PART THREE

1599–1601: the author brought into print

Play scene: "Love's Labor's Lost" to "Troilus and Cressida"

"How many tales to please me she hath coined."
"W. Shakespere," *The Passionate Pilgrim*, Poem 7

In his monumental 1790 edition, titled *The Plays and Poems of William Shakspeare*, Edmund Malone performs a curious editorial procedure. As the final poem to William Jaggard's *The Passionate Pilgrim* (1599, 1612) he prints "The Phoenix and Turtle," lifted from Robert Chester's *Love's Martyr, or Rosalin's Complaint* (1601). Malone's procedure may obscure the textual independence of these two volumes of early modern poetry, but it nonetheless highlights a shared genealogy for them: the genre of the printed miscellany.[1] In bringing the two volumes together, Malone makes available a set of comparisons between two works of erotic verse printed at about the same time.

Together, the printing of *The Passionate Pilgrim* and "The Phoenix and Turtle" near the mid-point of Shakespeare's professional career represents a second phase of the national poet-playwright in print. Unlike the 1593–94 *Venus* and *Lucrece*, however, these works do not show the author presenting himself as a poet through the medium of print, but rather they are works that show a manuscript poet brought into print by others. The nature of the appropriation differs, as do the roles of Jaggard and Chester in Elizabethan culture. Jaggard was a publisher and businessman on the look for a market success; Chester, an "obscure poet" in search of a patron (Burrow, ed., *Sonnets and Poems*, 82). As a savvy marketeer, Jaggard takes the liberty of collecting together a miscellany of verse and putting Shakespeare's name on the title page. Chester (we believe) commissioned Shakespeare as a popular author – famed from "both poems and plays," *Venus*, *Lucrece*, and *The Passionate Pilgrim* as well as the plays cited by Francis Meres the year before (Duncan-Jones, *Ungentle*, 107), to write a poem for a special volume.

[1] On the Elizabethan miscellany and authorship, see Wall, *Imprint*, 95–108, including on *The Passionate Pilgrim* (98–100). The forms of the two miscellanies do differ, and neither is a true miscellany, a collection of work by various hands: *The Passionate Pilgrim* is advertised as written by one hand (Shakespeare's) when in fact it is by several; and *Love's Martyr* is written nominally by one hand (Chester's) but is acknowledged to be augmented by others.

Nonetheless, as the epigraph above intimates, the two publishing enterprises cohere in their timely minting of "Shakespeare's name as an author."[2]

By examining the two volumes together, we can discern a story about Shakespeare at the very mid-point of his career. As Katherine Duncan-Jones reminds us, "professionally, the year 1599 was another *annus mirabilis*, one in which Shakespeare rose by bending" (*Ungentle*, 107), and she reminds us that the year saw a conjunction at the center of the present argument: the opening of the Globe Theatre (including the staging of *Julius Caesar*) and the printing of the first extant edition of *The Passionate Pilgrim*. To locate Shakespeare's poems within this theatrical time is to refine our knowledge of his professional career.

According to the *Oxford Shakespeare*, between the printing of the 1594 *Lucrece* and the 1601 *Love's Martyr*, Shakespeare composed eighteen plays, in the following order:

The Comedy of Errors
Love's Labour's Lost
Love's Labour's Won
A Midsummer Night's Dream
The Most Excellent and Lamentable Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet
The Tragedy of King Richard the Second
The Life and Death of King John
The Comical History of the Merchant of Venice
The History of Henry the Fourth
The Merry Wives of Windsor
The Second Part of Henry the Fourth
Much Ado About Nothing
The Life of Henry the Fifth
The Tragedy of Julius Caesar
As You Like It
The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark
Twelfth Night, or What You Will
Troilus and Cressida.

As with the first phase, here the chronology is anything but certain, and scholars have long debated with intense scrutiny the exact order of composition and performance. The *Oxford* chronology is useful here primarily

[2] S. Roberts, *Reading Shakespeare's Poems*, 158, citing Marotti, "Property" on this name "becoming important as a cultural phenomenon" (153), but for both critics with reference only to *The Passionate Pilgrim* and thus in need of extension to *Love's Martyr*.

to get a general sense of the kind of work Shakespeare was doing after the theatres reopened in 1594 and up through 1601. During this second phase, he continues his remarkable foray into the three primary kinds of drama, composing ten comedies, five histories, and three tragedies.[3] Once more, the boundaries between the genres are anything but stable. For instance, not simply are *Richard II* and *Julius Caesar* historical tragedies, but most notoriously *Troilus and Cressida* is problematic as a comedy, and already in *Twelfth Night* the generic darkness is falling.

The task of summarizing the presence of poetry and theatre in these eighteen plays within a few pages challenges the figure who turns out to inherit the discourse of "The Phoenix and Turtle": "Reason" itself. Yet the general conclusion is mercifully straightforward: in the comedies, histories, and tragedies during the middle of his career, Shakespeare does not abandon poetry in favor of theatre; he absolutely intensifies their conjunction, so much so that 10 of the plays easily sustain full-scale analysis: *Love's Labor's Lost*, *Dream*, *Romeo*, *Merchant*, *Merry Wives*, *Much Ado*, *Caesar*, *As You Like It*, *Hamlet*, and *Twelfth Night*. Most of the rest of the plays contain enough intriguing material to contribute important representations. In chapter 1, we saw the form of this conjunction especially in *Twelfth Night* through Viola and Feste, and we attended more briefly to such plays as *Merchant* and *Hamlet*. In particular, we followed Park Honan in noting how during this dramatic phase Shakespeare appears rather intently to be entertaining the possibility of a career as a print poet. That makes Jaggard's presentation of Shakespeare in *The Passionate Pilgrim* not simply a dubious marketing ploy cashing in on the author's capital but a rather shrewd reading of Shakespeare's own interests, commitments, and self-representations. Chester's commissioning of this author to pen a poem for *Love's Martyr*, then, is not a professional anomaly but a natural consolidation of the authorial facts. In the next chapter, we shall pause to look at the most formal conjunction of poetry and theatre during this phase, the printing of three songs and sonnets from *Love's Labor's Lost* in *The Passionate Pilgrim*. In the subsequent chapter, we shall likewise draw attention to links between *Hamlet* and "The Phoenix and Turtle." In this phase of Shakespeare's career, other links happily abound.

Here, we may note simply that several of the plays represent the Ovidian art of poetry and theatre in a Virgilian landscape, and again the representation is often inflected with the aesthetics of Spenser and Marlowe.

[3] Of the eighteen plays, only *Love's Labor's Won* is not extant, although some speculate that the title may refer to *Much Ado* (Erne, *Literary Dramatist*, 82n18).

A brief analysis of one play toward the end of this phase may indicate that Shakespeare continues his early interest in this complex professional project. In *As You Like It* (1599–1600), he relies on Spenser's Virgilian career discourse to identify the biography of the exiled Ovid with that of the dead Marlowe (and throws Jonson in to boot[4]). In Act 3, scene 3, the clownish courtier Touchstone woos the shepherd lass Audrey while the melancholic Jaques looks on under cover:

Touchstone. I am here with thee and thy goats as the most capricious poet, honest Ovid, was among the Goths.
Jaques. [*Aside.*] O knowledge ill-inhabited, worse than Jove in a thatch'd house!
Touchstone. When a man's verses cannot be understood, nor a man's good wit seconded with the forward child, understanding, it strikes a man more dead than a great reckoning in a little room. Truly, I would the gods had made thee poetical. (*As You Like It*, 3. 3. 7–16)

In his first speech, Touchstone presents himself as an Ovidian author by identifying his pastoral sojourn in the Forest of Arden with Ovid's exile in Tomis, the "goats" of his pastoral world with the Goths of Ovid's exhilic landscape. In the aside, the Jonsonian figure of Jaques expresses his contempt for such illiterate scholarship, comparing Touchstone's "ill-inhabited" knowledge with a representation that appears to conflate two passages from the *Metamorphoses*: Jove's disguise as a shepherd before Mnemosyne (6. 114) and Mercury and Bacchus' disguise as mortals in the cottage of Baucis and Philemon (8. 611–724).

Yet the conflation may derive less from Ovid than from Marlowe, whose Scythian shepherd Tamburlaine reports both how "Jove sometime masked in a shepherd's weed" (*1 Tamb.*, 1. 2. 198) and how "the tempest of the Gods" felt "the lovely warmth of shepheards' flames, / And [maske(d)] in cottages of strewed weeds" (5. 1. 184–87).[5] Accordingly, in his second speech Touchstone expresses a further predicament for the Ovidian author, when he imagines his reader failing to understand his "verses," committing him to a state that is death itself. Grammatically speaking, the "man's verses" are Ovid's poetry and the "man" he claims is struck "more dead than a great reckoning in a little room" Ovid himself. Yet Shakespeare equates Ovid with Marlowe by echoing a famous line from *The Jew of Malta* ("infinite riches in a little room" [1. 1. 37]), representing Marlowe's death in that

[4] On Jaques as the Elizabethan satirists in the late 1590s, especially Jonson, see Bednarz, *Poets' War*, 108–11.

[5] Fuller cites Ovid's Jove and Mnemosyne for the first passage (Fuller, ed., *Tamburlaine the Great*, 5: 177) and Ovid's Jove/Baucis/Philemon passage for the second (5: 219). For scholarship on the textual crux of "mask" at *1 Tamb.*, 5. 1. 187, see Cheney, *Profession*, 301n26.

"little room" in Deptford over who would pay the "reckoning" or the bill for the day's meals and lodging. In his complex comedic representation, Shakespeare identifies Marlovian tragedy as an art originating in the poetry of Ovid. Shakespeare's subsequent allusion to Marlowe, in Act 3, scene 5, quotes a line, not from one of his tragedies but from *Hero and Leander*: "'Who ever lov'd that lov'd not at first sight?'" (*As You Like It*, 3. 5. 82; *Hero and Leander*, 1. 176). In this way, Shakespeare's pastoral classification of Marlowe as a "Dead shepherd" (81) spans both Marlowe's poems and his plays, at once recalling the Scythian shepherd Tamburlaine from the tragedy and the Passionate Shepherd from the lyric poem.

In this comedy, Shakespeare neither names nor quotes Spenser, but critics have discerned the omnipresence of England's Virgil. As we have seen in chapter 1, Paul Alpers suggests that the courtiers in this comedy "play . . . out" Spenser's metaphor for himself as a pastoral poet masking his muse in rustic shepherd attire (*Fairie Queene*, 1. Proem 1) (*What is Pastoral?*, 74). The metaphor is distinctly that of the pastoral man of theatre, the theatrical pastoralist, and figures like Rosalind and Orlando are merely among Shakespeare's most memorable imitations of this Spenserian authorial figure. To catch Shakespeare deploying this figure, we may turn to Act 5, scene 1, the "William" scene. Recently, James P. Bednarz has seen Shakespeare rewriting Spenser's pastoral interlude in Book 6 of *The Faerie Queene* (cantos 9–12), when Calidore sojourns among the shepherds and woos the shepherdess Pastorella, loved by the foolish shepherd Coridon. Thus, Spenser tells how Calidore, "doffing his bright armes, himselfe addrest / In shepheards weed, and in his hand he tooke, / In stead of steelehead speare, a shepheards hooke" (6. 9. 38–40). For his part, Shakespeare stages Touchstone stealing Audrey from William, the author's cheerfully playful self-portrait, who "shares both the author's first name and his birthplace," the forest of Arden (*Poets' War*, 117).[6] According to Bednarz, "Shakespeare comically reconfigures Sir Calidore's pastoral interlude . . . in Touchstone's violation of the knight's exemplary performance . . . Shakespeare's rewriting of Spenser's pastoral episode on the lowest mimetic level is one of the plays' better literary jokes" (119). In this joke, Shakespeare redeploys Spenser's authorial strategy of self-critique in order to indict his chief rival at this time, Jonson, represented in Jaques: "Using the pastoral convention of self-reference, Spenser and Shakespeare thus make brief appearances near the ends of their works, in scenes specifically created to

[6] For the possibility that Shakespeare acted the role of William alongside Robert Armin's Touchstone, see Bednarz, *Poets' War*, 117.

show them being deprived of the pastoral happiness their fictions celebrate. Unlike Spenser, however, Shakespeare fashioned this episode of dramatic self-effacement to demonstrate the Socratic paradox that the admission of ignorance is the securest form of knowledge" (120). For Bednarz, the point of the "William" scene, as for the play as a whole, is to challenge Jonson during the Poets' War. We may add that Shakespeare manages this challenge by evoking a recently deceased rivalry, aligning his own art with Spenser's and Jonson's with Marlowe's.

This brief discussion of scenes from *As You Like It* merely intimates the kind of authorial intertextuality that requires further analysis to sort out more fully. Between 1594 and 1601, Shakespeare may have concentrated on the writing of plays, but he continued to conjoin a discourse of poetry with a discourse of theatre in them. The four courtiers of *Love's Labor's Lost*; Peter Quince, Oberon, and Puck in the *Dream*; Richard II; Falstaff in his several plays but especially *Merry Wives*; Benedick in *Much Ado*; Hamlet; Viola and Feste: these are only the most recognizable figures for the poet-playwright during this phase. Figures like the Bastard Faulconbridge, Marcus Brutus, and Prince Hal (later Henry V) are splendid variations. Sometimes, the plots of these plays are structured by characters siding primarily with either poetry or theatre; we have mentioned Richard III and Clarence, but we could add a comedic version in Rosalind (a supreme woman of the theatre) and Orlando (a Petrarchan poet fond of hanging his sweet verse on pastoral trees). In the plays of this period, we find poems embedded in plays, as in *Love's Labor's Lost* or the sonnets of *Romeo and Juliet*, not to mention the recurrent presence of lyric in a wide array of songs, often sung by professional singers, like Amiens in *As You Like It* or Balthasar in *Much Ado*; formal portraits of the poet, as with Cinna in *Julius Caesar* but also Orlando, Benedick, and Hamlet himself; extended rehearsals of plays based on books of poetry, as in the Mechanical's staging of Pyramus and Thisby from the *Metamorphoses*, or of Virgil's (and Marlowe's) retelling of "Aeneas' [tale] to Dido . . . of Priam's slaughter" (*Hamlet*, 2. 2. 446–48). One play, *Troilus and Cressida*, performs this poesis on a grand scale, staging the Homeric and Virgilian epic of the Trojan War itself, parodically; in fact, the "Armed Prologue" to this play constitutes one of Shakespeare's most decisive attempts to enter the epic list, indicating that his epicist urgings had not flagged since the printing of *Lucrece*.

Throughout this period, Shakespeare does not separate theatre from books but implicates the one in the other. "Read on this book," Polonius tells a daughter too eager to entertain her father's theatre of intrigue, "That shows of such an exercise may color / Your [loneliness]" (*Hamlet*, 3. 1. 43–45).

Rather than turning away from print culture because of his dramatic production, the author literally absorbs himself in it, to discover the form of truth itself: "The story . . . is printed in her blood," claims Leonato in *Much Ado*, judging his fallen daughter Hero to be a whore by the blush on her cheek (4. 1. 122), only to have Friar Francis perform a radically different interpretation of the virgin's physiognomial text: "Trust not my reading, nor my observations, / Which with experimental seal doth warrant / The tenure of my book . . . / If this sweet lady lie not guiltless here" (4. 1. 165–69). Not surprisingly, the author continues his obsession with artistic immortality, nowhere more potent than in Hamlet's counter-Christian commitment. Standing on the threshold of annihilation, the Prince does not concern himself with Spenser's New Jerusalem (*Fairie Queene*, 1.10) but with an altogether different form of afterlife: "tell my story" (5. 2. 349), he says to his friend Horatio: "Report me and my cause aright / To the unsatisfied" (339–40). Maybe for the Prince, but hardly for his cause and story, is the rest silence.

Remembering these and other contours in the middle comedies, histories, and tragedies, we may turn to the two books of poetry in which Shakespeare is brought into print by others. This third part thus divides into two respective chapters: on *The Passionate Pilgrim* and "The Phoenix and Turtle."

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