3
The Art of Precedent

> There is nothing in man of all the potential parts of his mind (reason and will except) more noble or more necessary to the active life th[an] memory: because it maketh most to a sound judgement and perfect worldly wisedome, examining and comparing the times past with the present, and by them both considering the time to come . . . Right so no kinde of argument in all the Oratorie craft, doth better perswade and more universally satisfie than example, which is but the representation of old memories.[1]

I

Venus and Adonis and *The Rape of Lucrece* are dazzling proofs of Shakespeare's art, self-conscious Renaissance exercises in the imitation and amplification of Ovid. They demand to be read side by side with the narratives upon which they improvise. They set themselves up as variations upon Ovidian themes, and thus give support to the idea that the culture in which they are produced is a renovation of an admired earlier culture. It was with this in mind that Francis Meres wrote of the infusion of the sweet witty soul of Ovid into mellifluous and honey-tongued Mr Shakespeare.

But for Meres the idea that contemporary texts were renovations of classical ones went far beyond works of overt imitation like Shakespeare's two narrative poems. He read the civil war poems of Daniel and Drayton as revisions of Lucan's *Pharsalia*, proclaimed Ausonius to be the precursor of William Warner, and so on.[2] What

[1] George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie* (1589), bk. 1, ch. xix, ed. G. D. Willcock and Alice Walker (Cambridge, 1936), 39.

[2] Meres, 'A Comparative Discourse of our English Poets with the Greeke, Latine, and Italian Poets', in his *Palladis Tamia*, *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, ed. Smith, ii. 316–17. Meres may not in fact have read all the authors whom he cites. He derived most of his classical allusions from a popular handbook, the *Officina* of J. Ravisius Textor—see Don Cameron Allen, *Francis Meres's Treatise 'Poetrie': A Critical Edition* (Urbana, Ill.,

are being proposed here are *precedents*, not *sources*—the *Fasti* of Ausonius is a conceptual exemplar, not a reservoir of raw material, for Warner's *Albion's Englande*. The trope used by Meres is that which Puttenham in his *Arte of English Poesie* denominated '*Paradigma*, or a resemblance by example':

if in matter of counsell or perswasion we will seeme to liken one case to another . . . and doe compare the past with the present, gathering probabilitie of like successe to come in the things wee have presently in hand: or if ye will draw the judgements precedent and authorized by antiquitie as veritable, and peradventure fayned and imagined for some purpose, into similitude or dissimilitude with our present actions and affaires, it is called resemblance by example: as if one should say thus, *Alexander* the great in his expedition to Asia did thus, so did *Hanniball* comming into Spaine, so did *Caesar* in Egypt, therfore all great Captains & Generals ought to doe it.[3]

Antiquity, then, offers a paradigm or an example which, by serving as a precedent, authorizes 'the things wee have presently in hand'. Puttenham, in his oratorical handbook for courtiers, had an eye on public affairs; Meres used the trope to bolster a sense of the literary achievements of the English nation. The purpose of his 'Comparative Discourse of our English Poets with the Greeke, Latine, and Italian Poets' was to dignify the poetry that was presently in hand in Elizabethan England by bringing paradigms to bear upon it. The structure with which he worked was Puttenham's 'as . . . so . . .' formulation: 'As Virgil doth imitate Catullus in the like matter of *Ariadne* for his story of Queene *Dido*: so Michael Drayton doth imitate Ovid in his *England's Heroical Epistles*'; 'As the soule of Euphorbus was thought to live in Pythagoras: so the sweete wittie soule of Ovid lives in mellifluous and hony-tongued Shakespeare'. Inverting the process whereby Castiglione applied a traditional image of literary imitation—the bee flitting from flower to flower—to the courtier's imitation of worthy models of behaviour,[4] Meres turned Puttenham's trope for humanist action to literary account by making *paradigma* into both a figure of speech and a design for the construction of literary history.

1933). Allen castigates Meres for lack of originality, failing to see that his value lies precisely in his status as a purveyor of Elizabethan *commonplaces*.

[3] Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie*, bk. 3, ch. xix, p. 245.

[4] Castiglione, *The Courtier*, trans. Hoby (Everyman edn., London, 1966), 45. The standard source for the image of the bee is Seneca, *Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales*, lxxxiv. 3–4.

Meres implicitly proposes two different kinds of relationship between English poets and their forebears, the specifically imitative and the grandly paradigmatic. *Imitatio* is a symptom of *paradigma*, but *paradigma* is not dependent on recognizable *imitatio* (Caesar's Egyptian expedition cannot really be described as an *imitation* of Alexander's Asian one). Thus *Englands Heroicall Epistles* is an imitation of Ovid's *Heroides*, as *The Shepheardes Calender* is of Theocritus' *Idylls* and Virgil's *Eclogues*, whereas the affiliation of Shakespeare to Ovid is more broadly paradigmatic. Meres cites not only *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*, which may be seen as imitations of parts of the *Metamorphoses* and the *Fasti*, but also the sonnets, which, being in a genre unknown to Ovid, cannot be so directly imitative. The metaphor used for this relationship is suggestively self-performing: the metamorphosis of Ovid into Shakespeare is imaged in an allusion to the fifteenth book of the *Metamorphoses*, where Pythagoras supports his theory of metempsychosis by claiming that he is a reincarnation of the soul of Euphorbus (*Met.* xv. 161). Meres's comparison is an inspired one, for the fifteenth book of the *Metamorphoses* is the prime *paradigma* for the sonnets. The principle of metempsychosis which Book Fifteen articulates is enacted in the metempsychosis of Book Fifteen into the sonnets.[5]

At this juncture one needs a bridge between the theory and the poetry. It must be demonstrated that Elizabethan sonnets did invite their readers to think about imitation and paradigm. One does not have to look very far to find such a bridge, for Thomas Watson actually built one into the first Elizabethan sonnet-cycle, the *Hekatompathia* of 1582. Probably working under the influence of E.K.'s marginal glosses to *The Shepheardes Calender*, he prefaced each poem with a brief critical account of its own imitative practices. In the headnote to 'Harke you that list to heare what sainte I serve', the blazon of which 'My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun' is a direct or indirect parody, he proclaims that he is proud to be a parasite:

This passion of love is lively expressed by the Authour, in that he lavishlie

[5] The aim of my analysis here is to reread the relationship between Ovid and the sonnets in the light of 16th-cent. imitation theory. It is not to enumerate Shakespeare's 'debt' in detail: there are accounts of Ovid as a 'source' for the sonnets in Sidney Lee, 'Ovid and Shakespeare's Sonnets', *The Quarterly Review*, ccx (1909), 455–76, repr. in his *Elizabethan and other Essays* (Oxford, 1929), 116–39; T. W. Baldwin, *On the Literary Genetics of Shakspere's Poems and Sonnets* (Urbana, Ill., 1950); J. W. Lever, *The Elizabethan Love Sonnet* (London, 1956), 248–72; and the commentary and app. 2 of Stephen Booth's edn. of *Shakespeare's Sonnets* (New Haven, Conn., and London, 1977).

praiseth the person and beautifull ornamentes of his love, one after an other as they lie in order. He partly imitateth herein *Aeneas Silvius*, who setteth downe the like in describing *Lucretia* the love of *Euryalus*; & partly he followeth *Ariosto cant. 7.* where he describeth *Alcina*: & partly borroweth from some others where they describe the famous *Helen* of *Greece*: you may therefore, if you please aptlie call this sonnet as a Scholler of good judgement hath already Christened it *ainē parasitikē*.[6]

Further assistance is provided for the reader in the form of learned marginal references along the lines of 'Vide Chiliad. I. cent. 5 adag. 74. vbi. Erasm. ex Philostrati ad uxorem epistola mutuatur'. Like some student anxious to impress his tutor, Watson brazenly displays his classical credentials.

One of his reasons for doing so is suggested by the headnote to the sonnet in *Hekatompathia* which immediately follows 'Harke you that list to heare what sainte I serve'. It includes a quotation from Ovid's *Tristia* (ii. 103–6) and an explication which reveals whom the poet is really anxious to impress: 'The Author alluding in al this Passion unto the fault of *Actaeon*, and to the hurte, which hee susteined, setteth downe his owne amorous infelicitie; as *Ovid* did after his banishmente, when in an other sense hee applied this fiction unto himselfe, being exiled (as it should seeme) for having at unawares taken *Caesar* in some great fault.' Whether the 'error' (*Tristia*, ii. 207) for which Ovid was exiled was something he saw in the imperial household or an actual involvement with the emperor's grand-daughter, the figure of Actaeon was a perfect image in which to convey it. Watson's verses set down the poet's own infelicity through the same allusion:

> Actaeon lost in middle of his sport
> Both shape and life, for looking but a wry,
> Diana was afraid he would report
> What secretes he had seene in passing by:
> To tell but trueth, the selfe same hurt have I
> By viewing her, for whome I dayly die.
> (*Hekatompathia*, viii, p. 22)

What this is implicitly about is fear of loss of patronage. By referring to

[6] Thomas Watson, *The Hekatompathia or Passionate Centurie of Love* (London, 1582), sonnet vii, p. 21. Greek transliterated in both title and quotation. The poem is discussed by John Kerrigan in the introd. to his edn. of *The Sonnets and A Lover's Complaint* (Harmondsworth, 1986), 19–20.

Ovid's comparison of himself to Actaeon after he fell out of favour with the emperor, Watson acknowledges his own need for the protection of Edward de Vere, the Earl of Oxford, to whom his 'Passionate Centurie of Love' is dedicated.

Shakespeare was subtler in his pursuit of admiration and hence patronage. He did not parade the imitativeness of his sonnets in the Watsonian manner, but on one occasion he did write a piece of literary criticism of his own work which suggests, as Meres did, that Ovid was the sonneteer's paradigm. The sonnet 'If love make me forsworn, how shall I swear to love?', originally composed for Berowne in *Love's Labour's Lost* but published as Shakespeare's by William Jaggard in *The Passionate Pilgrim*, is subjected to the astringent scrutiny of Holofernes: 'Here are only numbers ratified, but for the elegancy, facility, and golden cadence of poesy—*caret* ['it is lacking']. Ovidius Naso was the man. And why indeed "Naso" but for smelling out the odoriferous flowers of fancy, the jerks of invention? *Imitari* is nothing. So doth the hound his master, the ape his keeper, the tired horse his rider' (*Love's Labour's*, IV. ii. 121–7). Holofernes may be a pedant, but he is not a fool: he sees that Berowne's sonnet is a catalogue of commonplaces without novel application. Holofernes also knows his imitation theory. He has been reading in the tenth book of Quintilian: 'imitatio per se ipsa non sufficit'; 'invenire primum fuit estque praecipuum'—imitation by itself is not sufficient; invention came first and is all-important.[7] Contained within Holofernes' analysis is Quintilian's celebrated distinction between imitation and emulation: the business of poesy is not ape-like imitation but the emulation of Ovid's elegance and facility. Like Puttenham's figure of *paradigma*, emulation leaves room for dissimilitude as well as similitude; it ultimately comes down to matter, not mere words.

That good imitation involves difference as well as similarity is a cardinal principle of Renaissance poetics. Again and again, sixteenth-century theorists make the point which was first made by Petrarch in his letter to Boccaccio written from Pavia on 28 October 1366. The 'proper imitator should take care that what he writes resembles the original without reproducing it'; the resemblance should be that 'of a son to his father', not that of a portrait to the sitter; individual features will diverge, but the whole will, through some mysterious power, have the feel of the original. Petrarch continues,

[7] Quintilian, *Institutiones Oratoriae*, X. ii. 4, X. ii. 1.

Thus we writers must look to it that with a basis of similarity there should be many dissimilarities. And the similarity should be planted so deep that it can only be extricated by quiet meditation. The quality is to be felt rather than defined. Thus we may use another man's conceptions and the colour of his style, but not use his words. In the first case the resemblance is hidden deep; in the second it is glaring. The first procedure makes poets, the second makes apes. This is the substance of Seneca's counsel, and Horace's before him, that we should write as the bees make sweetness, not storing up the flowers but turning them into honey, thus making one thing of many various ones, but different and better.[8]

Shakespeare's Ovidianism answers to Petrarch's ideal: there are dissimilarities as well as resemblances; the relationship is often more easily felt than analysed; it is sometimes 'planted so deep that it can only be extricated by quiet meditation'.

The distinction between poet-son and ape may be made by contrasting the handling of Ovidian mythology in a routine allusion and a Shakespearian sonnet. Sonnet 63 of Barnabe Barnes's *Parthenophil and Parthenophe* begins as follows:

> JOVE for EUROPA's love, took shape of Bull;
> And for CALISTO, played DIANA's part:
> And in a golden shower, he filled full
> The lap of DANAE, with celestial art.
> Would I were changed but to my Mistress' gloves,
> That those white lovely fingers I might hide!
> That I might kiss those hands, which mine heart loves![9]

Thereafter the poet expresses the desire to be metamorphosed into his mistress's necklace or belt, or the wine that she is drinking. In an Ovidian conceit—indeed, an Ovidian indecency—he imagines being the wine that kisses her lips, trickles down her throat, runs through her veins, and finally 'pass[es] by Pleasure's part'.[10] Ovidian metamorphic mythology has furnished Barnes with images through which to convey his desire for a metamorphosis in his own standing

[8] *Le familiari*, xxiii. 19, in *Letters from Petrarch*, selected and trans. Morris Bishop (Bloomington, Ind., 1966), 198–9. See further the magisterial treatment of Petrarch in Greene's *The Light in Troy*.

[9] Barnes, *Parthenophil and Parthenophe* (London, 1593), quoted from Sidney Lee's anthology of *Elizabethan Sonnets*, 2 vols. (London, 1904), i. 207.

[10] The fountainhead for this kind of poem is *Amores*, II. xv, in which the poet imagines himself as the ring on his mistress's finger, touching various other parts of her body.

with regard to his lover.[11] Ovidian wit has furnished the sonnet with its tail. But the opening quatrain is formulaically dependent on Ovid and the final couplet crude in comparison with him. Barnes in no way advances on Ovid, in no way sublimates him.

But consider Shakespeare's Sonnet 53:

> What is your substance, whereof are you made,
> That millions of strange shadows on you tend?
> Since every one hath, every one, one shade,
> And you, but one, can every shadow lend.
> Describe Adonis, and the counterfeit
> Is poorly imitated after you.
> On Helen's cheek all art of beauty set,
> And you in Grecian tires are painted new.
> Speak of the spring and foison of the year:
> The one doth shadow of your beauty show,
> The other as your bounty doth appear,
> And you in every blessèd shape we know.

In Barnes the Ovidian mythological figures are fixed points, ideal substances which are shadowed in his own love. In Shakespeare the opposite is the case: the lovely boy is the substance, the mythological figure the shadow. 'Describe Adonis, and the counterfeit | Is poorly imitated after you': where Barnes offers counterfeits, poor imitations of Ovidian originals, Shakespeare makes the lovely boy into the ideal figure of beauty and Adonis into the counterfeit. The third quatrain performs a similar trumping, in this instance an overgoing of those figures of natural plenty who are so central to Ovid's world: 'Speak of the spring and foison of the year', and one would usually speak of Proserpina and Ceres, but here nature is a shadow of the youth's beauty. The sonnet's innovation is in its appropriation of the term 'imitate'. Where a poet like Giles Fletcher announces on the title-page of his sonnet-sequence *Licia* (1593) that he is writing in 'imitation of the best Latin Poets, and others', Shakespeare claims within his poem that classical figures are imitations of his own beloved. 'Figure' is an analogous term: *paradigma* is a figure of speech whereby classical

[11] This is a much-used topos which may be traced back to Ronsard's 'Je vouldroy bien richement jaunissant . . .' (*Amours*, 20), a lyric translated closely as sonnet 34 of Thomas Lodge's *Phillis* (1593) and more freely as 'Would I were chaung'd into that golden showre', a poem in *The Phoenix Nest* (1593) attributable to Ralegh. Sidney, who so often detaches himself from the literariness of other sonneteers, mocks the topos in *Astrophil*, 6: 'Some one his song in Jove, and Jove's strange tales, attires, | Broidered with bulls and swans, powdered with golden rain.'

figures serve as authorities, but Sonnet 106 goes so far as to make the claim that all praises of past beauties 'are but prophecies | Of this our time, all you prefiguring'. The ideal figures are but prefigurings of the poet's present love.

When Shakespeare deploys this effect of inverted *paradigma*, he exercises a turn on the concept of metamorphosis. The paradigmatic function of myth is to provide poet and reader with a stock of archetypes. But where it is customary to suggest the force of a present change by comparing it to a traditional mythological metamorphosis that is known to be forceful, Shakespeare makes the myths into the shadow, the present change into the archetype or true substance. In Ovid, extreme emotion precipitates the metamorphosis of a person into an object of nature, whereas in Sonnet 113, extreme emotion precipitates the metamorphosis of the objects of nature into a person:

> [Mine eye] no form delivers to the heart
> Of bird, of flower, or shape which it doth latch.
> Of his quick objects hath the mind no part,
> Nor his own vision holds what it doth catch;
> For if it see the rud'st or gentlest sight,
> The most sweet favour or deformèd'st creature,
> The mountain or the sea, the day or night,
> The crow or dove, it shapes them to your feature.

The sympathetic eye of Ovid looks at the natural world and reads out of it an array of mythic lovers and objects of desire; the possessed eye/I of the Sonnets sees in all the forms of nature its own love, its single object of desire.

But Shakespeare does not always seem so readily able to overturn his prototypes. Sonnet 59 opens with a troubled expression of poetic belatedness:

> If there be nothing new, but that which is
> Hath been before, how are our brains beguiled,
> Which, labouring for invention, bear amiss
> The second burden of a former child!

The darkness of this is manifest if we recollect Holofernes' distinction between *imitari*, which is nothing, and 'the jerks of invention' to which the poet should aspire. Whereas Shakespeare proved his inventiveness in Sonnet 53 by appropriating the idea of imitation, now he laments that the labour for originality is fruitless since nothing is new, what one writes will be already written, and what one

imagines to be the child of one's invention will turn out to be the child of one's poetic father. 'Burden' is a key word: together with 'labouring' it establishes an image of writing as giving birth, but at the same time it suggests the burden of the past, the oppressive weight of 'the wits of former days'. The notion of eternal repetition on which the sonnet rests carries the melancholy implication that all writing is mere imitation of previous writing. Line 8, 'Since mind at first in character was done', evokes an originary act of writing that can never be recovered. The sense of loss derives from the contrast between that 'at *first*' and the poet's own '*second* burden'.

Sonnet 59 exemplifies its own contention that there is nothing new by means of its own nature as something that is not new. For what is its argument about repetition other than a repetition of Pythagoras' argument in *Metamorphoses* Fifteen? The image of birth as rebirth of something that has been before is itself the second birth of Ovid's 'nascique vocatur | incipere esse aliud, quam quod fuit ante' (*Met.* xv. 255–6), or as Arthur Golding has it, 'For that which wee | Doo terme by name of being borne, is for too gin too bee | Another thing than that it was' (Golding, xv. 279–81). Ovid's technique in the *Metamorphoses* is to slide from one story to the next in a process of repetition and variation that embodies the neo-Pythagorean theory of constancy and change. The structure of the sonnets is the same: 60 picks up from 59.[12] In particular, it picks up on the language of Pythagoras' discourse. As every educated Elizabethan reader would have recognized,

> Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore,
> So do our minutes hasten to their end,
> Each changing place with that which goes before;
> In sequent toil all forwards to contend.

is a version of

> But looke
> As every wave dryves other foorth, and that that commes behynd
> Bothe thrusteth and is thrust itself: Even so the tymes by kynd
> Doo fly and follow bothe at once, and evermore renew.
> (Golding, xv. 200–3)

[12] I follow Katherine Duncan-Jones, 'Was the 1609 *Shake-speares Sonnets* Really Unauthorized?', *RES* NS xxxiv (1983), 151–71, and John Kerrigan, ed., *The Sonnets and A Lover's Complaint*, in ascribing authority to the 1609 order.

Here Shakespeare is imitating closely: his 'sequent' derives from Ovid's 'sequuntur' (xv. 183) and 'in the main of light' in the following line translates 'editus in lucem' (xv. 221). He pursues a similar *imitatio* with the image of sea encroaching on land and land on sea in Sonnet 64.[13]

But in Sonnet 60 he is also revising, for he undertakes an elision that is thoroughly Ovidian but which is never actually explicitly articulated by Ovid. In this sense, Shakespeare is, in Petrarch's terms, using his model's conceptions and the colour of his style, but not his exact words. The elision consists of a movement from past to future. Where Sonnet 59 looks back, and ends with the rather half-hearted couplet, 'O, sure I am the wits of former days | To subjects worse have given admiring praise', Sonnet 60 frees itself from eternal repetition by claiming that the verse itself will endure. A few sonnets earlier, in 55, Shakespeare had reiterated the great envoi of the *Metamorphoses*: 'Iamque opus exegi, quod nec Iovis ira nec ignis | nec poterit ferrum nec edax abolere vetustas' (xv. 871–2); 'Nor Mars his sword nor war's quick fire shall burn | The living record of your memory'. Now in the couplet of 60 this idea of triumphing through writing recurs and offers itself as the overcoming of time's inexorability: 'And yet to times in hope my verse shall stand, | Praising thy worth despite his cruel hand.' In *Metamorphoses* Fifteen, the envoi stands alone, not as a reply to Pythagoras. It is Shakespeare who makes the connection and thus uses one part of Ovid to unwrite or rewrite another.

Shakespeare has thus both cleared a space for himself, enabled himself to say something new, and at the same time remained responsive to his paradigm. In the very act of asserting his own immortality, he asserts Ovid's. There is a kind of mutuality whereby imagining the past and imagining the future are one and the same; Ovid's paradigmatic status proves his immortality and implicitly opens the way for Shakespeare to achieve similar immortality through becoming paradigmatic to eyes not yet created and when rehearsed on tongues to be. As Puttenham put it in his account of *paradigma*, the example of the past gathers probability of like success for the present.

The idea that Ovid has been reborn in sonnets such as 60 effects a curious effacement of the poetic 'I'. The conceit of Shakespeare writing Ovid will not do here. Meres's image of 'the sweete wittie soule

[13] An image reiterated dramatically in King Henry IV's night scene: *2 Henry IV*, III. ii. 47–9.

of Ovid liv[ing] in mellifluous and hony-tongued Shakespeare' carries the converse implication that it is Ovid who is writing Shakespeare. If it is Ovid who 'lives', Shakespeare has disappeared in the very moment of asserting his own enduring life. Consider the 'I' of Sonnet 64:

> When I have seen the hungry ocean gain
> Advantage on the kingdom of the shore,
> And the firm soil win of the wat'ry main,
> Increasing store with loss and loss with store;
> When I have seen such interchange of state . . .

and so on. Who is this 'I'? Is it the speaker of the sonnets, or is it Ovid's speaker, Pythagoras—or the speaker of the Englished Ovid, Arthur Golding?

> Even so have places oftentymes exchaunged theyr estate.
> For I have seene it sea which was substanciall ground alate,
> Ageine where sea was, I have seene the same become dry lond . . .
> (Golding, xv. 287–9)

Or could it be a version of the later Ovid, exiled from Rome and complaining about a friend who has now forgotten about him, as Timon is forgotten by his supposed friends once he is exiled:

> The freshe floudes shall from Seas retyre, againe their springs unto,
> So shall the Sunne wyth horses tourn'de, his course revoke also.
> The earth shal eke the bright starre beare, and ayre the plough shal cleve,
> The water shall bringe forth the flames, and fyre shall water geve.
> All thinges shall come to passe which I, denyed afore could bee,
> For nothinge is so straung to heare, but we may hope to see.
> It shall be so I gesse because, of him I was rejecte,
> Whose helpe I hoped now that should my wofull cause protecte.
> O faythlesse frende how came so great, forgetfulnes of mee,
> Why were thou then so sore afrayd, my carefull corpes to see?[14]

The use of anaphora to render the perpetual process of change is replicated by Shakespeare, even as the situation is different (he hasn't yet lost his friend, but he senses that one day he will).

[14] *The Three first Bookes of Ovids de Tristibus*, trans. Thomas Churchyard (London, 1572), I. vii [I. viii in modern edns.], sig. A7v. Churchyard gives the poems of the *Tristia* titles that are similar to those which are given to Shakespeare's Sonnets in Benson's 1640 edn. (this one is called 'To his frende that breake his promise'; proximate titles include 'To his constant frende', 'To his frendes that Ware his Image ingravde', and 'To his frende that the common people followeth fortune').

The 'I' who speaks the poem has been transformed into a polyphony of voices. According to one view, this dissolution is a source of anxiety. One might apply to Sonnet 64 Terence Cave's general conclusion regarding Renaissance imitation theory: 'it recognizes the extent to which the production of any discourse is conditioned by pre-existing instances of discourse; the writer is always a rewriter, the problem then being to differentiate and authenticate the rewriting. . . . Rewriting betrays its own anxiety by personifying itself as the product of an author; it imprints on itself—one might even say *forges*—an identity.'[15] But the polyphonic 'I' can equally well be seen as an expansion rather than a dissolution, a product of generosity rather than anxiety. There is a modesty about Shakespeare's self-effacement which is the counterpart to the arrogance of his inverted *paradigma*. Again, there is a process of repetition and variation in the movement from sonnet to sonnet: 60 overcomes the anxiety of 59, then 64 assuages the potential egotism of 60.

John Kerrigan sees modesty at work in Sonnet 55, and differentiates Shakespeare's claims for immortality from Ovid's. The final word of the *Metamorphoses* is in the egotistic first-person future: 'vivam', 'I shall live'. Golding renders the poem's last line 'My lyfe shall everlastingly bee lengthened still by fame' (Golding, xv. 995). 'Strikingly, though,' says Kerrigan, 'Shakespeare promises to preserve the young man in verse, not himself.' Kerrigan notes that this difference has led to the citation of a third possible 'source' for 55, an elegy of Propertius (III. ii) where immortality is bestowed on the person praised, not the poet himself; he is rightly dismissive of this possibility, since Propertius was barely read in the 1590s. 'It seems more likely', Kerrigan concludes, 'that Shakespeare adapted Ovid and Horace in Sonnet 55, and virtually certain that early readers would have understood the lines that way.'[16] Early readers might also have remembered the later Ovid. Images of the text outliving sword and fire

[15] Terence Cave, *The Cornucopian Text: Problems of Writing in the French Renaissance* (Oxford, 1979), 76–7.

[16] *The Sonnets and A Lover's Complaint*, 241; see also p. 21. For the citation of Propertius, see J. B. Leishman, *Themes and Variations in Shakespeare's Sonnets* (London, 1961), 42. For Horace's self-immortalizations, see the closing poems of bks. 2 and 3 of his *Odes* (II. xx, III. xxx)—the latter begins with the famous 'Exegi monumentum aere perennius'. The first and third books of Ovid's *Amores* follow Horace in ending with the claim that the poet will live on ('vivam': I. xv) through his work, that it will endure after his death ('post mea mansurum fata superstes opus!': III. xv).

derive from the end of the *Metamorphoses*, but the modesty of '*You* live in this' suggests the end of the *Tristia*:

> Quanta tibi dederim nostris monumenta libellis,
>   o mihi me coniunx carior, ipsa vides.
> detrahat auctori multum fortuna licebit,
>   tu tamen ingenio clara ferere meo;
> dumque legar, mecum pariter tua fama legetur.

What a monument I have raised to thee in my books, O my wife, dearer to me than myself, thou seest. Though fate may take much from their author, thou at least shall be made illustrious by my powers. As long as I am read, thy fame shall be read along with me.[17]

It is, I think, from the tender 'tibi' and 'tu' of this passage that Shakespeare works his immortalization of the beloved, just as it is from the structure of repetition in the last line of this—'As long as I am read, thy fame shall be read along with me'—that he creates the couplet of Sonnet 18, 'So long as men can breathe or eyes can see, | So long lives this, and this gives life to thee'.[18] The trope of the joint immortalization of poet and lover may also be traced back to the *Amores*: 'So likewise we will through the world be rung, | And with my name shall thine be always sung'.[19] The transformation of the mistress of the *Amores* and the wife of the *Tristia* into Shakespeare's fair youth is another suggestive revision: between the antique and the modern pen there is a constancy in love but a change in the object of love.

In these patterns of reiteration and variation, there is a rapid interchange between *verba* and *res*. The language of such sonnets as 18 and 19, 60 and 64, is for ever shifting as it interlocks with and then extricates itself from the words, *verba*, of Ovid. Textual transforma-

[17] *Tristia*, v. xiv. 1–5, with Loeb trans., adapted.

[18] It is strange that scholars (e.g. Baldwin, *Literary Genetics of Poems and Sonnets*, 215; Lever, *Elizabethan Love Sonnet*, 201) have derived the first line of Sonnet 19, 'Devouring Time, blunt thou the lion's paws', from *Tristia*, IV. vi. 5, but not the couplet of 18 from *Tristia*, v. xiv. 5. An earlier poem in the *Tristia* also gives immortality to the poet's wife: 'quantumcumque tamen praeconia nostra valebunt, | carminibus vives tempus in omne meis'—'Yet so far as my praise has power, thou shalt live for all time in my song' (I. vi. 35–6). The *Tristia* also includes many iterations of the topos of the poet's own work as enduring monument to himself: e.g. 'On Tombe these shal suffice: but yet, my bookes that longer byde, | As monumentes of mee, which that, no tract of tyme shall hyde' (III. iii. 77–8, trans. Churchyard). The topos of Time as enemy has a history as long as poetry itself, but there are particularly close links between Shakespeare's treatment of it and that of Ovid in the *Tristia*.

[19] Marlowe's trans. of the final couplet of *Amores*, I. iii.

tions furnish the alert reader with a reminder of the metamorphic substance, *res*, which Ovid and Shakespeare share. And in responding to the *res*, Shakespeare is going beyond the imitative poet like Watson who is stuck with the *verba* of his models. The Pythagoras of Book Fifteen has a figure which comes to the quintessence of the *res*, the matter, of both the *Metamorphoses* and the Sonnets:

> And even as supple wax with ease receyveth fygures straunge,
> And keepes not ay one shape, ne bydes assured ay from chaunge,
> And yit continueth alwayes wax in substaunce: So I say
> The soule is ay the selfsame thing it was, and yit astray
> It fleeteth intoo sundry shapes.
>
> (Golding, xv. 188–92)

That the soul, the self, is like wax is an idea which possessed Shakespeare deeply. One thinks of Theseus addressing Hermia,

> you are but as a form in wax,
> By him imprinted, and within his power
> To leave the figure or disfigure it.
> (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, I. i. 49–51)

and of related images of 'impression' and 'imprint' in the sonnets.[20] It is an idea that takes us beyond intertextuality.

In his frequent references to antique books, and especially in Sonnet 59, Shakespeare focuses his anxieties about time and endurance by means of unobtrusive classical citations. In most of his Ovidian sonnets, and especially 60, he overcomes the burden of time by means of a process of reiteration and variation that is itself a form of Pythagorean metempsychosis. But what the sonnets cannot escape is the burden of love. The real melancholy of the sequence comes from the way in which the poet is *impressed*, not by Ovid, not by the 'rival poet', but by the fair youth himself. The sense in which Ovid, and indeed the whole panegyric tradition, begets the sonnets is far less troubling than that in which the youth himself begets them and can reject them:

> Farewell—thou art too dear for my possessing,
> And like enough thou know'st thy estimate.
> The charter of thy worth gives thee releasing;
> My bonds in thee are all determinate.
> For how do I hold thee but by thy granting,
> And for that riches where is my deserving?

[20] e.g. Sonnet 112, l. 1, and Sonnet 77, l. 3.

> The cause of this fair gift in me is wanting,
> And so my patent back again is swerving.
> Thyself thou gav'st, thy own worth then not knowing,
> Or me to whom thou gav'st it else mistaking;
> So thy great gift, upon misprision growing,
> Comes home again, on better judgement making.
> Thus have I had thee as a dream doth flatter:
> In sleep a king, but waking no such matter.
>
> (87)

This sonnet is troubled not about the poetic tradition but about the whims of the beloved. Like Hermia's father, the youth has power to mould another person's self; he is able to shape the poet, 'To leave the figure or disfigure it'. Anxiety is wrought by the fear of losing the beloved; the truly terrifying thought is that he has only been possessed in a dream. Images of literary textuality are replaced by those of legal and commercial textuality. The instability of both desire and patronage are central concerns here. The speaker of the sonnet shares Actaeon's discovery that the person you desire has the greatest power to destroy you. The 'swerving' is not between the text and its aesthetic paradigm, but of the 'patent' back to the 'I' who has registered it; the 'misprision' is of the 'gift' of love which in this poem sounds suspiciously like a cipher for that of patronage. If the sonnet is to be granted its force, extra-textual reality must be allowed to intrude in some such terms as these.

It is possible that the Sonnets' Ovidian topoi ask to be read in connection with Shakespeare's clientage. The so-called 'breeding' sequence which opens the collection (numbers 1 to 17) invokes the figure of Narcissus. The most frequently cited words of that lovely boy, 'inopem me copia fecit', 'my plentie makes me poore',[21] are improvised upon in the very first sonnet:

> But thou, contracted to thine own bright eyes,
> Feed'st thy light's flame with self-substantial fuel,
> Making a famine where abundance lies,
> Thyself thy foe, to thy sweet self too cruel.

Not only is famine in abundance a version of poverty in plenty, the image of the self-regarding eye is also a sure sign of Narcissus, and the

[21] *Met.* iii. 466; Golding, iii. 587; quoted on innumerable occasions in the Renaissance, often in contexts of unrequited love, as when Spenser writes of the desiring lover's eyes 'in their amazement lyke *Narcissus* vaine | whose eyes him starv'd: so plenty makes me poore' (*Amoretti*, 35). 'Vaine' is a much-used pun in this context.

self-consuming flame is based on Ovid's densely packed line, 'uror amore mei: flammas moveoque feroque' (iv. 464, 'I burn with love of my own self: I both kindle the flames and suffer them'). Sonnet 3 begins with the narcissistic gaze ('Look in thy glass') and proceeds to 'self-love'. Line 10 of Sonnet 5, 'A liquid prisoner pent in walls of glass', refers metonymically to the youth and in so doing elicits the watery fate of Narcissus. And so on. When the 'only begetter' read these first sonnets in manuscript, he could not have failed to see the face of Narcissus mirrored in Shakespeare's lines. If he was the teenage Earl of Southampton it would have been a familiar identification: in 1591 one of Burghley's secretaries, John Clapham, had dedicated to that youth a Latin poem entitled *Narcissus*—an unsubtle hint on the occasion of his refusal to marry his guardian's granddaughter.[22]

If exhortation to marriage is also the true purpose of Shakespeare's first group of sonnets, the reading is obvious enough: 'Consider the fate of Narcissus and act to prevent it being yours'. But other possibilities suggest themselves. The fable of Narcissus 'presents the condition of those, who adorned by the bounty of nature, or inriched by the industry of others, without merit, or honour of their owne acquisition, are transported with selfe-love'. The sonnets could accordingly be read as a plea to the fair youth to share his bounty in material ways, not least by reciprocally 'inriching' the industrious sonneteer who is celebrating the adornments. Alternatively or additionally, the exhortation to marriage may be a cipher for an exhortation to public service, as suggested by another interpretation of Narcissus, namely his figuration of those 'Who likely sequester themselves from publique converse and civill affaires, as subject to neglects and disgraces, which might too much trouble and deject them: admitting but of a few to accompany their solitarinesse; those being such as only applaud and admire them, assenting to what they say, like as many *Ecchos*'. When the sonnet sequence exfoliates from its original occasion and explores the selves and souls of its desiring and desired personae in diverse ways, the reader versed in mythography might also bring into play the reading of the Narcissus story as an examination of the distinction between physical and spiritual beauty, in which the youth embodies someone who

[22] See 'Clapham's *Narcissus*: A Pre-Text for Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*? (text, translation, and commentary)', ed. Charles Martindale and Colin Burrow, *ELR* 22 (1992), 147–76.

considers only his bodily appearance (physical beauty being but the 'shadow of the soule'), who neglects 'his proper essence of virtue', and who is thus a representation of the soul 'alienated from it selfe'.[23]

In an analysis of Elizabethan sonnet sequences as social transactions, Arthur Marotti argues that Shakespeare gave up on the prospect of persuading the youth out of his narcissism:

> Recognizing that the young man is really uneducable, morally obtuse, and generally unworthy of anything more sincere than the kind of praise rendered in encomiastic formulae, the poet discovers he is engaging in self-praise finally, celebrating a love whose constancy, growth, and worth exist in himself rather than in a beloved friend who is actually abandoned to his imperious narcissism. He discovers also in his resources as a poet the means both for enacting a kind of revenge and for establishing an authority and status better than the benefits of clientage. Shakespeare uses the eternizing conceit, among other purposes, for asserting a power that reverses the roles of inferior and superior; he also projects onto the recurrent figure of time-as-destroyer the hostility and resentment implicit in his disadvantageous position as a client.[24]

In this account, it is Shakespeare who becomes the Narcissus or even one of Actaeon's avenging dogs. What is omitted by Marotti is the distinctive twist on 'the eternizing conceit' away from the self-assertion of Ovid's 'vivam' and Horace's 'Exegi monumentum aere perennius', towards the immortalization of the beloved. If the beloved is also the patron, then the sequence's rapid development from the Narcissus topos to the immortalizing one is an intensification, not an ironic reversal, of clientage. Shakespeare is doing the oldest work of the laureate: singing for his supper by eternizing his master.[25]

As far as Renaissance theorists of imitation were concerned, bad imitators were concerned only with the *verba* of their paradigms, good ones with the *res*. For all writers in the period, formal literary *imitatio* was co-ordinate with, not in opposition to, literature's traditional mimetic function with regard to nature. *Paradigma* in Puttenham is both a trope and a means to action. Shakespeare makes new senses

[23] All quotations in this paragraph are from the synthesis of interpretations of Narcissus in Sandys, *Ovid's Metamorphosis Englished*, 106.

[24] Arthur F. Marotti, '"Love is not love": Elizabethan Sonnet Sequences and the Social Order', *ELH* xlix (1982), 396–428 (p. 412).

[25] The point is made in strong, if vulgar, fashion by John Barrell when he suggests that the pathos of Sonnet 29 'is that the narrator can find no words to assert the transcendent power of true love, which cannot be interpreted as making a request for a couple of quid'—*Poetry, Language and Politics* (Manchester, 1988), 42.

out of Ovid as a way of making sense out of love more than as an assertion of his own hopes for literary immortality (to judge from his lack of interest in publication, the latter was not consciously a prime concern). And he tried to make sense of love in his writing not just because mimesis is, as Aristotle recognized, a primary pleasure, but also because it was a way of making himself known. Whether the sonnets were an attempt to gain or maintain the patronage of the Earl of Southampton, as were the Ovidian narrative poems, or whether they were directed at the Earl of Pembroke or some unknown WH, they did their required work: by 1598, together with *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*, they had won Shakespeare a place in the English pantheon outlined in Meres's commonplace book—they had made their author into a modern reincarnation of Ovid, someone who would have been an addition to any sophisticated and ostentatious nobleman's coterie.

II

Shakespeare's ambitions do not, however, seem to have been those of Puttenham's courtier or of Lyly hanging around the Revels office. Having proved his literary credentials with the narrative poems, he chose to return to the theatre in 1594 and became a shareholder in the new Chamberlain's Men. It was for his company, not himself, that he subsequently sought patronage. But some of his methods of doing so were the same as in the non-dramatic works: *paradigma* could also be a mode of dramatic composition. *The Comedy of Errors*, performed at one of the Inns of Court in 1594, is a textbook case: the *Menaechmi* of Plautus is its paradigm, but, as in the Sonnets, Shakespeare seeks to outdo rather than merely reproduce his model. Thus he squares the main plot-feature by adding to the twin brothers of *Menaechmi* the doubled servant from another Plautine comedy, *Amphitruo*.[26] He also demonstrates his artful eclecticism by contaminating the hard-edged farce of Plautus with a framework of romance—shipwrecks, strangers, magic, losses and reunions—that anticipates his own later plays. The Duke's baffled exclamation when the confusions of the plot are at their height, 'I think you all have drunk of Circe's cup' (v. i. 270), evokes the most beguiling but sinister of the enchantments

[26] For a detailed study of *The Comedy of Errors* as humanist *imitatio*, see Wolfgang Riehle, *Shakespeare, Plautus and the Humanist Tradition* (Woodbridge, 1991).

encountered during the sea-wandering of the romance-style later books of the *Metamorphoses*.

In pursuing the matter beyond the clear-cut case of *The Comedy of Errors*, I want to begin with a remark of Richard Farmer, the eighteenth-century Master of Emmanuel College, Cambridge. He was dismissive not only about Shakespeare's classical capacities, but also about the scholarship of Edward Capell, who was something of an outsider in the world of eighteenth-century Shakespearian editing: 'Capell thought *Edward III* was Shakspeare's because *nobody* could write so, and *Titus Andronicus* because *every body* could! Well fare his heart, for he is a jewel of a reasoner!'[27]

Modern scholarship has moved towards the endorsement of Capell's once idiosyncratic view on the canonicity of these two plays. It is now widely agreed that Shakespeare wrote at least the Countess of Salisbury scenes in *Edward III*. I think it is highly probable that he did so between 1592 and 1594, not least because that was a period when he was experimenting with ways of writing about and representing rape and seduction. When the Countess's constancy to her husband finally persuades the libidinous King to call off the hunt, he says,

> Arise, true English Ladie, whom our Ile
> May better boast of th[a]n ever Romaine might
> Of her, whose ransackt treasurie hath taskt
> The vaine indevor of so many pens.[28]

That 'her' is, of course, Lucrece, and I would wager that one of the pens was the author's own. Whether Shakespeare had Lucrece in mind, in hand, or in print at this time, the lines are wryly self-referential. As for *Titus Andronicus*, given the vogue for blood-and-guts revenge drama in the later 1580s and early 1590s, how could an aspiring young dramatist like Shakespeare have made his mark without contributing to the genre? If Shakespeare did not write *Titus*, we had better quickly find another revenge drama to attribute to him.

This was Capell's point in making the seemingly perverse claim that *Titus Andronicus* must be by Shakespeare because everybody at the time wrote thus: Shakespeare wrote for money and was eminently capable of adapting himself to the most popular style of the

[27] Farmer, quoted from James Boswell Jr.'s revision of Edmond Malone's 1790 Variorum edn. of Shakespeare, 21 vols. (London, 1821), xxi. 381.

[28] *The Raigne of King Edward the Third* (publ. 1596), II. ii. 194–7, quoted from *The Shakespeare Apocrypha*, ed. C. F. Tucker Brooke (Oxford, 1908).

day. There is, however, more to it than this. There is much to be said for Edmond Malone's opinion that *Titus* was 'coined in the same mint' as plays like *The Battle of Alcazar*, *Selimus Emperor of the Turks*, *Jeronimo*, and *Locrine*.[29] But if we then consider one of the identifying marks of this currency, its self-authentication as true classical gold, one notices something rather remarkable: where a 'learned' writer like Thomas Kyd, educated by no less a classicist than Richard Mulcaster at Merchant Taylors', merely spices his revenge drama with classical tags along the lines of 'Enter Hieronimo *with a book in his hand. Vindicta mihi! . . . Per scelus semper tutum est sceleribus iter*',[30] the provincial grammar-school boy Shakespeare shapes his effort with a far more thoroughgoing classicism. Even if the Titus Andronicus chapbook was Shakespeare's narrative source—and I follow the minority of scholars who believe that it was not[31]—the play's main structural model is the Ovidian tale of Philomel, Tereus, and Procne. As will be shown, that structural patterning is proclaimed much more loudly by the text than is usually the case in the genre. Thomas Lodge's *Wounds of Civil War* is a Roman play which skilfully conflates two classical sources (Plutarch and Appian), but it does not tell its audience that it is doing so, as *Titus* reminds the audience of its own Ovidianism.

Muriel Bradbrook has convincingly argued that Shakespeare wrote *Venus and Adonis* partly in response to Greene's 'upstart crow' quip—the Stratford lad decided to show that he could outdo the Oxbridge men in that most sophisticated of genres, the Ovidian erotic narrative.[32] *Titus* is also beautified with the feathers of classicism—and with a vengeance. If we posit an early date for the play we may consider it as a provocation of Greene; if a later one, as a response to him. This, then, is the additional force of Capell's point: precisely because Shakespeare had less formal education than certain other dramatists, his play has more display of learning. He trumps his contemporaries in their own suit.

[29] Malone, in the commentary to his 1790 edn., quoted from 1821 edn., xxi. 259.

[30] *The Spanish Tragedy*, ed. Philip Edwards (London, 1959), III. xiii. 1–6, citing Seneca (*Agamemnon*, l. 115).

[31] Marco Mincoff, 'The Source of *Titus Andronicus*', *N&Q*, ccxvi (1971), 131–4; G. K. Hunter, 'Sources and Meanings in *Titus Andronicus*', in *The Mirror up to Shakespeare*, ed. J. C. Gray (Toronto, 1983), 171–88, and 'The "Sources" of *Titus Andronicus*—Once Again', *N&Q*, xxx (1983), 114–16; MacDonald P. Jackson, 'The Year's Contribution to Shakespearian Study: Editions and Textual Studies', *ShS* xxxviii (1985), 249–50.

[32] Bradbrook, 'Beasts and Gods: Greene's *Groats-Worth of Witte* and the Social Purpose of *Venus and Adonis*', *ShS* xv (1962), 62–72.

From the outset, the characters in *Titus* establish mythical and historical patternings for the action. The first of them is already familiar from *Edward III*: 'Take this of me: Lucrece was not more chaste | Than this Lavinia, Bassianus' love' (II. i. 109–10). The parallel between Lavinia and Lucrece recurs at the end of Act III, scene i, where rape becomes the pretext for the expulsion of an emperor:

> If Lucius live, he will requite your wrongs
> And make proud Saturnine and his empress
> Beg at the gates like Tarquin and his queen.
> (III. i. 295–7)

The important parallel, implicit here, between Lucius and Lucius Junius Brutus, who revenged his kinswoman's rape by persuading the people to expel the Tarquins, is made explicit in Act IV, scene i; as the early Roman republic was established at the cost of Lucrece's chastity, so the fictionalized late Roman empire is renewed at the cost of Lavinia's.

The play's classical allusiveness is deep, not wide. It relies on sustained involvement with a few sources—Ovid and a little Livy, the most famous part of Virgil, some Plutarch and the odd tag from Seneca that might well be derived at second hand—not on deployment of a Jonsonian range of learning.[33] In what is perhaps the most self-consciously literary moment in all Shakespeare, the play's most significant source is actually brought on stage:

> TITUS. Lucius, what book is that she tosseth so?
> BOY. Grandsire, 'tis Ovid's *Metamorphoses*;
> My mother gave it me.
> (IV. i. 41–3)

[33] For an ingenious argument about the play as a destabilization—a 'dismemberment'—of Virgil, see Heather James, 'Cultural Disintegration in *Titus Andronicus*: Mutilating Titus, Vergil and Rome', in *Violence in Drama*, *Themes in Drama*, xiii (1991), 123–40. The argument coheres with my sense of Ovid being used to destabilize a Virgilian, imperial idiom in *Antony and Cleopatra* and *The Tempest*, discussed in Chs. 5 and 6, below. Early 20th-cent. critics took the *Thyestes* of Seneca to be the main source for the play's bloody banquet, but their argument was effectively disposed of in Howard Baker's *Induction to Tragedy* (Baton Rouge, La., 1939), a book which remains methodologically salutary in its way of attending solidly to what the text says about its own filiations, not imposing on it connections which satisfy the modern academician's desire to draw together the great classical drama and that of the Renaissance. The story of Hecuba is an important secondary strand in the patterning of the play, but I am not convinced by Emrys Jones's argument in his otherwise excellent *The Origins of*

(This passing allusion to an absent mother is one of the many features that *Titus* shares with *King Lear*.) Lavinia then 'quotes' the leaves of the *Metamorphoses* in order to tell her own tragic tale. Later, Titus himself is explicit about the patterning of the action in a pair of lines which are constructed every bit as formally as the whole play is:

> For worse than Philomel you used my daughter,
> And worse than Procne I will be revenged.
> (v. ii. 193–4)

The switch from rape to revenge is modelled on the narrative of Philomel, to whom Lavinia is repeatedly compared, and Procne, in whose revenge, as George Steevens said of Shakespeare's play, '*justice* and *cookery* go hand in hand'.[34]

Titus Andronicus is a prime exhibit in the case for Shakespeare's artfulness: to put it simply, the play is an archetypal Renaissance humanist text in that it is patterned on the classics. It is to Ovid's Philomel story what *Venus and Adonis* is to Ovid's Venus and Adonis, what *Lucrece* is to Ovid's *Fasti*, and what *The Comedy of Errors* is to Plautine comedy. The 'quoting' of the leaves of Ovid's book by Lavinia tells the audience that this is the case. Her reading signals that the play is itself both a revisionary reading of the Ovidian text and an examination of the efficacy of humanist education.

By virtue of their reading and imitation of Ovid and other classical authors, the characters in the play come to resemble students in grammar school and university. The language of the schoolroom suffuses the play—characters keep coming up with remarks like 'Handle not the theme', 'I'll teach thee', 'I was their tutor to instruct them', and 'well has thou lessoned us'; they also refer to key educational texts such as Tully's *Orator*.[35] In one of his most powerful images, Titus seeks to fix, to memorialize, the most terrible truth that he has learnt. Like a schoolchild, Lavinia reads from her Ovid and then writes her text: '*Stuprum*—Chiron—Demetrius' (IV. i. 77). But she has written on sand, so the text may be erased, as from a pupil's writing slate ('the angry northern wind | Will blow these sands like Sibyl's leaves abroad, | And where's our lesson then?'—IV. i. 103–5).

Shakespeare (Oxford, 1977) that Shakespeare read that story in a Latin translation of Euripides' *Hecuba* as well as in the *Metamorphoses*.

[34] Steevens, commentary on revised Johnson edn.: see Malone's Variorum, 1821 edn. xxi. 378.

[35] III. ii. 29, IV. i. 119, V. i. 98, V. ii. 110, IV. i. 14.

So it is that Titus asks to inscribe the lesson in a more permanent form; steel and brass replace the humbler writing tools of the sixteenth-century schoolroom: 'I will go get a leaf of brass | And with a gad of steel will write these words, | And lay it by' (IV. i. 101–3). The image furnishes an extraordinarily physical twist on the pedagogic routine of etching the words of the classics on the memories of students.

An imitation is not a slavish copy and, as we will see, there are important differences between *Titus* and the tale of Philomel which is read out from the *Metamorphoses* and into the action of the play. *Dissimilitudo* and *contrarium* are as important to *imitatio* as are *similitudo* and *collatio*. And *imitatio* does not restrict the imitator to one model. The good imitator is eclectic to the point of promiscuity, which is why *Titus* invokes Hecuba, Lucrece, Livy's Virginius, Coriolanus, Dido and Aeneas, and a host of other *exempla*. Here, Shakespeare is following the Erasmian prescription for *copia*: 'Most powerful for proof, and therefore for *copia*, is the force of *exempla*'. If you want an example of, say, inconstancy, Erasmus says, you have Mercury and Proteus and Circe, and many, many more:

> From the tragedies I will borrow Phaedra, with her varying moods . . . likewise Medea, before the slaying of her sons, tormented by various emotions; Byblis and Narcissus from Ovid; from Virgil, Dido, when Aeneas is already preparing his departure. And scattered through the works of the poets there are innumerable characters of this type.[36]

In stressing the importance of *exempla* (Puttenham's *paradigma*), Erasmus is following Quintilian:

> Above all, our orator should be equipped with a rich store of examples both old and new: and he ought not merely to know those which are recorded in history or transmitted by oral tradition or occur from day to day, but should not neglect even those fictitious examples invented by the great poets. For while the former have the authority of evidence or even of legal decisions, the latter also either have the warrant of antiquity or are regarded as having been invented by great men to serve as lessons to the world.[37]

Fables, so the argument goes, have all the rhetorical power of histories. 'You shall perceive', wrote Puttenham, 'that histories were

[36] Erasmus, *On Copia of Words and Ideas* (*De utraque verborum ac rerum copia*), trans. D. B. King and H. D. Rix (Milwaukee, 1963), 95. Testimony to the enormous influence of the *De Copia* in the 16th cent. is the fact that it went through 150 edns. between 1512 and 1572.

[37] *Institutio Oratoria*, XII. iv. 1–2.

of three sortes, wholly true and wholly false, and a third holding part of either, but for honest re-creation, and good example they were all of them.'[38] The ingenuity of *Titus* is that it is a feigned history—in contrast to Shakespeare's later Roman plays, the plot is fictional—based on a series of fabulous and historical exemplars.

Those exemplars are reflected upon with bold critical self-consciousness. *The Wounds of Civil War* again serves as a contrast: Lodge alludes incidentally to the Tarquin myth in order to achieve local copiousness, whereas *Titus* proposes that its whole *inventio* is generated out of its *exempla*. Like good humanists, the characters model their behaviour on the classical figures they learnt about in school. Should Mutius be given a proper burial despite the fact that he disobeyed his father? He should, argues Marcus, citing the precedent of Ajax: 'The Greeks upon advice did bury Ajax, | That slew himself' (I. i. 376–7). 'My lord the Emperor, resolve me this', begins Titus in the final scene, sounding every bit like a schoolmaster exercising his pupil,

> Was it well done of rash Virginius
> To slay his daughter with his own right hand,
> Because she was enforced, stained, and deflowered?
> (v. iii. 36–8)

'It was, Andronicus', replies the Emperor, submitting to the role of the schoolboy. 'Your reason, mighty lord?', continues Magister Titus. 'Because the girl should not survive her shame, | And by her presence still renew his sorrows', says the well-rehearsed pupil. 'A reason mighty, strong, and effectual', answers Titus, concluding the exercise. The next step is to make the humanist move from precept to practice, from literary *exemplum* to noble action. At the centre of humanism was 'the belief in the importance of the active life and the conviction that we are best persuaded to ethical praxis by the rhetorical practice of literature'.[39] This is the context in which we must read Titus' justification for the slaying of his daughter:

> A pattern, precedent, and lively warrant
> For me, most wretched, to perform the like.
> Die, die, Lavinia, and thy shame with thee,

[38] *The Arte of English Poesie*, 41.

[39] Victoria Kahn, *Rhetoric, Prudence, and Skepticism in the Renaissance* (Ithaca, NY, 1985), 9.

> And with thy shame thy father's sorrow die.
> *He kills her.*
> (v. iii. 42–6)

But is this a 'good example', leading to what Puttenham calls 'honest re-creation'? If the metaphor may be allowed in the context of Titus' cookery, I would say that Shakespeare has his cake and eats it too. He displays his own learning ('do *you* remember Virginius in Livy?' he seems to ask his audience); he maintains his copious generation of *exempla*. But he also implicitly offers a critique of the very humanism he is embodying. What kind of education by example is it, he seems to ask, that leads you to murder your daughter? Quintilian linked the rhetoric of example to 'the authority of evidence or even of legal decisions'; Titus uses the terminology which that rhetoric shares with the law—'pattern, precedent, and lively warrant'—to justify the most heinous transgression of the law.

The process recurs throughout the play. What kind of exemplary pattern is it that fits a place for murder and rape? When Lavinia 'quotes the leaves' of the *Metamorphoses* in the reading scene, Titus finds in the text 'such a place' as the one in which Act II was located:

> O, had we never, never hunted there!—
> Patterned by that the poet here describes,
> By nature made for murders and for rapes.
> (IV. i. 55–7)

It is as if the Ovidian text has licensed the violent action. Lavinia's quotation at first seems to be a constructive use of the classical text, but it turns out to be another violent, destructive one, in that it patterns the bloody revenge.

Again, consider what Chiron and Demetrius have learnt from their classical education. Titus sends them a bundle of weapons inscribed with a hortatory text from Horace, 'Integer vitae, scelerisque purus, | Non eget Mauri iaculis, nec arcu' ('The man of upright life and free from crime does not need the javelins or bow of the Moor'). 'O,' says Chiron, ''tis a verse in Horace, I know it well. | I read it in the grammar long ago' (IV. ii. 20–3). He remembers the text, but does not see its application to himself. The case of Chiron exposes the stupidity of the idea that rote learning of the classics is preparation for a noble life. Worse than this, such applications of education to life as there are turn out to be sinister in the extreme. What Chiron and Demetrius have learnt from their reading of the classics at school is not *integer*

vitae, but some handy information about how a rape victim was able to reveal the identity of her attacker even though he had removed her tongue because he had left her with her hands. As Marcus puts it,

> Fair Philomel, why she but lost her tongue,
> And in a tedious sampler sewed her mind;
> But, lovely niece, that mean is cut from thee.
> A craftier Tereus, cousin, hast thou met,
> And he hath cut those pretty fingers off,
> That could have better sewed than Philomel.
> (II. iv. 38–43)

What is the point of a humanist education if, instead of instilling in you *integer vitae*, it makes you into a craftier Tereus? The word that is etched upon the memory, as with a gad of steel, is not *integer* but *Stuprum*, not integrity but rape. It is one of Shakespeare's darkest thoughts. One is irresistibly reminded of *Julius Caesar*, where the linguistic art of Mark Antony works its effect and brings about—the tearing to pieces of a practitioner of the linguistic art, a poet, Cinna.

In *From Humanism to the Humanities*, Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine note that the great Italian humanist educator Guarino was 'at pains to remind any friend or alumnus who had passed through his hands that his literary, political and military triumphs were owed directly to the lessons he had learned in his Ferrara classroom'.[40] That intriguing off-stage character, Chiron and Demetrius' Gothic schoolmaster, may be seen as a kind of perverted Guarino. The triumphs which these alumni owe to the lessons of his classroom back north or out east are in the arena of rape and mutilation. What they learnt at his hands was the value of chopping off hands. The ideal of Renaissance humanism assumed a correspondence between the study of classical texts and the cultivation of civic virtue. The idea was to imitate Rome, which was viewed as both the supremely civilized culture and the *exemplum* for the study of classical literature (for the Romans, of course, this meant the Greeks). Shakespeare stands this idea on its head in *Titus*: here, Rome is not civilized but the very thing it set itself up in opposition to—barbaric. The scheming of Saturninus and the sacrifice of Alarbus break down the distinction between Romans and barbarians; Rome itself becomes 'but a wilderness of tigers' (III. i. 53). And furthermore, civic virtue breaks down not because the classic texts are neglected, but for the very reason that they are studied and

[40] Grafton and Jardine, *From Humanism to the Humanities* (London, 1986), 2.

applied selectively. They are evacuated of their wholesomeness and become instead manuals for barbarians. Horace's ode, 'Integer vitae' (I. xxii), claims that if one is armed with integrity one can roam in the Sabine wood and the wolf will flee from you. *Titus Andronicus* inverts this: Bassianus and Lavinia are anything but safe in the wood, while Chiron and Demetrius, readers of the ode, are the wolves. What Shakespeare is doing is comparable to some inconceivable scenario in which Cicero claims that Athens was the home of barbarism and that such barbarism was inculcated by the canonical Greek texts such as Homer.

Seen from this perspective, *Titus Andronicus* becomes a forerunner to *Troilus and Cressida*, Shakespeare's most thoroughgoing critique of the ancient world. It is significant in this respect that Ovid, the model for *Titus*, is used in *Troilus and Cressida* to destabilize the epic idiom associated with Homer and Chapman's Englished *Iliads*: the contention between Ajax and Ulysses for the arms of Achilles in Book Thirteen of the *Metamorphoses* reduces the stature of these two heroes almost to the point of parody—Ajax is a boasting 'dolt and grossehead', 'slye Ulysses' a slippery wordsmith 'who dooth all his matters in the dark'.[41] Ovid thus provides a precedent for Shakespeare's debunking representation of them. Reuben Brower's description of Ovid's revision of Homer serves equally well as a summary account of *Troilus and Cressida*:

> the effect of [Ajax's] windy eloquence is to undermine any respect for his claim to glory. The great words of the Roman and Elizabethan heroic style are there: *virtus*, *nobilitas*, *heros*, *gloria*, but they grow less and less convincing the more Ajax talks, and his demonstration that he has indeed acted valiantly only waits for Odysseus' demolition. With Ovidian cunning, Odysseus, not Ajax, is introduced as 'hero', *Laertius heros*, and in a great ridiculing oration he scores point after point against the heroism of brute force, as he harps constantly on the superiority of 'both thought and deed', *consilio manuque*, over deeds alone.[42]

Ulysses' manipulation of Ajax in *Troilus and Cressida* offers a clinical demonstration of how rhetorical skill leads not to principled heroic action but to pragmatic machiavellian efficacy, just as the play as a

[41] Golding, xiii. 168, 115, 129.

[42] Brower, *Hero and Saint: Shakespeare and the Graeco-Roman Heroic Tradition* (Oxford, 1971), 123. The standard moral interpretation of the contention between Ajax and Ulysses endured well into the 17th cent.: in his *Wisdoms Conquest* of 1651, Thomas Hall affirmed that 'The scope and drift of this Fable and fiction is, to shew the folly of those who preferred Strength before Policy, Warriours before Scholars, and Weapons before Wisdome'.

whole destabilizes the entire humanist project of learning from the exemplars of the past.[43]

Between *Titus* and *Troilus* comes the figure of Richard III, who, unable to metamorphose himself out of a deformed body, makes language his means to power instead. When he lays out his project in *3 Henry VI*, he prefigures the deconstruction of Nestor and Ulysses effected by *Troilus and Cressida*, whilst also casting himself Tarquin-like as Sinon:

> I'll play the orator as well as Nestor,
> Deceive more slily than Ulysses could,
> And, like a Sinon, take another Troy.
> I can add colours to the chameleon,
> Change shapes with Proteus for advantages,
> And set the murderous Machiavel to school.
> (*3 Henry VI*, III. ii. 188–93)

The conjunction of Proteus and Machiavelli suggests how the ideal of humanism may be inverted so that a character's modelling himself on a paradigm from the repertoire of the classics may be a way to villainy instead of virtue.

Where rhetoric is murderously clinical in *Richard III* and sordidly debased in *Troilus and Cressida*, in *Julius Caesar* it is exposed as potentially self-destructive. The orator precipitates the death of the poet. The archetype for Cinna, the artist torn apart by the mob who have been intoxicated by art, is Orpheus ripped to pieces by Dionysiac bacchants.[44] Orpheus is always a figure of the poet, as Proteus reminds the Duke in a strangely self-destructive image in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*: 'For Orpheus' lute was strung with poets' sinews' (III. ii. 77): Orpheus only gets strings for his lute if sinews are torn from the poet's body. Shakespeare was fascinated by the extremes of harmony and violence in the Orpheus story; the successive stages of the narrative betoken the civilizing power of poetry but also its destructive power. The dismemberment of Orpheus is a reminder that the poet's own position is always precarious, whilst

[43] On Shakespeare's 'refashioning, decomposing, vulgarizing, declassicizing' of his precursor texts in *Troilus and Cressida*, see Elizabeth Freund, '"Ariachne's broken woof": The Rhetoric of Citation in *Troilus and Cressida*', in *Shakespeare and the Question of Theory*, ed. Patricia Parker and Geoffrey Hartman (New York and London, 1985), 19–36. The title cites Troilus' fusion of Ariadne and Arachne at v. ii. 155.

[44] On Cinna as Orpheus, see Gary Taylor, 'Bardicide', *London Review of Books*, xiv, no. 1 (9 Jan. 1992), 7.

his art can also lead to the abuses of poetic privilege—Proteus cites his example in the context of coercive sexual advances. So too in *Cymbeline*, another play which alludes to the Philomel story, Cloten—whose head, like Orpheus', floats out to sea still speaking—is both a bringer of music and a potential rapist. In Marcus' speech in *Titus*, Lavinia's Orphic music has been silenced; in a typical piece of Shakespearian syncretism, the Thracian tyrant (Tereus, figuring Demetrius and Chiron) has mutilated the 'Thracian poet' (Orpheus, figuring Lavinia):

> O, had the monster seen those lily hands
> Tremble like aspen leaves upon a lute
> And make the silken strings delight to kiss them,
> He would not then have touched them for his life.
> Or, had he heard the heavenly harmony
> Which that sweet tongue hath made,
> He would have dropped his knife and fell asleep,
> As Cerberus at the Thracian poet's feet.
> (II. iv. 44–51)

The silencing of Lavinia's musical art is at the heart of the *dissimilitudo* between 'the tragic tale of Philomel', as Titus calls it (IV. i. 47), and Shakespeare's play. That *dissimilitudo* lies in the very sense in which Ovid's tale is *not* tragic. Philomel is released *into* song; she becomes a nightingale, archetypal songster and poet. That song may be wrung out of her by pain—the breast against the thorn, as in *Lucrece* and the twentieth poem of *The Passionate Pilgrim*—but at least it is song, not the terrible combination of silence and shame to which Lavinia must submit. To stick with the Orphic image that Marcus introduces: Ovidian metamorphosis is a release into Orphic song, whilst tragedy witnesses the dismemberment of Orpheus. Paradoxically, however, tragedy makes a song out of that dismemberment: Lavinia may be silenced, but Marcus sings like a poet of her dismemberment. In that song a recovery is enacted. The poet, Orpheus, is the one figure who can—though fleetingly—unravel the thread of fate and bring back that which has been lost: 'Eurydices, oro, properata retexite fata'.[45]

Marcus' elaborate set speech is not to everyone's taste. In an influential article, 'The Metamorphosis of Violence in *Titus*

[45] Orpheus to Pluto at *Met.* x. 30: 'I | Beseech yee of *Eurydicee* unreele the destinye | That was so swiftly reeled up' (Golding, x. 31–3).

Andronicus',[46] Eugene Waith argued that it was a prime example of incompatibility between gorgeous Ovidian language and violent stage-action: it is all very well for Pyramus' blood to 'spin on hie | As when a Conduite pipe is crackt, the water bursting out' on the page of the *Metamorphoses* (Golding, iv. 147–8), but on the stage it is indecorous for Marcus to speak of Lavinia losing blood 'As from a conduit with three issuing spouts' (II. iv. 30) when we are at the same time confronting the victim herself. There may be ethical as well as aesthetic objections: the linguistic display might be considered to be a public humiliation, an insult added to Lavinia's injuries. Read in terms of the critique of humanism, the speech could be said to show that having all the rhetorical tropes at your fingertips doesn't actually help you to *do* anything. It is only after the highly rhetorical language of lament has broken down into incoherent laughter that the Andronicus family get around to *action*.

In defence of the speech, I want to say that in a good production—I am thinking here of Deborah Warner's definitive version of 1987–8—there is none of the dislocation or indecorum that Waith finds. As audience members, we need Marcus' formalization just as much as he does himself in order to be able to confront the mutilated Lavinia. The presence of the audience is crucial: a critique of humanism is built into the action, but the audience is capable of discriminating between right and wrong uses of learning. Co-ordinate with the implicit attack on a theoretical education is a defence of a theatrical one. The characters put their knowledge of the classics to destructive use; the play in the theatre gives the audience a creative knowledge in that it teaches them how to respond sympathetically to suffering. In this sense, the play is Shakespeare's 'Defence of Poesie'. Thus one might say: if Chiron and Demetrius had seen a dramatization of the Philomel story, instead of read it cold-bloodedly in the classroom, they would have wept for her instead of re-enacted her rape. Remember the story of the tyrant Alexander of Pherae, recounted in Plutarch's *Life of Pelopidas*:

> he made some men to be buried alive, and others to be put in the skins of Bears and wild Bores, and then to set Hounds upon them to tear them in pieces, or else himself for his pastime would kill them. . . . And another time being in a Theatre, where the Tragedy of *Troades* in *Euripides* was played, he went out of the Theatre . . . ashamed his People should see him weep, to see the miseries of *Hecuba* and *Andromacha* played; and that they never saw him pity the death of any one man, or of so many of the Citizens as he had caused to be slain.[47]

[46] *ShS* x (1957), 39–49.

Alexander has not been reformed by the drama, but he has been moved and shamed by it. Sir Philip Sidney used the story to defend the stage against puritan attacks on its immorality: 'a Tragedy, wel made and represented, drewe aboundance of teares' from the eyes of a tyrant 'who, without all pitty, had murthered infinite nombers, and some of his owne blood. So, as he, that was not ashamed to make matters for Tragedies, yet coulde not resist the sweet violence of a Tragedie.'[48] Sidney's term 'sweet violence' captures beautifully not only the complex of ideas evoked by the Orpheus myth but also the tone of the scene where Marcus is brought face to face with Lavinia.

Also apposite here is Edward III's address to the poet Lodowick concerning the power of the poet's pen to 'rayse drops in a Tarter's eye, | And make a flyntheart Sythian pytifull'. It is a speech which ends with language remarkably similar to that of Marcus:

> For, if the touch of sweet concordant strings
> Could force attendance in the eares of hell,
> How much more shall the straines of poets wit
> Beguile and ravish soft and humane myndes?
> (II. i. 71–2, 76–9)

As in *Titus*, the context is sexual coercion and hence there is a conjunction between Orpheus and Philomel—a few lines later the king compares the Countess's voice 'to musicke or the nightingale' and then asks himself, 'why should I speake of the nightingale? | The nightingale singes of adulterate wrong' (II. i. 106, 109–10). For Shakespeare, as for Rilke, but more troublingly because Philomel displaces Eurydice, 'Ein für alle Male, | ists Orpheus, wenn es singt', 'Once and for all, it's Orpheus whenever there is song'.[49]

The fusion of Philomel and Orpheus is symptomatic of the revisionary nature of Shakespeare's reading and rewriting of Ovid. The combination of *similitudo* and *dissimilitudo* in the treatment of the Philomel pattern in *Titus* must now be examined in more detail. The Ovidian narrative is as follows: the story begins with a wedding in inauspicious circumstances; the husband is the Thracian tyrant,

[47] Plutarch, 'Life of Pelopidas', in Sir Thomas North's 1579 trans. (repr. London, 1676), 251.
[48] *Apologie for Poetrie*, in *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, i. 178.
[49] Rilke, *Sonette an Orpheus* (Leipzig, 1923), 1st part, 5th sonnet.

Tereus, his wife, Procne, daughter of Pandion. After a length of time (the events do not have the compression of a dramatic work), Procne asks her husband if her sister, Philomel, may visit. Tereus goes to Pandion to fetch her and when he sees her he is smitten with the most ardent desire. Like a kind of perverted Viola, he pleads his own desire under the guise of Procne's request. She eagerly agrees to go, despite her father's forebodings. When they land on Tereus' own shore, instead of taking Philomel home he drags her to a hut deep in the old woods, 'silvis obscura vetustis', or, as Golding has it in his usual vivid but uneconomic fashion, 'a pelting graunge that peakishly did stand | In woods forgrowen' (vi. 663–4). There he rapes her. Like Lavinia, she says what women are traditionally forced into saying in the literature of rape, that she would rather he had killed her. When she threatens to proclaim his villainy, his response is not that of an Angelo ('Who will believe thee, Isabel?'[50]—possibly the most chilling line in Shakespeare), but something more physical:

> And with a paire of pinsons fast did catch hir by the tung,
> And with his sword did cut it off. The stumpe whereon it hung
> Did patter still. The tip fell downe, and quivering on the ground
> As though that it had murmured it made a certaine sound,
> And as an Adders tayle cast off doth skip a while: even so
> The tip of *Philomelaas* tongue did wriggle to and fro,
> And nearer to hir mistresseward in dying still did go.
> (Golding, vi. 709–15)

Tereus then rapes his maimed victim many more times. For twelve months she is unable to communicate—'os mutum facti caret indice' (vi. 574, 'speechless lips can give no index of what has happened'). But then she weaves her story and sends the web to Procne, whose response is first speechlessness, then a denial of tears and a dedication to revenge. A literal translation renders the economy of this progression more effectively than Golding does: 'Grief chokes the words that rise to her lips, and her questing tongue can find no words strong enough to express her outraged feelings. Here is no room for tears, but she hurries on to confound right and wrong, her whole soul bent on the thought of vengeance' (vi. 583–6). Since it is the time when the Thracian women are celebrating the festival of Bacchus, Procne dresses the part, feigns frenzy, and, with Bacchic women in attendance, carries Philomel off. She vows revenge but, in Lear-like

[50] *Measure for Measure*, II. iv. 154.

fashion—'I am prepared for some great deed; but what it shall be I am still in doubt' (vi. 618–19)—cannot initially decide on a method. When her son comes in, however, she makes up her mind (how can she continue a normal family life when her husband has raped her sister?) and drags him away, 'as a tigress drags a suckling fawn through the dark woods on Ganges' bank' (vi. 636–7). She cuts the boy's throat, Philomel assisting, and then dishes him up in a stew at her husband's dinner table. Tereus calls for his son and Procne cries in elation that he is there already: '"intus habes, quem poscis"' (vi. 655, 'What you're asking for, you have inside you'). Philomel then thrusts the head in Tereus' face. He pursues the two women and all three are metamorphosed into birds. Pandion dies of grief.

It is easy to see the elements that Shakespeare dramatizes. An ill-fated marriage at the outset, a rape in the woods, the severing of the tongue, a revelation of the deed in a form which can be read, a response so intense that utterance is impeded, a move from tears to revenge (it is from here that the bipartite structure of *Titus* is derived), a confounding of right and wrong in the act of revenge ('fasque nefasque confusura' might be the motto of revenge drama), the mutilated victim's assistance in the retributive murder, the revenger killing his or her own child, the climactic banquet. A number of linguistic relations are also apparent: Tereus is 'barbarus'; Philomel 'tremit' (compare Marcus' 'Tremble, like aspen leaves' in his description of the mutilated Lavinia); then there is the language of the dark woods, the tigress and the stricken deer, and the centrality of 'pudor', shame. The grand climax is identical: the summoning of offspring, the revenger's triumphant announcement of said offspring's presence. 'Why, there they are, both bakèd in this pie' (v. iii. 59).

But Shakespeare's variations on his theme are more illustrative of his inventive *copia*. Precisely because the 'pattern' of Philomel is available in the text, the recourse to sewing is foreclosed and a new method of revealing the rapists has to be introduced. In his usual syncretic manner, Shakespeare turns to a detail elsewhere in Ovid's book—Lavinia's writing on the ground is an *imitatio* of the transformed Io's hoof-scratchings after Jupiter has raped her. Then there is considerable difference in the role of the fathers. Unlike Titus, Pandion stands aloof. He expresses foreboding at the outset and grief at the end; his role is more that of spectator and commentator, a function which Shakespeare gives over to uncle Marcus. As well as

varying, Shakespeare leaves alone certain facets of Ovid's narrative. He does not explore the psychology of the rapist, as Ovid does with his vivid account of how Tereus is inflamed by the sight of Philomel kissing her father. Shakespeare reserves such explorations for *Lucrece* and *Measure for Measure*, making this rape not so much a pure act of lust as part of a multiple revenge pattern that has already been instigated. The killing of Alarbus—and, for that matter, Mutius—means that the premiss of the revenge is different. And, as I have already said, the conclusion also varies in so far as the Ovidian release into metamorphosis is a relief that tragedy does not offer.

There is also a striking variation in the banquet. Where Procne stews Tereus' son's body but keeps the severed head whole so that Philomel can confront the tyrant with it, Titus prepares a pastry rather than an entrée. His kitchenware includes a pestle and mortar to grind the bones to powder small. Shakespeare perhaps decided not to produce two severed heads in the banquet scene because he had already dished up a pair in Act III, when, during the action to which the bloody banquet is a reaction, he had introduced his grisliest stage direction '*Enter messenger with two heads and a hand*'. A little earlier in the scene, Titus has for the first time been brought to the sight of his mutilated daughter; now, confronted with the heads of his sons, all he can do is laugh. After his extraordinary, cathartic line, 'Ha, ha, ha', he asks the way to Revenge's cave and the counter-action is initiated. Lavinia's response to the entrance of the severed heads is an attempted kiss, eliciting Marcus' line, 'Alas, poor heart, that kiss is comfortless | As frozen water to a starvèd snake' (III. i. 249–50). The proximity of the tongueless Lavinia to the image of the snake echoes that moment after Tereus has been to work with his pincers. To quote the lines again, this time translating them more literally than Golding, 'as the severed tail of a mangled snake is wont to writhe, [the tongue] twitches convulsively, and with its last dying movement it seeks its mistress's feet'. The key word in the Latin, reiterated in successive lines at the prominent line-ending position, is 'lingua', which of course means both tongue and language. Philomel is severed from her language; language struggles to be reunited to her, it seeks its mistress's feet. In a moment utterly characteristic of the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid literalizes a metaphor: the separation of character and language (*lingua*) is enacted through the independent life of the tongue (*lingua*).

And it is here that *Titus Andronicus* owes its essence not just to the letter but to the spirit of Ovid. For it is a play replete with literalized metaphors. Where Lear will cry his imprecations to the heavens, Titus writes his down, sticks them on arrows, and shoots them into the air. Furthermore, it is a play that is deeply concerned with the idea of giving language back to the silenced woman. As that tongue in Ovid struggles to return to its mistress, so Marcus reaches out linguistically to Lavinia in his lyric monologue. There is a deep dramatic irony in his first address to his mutilated niece, spoken before he has seen that she is tongueless: 'Cousin, a word' (II. iv. 12). In the rest of the speech Marcus needs so many words, so much poetry, in order to compensate for the fact that Lavinia has none. 'Shall I speak for thee?', he asks: it is the question, always present but rarely voiced so explicitly, that every tragedy asks. Shakespeare returned to this idea in his later addition to the play, the fly-killing scene. There Titus describes Lavinia, in a phrase cited in my previous chapter, as a 'Speechless complainer'—compare the 'os mutum' of Philomel—who can only produce dumb shows. His role, he says, is to translate her gestures into language, to read, interpret, and transform into speech the 'map of woe' that is her body: 'But I of these will wrest an alphabet, | And by still practice learn to know thy meaning' (III. ii. 44–5). Where Tarquin wanted to subjugate the 'maiden worlds' of Lucrece's body, Titus wants desperately to empathize with his daughter's pain, to try to understand its cause. Titus here, and Marcus in his monologue, figure forth the process that is at the very core of tragedy. Their words mark out this play, crude as it may sometimes be, as Shakespeare's paradigmatic tragedy. For what is tragedy but the restitution of *lingua* to suffering, the wresting of an alphabet out of woe?

Shakespeare and Ovid

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