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SHAKESPEARE AND THE IDEA OF METAMORPHOSIS

by

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ABSTRACT

This study attempts to discover what is comprehended by the title of Ovid's Metamorphoses and what it was about this narrative poem which Shakespeare found so congenial. The opening chapters explore the variety and coherence of Ovid's theme, whilst chapters widely explore Shakespeare's poems and plays and elucidating the Renaissance context in which the poem was received. Consideration is given to the way Ovid and Shakespeare place human action in an interpretative context of the natural world. It is argued that natural settings and natural imagery condition both the presentation of and our response to the marvelous events which occur in the fictions of both poets. A further fundamental continuity between Ovid and Shakespeare is their concern with language and the imagination as transforming media which dynamically influence human perception. The connection between metaphor and metamorphosis is examined, and it is argued that the triad of lunatic, lover, and poet is as significant in the Metamorphoses as it is in Shakespeare's plays from A Midsummer Night's Dream to The Tempest. Ovid's use of language was of considerable consequence in the Renaissance. However, this study suggests that, for Shakespeare, the most important rhetorical quality was his view of literature and the society. Thus an important aim is to relate Ovid's perception of the artist's role, and the relationship between poet and poem, poem and reader, which the Metamorphoses establishes, to the aesthetic character of individual Shakespearean works and to Shakespeare's developing perception of his role as a theatre poet. The second part of the study is a close consideration of three plays - As You Like It, All's Well That Ends Well, and Antony and Cleopatra - in the light of the critical context established in the opening chapters. Attention is given to Shakespeare's engagement with problems of authorial intention and critical interpretation (a word which also means translation), and the motif of Ovid's banishment is seen as central to the dramatist's examination of the licensed affective attitude of 'as you like it'. A contrast is made between the moralist's demand for fixed and singular denotation and meaning, and the imaginative artist's exploitation of linguistic ambiguity and change. Here Florio and Montaigne serve as foils to Ovid, and it is argued that Shakespeare's 'idea of metamorphosis' is increasingly manifest as a desire to find a form of imaginative fiction which can match the rich variety of the natural world and keep time with its changes. Like the Metamorphoses, the text of All's Well is deliberately left 'unsealed'. Similarly, Antony and Cleopatra is a truly aleatory work whose meaning can only be realized in 'performance' - an ambiguous word which, as used in these plays, also reflects Shakespeare's willingness to follow Ovid in accepting the risks incurred by the full expression of human sexuality.

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INTRODUCTION

Titus: Lucius, what book is that she tosseth so?

Boy: Grandsire, 'tis Ovid's *Metamorphoses*;
My mother gave it me.

Marcus: For love of her that's gone,
Perhaps she cull'd it from among the rest.

Titus: Soft! So busily she turns the leaves! Help her.
What would she find? Lavinia, shall I read?
This is the tragic tale of Philomel
And treats of Tereus' treason and his rape;
And rape, I fear, was the root of thy annoy.

Marcus: See, brother, see! Note how she quotes the leaves.

Titus: Lavinia, wert thou thus surprised, sweet girl,
Ravish'd and wrong'd as Philomela was,
Forc'd in the ruthless, vast, and gloomy woods?
See, see!
Ay, such a place there is where we did hunt -
O, had we never, never hunted there! -
Pattern'd by that the poet here describes,
By nature made for murders and for rapes.

(Titus Andronicus, IV,i, 41-59)¹

In Titus Andronicus, Ovid's Metamorphoses serves as an interpretative tool for both the audience and the characters in the play. Act IV scene i of Shakespeare's early tragedy is beset by problems of intention and understanding. Lucius' son is at a loss to know why Lavinia follows him about. He has, however, read 'that Hecuba of Troy / Ran mad for sorrow' (ll.20-21), and he attempts to understand her distracted behaviour by appealing to art rather than his own limited experience. Titus is equally unable to comprehend what Lavinia 'means', but he does recognize that her attention is directed, not at the boy, but at his books. His first assumption is that Lavinia wishes to beguile her present sorrows by escaping into a world of fiction. Thus he concludes that his own library would offer a wider range of suitable reading than what he takes to be Lucius' school-

books (ll.30-36). Yet Ovid's poem, a gift which no doubt Lucius' mother intended to be put to scholarly use, proves to have other purposes for Lavinia. Without the means of writing down or verbally articulating her own experience, she finds an analogue for it in 'the tragic tale of Philomel' (l.48). Thus Titus and Marcus come to explain Lavinia's behaviour, and are able to understand the suffering she has endured by reference both to Ovid's characterization of Tereus' crime and his depiction of the natural location which aided and abetted Tereus in his deviant passion.

There is something contrived in the way that Titus makes the connections between Ovid's tale and Lavinia's experience. The paratactic 'And ...And' in ll.49-50 is, I think, a studied, rather than an unconscious lack of stylistic sophistication on Shakespeare's part. The comparative process is, as it were, laid bare, and attention is drawn to the way art can serve to illuminate life. In focusing attention on the associative process by which Titus 'places' Lavinia's experience, the construction also asks us, the wider audience to her tragedy, to consider the connections between Ovid's poem and Shakespeare's play. Similarly, Titus' laboured juxtaposition of Ovid's 'silvis obscura vetustis' (VI, 521)² with the woods where he has hunted - woods which Aaron considered 'Fitted by kind for rape and villainy' (II,i, 116) - asks us to see that the play's second act owes its provenance at least as much to literary example as it does to Shakespeare's Warwickshire experience. The woodland setting is 'Pattern'd by that the poet ... describes' and 'By nature': it reaches us through the double filter of Ovid's poem and Shakespeare's imagination.

Throughout Titus Andronicus, Shakespeare draws attention to his literary progenitors - Seneca as well as Ovid - rather than trying to hide his indebtedness to them. At times, there is an extra-textual layer in the dialogue, which might be seen as Shakespeare's debate with himself about

his own place in the tradition and the shape his future career might take:

Titus: Shall thy good uncle and thy brother Lucius
And thou and I sit round about some fountain,
Looking all downwards to behold our cheeks
How they are stain'd, like meadows yet not dry
With miry slime left on them by a flood?

....

Or shall we cut away our hands like thine?
Or shall we bite our tongues, and in dumb shows
Pass the remainder of our hateful days?
What shall we do? Let us that have our tongues
Plot some device of further misery
To make us wonder'd at in time to come.

(III,i, 122-126, 130-135)

If the search for 'some device of further misery' implies the challenge presented by Senecan sensationalism, then the awareness that a play is something more than a 'dumb' text, suggests Shakespeare's desire to augment the admiration-seeking ends of Ovidian poetry by exploiting the full resources of the stage. In III,i, he would seem to invite us to consider the affective consequences of transforming the 'two-dimensional' Philomel of Ovid's 'tale' into the 'lively body' of Lavinia, as she appears in his own drama (ll.103-105). This concern to adapt Ovidian narrative form to the conditions of the Elizabethan stage and his own developing aesthetic as a theatre poet, remains an important feature of Shakespeare's dramaturgy.

The objective of Titus' 'plotting' is the 'wonder' of posterity. We may, along with Albert H. Tricomi, discern much the same motivating force in Shakespeare himself, who appears in this early work as very much an "an upstart Crow" striving to overreach his masters in their own vein'.³ Yet the identification of 'wonder' as an end of artistic aspiration - refined and stripped of a dubious concern with personal glory - remains a remarkably consistent dynamic in Shakespeare's plays, reaching its apotheosis in 'Admir'd Miranda'. It is, I believe, a further important aspect of Shakespeare's continuing debt to Ovid, as is his life-long

predisposition to place human action in an interpretative context of the natural world. For the rest of his career, Shakespeare would share with Titus a readiness to see nature through Ovid's eyes, as well as his own, and to use this vision to define and try to understand the nature of the human predicament. Finally, both Titus' boundless grief and his imaginative recovery are identified with the flooding of the Nile (III,i, 70-71, 122-126). The river's paradoxical motion is a central image in the Metamorphoses for the common wonder of natural and artistic creativity. It is also a point of reference to which Shakespeare's plays frequently return.

While Shakespeare is ready to honour his own imaginative debts, critics have not been slow to follow his lead. Yet the profound and pervasive influence of Ovid's Metamorphoses has been acknowledged more often than it has been considered in detail. This study is an attempt to pursue some of the lines of inquiry outlined above, and to discover what Ovid comprehended (in both senses of the word) by his chosen theme, and what it was about his narrative poem that Shakespeare found so enormously congenial. To put this even more simply, it is an attempt to find out why the Metamorphoses would matter to Shakespeare.

Not long ago, so-called 'influence study' was in very bad odour. In recent years, however, it has undergone something of a rehabilitation, so that a formal apology for the methodology might not be necessary. No longer seen in terms of deterministic studies of cause and effect, the influence of A upon B, it has been recognized as a means of investigating the nature of literary structures, inquiring into the origins of literary creativity itself, and engaging with the transforming procedures of reading and responding to works of art.⁴ If some of 'the stigma of source hunters' still adheres to my title, my response is that the very self-consciousness engendered by the study of the relationship between

texts is, in itself, much healthier than the illusion of objectivity implicit in critical procedures which might be superficially more attractive.

My title may, however, appear misleading in another respect, if it seems to suggest something fixed and settled in the way that Ovid and Shakespeare conceive of their own art. I will, on the contrary, be suggesting that the attraction of the metamorphosis theme for both poets is its open-endedness, and its capacity to combine underlying structure with an almost infinite fluidity of forms. Ovid's 'idea of metamorphosis' continues to expand with the poem, while Shakespeare's imaginative response to Ovid throws new light on his work and extends the possible meanings of his title.

Lionel Trilling's observations on the nature of literary influence are of interest here:

In its historical meaning, from which we take our present use, 'influence' was a word intended to express a mystery. It means a flowing-in, but not as a tributary river flows into the main stream at a certain observable point; historically the image is an astrological one and the meanings which the Oxford Dictionary gives all suggest 'producing effects by insensible or invisible means' - 'the infusion of any kind of divine, spiritual, moral, immaterial, or secret power or principle.'⁵

This primary meaning of 'influence', which was current in the Renaissance, has much to recommend it. The relationship between two poets, separated by time, language, and culture, must in the end remain a somewhat puzzling and mysterious thing. The most important aspects of that relationship are, indeed, likely to be the most nebulous and difficult to define, for example, the common humanitas we value in the Metamorphoses and Shakespeare's plays and poems. However, Trilling's view is not incompatible with Ben Jonson's famous definition of literary influence as a far more specific interplay between direct imitation and independent creativity:

The third requisite in our Poet, or Maker, is Imitation, to bee able to convert the substance, or Riches of an other Poet, to his owne use. To make choise of one excellent man above the rest, and so to follow him, till he grow very Hee: or, so like him, as the Copie may be mistaken for the Principall. Not, as a Creature, that swallowes, what it takes in, crude, raw, or indigested; but, that feedes with an Appetite, and hath a Stomacke to concoct, devide, and turne all into nourishment.⁶

In the following chapters, the relationship between Ovid and Shakespeare will sometimes be best understood as an informing spirit or 'influence', in the Renaissance sense defined by Trilling. On other occasions, it will be a more circumscribed question of Shakespeare's response to individual aspects and qualities of Ovid's poem - a response which, as Jonson saw, was also a form of metamorphosis. From time to time, I will be suggesting that a specific Ovidian locus can help to solve textual cruxes in Shakespeare's plays. Orlando's verse tribute to 'Rosalind' in As You Like It, and the song of Lavatch in All's Well That Ends Well, are two instances discussed in later chapters. The Metamorphoses can also illuminate difficult episodes in Shakespeare's plays, particularly where problems of intention are raised in an acute form, and we are uncertain in our critical response. The interview between Helena and the Countess in All's Well, I,iii, is one such occasion. We are more able to understand Helena's riddling emotion if we see it in the light of Ovid's victims of lawless passion - Tereus, Medea, Myrrha and, particularly, Byblis - who ultimately lose sight of the difference between dream and reality. The fact, however, that Helena does hold fast to the prohibition on her love, and continues what she calls 'wishing well', means that we must also attend to Ovid's pious heroes and heroines who do maintain the distinction between the imaginative dream of fulfilment and the prosaic reality of the waking world. By the same token, Helena's important concluding speech in I,i, is more intelligible if we notice that the natural paradox, on which she predicates her future conduct, is the principle of creativity which

Ovid establishes in the Metamorphoses.

A fundamental continuity between Ovid and Shakespeare is the belief that the imagination and language are transforming media, with a dynamic conditioning effect on human perception. The connection between metaphor and metamorphosis, established in Shakespeare's early comedies, is an important feature of Ovid's poem, while the triad of lover, lunatic and poet is as prominent in the Metamorphoses as in Shakespeare's plays from A Midsummer Night's Dream to The Tempest.

In the Renaissance, Ovid's use of language could be commended even when the view of life and love presented in his poems was more difficult to condone. In more recent times, his verbal wit has continued to receive considerable critical attention. Yet, in the view of one classicist, 'the most important rhetorical quality of Ovid is his view of literature and society'.⁷ This aspect of Ovid's poem was, I believe, of considerable consequence to Shakespeare, who was perennially concerned to establish the moral standing of his own art. Thus an important aim of this study will be to relate Ovid's perception of his own role as artist, and the relationships between poet and poem, poem and reader which the Metamorphoses establishes, to the aesthetic character of individual Shakespearean works.

From the marriage of these intentional and affective concerns, and the predisposition of Ovid and Shakespeare to set human behaviour in the natural context, comes the desire of both poets to find a form of imaginative fiction which can match the rich variety of the natural world and keep time with its changes. In considering the various ways this aspiration is realized in the Metamorphoses and respective Shakespeare plays, I will be concerned with differences and continuities between the story-teller's relationship with prospective readers, and the playwright's

with his future audiences. This will entail some consideration of the function of interpretation in literature. I will be suggesting that Ovid and Shakespeare are both aware of this aspect of metamorphosis, and anticipate that their work will be subjected to revisionary changes which will keep it alive. In this connection, the role of Arthur Golding, as a translator who influenced the way Ovid was received in the Renaissance, also becomes important.

The first four chapters of this study explore the variety and coherence of Ovid's idea of metamorphosis, whilst ranging generally over Shakespeare's poems and plays and elucidating the Renaissance context in which the Metamorphoses was received. The remaining chapters are centred firmly in individual Shakespeare plays which can be illuminated by the Ovidian frame of reference. That frame, however, will not be a strait-jacket. From time to time, other concerns and other perspectives will be introduced as part of a continuing attempt to distinguish Ovidian and Shakespearean modes of perception from other ways of seeing. Thus, for example, Chapter V compares the licensed affective attitude of As You Like It with John Florio's somewhat stricter views on interpretation, as well as with the generous relationship which Ovid cultivates with his readers. Ovid, however, paid dearly for artistic freedom, and concern about the morality of his art continued in the Renaissance when he was a key figure in the debate on the nature and role of imaginative literature. Touchstone's allusion to 'honest Ovid...among the Goths' is a major contribution to this debate. Thus Chapter V is also concerned with the possible dangers of the liberal affective stance suggested by the title of Shakespeare's comedy.

While the Metamorphoses is a key text for different ways of reading poetry, Ovid himself makes it clear that, since language is anything but a precise medium, differences of opinion are bound to arise. Chapter VI

develops the ideas on language as a transforming medium, outlined in Chapter IV, in a detailed consideration of Shakespeare's problem comedy, All's Well That Ends Well. Here, Montaigne serves as an important foil to Ovid in a contrast between the demands placed on language by the moralist and the imaginative artist. I will be suggesting that the incompatible nature of those demands is recognized but not resolved in the Essays and in Shakespeare's Hamlet. All's Well, however, is a highly experimental drama which finds strength in those very weaknesses of language that perplex the moralist, particularly the metamorphic forms and 'multivalent' character of words which preclude any absolute realization of the nature of things. It is because the title seems to fit Montaigne's Essays so much better than Ovid's Metamorphoses, that I find Harold Skulsky's recent characterization of the latter as 'Metaphysical Doubt' difficult to accept.⁸ I believe that Ovid's poem and Shakespeare's comedy are both truly aleatory texts, whose meaning is simply waiting to be realized by future interpreters. In the case of All's Well, this can only be achieved in dramatic 'performance'. And, because that word has a sexual as well as a theatrical meaning, the play also presents a forthright view of human sexuality, which reflects Shakespeare's readiness to follow Ovid in recognizing the sting as well as the sweetness of love.

The final chapter, on Antony and Cleopatra, employs the counter notion of mannerism as a way of defining more closely the play's naturalism. This unusual tragedy is a highly paradoxical work of art, but its artistic contradictions are founded on the natural model for creative conflict which Ovid establishes in the Metamorphoses, and from which Shakespeare continued to draw inspiration from the time of Titus Andronicus, through All's Well, to the Late Plays.

The three plays considered in depth are not the ones most commonly thought of as Ovidian. 'Ovidian' is, however, a protean word. For me

the plays characterize important aspects of Shakespeare's response to Ovid, and I trust that the selection of them will be fully justified by the critical context established in the first part of this study. A leitmotiv in this discussion is the variety of ways the title of Ovid's epic can be understood. The first chapter addresses this feature of the Metamorphoses directly, and is concerned with revolutions in critical response to the poem.

Chapter I

THE SUBJECT OF OVID'S POEM : SOME CRITICAL METAMORPHOSES

Critical assessment of Ovid's magnum opus has often turned on the meaning which is attributed to the title of the poem. 'Metamorphoses' has been seen to refer exclusively to the various physical transformations - Callisto to a bear, Narcissus to a flower, and so on - which conclude many of the individual fables in this vast storehouse of classical myth. Just such a delimitation of the title's significance can be seen as conditioning the long tradition of Ovide moralisé, which took firm root in the early fourteenth century when an anonymous Burgundian was the first to add his own instructive explanations to his translations of Ovid's stories. His readers are taught to read the fable of Narcissus as an exemplum of human vanity, since the short-lived flower which bears his name was chosen by the Psalmist as the symbol of pride.¹

The dividing line between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance is not clearly defined. Arthur Golding's 1567 translation of the Metamorphoses, which is the focus for much of this study, can be seen as a mirror which reflects both ways.² Although this Elizabethan's translation and editorial additions to his text bear remarkable testimony to both his own sensitivity and to the widening literary sensibility of his age, the Preface and the Epistle to his translation also continue the tradition of treating the poem as a species of moral philosophy. 'The tale of Daphnee turnd to Bay', Golding tells us, is 'A myrror of virginitie... / Which yeelding neyther unto feare, nor force, nor flatterye, / Doth purchace everlasting fame and immortalitye.' (Epistle, 67-70). Similarly, the fate of Tiresias 'willes

inferior folk in any wyse to shun / To judge betweene their betters' (Epistle, 103-104). Golding avoids the excesses of the medieval divines, who strove so strenuously to make the punishment fit the crime, yet he maintains that the stories 'in all are pitthye, apt and playne / Instructions which import the prayse of vertues and the shame / Of vices, with the due rewardes of eyther of the same' (Epistle, 64-66).³

The task of proving the essential wrongheadedness of this interpretation has, paradoxically, perpetuated Golding's perspective on the poem. But examination of Ovid's use of the metamorphosis device has readily revealed that it is not used consistently as an instrument of poetic justice. There are, indeed, some stories in which virtue is rewarded and evil punished. Thus the oak and linden trees standing side by side on the Phrygian hill-side bear testimony to the simple piety of Philemon and Baucis - and to Jove's fidelity in granting their request for a companionable death as an acknowledgement of his reception in their 'thatch'd house' (VII, 618-724).⁴ By contrast, Erysichthon's unappeasable hunger is depicted as a just punishment for his wilful impiety in cutting down the sacred tree of Ceres (VIII, 738-878).⁵ Yet here, as in other stories where metamorphosis functions as an appropriate punishment for human folly, the moral conveyed in the final transformation is not the major focus of the story.⁶ And elsewhere in the poem there is ample proof that Ovid is not concerned to justify the ways of the gods to men. The presiding deities of the Metamorphoses not only partake of the general human folly, but are also frequently depicted as merely capricious in the distribution of favours to their subjects. Juno is particularly reprehensible. Motivated by the all too human emotions of jealousy and pique, she deflects her resentment of Jove's philandering onto the innocent objects of his passion, who are thus doubly wronged.⁷

Human suffering in the Metamorphoses is often shown to be the consequence of sheer mischance rather than willed action. The story of Actaeon (III, 138ff) is of particular interest in this respect. In contrast to earlier versions of the myth, which had depicted Actaeon's suffering as a just punishment by Jove for his wooing of Semale, Ovid seems to go out of his way to emphasize Fortune's role in causing the guileless hunter to stumble on the naked Diana.⁸ And, in the lines which follow the story, he would seem to raise deliberately the whole moral issue of justice and desert:

Common talk wavered this way and that: to some the goddess
seemed more cruel than was just; others called her act
worthy of her austere virginity; both sides found good
reasons for their judgment. (III, 252-255).

But it is characteristic of Ovid's poetic stance in the Metamorphoses that such a moral issue should be raised, only to be dropped.⁹ In this instance, he wittily exploits Juno's refusal to comment as an excuse to abort the debate and effect a swift transition to the next story (256-259).

Ovid does not use different forms of metamorphosis to make moral discriminations. There is, for example, nothing to distinguish his treatment of lustful Glaucus from his handling of the heroes of ancient and contemporary Rome. The centaur is transformed to a sea-god by the dissolution of his mortalia; the deified Aeneas, Romulus and Julius Caesar attain apotheosis through the same purgation of their baser human qualities.¹⁰ Although Golding asks rhetorically,

What else are Circes witchcrafts and enchauntments than the
And filthy pleasures of the flesh which doo our soules defyle?
vyle
(Epistle, 276-277)

it is clear that Ovid's Circe, unlike Virgil's, is not a figure who throws into relief all that is ordered and civilized in human society.

In the final books of the poem, the 'upward' metamorphosis of the Roman heroes are intertwined with the 'downward' metamorphosis of man to beast. Ovid's art does not distinguish between the two.¹¹

Whilst Ovid sometimes uses metamorphosis as a way of avoiding issues of moral conflict, he also on occasion uses the device as a way out of an emotional impasse. The treatment of Niobe (IV, 146ff.) sets the example for a series of stories in which metamorphosis functions as a kind of naturalistic deus ex machina: 'an all but inevitable way out of an impossible situation, something that is no longer the punishment for, but the result of, an abnormal passion or an intense grief that can no longer endure human existence.'¹² As Brooks Otis has shown, in stories such as the Procne-Tereus-Philomela, Byblis, Myrrha and Cexy and Alcyone, where Ovid's focus is on the humans who suffer rather than the gods who make them suffer, the metamorphosis is invested with 'a natural inevitability'; it is 'the human situation itself that seems to demand the change.'¹³

Modern criticism has generally renounced the medieval preoccupation with the final literal metamorphoses, which had, in part, continued through the Renaissance. The implicit assumption that the title refers exclusively to these physical transformations has been disputed, and new perspectives opened on the poem by posing the question 'whether and in what sense metamorphosis is the subject of the poem.'¹⁴

That this literary and aesthetic revaluation of the Metamorphoses is not itself merely the twentieth century shibboleth replacing the ideological bias of the past, is demonstrable by the fact that artists - as distinct from critics - have traditionally found their subjects in the stories proper, rather than the moment of metamorphosis. Early sixteenth

century painters, no less than the late century poets, were responsive to the aesthetic experience offered by the poem as a whole, and not merely to those parts which could be conveniently detached as moral exempla.¹⁵ Only relatively recently has the art of criticism caught up with their lead.¹⁶

Physical metamorphosis is often, in fact, no more than a sop which Ovid sardonically throws to his more literal-minded readers in a formal gesture of compliance with earlier conventional treatments of the theme.¹⁷ In the Metamorphosis, this transformation scene is often far from being the focus of the story, or the impetus behind the telling of a tale. Sometimes it is not even part of the sequence.¹⁸ The Phaethon story (II, 19ff.) occurs only a few hundred lines after Ovid's announcement of the theme of mutatas dicere formas, yet he omits from this version Phaethon's transformation into the constellation Augira, a well-known feature of the story which he had previously used in the Amores (III, 21ff.).¹⁹ Literal metamorphosis is tacked on to the end of the sequence, when Phaethon's grieving sisters are transformed into trees. But the metamorphosis theme is intelligible less in this narrowly restrictive sense, and more as the psychological change which serves as a catalyst for the cosmic transformations occasioned by Phaethon's burning chariot ride.²⁰ Clearly, Ovid is interested primarily in explaining Phaethon's search for his own identity, and in tracing the connections between the fractured relations of Phoebus and his son and the progeny of geographical evils which comes from their dissension.²¹ Here then, Ovid begins to expose the contiguity of the human microcosm and the natural macrocosm, and to investigate human responsibility for things natural - concerns he develops elsewhere in the poem.²² Similarly, in the story of Cephalus and Procris (VII, 661ff.), the literal

metamorphoses of the wolf and the hound, Laelaps, function as a minor diversion in a serious examination of love's jealous credulity. Love's metamorphoses and the transition from a period of happy union to death and enduring sorrow are the significant changes which this tale is concerned to trace.²³

But if metamorphosis, in the restricted sense, is clearly not Ovid's major focus in the poem, it is legitimate to ask in what ways the motif is important to him. At the simplest level, the device provides a kind of link, or stepping-stone, from one story to the next, effecting the swift transitions which mirror the poem's concern with movement and change. But these transitions are not merely utilitarian, for they also provide convenient opportunities for Ovid to indulge his predilection for the grotesque and the fantastic. These metamorphoses are rhetorical set-pieces, in which Ovid pulls out all the stops to shock, horrify, amuse or arouse the compassion of his readers.²⁴ At such points in the poem he is supremely conscious of the 'affective' level of his work: 'If you have tears to shed, prepare to shed them now.' It is also clear from the opening lines of the poem that, paradoxically, metamorphosis will serve as a major unifying or harmonizing force within the poem:

My mind is bent to tell of bodies changed into new forms
Ye gods, for you yourself have wrought the changes, breathe
on these my undertakings, and bring down my song
in unbroken strains from the world's very beginning
even unto the present time. (I, 1-4).²⁵

The deceptively conventional proem closely compresses several notions of metamorphosis which will become important as the poem develops: literal change of form (mutatas formas); change expressed in terms of human imagination (poetic animus); and temporal change, as an ordered continuum of chronological events (ab origine mundi...ad mea tempora). The paradox of the poet's song, at once the product of a changed and disordered

sensibility and the promise of an ordered and harmonious triumph over time, establishes the poem's characteristic tension between change and continuity. From its introduction in the first line of the poem, metamorphosis is shown to be a major cohesive force: it 'assisted the idea of perpetuum carmen and, in emphasizing the continuity of change (cf. Pythagoras' speech in Book XV), helped to underline the Augustan significance.....of the great progression from Chaos to Cosmos.'²⁶ Metamorphosis, then, is a 'functional principle' in a poem which 'reflects rather than is about metamorphosis.'²⁷

Ovid's choice of the metamorphosis theme has been seen in biographical, political, psychological and purely literary terms. For Herman Fränkel Ovid's readiness to adopt the compromise between life and death offered by the metamorphosis device was the measure of a 'mild disposition' which 'shied from a crushing finale.'²⁸ Fränkel's suggestion that Ovid was also responding to the inherently sexual nature of the material has found endorsement,²⁹ although the poem has also been seen as an attempt to reverse rather than maintain the concerns of the Ars Amatoria. In this reading, the susceptibility of metamorphosis to a treatment which culminated in the lives of Julius Caesar and Augustus is seen as a reflection of Ovid's pragmatic desire to make amends for the earlier work, which had been ill-received by the Emperor.³⁰

Ovid's role as a psychologist of the passions - early recognized by Dryden³¹ - has been noted by most critics in the post-Freudian age. Fränkel's rather imprecise notion that the metamorphosis theme 'gave ample scope for displaying the phenomena of insecure and fleeting identity, of a self divided in itself or spilling over into another self,'³² has been investigated by later writers. William S. Anderson has shown that Ovid developed a complex and coherent 'vocabulary of metamorphosis' to expose

the relatedness of the physiological and psychological changes he describes. In the stories which focus on human passion (which include the 'gods in love!'), love is shown to be a transforming experience for both the subject and object of the emotion, though in general 'Ovid portrays an initial metamorphosis in the lover before he describes the change in the beloved.'³³ Whilst modern psychology (and such literary works as Kafka's The Metamorphosis, and the poetry and poetic theory of Wallace Stevens)³⁴ has shown that psychological interest, particularly questions of identity and perception, is inherent in the metamorphosis theme, various commentators have established that a tradition of speculation on the problem of human nature and change already existed by Ovid's time and is reflected in his poem.³⁵ In the Metamorphoses some element is usually shown to survive the transformation experienced by the various characters. Thus Io, Callisto and Actaeon, transformed to animals, retain their human reason and struggle to express their true natures through their deceptive animal shapes. Daphne's gleaming beauty and emotional antipathy to Jove are reflected in the laurel-tree she becomes, which continues to shrink from the god's embrace. Niobe's petrification is but an objective representation of the final insensibility caused by her multiple sorrows, whilst her earlier tears are commemorated in the cataract which continues to flow down her stony face.³⁶ This characterization of both change and continuity is consistent with Stoic reflections on human nature. Posidonius (c.135-50 BC), in particular, had given Aristotelian speculations on change versus permanence an application to human psychology, by discriminating between man's transient corporal form and enduring disposition and character.³⁷ This rejection of material appearance in favour of essential substance is echoed in the Metamorphoses where Ovid frequently stresses the deceptive nature of outward shape (forma), often expressed

as a delusive image or shadow (imago, umbra) which blinds the perceiver to the true reality.³⁸ In the final book, the Pythagorean extension of these Stoic ideas is represented in the poem when Pythagoras teaches Numa to look beyond the experiential present to find the permanent in things.

Perhaps the most satisfactory approach to Ovid's choice of the metamorphosis theme is to see the literary opportunities which it afforded. For all Ovid's interest in psychology, he was not concerned with psychological case studies. And, despite the philosophical support which Pythagoras lends to the metamorphosis theme, the poem is not conceived as a philosophical argument. As L. P. Wilkinson has indicated, 'Ovid's Narcissus may be the Urnarzissist, but he is not presented as a symbol of self-love in general,' any more than Pygmalion is presented as the archetypal 'seeker after ideal perfection.'³⁹ Rather, Ovid's interest is in the stories as stories, and in the psychological paradoxes which caught his imagination and drew out his particular literary skills. Similarly, the Pythagorean sequence allowed Ovid to vary yet again his treatment of metamorphosis with a different narrative style. The choice of metamorphosis, then, was primarily dictated by the imaginative and tonal qualities inherent in the theme. Because metamorphosis, used as a concluding device or denouement, virtually precludes tragedy and avoids the direct resolution of moral conflict, it allowed Ovid to treat Greco-Roman myth in a new way. He was able to re-orientate myth away from its traditional speculative, validatory and aetiological functions and to realize fully its narrative and entertaining potential.⁴⁰

While there is widespread disagreement about the precise nature of

Ovid's intentions in a work which, as the opening words of the poem suggest, seems to have been envisaged as a new beginning, there is a critical consensus that narrative plays a dominant role in the Metamorphoses, and that the variety of subject and tone is also a donnée of his chosen theme.⁴¹ The narrator not only opens and closes the poem in a way that suggests its final 'meaning' is closely connected with his role,⁴² but also acts in an editorial capacity for the remainder of the poem, dropping the fictive veil to comment on Narcissus' credulity or to protest Actaeon's innocence.⁴³ The controlling presence of the artist is felt through the poem's constant shifts of narrative style and subject, mood and perspective. The reader cannot identify with the poem for any protracted period, as the homely realism of the Philemon and Baucis sequence gives way to the allegorical depiction of Famine, in the ensuing story, or, as in Medea's story, the characterization of psychological conflict makes way for the fantastic and graphic depiction of landscape.⁴⁴ The tales cover a vast range of human emotions, ringing the changes on mutual love and jealousy, piety and greed, shame and libido, fear and pride. Moreover, as Dryden recognized, Ovid's dramatic feel is such that he loves 'to show the various movements of soul combating betwixt two different passions.'⁴⁵ The reader is now amused and now serious, now intellectually stimulated and now emotionally satisfied. Often the same tale, or sequence within a tale, elicits a complex mixture of responses. We find ourselves simultaneously repelled and engaged by the grotesquerie and pathos of the Io and Callisto stories. Though only too aware of the violent and horrific elements in the tales of Actaeon, Marsyas and Tereus-Procne-Philomela, we are also distanced and disengaged from that horror by what has been called 'the visual over-explicitness' of Ovid's narrative.⁴⁶

That Touchstone's 'most capricious poet' was a Proteus by art as well as by nature is evident from Ovid's treatment of his source material. The story of Erysichthon, punished by unappeasable hunger for cutting down the sacred tree of Ceres, shows that Ovid quite deliberately determined to tell the story aliter - differently from the Callimachean model, which remains extant. The 'bourgeois' realism and uniform tone of the earlier version give way to an episodic tale of shifting tones and perspectives. Towards the end of the story, Ovid even drops his main protagonist and 'puts on' his (Erysichthon's) daughter to entertain the reader with her multiple metamorphoses.⁴⁷ The polytonality of the sequence is completely characteristic of a poem in which Ovid not only varies previous workings of well-known myths, but also recasts his own earlier treatments of a given story.⁴⁸

Classical scholars have shown that Ovid exploited fully the capacity of the Latin language to meet his dual imperatives of change and continuity:

For Ovid, writing the sort of poem that the Metamorphoses was intended to be, two principal ends had to be kept in view if the reader's attention was not to flag: the need to keep the poem moving continuously, and the need to vary the tone and tempo according to the character of the episodes themselves.⁴⁹

In comparing the verse of Virgil and Ovid, Brooks Otis has found that (unless slowness is part of the special effect of a particular tale) Ovid's main concern is 'to make his poem....."go"':

In a word, Ovid puts in everything (dactyls, regular pauses, coincidence of ictus and accent, rhyme, alliteration, grammatical simplicity and concision) that will speed up and lighten; leaves out everything (elision, spondees, grammatical complexity, clash of accent and ictus, overrunning of metrical by sense units) that will slow down and encumber his verse.⁵⁰

And E.J. Kenney has shown how Ovid's technical virtuosity and exploitation

of variation is such as to prevent the poem from becoming monotonous.⁵¹

Ovid's disregard of simple decorum is playfully self-conscious rather than temperamentally capricious. It is with great delight that he exploits the opportunity provided by the Flood sequence of Book I to flout the Horacian ideal of lucidus ordo. Opening the Ars Poetica, Horace had written that 'he who yearns after too prodigal a variety in his theme - he paints a dolphin in the forest, or a wild boar amid the waves.'⁵² But the intended warning serves rather as a directive for Ovid's characterization of the Flood chaos:

The Dolphines playd among the tops and boughes of every tree.
The grim and greedy Wolfe did swim among the siely sheepe,
The Lion and the Tyger fierce were borne upon the deepe.
It booted not the foming Boare his crooked tuskes to whet...⁵³
(l, 354-357)

The Metamorphoses was written at a time when ancient myth had been divorced from its former religious significance and no longer commanded simple credence; in the Trista, Ovid, himself, described the transformations of the poem as 'not to be believed.'⁵⁴ The preceding period of Hellenistic poetry had created or responded to a shift in public taste away from the morally instructive and in favour of the erudite and recherché. The dramatic form in fashion, the pantomime, provided a showcase for the actors' protean versatility rather than using him as a tragic instrument.⁵⁵ Virgil had shown that the ancient material was capable of bearing a profound modern meaning. But, whilst the Metamorphoses shows that Ovid was well aware of the normative influence of the Aeneid, there were, as has often been pointed out, good historical reasons why Ovid could not emulate Virgil.⁵⁶ Ovid was born in 43 B.C., twenty-seven years after Virgil, who had been dead for twenty years when the Metamorphoses was written. Unlike Virgil, Ovid had known only the peace and prosperity of Augustan Rome: with no real experience of the

horrors of civil war and political instability, he lacked the incentive to use myth as a vehicle for the reinforcement of profound political and social truths. Moreover, Ovid's subject was not, like Virgil's, the single and largely untreated myth of Aeneas, but rather all myth - or myth itself.⁵⁷ Just as the love poetry of the Amores drew on art as well as experience,⁵⁸ so the ancient myths provided fresh sport for a poet who was perhaps encouraged by 'the spirit of the times' to retain the somewhat cavalier approach for his subsequent and more ambitious work:

(Ovide) vit dans ce milieu de chevaliers, gens fortunés
 et qui ont le temps, - le temps de jouir de la vie,
 d'écrire des vers pour leur plaisir, librés de l'angoissante
 fébrilité de l'homme de lettres mal nourri. Ils aiment l'art,
 pour les jouissances qu'il en attendent, et qui seront plus
 vives si elles sont moins simples. Ces raffinés sont
 naturellement portés a rompre avec le rigorisme des aïeux,
 avec des conceptions morales périmées; il ne se plaisent pas
 d'avantage aux formes d'art transmises, rudes souvent, et qui
 avaient aidé à prendre forme une éthique non moins rude.⁵⁹

But it is perhaps too easy to characterize the undoubted sophistication of the Metamorphoses by reaching for the 'baroque' label, whilst overstressing the 'play' element in the poem can also be reductive. 'Baroque', like its near cousin, 'mannerism', is at best a slippery term, which can mean all things to all men. Simply to see Ovid as the poet ludor, for whom 'wit and cleverness are at a premium over vision and imaginative insight,'⁶⁰ is to establish (one is reminded of the old arguments about Donne) a dubious division between game and earnest, humour and seriousness, and to ignore the re-creative impulse in play.⁶¹ Certainly, the Metamorphoses does not support such rigid divisions of subject or tone; it frequently demands of its readers a complex response.⁶² Against this kind of dualism, the pervasive spirit of the poem has been characterized far more suggestively as perpetua festivitas, a term borrowed from Cicero, which has prompted comparison with the

'festive comedy' of Plautus and Shakespeare.⁶³ This specific comparison is at least provisionally helpful if it facilitates the characterization of the poem's expansive mood, 'which keeps just the right equilibrium between detached amusement and sympathy'; its compassionate humour; and the kind of reversal which expresses 'acknowledgement rather than depreciation of, the "serious" order of things.'⁶⁴ It is this spirit which qualifies the essential humanitas of the Metamorphoses and is the expression of a 'catholic sensibility which has no parallel in the literature of the ancient world'.⁶⁵

In a famous passage of the Ars Amatoria, Ovid had written, 'Expedi esse deos et, ut expedit, esse putamos.' (It is expedient there should be gods, and this being so, let us suppose they exist).⁶⁶ In the Metamorphoses, the artifice of myth is similarly acknowledged, in such a way that its relation to life becomes part of the total 'meaning' of a poem which continues to explore the function of such 'necessary fictions'.⁶⁷ To this extent, Ovid's revivification of myth is consequent on his revaluation of the genre, and it is in this sense that the poem's title can ultimately be seen to refer to the metamorphosis of a literary form:

Ovid....can be said to have solved the same problem that confronted Virgil...Virgil made the old bones live: unlike his predecessors he made contemporary poetry out of quite incredible and anachronistic material. But the same is true of the Metamorphoses, however different its nature and aim may have been. Ovid put into it a very large part of the ancient mythology - all the unbelievable gods, demigods, miracles and variegated wonders - and somehow brought them alive....It is mainly, in fact, through his Metamorphoses that the ancient mythology has been passed to us.⁶⁸

Unlocking the mystery of this achievement turns partly on understanding Ovid's 'naturalization' of myth - and it is this aspect of the poem which I would next like to consider.

Chapter II

THE NATURAL CONTEXT OF MYTH

While commentators may disagree strongly about the Metamorphoses and yet concur in the view that story-telling plays a dominant role in the poem, enquirers who seek to answer the larger question, 'What is myth?', can usually resolve their differences by agreeing on this same factor of narrative.¹ In turn, methodologies as widely disparate as, (say) Freud's postulation of the incest taboo and Levi-Strauss' analysis of the Amerindian tale of Asdiwal can be seen to centre on a common paradox. It is well expressed by William Righter in his conclusion to a survey of major approaches to the subject:

There is a mixture in all these theories of a desire to give an adequate explanation for the phenomenon of myth and to evaluate its place in the whole spectrum of human thought. Yet....for all of them myth fulfils its role precisely because it is non-rational, indeterminate, and uncertain in the nature of its ultimate claims.²

In other words, attempts to account for the nature and role of myth are also attempts to account for the nature and role of the human imagination - as tentative definitions of the word sometimes reveal.³ Ovid, himself, may be regarded as not only a practitioner but also a critic of myth. Very much aware of the compass of his subject, his role may even be likened to that of the modern editor who studies the study of myth. Acknowledging early in the piece that, like Proteus, his subject refuses to be bound (and that herein lies its value), Ovid develops a methodology at once elastic and empirical. The hope is that light will be shed on the 'why' through an impartial study of the 'what'.⁴

1. Beginning and Ending: The Creation and Pythagorean Sequences

Ovid's first attempt at 'placing' these imaginative fictions is a foray into philosophical science. This could be construed as a traditional move. Apologists from the time of Theogenes had found it expedient to account for the gods' foibles - their amorous adventures and violent quarrels - by reading their stories as metaphors for universal forces in nature.⁵ Yet Ovid's approach is the opposite of those who held with Cicero that 'these impious fables enshrined a decidedly clever scientific theory'.⁶ Ovid, one feels, would have savoured the delusion of Renaissance alchemists who, working from the same allegorizing premise, hoped to mine a rich vein in his tales of transformation. His own approach reflects on antithetical habit of mind.

The Creation-Flood sequence of Book I and the complementary Pythagorean panel of Book XV create a philosophical epic framework for the poem.⁷ The literary function of both sequences is, however, more important than philosophical coherence: Ovid demonstrates the inclusive range and the unifying singleness of the metamorphosis motif by expressing it in cosmological terms. Even more importantly, the cosmological ideas are shown to have important aesthetic consequences in the poem itself. In the original 'huge rude heape' which 'Chaos hight',

No sunne as yet with lightsome beames the shapelesse world did view.
No Moone in growing did repayre hir hornes with borrowed light.

and

No kinde of thinge had proper shape, but ech confounded other.
(I, 7-17).

The temporal-spatial dialectic, already established with reference to the poetic imagination in the Proem (see Ch.1, p.16) is thus maintained, as Ovid describes the primal act of creation. The completed task of separating, ordering and fixing the elements within a binding harmony provides the poem's

first climax. In a sense, it is also its greatest, as the Renaissance commentator Georg Sabinus recognized in identifying this creative act as 'the first and most wondrous metamorphosis of all'.⁸ In both the original and the Renaissance translation, the emerging 'vocabulary of metamorphosis'⁹ lends coherence and definition to the climax, and establishes change as the vital creative medium:

sic, modo quae fuerat rudis et sine imagine, tellus
induit ignotas hominum conversa figuras.

And thus the earth which late before had neyther shape nor hew,
Did take the noble shape of man, and was transformed new.
(I, 87-88/1, 101-102)

Ovid tells his readers that this momentous change was effected by 'deus et melior natura' (I, 21). The idiom reflects the Stoic view, that God and the laws of Nature are synonymous.¹⁰ At the same time, the potentially ambiguous conflation is perfectly attuned to Ovid's purpose and typical of his narrative voice in the Metamorphoses. Thus in his account of the creation of man - from divine or earthly substances (I, 78-83) - religious and naturalistic explanations of phenomena are similarly allowed to play off against each other. Instead of subscribing to one view, Ovid deliberately invites questions about the compatibility of different accounts of the world. The juxtaposition of causal explanations, like the continuities established between cosmological and imaginative metamorphoses, raises issues - among them the relationship between poetry and belief, imaginative fiction and the ultimate reality beyond it, language and the material world - with which the poem will continually be engaged.

The cosmology on which Ovid draws in the opening and closing chapters of the Metamorphoses has important aesthetic consequences which the poem, itself, exemplifies and Renaissance artists and theorists would elaborate. Indeed, the central tenet of Sidney's literary theory, the concept of the

Poet as Maker, is inherent in the Pythagorean-Platonic formulations:

'the poet creates his poem in a way analagous to the creative act by which the Timean godhead gave the physical extension to his archetypal ideas'.¹¹

In this view, the world is not only a metaphor devised by God, but a metaphor for Him: 'the poet reproduces the subject-matter of God's metaphor, which is natura naturata; but, by reproducing the technique of God's metaphor-making process, the poet simulataneously reveals natura naturans'.¹²

If, as has been suggested,¹³ such Pythagorean ideas reached their widest Renaissance audience through the medium of Ovid's poem, they did so with a total absence of polemic. Ovid's relaxed style helps to explain why Golding, who was working on Calvin's Treatise on Offences at the same time as he was translating the Metamorphoses, was content to let God and Nature work hand in hand (1, 20). The spirit of easy accommodation admits the Genesis formulations here, just as in Book XV, it allows Golding to marry the philosophy of metempsychosis with Pauline transformation.¹⁴ While inhibiting dogmatism in a Puritan translator, Ovid's unassertive use of suggestive juxtaposition offered the maximum creative stimulus to an imaginative mind, such as Shakespeare's.

In Ovid's account of the decline of civilization through Gold, Silver, and Iron Ages, the traditional story is smoothly assimilated into the controlling idea of metamorphosis. Human decadence is equated with the loss of spacial form and order. In the Golden Age, everything has its place within the scheme of things.

The loftie Pynetree was not hewen from mountaines where
it stood,
In seeking straunge and forren landes, to rove upon the
flood.

(1, 109-110)

The poem's first individual metamorphosis, the transformation of the rapacious Lycaon into a wolf, is but the prelude to the universal punishment of the human race in the great Flood. In one of the great set-pieces of the poem, the cataclysmic effects of human evil are again graphically represented by the overriding of natural boundaries:

imaque mare et tellus nullum discrimen habebant:
omnia pontus erant, deerant quoque litora ponto.

.....no difference was betweene the sea and ground,
For all was sea: there was no shore or landing to be found.
(I, 291-2/1, 343-4).

But, as already suggested,¹⁹ Ovid is not willing to pass up the literary opportunities which follow from this *donné*. Moreover, by wittily expanding Horace's image of the bad artist as someone who puts dolphins in trees and wild boars among the waves, Ovid turns the whole notion of poetic decorum on its head. What started out as a castigation of bad taste becomes a celebration of the poetic imagination, as a faculty which crosses rational boundaries, takes delight in the incongruous and aims to stir wonder:

Some climbed up to tops of hills, and some rowde to and fro
In Botes, where they not long before, to plough and Cart did go,
One over corne and tops of townes, whome waves did overwhelme,
Doth saile in ship, an other sittes a fishing in an Elme.

(Here a mistranslation by Golding - Ovid had had the fish caught up among the branches²⁰ - only strengthens the charm of the visual incongruity).

In meddowes greene were Anchors cast (so fortune did provide)
And crooked ships did shadow vynes, the which the floud did hide.
And where but tother day before did feede the hungry Gote,
The ugly Seales and Porkepisces now to and fro did flote.
The Sea nymphes wondred under waves the townes and groves to see,
And Dolphines playd among the tops and boughes of every tree.
The grim and greedy Wolfe did swim among the siely sheepe,
The Lion and the Tyger fierce were borne upon the deepe.
It booted not the foming Boare his crooked tuskes to whet,
The running Hart coulde in the streame by swiftnesse nothing get.
(I, 345-358).

In a rewarding article, A.D. Nuttall has traced the literary history of Horace's use of the fishes-in-the-trees motif.²¹ As an exemplum of an

ancient trope, the Impossibilia, it has had a fascinating career, becoming in both English and French poetry and literary criticism 'a repeatable motif in its own right, a topos within a topos'.²² Thus, for example, it is recalled by Pope in both The Dunciad and the Epistle to Burlington. In the metaphoric riot licensed by the rule of Dullness, 'Realms shift their place, and Ocean turns to land', whilst in the garden of Timon's villa, 'Amphitrite sails thro' myrtle bow'rs'.²³ In each instance, Pope's ostensible purpose is the definition of bad taste. However, as Nuttall has remarked, in each instance there is also a contradiction between the argument and the verse which reflects a tension between Pope's aesthetic disapproval and his poetic instinct. The contradiction is, in turn, mirrored in the historical response to the sequences. If the lines from The Dunciad IV have become famous in spite of the argument, the Timon's villa sequence is remembered for reasons other than its enshrinement of Augustan architectural norms.

In The Dunciad, 'the lines in time and place may stir us more easily to delight than contempt, for they are a description of the poetic imagination' (my italics). Similarly, Timon, 'with his reckless coupling of drought and inundation, of flowers and death may seem...a better emblem of poetry than of bad taste.' This same contradiction can indeed be found in Horace's original use of the topos; just when he 'begins to give examples of what good poets don't do, at that very point his verse becomes poetry.'²⁴

It might be argued Ovid spotted this contradiction in Horace's use of the fishes-in-the-trees motif. Certainly, by choosing to give the Impossibilia its head, he makes the Flood sequence in the Metamorphoses a joyful illustration of poetry's transforming power. So much so, that his exuberance drew the censure of Seneca, whom, George Sandys reports, 'reproves this part of the description, as too light for so sad an argument'.²⁵

As Nuttall has shown, contradiction was inherent in the Impossibilia from the outset: 'it could serve the poet either as a way of talking about what could never happen, the absurd', or else as 'a way of talking about miracles'.²⁶ Herein lies the peculiar fruitfulness of the topos. The fishes-in-the-tree motif, in particular, becomes a kind of touchstone for views about the nature of poetry and its relation to the physical world. In Ovid's hands, it illustrates the way in which myths can serve as meeting grounds for a complex range of ideas and aesthetic preoccupations. In Nuttall's pithy analysis the crux of the problem is reached when those who hold that a poet's job is to call a spade a spade are faced with a less than prosaic reality - the Biblical story of the Red Sea crossing, for example. For the Christian, at least, 'when God stretches forth his hand the fishes actually do get into the trees'.²⁷

I have drawn extensively on Nuttall's article because it is a sensitive critical exploration of imaginative territory first mapped out by Ovid. Indeed, the Roman poet takes his readers to the core of the paradox figured in the fishes-in-the-trees motif, and beyond that in the creation myth itself: 'miracles though verities, lack verisimilitude'. What may be true in nature, does not look like truth when reflected in art.²⁸ Here is a radical dilemma for the responsible artist. Glancing at the alternative strategies which have been adopted, Nuttall defines two opposing camps. In the first, are those who, like the French poet and critic Boileau, write poetry 'in which fish are always scaly and streams forever purling'. And in the second, are those who hold with Auden that only through 'tall tales' and 'the luck of verbal playing' can there be any approach to an ever elusive truth.²⁹

Auden's poem, 'The Truest Poetry is the Most Feigning', takes us back to

Shakespeare, the poet who loved to place 'tongues in trees, books in the running brooks', and dramatist who delighted in mingling Kings and Clownes.³⁰ Behind Shakespeare stands the figure of the Roman poet. The artistic strategy of As You Like It and The Winter's Tale is essentially that which Ovid adopts in the Metamorphoses: the problem of verisimilitude is met head-on by directly focusing on miracles and deliberately challenging the credulity of the audience. Moreover, while both poets display the outrageous bad taste they are ostensibly criticizing (what is the difference between Orlando's contrived rhyme-schemes and the overtly manipulated couplings of Shakespeare's fifth act?), one of the ways they escape censure is to point to the sublime bad taste of the natural world itself.³¹ That this is something more than a sophistical reflex gesture, Ovid's creation sequence makes clear in an important forshadowing of the Pygmalion story.

The re-creation of human life after the deluge is presented as an example of marvelous change, vouched for by religious and literary tradition. Without sacrificing their simple piety, Deucalion and Pyrrha, reflecting the scepticism of Ovid's readers, are incredulous of the command to repopulate the earth by casting stones behind them (I, 381ff./1, 451ff.). The riddling instruction of the oracle is indeed cast in 'doubtfull wordes', to use Golding's suggestive phrase.³² And yet the conceit is shown to contain a truth. When the couple determine to suspend their disbelief and comply with the strange command, the stones do indeed soften and gradually begin to take on a human shape. Ovid tells his readers that the emerging forms are like the statues which gradually assume definition in a block of marble, and the artistic analogy reinforces the self-consciously fictive quality of the deus ex machina resolution. Like Deucalion and Pyrrha, it is required we should awake our faith:

The stones (who would beleve the thing, but that the time of olde Reportes it for a stedfast truth?) of nature tough and harde,

Began to warre both soft and smoothe: and shortly afterwarde
To winne therwith a better shape.

(1, 476-479).

This note of wonder, effectively sustained in Golding's translation, is a primary feature of the Ovidian art of the Metamorphoses and is invariably sounded at the moment of transformation. The highly self-conscious parenthesis, at once naive and knowing, commits Ovid to his source material whilst simultaneously disengaging him from it.³³ Similarly, in soliciting the reader's complicitous engagement it also promotes his detachment, by hazarding the suspension of disbelief and underscoring the element of irrational faith which is required.

The Deucalion and Pyrrha story is a seminal sequence in the Metamorphoses. I believe that Shakespeare found the narrative strategies which Ovid establishes here enormously congenial and ones which he was increasingly concerned to adapt for the stage. Just why this should be the case is made progressively clearer by the plays themselves, and will be a subject I am concerned to trace and explicate over the course of the remaining chapters. The reasons, I think, comprehend ethical and personal, as well as theatrical and pragmatic considerations. For the moment, however, it is important to establish the continuities between Ovid's artistic control of the moment of transformation in his poem and Shakespeare's orchestration of metamorphic climaxes in the plays.

Like Ovid, Shakespeare loves to remind his audience of the 'old tale' behind the present drama just at the very moment he craves their indulgence for yet another theatrical coup. Like an old trooper who knows when he has the audience in the palm of his hand, Shakespeare over the course of his career enjoys taking bigger and bigger risks at such moments, rehearsing more matter 'though credit be asleep and not an ear open' (The Winter's Tale, V,ii,60). This kind of double bluff manages to commend the present company

(always the exception to the rule being enunciated) for their sympathetic attentiveness, whilst countering with the charge that it is too easily tractable! In the same spirit, the wonder occasioned by the fifth act unions and reunions survives not so much in spite of as because of Jaques' sneers about Noah's ark couplings or Hymen's rhymes ('daughter'/'...brought her?'), which are no better than Orlando's. In As You Like It, Celia, who for much of the play has been the spokeswoman for the audience's scepticism, becomes in the end the target of Orlando's doubt about the suddenness of her love for Oliver. Here again Shakespeare celebrates the human capacity to exclude the self from sceptical doubt, especially where love's transforming powers are in question. The play provides a carefully qualified affirmative to the echoing cry of, 'Is it possible?' (I,iii, 25; V,ii, 1), with Rosalind, even in the dying moments, challenging the audience to be the exception that proves the rule.

In The Winter's Tale we have moved from telling to showing: from Oliver's artful narration of his Saul-like transformation to the full-frontal staging of Hermione's metamorphosis. Here, Shakespeare all but forces an audience he seems to find too uncritically accepting into the role of doubting Thomas. Then, as it were, he presses their fingers into the flesh. The movement of the play can be seen as an arch, connecting Leontes' lofty castigation of that 'ignorant credulity' (II,i, 92) which places faith in the appearance of things, to his ultimate willingness to believe anything that Paulina can put before him:

No settled senses of the world can match
The pleasure of that madness (V,iii, 71-72).

The rebirth of Hermione is a theatrical Impossibilia, expressing a truth beyond reason and soliciting a credulity which is anything but ignorant. Leontes, a doubting Thomas par excellence, at the opening of the play, has in the end to be persuaded to take the tactile proof of faith which is

offered. He acts here on behalf of all who witness the transformation, but Shakespeare has already given his audience ample proof that in this world the fishes really do get into the trees. No less than As You Like It, the play has been as much a hymn to the revitalizing and regenerative power of the natural world, as it has been a celebration of faith. The wonderful sheep-shearing scene which concludes the fourth act creates a natural context by which the marvelous happenings of the final scene can be judged. This absolves Shakespeare, even more than the frequent disclaimers of diabolism which he gives to Paulina, clearing him from the charge of artistic hubris, as well as religious blasphemy.³⁴ Because greater miracles may be witnessed every day by those with but half an eye, the art of the impossible is enfranchised:

For the red blood reigns in the winter's pale. (IV,iii, 4).

In the Metamorphoses, Ovid's account of the spontaneous regeneration of animal life after the Flood acts in just the same way to create a natural context for myth. If we have been asked somewhat equivocally to lend credence to the miraculous recreation of human life in the story of Deucalion and Pyrrha, we are now shown a natural fact which is yet presented as the greater marvel:

The lustie earth of owne accorde soone after forth did bring
 According to their sundrie shapes eche other living thing,
 As soone as that the moysture once caught heate against the Sunne,
 And that the fat and slimie mud in moorish groundes begunne
 To swell through warmth of Phebus beames, and that the fruitfull
seede
 Of things well cherisht in the fat and lively soyle in deede,
 As in their mothers wombe, began in length of time to grow,
 To one or other kinde of shape wherein themselves to show.
 Even so when that seven mouthed Nile the watrie fieldes forsooke,
 And to his auncient channel eft his bridled streames betooke,
 So that the Sunne did heate the mud, the which he left behinde,
 The husbandmen that tilde the ground, among the cloddes did finde
 Of sundrie creatures sundrie shapes: of which they spied some,
 Even in the instant of their birth but newly then begonne,
 And some unperfect, wanting brest or shoulders in such wise,

That in one bodie oftentimes appeared to the eyes
 One halfe thereof alive to be, and all the rest beside
 Both voyde of life and seemely shape, starke earth to still
 abide.

For when that moysture with the heate is tempred equally,
 They doe conceyve: and of them twaine engender by and by
 All kinde of things. For though that fire with water aye
 debateth

Yet moysture mixt with equall heate all living things
 createth.

And so those discordes in their kinde, one striving with
 the other,

In generation doe agree and make one perfect mother.
 And therefore when the mirie earth bespred with slimie mud,
 Brought over all but late before by violence of the flud,
 Caught heate by warmnesse of the Sunne, and calmnesse of the
 skie,

Things out of number in the worlde, forthwith it did applie.
 Whereof in part the like before in former times had bene,
 And some so straunge and ougly shapes as never erst were sene.
 (1, 495-524).

The juxtaposition of the mythical and natural metamorphoses which generate new life after the Flood forges a link between the strange traditions of the past, as recorded by the poets, and the no less strange - though empirically demonstrable - beliefs of the present. This fruitful juxtaposition is a poetic illustration of the cosmic principle which is Ovid's subject. The notion that life issues from the inter-action of discordant elements, variously expressed as discors concordia, concordia discors and discordia concors, was a commonplace of contemporary science.³⁵ It was also, however, the legacy of a mythical way of thinking. The coupling of Father Heaven and Mother Earth in the Hesiodic cosmogony was no longer an article of religious belief and had by Ovid's time ossified into something approaching a conceit.³⁶ By giving the mystery a local habitation and name - the topographical specificity of the Nile setting - Ovid's triumph is the reinvigoration of both an unconsidered scientific abstraction and a dead literary convention:

Ovid places mythology, in which nobody believed, and science, which was the accepted truth, side by side as sharing equal rights. The concept of metamorphosis in his poem is comprehensive enough to include both. Inevitably the two things interact upon each other and

their juxtaposition tends to blur the borderline between them. In terms of the poem they are equally surprising and fascinating, and this suggests they may be both true or false.³⁷

With a total absence of the dogged application which characterizes later Renaissance systematizers like Du Bartas and Le Roy, Ovid presents a cosmological theory with aesthetic consequences which the poem will continue to explore. Nothing is asserted, everything suggested. But the reader is encouraged to suspend disbelief before the most extravagant artistic effects because Ovid persuades him that such probable impossibilities are no different in kind than nature's own quite believable absurdities.³⁸

In structure and tonal range, the Pythagorean soliloquy of the final book (XV, 1-478/15, 1-532) perfectly complements the Creation-Flood sequence which opens the Metamorphoses.³⁹ The two panels enclose the stories of miraculous transformation within a wider frame of natural change. Dramatically occasioned by Numa's desire to know, 'quae sit rerum natura' (XV, 6), Pythagoras' speech subordinates the esoteric doctrines of metempsychosis and vegetarianism associated with his name to a broader disquisition on natural change, which is more suited to Ovid's artistic purpose. There are strong Lucretian echoes in the verse, as Pythagoras provides abundant empirical evidence of the universal law of change, and demonstrates the function of metamorphosis is the re-creative life-cycle.⁴⁰ Pythagoras, himself, has witnessed the interchange of sea and land and can vouch for anchors, if not fishes, in the trees:

....I have seene it sea which was substanciall ground alate,
Ageine where sea was, I have seene the same become dry lond,
And shelles and scales of Seafish farre have lyen from any strond,
And in the toppes of mountaynes hygh old Anchors have beene found.
(15, 288-291)

Such empiricism is catching. In the Renaissance, Sabinus cites a year (1460)

when such phenomena were observed in contemporary Italy, prompting him to reflect that Pythagoras' marvelous instances 'non sunt fabulosa, sunt historica'.⁴¹ In Pythagoras' dramatic monologue, Ovid realizes fully the potential of the first person narrative to lend veracity to literary experience. And in Shakespeare's sixty-fourth sonnet, it is the thrice-repeated 'when I have seen' which makes the personal loss anticipated in final couplet so conclusively poignant - even when the evidence of 'Time's fell hand', to which he defers, comes from art as well as nature.⁴²

In the concluding book of the Metamorphoses, the tension between temporal change and continuity, first established in the Proem and felt continuously throughout the intervening stories, is expressed as a general principle in Pythagoras' omnia mutantur nihil interit. In the same way, the spacial patterning of varying shape and uniform substance, implicit throughout the poem, is made explicit in Pythagoras' image of impressionable wax, which

with ease receyveth fygures straunge,
And keepes not ay one shape, ne bydes assured ay from change,
And yit continueth alwayes wax in substaunce.

(15, 188-190).

Symbolic of both the variety and integrity of the Metamorphoses, itself, the image is more immediately an artistic formulation of the common experience:

No kind of thing keepes ay his shape and hew,
For nature loving ever change repayres one shape anew
Uppon another. Neyther dooth there perrish aught (trust mee)
In all the world, but altring takes new shape.

(15, 276-279).

In Dryden's judgement, 'the former part of the Fifteenth Book...is the Masterpiece of the whole Metamorphoses'.⁴³ Though later critics have strongly disagreed, Sandys also praised Ovid's exceptional achievement at the end of a very long poem, finding that, rather than flagging here, Ovid's Muse 'flies a more lofty pitch, both in matter and expression'.⁴⁴ Golding's

eloquent translation of this part of the poem would seem to suggest that he too found it impressive and inspirational. In his Epistle, Golding remarks somewhat enigmatically that 'The oration of Pithagoras implyes/ A sum of all the former woorke' (ll.288-289). Whether, and in precisely what sense, this judgement might be endorsed has been a further subject of much debate.⁴⁵ But since we have here - in some sense at least - the choric voice of the Metamorphoses, the classical expression par excellence of a dominant motif in Renaissance literature, and a peculiarly seminal passage for Shakespeare in particular, I give below an extended extract from Golding's translation:

In all the world there is not that that standeth at a stay.
 Things eb and flow: and every shape is made to passe away.
 The tyme itself continually is fleeting like a brooke.
 For neyther brooke nor lyghtsomme tyme can tarrye still. 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.
 For that that was before is left, and streyght there dooth ensew
 Anooter that was never erst. Eche twinkling of an eye
 Dooth change. Wee see that after day commes nyght and darks the
sky,
 And after nyght the lyghtsum Sunne succeedeth orderly.
 Like colour is not in the heaven when all things weery lye
 At midnyght sound asleepe, as when the daystarre cleere and bryght
 Commes foorth uppon his milkwhyght steede. Ageine in other plyght
 The Morning, Pallants daughter fayre, the messenger of lyght
 Delivereth into Phebus handes the world of cleerer hew.
 The circle also of the sonne what tyme it ryseth new
 And when it setteth, looketh red, but when it mounts most hye,
 Then lookes it whyght, bycause that there the nature of the skye
 Is better, and from filthye drosse of earth dooth further flye.
 The image also of the Moone that shyneth ay by nyght,
 Is never of one quantitie. For that that giveth lyght
 Today, is lesser than the next that followeth, till the full.
 And then contrarywyse eche day her lyght away dooth pull.
 What? Seest thou not how that the yeere as representing playne
 The age of man, departes itself in quarters fowre? First bayne
 And tender in the spring it is, even like a sucking babe.
 Then greene, and voyd of strength, and lush, and foggye, is the
blade,
 And cheeres the husbandman with hope. The all things flourish gay.
 The earth with flowres of sundry hew then seemeth for to play,
 And vertue small or none to herbes there dooth as yit belong.
 The yeere from springtyde passing foorth to sommer, wexeth strong,
 Becommeth lyke a lusty youth. For in our lyfe through out
 There is no tyme more plentifull, more lusty, hote and stout.
 Then followeth Harvest when the heate of youth growes somewhat cold,
 Rype, meeld, disposed meane betwixt a yoongman and an old,

And sumwhat sprent with grayish heare. Then ugly winter last
 Like age steales on with trembling stepes, all bald, or overcast
 With shirle thinne heare as whyght as snowe. Our bodies also ay
 Doo alter still from tyme to tyme, and never stand at stay.
 Wee shall not bee the same wee were today or yisterday.

...

Thou tyme the eater up of things, and age of spyghtfull teene,
 Destroy all things. And when that long continuance hath them bit,
 You leysurely by lingring death consume them every whit.
 And theis that wee call Elements doo never stand at stay.
 The enterchaunging course of them I will before yee lay.

(15, 197-237, 258-262).

The Heraclitan doctrine of flux is transformed into poetry and graphically realized in Ovid's image of the varying shore of the world. The vibrant cogency of the verse here is certainly felt by Golding, who, at l.205, slips in an echo of St. Paul: 'Beholde, I shewe you a secret thing. We shal not all slepe, but we shal all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye'.⁴⁶ There is indeed a marked similarity between the Pythagorean and Biblical passages; the seer and the Apostle are both highly dramatic figures imbued with a strong awareness of their initiatory roles. Golding's seemingly subliminal use of the Pauline formulation speaks volumes about the easy accommodation of potentially antithetical classical ideas in the Renaissance. It is also a fascinating anticipation of Shakespeare's imaginative synthesis of Ovidian and Pauline metamorphosis in the Last Plays.

The mystery with which Ovid is most immediately concerned is a natural one. The philosophy of cyclic renewal reveals its empirical foundations and is given memorable expression as Ovid's persistent sense of the contiguity of experience assimilates the patterns of human growth and decay into the larger designs of elemental and seasonal change. Nothing dies because all things are changing: the paradox of the discors concordia, exemplified in the Nile sequence of Book I, is fully explicated in the extended sea-metaphor of Book XV. Conflict and change are placed in a wider context of order and continuity. Pythagoras reveals that magical

metamorphosis is not the peculiar province of literary fiction. The slimy undifferentiated mud from which the frog materializes, the 'evil-favored lump of flesh' which the mother licks into a bear-cub, the rotting carcass which produces flower-culling bees - these natural transformations are far more deserving of an incredulous wonder. For, had he not seen with his own eyes, who would believe that the beautiful peacock started life as an egg?⁴⁷

Here again, it is rewarding to turn from the Metamorphoses to the Romances, and to notice the continuities between Ovid's narrative strategies and Shakespeare's dramaturgy. In structure, Act III scene iii of The Tempest follows closely the pattern of Pythagoras' rhetorical argument at the close of Ovid's epic. Like Ovid, Shakespeare presents his audience with a compendium of natural wonders. Some, like the phoenix, are culled from mythology, perhaps from Pythagoras himself. Others, like the men 'whose heads stood in their breast' (1.46) derive from more contemporary travellers' tales, whether Raleigh or Mandeville. As befits the Shakespearean play which more than any other blurs the distinction between the fictional milieu and what we are accustomed to calling the 'real' world, still other marvelous exempla seem to derive from a half-world between myth and experience. In the 'mountaineer's,/ Dewlapp'd like bulls, whose throats had hanging at 'em/ Wallets of flesh' (1.1.44-46), the exotica of Elizabethan travel-lore is superimposed on Shakespeare's memory of Ovid's Bull-Jove, 'his neck...brawn'd with rolles of flesh, and from his chest before/ A dangling dewlap hung me downe good halfe a foote and more' (2, 1067-1068). Golding's rapt wonder at the god's metamorphosis is matched in The Tempest by the fascinated engagement of Alonso, Antonio and Sebastian when presented with Prosepero's masque of 'strange shapes'. As they seek to accommodate this new experience, they find that all their previous values have been inverted. In the light of this 'living drollery' (1.21), the natural wonders reported by

the travellers - long a byword for the fabulous - have become quite substantial, almost domesticated. Ovid's Pythagoras moves from mirae novitalis (XV, 408), like the phoenix, to familiar wonders like the sex-changing hyena, the colour-changing chameleon and the coral, whose character (like Cleopatra's) is conditioned by the element it lives in (XV, 408-417/15, 449-460). In much the same way, Shakespeare's Sebastian cites the mythological rarities of unicorn and phoenix, while Gonzalo's more familiar exempla (as befits his sweetly accommodating nature) bring the marvelous closer to home. In a play crammed full of metamorphoses, Shakespeare can afford to discriminate between degrees of miracle. What the scene establishes, however, is a common realm of the marvelous. The shifting shapes, colours and sounds of the island are seen as no less real or believable than the transformation of the barnacle from shell-fish to goose (IV, i, 246) - a metamorphosis vouched for by worthies such as Holinshead and Du Bartas.⁴⁸ Fearing their own transformation, Calaban and Trinculo, like Sebastian and his friends, come to see that such transgressions of nature's boundaries are all too likely. For the audience too they are no longer Horatian Impossibiliae, but Ovidian synonyms for the common miracle of creation.

The peculiar power of Ovid's Pythagorean sequence, evidenced by its subsequent literary history, derives from the double-edged quality which has led to the widely divergent critical assessments noticed above. It is not difficult to show that, for much of the first fourteen books, the Metamorphoses has been concerned with what one commentator has called 'the inevitabilities of nature and history'.⁴⁹ To paraphrase Enobarbus,⁵⁰ things outward have indeed drawn the inward quality after them, and Ovid has repeatedly focused on errors of judgement, failures in perception, and exposed the time-bound relativity of both moral codes and personal

and historical achievement. The relentless patterns and rhythms of Pythagoras' speech can seem an ironically fitting climax to a poem in which Ovid has shown that the same God who arms the hero also makes his funeral pyre:

Now is he dust: and of that great Achilles bydeth still
A thing of nought, that scarcely can a little coffin fill.
(12, 681-682)

The sardonic tone is echoed in Hamlet's riddling play on 'Imperious Caesar, dead and turn'd to clay', and indeed like Shakespeare's play, the Metamorphoses has been seen as a portrait of metaphysical uncertainty. In this reading, the old philosophy is as profoundly unsettling as the new, and Pythagoras' pseudo-scientific treatise the ultimate mockery in a poem which mocks all metaphysical speculation. The day is carried by shape-changers like Autolycus and Proteus, who can swim with the tide, whilst Pythagoras himself, 'with his drolleries and platitudes, is a harlequin figure of doubt'.⁵¹

Pythagoras is certainly not immune from the play of Ovid's wit. His long-windedness and bardic stance make a delightful contrast to Ovid's own narrative persona, and he is not above utilizing his philosophy for self-aggrandizement. Unlike Rosalind, who can just remember the time she was an Irish rat, Pythagoras has perfect recall of a far more impressive genealogy!⁵² But to insist on Ovid's single-minded parodic intent in Book XV is not only to miss the poetic force of parts of Pythagoras' speech - attested by Dryden, Sandys, Shakespeare and the many other poets who drew inspiration from this sequence - but to deny Ovid's characteristic ambivalence. It is to miss the vitality and variety which are also inherent to the idea of metamorphosis and to ignore the sheer dogged tenacity, the capacity for something in the human spirit to endure and survive, which Ovid has also dramatized in the first fourteen books of the poem.

At once nihilistic and positivistic, Pythagoras' speech is both an eloquent lament for the time-oppressed human condition and a triumphant assertion of faith in continuities, won from the persistent human search for something permanent. Easily accommodating Ovid's scepticism, the poem ultimately bears testimony to the continuing potency of the Greek concept of physis - 'how things grow'. As an ordering system of thought, connecting human and non-human experience, the Roman equivalent, natura, is felt at every level in the Metamorphoses. This helps to explain the tremendous appeal of the poem in the Renaissance, when the distinguishing of such continuities became almost obsessional. That very simplicity which acts as a foil to Ovid's sophistication elsewhere in the poem may ironically have contributed to the popular appeal and peculiar longevity of the Pythagorean sequence. (Jaques' Seven Ages speech in As You Like It provides a similar instance).⁵³ Certainly Pythagoras' lucid formulations have proved not infrequently inspirational, and, above all, protean enough to meet the needs of succeeding generations. If, like many a less serious sophist, Shakespeare could isolate the argument of tempus edax rerum (XV, 234) to lament the inevitable fading of youth and beauty, Spenser could allow the full dialectic of omnia mutantur, nihil interit (XV, 165) to counter the reign of Mutability.⁵⁴

In the Metamorphoses, itself, the opening and closing sequences radically qualify our appraisal of the imaginative metamorphoses in the intervening books, by providing a natural context for myth. If the poem ultimately ends where it began - with the poet himself and the art which alone resists the dynamic of change - the epilogue perfectly complements the poem by once more drawing attention to the poetic animus. This inspirational change, now ceasing, has conceived and brought to issue the changeless work of art, which Ovid calls 'the better part of mee' (15, 989).⁵⁵ 'The art itself is nature': Polixenes' paradox - like the self-irony which has throughout

acknowledged the recreative as well as the re-creative impetus of the poem - takes 'the hybristic (sic) edge off Ovid's self-confidence',⁵⁶ despite the triumphant vivam on which it finally comes to rest.

2. Temporal and Spacial Controls: Nature as Rhythm and Backdrop

Throughout the Metamorphoses, Ovid uses nature as a changeful constant which anticipates locally and empirically the philosophical formulations of Pythagoras' summing up. References to the changing face of the macro-cosm create a fluid medium for the depiction of vicissitude in human affairs; the recurrent use of landscape as a backcloth for human action is a similarly unifying motif. These natural references significantly qualify the self-consciously fictive metamorphoses in the unfolding myths.

Allusions to the changing rhythms of the natural world often form part of the narrative machinery connecting individual tales in the compendium. Cephalus has time to recount his sorrowful history (VII, 611ff/7, 851ff), because the prevailing winds retard his travel plans:

The Sunne next Morrow in the heaven with golden beames did burne,
And still the Easterne winde did blow and hold them from returne.
(7, 853-854).

And the conclusion of his story coincides with a break in the weather:

The day starre now beginning to disclose the Morning bright
And for to clense the droupie Skie from darkenesse of the night,
The Easterne wind went downe and flakes of foggie Clouds gan show,
And from the South a merrie gale on Cephals sayles did blow.
(8, 1-4).

The story of Cephalus and Procris, a study in love's jealous metamorphoses,⁵⁷ is thus contained within a wider frame of natural change, whilst the alteration in the weather facilitates Ovid's narrative transition to the tale of Minos and Scylla.

Thoroughly characteristic of the Metamorphoses,⁵⁸ such transitions lend an air of plausibility to the essentially contrived sequence of stories in the carmen perpetuum. They are not, however, simply functional. A constant reminder that 'the tyme itself continually is fleeting like a brooke', the natural allusions make an intrinsic contribution to the artistic milieu of the Metamorphoses. In part, they are responsible for the impression of speed and vitality - of 'quickness' in the full Elizabethan sense - created by the poem. The natural markers also condition our response to the tales they punctuate. As night follows day and fair winds displace foul, the magical transformations take on an air of inevitability. Reciprocally, the natural metamorphoses are absorbed into the magical world and lose some of their prosaic familiarity.⁵⁹

Whilst the natural world sets the rhythm of human actions, it can also seem to provide the shaping pattern. The Romans had a predilection for landscape in the pictorial arts, which may have influenced Ovid.⁶⁰ The Metamorphoses has in turn exerted a considerable historical influence on the plastic arts, particularly in the Renaissance. Nevertheless, the natural settings in the poem remain remarkable for their literary rather than their pictorial qualities.⁶¹

Ovid uses landscape to create the ambiance of a particular myth and to point up its major features. The sensuous pool-side settings for the stories of Echo and Narcissus, and Salmacis and Hermaphroditus (III, 405ff/3, 509ff and IV, 285ff/4, 347ff) mirror the ambiguous eroticism inherent in the tales. Reflecting water is also the perfect emblem for narratives which explore the mysteries of identity and the problems of self-consciousness.⁶² In the Salmacis and Hermaphroditus sequence, the associations of the pool change with the unfolding tale. As Galinsky notes, at first it represents both the nymph's sensuality and the boy's innocence; then, after Salmacis' violent attack, the stained waters (IV, 383/ 'infected' 4, 481) mirror Hermaphroditus' lost purity.⁶³ Here, as elsewhere in the poem, the shifting symbolism

reinforces the thematic preoccupation with instability and change.⁶⁴

The paradoxical nature of water as a transparent barrier also allows Ovid to explore the rich potential for dramatic irony and linguistic conceit in these stories of innocence defiled. Woodland pools seem to offer cover for Diana and her nymphs. Yet it is here that virginity proves to be most vulnerable, and here where the Huntress is herself exposed to the view of the unwitting Actaeon (III, 155ff/3, 178ff). When Diana employs the pristine waters of the pools as an instrument of revenge, the positions are once more reversed and it is the boy hunter, with his newly-sprouted horns, who becomes in turn the hunted. This ironic role-reversal, a favourite motif throughout the poem,⁶⁵ is even more paradoxical in the case of Narcissus. Here the roles of hunter and hunted are played simultaneously by the same character. Ovid's exploitation of the ambiguous properties of water is accordingly more radical:

The mutual character of the persuer and persued ensures that the boy's desire cannot be consummated on the image of the virgin pool; the water is the final barrier to lust, as the boy exclaims (III, 450): exigua prohibemus aqua. Yet ironically, the same pool which is represented here as the guardian of his virginity is, by this very token, ultimately responsible for his death.⁶⁶

When we bring into play the further association of reflected light with reverberating sound, the permutations begin to seem infinitely complex. Yet in Ovid's 'central and canonical' union of Echo and Narcissus is established what one commentator has called 'the profoundest relations between light and sound, emptiness and fulness of self, absorption and reflection.'⁶⁷

Just as he inverts the Horatian Impossibilia of fishes-in-the-trees, so throughout the Metamorphoses Ovid exploits rather than simply utilizes the topos of the locus amoenus.⁶⁸ The features of this 'pleasant place' - water, shade, quiet, coolness, soft grass, with sometimes a cavern or rocks - had (by a process of association similar to that linking 'love' and 'lovely') through Homer, Theocritus and Virgil come to be associated with amor. But

'love' in Ovid's poem is frequently a euphemism for stronger forms of feeling and the appearance of the locus amoenus usually heralds something more than pastoral dalliance! The same landscape features in the Calydonian boar-hunt, the chase of Apollo after Daphne, and Narcissus' self-pursuit; in all three stories, the violent characteristics of the hunting scene proper are transferred to the erotic chase. This doubleness is personified in Diana, at once the goddess of virginity and patron of the hunt, and typified in Actaeon's story when cupido is the emotion felt by the hounds for their prey and sometime master.⁶⁹

If the very appearance of the locus amoenus creates dramatic tension in the poem, the reader comes to recognize a further fatal coincidence of time and place:

Great slaughter had bene made
Of sundrie sortes of savage beastes one morning: and the shade
Of things was waxed verie short. It was the time of day
That mid betweene the East and West the Sunne doth seeme to stay.
(3, 166-169)

This brief hiatus in the natural rhythm when 'the bawdy hand of the dial is ...upon the prick of noon',⁷⁰ frequently signals violent action issuing in metamorphosis. The time when all seek rest and respite from the sun's extremity (the parallelism between Diana and Actaeon is underlined by the fact that both hunters have retired to the shade) is paradoxically also the time when passions flare and irreversible steps are taken.⁷¹ Possibly, as in fairy-tales of midnight transformations, the very ambiguity of the hour, poised between morning and afternoon, is suggestive of metamorphosis. Certainly, the 'critical hour of judgement', associated in Biblical exegesis with the Fall, would seem to have had analogous connotations for classical mythographers. For noon is the time when the Satanic counterpart, Proteus, is 'unbound' from the sea.⁷²

Thus, though its attractions seem less dubious than those of Spenser's

Bower of Bliss, the pleasant grove into which Actaeon strays spells danger to the reader of the Metamorphoses:

There was a valley thicke
 With Pinaple and Cipresse trees that armed be with pricke.
 Gargaphie hight this shadie plot, it was a sacred place
 To chast Diana and the Nymphes that wayted on hir grace.
 Within the furthest end thereof there was a pleasant Bowre
 So vaulted with the leavie trees the Sunne had there no powre:
 Not made by hand nor mans devise: and yet no man alive,
 A trimmer piece of worke than that could for his life contrive.
 With flint and Pommy was it wallde by nature halfe about,
 And on the right side of the same full freshly flowed out
 A lively spring with Christall streame: whereof the upper brim
 Was greene with grasse and matted herbes that smelled verie trim.
 (3, 178-189)

At such a time and in just such a place, the lusty Jove had compromised the innocent Callisto, repeating the pattern of his earlier crime against the equally blameless Io (II, 409ff/2, 512ff and I, 588ff/1, 727ff). The internal logic of the poem dictates that guileless Actaeon must suffer the whimsical wrath of Diana, and that his fate will in turn be echoed in the stories of Arethusa (whose Renaissance reputation seems undeserved), and Cephalus and Procris - yet another case of misjudged guilt and causeless jealousy (V, 577ff/5, 716ff and VII, 661ff/7, 851ff).

In the story of Actaeon, Ovid goes out of his way to lay responsibility at the door of a capricious Fortune rather than an arbitrating poetic justice. Elsewhere in the poem, however, he lets the metaphorical suggestiveness of the natural setting carry the weight of narrative assertion. The sylvan scenes point up the vulnerability of 'honour' and 'beauty' in 'a world of harms'. Offering false succour, the seeming havens prove to be 'fitted by kind for rape and Villainy'.⁷³ The natural world can, indeed, seem to pander to human permissiveness. Ovid's fusion of figure and setting - Salmacis and her pool, Jove in the guise of a snowy bull luxuriating in the tender grass (II, 850ff/2, 1062ff) - seems to demonstrate a general rule of lawlessness which undermines human responsibility. But, at the same time, the particularity

of Ovid's characterization allows him to question the stature and infer the culpability of the men and women who prove the validity of any such rule. Thus Salmacis' pride and self-indulgence is idiosyncratically human. And the comic-pathos of Jove's metamorphosis similarly turns on the convincing anthropomorphism which underpins Ovid's delightful dramatization of the incompatibility between 'maiestas et amor'. (Recalling Shakespeare's Titania here may help to clarify the point).

Ovid's playful illustration of nature's double standard anticipates the frequently more angst-ridden Christian apprehension of humanity's burden: 'Vainly begot, and yet forbidden vanity: Created sick, commanded to be sound'.⁷⁴ His readiness to expose the darker side of eros suggests a temperamental dissatisfaction with the simplifications of romantic idealism and an aversion to moral hypocrisy. It also reflects a pragmatic eye for the literary opportunities afforded by disclosing the Janus-face of pastoral:

In terrain which is itself paradoxically both virginal and dangerous, the roles of hunter and victim are repeatedly reversed; the virgin hunter is himself pursued and destroyed; the water of the pool both purifies and menaces; in the holy groves, acts of demonic brutality are perpetrated; in the shady woods, traditionally the haunt of lovers, fearsome violations take place in the name of love, as nature reveals at unexpected moments her claws and bloody fangs.⁷⁵

Finally, it has been suggested that, by absorbing and transforming the violence and eroticism, Ovid's pastoral settings render it aesthetically acceptable.⁷⁶ But the question of our response to the mixture of wit and cruelty, literary artifice and pictorial realism in the Metamorphoses is much wider than Ovid's use of natural backdrops. Because some of the most interesting moral and aesthetic issues raised by the poem derive from this ad-mixture and are necessarily raised in considering the Elizabethan response to Ovid - particularly in a poem like Venus and Adonis or a play like Titus Andronicus - it is a subject to which I will be returning.⁷⁷

In contrast to the noon-time landscape used in the tales of innocence defiled, Ovid employs a formulaic nocturnal setting to counterpoint a set of stories concerned with different kinds of unnatural passion. The deep stillness of the night sets in relief the deviant concerns and watchful cares of the individual who remains active in body and mind. After the banquet given in Tereus' honour by King Pandion, the court retires to enjoy 'great nature's second course'; only King Tereus, burning with incestuous love for Philomela, remains awake:

...in his minde revolving all the night
 Hir face, hir gesture, and hir hands, imagine all the rest
 (The which as yet he had not seene) as likte his fancie best.
 He feedes his flames himselfe. No winke could come within his eyes,
 For thinking ay on hir.

(6, 627-631)

When Tereus has had his particularly brutal way with his sister-in-law, it is once more 'a nighttimes' when Procne instigates her terribly apposite revenge (VI, 587ff/6, 748ff).

The unnaturalness of Medea's passion is similarly defined by as almost preternatural stillness and quiet. The sequence foreshadows Lady Macbeth's sleep-walking scene. But the hushed tones are also curiously suggestive of the 'hallowed and..gracious..time' longingly invoked by Marcellus as a foil to present-day Denmark, when spirits do dare to stir abroad:⁷⁸

Before the Moone should circlewise close both hir hornes in one
 Three nightes were yet as then to come. As soon as that she shone
 Most full of light, and did behold the earth with fulsome face,
 Medea with hir haire not trust so much as in a lace,
 But flaring on hir shoulders twaine, and barefoote, with hir gowne
 Ungirded, gate hir out of doores and wandred up and downe
 Alone the dead time of the night. Both Man, and Beast, and Bird
 Were fast asleep: the Serpents slie in trayling forward stird
 So softly as ye could have thought they still asleepe had bene
 The moysting Ayre was whist. No leafe ye could have moving sene.
(7, 244-253)⁷⁹

The same contrast between the wakeful individual who is denied 'the balm of hurt minds' and those whose rest is untroubled lends dramatic force to

the scene where Scylla hazards her father's life for the love of Minos, his Cretan enemy:

Night (chiefest Nurce of thoughts to such as with care opprest)
 Approached while she spake these words, and darknesse did encrease
 Hir boldnesse. At such time as folke are wont to find release
 Of cares that all the day before were working in their heds,
 By sleepe which falleth first of all upon them in their beds,
 Hir fathers chamber secretly she entered: where (alasse
 That ever Maiden should so farre the bounds of Nature passe)
 She robde hir Father of the haire upon the which the fate
 Depended both of life and death and of his royall state.
 (8, 101-109)⁸⁰

Finally, both Byblis and Myrrha wrestle with their perverse desires at 'high mydnight' (10, 44), and when Myrrha does advance towards the guilty assignation with her father, her action corresponds to a turning point in the constellations (X, 446-447/10, 511-514).⁸¹

The formulaic, 'nox erat' which marks the crises of these stories is a traditional epic flourish. The characterization of night as 'the nurse of care' is similarly conventional and would be identified by Renaissance schoolboys as a cronographia, a descriptive figure of time, which allowed the poet to amplify the human emotion.⁸² But the 'dead of night' seems to have held a peculiar fascination and significance for Ovid. Like the complementary noon-tide hiatus in the natural rhythm, the ambiguous hour of midnight is used to counterpoint the paradoxical emotions of his characters and to call attention to the critical nature of the decisions on which their future lives will turn. The midnight setting does not simply provide a highly dramatic backdrop for human action, it also reveals the self-defeating unnaturalness of crimes committed against brother, father, host, king and other members of the extended human family.

The same nexus of associations recurs throughout Shakespeare's work. In Titus Andronicus, II,ii, Tamara's reference to the 'dead time of the night' (1.99) underlines the emblematic quality of the 'barren detested vale'

For both Ovid and Shakespeare, the temporary paralysis of the natural sequence means there is nothing to nurture the moral impetus in the mirroring human microcosm. The fight between 'frozen conscience and hot burning will' (The Rape of Lucrece, l.247) is ipso facto an unequal one. 'Pure thoughts are dead and still': those who remain wakeful are by definition 'unnatural' and their movements are clearly marked as such. In anticipation of Lady Macbeth's sleep-walking, Tarquin and Macbeth, like Ovid's Byblis and Medea, move in an almost trance-like state to an outcome which, for all the agonies of equivocation, we feel to have been inevitable. Medea's, 'The best I see and like: the worst I follow headlong still' (7, 25), speaks for them all. The total abrogation of personality which is incurred is expressed in the Metamorphoses by the total identification of the characters with the emotion that overwhelms them - Niobe with grief, Procne and Hecuba with vengeance and so on. In Shakespeare's work, it is suggested by the personified 'lust and murder' of the Lucrece sequence, and is caught even more perfectly in Macbeth's self-dramatizing abstraction, 'wither'd murder', who 'towards his design/ Moves like a ghost'.⁸⁷

3. Explicatory Analogues: Natural Imagery

While landscape in the Metamorphoses often functions metaphorically, Ovid also makes extended use of formal imagery to explicate human action more directly. Brooks Otis has noted that Ovid clearly knew that similes were 'de riguer in epic' (they occur far more frequently than in the Fasti), but that he did not use the convention in the Metamorphoses in a traditional epic way: 'as a means of inflating the content to a certain stylistic amplitude'.⁸⁸ Many years ago, C. Knox Pooler made a similar observation about Shakespeare's use of expansive illustrations and exempla in Venus

and Adonis. The genre imposed the criterion of copiousness, and Shakespeare was clearly concerned to strike just the right fashionable note. Nevertheless, he was remarkably restrained: 'what in others is visible padding, or affectation, is in him natural growth...'⁸⁹ Pooler's further characterization of both Ovid and Shakespeare as (compared to the Euphuists) 'miracles of temperance' is at variance with many received ideas about Ovid and his influence, both current, and in the Renaissance when his name was often used as a synonym for excess.⁹⁰ Pooler's remarks, then, can help to define the organic quality of the narrative expansions in both Ovid and Shakespeare; the way they 'grow out of' the central situations in the poems. In the Metamorphoses, the natural comparisons bring human action within the controlling idea of change and relate the shifting equivocations of the psyche, the volatile emotions, and the variations in physical appearance to the agonistic and revolutionary model of the natural world. Here, as in Venus and Adonis and Shakespeare's much later plays Troilus and Cressida and Antony and Cleopatra, conflict and change are portrayed as the irreducible fact of human life: our natural inheritance.

Ovid's reorientation of epic simile may be instanced in his characterization of Myrrha's midnight struggle with her own perverse desires:

...One while shee sinkes in deepe despayre. Anon
 Shee fully myndes to give attempt, but shame doth hold her in.
 Shee wishes and shee wotes not what to doo, nor how to gin.
 And like as when a mightye tree with axes heaved rownd,
 Now redy with a strype or twaine to lye uppon the grownd,
 Uncerteine is which way to fall and tottreth every way:
 Even so her mynd with dowlfull wound effeebled then did stray
 Now heere now there uncerteinely, and tooke of bothe encrease.
 (10, 417-424).

This same image of a 'tottering' partly-felled tree had originally been applied by Homer to the fall of Sarpedon, and subsequently elevated by Virgil to characterize the fall of Troy.⁹¹ In contrast, Ovid uses the

simile to project an emotional conflict concretely and dramatically, and to interpret the human predicament for his readers.⁹²

As the mother of Meleager, who is also the murderer of her two brothers, Althaea is caught in an impossible emotional impasse. Again Ovid both dramatizes and explicates her dilemma by reference to the natural condition:

As mother and as sister both she strove what way to go:
The divers names drew diversly hir stomacke to and fro...

.....
One while hir looke resembled one that threatned cruelnesse:
Another while ye would have thought she minded pitiousnesse....
..... And as a Boate which tide contrarie beares
Against the winde, feeles double force, and is compeld to yeelede
To both, so Thesties daughter now unable for to weelde
Hir doubtful passions, diversly is caried off and on,
And changeably she waxes calme, and stormes againe anon.
(8, 607-618)

Despite the formal machinery of comparison (more obtrusive in Golding's habitual, 'And as....so..' translation, than in Ovid's frequent variations of the 'quam....sit' construction), there is nothing formulaic or applied about Ovid's use of such similes. It is, perhaps, difficult for anyone approaching Ovid through post-Petrarchan literature to appreciate their freshness and resonance in the Metamorphoses. But the similes are far more than a traditional device for representing a divided mind which they became in the Renaissance, and can be in Seneca, for example. When Althaea ends her identity crisis by settling on the role of sister and determining revenge, Ovid tells us that she is 'pious in impiety' (inpietate pia est, VIII, 477). The pithy force of the moral paradox is somewhat diluted in Golding's prolix translation: 'In meaning to be one way kinde, doth worke another way / Against kinde' (8, 621-622). But the basic underlying paradox, which is, in a sense, Ovid's subject - the notion of 'Nature that made thee, with herself at strife'⁹³ - is, if anything, more pronounced in the English version. Ovid is less interested in argument than in the investigation of human character and behaviour.⁹⁴ The rhetoric is matched to an emotional situation which is itself an expression

of a natural law of conflict and change. To twist Eliot's aphorism about Seneca's plays, in Ovid's poem, the drama is not all in the word, and the word has a further reality behind it - albeit a shifting and unstable one.⁹⁵

When passion strikes in the Metamorphoses it strikes suddenly and with great intensity. Like the discors concordia which recreates animal life after the Flood, characteristically its inception is paradoxical. There may be - as in the case of Daphne and Philomela - a contradiction between the woman's provoking beauty and the innocence of her intentions. Or there may be a mismatch between the status of her lover - deity, guardian, sibling nymph or child - and the object of his or her desire. Ovid makes comic capital from the god of prophecy, lost in a wishfulfilling imagination, unable to foresee his own future, or the conceit of the sun-god, inflamed with desire, and we remember Shakespeare's Venus, 'Poor queen of love, in (her) own law forlorn' (Venus and Adonis, 1.251). He also lingers, with at times a prurient curiosity, over the confounding of relationships which would result from the unnatural union anticipated by a yearning sister or daughter.

The psychological change in the lover, which is a prelude to physical metamorphosis in both the lover and the beloved, is frequently compared to a sudden conflagration in nature. The pattern is established in Book I, when Apollo, smitten with Daphne's beauty, 'goes into' flames:⁹⁶

And as light hame when corne is reapt, or hedges burne with brandes,
That passers by when day drawes neere throwe loosely fro their handes,
So into flames the God is gone and burneth in his brest
And feedes his vaine and barraine love in hoping for the best.
(1, 596-599).

This flame motif, which comes to signal comic folly, can also prefigure tragically misplaced desire. Thus, at the sight of Philomela, Tereus

did burne in his desire,
As if a man should chaunce to set a gulf of corne on fire
Or burne a stacke of hay.

(6, 582-584).

The objects of this desire, Daphne and Philomela, unconsciously add fuel to the fire: the one by ironically exhibiting her beauty in fleeing from her pursuer (1, 645); the other by passionately pleading with her father and giving her covert lover vicarious pleasure (6, 606-616). In both stories, the erotic chase is compared to the unequal contest of stronger and weaker animals. And, in sequences which Shakespeare recalled in some detail in his Ovidian juvenilia, the paradoxes fly thick and fast. Puffing and panting behind the fleet nymph who is, herself, accustomed to the role of huntress rather than victim (1, 475-476/1, 573-575), the god of the bow protests that his customary pursuit should be reglossed:

.... I chase not as a fo:
 Stay Nymph: the Lambes so flee the Wolves, the Stags the Lions so.
 With flittring feathers sielie Doves so from the Gossehauke flie,
 And every creature from his foe. Love is the cause that I
 Do followe thee: alas alas how woulde it grieve my heart,
 To see thee fall among the briers, and that the bloud should start
 Out of thy tender legges, I, wretch, the causer of thy smart.
 The place is rough to which thou runst, take leysure I thee pray,
 Abate thy flight, and I my selfe my running pace will stay.
(1, 610-618).

Apollo's disclaimer does little to advance his cause: the words which distinguish his humanity are contradicted by his less than human actions. When they are rejected as an impediment to animal efficiency, Ovid supplies the appropriate simile:

And even as when the greedie Grewnde doth course the sielie Hare,
 Amiddes the plaine and champion fieldes without all covert bare,
 Both twaine of them doe straine themselves and lay on footemanship,
 Who may best runne with all his force the tother to outstrip,
 The t'one for safetie of his lyfe, the tother for his pray,
 The Grewnde aye prest with open mouth to beare the Hare away,
 Thrusts forth his snoute gyrdeth out and at hir loynes doth snatch,
 As though he would at everie stride betweene his teeth hir latch:
 Againe in doubt of being caught the Hare aye shrinking slips
 Upon the sodaine from his Jawes, and from betweene his lips:
 So farde Apollo and the Mayde: hope made Apollo swift,
 And feare did make the Mayden fleete devising how to shift.
(1, 649-660)

Comparison of the sequences with Venus and Adonis (ll.695ff) reveals the mixed genealogy of 'poor Wat', Shakespeare's 'purblind hare' (Venus and

Adonis, ll.695ff). Despite the homely sportsman's name, literary example stimulated Shakespeare's imagination at least as much as Warwickshire experience - as the motto for Venus and Adonis reminds us.⁹⁷ Both Ovid and Shakespeare make a strong appeal to the visual imagination. The remarkable couplet in Venus and Adonis which transfixes, as it were for all time, the cross-country flight of Adonis' 'trampling courser' and the 'breeding jennet',

And they were mad unto the wood they hie them,
Outstripping crows that strive to overfly them. (ll.323-324)

has the same 'plastic quality' as the many images in the Metamorphoses which show why Ovid had such a strong influence on Renaissance art.⁹⁸ But, by asking us to interpret human behaviour with reference to the conflicts, irrationalities and lawless cruelties of the animal kingdom, the images appeal to the mind as well as the eye. As a consequence, they are among those passages in the Metamorphoses most susceptible to allegorizing or moralizing by Neo-Platonist and Christian interpreters.⁹⁹ Ovid leaves his myths open to such interpretations, but he himself is primarily concerned to expose the universality of the metamorphosis theme. Connections are forged between the artistic transformations that conclude the narratives and the natural changes which occur in the stories themselves. The extended images, which ask us to interpret human action in a particular light, also suggest the connection between metaphor and metamorphosis - a topic which receives further explicit investigation elsewhere in the poem.¹⁰⁰

There is a common thread running through Ovid's depiction of passion in the 'comedic' and the 'tragic' episodes in the Metamorphoses, connecting both to a Lucretian view of nature informed by a single vital force. We respond as differently to Jove's metamorphosis to a bull and Tereus' transformation to a bird of prey, as we do to Bottom's 'translation' and

Tarquin's vulture-like debasement. But the hazard to personal identity of strong emotion is a persistent theme which both Ovid and Shakespeare explore in the mood of romantic comedy or the spirit of tragedy. Moreover the persistence of the same natural imagery through diverse stories militates against any absolute categorization of mood and genre. As with Venus and Adonis, we are often unsure whether the poem is inviting a serious or humourous response, and it would seem to be part of Ovid's purpose to keep us guessing.¹⁰¹ Here again the Metamorphoses resists simplistic notions of decorum and exposes the shallowness of rigid doctrines of mimesis on which they are based. In the Ars Amatoria, Ovid had shown how his 'naughty subject, love, had invaded all other genres (epic, tragedy, comedy etc.)',¹⁰² and in the Metamorphoses he continually reminds his readers that 'the web of our life is a mingled yarn'. The natural similes and metaphors are a reminder that human affairs are no more stable than the weather. As in Shakespeare's Comedies, wedding celebrations in Ovid's poem are likely to be interrupted by discordant notes - 'a sodaine change from feasting into fray', which is a reminder of the tempest just outside the door (V/5, 1-7).

A comparison with Virgil may help finally to bring into focus the Ovidian vision of the Metamorphoses which Shakespeare found congenial. One of the major themes or tensions in the Aeneid has been well characterized as 'the contrast which it creates between "this world" and "visions of some other world"'.¹⁰³ In contrast, the focus in the Metamorphoses, for all that it is preoccupied with the lives of the deities, is resolutely on this world, and the tensions in the poem derive from the natural rather than the supernatural frame of reference. There is little to distinguish between the behaviour of men and gods and the vital relationship is that between the individual and the immediate world around him. Like Shakespeare's Macbeth, Ovid is ready to 'jump the life to come'.

Chapter III

RESPONSIBILITIES

*TITANIA: And this same progeny of evil comes
From our debate, from our dissension;
We are their parents and original.*

*(A Midsummer Night's Dream,
II,i, 115-117)*

*LADY ANNE: Thy deeds inhuman and unnatural
Provokes this deluge most unnatural.*

(Richard III, I,ii, 60-61)

*CERES: Earth's increase, foison plenty,
Barns and garner never empty;
Vines with clust'ring bunches growing,
Plants with goodly burden bowing;
Spring come to you at the farthest,
In the very end of harvest!
Scarcity and want shall shun you,
Ceres' blessing so is on you*

(The Tempest, IV,i, 110-117)

1. The Human Model: Man and Nature

In the Metamorphoses, as in Shakespeare's plays, human affairs do not always copy the natural pattern: sometimes they furnish the model. The all too-human foibles of the poem's presiding deities have consequences as universally catastrophic as those for which Titania acknowledges responsibility in Shakespeare's early comedy. The discrepancy between divine status and human or even sub-human behaviour permits moral evaluation along with comedy, as Ovid makes capital from the incongruities inherent in the mythic tradition of treating the gods as both the personification of natural forces and idiosyncratic personalities. Thus Phaeton is heir apparent to no less a deity than the Sun-God; he is also a spoiled and peevish child with a severe identity problem. Venus is the incarnation of Love and a jealous power-broker. Ceres, at once the goddess of Agriculture

and a loving mother to her daughter, Proserpina. The double vision of myth permits the radical word-play we find in Shakespeare's early poem, where Venus is 'Love', 'loves', and yet 'is not loved' (1.610). It also allows both Ovid and Shakespeare to realize a major thematic concern - the interdependence of man and nature - in a peculiarly dramatic way.

When, in the Metamorphoses, Venus' politicking against Dis, the King of the Underworld, leads to the rape of Proserpina, Ceres takes revenge by withdrawing the gift of fertility from Sicily, the scene of her daughter's deflowering:

But bitterly above the rest she banned Sicilie,
 In which the mention of hir losse she plainely did espie.
 And therefore there with cruell hand the earing ploughes she brake,
 And man and beast that tilde the grounde to death in anger strake.
 She marrde the seede, and eke forbade the fieldes to yeeld their
 frute.
 The plenteousnesse of that same Ile of which there went suche
 bruit
 Through all the world, lay dead: the corne was killed in the blade:
 Now too much drought, now too much wet did make it for to fade.
 The starres and blasting windes did hurt, the hungry foules did
 eate
 The corne in ground: the Tines and Briars did overgrow the Wheate.
 And other wicked weedes the corne continually annoy,
 Which neyther tylth nor toyle of man was able to destroy.
 (5, 593-604).

This sequence in the Metamorphoses, like Titania's 'forgeries of jealousy' speech, which is in part indebted to it,¹ rubs shoulders with broad humour but is itself untinged by comedy. Ovid's tone here, and in the ensuing lament of Arethusa for Sicily, suggests first-hand experience of natural disaster and a peculiarly strong feeling for the Italian island.² On reflection, we may notice how surprisingly well Titania's speech chimes with the choric expressions of grief for a similarly devastated island in Richard II. For in Shakespeare's history cycle sequential time and natural fertility once more fall victim to the unruly passions of quasi-gods who are yet 'flesh and blood'. In the melting-pot of Shakespeare's imagination, the double vision of myth blends with medieval doctrines of the King's

'two bodies' to dramatize Richard's tragic dilemma. Classical, Biblical and proverbial law inform Gaunt's patriotic speeches and the emblematic Garden Scene (III,iv). The familiar patterns of the Metamorphoses fuse readily with the rhythms of Elizabethan homilies against civil war, whilst Ovidian and Yorkist mythology combine in the characterization of the Sun-King. Richard's 'rash fierce blaze of riot' and its lingering consequences emulate Phaethon's trail-blazing chariot ride, which creates confusion in the heavens, upsets the world climatic patterns, stifles the earth's productivity, and finally threatens a return to the primeval chaos which, in Shakespeare's history cycle, actually materializes in the person of Richard III.³

The tonal ambivalence of the Metamorphoses enabled Shakespeare to adumbrate serious or comedic concerns by reference to the same protean metaphor. In Troilus and Cressida, the seminal story of Deucalion's Flood illustrates the anarchic overthrow of degree; in the Comedies, as we have seen, it is an emblem for the creative confounding of form in the poetic imagination. It is worth remembering that Phaethon, who threatens to end the world's creativity, is resurrected in Daedalus-Icarus, the story of the artist who dares and an Horatian emblem of the audacious poet.⁴ Ovid helped Shakespeare to chart the ambiguous territory between despotic over-reaching and imaginative endeavour. The refusal of both poets to keep simple decorum extends the boundaries of the possible in life, as well as art. In the major tragedies we are repeatedly shown 'the heavens...as troubled with man's act' (Macbeth, II,iv, 4). The Proserpina-inspired metaphor of 'corn o'er grown by weeds' - the negative image of the 'sustaining corn' invoked by Cordelia (King Lear, IV.iv, 6) - is a recurrent emblem of human irresponsibility and failure of the moral will. In the more stylized of the History plays, the same image is a powerful stage icon of Kingly failure to fulfil the natural contract.⁵ But it is the generous

licence of Romance which in theatrical terms most closely approximates to the decorous indecorum of Ovidian myth. This all-embracing 'kind' allows Shakespeare to dramatize fully the human responsibility for natural good and ill and to explore the continuities between the creative and anarchic principles.

Two stories in the Metamorphoses will serve to illustrate the significant coincidence of Ovidian and Shakespearean concerns in the Comedies and Romances. Both are stories which define human responsibilities by positive rather than negative images; by reference to what might be, rather than to what, in a fallen world, usually is. The narrative focus here describes a reciprocity between man and the world around him which reveals the vital mediating role of human love in the process from chaos to cosmos.⁶ The best loved of these stories, that of Philemon and Baucis, I will be discussing in a later chapter. For it is no accident that this recasting of Deucalion and Pyrrha in a naturalized theodicy makes, as it were, an 'on stage' appearance in Shakespeare's pastoral, As You Like It.⁷ But the tale of Ceyx and Alcyone, another Renaissance favourite, similarly illustrates the benevolent interchange between man and nature which regenerates the original contract between the Divine Creator and His world. Somewhat in the manner of Shakespeare's Last Plays, the story also repeats and summarizes many of Ovid's major preoccupations and can be seen as a miniature of the Metamorphoses itself.

With the exception of the Phaethon story, that of Ceyx and Alcyone (XI, 410-748/11, 471-862) is the longest single episode in the Metamorphoses and one of the most carefully crafted in the poem. One of the early Elizabethan translations of individual tales which were competing with Golding's compendium in the 1560's,⁸ the story was already familiar in English from The Book of the Duchess, where Chaucer had used it to great

effect. Like the Philemon and Baucis, the story deals with deep conjugal affections. And like so many of Ovid's stories, it is also about the power of love which is portrayed here as a primal civilizing force, as it is in the opening of the Metamorphoses and the Ars Amatoria (II, 467ff). Taking the lead from the speaker of Chaucer's poem, who thought the tale 'a wonder thing' (l.61), Golding eschews a rigidly moralistic reading. In his Epistle, the story is glossed as an illustration of 'most constant love / Such as betweene the man and wyfe to be it dooth behove' (ll.232-233). Dedicating a very different translation to the Earl of Oxford later in his career, Golding could think of no better model for the young man's marriage than 'the love of Ceix and Alcyonee'.⁹ The orthodox moralizing of the tale - as an exemplum of hubris and mistaken faith in the transitory joys of this world - which Sandys maintains, is perhaps an unreflective response to traditional versions of the myth rather than a considered reaction to Ovid's somewhat different telling of it.¹⁰ Although the chief protagonists in the story both have divine parents, Lucifer and Aeolus do not interfere in the central action; nor is Ovid's tale one of divine retribution. The supernatural does have an important role to play in the dream-vision sequence. But the masque-like machinery, which is here such a powerful dramatic coup, is more readily equatable to the human imagination than to any divine ordering of things. Above all, it is nature, revealed as a power which can both destroy and heal, which is the most important force in the story.¹¹

Many details of the Ceyx and Alcyone are suggestive of the tempest-tossed world of Shakespeare's Last Plays. The dramatic realism of the storm sequence, where Ovid uses direct speech to capture the ship-board fear and confusion, is particularly evocative of the opening scenes of The Tempest. The verbal echoes are frequently as striking as the 'specific details' from the Bermuda pamphlets which Geoffrey Bullough cites in his study of

the play's background.¹² My purpose here, however, is not to try to tie down Ariel. Shakespeare's rich and strange play is, in any event, resistant, water-resistant one might say, to attempts to attribute its magic to specific sources. Nevertheless, implicit in the following discussion is my conviction that it is precisely this kind of story in the Metamorphoses and, more importantly, this manner of telling of it, which stimulated Shakespeare's imagination throughout his career - often in those plays where it is least possible to pin down the question of 'influence' to a definite 'source' or 'analogue'. Ovid's story of Ceyx and Alcyone is a finely executed work of art, which handles lightly serious matters which concerned Shakespeare deeply. It is in this sense, that both A Midsummer Night's Dream and The Tempest can be described as Ovidian plays.

The Ceyx and Alcyone is very carefully constructed: its repeated motifs and symmetrical sequences draw attention to the poet's shaping hand, while at every level of the story we are made aware of Ovid's persistent concern with the nature of his craft, and his desire to relate the wondrous changes of the poetic imagination to those of the natural world. The first storm in the story (XI, 427-443/ll, 491-510) is, in fact, a purely imaginary one, conjured up by Alcyone in an attempt to dissuade her husband from his proposed journey to the oracle. The fearful vision carries the weight of experience, however, for 'as a little wench within my fathers bowre' (ll, 503) Alcyone, like Miranda, was taught the power of the elements. Although her father is the wind-god, Alcyone has witnessed 'the broken ribbes of shippes alate upon the shore', seen the tombs of men whom 'the sea had swallowed', and has no conviction that the 'boystrous wind' is subject to any rule, human or divine. On the contrary, she has learnt that, once released, this force will overcome all natural boundaries, ignoring the 'priviledge' of land and sea and 'vexing' the fire and air of the heavens themselves (ll, 493-500).

The 'actual' sea-storm (XI, 474-572/11, 549-665) which separates husband and wife is thus a realization of Alcyone's worst fears and a dramatic enactment of the irrepressible natural force she had previously imagined. Here, indeed, nature more than fulfils the imaginative prescription. Full of nautical diction and phraseology, the clamour of the elements and the competing cacophony of human voices, the sequence is an impressive piece of dramatic realism by a poet often associated exclusively with amatory dalliance and conceited word-play.

Yet despite the salt-tang of the sea, this is a self-consciously literary storm; an imaginative tour de force, replete with epic similes, in which Ovid attempts to 'out-tempest' Homer, Virgil and other famous interpreters of the storm motif.¹³ The tempest is also an emblem or miniature of his own poem, with even small details repeated from the larger canvass of the work. Thus on the Trachinian ship the confusion of the sailors exacerbates the elemental havoc and destruction: as we see elsewhere in Ovid's poem and also in Shakespeare's later plays, the desperation of human beings 'assists' the storm:¹⁴

Anon the Mayster cryed: Strike the toppesayle, let the mayne
 Sheate flye and fardle it to the yard. Thus spake he, but in vayne,
 For why so hideous was the storme uppon the soodeine brayd,
 That not a man was able there to heere what other sayd.
 And lowd the sea with meeting waves extremely raging rores.
 Yit fell they to it of them selves. Sum haalde asyde the Ores:
 Sum fensed in the Gallies sydes, sum downe the sayleclothes rend:
 Sum pump the water out, and sea to sea ageine doo send.
 Another haales the sayleyards downe. And whyle they did eche thing
 Disorderly, the storme increast, and from eche quarter fling
 The wyndes with deadly foode, and bownce the raging waves together.
 The Pilot being sore dismayd sayth playne, he knowes not whither
 To wend himself, nor what to doo or bid, nor in what state
 Things stood. So huge the mischief was, and did so overmate
 All arte.

(11, 557-571)

As heaven and earth appear to change places and the surging waves 'did seeme to mate the skye' (11, 573) in fulfilment of Alcyone's vision, we are reminded of that ceaseless 'interchange of state' which is the major subject

of the poem's opening and closing books. The storm-sequence similarly recapitulates many of the poem's major concerns: the volatile changeability of events; the agonistic natural model which conditions human character and action; the vulnerability of human values and achievements in a 'world of harms'.

But the tempest is also a central illustration of the aesthetic consequences of Ovid's world vision. In Golding's ambiguously suggestive phrase, the natural 'mischeef' did 'overmate / All arte',¹⁵ and the transgression of natural boundaries - seemingly so destructive - is also a creative confounding of form - a mixing of kinds - which extends the artistic parameters of the poem. The relentlessly shifting perspectives of the storm sequence maximize Ovid's continuous experiments with narrative point of view. In this story he has already shown an almost painterly interest in the effects of distance and relative size, when depicting Ceyx's departure from the shore-line vantage point of the watching Alcyone:

She lifting up her watrye eyes behilld her husband stand
 Uppon the hatches making signes by beckening with his hand:
 And she made signes to him ageine. And after that the land
 Was farre removed from the shippe, and that the sight began
 To bee unable to discerne the face of any man,
 As long as ere shee could shee lookt uppon the rowing keele.
 And when shee could no longer tyme for distance ken it weele,
 Shee looked still uppon the sayles that flasked with the wynd
 Uppon the maast. And when she could the sayles no longer fynd
 She gate her to her empty bed with sad and sorye hart,
 And layd her downe.

(ll, 537-547)

Metamorphosis is interpreted here as that 'diminution of space' which Shakespeare dramatizes in *Cymbeline*, when a similarly faithful and sorrowing Imogen watches the sea-ward departure of Posthumous, until he is 'pointed...sharp as my needle' (I,iii, 18-19).¹⁶ In Ovid's central storm sequence, things constantly change their size and value. The sea, itself, the most fluid element of all, is throughout the poem - as throughout the Shakespearean canon - synonymous with metamorphosis. In the shipwreck

scene its symbolic value is equally protean: now 'blacker than the waters of the styx', and now beguilingly innocent-seeming as it 'lyeth playne and loometh whyght with seething froth thereon' (11, 578). As the sea, so the ship 'ay alteration tooke':

One whyle as from a mountaynes toppe it seemed downe to looke
To vallyes and the depth of hell. Another whyle beset
With swelling surges round about which neere above it met,
It looked from the bottom of the whoorlepoole up aloft
As if it were from hell to heaven.

(11, 580-584)

The echo of Deucalion's Flood in Book I is quite deliberate: here is another natural exemplum of 'fishes-in-the-trees' which licenses the poem's extraordinary perspectives and its habitual mingling of kinds.

The Ovidian sequence can, I think, be used to illuminate that dramatically audacious moment in Act III scene iii of The Winter's Tale, when Shakespeare brings on a shepherd and a clown to mix tragic with comic matter, 'things dying' with 'things new-born'. Here, as it were, Shakespeare rises to the Ovidian challenge. The Clown's simultaneous narratives of the tempest-tossed ship, and Antigonus and the bear (a fabulous tale if ever there was one), superimpose the double perspectives - from land, and from sea - of the Ceyx and Alcyone story:

I have seen two such sights, by sea and by land!
But I am not to say it is a sea, for it is now
the sky; betwixt the firmament and it you cannot
thrust a bodkin's point.

(III,iii, 81-84)

The merging of the elements, like the fusion of the two story-lines and the discontinuous visual image of the 'poor souls at sea' - 'sometimes to see 'em, and not to see 'em' - is emblematic of the play's violent conjunctions and indecorous mixing of kinds. For nature, great kinde, herself, is notoriously lax at keeping simple decorum:

...now the ship boring the moon

with her main mast, and anon swallowed with yeast
 and froth, as you'd thrust a cork into a hogshead.
 (III,iii, 90-93)

Less than a minute can bring a change in the natural perspective. And, like Ovid, Shakespeare, throughout his career, evolved a dynamic decorum by experimenting with different theatrical equivalents for a world perceived in constant flux. Storms, as King Lear centrally demonstrates, are particularly great dissolvers of difference and discretion. In that play, only when the King has learnt the handy-dandy language of a world upside-down can the Fool be dispensed with. In The Winter's Tale, it is only fitting that, as natural boundaries are overridden, the 'poor gentleman's' end should be recorded by a clown. For with the loss of nature's 'privileges' (Metamorphoses, ll, 499) goes the claim to human distinction. Roarers care nothing for the name of King (The Tempest, I,i, 15) and, in Ovid's tale, Ceyx,

The king himselfe was fayne
 A shiver of the sunken shippe in that same hand to hold,
 In which hee erst a royall mace had hilld of yellow gold.
 (ll, 649-651)

What happens now in Ovid's romance is, in one sense, an abrupt change of pace, style and, indeed, idiom. After the manner of the modern film director, Ovid 'cuts' to what Shakespeare's clown would call 'the land service', to depict events from the perspective of waiting and watching Alcyone. With the shift in perspective, comes a change in genre; the dramatic realism of the storm is superceded by a dream-vision (XI, 573-709/ll, 666-818), which is the apotheosis of mythic fantasy. Juno, Iris and Morpheus take over the major roles played hitherto by the wind and the waves. It is through their intercession that Alcyone learns the truth about her husband's fate. The Cave of Sleep sequence with Iris' soothing invocation to Sleep, 'balm of the soul' (XI, 623), is deliberately contrasted with the frenzied activity of the opening storm.¹⁷ And, indeed,

the whole dream sequence is a beautiful example of Ovid's antipathy to tonal continuity, for it is as whimsical and humourous as the first part of the story is stridently naturalistic and passionate. Having proven his Virgilian credentials with 'The Compleat Storm',¹⁸ Ovid now revels in the kind of fantastic imagining which inspired the minutiae of Mercutio's Queen Mab, or the Popian vision of The Rape of the Lock. When the myriad 'shapes of sleep' hinder Iris' access to the cave, and her own bright rainbow hues light-up the customary darkness, when Sleep has to shake himself free of himself to respond to Juno's bidding, and can scarcely raise an eyelid, it is evident that Ovid is exploiting the incongruities inherent in the mythic tradition, pushing allegory about as far as it can go, and yet celebrating his liberation from the constraints of realism and the imaginative freedom which the vehicle of myth provides. Our role as audience to this great magician is to sit back, wonder and applaud the extravagant effects which his art can conjure.¹⁹

With its supernatural machinery and coups de théâtre, the dream vision in the Ceyx and Alcyone story is indeed comparable to a spectacular Interlude in a Jacobean play. But there is more here than the virtuoso display and pure illusionism of the mannerist artist.²⁰ And Ovid is no simple magus. If the storm sequence uses nature to conceal art, the dream vision employs art to 'masque' nature. We have moved from a world of elemental change to one of artistic legerdemain: metamorphosis remains the common theme. Characteristically, Ovid blurs the distinction between imaginative and natural transformations by comparing the host of dream shapes to the multiple 'eares of corne....in harvest tyme' (XI, 613-615/11, 713-714). The thematic language of metamorphosis further augments the ambiguity: it is Morpheus' task to 'fashion a shape that shall seem true form' ('quae veras aequant imitamine formas', XI, 626); an apparition

of Ceyx which will advise Alcyone of the truth and end her fruitless intercessions to the goddess, Juno. Golding's translation catches the nuances of Ovid's meaning more succinctly than can modern English. The vision of Ceyx will be

a dreame that in theyre kyndes can every thing expresse.
(11, 727)

There is more than a hint of Ariel in Ovid's characterization of Morpheus, especially in Golding's 'Morph, the feyner of mannes shape, a craftye lad' (11, 736).²¹ But, like Prospero's art, this is a benevolent piece of trickery - 'kindly' meant, as an approximation of the natural fact. The 'seeming' 'shade' of Ceyx assumes his 'form' and 'feynes' his voice in order to disabuse Alcyone of her false hopes. The illusion is her means to truth. As she reports to her nurse: 'umbra fuit, sed et umbra tamen manifesta virique/vera mei: it was but a shade, and yet it was my husband's shade, clearly seen' (XI, 688-689).²²

Alcyone's words reverberate far beyond their immediate context, and might be seen to inform Shakespeare's plays from A Midsummer Night's Dream to The Tempest. Certainly, as in the most satisfying of the mediaeval dream visions or, more pertinently, as in Prospero's employment of Ariel to awaken conscience in the 'three men of sin' (The Tempest, III,iii, 53-110), the artistic convention carries the weight of psychological truth, and is equated with a natural process.²³ Through this vision, Alcyone suffers, like Miranda, with 'those (she) saw suffer' (1,ii, 5-6). Ovid presents her emotional turmoil as a partial fulfilment of her wish that she and Ceyx be 'storm-tossed together' (XI, 441). The artful contrivance casts Alcyone (as Prospero's similar device casts Alonso: cf. 11.95-102) into the heart of the storm:

far from myself I have perished;
far from myself I am tossed about upon the waves, and
without me the sea holds me. (XI, 700-701)²⁴

The double dénouement to the story completely fulfils Alcyone's desire to experience life 'simul' and 'coniugis' (XI, 440,441). The last movement is ushered in by a characteristic natural marker: 'The morning came' (ll, 819). The new day brings the physical reunion which both husband and wife have prayed for. 'Though the seas threaten, they are merciful' (The Tempest, V,i, 178): in direct response to Ceyx's prayer that the waves might redeliver his body to Alcyone (XI, 564/ll, 654-655), the tide that bore him away now restores him to his wife. Ovid fashions this rather unusual recognition scene to complement perfectly the initial scene of parting. The coincidence of situation - 'that same place in which shee tooke her leave of him before' (ll, 820) - and the chiastic symmetry of treatment as Ceyx is borne closer and closer to Alcyone, enforces the poignant difference between 'then' and 'now'. The slow-motion rhythm of the tide, which previously counterpointed the sorrow and the strain of parting, now dramatizes Alcyone's growing awareness of the change that has taken place and her ultimate recognition that the 'poor corse' she had pitied is in fact that of her husband.

In Ovid's perfect fusion here of plot dénouement and metaphorical suggestiveness we see again how much the Roman poet had to offer Shakespeare. Though recognition scenes are a staple of romance, there is nothing jaded or formulaic about Ovid's handling of this scene, which grows out of everything that has gone before. As in Shakespeare, the convention is used as a powerful dramatic realization of psychological and emotional forces. This climax in the story of Ceyx and Alcyone is as richly suggestive as the moment in Act Five of The Tempest when Prospero describes the dawn of understanding in the charmed circle of his islanders:

Their understanding
 Begins to swell, and the approaching tide
 Will shortly fill the reasonable shore
 That now lies foul and muddy.

(V,i, 79-81)

The power of both recognition scenes is a measure of the totally integrated dramatic locale and metaphorical design of the whole work.²⁵

The sea affects the initial restoration, but the consummate and eternal union of Ceyx and Alcyone, which Alcyone had envisaged as a joining of names 'in a graven Epitaph' (II, 816), is made a living reality through the agency of metamorphosis. The marvelous transformation of the couple into sea-birds and nature's annual celebration of their love in the halcyon days of winter, is a deeply satisfying resolution which meets the double imperative of change and continuity. The metamorphoses are directly attributed to the 'compassion of the the Goddess' (II, 853: superis miserantibus, XI, 741). In a characteristic aside which threatens to break the suspension of disbelief only to strengthen it, Ovid calls attention to the marvelous aspect of Alcyone's transformation and the 'wonder' it should occasion (XI, 731/II, 843). Yet the metamorphosis is simultaneously presented as a spontaneous and natural development. Entirely congruent with the empathy Alcyone has expressed throughout the tale, it seems to grow directly from that 'virtue of compassion' (The Tempest, I,ii, 27) which she shares with Miranda and Imogen - her pity for the at first unidentified 'corse' and consequent depth of feeling for the husband it proves to be.

The metamorphosis of Ceyx (XI, 733-742/II, 848-854) also makes this double impression. With a further shift in perspective, it is presented indirectly, through the mediating device of the spectators who witness the event and interpret it for the extended audience of the Metamorphoses. Golding tells us that 'folk' were unable to distinguish whether Ceyx's regeneration was occasioned by the 'kiss' of the transformed Alcyone, or

whether the apparent marvel was an illusion to be explained by the natural motion of the waves. The metamorphic result, we are assured, is the same.

The coda which Ovid appends to this major sequence in his poem makes the conclusion to the Ceyx and Alcyone more deeply satisfying than many of his abrupt 'endings':

The love of them eeke subject to their fate,
Continued after: neyther did the faythfull bond abate
Of wedlocke in them beeing birdes: but standes in stedfast state.
They treade, and lay, and bring foorth yoong and now the Alcyon
sitts
In wintertime uppon her nest, which on the water flitts
A sevennyght. During all which tyme the sea is calme and still,
And every man may to and fro sayle saufly at his will,
For Aeolus for his offsprings sake the windes at home dooth keepe,
And will not let them go abroade for troubling of the deepe.
(ll, 854-862)

The causal explanation is incidental to the major impression of these lines, except in the general sense in which aetiology can be seen as 'part of the process of binding the volatile present to the traditionally and divinely sanctioned regularity of the past'.²⁶ For the mythological frame of reference suppressed for much of the tale is restored here to create a mood of religious solemnity. The paradoxical sea, both threatening and relenting is, as it were, the poem's supreme humanistic image for the uncertainty and ultimate benevolence of this world, its changes and continuities. This same conviction, expressed in language more readily accessible to conventional believers, is mirrored in the Janus-faced Aeolus, now violently aggressive, and now, like Prospero, revealing his 'better nature' (cf The Tempest, I,ii, 496 & V,i, 25-30). As with the story of Philemon and Baucis,²⁷ an attitude of as you like it prevails, and Ovid does not make it impossible for those who wish to read the myth as a mystery of divine forgiveness to read it that way. The story thus anticipates and accommodates the moralisè critical tradition, much as Shakespeare's Last Plays can be seen to absorb

the religious explications which ultimately fail to exhaust their possible meanings. The original religious meaning of the Ceyx and Alcyone myth is, in a further sense, indispensable. And here again a comparison with Shakespeare's final work is, I think, both helpful and valid. The inclusion of Pauline metamorphoses and Christian redemptive patterns in the all-embracing mythology of Shakespeare's Last Plays reveals the moral seriousness - even the sanctity of his own artistic changes, too readily confused with diabolism. In precisely the same way, Ovid's admission of the original intention of the myth discloses the re-creative value of his own seemingly lesser art.

Closer in spirit, perhaps, to the fifth act of The Winter's Tale than to the disquieting conclusion of The Tempest,²⁸ Ovid's ending to the Ceyx and Alcyone makes us equally aware of the mediating power of human love: the moment is outside time, but born of it. As Otis notes, the harmony between humanity and nature balances and reconciles the opening scene with Ceyx and Alcyone, the wind and the waves.²⁹ But Prospero's benediction of Ferdinand and Miranda is also apposite, and perhaps the final word on the love of Ceyx and Alcyone should be his:

Fair encounter
Of two most rare affections! Heavens rain grace
On that which breeds between 'em!
(The Tempest, III, i, 74-76).

2. Dramatic Empiricism: Poem and Reader, Play and Audience

In dreams begins responsibility.
(Old Play)³⁰

The Ceyx and Alcyone is a totally satisfying work of art which bears testimony to the depth of Ovid's idea of metamorphosis.³¹ If it is clear why the story has received enthusiastic attention from recent commentators,

its achievements also help to place the kind of appreciative audience the Metamorphoses would find during the latter part of the sixteenth century when the English language was rapidly coming of age. The poem was guaranteed to attract the compilers of English language mythographies and peddlers of ballads and broadsheets, to whom it supplied a seemingly inexhaustible store of readily-assembled source material. But tales such as the Ceyx and Alcyone show why the Metamorphoses provided sustenance to those outside the tribe of Autolycus, on one side of the expanding literary market, and the sophisticates who were setting the fashion for erotic narrative poems on the other.³²

The most striking aspect of the tale is its dramatic quality. 'Dramatic' not simply because it is highly theatrical; nor because it strains towards the direct speech of dialogue and soliloquy, even though it was this latter feature of Ovid's poetry which Dryden considered most distinguished it from that of Virgil so that, of the ancients, it was Ovid 'who had a Genius most proper for the stage'.³³ The poem is dramatic rather because these features are symptomatic of its overall empirical stance. When he points to the 'discomposed' and dynamic qualities in Ovid's poetry, Dryden is essentially characterizing the dramatic mode of writing: the sense we get of an individual person at a particular moment in his or her life showing us how it feels to be alive. It is this quality, carried over to the Metamorphoses from the Heroides, which Dryden finds in Ovid's 'Myrrha, Biblis and Althaea', and to which he attributes the stronger empathy - 'the greater concernment for them' - than he feels for Virgil's Dido.³⁴

The structure of the Ceyx and Alcyone is empirical in the sense that we feel it to be determined by the attitudes and beliefs of the two major protagonists. To put it another way, as in Shakespearean drama there is an intimate connection between the poetic and the dramatic design of

the tale; between what the characters say and the way they say it, and the outcome of the story made by their lives.³⁵ The symmetry and balance which makes this tale so aesthetically satisfying is felt as something more than a purely artistic solution to a problem posed by the established elements of the myth. The conclusion is experienced neither as the poet's facile superimposition of an ending, nor (though the abstraction of analysis can create the impression of a formula being fulfilled) is it automatically pre-empted by the poem's *donnée*. A synopsis of the plot might suggest an easy optimism or a simple belief in providential order. This is even more true of a play like The Winter's Tale, where the old shepherd's signalling of the tragi-comic movement (III,iii, 109-111) makes explicit the *dénouement* which is already implicit in the title. But in the poem, as in the play, we perceive the final metamorphoses as the dynamic consequence of the protagonists' openness to the complexity of experience, commitment to things of value in this life, and their ultimate willingness to trust in the processes of time to fulfill as well as destroy.

This kind of dramatic writing can be found in English before the 1590s, but it is in Donne, and above all Shakespeare, that we recognize the mode which became central in the English literary tradition. Indeed we delight in 'before' and 'after' juxtaposition of (say) Spenser and Donne, and tend to chart Shakespeare's development in terms of his gradual abandonment of the formalized, essentially static writing, which characterizes some of his early work. Ovid has become infamous for the witty and conceited word-play which made him the classical poet most attuned to the exuberant mood and linguistic self-confidence of the late sixteenth century. But there are many Ovids, and 'Ovidian' is a protean word.³⁶ It is the concomitant dramatic quality in his poetry, something noticed far less often (despite Dryden's early perceptiveness), which also accounts for Ovid's peculiar

affinity with the literary developments of the period. It is ironic that Carew should have eulogized Donne for banishing the 'goodly traine of gods and goddesses' and silencing the 'tales o' th' Metamorphoses', since much that is 'original' in Donne's poetry (early and late) is the originality of Ovid.³⁷ Shakespeare, of course, did not stifle even the subject-matter of the 'old idolls' of whom Carew is so disparaging. On the contrary, he broadcasts his indebtedness to the 'old tales', throughout his career acknowledging them as the staple of his own art. The precise nature of the debt is a complex matter, but the dramatic quality of Ovid's art goes some way towards indicating why the Metamorphoses would matter to Shakespeare.

To say this much, however, is to risk the elementary mistake of confusing Ceyx and Alcyone with 'The Tale of Ceyx and Alcyone', Hamlet with Hamlet. The Metamorphoses is not a protracted Heroides any more than Shakespeare's plays are conjoined soliloquies. From one point of view - that of the main protagonists - the Ceyx and Alcyone is a tragic story. It was indeed as a 'tragicall and lamentable historie' that the tale was retold by William Hubbard. But Ovid's Elizabethan translator did more than to 'draw the tale into English meeter'. By streamlining the story into a singular plot outline, recounted from a fixed point of view, and washed over by an all-pervasive mood of pathos, he transformed the original completely by the simple expedient of cutting-off its narrative possibilities.³⁸ Unlike Hubbard, Ovid, himself, is anxious to show that there is in this story much stuff besides tragic material, and this very demonstration becomes part of the expanded meanings of the tale. If Ceyx's sea-bound perspective is very different from that of his wife, despite their mutuality of interest, both points of view are different again from that of the watching Janus. She is frankly fed-up with the funereal atmosphere engendered by Alcyone which has begun to

impinge on her own domain (XI, 583-584/11, 676-678). Different again - and closer to our own perspective - is the viewpoint of the old man who watches the transformation of the couple and the metamorphosis of their tale into a tragi-comedy (XI, 749-750/11, 863-864). Ovid, the manipulator of all these points of view and the tonal changes which accompany them, makes his larger audience aware of the limited view of experience provided by any one of them and the necessary falsity of any single literary kind.

The same observations can be made of Shakespeare's late work. As already suggested, even the title of The Winter's Tale seems to proclaim the release of both dramatist and audience from the narrowing concentration of tragedy, and to signal Shakespeare's desire to apply, in even more radical fashion than in As You Like It, Touchstone's insight that 'the truest poetry is the most feigning'. But Shakespeare's antipathy to generic singleness is not peculiar to tragi-comedy. The titles of some recent books on the earlier plays - The Comic Matrix of Shakespeare's Tragedies, The Uses of Division: Unity and Disharmony in Literature, The Resources of Kind: Genre Theory in the Renaissance - hint at the ways in which similar observations can be brought to the major works of Shakespeare's central period.³⁹ Rosalie Colie has shown us that, far from being the straight-jacket we sometimes take it to be, generic consciousness was in the Renaissance not simply a way of organizing a closed literary system, but a way of perceiving experience: 'a myth or metaphor for man's vision of truth'.⁴⁰ In his most recent book, Professor Bailey writes: 'In general the impression we may receive from the tragedies written by Shakespeare is that the tragic form exists for him as a means of giving its freedom to every other aspect of life and art....Tragedy as a catalyst reveals both different modes of being and

separate kinds of art'.⁴¹ And similar generic and rhetorical considerations have recently enhanced our understanding of The Sonnets.⁴²

It might seem folly to compare the Metamorphoses with King Lear - despite the undisguised romance elements in Shakespeare's play. But without undermining the achievements of the tragedies, I think we can discern in Ovid's handling of the Ceyx and Alcyone story the same authorial awareness which Professor Bayley finds in Shakespeare's play and Huxley found in Homer, an awareness of 'the difference between the way in which tragic grief is represented and the ways in which it actually has to fit into the priorities of existing'. When Professor Bayley writes of Shakespeare's 'feigning' as 'of a uniquely comprehensive kind which creates the appearance of tragic reality not by reduction but by multiplication',⁴³ I think we can also see the significant compatibility between the expansive forms of Shakespeare's plays and the idea of metamorphosis as realized in Ovid's poem. For both poets, 'multiplication' is the aesthetic consequence of the desire to tell 'the Whole Truth', a way of avoiding both moral superiority and artistic hypocrisy. The twentieth century painter, Georges Braque, in whose late work objects constantly shift in form and space to reveal a different nature, has described how metamorphosis is a projection of the artist's integrity:

I will try to explain what I mean by 'metamorphosis'. For me no object can be tied down to any one kind of reality... this file in my hand can be metamorphosed into a shoe-horn or a spoon, according to the way in which I use it....everything changes according to circumstances...this metamorphic confusion is fundamental to the poetry.⁴⁴

The co-existence in tragic circumstances of other feelings, other thoughts, and the continuance of a 'world elsewhere' is dramatized in the Ceyx and Alcyone, not only in Juno's jaundiced perspective and the bemused and wondering human witness to the story, but also in Ovid's poetry itself.

In the first part of this chapter, I suggested that Ovid's storm sequence ('Now the water is tawny...and now blacker...at other times.. whiter. The Trachinian ship...now high up...now far down..') can be seen as emblematic of the poetic art of the Metamorphoses and can cast light on a similar storm sequence in The Winter's Tale. John Bayley has chosen two moments, in King Lear and The Tempest, to illustrate Shakespeare's mature style. Closely related to each other, the moments share a little more than kin with the Ovidian sequence previously discussed.⁴⁵ Edgar's description of the Dover straits (IV,vi, 11-22), which takes in the samphire-gatherer plying his trade half-way down the cliff, the birds winging the air in the middle-distance and, on the distant horizon, 'yond tall anchoring bark / Diminished to her cock, her cock a buoy / Almost too small for sight', is a further instance of that 'diminution in space' characterized by Imogen and Alcyone. Ariel's description of his frantic activity on 'the King's ship' is similarly reminiscent of the almost cinematic 'cuts' which Ovid employs to show us the changing conditions on that other king's ship:

I boarded the King's ship; now on the beak
Now in the waist, the deck, in every cabin,
I flam'd amazement: sometimes I'd divide
And burn in many places; on the topmast
The yards and bowsprit, would I flame distinctly,
Then meet and join.

(The Tempest, I,ii, 196-201)

Both Ovid and Shakespeare enjoy the conceit of antithetical elements meeting: while Ariel's fire invades Neptune's watery domain (ll.203-206), Ovid's 'lightnings setts the waves on fire (ll, 605). The discors concordia of both poets is not only matched to the storm; their art seems to contest with nature's minute by minute changes and effects. Seige-imagery (common to the Ovidian and Shakespearean tempests) characterizes the challenging quality of the verse as well as the threatening elemental

forces. As Ariel says of his own achievements,

Jove's lightning, the precursors
O' th' dreadful thunder-claps, more momentary
And sight-outrunning were not.
(I,ii, 201-203)

Ariel is Shakespeare's dramatic projection - part parody, part celebration as John Bayley suggests - of the 'momentary and sight-outrunning quality' of his own poetic art, particularly as evidenced in Antony and Cleopatra and The Tempest: 'Ariel's description of his magic is also a description of the height of Shakespeare's tragic style'. It is also, I have been suggesting, a description of Ovid's poetic style, particularly as evidenced on his 'King's ship', where, in John Bayley's words, poetry exults in 'the freedom of mind and sense' and 'the power of its charge to leap from point to point with telegraphic economy'.⁴⁶

The story of Ceyx and Alcyone illustrates a further aspect of Ovid's art in the Metamorphoses and another aspect of the poem's timeliness for 'the Shakespearean moment'. The Metamorphoses has been seen as escapist art. L.P. Wilkinson compares it with A Midsummer Night's Dream, noting that it 'conveys an impression of freedom and clarity combined with a sense that we are temporarily detached from the realm of ultimate seriousness, of normal and moral value'.⁴⁷ This observation is consistent with Gordon Braden's desire to distinguish Ovid's more ancient story-telling art from that of the modern novelist, who 'must pretend to some much more rigorous and sober point of view'. And it similarly corresponds to John Bayley's concern to separate Shakespeare's art and its audience from the 'saturation of consciousness' which was the all-engulfing aim of Virginia Woolf's and 'most post-Hegelian writing'.⁴⁸ 'Freedom' is here again the key word. Freedom from the constraints of verisimilitude, from questions of sincerity and ultimate truth-telling, and from the necessity of making

absolute statements about the nature of human life.⁴⁹

Freedom from 'ultimate seriousness' is not, however, freedom from responsibility: there is, I think, an inherent danger in Wilkinson's dream-motif and a touch of hyperbole in Professor Bayley's observation that in a Shakespearean tragedy 'The artist is away from home, in a place where he can do what he wants'.⁵⁰ The plays may have no absolute statements to make about life, but Shakespeare's responsibility, like Ovid's, rests just here, in his constant desire to make the partiality of his fictions apparent to his audience. There is a residual toughness in this world of freedom and space which demands that the dream be made accountable to the waking world.

If Shakespeare's art is antithetical to the realist tradition in the novel, it is equally resistant to the assumptions about life and art inherent in the development of the Jacobean masque from an interlude in a play of a different kind to a dominant theatrical form in its own right. Here a fascination with the nature of illusion has led to an art of illusionism, which takes as its working hypothesis the essential unreality of life itself. (The assumptions of seventeenth century masquer and nineteenth century novelist might be seen as fusing interestingly in the work of a mid-twentieth century novelist like John Fowles.) In the Shakespearean canon, The Tempest with its doubt-provoking epilogue presents a particularly testing case. Critics continue to draw nihilistic conclusions from the brilliant surface and stylistic facility of the Metamorphoses. But I would suggest that for most, if not all, of his career art remains for Shakespeare as for Ovid a form of recreation which can be re-creative - if the audience validates the suggestions which are provisionally and imperfectly realised in the play. In this 'if', as Touchstone insists, there is 'much virtue'. And to preserve and protest their virtue, Ovid

and Shakespeare underscore the hypothetical nature of their art many times and in different ways.

The intrusive narrative voice which equivocally underlines the wonderful nature of Alcyone's transformation; the surrogates for the reader who witness with a kind of double vision the metamorphosis of Ceyx; the (only apparently inconsequential)⁵¹ 'old man' who, after the tale has concluded, praises the enduring love of the couple and places it within his own experience: these are all aspects of the Ovidian 'if' and of the mediation of the Metamorphoses with the space beyond its imperfect closures. Thoroughly characteristic of Ovid's poem, they can be compared to similar moments in Shakespeare's plays: Paulina orchestrating the 'marvel' of Hermione's metamorphosis and insisting on the 'apparent' truth of the 'old tale'; Lysander, 'half sleep, half waking' and Hermia, 'with parted eye' doubting the evidence of their senses and struggling to accommodate the vision of the reunited couples; Rosalind, diffident about her role as Epilogue, 'conjuring' the audience into proving the truth of the artifice they have just enjoyed.⁵² These assimilated and naturalized intermediaries complement the formal Prologues and Choruses and the overtly theatrical framing devices through which Shakespeare's plays thrust out into the world beyond the stage whilst maintaining their distance from it.⁵³

Shakespeare's overtly theatrical framing devices also have their narrative counterparts in the Metamorphoses, while inset stories became a standard feature of the Elizabethan narrative poem or epyllion.⁵⁴ The story of Pyramus and Thisbe, for example, is in context in the Metamorphoses, one of the tales told by the daughters of Minyas, 'To ease ...labor and make the time seeme shorte' (4, 48-49), while they do their weaving. A prominent feature of Ovid's poem, the narrative frames call attention to the nature and purpose of story-telling, much as the

theatrical frame formed by the Sly Induction calls attention to the purpose of playing in The Taming of the Shrew, the entertainment which allows Sly to 'let the world slip' (Induction,ii, 140). Ovid's technique of setting tales within tales - Venus telling the admonitory story of Atalanta and Hippomenes to caution Adonis against hunting, the disguised Vertumus using the story of Iphis and Anaxarete to hold a mirror to Pomona's 'stubborn scorn' - similarly requires us to consider the psychology of story-telling and to reflect that art is a transforming medium capable of effecting material and moral change.⁵⁵ The Shakespeare of As You Like It, All's Well That Ends Well, and The Winter's Tale, as well as The Taming of the Shrew would be beholden to this aspect of Ovid's literary self-consciousness.⁵⁶ The Metamorphoses is both an apology for poetry and Ovid's apologia pro vita sua - perhaps more so than the explicitly biographical Tristia. The self-consciousness of the poem is outward-looking as well as introspective, reflecting that concern with artistic morality as it relates to both author and audience, which we find throughout the Shakespearean canon. The bridging devices, which break the closed perfection of the poem and make the contribution of the reader part of the dynamic and changing meanings of the work, are further testimony to the complexity and depth of Ovid's idea of metamorphosis.

Moreover, Ovid and Shakespeare do not simply accommodate the contribution of their audience: behind the aleatory nature of their work is the confident recognition that we will be unable to resist the urge to 'finish' their work and invest it with meaning:

....Ovid's world, by itself, doesn't mean anything. It is just there. Unlike Spenser, Ovid does not invite us to allegorize or philosophize myth, make sense of it. We do so spontaneously, as Ovid knew Allegorizing bridges behaviour and explanation. But Ovid makes us aware that this level of meaning comes from us not from the poem.⁵⁷

This awareness is dramatized in the group discussion which Ovid appends to Actaeon's story. Among these surrogates for ourselves there is disagreement about the significance of the tale, although 'both sides found good reasons for their judgments' (Metamorphoses, III, 255). In a play in which the Actaeon myth figures strongly, Shakespeare projects in the figure of Jaques his awareness of this same human predisposition to 'moralize' experience and interpret it subjectively, according to our own lights (As You Like It, II,i, 25-66).⁵⁸ Both poets are assured that, like those on-stage witnesses of Ophelia's 'nothings', the extended audience of their work will be 'moved to collection' and more than ready to 'botch the words up to fit their own thoughts' (Hamlet, IV,iv, 9-10).

The spontaneous impulse to interpret (a word which also means 'translate')⁵⁹ and make sense of things is a major subject of King Lear. (And this last sentence, an instance of Shakespeare's perceptiveness about the psychological processes of the audience!). Indeed, the title of Richard Lanham's book, The Motives of Eloquence, from which the above characterization of Ovid's artistic premise is taken, might provide an interpretative sub-title for Shakespeare's play. Certainly, Lanham's further comments about the confidence which is engendered by Ovid's directness about his rhetorical strategies and optimistic faith in his own stylistic control, can help us locate a core morality amidst the expendable philosophies and disposable eloquence of King Lear. For Lanham, himself, it defines the 'center' of the Metamorphoses, a poem which can otherwise be seen to have 'a hole in the middle':

It is style as the endless debunker, and rebunker, of human values which provides the human center of Ovidian reality, Ovidian seriousness. If we are not in direct touch with reality, we do touch language, and with it realities can be examined, discarded, created. With language, much can be done.⁶⁰

Making-up and telling stories is, in a sense, the artistic premise, the plot instigator and subject, and the affective consideration of King Lear. If anything, Shakespeare uses the story-telling motif in an even more radical fashion, since in this play he is willing to contemplate its opposite: the morality of individual silence and artistic reticence. John Bayley has suggested that Cordelia stands out amongst Shakespeare's characters because her creator won't let us see what she is 'like', preferring to present her as an absolute, and existence which 'has no "story" in it'.⁶¹ But the dramatic action of King Lear shows that in practice Cordelia's honest 'blankness' is as harmful as Edmund's downright deceit. It is difficult to distinguish her 'nothing' from his, since both prove as subject to misinterpretation as all the other verbal pronouncements in this rhetorically over-ripe play. Silence, then would seem to offer no solution to the necessary inadequacy of verbal summations of experience. The jingling couplet with which Edgar concludes King Lear, bringing the play full-circle to its fairy-tale beginning, might be seen as Shakespeare's somewhat grudging acceptance of the inescapable story-telling impulse in human affairs.

By the same token, the Metamorphoses is above all else a compendium of stories. If it can be said to be 'about' anything, it is 'about people telling stories and how telling stories is one of the things that people do to get through it all'.⁶² Finally, it is on this faith in story-telling as 'the possibility of exchanging experiences',⁶³ that the social and cultural imperatives of his age, together with Shakespeare's predispositions and peculiar talents, would seem to have converged with those of Ovid, 'the last...but not the least of the great Latin poets'.⁶⁴

The Metamorphoses, then, is not simply a poem turned in on itself. On the contrary, I have been suggesting that its considerable self-consciousness is both life-enhancing and reader-enfranchising. Ovid cares about the

affective level of his poem for humanitarian reasons which are also pragmatic, since with the reader rests the responsibility for closing and justifying his incomplete vision. It is with this in mind that I want next to consider the poem's linguistic self-explorations; its investigation of the unreliable, dynamic medium through which all the poem's metamorphoses must be expressed. I will be suggesting that Shakespeare's thinking about language - at once revolutionary and rooted in rhetorical tradition - is given both licence and authority by the coherent framework established in Ovid's comprehensive idea of metamorphosis.

Chapter IV

THE TRANSFORMING MEDIUM

Many centuries before the English Romantics challenged the received idea of language as an ornamental embellishment, the 'dress' of both 'fact' and 'thought', Ovid seems to have recognised the speciousness of absolute distinctions between form and content, thinking and reality, on which such a theory of language is constructed. In Chapter II, I considered his humourous exposé in the Metamorphoses of the naive idealism which supports Horatian decorum. By going out of his way to put fishes in the trees, Ovid demonstrates at the beginning of his major work that poetry can be a faithful representation of a continually surprising world when it seems to be most fabricated. Most imitative, that is, in Puttenham's or Sidney's expository terms, when it seems most made; most true, in Touchstone's riddle, when it appears most feigned. This apology for poetry is endorsed in the closing book of the poem, when Pythagoras testifies to nature's own surrealistic effects.

Thus far, however, part of the argument has been left out of the reckoning - in the interests of clarity, but not without some contrivance. For the fishes-in-the-trees exposé involves a further radical investigation of both the mental and linguistic 'means' by which the poet gives us his vision of truth. Ovid's finding is that the tools which the poet employs are as inherently unstable as the world model which can be his subject. The Roman poet's awareness of what Coleridge was to articulate so memorably - the shaping, 'image-making', faculty of the Imagination, and of the dynamic, conditioning role which language plays in our perception

(which might be regarded as a primal word in a different sense: linguistic rather than theological) is equally suggestive and ambivalent. Indeed, the Latin word for 'word' (here common locutions threaten to make the mire even thicker!) leads a rich and strange life of its own, and might be seen as an emblematic miniature of the changeful variety imaged in the title of John Florio's 1598 dictionary.³ Expounded tropically, as Hamlet might say, 'nomen' can signify 'reputation', both good and bad; 'fame' and 'honour', as well as 'infamy' and ill-repute'. By the same token (it is the other side of the coin) nomen comprehends 'pretext', 'pretence', 'colour', and 'excuse',⁴ words which are as endemic to the Ovidian world of amorous changes and metamorphic disguising as are the former non-pejorative 'set' to the heroic tradition which culminated in Virgil's Aeneid.

The primal word, 'nomen' drifts between substantive and substantial qualities, both material and moral, and values which are, in every sense of the word, slight: insubstantial, ephemeral and ethically suspect. Nomen is thus symbolic of the highly ambivalent status of all language, and Ovid frequently employs the word with these generic implications. Cognate with species, imago and opinio, as well as with gloria and fama, nomen is as plastic as the unformed bear-whelp which the mother must lick into shape (XV, 379-381/15, 416-419) - an image which, applied to chaos - Richard (3 Henry VI, III,iii, 161-163), characterizes both the physical and verbal dexterity of Shakespeare's most protean King.⁵ The fluid medium of the Metamorphoses, with its agonistic natural model, similarly fosters the constant interaction of opposing connotative 'sets'. In this sense, nomen is related to the English word 'feign', which (with the pun, 'fayn') is such an important counter in Shakespeare's investigation of sexual and artistic morality in As You Like It. It also shares common kin with 'honour' and 'reputation', words which in 1 Henry IV, Troilus and Cressida, All's Well That Ends Well and Coriolanus, are the focus for

Shakespeare's radical investigation of the problem of conferring value through the medium of 'air'.⁶

In the Metamorphoses, 'feigning' and 'fame' are each the focus of a set-piece which Renaissance schoolboys would learn to identify as topothesia, or the description of imaginary places. 'Feigning' is given emblematic treatment in the Cave of Sleep sequence of the tale of Ceyx and Alcyone, and has already been discussed.⁷ The companion-piece to Morpheus' 'dream-factory' is the House of Fame (XII, 39-63/12, 46-69), which Ovid portrays as the 'word-factory' of the Metamorphoses. Here worldly reputation and posthumous renown are manufactured from elemental substances no less flimsy and ethereal, doubling and deceptive, than the material from which the dream-shapes are forged. In this fabulous house of resounding brass, all verbal representations echo away to infinity, mimicking the ceaseless murmur of the waves on the shore. In the House of Fame, as in the Cave of Sleep, it is virtually impossible to distinguish between true and false representations - especially in Golding's highly populous and animated version, where

....millions both of trothes and lyes ronne gadding every where,
And woordes confusely flye in heapes.

(12, 58-59)⁸

The topothesiae make some important Ovidian connections between imaginative and verbal metamorphosis: between the 'feigned' shapes of dreams and the 'airy nothings' with which the poet creates his insubstantial pageants; between acting and disguising, and the verbal representations and misrepresentations of an ever-changing 'reality'. Morpheus and his crew of actors in the Cave of Sleep are the exact physical counterpart of the deceptive linguistic forms which flit around the House of Fame. Together, the sequences are a grand scale dramatization of the connection between physical and verbal changes of form which Ovid explores throughout

the Metamorphoses. Grumio's punning allusion to Petruchio's purposive rhetoric is a reminder that Shakespeare is equally fascinated by the connections between metaphor and metamorphosis.

Grumio's play on 'rope-tricks' - for 'rhetorick' or 'trope-tricks'⁹ - brings the quick-change versatility of language into what has come to be an unaccustomed spotlight. The pioneering work of Rosamund Tuve, Sister Miriam Joseph, T.W. Baldwin and others, has taught us that things were not ever thus. With good reason, levels of awareness about the way language works were once very much higher, and more widely disseminated. In Elizabethan schools, students learnt to identify the figures and practised framing their own similitudes, metaphors and so on. The widespread use of rhetorical handbooks ensured that writers could 'scarcely avoid' being aware of the rational function of language and 'the nature of the logical processes involved in metaphor-making'.¹⁰ The marked degree of self-consciousness in the use of poetic conceits which we notice, for example, in sonnets eighteen and one hundred and thirty, might be seen as evidence of Shakespeare's mistrust of the conventional use of language - a sense of counterfeit currency which we also notice in the plays of his middle period, King Lear, All's Well That Ends Well and Troilus and Cressida. Indeed, when Troilus speaks of similes, 'truth-tir'd with iteration' (III,ii, 172), we are aware that the depreciation of the linguistic coin is inseparable from the play's concern with devalued ethics, both public and private.

This degree of awareness about the comparative process is not, however, in itself a sign of malaise. On the contrary, the rhetorical education provided in the grammar schools was predicated on the belief that self-consciousness is an indicator of linguistic (and hence moral) health, ensuring the optimum exercise of constructive thought, facilitating skilful

argument and ensuring maximum poetic effects. By the same token, both classical and renaissance educators would have been scandalized at the contemporary failure to distinguish between types of similitude or to recognize just what is involved when we elect to use a metaphor. Where the etymology of the generic term 'trope' (Gk. τροπος - a turn) now passes unremarked, an Elizabethan schoolboy would have been alerted to its significance by the figure of notatio - 'the designating the origin or power of a word'.¹¹ Versed in Quintilian, he would also know that 'By a trope is meant the artistic alteration of a word or phrase from its proper meaning to another', and, furthermore, that 'The changes involved concern not merely our individual words, but also our thoughts and the structure of our sentences'.¹² Where we fail to see (or choose to overlook) the self-advertising kinship of 'metaphor' and 'metamorphosis' (Gk. μεταφερειν - to bear, carry-over, transfer), the definition of translatio would have warned earlier users of the radical degree of alteration which occurs when 'the first and by far the most beautiful of the tropes' is deployed.¹³

The tautology of the sub-chapter heading seems worth risking precisely because, developments in modern linguistics notwithstanding, awareness of the dynamic properties in language remains less sharp than it once was. For this reason, Wallace Stevens, who is wary of false dichotomies between knowing and ways of knowing, writes of the 'symbolic language of metamorphosis' and suggests that 'metamorphosis' might be a better word for 'metaphor'.¹⁴ Exposing the same radical connection between 'conversation' and 'conversion' can help to illuminate the nature of linguistic play in Shakespeare's comedies.¹⁵ But for the moment, it is worth simply underlining the point made by Stevens: things are changed by the words used to refer to them, and the transformation can be directly related to

physical changes of form. It is, indeed, in metaphor (rather than simile, analogy and so on) that the distinction between 'figurative' and 'literal' metamorphosis seems most questionable. As already suggested, the ancient distinction between schemes and tropes was that, where the former simply rearrange words, the latter (of which metaphor is the prime example) entail 'an actual wresting of signification'. For this reason, translatio was seen as a dangerous (if beautiful) tool, and a 'powerful aid..to suggesting the significance of appearance to insight, as compared to sight'.¹⁶ In contrast to classical and renaissance rhetoricians, Philip Wheelright, a modern linguistic philosopher, sees 'the test of essential metaphor', not as 'any rule of grammatical form, but rather the quality of semantic transformation that is brought about'.¹⁷

In the following discussion and in later chapters, I will be suggesting that both ancient and modern perceptions of linguistic metamorphosis are reflected in Ovid's poem and in Shakespeare's poems and plays. Both poets use the figure of similitude in a quite radical fashion to bring about a significant degree of change. At the same time, they are anxious to avoid any suggestion of artistic legerdemain which might follow from the selection of the more insidiously-operating figure of metaphor. A contrary desire, to call attention to the process of change, determines the selection of a figure which forces us to acknowledge the 'likeness' which both unites and separates life and art.

Just as successive students of Titus Andronicus have been nonplussed by Marcus' elaborate disquisition on the mutilated and ravished Lavinia (II,iv, 16-57), so 'numberless generations of students have been stopped cold' by Ovid's description of Pyramus' suicide:¹⁸

....he drew
His sworde, the which among his guttes he thrust, and by and by
Did draw it from the bleeding wound beginning for to die,

And cast himselfe upon his backe, the bloud did spin on hie
 As when a Conduite pipe is crackt, the water bursting out
 Doth shote it selfe a great way off and pierce the Ayre about.
 (4, 144-149)

Unlike the readily assimilated natural images previously considered, the most immediate effect of this comparison is that it is arresting and attention-grabbing. Becoming a subject in its own right, the 'plumbing image' detracts attention from Pyramus, the human protagonist in the story. Instancing various examples from the Metamorphoses, many of them more disturbing than the above, Eugene M. Waith has brilliantly characterized such images as 'emblem(s) of transformation' which are instrumental in the metamorphosis of character into 'naked abstract emotion':

In every case the visual image is exact and thus the horror more vivid, yet at the same time our minds are turned away from the individual as a whole to a minute part of his body. Looking thus through the microscope, as it were, we momentarily forget the suffering in the overwhelming reality of the wound, and beyond the wound we glimpse its analogies in an everyday world. The comparisons are often extended, usually unexpected, sometimes even fanciful, always neatly phrased. What may seem at first an incongruous elegance is perfectly suited to the process of transforming character into an emotional state. Violence, as Ovid describes it, is an emblem of transformation. In a sense, it is itself transformed in the process into an object of interested but somewhat detached contemplation.¹⁹

Waith, himself, is primarily concerned to investigate Shakespeare's appropriation of the technique in his early tragedy: he does not speculate about the response of Augustan Romans to an Ovidian technique which modern readers find confusing and disturbing. However, a change in sensibility - modern squeamishness compared with the stronger stomachs of readers bred on bloody gladiatorial combat and domestic animal slaughter; a taste for the sensational in theatrical entertainment as in other forms of spectator sport; and the further possibility that in pandering so overtly to such taste Ovid was parodying it: are some of the suggestions which seek to account for the 'visual over-explicitness' of the Metamorphoses.²⁰

Particularly interesting, is Galinsky's suggestion that Ovid's use of this metamorphic linguistic technique in the story of Pyramus and Thisbe is indicative of his desire to avoid taking too seriously the 'shop-worn genre' of star-crossed lovers. Replacing the deeper characterization used in such stories as Ceyx and Alcyone and Cephalus and Procris, the technique enables Ovid to mock the genre whilst avoiding mocking love itself.²¹ Shakespeare's similar use of the Pyramus and Thisbe story as a gentle parody of his own essay at the genre in Romeo and Juliet, would seem to provide a remarkable example of his general sensitivity to Ovid's tone and intention in the Metamorphoses. Less speculative, is the suggestion that such images are a further instance of the inherent incompatibility of the metamorphosis theme with tragedy. Ovid could not fail to be aware of Horace's 'Specific Advices on Tragedy':

Do not have Medea slaughter her children before the audience, or wicked Atreus cook openly organs of a human body, or Procne be changed into a bird, Cadmus into a serpent. Whatever you show me thus, I disbelieve and despise.²²

But just as he deliberately flouts Horatian decorum, Ovid goes out of his way to include such scenes in his dramatic poem, to make them as visually arresting as possible to underline rather than conceal the discontinuity between the fictional and the 'real' worlds, and to call attention to the question of credibility. The sound Aristotelianism of the Ars is ignored because Ovid wishes to avoid not promote tragic effects, and focusing on míaron, the repulsive, helps him to do so.²³ Rather than 'pity and fear', the Metamorphoses aims at arousing admiration and wonder.

It is 'admiration', that quality much admired by Renaissance critics, which Eugene M. Waith sees as the affective dynamic behind Shakespeare's early tragedy: in Titus Andronicus, the 'final spectacle is both horrible and pathetic, but above all extraordinary'. However, as Waith has shown, what works in dramatic poetry does not work to the same degree in poetic

drama. The magical transforming power of language is more likely to take effect, as Horace pointed out, when the incidents are not shown but 'eloquently narrated'. In Titus Andronicus, the physical action - for example, the intransigent spectacle of the mutilated Lavinia - 'frustrates rather than reinforces the operation of the poetry'.²⁴ Our imagination, like Dr. Johnson's, remains visually orientated. Unable to act as Coleridge's 'active creative being', we fail to complete the metaphorical transformation.²⁵

When one considers that Ovid used his considerable narrative and dramatic skills to inhibit tragic effects, the odds seem stacked against Shakespeare's successful appropriation of the Ovidian mode in Titus Andronicus. It was a long time before he again experimented in the tragic form with the opposition between an implacable stage image and transcendent metamorphic poetry. It is in Antony and Cleopatra that the issue of 'telling' versus 'showing' again arises and makes for a problematical and yet fascinating play. But by this stage in his career Shakespeare had behind him many successes with comedy, a theatrical form in which the dramatic image can be made to reinforce the admiration-seeking ends of the poetry, where physical metamorphosis can complement the metaphorical transformation, and where the 'point of exclamation',²⁶ which ends an Ovidian narrative can be visually represented. Antony and Cleopatra, where the mismatch between verbal and visual representation is so pronounced as to become a matter of self-conscious concern, may be seen as Shakespeare's triumphant solution to a dramatic problem first raised in Titus Andronicus. The play's formal 'divided catastrophe' and the strange doubleness of impression it makes as a tragedy may also be seen as a consequence of the lessons learnt in the comedies of the intervening years.²⁷

Ovid's use of arresting imagery is not, however, confined to violent and

potentially tragic stories. Nor is it simply a question of cisterns and water-pipes. The amatory tales of Narcissus and Echo, and Hermaphroditus and Salmacis are packed with imagery (L.P. Wilkinson notes that the latter has six comparisons in thirty lines)²⁸ of a related but somewhat different kind. Thus, for example, when the loss of his own image drives the distraught Narcissus to self-flagellation, Ovid's narrative pauses to let us consider the curious effects:

...he stripped off his cote
 And with his fist outrageously his naked stomacke smote.
 A ruddie colour where he smote rose on his stomacke sheere,
Lyke Apples which doe partly white and striped red appeere,
 Or as the clusters ere the grapes to ripenesse fully come:
 An Orient purple here and there beginnes to grow on some.
 (3, 605-610)

When Hermaphroditus, propositioned by a heavy-breathing Salmacis, is overcome with embarrassment, we are again invited to savour the visual moment:

...the Nymph did hold hir peace, and therewithall the boy
 Waxt red: he wist not what love was: and sure it was a joy
 To see it how exceeding well his blushing him became.
 For in his face the colour fresh appeared like the same
 That is in Apples which doe hang upon the Sunnie side:
 Or Ivorie shadowed with a red: or such as is espide
 Of white and scarlet colours mixt appearing in the Moone
 When folke in vaine with sounding brasse would ease unto hir done.
 (4, 402-409)

Less protracted but even more arresting, is the image a few lines later, which (almost literally) captures and freezes into an enduring moment the beauty of the naked boy as glimpsed through the clear waters of the pool. He

Into the water lithe and baine with armes displayed glydes.
 And rowing with his hands and legges swimmes in the water cleare:
 Through which his bodie faire and white doth glistringly appeare,
As if a man an Ivorie Image or a Lillie white
 Should overlay or close with glasse that were most pure and bright.
 (4, 435-439)

Stimulated by Coleridge's fine analysis of Shakespeare's use of pictorial imagery, such characteristic Ovidian moments have indirectly received a lot of attention. Thus, for example, Muriel Bradbrook cites Shakespeare's



apparent adaptation of the ivory-lily image in Venus and Adonis:

Full gently now she takes him by the hand,
A lily prison'd in a gaol of snow,
Or ivory in an alabaster band:
So white a friend engirts so white a foe. (ll.361-364)

as an instance of the 'heraldic manner'. She concludes, 'This passage is built on sensuous opposities: it is definition by exclusion'.²⁹ Coleridge, of course, uses the same image to illustrate the operation of the inferior Fancy. It is, for him, less estimable than a metaphor which occurs some lines later (815-816) because the comparative process is so clearly delineated that Imaginative fusion cannot take place.³⁰

In respect of this discussion, Coleridge's valuable analysis is beside and yet makes the point. The discreet and insidious transformation which can occur in metaphor does not serve Ovid's purpose: the ivory-lily image is meant to be expository. The same patient, clarifying impetus, making us aware of the poet's labour (casting and sweating 'to write a living line', as Jonson, uncharacteristically, once said of Shakespeare) is evident in the meticulous punctuation of the Venus and Adonis stanza.³¹ The images reveal, as it were in slow motion, the transforming power of language and the process by which natural subjects become artistic curios - something rich and strange.³² Here again, 'admiration' is the appropriate response to a self-consciously 'wonderful' artifact and it is worth remembering that Puttenham's domesticated word for the rhetorical paradox was the 'Wondrer'.³³ The images merit aesthetic approval; they also foster a healthy scepticism. In fact, approbation and reservation, delight and distrust are mixed in about the same proportions as our wider response to the works as a whole. In these miniatures Ovid and Shakespeare once more exercise their virtuous responsibility by underlining (as I have literally in the quotations above) the 'as if' and the 'like' which connects yet separates the 'real' and the fictional worlds. Just as Ovid's Orpheus uses the love of Venus for Adonis

to paint a moral and adorn his tale, and Shakespeare's Venus makes metaphorical application of the palfrey-jennet encounter, so the poets behind both these stories call attention to the process by which they themselves transform nature into art. Ultimately, these miniature curios can be seen as emblems of the poems themselves, which are exquisite fabrications of that most common and natural of instincts: love.

Such a linear analysis is, however, unsatisfactory and misleading. The structure of the Metamorphosis, emulating the natural pattern, is essentially circular. If nature is translated into art, art in turn returns to nature. This is how Ovid describes the nymph's response to Hermaphroditus' unrobing:

When Salmacis behilde
His naked beautie, such strong pangs so ardently hir hilde,
That utterly she was astraught. And even as Phebus beames
Against a myrrour pure and clere rebound with broken gleames:
Even so hir eyes did sparcle fire.

(4, 426-430)

Kindled (exarsit, IV, 347) by the boy's natural beauty, Salmacis' passion under the lens of Ovid's art gains the preternatural intensity and effect of refracted light. Reproducing the primal discors concordia in a way which would be readily comprehended in Renaissance poetic theory,³⁴ Ovid expresses the natural emotion in a conceit which is itself a fabrication of a natural phenomenon. At the same time, by anticipating the series of similes which expose the possessive character of Salmacis' 'love' (4, 449-455), he reveals the potential danger in an essentially benevolent force. An emotional cliché and an over-worked artistic subject - love at first sight - is made an object of aesthetic interest and affective concern: a natural wonder.

2. The World of Words

CLOWN: *To see this age!
A sentence is but a chev'ril glove to
a good wit. How quickly the wrong side
may be turn'd outward!*

VIOLA: *Nay that's certain; they that dally
nicely with words may quickly make
them wanton.*

CLOWN: *I would, therefore my sister had no
name, sir.*

VIOLA: *Why, man?*

CLOWN: *Why, sir, her name's a word; and to
dally with that word might make my
sister wanton. But indeed words are
very rascals since bonds disgrac'd
them.*

VIOLA: *Thy reason, man?*

CLOWN: *Troth, sir, I can yield you none
without words, and words are grown so
false that I am loath to prove reason
with them.*

(Twelfth Night, III,i, 10-24)

From time to time, Ovid's stories, in addition to illustrating, can be said to be 'about' the transforming power of language. As the character called (in all his unavoidable plurality) Parolles threatens to dominate the Shakespearean comedy in which he appears, so words have a leading, if not star, role to play in Ovid's poem. In All's Well that Ends Well, 'linsey-woolsey' is the perfect - because imperfect - linguistic match for the 'mingled yarn' of human nature;³⁵ in the Metamorphoses, slippery, unstable nomen is the mimetic counterpart of an appearance-ridden and change-dominated world. As pragmatists and victims, deceivers and deceived, Ovid's characters, like Shakespeare's, exploit or are exploited by what

Feste calls the 'wantonness' of words.

For linguistic metamorphosis, like the change which unites macrocosm and microcosm, is both a blessing and a curse. Copiousness in the world of words corresponds to God's plenitude in the world at large. In Paradise Lost, Raphael explains to Adam that

Earth hath this variety from Heav'n
Of pleasure situate in Hill and Dale

and, throughout the Renaissance, variety and change as aesthetic principles were upheld by classical and Christian authorities and supported by psychological and rhetorical principles.³⁶ For Erasmus, stylistic variety and verbal eloquence were to be encouraged because they discouraged mental sloth: 'to avoid tedium one must change a sentence into many forms "quam Proteus ipse se transformasse dicitur" - as Proteus is said to have transformed himself'.³⁷ Human beings, moreover, delight in variety, so that even in Heaven (where needs are beside the point) Milton, again through Raphael, equated pleasure with the absence of uniformity and stale repetition:

For we have also our Evening and our Morn,
We ours for change delectable, not need.³⁸

'Change delectable', however, can also be glossed as uncertainty; alter the perspective only slightly, and variety becomes confusion. The principle of order which contains change and the structure which supports variety (and the stylistic and episodic richness of Paradise Lost) can easily be lost sight of. As the definition in Elyot's dictionary makes clear, Proteus' much-vaunted versatility is, at best, a dubious talent:

Proteus, the sonne of Oceanus and Tethys, called of the paynims the god of the sea whom Homere nameth to be the herde man of the fishes called Phocae, and also a prophete, notwithstandinge he would not geve aunswere but beying contrained by Ulysses. He also tourned himselfe into sundrie figures. Sometime like a bull, anothers time like a terrible serpente...In verie deede he was kynge of Aegypte in the time of Priamus kynge of Troy. Of him came the proverbe, PROTEO MUTABILIOR, more changeable than Proteus, applied to him that in his acts or words is unstable.³⁹

Poet, actor and cheat, a physical and verbal trickster who yet has the power to see beyond the limited perspective of the present, Proteus is the personification of the idea of metamorphosis. In his every aspect he is, as A. Bartlett Giamatti has established, a highly ambiguous figure.⁴⁰ With respect to words, Proteus is associated with both the eloquence and vatic powers of the poet and with the verbal dexterity of the magus. These benevolent and malevolent powers are all too easily confused, as The Tempest reveals. A reflection of the general problem of truth, poetic intention has always been a vital crux and a critical problem: well-meaning creativity can be interpreted as sinister manipulation.⁴¹ With his ability to 'moralize two meanings in one word', the poet shares the questionable skills of 'the formal Vice', as well as the 'honest' actor.⁴² The portraits of Ulysses (in Ovid's poem and Shakespeare's play) and Parolles, as well as Prospero, are a reminder that the onus is on the man of words to establish his claim to virtue. Summarizing a rich and complex history, Pope's cryptic remark that 'The Father of Lies was also the Father of Puns'⁴³ recalls both the specious eloquence of Milton's shape-changing Satan and the popular theatrical tradition.

In his attitude to words, as in many other respects, Montaigne can be seen as a barometer of his times. He seems to celebrate in human life the qualities which also characterize the Metamorphoses, his first literary delight.⁴⁴ 'La vie est un mouvement inégal, irregulier et multiforme' and accordingly the best minds are 'celles qui ont plus de variété et de souplesse'.⁴⁵ But Montaigne was also ready, like Hamlet, to find something less than admirable in man's chameleon adaptability.⁴⁶ Questioning the humanist exultation of the infinitely flexible self, he was equally distrustful of what has been called the humanist 'cult of the word' and its power and mindful of the cost of rhetorical skills.⁴⁷

Although he admired Ovid's 'blithe and ingenious fluiditie', Montaigne regarded his own 'ever indigested' outpouring with scatological disgust, and wished that the two-year moritorium of silence which Pythagoras had imposed on his pupils had been brought against himself.⁴⁸

A coincidence of perspective in Ovid and Montaigne is evidenced in this recent characterization of the French writer:

Montaigne conceives of man as composed of a fluctuating core of being, itself unreliable and inconstant, whose outlines are further blurred by an external cloak of appearances and 'fair, false words'.⁴⁹

But the commonality of conception conceals a divergence of prevailing mood, of attitudes towards the self, and a disparity in the way the poet, Ovid, and the essayist, Montaigne, regard language. In an earlier chapter, I was concerned to contrast the older art of the Metamorphoses with that of the modern novel. I also attempted to define the qualified 'freedom' of Shakespeare's plays; freedom from 'saturation of consciousness', from constraints of verisimilitude, and from questions of sincerity and ultimate truth-telling. I suggested that the appeal which the Metamorphoses held for Shakespeare may have been related to the outward-looking rather than introspective character of the poem's self-consciousness. Ovid's art, I suggested, is both life-enhancing and reader-enfranchising, since the possibility remains that the necessarily imperfect representations of the poet might be perfected by those who attend to his possible meanings.

By contrast, it has been suggested that Montaigne's originality can be located in his exploration of the forms of introspective self-consciousness. What was new in the Essays was not so much the theme of 'inconstancie', as his 'concentration on the quest for self-knowledge...his self-exhibition ...and the realization that the essence of his elusive self was bound to

to evade his inquiry' (author's italics). The dissolution of the notion of character, which is consequent upon this view of the self, has been seen as 'eminently modern' and anticipating the concerns of the modern novelist.⁵⁰ Montaigne's chosen form, with its in-built notion of individual 'essays' at a complex and shifting experience, is perfectly attuned to his view of the individual psyche. This use of the moral essay as a fictional form is, however, very different from the kind of multiplicity which characterizes Ovid's older and more objective art.

With these kinds of considerations in mind, I think it is possible to distinguish between the story-teller's faith in highly conditional verbal representations, and the moralist's lament that 'fair words', like women's 'paintings', 'bastardize and corrupt the essence of things'.⁵¹ In a later chapter, I will be suggesting that these essentially contrasting views of linguistic possibilities can be compared in Shakespeare's As You Like It and All's Well That Ends Well. Ideas of metamorphosis are common to both plays, but the storyteller's attitude toward change, which prevails in the romantic comedy, has to fight off the challenge of the moralist's response in what we have come to regard as the problem play. For this reason, All's Well That Ends Well can be seen as an exciting and significant moment in the evolution of Shakespeare's dramatic idea of metamorphosis.

Ever since Babel, linguistic metamorphosis has been imaged as moral decline.⁵² Facilitating endless delight, verbal change carries the seeds of corruption and decay. Or so (some) men have always thought, imagining (in images furnished by the dominant organic metaphor) their own time to be pre-eminent for linguistic degeneracy. It is here, however, that we encounter a paradox, and one of which both Ovid and Shakespeare show themselves to be well aware. Though both Grumio and Feste use sexual innuendo to suggest corruption in the world of words, their linguistic

dalliance (the exact counterpart of Shakespeare's insistence on the conditional nature of his verbal summations) is testimony to their own virtue, and their very act of speaking evidence of the healthy vitality of Elizabethan English. As fool rather than knave, Feste is 'loathe to prove reason' with words grown false. In some of Shakespeare's plays, Troilus and Cressida perhaps pre-eminent among them, the same linguistic perception is at the root of psychological uncertainty and ethical doubt. If 'Cressida' has no intrinsic value, her honour no more than what Montaigne suggests honour and reputation can be, 'a word for al mouths' or three or four arbitrary strokes of a pen, then there are indeed many Cressidas.⁵³ The principle of unity of being is called into question and 'madness of discourse' (V,ii, 140) become almost a tautology.

Yet it is just here, on the edge of reason, that the poetic use of language comes into its own, adumbrating 'wonderful' truths which are not amenable to the processes of argument and logic. All's Well That Ends Well (which has its own central image of Babel-like confusion in the gulling of Parolles) overcomes the loss of confidence engendered by 'words, words, mere words',⁵⁴ by eschewing 'philosophical' summations of experience and recovering an ancient faith in miracles expressed in honest verse. Though the death knell of 'admiration' can be heard in Bacon's desire to forgo 'muddling verbal structures' for an 'exact, restatement of things', (an impetus also felt in All's Well), only at the end of the seventeenth century does the Shakespearean locution of wise credulity cease to be a meaningful paradox. Then, as Rosalie Colie has shown, a scientific concern with causality worked hand in hand with a call for plain speaking to put a curb on that 'Ignorance (which) keeps the World in perpetual Admiration'.⁵⁵

In later chapters, I will be considering the ways that, in the Comedies,

linguistic self-consciousness serves as indicator of healthy self-knowledge. Corresponding to the benevolent use of disguise, this awareness is to be distinguished from a naivety about language which permits unreflective narcissism and self-deceit. I will also be looking at the ways in which the dramatic action of the plays rewards the lawful deceivers who attempt to close the gap between word and deed, metaphor and meaning. Here, however, it is important to establish that Shakespeare expresses these concerns in a purposive and cohesive 'vocabulary of metamorphosis', which overlaps significantly with the language which Ovid employs to body forth the same possibilities.

In the closing moments of All's Well That Ends Well, Helena advances towards Bertram claiming to be no more than what the audience knows (in one sense) she is: 'the shadow of a wife...The name and not the thing'. It is Bertram who now insists otherwise, his revised linguistic philosophy the measure of his moral regeneration: 'Both, both; O pardon!' (V,iii, 301-303). The whole of the play gives resonance to this exchange, which, with the conversation that follows, can only be understood by careful consideration of what has gone before. But if the idiom in which Helena speaks is not difficult for the audience to catch, nor is it foreign to the reader of the Metamorphoses. Helena, herself, in common with Viola, or with Paulina - the last of Shakespeare's piously fraudulent heroines - would find no difficulty in conversing across the centuries with Ovid's Pygmalion: she speaks the same language.

That language is, of course, part of the repertoire of the well-intentioned verbal manipulators who stand behind Pygmalion and Helena. William S. Anderson has established that Ovid habitually deploys a series of highly ambiguous nouns and verbs to reinforce at the local linguistic level the central tenet of Pythagoras' formal discourse: 'when a human being counts

as forma, whether beauty or the permanent shape of things in general (or, one might add, the structure of language itself), he or she courts disaster'.⁵⁶ 'Forma', 'figura', 'imago', 'simulamen', 'effigies', 'species', 'umbra' - these are the key words.⁵⁷ They are equally suggestive and equally 'doubtfull', to use Golding's word for 'ambiguous',⁵⁸ in English, where, as 'form', 'beauty', 'likeness', 'imitation', 'visible form/shape', 'shadow', they are the major counters in Shakespeare's poetic control of the idea of metamorphosis.

In the individual stories which compose his major work, Ovid presents many different approaches to language. The poem, however, is not a rhetorical handbook, any more than Shakespeare's plays can be regarded as linguistic debates. The work of both poets occasionally overlaps with these more formal genres; the Ajax-Ulysses set-piece in the Metamorphoses and the 'staged' theatricality of Troilus and Cressida are instances. But for the most part, different linguistic attitudes are part of the fabric of the work and are fully realized in contrasting dramatic characters. 'Professional' speakers, like Ulysses, are well aware that words may impinge on events more than the sword, while 'professional' lovers, like Jove, prefer to woo with words, though when words fail violent deeds are likely to follow. Credulous lovers, like Cephalus and Procris, fall victim to the ambiguity of language and its protean power to shape itself to a diseased imagination. Perverted lovers, like Byblis, Myrrha and Medea, hide behind the doubleness of language and practise self-deception by covering moral failings with 'fair-seeming names' (VII, 69). In short, Ovid is fascinated by the power of language to condition and regloss our perception of people and events. Seeking redress for the 'rape' of Proserpina, Ceres discovers that the arbitrating Jove can change the meaning of the whole affair by the substitution of a single word: '....if only we are willing to give the right names to things, this is no harm that has been done, but

only love' (my italics - V, 24-526).⁵⁹ This provisional response to the relationship between word and deed is varied elsewhere, for the question, 'What's in a name?', resounds through the poem soliciting different responses, much as in Shakespeare's work it echoes far beyond Romeo and Juliet, receiving different answers in different plays.⁶⁰

With the exception of Ulysses, the soldier-sophist famous for his eloquence, none of the Ovidian characters mentioned above could seriously be described as a professional artist. All, however, are transported from their 'normal' selves by powerful emotional forces. Like the continuities between the Cave of Sleep and the House of Fame, the poem's dream and word 'factories', they show that Ovid shared Theseus' conviction about the common imagining of the lunatic, lover and poet. But it is with the last-named that I want to begin. For one of the ways the Metamorphoses finds to talk about itself and the nature of the creative imagination, is to use as its protagonists professional artists of various kinds. It is the word-smiths and weavers, the sculptors, musician-poets and builders - Ovid's self-confessed dream-makers - that I now wish to consider.

3. Art and Artists

The story of Daedalus and Icarus (VIII, 152ff/8, 201ff), which served the Romans, Middle Ages and Renaissance as a sermon on mediocritas, has served subsequent generations of readers, less troubled by the utile of literature, as a paradigm for the development of the artist hero. It is the quintessential story of the artist who dares, whose art challenges the natural order of things, or, in Ovid's skilful manipulation of the myth to fit the metamorphosis theme, who attempts to 'change' it (naturam novat, VIII, 189). Characteristically, in the Ars Amatoria (II, 97-98), Ovid had already applied the myth to his own poetic endeavours. Ironically, it may well be that this same poem was the cause of his own downfall.

Certainly, forced to live in savage Tomi, Ovid would again identify with Daedalus, an exile like himself, whose marvelous wings would come to present themselves as an image of escape rather than artistic inspiration.⁶¹

Horace had used Daedalus as an analogue for the audacious poet; Icarus for rash failure. In the Metamorphoses, Ovid's reference to damnosas artes (VIII, 215) when the father instructs the son in the art of flying, shows his readiness to exploit what had become a familiar poetic topos.⁶² Golding's traditional reading of the story is evident, not only in the lengthy gloss of his Epistle (173-180), but also in the disapproving narrative tone of his translation and the minor embellishments he makes to Ovid's text. In Golding's account, ingenium shades readily into something more like deviousness. Double-edged adjectives, such as 'cunning' (8, 251), do not let us forget that it was Daedalus who built the labyrinth. Golding's Daedalus does not simply change the laws of nature: he does so 'by craft' (255). Icarus, of course, paid dearly for his father's enterprise and his own over-reaching, and Ovid does not change the traditional dénouement of the myth. He does, however, in the course of his telling, point up those elements most suited to his own narrative frame, by stressing, for example, the 'wondrous' nature of the artistic metamorphosis which Daedalus effects.⁶³ And, in a marvelously visual digression which inspired Breughel's painting of the myth, he lets us see the flight of the fated pair through the eyes of earth-bound peasants (VIII, 217-220). For a moment, at least, they can be taken for gods.

The story of Pygmalion (X, 243ff/10, 261ff) has also become a locus classicus for discussions of the artist's role. The tale existed in antiquity, but as 'an ugly erotic one' and Ovid's would seem to be 'the

only truly literary treatment of the myth'.⁶⁴ For this reason, as well as its subsequent literary history, Ovid's account of the myth has attracted a lot of attention, and its critical history suggests that its undoubted charms and interests have tended to be over or underplayed. It has proved difficult to find the right balance. It is true that Ovid, himself, contrives to draw attention to the tale by having its narrator, Orpheus, depart from his announced theme; the resulting prominence has been seen as 'fully warranted by its character as "one of the finest apologues on the marvel of the creative imagination" and by its obvious relevance to Ovid's own achievement in the Metamorphoses'.⁶⁵ Assured words. Yet it is all too easy to over-intellectualize the tale, or, in a post-Freudian age, to over psychologize it. As William S. Anderson remarks, Ovid does not linger over the myth, but, at the conclusion, 'moves swiftly past Pygmalion and his new wife, leaving the field open for romantic conjecture and Shavian wit'.⁶⁶ The story does not have the psychological depth of the 'crime and passion' stories of Tereus, Scylla, Byblis and Myrrha. But in contrasting the Pyramus with these sequences and yoking it with 'the simple miracle tale' of Iphis and Ianthe (IX, 666/9, 787), Brooks Otis surely errs in the opposite direction. 'What we see in the Pyramus and Iphis stories is a metamorphosis that reverses nature by force majeure from above':⁶⁷ a fair summary of the plots, perhaps, but one which leaves out of the reckoning the substance of the tales and misrepresents the final impression which they leave. An earlier Ovidian aficionado, John Lyly, found the theological and political conservatism of this traditional reading of the Iphis dénouement wholly congenial to his purposes in Gallathea.⁶⁸ Yet the central scenes of that play suggest that he too found Ovid's story rather more stimulating than Otis' outline would suggest. In fact, whilst the Iphis and Pygmalion are both slightly risqué stories, packed

with the kind of literary and verbal paradoxes which would appeal to courtly Renaissance wits, they nevertheless sustain and further stimulate a discussion of serious aesthetic questions which never for one moment smacks of abstract debate. The story of Pygmalion, in particular, is further testimony to the essentially dramatic orientation of Ovid's talent, the playful seriousness of the Metamorphoses, and the multiplicity of appeal in its stories.

Pygmalion's history is conditioned by and contrasted with that of the Propoetides, Golding's 'filthy Propets' (10, 255). The first prostitutes, the Propoetides were turned to stone: an aesthetically fitting as well as morally appropriate punishment for their denial of Venus and hardness of heart. It is from this corrupt world of women that Pygmalion withdraws to live a celibate life. In a deceptively casual link, Ovid tells us that 'meanwhile':

by wondrous Art an image he did grave
Of such proportion, shape, and grace, as nature never gave
Nor can to any woman give.

(10, 265-267)⁶⁹

It is this 'better nature' which cures Pygmalion's misogyny and ironically stirs those natural passions which an imperfect world had caused to be suppressed:

He wondreth at his Art
And of his counterfettēd corse concey^oveth love in hart.

(10, 271-272)

For a time, Pygmalion cultivates the illusion that the statue lives. He behaves, that is, like a typical Ovidian lover caught up in a world of his own imagining. At a critical point, however, Pygmalion holds back. Unlike Ovid's 'tragic' heroines, for him the confusion between illusion and reality does not become so absolute that his dream becomes the basis for action.⁷⁰ Rather, Pygmalion's prayer to Venus expresses his desire that life should come as close as possible to the dream: he asks not for

'yoon same wench of Ivory', but a wife 'leeke / My wench of Ivory' (my italics 10, 299-300). It is a verbal trick of the kind played by Viola, Rosalind and Helena in much the same spirit. Like Shakespeare's heroines, Pygmalion's virtue resides precisely in his continuing ability to acknowledge this 'like' (similis, X, 276) - Touchstone's hypothetical 'if', in which Sidney also found the poet's saving grace.⁷¹ Pygmalion's integrity is the counterpart of his creator's and it is the sculptor's healthy imagination, as well as his piety, which is rewarded when Venus responds to his ambiguous prayer.

The transformation scene, which repeats the mystery of the recreation of human life after the Flood, is beautifully handled by Ovid. The miraculous nature of the event is acknowledged in the thematic vocabulary of metamorphosis and the 'stage-directions' which point up Pygmalion's wonder:⁷²

He amazde stood wavering to and fro
Tweene joy, and feare to be beguyld...
(10, 312-313)

A comparison with the dénouement of The Winter's Tale can not be avoided. Like Leontes, Pygmalion fears that he is 'mocked with art': a victim once more of his own wishfulfilling imagination or a similarly deceiving artistic illusionism. It is a fear shared by Ovid's readers. Yet Ovid's fundamental honesty is the exact counterpart of Pygmalion's, just as Shakespeare's artistic integrity could be said to be projected in the figure of Paulina. Precisely because Venus' supernatural agency is recognised, the metamorphosis is prevented from becoming a cheap confidence trick. We do not 'hoot' at the old tale.

The goddess, however, does not hold centre-stage. The mimetic verse (Golding's as well as Ovid's) allows us to feel that in a special kind of sense it is Pygmalion's love - a love which in his case, as in Leontes,

has been reawakened after a period of profound disgust with nature and all its works - which kindles life in the cold marble of the statue:

streyghtway Pygmalion did repayre
Unto the Image of his wench, and leaning on the bed,
Did kisse hir. In her body streyght a warmnesse seemd to spred.
He put his mouth againe to hers, and on her brest did lay
His hand. The Ivory waxed soft: and putting quyght away
All hardnesse, yeelded underneathe his fingars, as wee see
A peece of wax made soft ageinst the Sunne....

...ageine he burnt in love,
Ageine with feeling he began his wished hope to prove.
He felt it verrye flesh in deede. By laying on his thumb,
He felt her pulses beating. Then he stood no longer dumb
But thanked Venus with his hart, and at the length he layd
His mouth to hers who was as then become a perfect mayd.
She felt the kisse, and blusht therat: and lifting fearefully
Hir eyelidds up, hir Lover and the light at once did spye.

(10, 304-320)

The Ovidian sequence, like the Shakespearean play, is rounded-out with marriage and the natural blessing of a child, who instigates a new cycle of life. In the Metamorphoses, this natural continuity is further underlined by the context in which the tale is told. As a dénouement which reverses the Orphic life-denying theme of homosexual love, the birth of the child takes on greater significance. In the story of Pygmalion, as in the tale of Iphis and Ianthe, an impossible love is made possible through the imaginative truth of Ovid's art - an art of the probable which fully merits our faithful indulgence.

Artistic metamorphosis is again put under the microscope in Ovid's Arachne (VI, 1-145/6, 1-181), a tale told, however, in a very different spirit. The story of the weaving contest between the goddess Minerva and the 'meanly-borne' Arachne acts, something like a play-within-a-play, as a focus for the artistic concerns of the Metamorphoses itself. Ovid's technique may, in turn, be directly compared with Shakespeare's use of Ovidian pictures in the Sly scenes of the Taming of the Shrew (Induction, ii, 47-58). In the poem and play, the 'miniatures' summarize the themes of amorous and imaginative transformation reproduced on the wider canvas

of the work, and call attention to the question of the relationship between these natural changes and the process of artistic metamorphosis.⁷³

Like Daedalus and Pygmalion, but far more directly and aggressively, Arachne's artistry challenges the gods. Her act of creation is all the more remarkable because, as Ovid describes it, the basic material she employs is so unpromising. Through a long opening expansion (VI, 8-25/6, 11-31), the emphasis falls on Arachne's grace and dexterity, the facility with which she transforms the 'rough yarn' into something finely wrought.⁷⁴ Not only the finished product, but her artistry itself is an attention-commanding and wonder-begetting subject. As William S. Anderson remarks, Ovid's theme is, in a sense, 'the making or metamorphosis of raw wool into something marvelous by artistic genius'.⁷⁵ The analogy with Ovid's own transmutation of common folk-material into high art is to be understood.

Warned by a disguised Minerva (a form of transformation less praiseworthy than that effected by Arachne)⁷⁶ to desist with the art which she refuses to attribute to the goddess' tutoring, Arachne petulantly refuses. Her tale seems to be taking shape as an account of hubris, which will end inevitably with the fall and punishment of the offending human. It may be that such a moral purpose informed traditional accounts of the myth.⁷⁷ Ovid, however, sets up such expectations only to reverse them: Arachne is, in effect, allowed to win the contest and her metamorphosis is not presented as a punishment. His ending thus represents not only a significant vindication of human pride, but also an indirect assertion of the superiority of Arachne's form of art.

In the central scenes of the story, the tapestries of the divine and human weavers are juxtaposed.⁷⁸ In classically ordered and representative scenes, Minerva depicts the gods as traditional authority figures with

super-human powers. Arachne's own fate is anticipated in the various triumphs of the goddesses over reckless humans: the content is highly moral and didactic. By contrast, Arachne depicts the sub-human metamorphoses of the gods and the human victims of their amorous passions. By stressing the victimization of human females, her tapestry offers a different reading of her own fate to that anticipated in Minerva's work. The spirit and treatment of Arachne's work is beautifully caught in Marlowe's description of the walls of Venus' temple:

There might you see the gods in sundrie shapes,
Committing headdie ryots, incest, rapes.⁷⁹

Countering the classical symmetry and selective arrangement of Minerva's offering, Arachne's tapestry is 'crowded with these many love-affairs of the gods, arranged in no apparent order, achieving their effect by sheer bulk'.⁸⁰ Anticipated by Ovid's earlier description of the doors to Sol's palace (II, lff), her work summarizes the stories told in the intervening books of the Metamorphoses, restating the themes whilst underlining the prevailing playful treatment of myth and the fluid forms of the carmen perpetuum.

Neither Pallas, 'nor Envy himself' can find fault with the tapestry. The goddess works off her anger by attempting to destroy the offending subject-matter, rather than the artefact per se, and by attacking Arachne, herself, in an undignified fit of pique. It is here that Ovid gives the story a final twist. For Arachne remains unhumbled: she hangs herself only because her considerable pride cannot endure this attack. The concluding metamorphosis is thus presented not as a punishment, but as a mitigating act of pity on the part of the goddess. It is also a witty solution to the problem posed by the non-didactic treatment of myth on the part of Ovid himself. The dual imperatives of continuity and change are cleverly met in the transformation: in her new spider-

form, both Arachne's spinning skills and her hanging are perpetuated. By inviting our aesthetic rather than moral approbation, Ovid's ending sets the seal on the triumph of Arachne's artistic credo over Minerva's.

Despite its playful ending, the story of Arachne could be read as a vindication of artistic arrogance by the poet whose final word in the Metamorphoses is the egotistical vivam. Yet Ovid's treatment of Orpheus and Ulysses shows that he is not simply concerned to glorify his own calling. In these stories, humour, and what amounts to a clinically objective analysis, are used in turn to question the power of poetry, music and speech. The contrasting sequences widen even further the boundaries within which the poem's debate on the affective level of art is conducted.

When Ovid puts into Orpheus' mouth doubts about the veracity of the story of Proserpina (X, 28-29/10, 29-30) it is only one of many disclaimers sprinkled throughout the Metamorphoses. It is, however, all the more ironic because Orpheus is himself a poet. Just as Ovid is prepared to have fun with the question of the credibility of poets (ever since Plato, a serious literary topos), he is also ready to make unceremonious use of a related motif: the claims made for the moving power of song. By deferring to tradition (X, 45/10, 48), Ovid heavily qualifies his account of the spell-binding effects of Orpheus' songs in the Underworld. The subsequent story, which deals with the bard's adventures in the Upper-world, provides a further opportunity for humorous scepticism. Here (X, 86ff/10, 93ff), the potentially ideal pastoral setting for Orpheus' song is marred only by the lack of shade. This is soon mended, however, for when the bard strokes his lyre the trees do indeed move, just as tradition had reported. In Ovid's telling, there are precisely twenty-seven of them, and more than adequate shade is thus provided! Ovid's technique is not simply to reject the tradition, but rather to push it

to its logical conclusion and exploit its utilitarian potential.⁸¹

Horace had alluded to Orpheus' ability to 'transport stones by the power of his music' and the tradition that 'a mob of trees once followed to hear (him) sing' in order to exult the 'High Office' of poetry.⁸²

Ovid produces an exhaustive catalogue of trees as yet another reminder of the fictive boundaries of his poem and the limitations of the poetic imagination. The catalogue is also a further instance of his deliberately provocative refusal to keep classical decorum. The discors concordia of the horticultural mixed-sampler readily convicts Ovid of the Horacian charge of straining after 'too prodigal a variety in his theme'.⁸³ Yet, as G. Karl Galinsky and others have shown, the sequence is not simply a reductio ad absurdum of a serious poetic tradition. Rather, Ovid goes on to exploit the mimetic and symbolic properties of his twenty-seven trees in an illustration and development of various aspects of Orpheus' story. In a way that Galinsky sees as emblematic of Ovid's whole approach to his traditional material, Ovid's ironic and debunking intent is in turn undercut by his literary and recreative treatment of the myth.⁸⁴

In support of his argument for 'The High Office of Poetry', Horace had adduced not only poetry's power to civilize wild beasts, but also (paradoxically) the demonstrable power of verse 'to inspire masculine minds to war'.⁸⁵ In the figure of Ulysses Ovid dramatizes his awareness of the equivocal nature of the distinguishing human feature, the gift of language. The debate in the Greek camp, which opens the thirteenth book, is one of the most well-known episodes of the Metamorphoses. In complete contrast to the light-hearted, almost burlesque, treatment of Orpheus, it is a masterful sequence which displays to best advantage Ovid's skilful characterization and acute powers of observation. Justifiably famous in its own right, it nevertheless claims the special attentions

of anyone interested in Shakespeare's dramatic scrutiny of political rhetoric in such figures as Mark Antony and Henry V, as well as his own Ulysses.

According to Arthur Golding,

Ulysses dooth expresse
The image of discretion, wit, and great advisednesse.
And Ajax on the other syde doth represent a man
Stout, headie, irefull, hault of mynd, and such a one as can
Abyde to suffer no repulse.

(Epistle, 248-252)

As a thumb-nail sketch of the two antagonists, this is surely over-generous to Ovid's Ulysses. It fails to take account of, not only Ajax's portrait of 'slye Ulysses' with 'his talk so smooth' (13, 115), but also of the Ulysses who, by his own admission, 'practysed sundry pollycies to trappe our foes unaware' (13, 262). Golding's basic integrity as a translator ensures that he is responsive to the nuances of Ovid's portraiture in preparing his text, even though this may be strangely at odds with the less sensitive reading of the poem offered in the Epistle. One feels, however, that on this occasion, Ovid would have savoured Golding's divided response, since both his presentation and summing up of the contest seem deliberately to invite it.

The controversia between Ajax and Ulysses, a stock subject of the rhetorical schools, is presented in the Metamorphoses as a staged event in which we, as well as the assembled chiefs and commons, are invited to participate. As a set-piece, it certainly allows Ovid to show (off) his own ingenium.⁸⁶ It may also be true that, seen in the context of Ovid's 'Aeneid', the debate takes on an additional significance. It would seem to mark a shift in the conception of the hero; the days of the rough old soldier, like Ajax, seems to be numbered, with the ascendancy passing to Ulysses and his kind, men who are shrewd, political, but above all articulate.⁸⁷ Men, that is, who like Shakespeare's Henry V,

can put words to work and who, like his Mark Antony, can supplement word-power with the actor's complete armoury of expression, gesture, and simulated emotion. Nevertheless, Brooks Otis' conclusion that Ovid 'obviously felt far more sympathy for the clever Ulysses than for the usual epic hero' seems in need of qualification.⁸⁸ There is a danger that pragmatism might be equated with moral approval. Yet this is how Ovid concludes Ulysses' speech and reports the decision of the judges:

The Lords were moved with his woordes, and then appeared playne
The force that is in eloquence. The lerned man did gayne
The armour of the valeant.
(13, 463-465)⁸⁹

It is a carefully understated and indirect summing up, but the ambiguous final sentence suggests, at best, the deliberate withholding of moral approval. The inevitable triumph of the last speaker is acknowledged as a fact of life, but he is not mentioned by name, nor is his victory presented as a personal triumph. Richard A. Lanham (whose judgement of where Ovid's 'sympathies' lie directly contradicts that of Otis) concludes:

The ultimate lesson the debate teaches, is not that Ulysses deserves the armour more than Ajax - Ovid's sympathies lean toward Ajax - but that the best talker wins. The verdict is given almost laconically - Ovid does not bother to tell us directly who won - because the real winner is not so much Ulysses as Eloquence.⁹⁰

This modern judgement is even more strikingly at odds with Golding's last word on the debate:

And finally it sheweth playne that wisdome dooth prevayle
In all attempts and purposes when strength of hand dooth fayle.
(Epistle, 254-255)

Whilst Golding's own text certainly does not promote such an unequivocal 'playne' reading, it is precisely this direct equation of 'wit' and 'wisdom' - ingenium and bonum - which Ovid himself seems concerned to question rather than automatically endorse.⁹¹ His integrity, like Shakespeare's in Troilus and Cressida, is evidenced in his readiness to

subject his own professional skills to the same objective scrutiny which is elsewhere applied to love and war.⁹²

Ulysses is Ovid's study of Rhetorical Man. If we judge it to be a 'warts and all' portrait, it is largely because the spotlight trained on Ulysses proves to be merciless: the debate is fully dramatized and, except to give 'stage-directions' and to conclude the event, Ovid's narrative voice does not intrude. Shakespeare could learn from Plutarch's report, that, in his address over Caesar's body, Antony 'mingled his oration with lamentable words; and by amplifying of matters did greatly move their hearts and affections unto pity and compassion'.⁹³ He could also learn second-hand from Holinshed that, before Agincourt, 'King Henrie...calling his capteins and soldiers about him...made to them a right grave oration, mooving them to plaie the men wherby to obtaine a glorious victorie'.⁹⁴ But from Ovid he could, as it were, gain first-hand experience of a classic oratorical performance.⁹⁵ Ulysses, it is true, also reports his former triumphs; his proven ability, for example, to face a dispirited and demoralized Greek army, 'And shed new courage in theyr minds through talk that fro mee goes' (13, 290). But there is the additional evidence of his present performance to show how this would have been achieved.

Ulysses' challenge for the armour of Achilles is a virtuoso display of the full range of rhetorical techniques:

....nothing relevant escaped his attention, and it was all set in proper place for the greatest force and effectiveness. In the matter of choosing words (and choosing them more for weight than for charm), in placing them and tying them into compact sentences, (he) controlled everything by purpose and by something like deliberate art.

This portrait by Cicero of an earlier Marcus Antonius holds good for Ovid's Ulysses, as well as Shakespeare's Antony.⁹⁶ False modesty,

concession of an argument to win a point, exploitation of the opponent's strength as well as weakness to make his own virtues shine all the more, anticipation of his audience's potential objections - these are just a few of the strategems in the 'deliberate art' of Ulysses. He is also a master of timing and delivery, adding voice and gesture to his beautifully modulated sentences in an appeal to his audience's emotions as well as its intellect. Ovid's Ulysses, who quiets his listeners and arouses their anticipation by thoughtful study of the ground before he begins his address; who is overcome with emotion for the dead leader and makes 'as if to wipe tears from his eyes' (XIII, 132-133); who appeals directly to the audience for verification of a point, and wins both pity and respect for his self-portrait of almost single-handed heroism ('the multitude were helping thee at hand / I had but one with mee');⁹⁷ and who at the perfectly chosen moment leaves off his 'empty words' (XIII, 263) and allows his battle scars to speak: is a living exemplum of Cicero's directions for oral delivery, as instanced in Henry Peacham's explanation for the rhetorical figure, mimesis. By this

we counterfeit not only what one sayd, but also utterance and gesture, immitating everything as it was...cutting it shorte, or drawing it out with stammering, with loude or loe voyce, lisping, nodding the head, wincking, frowning, smiling....

A pittiful pronounciation is of great force: and moveth affections wonderfully, in expressing a wofull case....⁹⁸

In short, Ulysses is the complete actor. As the common vocabulary makes clear, his words and actions approximate directly to the metamorphic techniques practised by other actor-artist figures in the poem. In particular, Ovid exploits the 'not entirely dignified connotation of verbs like simulare and adjectives such as falsus - vocabulary habitually applied to the gods who assume disguises for immoral ends, and humans who act out false emotions for base purposes.⁹⁹ Ulysses 'deceives by craft'

and employs 'cunning artifice' (XIII, 194,322). In a particularly clever stroke, Ovid makes him chastise Ajax for his boorish insensitivity to the artistic relief-work on Achilles shield (XIII, 286-295): it is an affront to his own aesthetic sensibilities!¹⁰⁰ In spite of his moralising Epistle, Golding the translator seems instinctively to grasp that Ovid's Ulysses is a master of theatre. If anything, the English version of this classic debate intensifies the dramatic immediacy of the original, as sub-clauses of the direct-speech are rendered in mimetic parenthetical asides and Ovid's narrative interpolations assume the form of hastily added stage-directions:

Alonly let it not avayle Sir Ajax heere, that hee
 Is such a dolt and grossehead, as he shewes himself to bee
 Ne let my wit (which ay hath done you good, O Greekes) hurt
 mee.
 But suffer this mine eloquence (such as it is) which now
 Dooth for his mayster speake, and oft ere this hath spoke for
 yow,
 Bee undisdeynd...

(13, 167-172)

There also are (O countrymen) about mee woundlings, which
 The place of them make beawtyfull. See heere (his hand did
 twich
 His shirt asyde) and credit not vayne woordes. Lo heere the
 brist
 That alwayes to bee one in your affayres hath never mist.

(13, 321-324)

Ulysses uses his voice and body as a versatile, flexible instrument which he in turn uses to play upon the pliability of others. He constantly stresses his ability to move audiences both emotionally and physically, his capacity to turn weakness into strength and make the impossible seem possible. In sum, he is a not entirely flattering alter-ego of Ovid himself, and both his portrait and the standard rhetorical topos of the Ulysses-Ajax debate are beautifully accommodated to the Ovidian theme of metamorphosis. Ulysses joins Daedalus, Pygmalion, Arachne and Orpheus, as yet another artistic figure, whom, with remarkable objectivity, Ovid

uses to refract both the splendour and shadiness of his own manipulative art of transformation.

4. The Lunatic, the Lover and the Poet

In the central books of Ovid's poem, the idea of metamorphosis itself undergoes something of a sea-change. As the narrative focus shifts from the gods who cause suffering to the humans who suffer, there is a corresponding shift to a more naturalistic treatment of myth and a deepening and intensification of the transformation motif. In the earlier books, love is presented as an overwhelming natural force which transforms both lover and beloved, but Ovid does not allow us to penetrate the psyche of either the gods or the humans. In these stories of 'the gods in love', metamorphosis is largely an externalised motif; the effects are mainly visual, with much of the comedy turning on incongruity and the loss of decorum. The transformation of mighty Jove into a snowy bull may be taken as emblematic: 'Majesty and love do not go well together' (II, 846-847) is Ovid's gnomic comment on this particular passion, but the incompatibility between maiestas and amor is a motif common to them all.¹⁰¹ Though pure comedy may shade into an almost voyeuristic curiosity about the strange couplings which occur, the erotic content is distanced and contained by Ovid's unnaturalistic and self-consciously literary treatment of the myths. The vision of 'bull-Jove' with Europa is no more (nor less) disturbing than that of 'sweet Bully Bottom' with Titania.

The change which occurs in the central books of the Metamorphoses may be compared to Shakespeare's development of the 'Supposes' motif through the early Comedies. The focus of attention increasingly falls on those who do the 'supposing' rather than those who are supposed upon, and the comedy becomes more deeply satisfying as the external devices of mistaken identity

and disguise are shown to be the superficial manifestations of a far more radical transformation. As Geoffrey Bullough observes of The Taming of the Shrew, 'Shakespeare was....moving from the outer world of appearances and situation to the inner world of character and ethical implications'.¹⁰² This same journey is made in the Metamorphoses by the poet who had already composed the Heroides. In Shakespeare's development as a dramatic artist, it is Ovid, as well as Plautus, who charts the way.¹⁰³

In the stories of Niobe, Hecuba, Medea, Tereus, Procne and Philomela, Cephalus and Procris, and others - characters who, largely as a result of Ovid's account of the myths, become figures of symbolic proportions in Elizabethan literature - the idea of metamorphosis is expressed as something very close to a tragedy of moral choices, rather than a comedy of manners. It is in these stories, rather than in Ovid's earlier 'comedies', that Bottom's observation that 'reason and love keep little company' is subject to the Roman poet's most radical scrutiny. Similarly, it is Shakespeare's appreciation of these 'stories of the night' which lends profundity to the comedy of A Midsummer Night's Dream, as well as conditioning his depiction of transforming passion in the subsequent tragedies and tragi-comedies. As Reuben A. Brower has written (with particular reference to the Tereus story),

Through the Ovidian vision that is expressed so perfectly in this and many other tales, Shakespeare was introduced to an imaginative form that was to be characteristic of his later work as a dramatic poet. In these beautiful and monstrous changes, these 'transshifting' states, Shakespeare glimpsed one of the central metaphors of his comedies and tragedies, and in Ovid's shaping of narrative through metaphorical imagery to give unity and large meaning to moments of high drama, Shakespeare discovered, for the first time, I believe, a pattern that can be traced from A Midsummer Night's Dream to The Tempest,

Such power hath strong imagination.¹⁰⁴

The central books of the Metamorphoses show that men, no less than the gods themselves, are seduced by the outward appearance of things. When the basic substance on which the imagination operates is inherently unstable, and the linguistic forms used to represent that unstable reality are equally 'doubtfull', there are manifold opportunities for transformation to occur. When, in turn, the human imagination itself is shown to be equally plastic and volatile, the metamorphic possibilities are truly compounded. This incremental process is captured in slow motion by Anderson:

The power of forma to move the imagination and then the power of the activated imagination to overwhelm the reason and personality (in effect to cause an internal change or 'metamorphosis') is one of the basic motifs in the central books of the Metamorphoses.¹⁰⁵

The dramatic continuity and the tremendous power of these sequences derive from the total integrity of Ovid's controlling idea of metamorphosis. But the true focus of these stories is the subjective link in the chain which Ovid had previously left unexplored: the human imagination as a transforming medium. Under the influence of powerful emotional forces, Ovid's major characters also manifest a tremendous release of imaginative energy which shapes and controls their lives, as it controls the shape of the narratives in which they appear. Reuben A. Brower quotes Yeats' insight in The Statues - 'Passion could make character enough' - to argue that Shakespeare's notion of characterization has far more in common with classical poets' understanding of that term, than that of nineteenth century novelists, dramatists and critics: 'Iago's comment is a good piece of Shakespearean criticism: "I see, sir, you are eaten up with passion"'.¹⁰⁶ Ovid, like Homer, was interested in the working-out of passion. Sorrow and suffering, sexual lust, anger, ambition, love, jealousy, revenge - these are the subjects of the major stories in the Metamorphoses, as they are the subjects of the Iliad and

Shakespeare's major tragedies.

If the dénouements of the Tereus myth and Titus Andronicus, where the Thracian King unwittingly consumes 'the flesh of his own flesh' (Metamorphoses (VI, 651) and Tamara 'daintily' feeds on 'the flesh she herself hath bred' (Titus Andronicus, V,iii, 61-62), add literal weight to the force of Iago's 'dramatic criticism', many other sequences in Ovid and Shakespeare demonstrate its essential utility. Under the influence of powerful emotional forces, characters fashioned by both poets lose their individuality to the extent that they become abstract 'personified emotion' and 'phenomena of nature'. As already noted,¹⁰⁷ Eugene M. Waith has been able to show that, in this respect, Titus Andronicus is a thoroughly Ovidian play. In the Metamorphoses, the total identification of the individual with his or her ruling passion is often complicated by the final transformation when, for example, Niobe, as a cataract-bearing stone, quite literally becomes 'all tears'. But the essential metamorphosis can occur much earlier. Procne and Hecuba are loving wives and mothers who are completely changed into inhuman abstractions of Revenge before their respective metamorphoses into a swallow and dog. Ovid's phrase for both, poenaque in imagine tota est (VI, 586 and XIII, 546), is wonderfully suggestive of the change which has occurred, as Anderson's commentary makes clear:

Ovid seems to mean that she is totally immersed in the contemplation, imagination of the punishment she will inflict. However, the words also suggest, as does Ovid's entire theme, that Procne has become transformed and taken the shape of vengeance.¹⁰⁸

If, as Anderson goes on to suggest, the depiction of Procne is only 'the first of Ovid's great portraits of a woman distorted by vengeance', the sequence can also serve as the template for a sequence which is enacted many times over in Shakespeare's plays and poems. Thus, for example, Lucrece addresses her appeal to Tarquin's 'exil'd majesty', failing to

recognize the personified Lust he has become; Othello speaks of himself in the third person as 'he that was Othello'; Antony and Cleopatra both almost literally lose their names, the one protesting that, in spite of all evidence to the contrary, 'I am / Antony yet', whilst demanding to know of the other ' - what's her name / Since she was Cleopatra?'; and Leontes is so distorted by jealousy that even his language is incomprehensible to Hermione.¹⁰⁹

Yet these few Shakespearean examples give pause for reflection. They call attention to an apparent paradox which Waith's seminal study of 'the metamorphosis of violence' ignores: character is not simply obliterated but also defined by passion. In The Winter's Tale, this paradox is suggested by Polixenes' characterization of Leontes' jealousy: '...as his person's mighty / Must it be violent' (I,ii, 453-454). The absolute quality of Hermione's purity and Polixenes' friendship serve only to demonstrate the magnitude of Leontes' imaginative feat of supposing them to the contrary. The same dreadful paradox is enacted in Macbeth, where both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth must expend tremendous resources of emotional and imaginative energy in order to conjure into being the evil antithesis of the natural goodness Banquo can so readily comprehend.¹¹⁰ And in Antony and Cleopatra, where 'every passion fully strives' for possession of Cleopatra, and Antony is a 'heavenly mingle' of 'sad' and 'merry', it is the violence of the opposing passions both within and between the two protagonists which guarantees their very existence. Those same passions which, in the plays's characteristic imagery, threaten to dissolve individual identity completely, also make manifest Cleopatra and Antony's claim to greatness. Violence here is truly 'an emblem of metamorphosis' in the full Ovidian sense: not simply of change, but of continuity.¹¹¹

Commenting on Ovid's treatment of 'a story that Shakespeare dearly loved, the sorrows of Hecuba', Reuben A. Brower writes that 'for Ovid

the tale of Hecuba was what it surely must have been for Shakespeare, an image of a noble nature (my italics) terribly changed, a type of imaginative experience that became increasingly real to Shakespeare as his tragic vision matured'.¹¹² Under the influence of that same emotion, which threatens to deny all human individuality by asserting the primacy of unregenerate Lucretian nature, the major protagonists of both poets experience a tremendous release of imaginative energy which simultaneously demonstrates their claim to a distinguishing humanity. The very size of their struggle against overwhelming natural forces is a measure of their stature. The major sequences of the Metamorphoses, like Shakespeare's tragedies, constantly make us aware of 'the possible other case':

One of the favorite themes of Ovid in this part of the poem (Books VI-X) [is] the vain resistance which mortals make against life's obstacles. But the very fact that Medea and her like do resist their inclinations makes them much more sympathetic than the lustful, uncomplicated gods, who gratify their passions without a moment's hesitation, without the slightest moral concern. In these stories metamorphosis often comes as a compensation for the brave, but hopeless battle.¹¹³

In this reading, metamorphosis comes very close to tragic catharsis.

Stimulated by jealousy, ambition, anger, Shakespeare's tragic heroes reveal themselves as skilful rhetoricians, resourceful strategists, profound thinkers, and great poets: the best that humanity can achieve. Speeches which proclaim the triumph of passion over reason continue to employ the structures of reason to order and control the formless emotion, whilst drawing on the deepest resources of intellect and imagination to 'body forth' the unknown doubts, hopes and fears. It is here that, notwithstanding the enormously diverse traditions which developed between the antiquity and the Renaissance, the profound affinity between Ovid and Shakespeare's notion of character and their common preoccupation with the source and nature of the creative imagination is truly evident. Waith's analysis of the Ovidian form of Titus Andronicus isolates only half of the characteristic dialectic

of the Metamorphoses, which in this early play Shakespeare appropriates in full. The vital 'other half' is suggested in passing by Ovid's Ulysses. Summarizing the metamorphic effects of his words on a retreating Greek army, Ulysses concludes:

with such like woord
And other, (which the eloquence of sorrowe did avoord),
I brought them from theyr flying shippes.

(13, 283-285)

Golding's parenthesis is a major Ovidian insight: in quae dolor ipse disertum fecerat (XIII, 228-229) - 'to which my very grief had made me eloquent'. Here, and in similar phrases throughout the poem, Ovid identifies a curious paradox, which similarly preoccupied Shakespeare in his early poems and plays. In Richard III, it is expressed in the Duchess of York's question:

Why should calamity be full of words? (IV,iv, 126).

The question is perhaps subject to its most radical examination in Hamlet, where the fact that Hamlet 'Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words', is at the core of his self-loathing, even though, in concluding an earlier soliloquy, he had already answered the Duchess of York's question: 'But break, my heart, for I must hold my tongue'.¹¹⁴ When people feel strongly they must express themselves in fictions. What they 'fayn', they are obliged to 'feyn'.

In Titus Andronicus, Shakespeare had already begun to explore the implications of Ovid's insight into the 'eloquence of sorrow'. With youthful enthusiasm he even multiplies the violence and pathos of Ovid's story, for even more than Marcus, as Lavinia's father, Titus must accommodate in his speeches not only his own emotion and activated imagination, but also the 'heart' and 'mind' of his doubly-mutilated daughter, who is denied the means of release open to Philomela (II,ii, 34-40). And so, through speech after speech, Titus continues to 'storm'. As Waith reminds us,¹¹⁵ his

grief, 'like Nilus...d disdaineth bounds' (III,i, 71). This allusion to Metamorphoses, Book I, is a key text for Titus' metamorphosis into a 'phenomenon of nature'. But it is incomplete. The paradoxical Nile does not simply image the disintegration of Titus' character, it is also emblematic of his imaginative recovery. In the play's central acts, Titus' overflowing grief is contained by the most elaborately patterned and conceited language - language which is not simply a feature of the dramatist's 'metamorphosis of suffering', but of Titus' transformation of formless emotion into artifice. When speech no longer serves as an adequate receptacle, Titus looks for other ways of easing his mind. He moves - in essentially the same direction as Hamlet when in the 'rogue and peasant slave' soliloquy, he conceives the idea of 'The Mousetrap' - towards more sustained forms of a dreadfully perverted 'creativity'. At what seems to be the most extreme point of his suffering (soon to be faced with the heads of his 'two noble sons', Titus will plum new depths of 'bottomless sorrow') Shakespeare signals his imaginative recovery by a second reference to the Nile, the river whose flood ensures foison, whose destructive course is also creative:

Gentle Lavinia, let me kiss thy lips,
 Or make some sign how I may do thee ease.
 Shall thy good uncle and thy brother Lucius,
 And thou and I, sit round about some fountain,
 Looking all downwards to behold our cheeks
 How they are stain'd, like meadows yet not dry,
 With miry slime left on them by a flood?

...

Or shall we bite our tongues, and in dumb shows
 Pass the remainder of our hateful days?
 What shall we do? Let us that have our tongues
 Plot some device of further misery,
 To make us wonder'd at in time to come.

(III,i, 120-135)

And so, in a daring but ill-advised enactment of Edgar's, 'The lamentable change is from the best. / The worst returns to laughter' (King Lear, Iv,i, 5-6), the plot of this early tragedy prematurely revolves on the

axis of Titus' mad laughter (III,i, 264), and groans towards the climax of his terrifyingly apposite revenge.

The dénouement of Titus Andronicus closely follows the evolution of the story of Tereus, Procne and Philomela, not because Shakespeare had unthinkingly appropriated a ready-made plot, but because his 'moral energy', like that of Ovid and Homer, 'is made manifest in pursuing the logic of suffering and revengeful passion to its ugly end'.¹¹⁶ Like Ovid, himself, Shakespeare is responsive to the imaginative truth of the Tereus myth with its vision of 'humanity gone astray'.¹¹⁷ Titus claims our 'admiration' because (in a sense not intended by Eugene M. Waith) he 'transcends the normal limits of humanity'. That same intensity of passion which threatens to destroy his 'visible shape' also promotes his distinguishing characteristic: the ability to 'apprehend / More than cool reason ever comprehends'. As Shakespeare's use of the Nile motif here, and in Antony and Cleopatra, makes particularly clear, it is the full Ovidian notion of character which engages Shakespeare's attention: the strange confusion of 'loss with store' which is passion's gift.¹¹⁸ Notwithstanding the very real difficulties which Shakespeare encountered in transposing narrative into drama, his adaptation of the Ovidian 'rhetoric of admiration', as well as character and plot, testifies to his deep understanding of the intimate relationship between Ovid's metamorphic poetry and the transformations which occur in the myth itself. Waith concludes that Titus, 'like Tamburlaine or Bussy D'Ambois, is almost beyond praise or blame, an object of admiration'.¹¹⁹ I would argue, however, that the final spectacle of Titus Andronicus is 'extraordinary' in a more characteristically Shakespearean sense. The play's truly 'astonishing' disclosure is that the deviant strategies adopted by otherwise noble individuals in response to a disabling emotional crisis are a

transposed version of those adopted by the dramatic poet himself. To the extent that its protagonist's 'seething brain' and 'shaping fantasies' differ from the 'strong imagination' of Hamlet, Othello and Macbeth in quality rather than in kind, Titus Andronicus can not, as Waith argues, be regarded as 'Shakespeare's contribution to a special tragic mode'.¹²⁰ In this early play, Shakespeare has already begun to establish the relations between Theseus' unholy triumvirate of lunatic, lover and poet, and to reveal the 'strange and admirable' 'constancy' of Ovid's 'antique fables'.

The theme of order versus chaos announced in the Creation sequence is adumbrated throughout the Metamorphoses at the level of character. Seneca the Rhetorician's observation that Ovid was not so much interested in argument as in character is really only a half truth.¹²¹ What really fascinated Ovid, as it fascinated Shakespeare and Coleridge, is the strange and paradoxical relationship between rhetoric and feeling, linguistic control and emotional and psychological disorder, reason and passion. The apparent contradiction between the violent subject-matter and the stylistic urbanity of the Metamorphoses is not simply a question of Ovid's artistic strategy: it is an issue constantly raised by his characters themselves. An extended consideration of the Tereus story will help to make this clearer.

Fired by a sudden and overwhelming desire for Philomela, Tereus, a dutiful husband to Procne for five years, is completely transformed. Under the influence of this natural force, he becomes no less an orator than Ulysses. In a suggestive phrase which recalls the Greek hero's 'eloquence of sorrow', Ovid tells us that Tereus is suddenly fluently persuasive: 'facundum faciebat amor' (VI, 469) - 'Love gave him power

to frame / His talke at will' (6, 599-600). As William S. Anderson notes, this gift is all the more remarkable in view of Tereus' birth-right:

Tereus has radically changed. Love has made him,
a crude Thracian, eloquent.¹²²

Himself transformed, Tereus becomes acutely aware of the metamorphic possibilities afforded by an appearance-dominated world. As he pleads his own cause under the guise of his wife's, Tereus is no less of an accomplished actor than Ulysses:

He also wept: as though his wife had willed that likewise.
O God, what blindness doth the heartes of mortall men disguise?
By working mischief Tereus gets him credit for to seeme
A loving man, and winneth praise by wickednesse extreeme.
(6, 602-605)

Golding's translation of the narrator's outcry, though 'correct', loses some of the metaphorical force of the Latin, 'Pro superi, quantum mortalia pectora caecae noctis habent!' (VI, 472-473: Ovid is inveighing, not only at the blindness of Tereus' 'audience', but at the blackness of Tereus' heart.¹²³ The phrase, caecae noctis, also evokes the whole imaginative context of the tale in which, as previously explored, imagery of night and darkness is increasingly used to symbolic effect.¹²⁴ Such details testify to the tremendous integrity and coherence of these Ovidian tales. In Ovid's 'shaping of narrative through metaphorical imagery to give unity and large meaning to moments of high drama', Shakespeare found much that was worthy of emulation.¹²⁵

The total integrity of Ovid's idea of metamorphosis becomes even clearer after the rape and mutilation of Philomela, when we see the incremental effects of Tereus' initial act of violence. Tereus, himself, now inhabits a totally imaginary world. Returning to Procne, he is characterized as both an actor and a story-teller, as he groans in

'pretended grief' and tells 'a made-up story' of Philomela's death (VI, 565-566). Anderson's summary suggests the symbolic power of Ovid's design:

Tereus, who was internally transformed by lust at Athens and concealed his feeling behind a mask of pietas, now dons a similar mask before his wife. His willful deceit symbolizes his own perversion, anticipates his physical metamorphosis, and sets off a train of mutual deceit that eventually achieves punishment.¹²⁶

In the sequences which follow, Ovid skilfully juxtaposes Tereus' counterfeit sorrow against the real suffering of both Philomela and Procne. However, in Ovid's poem as in Shakespeare's plays, putting on clothes often means assuming a role, disguising one's basic nature.¹²⁷ The thematic vocabulary of metamorphosis allows Ovid to play with the idea of Procne's mourning, much as Hamlet plays with the word 'seems' to expose the true integrity of his own grief (Hamlet, II,ii, 76-86). In spite of her true feelings, Procne's 'black weeds' amount to a disguise. Her mourning is the exact counterpart of Tereus' hollow words, since her outward forms of grief correspond to no real object. Totally compromised, she is herself 'shaped by her husband's words and acts', and becomes a fellow actor:¹²⁸

he sighing feynedly
Did tell hir falsly she was dead: and with his suttle teares
He maketh all his tale to seeme of credit in hir eares.
Hir garments glittering all with golde she from hir shoulders teares
And puts on blacke, and setteth up an emptie Herce, and keepes
A solemne obite for his soule, and piteously she weepes
And wailleth for hir sisters fate who was not in such wise
As that was, for to be bewailde.

(6, 721-728)

Where the transformed Tereus becomes something of a Ulysses, the violated Philomela becomes in extremis something of an Arachne. Tongueless, she finds an outlet for her pent-up feelings in a kind of artistic strategy. This new turn in the action elicits further comment from the narrator:

Great is the wit of pensiveness, and when the head is rakt
 With hard misfortune, sharpe forcast of practise entereth in.
 A warpe of white upon a frame of Thracia she did pin,
 And weaved purple letters in betweene it, which bewraide
 The wicked deede of Tereus.

(6, 734-738)

Golding's sensitivity to Ovid's meaning is evident in his translation of the gnomic, grande doloris ingenium est (VI, 574-575). What at first glance appears to be somewhat tautological - 'wit of pensiveness' - is, on reflection, evidence of Golding's concern to qualify Philomela's suffering as mental as well as physical anguish. The Latin phrase was a sententia which might be compared with the English saying, 'necessity is the mother of invention'. But, as Anderson notes, 'doloris' suggests suffering and outrage rather than mere necessity,¹²⁹ while Ovid's whole theme intimates that by 'ingenium' he means something more than pragmatic resourcefulness. Here again Golding's choice of the term 'wit' reflects his sensitivity as a translator, and his capacity to serve as a positive rather than negative intermediary between Ovid and Shakespeare. In an extended study of this 'complex word', C.S. Lewis has shown that 'wit' is inextricably related to 'ingenium'. It is not simply that one word is invariably used to translate the other: the Latin and English words cluster the same sets of ideas and 'enter into exactly the same traditional antithesis'. The problem, as Lewis explains, is to find a contemporary term which expresses what Ovid, Golding or Shakespeare understood by 'ingenium-wit':

One cannot call it either 'talent' or 'genius' without foisting upon the Roman and English writers a far later, and Romantic, distinction...But what is hard to express is easy to understand. What is being talked about is the thing which, in its highest exaltation may border on madness; the productive, seminal (modern cant would say 'creative') things, as distinct from the critical faculty of judicium; the thing supplied by nature, not acquired by skill (ars); the thing which he who has it may love too well and follow intemperately. It is what distinguishes the great writer and especially the great poet. It is therefore very close to 'imagination'. Indeed, there is one Latin passage where ingenium can hardly be translated except by that very word. It

comes at the beginning of Cicero's De Legibus. Atticus looks round to see the oak which had been mentioned in Cicero's poem Marius and asks if it is still alive. 'Yes' comes the answer, 'it is, and always will be, for it was planted by ingenium'. It was an imaginary tree. (I, i).¹³⁰

It is precisely in this sense that Ovid uses the word 'ingenium' to characterize Philomela's weaving, whilst the connotations of 'seminal', 'natural' and 'creativity' are maintained in Golding's choice of the word 'wit'. The Roman sententia, 'grande doloris ingenium est' is reinvigorated by the whole imaginative context of the Metamorphoses in which, from the poem's opening to its closing lines, Ovid continues to explore the origins, nature and role of the creative imagination. Like the similar observations which the narrator makes of Tereus and Procne, the phrase expresses a major psychological insight on Ovid's part, which Shakespeare continued to explore throughout his career: extremes of natural emotion - love, jealousy, suffering, sorrow - activate the imaginative faculty, and the resolution of the turmoil in 'creative' activity akin to poetic strategies is as much to relieve the victim's thoughts as his feelings.

Shocked and horrified by the evidence of her sister's tapestry, Procne, like Philomela herself, is at first struck dumb before 'hurrying on' to a deed of perverse creativity which Ovid tells us 'confounds right and wrong' (VI, 581-586). Her metamorphosis is signalled in a parenthetical aside which draws our attention to the wonder:

She held hir peace (a wondrous thing it is she should so doe)
But sorrow tide hir tongue, and wordes agreeable unto
Hir great displeasure were not at commaundment at that stound.
And weep she could not. Right and wrong she reckoneth to confound,
And on revengement of the deede hir heart doth wholly ground.
(6, 743-747)

The final line here is Golding's rendering of Ovid's, poenaque in imagine tota est (VI, 586), a phrase which, as already suggested,¹³¹ densely expresses Ovid's whole theme. Procne, who had already assumed the outward forms of sorrow, is now completely transformed into the shape pictured in

her imagination, the shape of vengeance. The second time he encounters this phrase in the poem, Golding varies his translation. Of Hecuba (who initially is also struck 'dumb for sorrow') he writes: 'to vengeance shee her bent / Enforcing all her wittes to fynd some kynd of ponnishment' (13, 654-655).¹³² 'Englised' in this way, the phrase may lack the pithy suggestive power of the Latin, but Ovid's meaning is not totally obscured. The best possible translation, however, is provided indirectly by Shakespeare - when Hamlet describes the Player's total identification with the plight of Hecuba in the phrase 'his whole function suiting / With forms to his conceit' (Hamlet, II,ii, 549-550).

Initially overcome by extremes of suffering, Philomela, Procne and Hecuba struggle to give a semblance of meaning to their devastated lives by living out, or rather almost literally inhabiting, the world of their imagination. In exactly the same way, once inflamed by the seductive outward form of Philomela's beauty, Tereus had been forced to exist in a world entirely of his own making:

...in his minde revolving all the night
Hir face, hir gesture, and hir hands, imaginde all the rest
(The which as yet he had not seene) as likte his fancie beste.
He feedes his flames himselfe.

(6, 627-630)

Just this notion of transforming passion and the plot-shape it dictates is reflected in Shakespeare's constant refinement of the revenge motif through Titus Andronicus, Hamlet and Macbeth. 'The tale of Tereus, Philomele and Prognee', writes Golding, 'shews':

that distresse doth drive a man to looke about
And seeke all corners of his wits, what way to wind him out.

(Epistle, 141-142)

Probably intended as a summary of the deperate strategies which precede Tereus' physical metamorphosis, the couplet nevertheless serves to link Tereus, Procne and Philomela in a common imaginative endeavour. When

one recovers the full Renaissance connotations of the word 'wit', it is also more than fair summary of the plot of Hamlet.

The integrity of Ovid's design ensures that the final act of the Tereus story is played out with total dramatic inevitability. Driven on by 'the madness of grief', Procne puts on the disguise and 'feynes' the frantic behaviour of a Bacchantian reveller in a 'nighttimes' (the word echoes through the sequence) rescue of Philomela from her woodland prison (VI, 587-600/6, 748-763). Ovid makes it clear that Procne is and is not mad, is and is not acting!

....And where the sting of sorrow which she feeles
Enforceth hir to furiousnesse, she faynes it to proceede
Of Bacchus motion.

(6, 757-759)

Like Titus' gulling of Tamara and her sons, and Hamlet's 'antic disposition', Procne's manic behaviour is a parodic exaggeration of her real psychological and emotional transformation. The thematic vocabulary of metamorphosis enforces the parallel with Tereus' behaviour earlier, which displayed the same mixture of game and earnest.¹³³

'Fully bent all mischiefe for to trie' (6, 778), Procne pauses only to find a totally apposite course of action. The original crime must not simply be requited, but take a form that is aesthetically satisfying to the avenger - as Hamlet's conception of 'The Mousetrap' scheme is perfectly fitted to Claudius' false seeming, and his eventual poisoning repays the murderers original act in kind. Procne's task, like Titus', is to 'o'erreach' her enemy 'in (his) own devices' (V,ii, 143):

The thing that I doe purpose on is great, what ere it is.
(6, 784)

The dreadful paradox which engages Ovid is that Procne must prove her superior human quality in an act of utter depravity. Herein also, I

believe, is the source of Shakespeare's fascination with the revenge motif, for it is this dreadful paradox which Hamlet recognizes and seeks to resolve.¹³⁴ It is the fact that Procne's is essentially a noble nature which has been terribly changed, which 'opens up more disturbing and tragic possibilities' and points the way to Shakespeare.¹³⁵

Ovid's presentation of the solution to Procne's dilemma is beautifully dramatic:

While Progne hereunto
Did set hir minde, came Itys in, who taught hir what to doe.
(6, 785-786)

Despite a momentary loss of resolution, some fifteen lines later, Procne has been able to persuade herself that the sacrifice of her son is the appropriate - even the morally appropriate course of action. Since Ovid has ensured that everything in the story so far has led inexorably to this momentous decision, the reader himself is obliged to accede to Procne's perverse logic. Throughout the tale, Ovid has stressed the complete inversion of family relationships, moral values, and appearance and reality which follow from Tereus' original unnatural act. 'Pius' and 'pietas', words which compress complex and inter-related ideas of dutiful, loyal and affectionate behaviour towards ones immediate family, as well as to the gods and their earthly representatives, become thematic at an early stage. Thus Philomela's father had appealed for his daughter's swift return in the name of pietas - the filial duty naturally owing to a father:

'si pietas ulla est, ad me, Philomela, redito!'
(VI, 503)

which Golding renders:

If any sparke of nature doe within thy heart remayne,
With all the haaste and speede thou canst returne to me againe.
(6, 643-644).

The couplet is a fine example of the dramatic realism and depth of feeling which Golding - at his best - can imbue in the treacherous 'fourteener'. More importantly, it illustrates the tremendous service Golding paid to Ovid in translating, here as throughout his version of the poem, the complex Latin words, pius and pietas, by the equally complex and fundamental English words, 'kinde' and 'nature' (where he might perhaps have reached less strenuously for their religiously restrictive English derivatives). The nexus of natural relationships comprehended by the words is exactly that which Macbeth characterizes as the self-requiting service he owes to Duncan, the duties 'Which do but what they should, by doing everything / Safe toward your love and honour' (Macbeth, I,v, 26-27). Where it is Duncan's 'part' to receive such duties, it is Philomela's 'part' to similarly love and honour her father, and to receive in turn from Tereus the respect which is owing to a sister-in-law.

It is just this self-justifying, inherently reasonable order of things which Tereus' act of violence, no less than Macbeth's, once and for all destroys. 'Omnia turbasti' is Philomela's summary of the travesty of family relationships which accrues from the barbarous crime: 'thou hast confounded all' (VI, 537/6, 684). Tereus' act, which has made Philomela her sister's enemy and Tereus the bigamous husband of them both, returns the family to the situation which obtained in the Iron Age when, as Ovid described it in the opening book of the poem,

Men live by ravine and by stelth: the wandring guest doth stand
In daunger of his host: the host in daunger of his guest:
And fathers of their sonne in lawes.....

(I, 162-164)

This was the time, as Shakespeare remembered in Titus Andronicus, when 'terras Astrea reliquit' (IV,iii, 4: Metamorphoses, I, 150).

The profound coherence of Ovid's idea of metamorphosis is such that with the confounding of right relationships goes the confounding of the normal relationship between a word and its denotative significance. The words, pius and pietas, are as vital as counters in Ovid's poetic control of the metamorphosis theme in these central books, as the words, 'nature' and 'man', are in Shakespeare's metaphorical ordering of King Lear and Macbeth. As in Shakespeare's plays, the dislocation of the natural relationships which hold together men in society incurs a dislocation of the linguistic structures which order and control reasonable thought processes. The language of the Tereus story is as relentlessly riddling and paradoxical as the language of Macbeth. In exactly the same way, words can be invoked to denote their normal opposites. Where the 'milk of human kindness' is for Lady Macbeth a fault and not a virtue, Procne is able to reach 'the monstrous conclusion that pietas is scelus where Tereus is concerned'.¹³⁶ As Golding has it, in a line which only marginally dilutes the pithy force of the economical Latin, 'To such a husband as / Is Tereus, pitie is a sinne' (6, 803-804). In the 'handy-dandy' world which Tereus had created, Procne is thus able to 'justify' the murder and mutilation of their son as a moral deed.

Much as the third Act 'Banquet Scene' in Macbeth takes its meaning from the normative feast of Act One, the 'sacred feast' which Procne now 'feynes' is defined by the true family relationships which Ovid shows us at the opening of his tale. At this parodic banquet, Tereus is finally and totally made aware of the self-negating hollowness of his initial act of greedy pleasure. The paradoxical language catching up with him at last, he is forced to bewail that, having eaten 'the flesh of (his) own flesh', he has become 'bustum miserabile nati' - his son's 'wretched grave' (VI, 665/6, 841).

The physical metamorphoses of Tereus, Philomela, and Procne into the war-like hoopoe, the lamenting nightingale, and the house-bound swallow, set the formal seal on three lives which have already changed beyond all recognition. The somewhat slighting tone of the final lines (as reflected in the 'spluttering alliteration', which Golding in part attempts to reproduce)¹³⁷ is typical of the detached view which Ovid adopts towards the marvelous element in the poem, and of his deliberate inhibition of totally tragic effects.¹³⁸ Here, as elsewhere, however, detraction from the marvelous transformations serves to point up the relative importance of the natural metamorphoses which we have witnessed earlier in the tale, and to formalize the relationship between art and nature which has been dramatized in the story itself. The concluding artistic marvels, Ovid gracefully suggests, accommodate and transform the horror and disorder of his own imaginative vision in a way which has already been made manifest by Tereus, Procne and Philomela themselves.

As the reading matter of both *Lavinia* and *Imogen*, the tale of Tereus, Procne and Philomela, makes an appearance, as it were, in propria persona, in plays which mark the beginning and end of Shakespeare's theatrical career. This dramatic 'instancing' may be taken as emblematic of a continuing Ovidian influence which Shakespeare was far from ashamed to acknowledge. Though one sometimes feels - particularly in respect of the erotic narratives which proliferated in the 1590's - that Ovid's classical status (like Seneca's) could be used to legitimize an otherwise suspect Elizabethan taste for sex and violence, the Tereus story shows particularly clearly why the Metamorphoses would offer so much more to a discriminating reader and practising playwright. Reuben A. Brower has cited the tale as evidence of 'a poetic power and a type of poetic design that had a profound effect on Shakespeare early and late',¹³⁹ and in lingering over the tale, my purpose has been to reveal its dramatic

continuity and the total imaginative coherence which follows from the depth and integrity of Ovid's idea of metamorphosis.

A further aim has been implicit in the extended analysis of the Tereus story, as, in a more general sense, it has been implicit throughout these opening chapters. In identifying the emphases and foci which seem to be quintessentially Ovidian, I have thereby been attempting to distinguish Ovid from other classical writers who were competing for attention in the Renaissance, and whose influence on Shakespeare and Elizabethan drama I would not want to deny, though it can not be the major concern of the present study. Perhaps, however, this will be more clear if space is taken here for a brief but direct comparison with the plays of Seneca..

The absence of any Senecan reference in the discussion of revenge above, might have been construed as almost wilfully perverse. It is of course true that Hamlet is almost inconceivable without the Senecan flavouring of Kyd's plays, while there is some evidence that, before embarking on Macbeth, Shakespeare had been re-reading Seneca himself.¹⁴⁰ Yet, even if 'English Seneca' did 'affoord...whole Hamlets....of tragical speeches', there is a sense in which Shakespeare's debt to the Metamorphoses runs deeper than the 'manie good sentences' which may have found their way into his early tragedy via the lost play to which Nash alludes,¹⁴¹ or the Senecan models which Professor Muir notes for Macbeth. Part of the reason is that Seneca, writing a couple of generations on from Ovid, had himself taken over many themes, motifs, indeed 'manie good sentences' from the earlier poet, without, however, appropriating the imaginative design which underpins the Metamorphoses. Seneca's interests were elsewhere, whilst, as Brower notes, with a few potential exceptions, the plays show that he 'can compose a scene or a speech

imaginatively but not a whole play'.¹⁴² As a result, many of the features which I have noted in the Tereus story can also be found in Seneca's plays. The opposition of pietas and scelus; the false fronts of familial affection which mask diabolic intentions; the wavering between seemingly incompatible roles - of mother and abused wife, father and cuckolded husband: all these features can, for example, be seen in Medea and Thyestes.¹⁴³ Yet because the conception behind the Senecan plays is not the same as that which informs the Metamorphoses, these features become set moves in an elaborate game which is being played by different rules. Thus, as has been previously noted, when Seneca's Medea, caught between hatred for her husband and love for her sons, describes herself as tossed by a double tide, we do not feel, as we do when Ovid's Althea or Procne characterize the same conflict, that the personal struggle is mimetic of the antagonistic and creative conflict which obtains in a change-dominated world.¹⁴⁴ The metaphor has atrophied and the opposition itself become merely a traditional device for representing a divided mind. Similarly, the preternatural darkness which coincides with the dreadful banquet which concludes Thyestes, is experienced as an atmospheric coup de théâtre, rather than a symbolic representation of a crime against the natural order.

One of the 'manie good sentences' which would seem to find their way from the Metamorphoses into Seneca is the sententia, 'grande doloris ingenium est'. Medea's 'crevit ingenium malis' - my wit has grown through suffering' would, on the face of it, seem to express the same idea.¹⁴⁵ Yet the context in which Medea employs the phrase, as indeed the structure of the play itself, makes it clear that 'crevit' means 'increased' rather than 'originated', whilst 'ingenium' would seem to denote a far less complex faculty than is signified by the same word in the Metamorphoses. Where Ovid is interested in the origins and nature of the creative imagination, Seneca seems to be concerned to portray the final stages in

the development of the deviant imagination. It is the superlative case which engages the later poet's attention. The aim of Seneca's *Medea* is to prove her graduation in crime; having served her apprenticeship, she wishes to perpetrate an act which is less petty or common.¹⁴⁶ Like Clytemnestra in the *Agamemnon*, she aspires to 'a crime of greater wickedness' ('maius nefas'),¹⁴⁷ and one feels that all of Seneca's imaginative energy is similarly expended in the search for the ultimate crime.

The dynamic which informs Seneca's plays is thus something very different from the generous double dialectic of the *Metamorphoses*. Everything is pitched towards finding a dénouement which is more shocking than the last point of rest, in which more blood will be spilled in more grotesque and ingenious ways. Moreover, where Ovid adopts a complex attitude of incredulity and wonder towards the terrible transformations which occur - an attitude which easily accommodates acknowledgement of his own artistic kinship with the madmen and lovers of the tales - Seneca....well where is Seneca? Whatever the clear moral stance of Seneca the Philosopher may have been, that of Seneca the Dramatist is notoriously difficult to discern. It is very difficult to see precisely where he stands in respect of the escalating violence of the plays. It is little wonder that, where Golding was largely content to let Ovid speak for himself, Heywood, Studley and the other Elizabethan translators of Seneca felt obliged to insert Christian analogues into the text itself and append didactic epilogues in an attempt to give the plays a clearer moral orientation.

One further instance must serve in a comparison which could be elaborated at length. In Seneca's *Thyestes*, Atreus, wronged by a brother who has stolen his wife and the golden fleece on which the right of succession to the throne depends, wishes to devise a crime which will surpass that of his brother. The iron law of revenge dictates that, 'Thou never doost /

enough revenge the wronge / Except thou passe'.¹⁴⁸ Meditating on the possible alternatives, Atreus echoes Ovid's Procne: 'What thyng / It is, I cannot tell: / But great it is'.¹⁴⁹ The echo is fully conscious, for Atreus feels compelled to surpass the crime not only of Thyestes, his brother, but that of Procne herself. Procne's crime was 'monstrous', but the very fact that it has been perpetrated before devalues it in Atreus' eyes, and so he calls on both Procne and Philomela to inspire him to 'greater' acts. Novelty, one feels, is the major criterion for both Atreus and Seneca himself. It is thus all the more curious that, the possibility of new forms of atrocity having been mooted, the criminal and literary one-upmanship should be almost immediately abandoned. Yet Atreus concludes that Procne's solution is 'more than enough', that her 'way of punishment is pleasing'.¹⁵⁰

From the point of view of Seneca's readers, however, the revenge, does not have anywhere near the same degree of aesthetic fitness which it has in the Ovidian story and fails to satisfy. Behind the plot of Thyestes is the long-standing curse on the house of Pelops, whilst the action of the play is initiated by the ghost of Tantalus, who urges the present generation to acts of greater violence. The seduction of Atreus' wife by Thyestes does not figure in the action of the play, and, though it is Atreus' prime motivating force, is thus experienced by the audience as yet another extrinsic incitement to violence. In other words, though it is precisely here that the aesthetic morality of the Metamorphoses is to be found, in Seneca's play we are not allowed to see the intricate chain of events which binds act and consequence. In the Tereus story, the original act of violence is not only shown, but subsequently 'placed' at every point in the action by the physical and verbal deceits, the physical settings and metaphorical design which dramatize its transforming effects. In this sequence, Procne's banquet is an extreme but no less inevitable

and 'fitting' response to the initial unnatural act.

By contrast, in Seneca's play, the violent acts which occupy the foreground of the action do not hinge on anything which we have seen and, for this reason, do not appear to be 'justified'. Thyestes is all denouement. The absence of any initiating action might be compared to a Hamlet in which the vital opening scenes of the play have been omitted. A Hamlet, that is, in which we are not permitted to see the Denmark which Claudius' crime has created; a Denmark in which family relationships are distorted and confused, where friendship is a masquerade and brotherly love an affectation, where the court is riddled with spies and acting a part has become the normative mode of behaviour, where appearance conflicts with reality and words have become just so much wind. Or, Thyestes might be likened to a Macbeth in which we are not shown an initial loving and relationship between Duncan and Macbeth, a relationship which is defined by images of natural growth and plenitude and against which all the subsequent violent acts and future losses will be measured.

When Atreus lures Thyestes into his trap by playing the part of a repentant brother, the pius disguise is not related to any wider theme of physical or verbal false seeming. It is the surface irony only which engages Seneca. Similarly, when Thyestes, himself, becomes the vehicle of Atreus' revenge, it is the superficial neatness which impresses, rather than (as in Ovid and Shakespeare) the total appropriateness of a dénouement which dramatizes the self-defeating negativity of the original evil act. When Ovid's Tereus eats 'the selfsame flesh that of his bowels bred', we appreciate that the final stone has been laid in a harmonious and fully self-justifying structure. When, however, Seneca's Thyestes 'eats / The lymmes to whiche he onse gave lyfe' and goes on to 'sup his childrens blood',¹⁵¹ there is no corresponding sense of dramatic inevitability. As

Atreus recapitulates in greater detail the circumstances of the murders in an attempt to squeeze the last ounce of satisfaction from his brother's suffering, it would seem that we too are being asked to respond to the carefully orchestrated crescendo of violence. Atreus derives most satisfaction from his belief that he has foiled an intention on the part of Thyestes to prepare 'a like feast' for himself. There is, however, nothing in the play to support this belief, so that the revenge fails to answer any original crime or intention which the audience has seen or been made aware of. As a result, despite the escalating horror, the ending of the play falls curiously flat - a flatness which Jasper Heywood's additional scene, in which a lamenting Thyestes calls on the powers of darkness to receive him and the gods to avenge Atreus' crime, does little to alleviate.

The cavalier attitude of Seneca's Elizabethan translators towards their classical material can work to different ends. Studley's impatience with Seneca's relentless name-dropping led him to rewrite one of the choruses in Medea completely. 'Because in it I sawe nothyng but a heape of prophane storyes, and names of prohane Idoles', he tells his readers, 'I have altered the whole matter of it'.¹⁵² In the process of expounding what he calls 'the darke sence of the Poet', Studley shifts the balance of Seneca's drama away from Medea towards Jason. In the interpolated first chorus, it is Jason whose speech is described as sweet and beguiling, and whose 'Dissembling thoughtes' are said to 'weave the webbe of woe'.¹⁵³ Medea is thus cast in the role of deceived rather than self-deceiver, taking Studley's version of Medea further away from Ovid's version of the tale than is the Senecan original.¹⁵⁴ Elsewhere, however, the Elizabethan translators could bring colloquial verve and felt immediacy to the abstract debates and formal rhetorical oppositions of Seneca's dramatic speeches. As Brower notes, this is not so much new life, as 'old life recovered',

since speeches which effectively create a sense of personal and internalized struggle bring Seneca's plays closer to Ovid (and Virgil) than they actually were.¹⁵⁵

In the sense that Eliot's Four Quartets can be said to be 'more dramatic than all of his plays put together',¹⁵⁶ Ovid's narratives can be said to be more inherently dramatic than Seneca's plays. By the same token that Shakespeare proved to be 'less effective a presence to later playwrights than to poets like Pope, Blake, Keats and Eliot, for example...or...to novelists like Dickens, George Eliot, and Joyce',¹⁵⁷ Ovid, a poet, was, I would suggest, more effective a presence to Shakespeare, himself, than was Seneca, a dramatist. Seneca's characters may actually speak in soliloquy, and, as Eliot saw, in new declamatory ways which could not help but be of interest to a young generation of English dramatists concerned to take a native tradition in new directions. But the internal monologues of Ovid's major heroines convey far more successfully the minute to minute fluctuations of thought and feeling, and the sense of an individual person 'voicing the words, not just for our entertainment, but for our understanding, reflection, and judgment'.¹⁵⁸

The primary metamorphosis which engages Ovid in the central books of the poem is the curious process of transformation in which the sleeping or waking dream, the provisional hypothesis, becomes the basis for action in the real world. Yet in the tales of Medea, Scylla, Byblis, and Myrrha, it is the total integrity of Ovid's 'idea of metamorphosis' which gives these stories such tremendous coherence and power. Transformed by the 'power of beauty', these mad lovers are, to borrow Hamlet's words, the more able to 'transform honesty from what it is to a bawd' because everything in an appearance-dominated world - including language which governs

thought - conspires to enable them to do so. As Shakespeare was to show in Troilus and Cressida, it is because language itself is not exempt from the common law of metamorphosis that reason can pander will. Thus Medea is able to practise moral equivocation by using language as a form of disguise. Her intended treachery - the aid proffered to Jason to help him overcome the dangerous tasks set by her father, Aeetes - is translated into fidelity to the husband whom in her imagination Jason has already become. An unnatural crime against her father is glossed as its opposite, a demonstration of Medea's humanity (VII, 25-68/7, 32-98). When Ovid allows Medea to catch herself in the process of self-deception, this idea is given explicit expression:

Callste thou him thy husband? Doste pretende
Gay titles to thy foule offence, Medea?
(7, 98-99)

And in the stories which follow, the notion of 'speciosaque nomina' (VII, 69), fair-seeming names which permit the evasion of moral responsibility, becomes thematic.¹⁵⁹

The story of Byblis (IX, 459ff/9, 540ff) is controlled by Ovid's manipulation of the idea. Thus Byblis proposes to use normal sisterly affection to hide her incestuous desires for her brother. In a letter to Caunus, she suggests that 'beneath the sweet name of brother and sister we shall conceal our stolen love' (IX, 558). William S. Anderson comments:

Byblis plots to exploit the ambiguities of nomen; she is so far from acting as a sister that she sees in the relationship of brother and sister a kind of disguise for sexual indulgence. Thus sub nomine virtually equals sub imagine.¹⁶⁰

But, if Byblis is willing to exploit 'the name of kin' (9, 666), her own avoidance of the word which realizes her sin also reveals her involuntary sense of guilt. Thus she eschews the word, 'sister', when addressing the letter:

phorical settings. As her passion moves towards terrible fulfilment, Myrrha's shame is covered by both 'the darknesse of the nyght' (10, 523) and the cloak of ambiguous language. The unsuspecting Cinyras is told that the name of the willing maiden is 'the same as Myrrha's. The 'over-officious' Euripidean nurse hands over her charge with the words, 'shee is thine owne', thus 'exploiting the tragic ambiguity of the possessive tua'.¹⁶⁴ To complete the dose of heavy irony, Cinyras and Myrrha use 'daughter' and 'father' - names which could define their relative age as well as family relationship - as endearments, 'lest', says the narrator, 'this cryme of theyres / Myght want the ryghtfull termes' (X, 438-468/ 10, 501-536).¹⁶⁵

When Golding encounters the epiphonema, 'tanta est discordia mentis' (X, 445), with which the narrator summarizes Myrrha's self-division as she is tossed between foreboding and anticipation, fear and longing, he translates: 'Such dischord of affections was within her combred mynd' (10, 510). Though the prolixity is doubtless a consequence of metrical constraints, Golding's easy yoking of 'affections' and 'mynd' is a reminder that Elizabethan psychology (and the physiology on which it was based) was much closer to the Romans than to our own time. The oppositions which we most readily understand - body and mind, passion and intellect, reason and imagination - are essentially post-Romantic, so that we see paradox in the title of Thomas Wright's treatise, The Passions of the Minde (1604), where none was intended. The psychic condition which fascinates Ovid throughout the central books of the Metamorphoses would be readily intelligible to Thomas Wright as 'contradiction' or 'contrarietie', a seditious brawling within the mind which could be directly compared with a state of insurrection in the Commonwealth.¹⁶⁶ Under these circumstances, an Elizabethan, in much the same way as Ovid, saw the relationship between mind and body as a stalemate between the wit and the will, the

legislative and executive branches of this miniature 'body-politic'.¹⁶⁷

The state of mind which Ovid explores in these stories of human passion is precisely that which Brutus' state of sleepless suspension leads him to analyze:

Between the acting of a dreadful thing
And the first motion, all the interim is
Like a phantasma, or a hidious dream.
The Genius and the mortal instruments
Are then in council; and the state of man,
Like to a little kingdom, suffers then
The nature of an insurrection.

(Julius Caesar, II,i, 62-68)

When the mature Shakespeare has a similarly troubled Macbeth voice the same idea, it has been fully assimilated into the language of the play in which it appears, and smacks much less of an Elizabethan commonplace:

My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,
Shakes so my single state of man
That function is smother'd in surmise,
And nothing is but what is not.

(Macbeth, I,iii, 138-141)

Whilst Macbeth retains Brutus' sense of the antipathy between thought and action, he sees the usurpation of the present reality by the world of illusion and imagination as more radical and absolute. Here the interim between thought and deed is not simply likened to a fantasy, it has become that which, quite literally it is not - the future, which Lady Macbeth, transported by her husband's letters, also experiences 'now', 'in the instant' (I,iv, 53-54). However, Brutus, whose course of action is predicated on what Caesar 'may become', on 'what he is augmented' (II,i, 10-34), effects essentially the same reversal between future and present, dream and reality, hypothesis and empirical fact.

In the Metamorphoses, Byblis 'tragedy' is the outcome of a similar attempt to give substance to that which is not - in this case, a dream in

which 'she sees herself clasped in her brother's arms' (IX, 471-472). At first, she longs only for the return of the dream, envisaging no harm so long, she says, 'as I awake doo still mee undefylde keepe' (9, 569). She is, however, unable to maintain this Banquo-like resolution for very long, and begins to 'speak in positive terms' of the joy and delight which the fantasy occasioned. Herein lies the tragic potential of Byblis' story, for though her imaginary pleasure seemed all too tangible, she is unable to find this pleasure in the real world, and becomes more and more 'wretched' as she persists in her attempt to do so. As Anderson observes, though 'her irrational passionate side...vainly (struggles) to metamorphose all circumstances that obstruct her love, she does not have either the power or the requisite amorality to effect anything but an illusive, hence tragic, self-metamorphosis'.¹⁶⁸

Ovid, like Shakespeare, is particularly fascinated by the sophistic arguments which passion's victims employ to support their dream of future gain. Grammatically, this is reflected in the knotty verbal phrases and persistent use of the subjunctive mood, which acknowledge the element of uncertainty and unrealized potentiality the speaker almost immediately chooses to forget, as 'if' clauses become the rationale for deliberate action, and 'mights' (as in Brutus' soliloquy) harden imperceptibly into 'musts'. Thus, in a beautiful piece of casuistry, Byblis argues that if Caunus had been the one first smitten with love, she would have welcomed his passionate advances; since she would not have rejected his wooing, she will herself woo! (IX, 511-514). Having been repulsed by her brother, Byblis can argue herself into a position where persisting in the same course of action is the appropriate, indeed, the only option. Had she moved less quickly, noted the bad omen of the slipping tablet, appeared to her brother in person rather than using an intermediary, she 'might have won his stubborn soul' (IX, 585-609).¹⁶⁹ The uncertain possibility that

things 'might' have been otherwise becomes the basis for Byblis' continuing commitment to the dream, as she decides that she 'must go to him again' (IX, 616). In a brief moment of clarity, Byblis acknowledges that 'it was the best not to have begun at all' (IX, 618-619), but this quickly modulates into Macbeth's conviction that the only way is forward: 'the second best is to win through with what I have begun' (IX, 619).¹⁷⁰ Such heroic posturing (seige imagery runs through the lines) is, however, short-lived. It is replaced by a weary but dogged persistence, based on a newly pragmatic but equally specious reasoning that, having sinned already, she has little to lose and much still to gain:

And though I cease: yit can I not accounted bee for cleere.
 Now that that dooth remayne behynd is much as in respect
 My fond desyre to satisfy: and little in effect
 To aggravate my fault withall.

(9, 743-746)

Comparing her argument with Macbeth's, 'I am in blood / Stepp'd in so far, that should I wade no more, / Returning were as tedious as go o'er'. (III, iv, 136-138), Anderson notes somewhat sardonically that the 'little' of which Byblis speaks is 'only the act of incest'.¹⁷¹ The treadmill rhythm of Golding's lines effectively conveys the potential endlessness of Byblis' joyless pursuit of an increasingly elusive dream:

...though it irkt her for to have attempted, yit proceedes
 She in the selfsame purpose of attempting, and exceeds
 All measure, and, unhappy wench, shee takes from day to day
 Repulse upon repulse, and yit she hath not grace to stay.

(9, 748-751)

Her story is concluded, however, when, after a futile attempt to follow her brother who has fled the country, Byblis finally languishes and goes into decline. In a scene of emblematic power, Ovid describes her among thinning trees and falling leaves, consumed by her own tears and ultimately transformed into a fountain. (IX, 649-665/9, 768-786).

Although all of these stories are shot through with irony and moral

equivocation, none is more relentlessly paradoxical than that of Medea, the first of Ovid's potentially 'tragic' heroines.¹⁷² It is, of course, Medea who speaks some of the most famous lines in Ovid, 'defining the ability of the mind to perceive (video) what is right, but its inability to ensure action corresponding to that mental apperception':¹⁷³ 'video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor' - I see the better and approve it, but I follow the worse' (VII, 20-21). To Sir John Davies, as to other Elizabethans, Medea's experience was testimony to the existence of a faculty purer and more durable than mere sense, but which for the duration of a man's life was nevertheless caught within the 'bodies prison', placing man, of all the animals, in a uniquely dramatic position. Rhetorically, he asks:

What power was that, whereby Medea saw,
And well approv'd, and praised the better course,
When her rebellious sense did so withdraw
Her feeble powers, as she persu'd the worse?¹⁷⁴

Here the familiar image of sedition within man's 'little kingdom' takes the form of 'the rebellion of the Passions....against Reason, their Lord and King'.¹⁷⁵

Golding's translation of the Medea story is particularly rewarding, adding dramatic force and emphasis to the narrative without substantially altering Ovid's meaning. Thus Golding's Medea does not simply 'follow the worst', she does so 'headlong still' (7, 25). Elsewhere metrical constraints again serve (however fortuitously) to give the tale an almost Shakespearean resonance, as when Golding's Medea tells Jason:

Sir, what I doe I see apparantly.
Not want of knowledge of the truth but love shall me deceive.
(7, 131-132)

'Apparantly' is a Golding 'filler', but it nevertheless underlines Ovid's central irony: Medea's treasonable action is based initially on a 'dream of passion', the beautiful outward appearance of Jason, whom she sees not

so much as a man as a god-like apparition (VII, 86-98/7, 124-126). Overcome by his forma, Medea manipulates 'fair-sounding names' to give her crime the semblance of reason. At such moments, one begins to see why the Medea story could make its presence felt in such apparently diverse plays as A Midsummer Night's Dream, Macbeth and The Tempest, and is reminded once more of the common threads which cross the generic divides of Shakespearean comedy and tragedy.¹⁷⁶ Ovid's fluctuating narrative tone easily accommodates the amatory themes of the earlier books whilst laying the groundwork for the subsequent 'tragic' monologues. If the Medea, who 'gapes and gazes' at Jason 'As though she never had him seene before that instant time' (7, 123-124), recalls a Lysander newly-awakened to Helena's 'divinity' (and thus newly 'ripe.....to reason'), then the Medea who fights a losing battle between hope and fear and prepares to hazard everything she has, for what she might become, puts one in mind of Macbeth:

Why fearste thou now without a cause? step to it out of hand:
 And doe not any lenger time thus lingring fondly stand.....
 And shall I then leave brother, sister, father, kith and kin?
 And household Gods, and native soyle, and all that is therein?
 ...Yea: why not?

...the things I doe forsake
 Are trifles in comparison of those that I shall take.
 (7, 65-78)

Medea is not a stable enough creation to warrant the term, noble, but in the early part of her story she is established as a moral creature who can distinguish right and wrong. As the tale moves from this type of inner characterization of a moral struggle to become something much closer to a supernatural melodrama, a thread of continuity is maintained in Ovid's manipulation of the theme of pietas. What seems to have fascinated Ovid - as it fascinated Shakespeare - was the ability of essentially good characters to commit atrocious crimes, and the susceptibility of essentially noble emotions to be transformed into their opposite. Thus Medea, who had earlier been able to persuade herself that

her treachery was a demonstration of humanity, is able to similarly pervert the notion of pietas to persuade the daughters of Pelias that the murder of their father is a demonstration of their natural feeling:

....Now

If any nature in ye be, and that ye doe not feede
 A fruitlesse hope, your dutie to your father doe with speede.
 Expulse his age by sword, and let the filthy matter out.
 (7, 430-433)

Medea's argument is as insidiously effective as Lady Macbeth's, and the paradox which Ovid underlines is at the bitter heart of Shakespeare's play:

Through these persuasions which of them ever went about
 To shewe hirselfe most naturall, became the first that wrought
 Against all nature: and for feare she should be wicked thought,
 She executes the wickednesse which most to shun she sought.
 (7, 434-437)¹⁷⁷

Of all the Ovidian stories which invite consideration under the heading of Theseus' famous lines on the imagination, the Cephalus and Procris (VII, 661ff/7, 851ff) is perhaps the most obvious choice. This beautifully structured tale must also serve as a final illustration of the coherence, dramatic unity (which, even in a sequence which is tonally far more consistent than most, remains the antithesis of Horatian decorum), and ultimately the profundity of Ovid's idea of metamorphosis. The story, which was most popular in Elizabethan England,¹⁷⁸ is of further interest since the formal, marvelous, metamorphosis is extrinsic to the story proper. The short sequence which concludes with the transformation of the hound, Laelaps, into a stone, serves as light relief between the two major movements of the story and points up the perfect symmetry of the whole, as the comedic reconciliation on which the first movement ends is reversed towards the tragic loss on which the story finally comes to rest. The transformations which enage Ovid all devolve from the central relationship of a man and wife, whose mutual love and happiness is destroyed by the suspicious jealousy which afflicts them both in turn. In classical literature, this kind of coherence is peculiarly

Ovidian. Comparisons with earlier versions of the story show that Ovid effected a typically Shakespearean metamorphosis of his source material, to turn 'a novella, a game of masks and transformations and magical devices, into a love story'.¹⁷⁹

In Ovid's hands, the story of Cephalus and Procris turns on the paradoxes which are close to the heart of the Metamorphoses: the power of imagination to both create and destroy, and, closely related to this, the capacity of love to kill 'the thing it loves'. The dénouement of the story, in which Procris is killed with the hunting spear, her own gift, is a dramatic enactment of Cephalus' earlier recognition that, in seeking to prove Procne's guilt, he acted only to wound himself (VII, 738-739). The familiar Ovidian theme of self-negating passion is thus economically underlined. In a quite literal sense, Cephalus and Procris both fall victim to the power of 'strong imagination' to give 'to airy nothing / A local habitation and a name'. This paradoxical creativity is shown to be inherent in the nature of love itself. Thus Cephalus justifies his fears about Procris' infidelity with the elegiac lament, 'cuncta timemus amantes' (VII, 719), and subsequently bemoans Procris' similar doubts about himself with the equally choric, 'credula res amor est' (VII, 826).¹⁸⁰

The tale's central ironies are reinforced by Ovid's revival of the hunter-hunted motif, which he had used to great effect in the earlier part of the poem and would use again in the closely related Venus and Adonis (X, 519ff/10, 596ff).¹⁸¹ Spreading his nets to catch the deer, Cephalus is himself caught by the Goddess of the Dawn. His resistance to Aurora's charms provokes her to retort that Cephalus will have future cause to regret his fidelity to Procris. Thus planted, this tiny seed of doubt will transform Cephalus' life, as he labours to give substance to the imaginary fear. Although Procris' character argues against the reasonableness of such a charge, her very beauty now seems to Cephalus to argue the case for

infidelity: he has been absent for some time; Aurora's behaviour provides an instance of women's lack of constancy; and besides, 'we poore Lovers are afraide of all things' (7, 928). As a way out of this uncertainty, Cephalus adopts a disguise which is designed to put Procris' fidelity to the test. Here Ovid significantly altered his source material to make the disguise a direct consequence of the doubt.¹⁸² Cephalus thus takes his place among the many Ovidian lovers for whom a changed external appearance is a symbolic representation of a far more radical psychological metamorphosis. When Procris refuses to acquiesce to his 'adulterous' stratagems, Cephalus is unable to rest contented. Telling the tale in retrospect, he admits that anyone 'having his / Wits perfect' would have been happy with such ocular proof 'Of hir most stedfast chastitie'. Yet 'to purchase to (himself) more wo', Cephalus persists until, finally, Procris 'hesitates' (7, 954-958). When Cephalus reveals his true identity, the sorrow-struck Procris spurns not only her husband, but the company of all men, to become a devotress of Diana, the goddess of both chastity and the chase. Her withdrawal is, however, the prelude to a period of reconciliation during which the two 'lived many a yeare / In joy' (7, 977-978):

My Lorde, the ground of all
 My grief was joy. Those joys^e of mine remember first I shall.
 It doth me good even yet to thinke upon that blissfull time
 (I meane the fresh and lustie yeares of pleasant youthfull Prime)
 When I a happie man enjoyde so faire and good a wife,
 And she with such a loving make did lead a happie life.
 The care was like of both of us, the mutuall love all one.
 She would not to have line with Jove my presence have forgone.
 Ne was there any Wight that could of me have wonne the love,
 No though Dame Venus had hir selfe descended from above.
 The glowing brands of love did burne in both our brests alike.
 (7, 1033-1043)

Golding's sympathetic rendering of the marvelously mimetic Latin lines with which Ovid celebrates mutual love are but the prelude to a second loss of faith, this time on the part of Procris, as Ovid's narrative doubles-up on the dramatic action of Shakespeare's The Winter's Tale. In

a second emblematic hunting scene, Cephalus ceases the activity of the chase only to find himself in greater danger. Vocalizing his desire for cooling comfort, Cephalus ingenuously personifies the breeze with the name, Aura. A ubiquitous Ovidian tattle-tale, overhearing these 'doubtfull words' (7, 1065/vocibus ambiguis, VII, 821), informs Procris of her husband's 'supposed fault' (criminis ficti, VII, 824). Closely adhering to the sequential development of his first movement, Ovid proceeds to show the substantiation of an imaginary fear within Procris' mind. Where Cephalus had, as it were, embodied his fear of a rival by acting the part of an adulterer, Procris now lends substance to a shadow by grieving 'as over a real rival' (VII, 830). The incremental ironies of Ovid's central theme are underlined when, through Cephalus, he tells us that Procris 'feared a mere nothing' (quod nihil est) - 'an empty name' ('sine corpore nomen', VII, 830). (Here, Golding's over-literal 'headlesse name' (7, 1077), threatens to turn the gentle pathos of Ovid's version into bathetic comedy).

In order to turn an unbearable doubt into certainty, Procris, like Cephalus before her, becomes a spy. The action of the previous day's hunting is repeated, as Cephalus leaves the heat of the chase only to be involved in further violence in the deceptively peaceful shade. Here, the watching Procris, mistaken by her husband for a wild animal, is gored through the heart by her own gift, the hunting spear. As Anderson notes, Ovid carefully structures Cephalus' narrative to enforce the parallel with the first movement of the story, thus underlining the theme of transforming passion. By skilfully delaying Cephalus' recognition of his wife, 'Ovid suggests that her lack of trust has changed Procris into a wild animal, unrecognizable to her husband, just as he became unrecognizable to her earlier when he distrusted her'.¹⁸³

Dying in her husband's arms, Procris discovers that her fate has been sealed by her mistaken adherence to the appearance of things, what Cephalus

calls 'a mistake in a name' (errorem nominis, VII, 857). The recognition scene is not, however, the prelude to a redemptive and tragedy-precluding metamorphosis. For 'Cephalus and Procris', Ovid eschews the marvelous, making the conclusion of the tale one of the most muted and highly equivocal expressions of the change-continuity dialectic within the whole poem. Though Procris proclaims her undying love, it is her 'unhappy spirit' (VII, 861), which Cephalus, in traditional Roman fashion, catches on his lips.¹⁸⁴ Only at the very end of the tale, in Cephalus' concluding words, 'she seemed to die content, and with a happy look upon her face', does Ovid hold out the faint possibility that the imagination has been able to recreate that which it has destroyed.

Chapter V

OVID ENGLISHED : AS YOU LIKE IT

Translations that are more than transmissions of subject matter come into being when in the course of its survival a work has reached the age of its fame.

....For in its after life - which could not be called that if it were not something living - the original undergoes a change.

(Walter Benjamin, 'The Task of the Translator')

'Interpretation' as that which gives language life beyond the moment and the place of immediate utterance or transcription, is what I am concerned with. The French word interprète concentrates all the relevant values. An actor is interprète of Racine; a pianist gives une interprétation of a Beethoven sonata. Through engagement of his own identity, a critic becomes un interprète - a life-giving performer - of Montaigne or Mallarmé. As it does not include the world of the actor, and includes that of the musician only by analogy, the English term interpreter is less strong. But it is congruent with French when reaching out in another crucial direction. Interprète/interpreter are commonly used to mean translator.

This, I believe, is the vital starting point.

When we read or hear any language-statement from the past, be it Leviticus or last year's best-seller, we translate.

(George Steiner, After Babel)

Some Aspects of Interpretation

The remaining chapters of this study are concerned with the way Shakespeare adapts, changes, and thus keeps alive the Ovidian idea of metamorphosis. By the 'Englishing' of Ovid, I mean 'translation' in its widest sense, for, as George Steiner has shown, all efforts at understanding are necessarily exercises in translation. As You Like It, the focus for much of the present chapter, can be seen as a celebration of the capacity of language to express alternative ways of seeing and being. As commentators

have noticed, the play is full of propositions which begin with the conditional 'if'.¹ And in the final act, Touchstone is given 'the only "encore" in Shakespeare'² to explain that with this 'if' the 'Lie Direct' is avoided. By this means, the poet, like the dueller, retains his reputation as a man of honour, for, as Sidney says, 'the Poet, he nothing affirms, and therefore never lyeth'.³ Stated in this way, the argument can seem glib and sophistical, but the whole of As You Like It deepens the terms of the inquiry into the relationship between poetry and truth, art and belief. Shakespeare, like Ovid, is ever-concerned to find a form of language which can match the rich variety of the natural world and keep time with its changes. As George Steiner has shown, philosophers and logicians have balked at all 'hypothetical arguments or "reasoning upon a supposition"', because they are 'chimerical and without foundation'. Both 'if and can' have been regarded as '"protean words, perplexing both grammatically and philosophically". They "engender confusion"'. Steiner himself, however, has argued that 'if propositions' 'engender life', and are 'fundamental to the dynamics of human feeling'.⁴ His thesis could find no better illustration than As You Like It, II, vii, 113-126,⁵ where Orlando's solemn appeal to other places and other times is formally requited by Duke Senior, and the common 'gentleness' of the two men is discovered by means of an 'if'.

In an earlier comedy, The Taming of the Shrew, Shakespeare himself had discriminated between the poet's view of the world and that adopted by philosophers and logicians. Advising his master on a course of study, Tranio associates the name of Ovid with the capacity of poetry to 'engender life':

Let's be no Stoics nor no stocks, I pray,
 Or so devote to Aristotle's checks
 As Ovid be an outcast quite abjur'd.
 Balk logic with acquaintance that you have,

And practise rhetoric in your common talk;
 Music and poesy use to quicken you;
 The mathematics and the metaphysics,
 Fall to them as you find your stomach serves you.
 No profit grows where is no pleasure ta'en;
 In brief, sir, study what you most affect.
 (I,i, 31-40)

Both the context and the bawdy of Tranio's speech readily associate this Ovid with the praeceptor amoris of the Ars Amatoria. But the oblique reference to Ovid's exile in 1.33 is also an invitation to consider the way the Roman poet's concern with the 'quickenning' power of poesy has been too narrowly interpreted. In the Renaissance, various strategies were developed for dealing with what Nashe calls 'Ovid's obscenitie'. One of the most common was the principle of selection, by which the 'writte' and 'learning' can be commended and the 'wantonness' and 'lust' ignored,

...even as the Bee out of the bitterest flowers
 and the sharpest thistles gathers honey, so out of the
 filthiest fables may profitable knowledge be sucked and
 selected.⁶

Lysander shows that he has learnt this technique when, charged by Hermia with lascivious innuendo, he urges her to take the 'sweet' sense of his words:

O take the sense sweet, of my innocence,
 Love takes the meaning, in loves conference,
 I mean...

(A Midsummer Night's Dream, II,ii, 45-47 : 697-699)⁷

Lysander argues that between true lovers words should be taken as they are meant, but the long shadow of Ovid casts doubt on his integrity. Yet the very name of the Roman poet could be readily associated with 'sweetness'. 'Why, indeed, "Naso", asks Holofemes, 'but for smelling out the odoriferous flowers of fancy, the jerks of invention?' (Love's Labour's Lost, IV,ii, 118-120). And it is no coincidence that at the moment of his 'translation', Bottom with his 'flowers of...odours savours sweet', is virtually punning

on Ovid's name (A Midsummer Night's Dream, III,i, 73-75).⁸

Shakespeare's strategy, however, is to insist increasingly on the sting, as well as the sweetness of love. From the outset, he is equally concerned to reconcile the rhetorical copiousness for which the schoolmasters could commend Ovid, with the concentration on natural passion, which they felt obliged to argue away. The profound connections between poetical expression and physical desire to which Empson pointed in Touchstone's maxim, 'the truest poetry is the most feigning' (As You Like It, III,iii, 16)⁹, are already established in Tranio's pun on 'affect'. The injunction to 'study where you most affect' might be seen as a marriage between the Ovids of Ascham's The Scholemaster and Marlowe's Amores. But, as I tried to show in the opening chapters of this study, that marriage is already made in the Metamorphoses, where lovers become great rhetoricians because they are in love.

The same connection between 'affectation' and 'affection' is made in Love's Labour's Lost, where Armado, who 'affects' (at length) the very ground Jaquenetta walks upon, is sure he will 'turn sonnet' (I,ii, 158-end). From his vantage point 'in the sky' (IV,iii, 75), Berowne watches the folly of academics metamorphosed into poet-lovers with all the self-righteousness of a Juno. He pronounces the King 'transformed to a gnat' and passes judgment on the lords' sonnets by remarking 'how love can vary wit' (IV, iii, 162; 96). The poetic facility for which Holofernes quite properly commends Ovid is shown to be an expression of the natural feeling Sir Nathaniel scorns (IV,ii, 117-123, 24-25).

Berowne delights in the contradictions which characterize these lords-turned-lovers, taking some satisfaction in the incompatibility between dignitas and amor. But, of course, his superior perspective is no less misleading than that of the gods in the Ovidian pantheon. Like his fellows,

Berowne is an inconstant 'moon-like' man (IV,iii, 176)¹⁰ who is 'born with his affects' (I,ii, 149). As a consequence, his verse and behaviour are subject to the same misinterpretation as those of the other lords.

In the important speech (V,ii, 741ff) which anticipates Theseus on 'the lunatic, the lover, and the poet', Berowne tries to account for the absurd contradictions in the lords' behaviour. His explanation is a further attempt to unravel the paradox he has already addressed in his own sonnet to Rosaline: 'If love made me foresworn, how shall I swear to love?' (IV, ii, 101). It is a problem over which Armado similarly puzzles - '..how can that be true love which is falsely attempted?' (I,ii, 161) - and to which the play constantly returns. Berowne knows that the problem is much larger than the perjury of academic vows. It is rather: how can the lover, who is by definition (as Silvius knows) 'all made of fantasy, /All made of passion and all made of wishes' (As you Like It, V,ii, 93-94), find the language to express true feeling? Berowne's very question recognizes that both love and language are, like all else in the world, subject to change with the passage of time.

Berowne tries to explain to the Princess that the very changefulness of the lords' behaviour and the 'varying' (V,ii, 752) of their language are the marks of the natural validity of their love. But he is unsuccessful in turning their offence to grace (V,ii, 763-764). The lords' letters and their 'looks' 'show'd much more than jest', but, mislead by that very showiness of expression which Berowne insists is a measure of sincerity, the ladies 'did not quote them so' (V,ii, 772-774).

Love's Labour's Lost does not end 'like an old play', and the crux on which the dénouement turns is one which recurs in later comedies: the discrepancy between authorial intention and critical interpretation. In his own sonnet, Berowne sees the problem of subjective 'bias': the thoughts

which are to him 'oaks', are to Rosaline 'like osiers bowed' (IV,ii, 102). But, unlike Moth and his fellow Worthies who seek to accommodate just this discontinuity between artistic intention and affective response, Berowne does not act upon his recognition. Moth and company do succeed in making their 'offence gracious', by the 'excellent device' of admitting the shortcomings of their artistic representation and appealing to the mitigating clemency of their audience (V,i, 118-121). But Berowne and his fellows are too preoccupied with their own self-esteem to cultivate the respect of the ladies. In passing her twelve month moratorium, Rosaline warns Berowne against taking an excessive pride in his own penmanship:

A jest's prosperity lies in the ear
Of him that hears it, never in the tongue
Of him that makes it.

(V,ii, 849-851)

This lesson is one which the Helena of All's Well That Ends Well will also have to learn, for she too is guilty of hubristic pride in her own 'fixed intents'.¹¹ And throughout the later comedies, Rosaline's moral, which echoes Quintilian's views on the relativity of linguistic decorum, is taken up by the clowns. In Twelfth Night, Feste (who can cite 'Quintapalus') constantly reminds us that the success of the fool's jesting turns on the generous predisposition of his listeners. Lavache, in All's Well, teaches that 'sense' itself can be taken in many senses.¹² And in making meaning the responsibility of the audience and not the author, Touchstone has an opportunity to be true to his name. For according to Quintilian, 'propriety' in the use of words,

turns not on the actual term,
but on the meaning of the term, and must be
tested by the touchstone of the understanding, not
of the ear.¹³

In As You Like It, III,iii, where Touchstone underlines the crucial nature

of affective interpretation, Shakespeare also invites us to consider the potential dangers of the liberal attitude encapsulated in the play's title. The fate of Ovid becomes an emblem of the penalties of critical misunderstanding, and in adducing his name in defence of imaginative freedom Touchstone argues the hardest possible case. As You Like It is, however, one of Shakespeare's sunniest comedies, and poetic licence and freedom of interpretation become two of the many liberties which are celebrated in Arden.

It is in All's Well That Ends Well that 'mistaking', as opposed to understanding, really becomes the focus of interest. In this problem comedy, as in the problematical tragedy, Antony and Cleopatra, Shakespeare is also engaged with a further aspect of affective interpretation - that of acting. Here too the notion of translation as metamorphosis remains operative. For theatrical performance is also seen as a life-engendering action, in which the 'dumb' text is made to speak and is of necessity transformed in order to be preserved.

Both All's Well and Antony and Cleopatra are the subjects of succeeding chapters. In the remainder of the present chapter the focus is restricted to As You Like It. I hope to show that Shakespeare's appreciation of Ovid's artistic purpose in the Metamorphoses is evident in the way he uses the story of Philemon and Baucis to refract his own comedic art, and that the motif of Ovid's banishment is an important foil for the licence of 'as you like it'. Finally, I want to use both Ovid's poem and Golding's translation as an interpretative aid to understanding Orlando's verse tribute to Rosalind in III,ii. The same Ovidian context can also throw light on a textual crux which occurs in Orlando's poem.

The presence of Golding ensures that, as in previous chapters, 'translation' must from time to time be understood in the narrower sense of

transference from one language and culture into another. In this century, Golding's Ovid has been lauded by Ezra Pound as 'the most beautiful book in the language' - a hyperbole which, as Gordon Braden shrewdly observes, has played nicely into the hands of publishers.¹⁴ If Shakespeare did not quite find it that, he perhaps held the translation in rather higher esteem than is allowed for by Baldwin's comment that most modern critics 'merely find Golding a necessary evil in the background of Shakspeare'.¹⁵

In earlier chapters I mentioned Ovid's desire to tell the myths 'aliter' - differently from the way they had been treated in Homer and Virgil. Some of the most characteristic effects of the Metamorphoses derive from his decision to relocate the mythical past in contemporary Rome. It is in part a fortuitous accident of history, but also by design that Golding in turn refreshed Ovid's myths by the same expedient of transporting them to sixteenth century England. Golding undoubtedly saw himself first and foremost as a communicator. The democratic principles, which he shared with other Tudor translators, are openly acknowledged in the Dedication to Calvin's Psalms (1571), where he states his intention,

too lay foorth things plainlye (yea and sometimes
also homely and grossely) too the understanding
of many, than to indyte things curiously
too the pleasing of the fewe.¹⁶

The effect is to refurbish a distant Latin poem with local habitations and familiar names. Pentheus' mother rushes after her son 'like a Bedlem' (3,898 : insano, III, 711); the River-god, Achelous, is given a 'crabtree face' (9,114 : agrestis vultus, ix, 96); Midas wears 'a purple nyghtcappe' to hide his ass's ears (11,204 : purpureis tiaris, xi, 181); and both mortals and gods are honoured with the Elizabethan titles of 'Dame' and 'Ladie', 'King' and 'Queene'.

Such techniques, like Golding's domestication of proper names and his

amplification of colourless Latin adjectives, can introduce unconscious comedy. Thus Ovid tells us that Pomona was named for her skill in cultivating fruit-trees (XIV, 623-626). Golding (in a marginal note)¹⁷ suggests that the name might be anglicized to 'Applebee' - and a nubile wood-nymph is instantly transformed into a farmer's wife. Something similar occurs in the tale of Pyramus and Thisbe. In Ovid, the lovers protest to the dividing wall that they are not ungrateful ('ingrati', IV, 76) for the limited access it affords. In Golding, Pyramus and his 'Thisb' insist that they are not 'churles' (4,95).¹⁸

While Shakespeare clearly enjoyed such 'Goldingisms', he does not adopt a superior attitude to them. On the contrary, his own treatment of 'Pyramus and Thisbe' reflects an awareness that Golding's bathos is rarely totally destructive. As was suggested in previous chapters,¹⁹ both the context and the scarcely reverential manner in which Ovid himself chooses to tell the Pyramus and Thisbe story serve to draw attention to boundaries of the story's fictiveness. It is, of course, this aspect of the tale - encapsulated in Theseus' remark that 'The best in this kind are but shadows; and the worst no worse...' (V,i, 209-210) - which is paramount in A Midsummer Night's Dream. Like the daughters of Minyas, who swap such stories to 'ease their labor' and 'make the time seeme shorte' (4,48-49), Bottom is a weaver.²⁰ And like them (cf. IV, 53-54/4, 64-65), he is very much concerned with the story as a story.

Moreover, both Golding's unconscious idiosyncrasies and deliberate policies can reinvigorate effects that are part and parcel of a poem which thrives off incongruity. Thus, for example, Ovid delights in settling his gods in Augustan palaces (atria nobilium, I, 172). When Golding finds them homes in 'the sumptuous houses of the Peeres' (1,198), the effect for his audience is much the same as the original would have been for Ovid's. This

is also the case when Ovid's Jove summons a 'council' (concilium, I,167) of the gods, and Golding's domesticated deity calls for a 'Court of Parliament' (I,191). The blending of classical vistas and mores with native English settings and sentiments can, paradoxically, come closer to the essential spirit of the Metamorphoses than any 'correct' translation might have achieved. Shakespeare, at least, seems to have appreciated that the odd coupling of an aristocratic Elizabethan puritan and Rome's 'grand-maister of wantonnesse',²¹ was a recreative interaction not unlike that of the sun upon the Nilus' mud. 'In part' it 'restored the ancient shapes', and 'in part..created creatures new and strange' (I, 436-437).

One further point seems worth making by way of anticipating As You Like It. When one compares the great editions of the Metamorphoses on either side of Golding - the Regius with its wide marginal annotations threatening to submerge the narrow strip of text, and Sandys' tome with its lengthy appended commentaries 'Upon' the successive books - one is forced to recognize how unobtrusive Golding really is. Gordon Braden speaks of his 'small-time Christianizing', and various echoes of Protestant doctrines and terminology have been noted by other commentators.²² As already indicated, my own feeling is that Golding performed a considerable service to Shakespeare by using the language of St. Paul to translate Ovid's Pythagorean sequence.²³ He helped to promote an essentially a-historical and non-denominational awe and wonder which transcends the boundaries of art, nature, and orthodox religion. In this sense he can be said to have fostered the synthesizing humanism which has given us 'Bottom's Dream' (A Midsummer Night's Dream, IV,ii, 201-end) and Oliver's conversion (As You Like It, IV,iii, 98-132), as well as the rebirth of Hermione (The Winter's Tale, V,ii).

What is important in the context of the present chapter is that

comparatively speaking, Golding does not try to control the responses of his readers. His final attitude is very much one of as you like it, or what you will. He sets an example by his own interpretation of selected fables, but is equally anxious to avoid the 'tediousnesse' of protracted and 'over-curious' explanations of them all (Epistle, 298-301). Though he makes use of the apologist's favourite metaphor of the honey-sucking bee (Preface, 163-166), Golding ultimately gives up worrying about the effects of his translation. 'But why seeme I theis doubts to cast', he asks in his Epistle, '...as if that I /Ought to have a speciall care how all men doo apply /My dooings to their owne behoof?' (597-603). There is a refreshing absence of neurosis here. Though Golding's chief purpose as a translator is clearly a moral one, he is ready to shift the onus of responsibility from the author onto the reader. He hopes that men will profit from 'good meaning', but

If otherwyse, the fault is theyrs not myne they must
 confesse
 (Epistle, 606).

There is nothing narrow-minded about this. It is a conclusion which Touchstone, who is certainly no Puritan, will be happy to endorse.

2. Poor Entertainment Richly Meant

I take my title from a free Italian version of Ovid's tale of Philemon and Baucis. It occurs in the preliminaries to Florio's World of Wordes, which appeared in 1598, the year before the date most commonly accepted for As You Like It. The dictionary is dedicated to three noble patrons - the Earls of Rutland and Southampton, and Lucie, Countess of Bedford - whom

Florio invites to:

joyne hand in hand, and so jointly
to lende an eare (and lende it I beseech you) to
a poor man, that invites your Honors to a christen-
ing, that I and my poor studies, like Philemon
and Baucis, may in so lowe a cottage entertaine
so high, if not deities, yet dignities; of who the
Poet testifies.

.... But of all other cheere most did content
A cheerefull countenance, and a willing minde,
Poor entertainment being richly ment,
Pleaded excuse for that which was behinde.²⁴

The combination of extravagant praise for the patron, and self-deprecation on the part of the artist himself is, of course, a familiar feature of the literary dedication. Florio's exercise in decorum is, however, interesting in a number of respects. Whether by accident or design, his deployment of the Philemon and Baucis myth as an apology for his own work is remarkably apt. It recalls the way Ovid himself uses the myth to comment on the nature of his own art in the Metamorphoses. Since Shakespeare employs the myth in much the same way in As You Like It, III, iii, Florio serves as an intermediary between Ovid's poem and Shakespeare's play.

The tone of Florio's 'Epistle Dedicatrive' is, moreover, curiously suggestive of Touchstone. The overmuch of Florio's humility ('poor man... poor studies') is simply an inversion of the considerable pride which he exhibits throughout the remainder of the Preface. The man who affects the part of a peasant receiving guests in a poor cottage does not scruple to remind his patrons of the considerable intellectual labour which has gone into the creation of his world of words. The egregious fake modesty which Touchstone displays in presenting Audrey to Duke Senior is, in much the same way, merely a different manifestation of the supercilious condescension which characterizes his behaviour elsewhere in the play:

A poor virgin sir, an
 ill-favoured thing sir, but mine own; a
 poor humour of mine sir, to take that that no
 man else will. Rich honesty dwells like a miser
 sir, in a poor house, as your pearl in your foul
 oyster.

(V,iv, 57-61)

Prompted by Jaques, Touchstone is about to discourse on the forms of the Lie. Though his use of connecting imagery, Shakespeare invites us to relate this 'rhapsody on If'²⁵ to the debate about poetry's truth in III, iii. The conceits of the pearl in the oyster and rich honesty in a poor house are a further expression of the notion of multum in parvo. In III, iii, the idea is presented in Touchstone's multi-suggestive conceit of 'a great reckoning in a little room'; his complex word-play on 'honest Ovid ...among the Goths'; and Jaques' capping allusion to 'Jove in a thatched house' (ll. 5-12). In each sequence, the dramatic situation reinforces the verbal conceits. Duke Senior's appreciation of a sententious fool (V, iv, 62) points up the same kind of incongruity which Jaques savours on discovering 'knowledge ill-inhabited' (III,iii, 7). The story of Philemon and Baucis is a containing myth for the confrontations of both character and style which abound in Arden.

Having used the Ovidian myth to represent his own well-meaning intentions, Florio addresses the closely-related problem of critical understanding. He hopes the dictionary will serve 'well-forward students' as well as 'new-entered novices', and will join other scholarly aides in preventing that misrepresentation of authors which he sees to be a culpable widespread practice:

... Although we misse or mistake
 the worde, yet make we up the sence.
 Such making is marring. Naie all as good;
 but not as right. And not right, is flat wrong.²⁶

In his Preface to Montaigne (1603), Florio anticipates both Goethe and Walter Benjamin in seeing translation as a form of metamorphosis which is analogous to 'Pythagoras his Metempsychosis'.²⁷ But in the preliminaries to The Worlde of Wordes, his views are somewhat stricter. He imagines that, rather than accepting the interpretations which have been foisted upon their works, authors would willingly submit to a fate worse than death:

One saies
of Petrache for all: A thousand strappadas
coude not compell him to confesse, what some
interpreters will make him saie he ment.
And a judicious gentleman of this lande will
uphold, that none in England understands him
thoroughly.²⁸

One wonders what Florio felt about the degenerate Petrarchanisms on display in As You Like It, a play which, like Love's Labour's Lost, is made from the marring of literary texts!

Florio's allusion to Philemon and Baucis in a context which is directly concerned with problems of authorial intention and critical understanding is highly suggestive of As You Like It, where Jaques invokes the myth and Touchstone complains that

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.

(III,iii, 9-12)

A further anticipation of Shakespeare's comedy might be seen in Florio's subsequent allusions to Iphis and Ianthe, another Ovidian myth which, via Lyly and Lodge, makes its presence felt in As You Like It - in the coupling of Ganymede and Orlando.²⁹ And, as Florio explains, the title of the dictionary is itself an expression of multum in parvo³⁰ - an idea which in Shakespeare's play is expressed in Orlando's creation of 'Rosalind' as a

world 'in little', as well as in Touchstone's conceits. At the very least, Florio can serve to redirect us to the Metamorphoses, where Ovid's pastoral is a joyful exploration of aesthetic and moral problems close to the heart of the poem and of equal concern to Shakespeare in As You Like It.

The story of Philemon and Baucis (VIII, 618ff/8, 792ff), one of the best-loved in the Metamorphoses, is the antithesis of the many tales which depict ungoverned passions and unregenerate nature. Indeed, its popularity may reflect the fact that, unlike so many of Ovid's tales, it has 'some singularly decent and psychologically normal people as its protagonists'.³¹ The story is juxtaposed with the tale of Erysichthon (VIII, 738ff/8, 924ff) whose impiety (cutting down the sacred tree of Ceres) is punished by unappeasable hunger. In a wider context, it is one of several stories which serve to entertain Theseus and his companions when they are waylaid by flood on their way home from the Calydonian boar-hunt. The motif of natural devastation is prominent in the hunt sequence itself (VIII, 260ff/8, 343ff), and the contrasted images of feast, famine and flood recur in the ensuing tales. The gods respond in kind to human generosity and react to acts of petulance by withdrawing the gift of plenty from the land. In the case of Philemon and Baucis, the religious context is further enhanced by the obvious parallel with Deucalion and Pyrrha, who were similarly the sole exemption to universal punishment by flood.

However, as in the seminal sequence in Book I, the traditional religious themes are subordinated to other literary and narrative concerns.³² The whole story exhibits that blurring of the distinctions between the natural and the supernatural which is so characteristic of the Metamorphoses and is an important feature of As You Like It. Even the divine reward which provides the dénouement of Ovid's story seems no more than natural justice. Ovid's is a naturalized theodicy and nature, we are made to feel, takes care

of her own.³³

As in the Golden Age, Philemon and Baucis live in a state of grace and harmony with nature. The fruitful abundance of their world is as much an extension of their mature loving relationship, as it is a reward for their piety. In his Epistle, Golding underlines the moral virtues of patience, thrift and obedience in the tale, but he also draws attention to the 'mutuall love betweene the man and wyfe', and to the simple charity which they extend to 'wandring straungers' (II, 184-186). Like Corin, who is generous with his limited means (II,iv, 84-85), and Celia, who contrives to see 'banishment' as 'liberty' (I,iii, 134),³⁴ Philemon and Baucis bear adversity willingly and hence transform it.

As William S. Anderson has shown, Ovid dwells on the limitations of their lives only to counteract this impression by the formal dignity of his style (VIII, 630-634). He tells us that the couple were wedded in the humble cottage and in the same cottage had grown old together. What might be seen as a life of dull uniformity is instead construed as an exemplum of true value: 'the house becomes a "palace" because of the couple that has honorably lived in it so long'.³⁵ Ovid's technique is to subvert sophisticated expectations. We are asked to see that what we might take for poor subsistence (and Touchstone for 'shallowness') is no such thing for Philemon and Baucis (or Corin). It is all a question of attitude and point of view. Something of this is caught by Golding who, perhaps fortuitously, underlines the note of surprised revelation in Ovid's text in an effort to fill our his line:

And for they patiently
Did beare theyr simple povertie, they mede it light thereby,
And shewed it no thing to bee repyned at at all.

(8, 809-811).

The roof of the cottage, as Shakespeare recalls (As You Like It, III, iii, 8; Much Ado, II,i, 82-84), is 'thatched all with straw and fennish reede' (8, 806). Dried leaves kindle the fire and various forms of wood provide both kitchen utensils and furniture, so that the gods must feast from 'Mazers made of Beech' and lounge on 'A Couch...of Sallow wood' (8, 848, 833). As in *Arden*, talk beguiles the tediousness of time (8, 828).³⁶

Golding's rustic vocabulary is perfectly attuned to presenting the simple peasant meal. When 'ricotta cheese' (VIII, 666) becomes 'a jolly lump of butter fresh and soote' (8, 845), and the gods 'sit down' squarely as at an English table rather than 'reclining' as at a Roman feast (8, 838/VIII, 660), we are once more reminded that translation can be a benevolent form of metamorphosis. According to Marvell, who shared Florio's ideal of literary purity, infidelity to the original text is a crime. The translator should not be a 'maker',

... he maketh blots
That mends; and added beauties are but spots.³⁷

But the changes which Golding makes keep alive the incongruous effects which are an indispensable feature of Ovid's tale. The 'blots' only augment the paradoxical beauty of the poem.

For there is, of course, much more to this pastoral idyll than first meets the eye. As in the Golden Age sequence in Book I,³⁸ Ovid has fun at the expense of simplistic exponents of the 'back to nature' genre. What engages him, as it engages Shakespeare, is the contradiction at the heart of the pastoral genre, which is dependent upon the urbane point of view it affects to despise. It is after all Duke Senior's literary sophistication (the counterpart of Shakespeare's) which allows him to 'translate the stubbornness of fortune /Into so quiet and so sweet a style' (II,i, 19-20).

Just as Touchstone, furnished with 'good set terms', can afford to rail on 'Lady Fortune' (II,vii, 16-17). Ovid similarly leaves us in no doubt that Philemon and Baucis were better off without the 'high Olympian charity' of the gods, who (in Graham Hough's words),

Left the old couple to a tedious cult
Of virtue spoilt by knowing what it meant.³⁹

For both Ovid and Shakespeare, the pastoral is a myth or metaphor which provides a coherent way of knowing the world while allowing other perspectives to be played off against it. 'Philemon and Baucis' and As You Like It are good illustrations of Rosalie Colie's thesis that the genre system could subvert its own rules even in the process of maintaining them. If, as Colie has also shown, the pastoral developed as the 'kind' which more than any other could accommodate 'much mixture',⁴⁰ then that process had already begun by Ovid's time. In the Renaissance, poets like Lodge were happy enough to exploit the freedoms which went with the development in the form. And apologists such as Sidney could use the allegorical method to show the moral value of 'prettie tales of Wolves and Sheepe'.⁴¹ But in the Metamorphoses, the freedom to mix 'kinds' is already part of the meaning of Ovid's highly self-conscious pastoral idyll. And in As You Like It, moralizing is only one of several attitudes which are adopted towards the natural world.⁴²

There is art as well as nature in the rustic setting of 'Philemon and Baucis'. Simple meals had become something of a topos in Roman poetry and this genre-within-a-genre is gently parodied in Ovid's over-attention to such details as the table, which has one foot 'a little shorter than the rest' (8, 840).⁴³ This kind of verisimilitude brings the writer out on the other side of realism, by drawing attention to his discriminating eye and fastidious style. Ovid's description of the 'frugal' meal is as

aesthetically pleasing as a still-life painting, and just as composed. We are no more expected to equate this naturalism with realism, than we are to imagine Arden - where Orlando expects to fight for his supper and is instead courteously invited to dinner (II,vii, 104-105) - as a real forest. (It was surely a mistake that the BBC production of As You Like It was filmed 'on location' - of all places, at Glamis!).

In a play in which Orlando and Jaques can address each other as 'Monsieur Melancholy' and 'Signior Love' (III,ii, 287-289), and the one can be discovered supine under 'Jove's tree...like a wounded knight' (III,ii, 232-237), the other moralizing a natural scene 'into a thousand similes' (II,iii, 45), it is tempting to see Rosalind's hard-headed speeches as a reflection of Shakespeare's impatience with the jaded forms of literary artifice. 'Sell when you can, you are not for all markets' (III,v, 60) certainly cuts through Silvius' 'truth-tired' conceits like a knife. But, of course, Rosalind's realism (like Berowne's 'russet yeas and honest kersey noes') is as much a literary style as any other, and her harsh words sound sweeter than a sonnet to Phoebe's ear.⁴⁴ Love, moreover, like art, thrives off contradiction - as both Ovid and Shakespeare delight in showing. Just as Helena is 'drawn' by Demetrius' 'hardhearted adamant', loving him the more for his plain speaking,⁴⁵ so Phoebe translates Rosalind's stubbornness into the stuff of her own fancy (III,v, 109ff).

In both the Metamorphoses and As You Like It, the mixing of stylistic techniques extends to the characterization. In Shakespeare's play the irrational behaviour of both Oliver and Duke Frederick is in one sense quite arbitrary. Shakespeare does not try to conceal his exposition, and to some extent we are asked to accept their dislike of Orlando and Rosalind as a 'given'. It quite patently serves the purpose of projecting both characters into the forest where, as it were, the play proper can begin.

Yet while we are not required to place any more credence in their villainy than in the renegades of a tale of Robin Hood, Oliver and Duke Frederick are at the same time quite understandable in psychological terms.⁴⁶ It is a curious paradox that Shakespeare can actually reduce the amount of character motivation he finds in his sources and yet create characters with greater psychological depth. He seems to have felt increasingly that the mainsprings of human action are, in a sense, quite simple and can most honestly be represented in the broadest of strokes. Here too the truest can be the most feigned, and this aspect of Touchstone's conceit I want to take up in the next chapter.⁴⁷

In the Metamorphoses, Philemon and Baucis are vividly realized by stylized pious gestures and deft touches of psychological realism. The old man, for example, is anxious to please, but force of habit ensures that he cuts off only a 'little' piece of his 'long-preserved' pork (VIII, 649-650).⁴⁸ Golding misses the fun but, perhaps because he is unfamiliar with Italian methods of curing, makes the bacon 'rancid' ('restie', 8, 824), which has the effect of making Philemon's hospitality equally equivocal! Similarly, the broad comedy of the goose chase (VIII, 684-688/8, 863-867) is the stuff of fabliaux, while the heavily exaggerated responses to the miracle of the self-replenishing wine-cup (VIII, 679-683/8, 857-862) is material for religious art. 'I see Baucis and Philemon as perfectly before me', wrote Dryden, 'as if some ancient Painter had drawn them'.⁴⁹

Ovid clearly enjoys playing with these various stylistic techniques, but his art, like Shakespeare's in As You Like It, always stops short of caricature. And for much the same reason, since what is on trial in the Philemon and Baucis is not so much religion as fiction - or perhaps fictions. The tale is told by one Lelex, a man 'rype in yeares and wit' (8, 791), to quash the doubts of Pirithous, a Jaques-like sceptic, 'over hault of mynde

and such a one /As did despise both God and man' (8, 785-786). By not only scorning the power of the gods, but also laughing at the credulity of Theseus and his companions who are moved by the river-god's tales of wondrous transformations, Pirithous questions the very substance of the Metamorphoses itself:

The words thou spakest
Are feyned fancies, Acheloy: and overstrong thou maakst
The Gods: to say that they can give and take way shapes.
(8, 787-789).⁵⁰

The natural simplicity of Philemon and Baucis is enhanced rather than diminished by the urbanity it plays off, and their religious piety validated by those who are prepared to suspend disbelief before their tale. While the superior perspective is of course Ovid's, it can no more be equated with him than can Jaques' with Shakespeare. The authorial urbanity is, in fact, skilfully deflected onto the gods of the story, whose loftiness (even in human form they have to stoop to get into the cottage) and brusque formality enhances their host's true humanity - much as Corin's humanity is enhanced by his contact with Touchstone.

The eternal union of Philemon and Baucis is, like that of Rosalind and Orlando, merited by 'true faith' (V,iv, 187). Though their metamorphosis is brought about by a divine agency, it is presented as a natural evolution of their lives hitherto (VIII, 712-719; 8, 894-902). In death, they take their place in the landscape as a linden and an oak, 'theyr two bodies, growing yit together joyntly there' (8, 904). While this reconciliation of the natural and the marvelous is thoroughly characteristic of the Metamorphoses, the whole sequence is a perfect illustration of that generosity of spirit which distinguishes both Ovidian and Shakespearean comedy. In As You Like It, we are invited to believe in the magic 'if we please' and, with Orlando, we perhaps 'sometimes do believe, and sometimes

do not' (V,ii, 59; V,iv, 3). The conclusion of Ovid's tale similarly leaves room for sceptics even as it accommodates true believers, for we hear no more of doubting Pirithous.⁵¹

Instead, Ovid focuses on those members of Lelex' audience who are a projection of his own ideal audience and our own better selves. Ovid tells us that both the tale,

and he that did it tell
Did move them all, but Theseus most.
(8, 910-911).

It is perhaps no coincidence that Theseus' namesake, the Duke in Shakespeare's earlier Ovidian comedy, is similarly gracious enough to invest the 'poor entertainment' with which he is presented with that same degree of faith which the presenters themselves invest in it (A Midsummer Night's Dream, V, i, 209-214).

Shakespeare's appreciation of Ovid is evident in the way the story of Philemon and Baucis is introduced in As You Like It, III,iii. The myth is not simply invoked as the quintessential exemplum of pastoral simplicity. As in the Metamorphoses, it is also used to canvass the question of poetry and belief, and becomes an emblem of that creative confounding of form by which the poet matches his art to the decorous indecorum of the natural world. The delight of Ovid's tale is in the comic incongruities of character and style, while As You Like It is a similar celebration of the kind of artistic bad taste which makes disparate things collide in a marring that is also a mending.

It is in this spirit that Shakespeare presents his apology for poetry in the form of a dialogue - all bogus erudition on one side and naive incomprehension on the other - between a wise fool and a country girl. And it is here that a cloud is briefly cast over Arden when we are asked to consider the dangers that attend the licensed attitude of 'as you like it'.

The title of Shakespeare's comedy is generally thought to have been suggested by an apparently casual phrase used by Lodge in his address 'To the Gentleman Readers' of Rosalynde: 'If you like it, so'.⁵² As Agnes Latham notes, 'It is particularly suited to the do-as-you-please atmosphere of Arden, a place where a very mixed collection of people very happily go their own various ways'.⁵³

But Lodge's attitude in his preface is less carefree and detached than it at first appears.⁵⁴ Under the name of 'Momus', he goes on to raise the spectre of those opponents of imaginative literature whose harsh criticisms had led to the pamphlet wars of the 1580s. 'Momus', like 'Zoilus', the grammarian who assailed Homer for his fabulous and incredible stories, was a name used by liberal writers and translators against conservatives and scholastics, who were opposed alike to vernacular translations of the classics, anything which - like the Romances - smacked of 'idle' medievalism, and of course, the London theatres.⁵⁵ Momus and Zoilus were frequently coupled with the epithets, 'poisoned', 'spiteful' or 'envious', and seconded (as in Lodge) by the name of Midas, whose ass's ears testified to a lack of aesthetic judgment (Metamorphoses, XI, 146ff/11, 164ff).⁵⁶ In short, the names characterized those readers who were not prepared to take the 'sweet sense' of doubtful offerings, and were synonymous with carping narrow-mindedness and anti-humanism.

In the pamphlet wars, one of the names tossed backwards and forwards more than any other was that of Ovid. The whole question of Elizabethan attitudes to Ovid is, as Clyde Barnes Cooper recognized, inseparable from 'a larger and far more vital question': the right of poetry and all imaginative literature to exist.⁵⁷ A familiar leit-motif in these exchanges was Augustus' banishment of Ovid from Rome, which the opponents of poetry found convenient to equate with Plato's expulsion of poets from his ideal state. Touchstone's allusion to 'honest Ovid...among the Goths' (III,iii, 6) is thus a familiar counter in long-running literary debate.

Lodge had taken it upon himself to reply to the first squib in the war between the critics: Stephen Gosson's The Schoole of Abuse (1579). Gosson had registered his disapproval of the Metamorphoses, as well as 'that trumpet of bawdrie, the Craft of Love', citing 'the incest of Myrrha' as an example of Ovid's 'cunning'. He also charged Ovid with fostering the connections between 'musick, playing, singing and dancing' in the English theatres and for suggesting that such public assembles were ideal places for the procurement of women. As a consequence, he held that Augustus set a good example in banishing Ovid - as did Tiberius in sentencing Scaurus to death for writing a tragedy!⁵⁸

In his reply to Gosson, subtitled A Defence of Poetry, Music, and Stage Plays (1579), Lodge makes it clear that the defence of Ovid is a central plank in the humanist platform:

I must arme
myself now, for here is the greatest bob I can gather out
of your booke, forsooth Ovid's abuses, in descrybing
whereof you labour very vehementlye, terming him
letcher, and in his person dispraise all poems.⁵⁹

His own apology is not an argument for unrestrained artistic freedom, but for the proper employment of literature as a medium of moral instruction.

One man's folly should not discredit a whole profession. Though not all poets are holy, 'yet poetry is a heavenly gift'. Abuse should not prohibit use:

I like not of an angrye Augustus which
 wyll banishe Ovid for envy. I love a wise
 Senator, which in wisdom wyll correct him, and
 with advise burne his follyes.⁶⁰

Shakespeare may have been reminded of Ovid's banishment, not only by the catch-cry of 'Momus' in Lodge's preface to Rosalynde, but also by the thematic concern with envy, banishment and exile in the romance itself. There are, moreover, curious continuities between the apology with which Lodge prefaces Rosalynde and Ovid's Tristia, the source of Touchstone's allusion. Lodge's romance was written during a voyage to the Canaries; Ovid's poems were composed en route for darkest Tomis. Both writers anticipate a hostile reception and crave indulgence for works written 'on the stormy deep...the paper sprayed by dark waters' (Tristia, I,xi, 39-40) and 'everie line...wet with a surge' ('To the Gentleman Readers').⁶¹ Ovid, however, anticipates Duke Senior in finding the hostile winter weather less of a threat than human hostility (Tristia, I,xi, 25-26).

What is clear, is that by adducing the name of Ovid in As You Like It, III,iii, Shakespeare, like Lodge in his Reply to Gosson, intends 'in his person to defend all poems'. It has, of course, long been recognized that Touchstone refers to the mystery of Ovid's exile in his cryptic cross-talk with Audrey. What is less certain, is whether under cover of this allusion there lurks a further reference to the fate of Marlowe, who was connected with Ovid not only by the common enterprise of the Amores, but also by the ignominious ways their lives ended. The striking conceit, 'a great reckoning in a little room' (II, 11-12) has been seen as a covert glance at the dispute over 'le recknynge' which led to Marlowe's death in a Deptford

tavern, together with an echo of the Jew of Malta, where Barabas describes his jewels as 'infinite riches in a little room' (I,i, 37). The fact that this image is itself a clever refashioning of a Christian conceit - the paradox of Christ's infinite value being contained by the womb of a humble virgin - both adds to the arcana and illustrates the opportunities for critical misunderstanding which arise in Marlowe's work, as in Ovid's.

The tantalizing nature of Touchstone's allusions is augmented by the further possibility of references to Chapman, the rival for Shakespeare's title as the reincarnated Ovid and the author of a difficult narrative poem about the Roman poet, which also contains the conceit, 'riches in a little room', together with the phrase 'struck dead'.⁶² Ovid's Banquet of Sence invites the speculation that the crime which led to Ovid's banishment was his misfortune in seeing Julia, the Emperor's daughter, naked. This speculation is, in turn, based on an interpretation of Tristia, II, 103ff, where Ovid himself, draws an analogy between his own fate and that of Actaeon:

Why did I see anything? Why did I make my eyes
guilty? Why was I so thoughtless as to harbour
the knowledge of a fault? Unwitting was Actaeon
when he beheld Diana unclothed; none the
less he became the prey of his own hounds.⁶³

In his version of the Actaeon myth in the Metamorphoses (III, 130ff/3, 161ff), Ovid had focused on the role of fortune in human affairs and had also deliberately raised the problem of critical understanding. In the debate which follows the story, he shows how a variety of responses of the same events are equally tenable and the behaviour of Actaeon and Diana capable of being interpreted in a number of different ways (see Ch.1, p.13). Seen from the perspective of 'savage Tomis', this liberal attitude of 'as you like it' must have struck Ovid as bitterly ironic.

The speculation about the precise meaning of Touchstone's allusions can never be resolved. That, I would suggest, is very much the point. In rehearsing all this matter, which is not in itself new,⁶⁴ my purpose has been to show the way Shakespeare obliges us to engage with the twin problems of authorial intention and critical understanding. While the thrust of Touchstone's argument (like Florio's) is that the failure to find critical understanding is, for the artist, a fate worse than death, Shakespeare seems bent on showing that a range of responses is inevitable. The cryptic nature of Touchstone's language ensures this, while the possible allusions to Marlowe's translation of Ovid's Elegies, the two parts of Hero and Leander, and Ovids Banquet of Sence underline the central issue by pointing to the many different ways that Ovid was being interpreted in the Renaissance.⁶⁵ The peculiar brand of Chapman's 'Ovidianism' remains open to question.⁶⁶ But it is clearly something very different from Marlowe's, which was different again from that of Lodge, whose own contribution to the erotic narrative suggests a fuller response to Ovid than the moralism of his formal defence would seem to allow.⁶⁷

Ovid, then, is not only a key author for ethical and moral problems relating to imaginative literature, but also for demonstrating different ways of reading, interpreting and understanding poetry. This, I think, is the significance of his 'appearance' in the guise of the suitably-named Touchstone in the central act of a play called As You Like It.⁶⁸ While imaginative literature exemplified the variety of ways Ovid could be interpreted, scholarly and critical works from the time of Ascham's The Scholemaster (1568) onwards offered alternative strategies for dealing with an author perceived as problematic. In the latter half of the 1590s what Nigel Alexander calls the 'Ovidian debate',⁶⁹ was no less heated than at the time of the Gosson-Lodge exchanges. The controversy about Marlowe's

works continued. In June 1599 surreptitious editions of his translations of the Elegies were burned by order of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London. By the same order, a quite different contribution to the genre, John Marston's seemingly-satirical poem, The Metamorphosis of Pygmalion's Image (1598) was also publicly burnt.⁷⁰ And in the same year Willobie His Avis was called in by the authorities - presumably on quite different grounds since, as Alexander notes, the poem is less a contribution to the erotic genre per se, than an 'attack on all the values and attitudes implied in the Ovidian poems'.⁷¹

Marlowe's life and death are doubtless intimately connected. But in the context of As You Like It, III,iii, the precise circumstances in which he met his end are perhaps less important than the revolutionary manner in which he chose to interpret Ovid. His crime may well have been that (like Ovid himself in his own day) he was 'the first to strip off allegory and other garments of reverence, and to treat a classic as an equal'.⁷² 1598, however, found Chapman reasserting the values of 'correctness' in translation and overt moralism and elitism in literature.⁷³ In the commendatory verses attached to Ovids Banquet of Sence, J(ohn) D(avies) had lauded Chapman as an Ovid 'now growne more old and wise' and expressing himself 'in deeper mysteries'.⁷⁴ Chapman obviously concurred with this estimation of his poetic role. In his continuation of Hero and Leander (entered in the Stationer's Register on 2 March 1598), he quite deliberately takes the poem on a difficult new course. Both the Dedication and the opening lines of the poem itself, reflect Chapman's conviction that a 'trifeling...subject' (love) must, as it were, be bolstered by explicit moral and intellectual input from the author.⁷⁵ This Chapman proceeds to do in his additions to the story.

Seen against this background, Touchstone's assertion that 'the truest

poetry is the most feigning', a simultaneous vindication of the value of both sexuality and story-telling, assumes a greater significance. Moreover, at a time when the 'Ovidian debate' was becoming a matter of mutually exclusive hostile camps, Shakespeare's comedy manages to accommodate almost the full range of interpretative strategies which had been developed for dealing with imaginative literature. And not just literature. For, as Nigel Alexander says, 'different interpretations of Ovid frequently involve different and indeed opposed ways of looking at the world'.⁷⁶

As You Like It, a play which confounds the real-life categories of art and life, might almost be said to be about the process of interpretation as translation. It is, I think, no coincidence that much of the attitudinizing in the play is focused on the related motifs of harts, hunting and horns. Touchstone, as I hope to show below, both invokes and transforms the Actaeon story at III,iii, 42ff, and there are frequent suggestions of the myth elsewhere in the comedy. As we have seen, it is this myth which Ovid uses in the Metamorphoses to canvass the problem of critical interpretation, and which in the biographical Tristia becomes an emblem of tragic mistaking. The story of Actaeon, which in Petrarch, Ronsard, and the Elizabethan sonneteers readily conflated with the chasse d'amour, also became one of those 'highly configured' myths which served as meeting places for a range of ideas and aesthetic preoccupations through the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.⁷⁷ More than most myths, it proved susceptible to quite different and indeed contradictory interpretations.

In As You Like It, Shakespeare delights in showing that the interpretation of common phenomena is bound to differ according to individual predisposition and social circumstance. Duke Senior's attitude towards the 'poor dappled fools' of the forest reflects his urbanity and his sense of civic justice (II,i, 21-24). Jaques, as befits his quite different nature, generally

takes a darker view. Yet there is light and shade in his interpretations too. In II,vii, we learn that, for all his perfection of the role of Monsieur Melancholy, Jaques is something of a changeling (II, 64-69). And as a scholar, Jaques shows that he can vary his translation of 'the sobbing deer' into 'a thousand similes' (II,ii, 45,56).⁷⁸

Like the Duke, Jaques is less of a naturalist than a mythographer. In his 'commentary', the already 'much marked' deer is subjected to further homiletic and social interpretations. Shakespeare also takes delight in showing that the translation process is incremental. By that accretion which broadened the margins of mythologies, both Jaques and his deer become, in turn, more 'matter' for Duke Senior's art (II, 68-70). In a subsequent scene, we find the Duke playing fondly with the idea of Jaques 'transform'd into a beast' (II,viii, 1). It is as if the objective satirist is, himself, now cast in the role of the luckless Actaeon. Certainly he is forced by Orlando into playing the part of Narcissus - another hunter who becomes the hunted and weeps over his image in a brook (III,ii, 280-285).⁷⁹ By the same process of accretion and transference Jaques, who is sport for both Duke Senior and Orlando, finds his own sport in Touchstone. The Clown's brain 'hath strange places cramm'd /With observation, the which he vents /In mangled forms' (II,vii, 40-42). This marring transformation - or rather deformation - of rhetorical commonplaces is precisely what Jaques finds so amusing. In As You Like It, as in Love's Labour's Lost, the audience is similarly reminded that the false construing of speeches can breed delight, while 'form confounded makes most form in mirth' (III, V,ii, 517).

In Arden, Duke Senior translates stubborn fortune into sweet conceits, much as Ovid in the Tristia transformed his own hardship into poems which became models of stylistic facility for Elizabethan school-boys.⁸⁰ Jaques, like a well-trained allegorist, extracts good 'sentences' from seemingly

unprofitable material. And Touchstone 'hangs a tale' of mutability onto his idle languishing in the forest (II,vii, 15-29). But Shakespeare shows that if nature is translated into art, art also returns to nature. Thus Jaques self-consciously elects to use the term 'stanzos', but Amiens is content merely to sing, 'turn(ing) his merrie note /Unto the sweet bird's throat' (II,v, 3-4, 15-20).⁸¹ In an effort to cheer up the failing Adam, Orlando jokes,

If this uncouth forest yield anything savage, I will
either be food for it, or bring it for food to thee
(II,vi, 6-7),

and the joke is both an expression of the self-regulating natural system and another translation of harsh circumstances into a sweetly balanced style. '...If I bring thee not something to eat', Orlando continues,

I will give thee leave to die; but if thou diest
before I come, thou art a mocker of my labour.
(II, 11-13)

His ensuing exclamation, 'Well said!', is a 'stage direction' which tells us that Adam is attempting to look cheerful. But (despite what editors would have us believe) the phrase is not simply the equivalent of 'well done!'. Like Amiens' gracious appreciation of Duke Senior's language (II, i, 18-20), it is also a reflexive comment on the style of Orlando's own speech. The two meanings are, in any case, inseparable, since Adam does not mock Orlando's literary labour and brightens because of his conceits.

Alexander Leggatt has brilliantly characterized the process by which Oliver 'moves into a story, and comes out a new man'. Oliver, as Leggatt notes, describes his conversion in the third person, but yet concludes 'I awak'd' (IV,iii, 104-132): 'The manipulation of literary convention thus fuses with a familiar human experience: we can be so changed by time and circumstance that when we recall our past actions they seem like those of

a different person'.⁸²

This fusion of convention and experience, which is so characteristic of both As You Like It and the Metamorphoses, is the most important feature of Oliver's transformation. But the sequence can also be seen as an example of Renaissance syncretism - the process whereby classical myth was matched to Christian exemplum. The snake and the lion which feature in Oliver's story are readily intelligible as Biblical symbols. But they also reinforce the suggestions of Hercules Ovidianus (Metamorphoses, IX, lff), on which Shakespeare draws elsewhere in As You Like It, for the wrestling match in I,ii, and Touchstone's image of the cornucopia (III,iii, 56-57).⁸³ Oliver's metamorphosis is presented as both an Ovidian fable and a testament of faith that invites comparison with St. Paul's account of his conversion, which similarly moves from the third to the first person (II Corinthians, 12, 2-5). In this respect, the sequence has affinities with Jaques' seven ages speech, which is a fine blend of classical and patriotic material, and with Duke Senior's opening speech in II,i, where, to the consternation of modern commentators, Shakespeare shifts effortlessly from 'the penalty of Adam' to the perpetual Spring of the classical Golden Age. The conflation would not have disturbed Golding, who asks in his Epistle,

... by the golden age what other thing is ment,
Than Adam's tyme in Paradyse..

(II, 469-470).

The forest of Arden, then, exhibits the full range of interpretative strategies which were current in Shakespeare's day - moralizing, allegorizing, satirizing, extracting the 'sweet sense' - and one more, which was not so common. For of all the possible attitudes towards Ovid - and by extension to poetry itself - which were tenable, the one most difficult to maintain was an unequivocal acceptance of the Roman poet's concern with love in all its varieties.

Shakespeare's own 'Ovidianism' is nowhere better exemplified than in his casting of Touchstone as the apologist for poetry, and Audrey as the 'Mome' whose 'rusticall disdain' (to borrow Sidney's epithets for 'Momus')⁸⁴ necessitates the defence. As a further piece of subversion, Shakespeare allows Touchstone to mount his defence by arguing the case for the prosecution. In seducing the guileless Audrey, the Clown shows that he has been tutored by the praeceptor amoris, who, as the odd little poem Greenes Vision has it,

.... taught how to woe,
 What in love men should doe,
 How they might soonest winne
 Honest women into sinne.⁸⁵

Touchstone behaves like a 'bold sophister', even as he counters the charge of poetic immorality with which Ovid's name was synonymous. His puns on 'capricious' and 'Goths' reinforce the notion of lasciviousness, so that 'honest Ovid' (III,iii, 6) is presented initially as not so much a wonderful paradox, as an outright contradiction in terms.

Yet in finding a place for the physical expression of love, Touchstone is being true to the spirit of Arden, which is one of accommodation rather than exclusion. The poet's 'feyned fables' as Webbe refers to the Metamorphoses, are neither safely moralized nor subjected to the sweetening process of selection. Shakespeare's apology for Ovid is much more radical than Lodge's, and it avoids the double-dealing of Marston, who first exploited the licence of the mythological poem and then attempted to justify the excesses by reglossing his narrative as a satire.

In contrast, the whole tenor of As You Like It, III,iii, is an argument for freedom of expression and generosity of understanding presented in religious, sexual and literary terms. Because, as Empson pointed out, the root of Touchstone's joke 'is that a physical desire drives the human

creature to a spiritual one',⁸⁶ the 'fayn-feign' pun holds together sacred and profane meanings. In the exchanges which follow, contradictory interpretations of what is lawful in love and marriage emerge from the discussions conducted in the presence of the well-named Sir Oliver Mar-text. Anticipating a major theme in All's Well That Ends Well,⁸⁷ Touchstone makes us aware of a tension between what St. Paul calls 'the law of my mind' and 'the law in my members' (Romans, 7, 18-25). It is a tension maintained in the final scene of the play, when marriage is presented as 'great Juno's crown' - and also as the means by which 'Hymen peoples every town' (V,iv, 140-143). 'Better to marry than to burn' is the Apostle's pragmatic advice (I Corinthians, 7, 9), and in III,iii, Touchstone argues that marriage is society's rationalization of necessity and forcible restraint of a naturally plural instinct:

As the ox hath his bow, sir, the horse his curb,
and the falcon her bells, so man hath his desires,
and as pigeons bill, so wedlock would be nibbling.

(II. 71-73)

Since he has no desire to be 'well married', Touchstone regards Sir Oliver's slack ecumenicalism as a means of escaping from the restricting yoke of marriage. We are not asked to condone Touchstone's morality but to recognize the changes which with time can compromise less than perfect matches. The union of Rosalind and Orlando is a timeless bonding (V,iv, 130), but couples like Touchstone and Audrey are as much a fact of life as 'winter' and 'foul weather' (V,iv, 135).

Moreover - and this, I think, is where the play's most radical effects begin to anticipate the later comedies - Touchstone goes on to suggest that in a less than ideal world it is possible to do good by default:

As horns are odious, they
are necessary. It is said, many a man knows no

end of his goods. Right. Many a man has good
 horns and knows no end of them. Well that is
 the dowry of his wife, 'tis none of his own
 getting. Horns? Even so. Poor men alone?
 No, no. The noblest deer hath them as huge
 as the rascal.

(III,iii, 45-51)

The language remains cryptic but densely suggestive. Given the context, the implication is that despite the manifest dangers, instanced in the tragic misjudgment of Ovid ('the noblest deer')⁸⁸ and perhaps Marlowe, the licence of free expression should remain an article of sexual, religious and artistic faith. In IV,i, Rosalind, chiding Orlando on his tardiness, suggests that she would rather be wooed by a snail - such a creature offers more than Orlando, since he brings his horned 'destiny' with him and thus prevents 'the slander of his wife' (II, 49-59). In her light-hearted banter, Rosalind is facing up to the problem of time's changes and offering a 'safe' solution. Touchstone, by comparison, promotes the values of recklessness and risk-taking. Sure of his Rosalind, Orlando can assert that 'virtue is no horn-maker' (IV,i, 60). Less certain of what the future may hold, Touchstone refuses to 'stagger' in his attempt at marriage. Summoning his 'courage', he reverses Orlando's argument and suggests that even horns can prove virtuous, while defamation is a necessary risk of any creative performance.

The connection between things sexual and things literary forged in the 'fayn-feign' pun, is maintained in the play on 'horns' which unites the cuckold and the Elizabethan horn-book. It is from this basic primer that 'the great feast of language' is concocted in Love's Labour's Lost, where this pun is exploited.⁸⁹ In As You Like It, however, Shakespeare may have had in mind a further play on 'cornua'. For in Ovid's time books were rolls and did indeed have projecting 'horns'. Ovid uses the word in the opening poem of the Tristia (1-8) when he sends his book to an unknown fate in far

away Rome. Such an allusion would certainly add extra 'point' to Touchstone's claim that 'Many a man has good horns and knows no end of them'!

The thrust of Touchstone's argument is that neither the husband nor the artist can anticipate future wrongs. Nor should such wrongs be his responsibility: ''tis none of his own getting'. Unlike Florio, Touchstone is willing to relinquish control over his own 'goods'. The responsibility for meaning is not, in the end, his affair. Like Golding, he shifts the interpretative burden from the author onto his future audiences. In As You Like It, the same strategy is adopted by Jaques when he defends himself against the charge of personal slander and malicious intent in his satires (II,viii, 70ff). However, when Jaques uses this tactic he is side-stepping the issue with which he is actually charged. By choosing this moment to expose the satirist's lascivious past, Shakespeare asks us to question his motives. We are reminded that the argument of reader responsibility could be employed disingenuously, and critics have perhaps been right to detect something of Marston in Jaques' make-up.⁹⁰

Touchstone's argument is similiar in kind but different in spirit. Moreover, the charge of doubt-dealing is avoided precisely because he admits to an element of duplicity in his 'feigning'. It is for this reason that 'honest Ovid' is more than just a contradiction in terms. 'Is the single man therefore blessed?', continues Shakespeare's ersatz Apostle:

No.

As a walled town is more worthier than
a village, so is the forehead of a married
man more honourable than the bare brow of a
batchelor; and by how much defence is better
than no skill, by so much is a horn more
precious than to want.

(II, 51-57).

The 'rose distill'd' is preferred to 'single blessedness' (A Midsummer

Night's Dream, I,i, 76-78) and freedom of expression - with all its attendant risks - is valued more than the barren virtue of silence. Validating his moral position by critical example, Touchstone demonstrates how the horn of cuckoldy can be translated into the horn of plenty. The transition he effects anticipates the metamorphosis described in Amiens' hunting song (IV,ii). Here too, the hunter becomes the hunted (II, 10-11), but the horns which are a mark of dishonour are translated into 'a branch of victory' (1.5):

Take thou no scorn to wear the horn,
 It was a crest ere thou wast born.
 Thy father's father wore it,
 And thy father bore it.
 The horn, the horn, the lusty horn,
 Is not a thing to laugh to scorn.

(II, 14-19).

The song reverses the 'tragic' dénouement of the Actaeon myth. The horned huntsman is decked out 'like a Roman conquerer' (II, 3-4), and a temporary disgrace becomes the price paid for life-giving continuity.

In the Metamorphoses, the dénouement of the Actaeon myth is reversed in the wrestling match between Hercules and the river-god, Achelous (XI, 1ff). Though 'Acheloy' loses the bout, he does not scorn to tell his story, since

to have the worser hand was not so great a shame
 As was the honor such a match to undertake.

(9, 8-9).

Ovid's comic version of the myth thus celebrates the values of effort and good intentions rather than actual achievement, and is emblematic of his own less than heroic art in the Metamorphoses.⁹¹

Shakespeare makes use of precisely this aspect of Ovid's tale in Love's Labour's Lost. The Princess glances at Hercules' mock-heroic labours in her appreciation of the pageant of the 'Worthies':

The comedy presents a wide range of attitudes towards life and literature and invites an equally full range of responses. The libertarian affective stance of 'as you like it' incurs the risk of defamations, but 'as horns are odious, they are necessary'. The interpretative changes ensure that the play will be kept alive.

3. The World 'in little'

Therefore heaven Nature charg'd,
 that one bodie should be fill'd
 With all Graces wide enlarg'd,
 nature presently distill'd
 Helens cheeke, but not his heart,
 Cleopatra's Maiestie:
 Attalanta's better part,
 sad Lucrecia's Modestie.

(III,ii, 138-145; ll.1339-1346)

I give above part of Orlando's 'homily of love' as it appears in the First Folio text of As You Like It. Modern editions invariably regularize l.1343 and print 'her'. My purpose is, in part, to argue for the retention of the masculine pronoun - however perverse this may at first appear - and to suggest a new reading for 'Attalanta's better part', a phrase which has come to be regarded as a crux. More generally, I want to argue for the conceited play of wit in the whole verse tribute, which is not usually regarded as intentionally paradoxical, and to illustrate the affectionate debt which Shakespeare pays to Golding's Ovid.

I begin, however, with a textual problem which has already been addressed in an excellent article by Maura Slattery Kuhn.⁹³ It occurs in the concluding lines of the first stanza of Hymen's song. In the First Folio the lines read: 'That thou mightest joyne his hand with his /Whose heart

within his bosome is' (V,iv, 113-114: ll.2689-2690). Kuhn points out that ever since the Third Folio (1664) editors have emended the pronouns, changing 'the first and sometimes the third "his" to "her"'. Editorial practice has thus ratified a post-Restoration stage tradition: when Rosalind re-enters the final scene, after an off-stage absence of some 78 lines, she is invariably dressed as a woman.

Ms. Kuhn presents a persuasive argument for both the restoration of the F. pronouns and a stage practice which was, she believes, discontinued by the closing of the theatres and their subsequent re-opening with women on the stage. While the Second Folio which appeared 'in the midst of living stage tradition' reprinted the male pronouns, 'the desire of eighteenth century actresses to end the play in their finery' was confirmed by contemporary editorial practise.

The effect of the emendation is to create problems of both staging and dramatic recognition. Kuhn points out that Rosalind's quick change of costume, expedited by modern zippers, would have been a very different matter where Elizabethan points and eyelets were concerned. More importantly, in both modern texts and performances, Orlando is denied his moment of recognition. If the conventional emendation is accepted, 'no where in the text of As You Like It does Orlando realize that the boy he has been wooing is in fact his love'.

If, however, the pronouns as printed in the first two Folios are allowed to stand, various theatrical bonuses follow. Of those listed by Kuhn, the most consequential is that relating to Touchstone's discourse on the forms of the Lie, which occupies most of the time Rosalind is off stage. If she returns very much as she went out, that is dressed as a boy but minus perhaps her hat and her swagger, the effect is an immediate dramatic

fulfilment of Touchstone's prescription:

What we would have is the Lie Direct in person.
 'Good Duke receive thy daughter'. If the daughter's
 garb belies her sex, this is assuredly the Lie Direct.
 Which is unavoidable except 'with an If'...Following
 Hymen's first stanza come line after line of Ifs. (V,iv,
 116-122).

[Arden V,iv, 117-123]⁹⁴

Kuhn's persuasive reading of the play's denouement is, I think, further corroborated if the masculine pronoun in Orlando's verse tribute in III,ii, is similarly allowed to stand. The quintessential 'Rosalind' thus has 'Helen's cheeke, but not his heart'. In support of 'pronoun error', the New Variorum As You Like It cites Neil (ed. 1876): 'The surpassing beauty of feature for which Helena,..the cause of the Trojan war, [was famous] without the "blushless" heart which Homer (iii, 180) gives her'.⁹⁵ If, however, we retain F.'s mismatch of female subject and masculine pronoun, Orlando's verse tribute directly prefigures Rosalind's ambiguous stage presence in V,iv, where Hymen reveals that the masculine appearance is a substitute for the 'daughter' which Rosalind actually is. What we have 'in little' is that tension between the word as name (nomen) and as representation or substitute for name (pronomen) which is itself symbolic of the Poet's role as both maker and imitator⁹⁶ - a thematic concern close to the heart of As You Like It:

Hymen from Heaven brought her,
 Yea brought her hither,
 That thou mightest joyne his hand with his
 Whose heart within his bosome is.

(V,iv, 2687-2690).

Hymen's confirmation of the feminine pronoun in the second line (Yea... 'her') mirrors the incredulity of the assembled company. The ambiguous 'whose', which may have as its antecedent either 'her' (l.2687) or 'his' (l.2689) reinforces the visual confusion, while the repetitious 'his'...

'his'...'his'...'is' adds an oral confirmation to Hymen's marriage conceit of things 'Atone - that is 'at one' - together'.

On reflection, we can see that Orlando's verse in III,ii, more generally anticipates both the monotonal form and the ambiguous sexual content of Hymen's hymn. With respect to III,ii, 99-110; ll.1298-1310, the New Variorum notes: 'The editors have annotated these lines very gingerly. Furness (ed. 1890) perceived that they are a series of more or less indecorous allusions to Rosalind's sexuality, but he wrote his comments in Latin and tucked them away among the textual notes'.⁹⁷ Post-Victorian editors have not been quite so reserved. But neither have they been sufficiently permissive to distinguish the suggestions of bi-sexuality in the lines. The verbal images, however, perfectly complement the dramatic image which Ganymede-Rosalind presents.

The male 'Hart' lacking a female 'Hind' is directed to 'seeke out Rosalinde': the girl dressed as a boy with the 'heart' which is qualified by a masculine pronoun (l.1343). The lines gain resonance from the ubiquitous heart-hart puns in the play and it is significant that at III, ii, 242, F. prints 'Hart' for 'heart', thus identifying Rosalind as the male of the species:

<u>Cel</u>	He was furnish'd like a Hunter.
<u>Ros</u>	O ominous, he comes to kill my Hart.	(ll.1439-1440)

This, and further suggestions of the Actaeon myth, support the ironies of the hunter becoming the hunted, the self seeking out its own image and likeness. At III,ii, 2-10, Orlando casts Rosalind in the role of Diana. But in III,iv, the yearning and waiting Rosalind is very much the victim, and a sardonic Celia makes Orlando the all-too chaste huntress (III, 14-16). D.J. Palmer, who has noted similar visual and aural patterns provided by

the myth of Echo and Narcissus in Twelfth Night, has also characterized the 'mirroring' effect of many of the 'confrontations' in As You Like It: 'Each sees his own image reflected in "true" perspective'.⁹⁸

In Orlando's poem, the hypothesis of the hart and the hind is complemented by a couplet which tells us that 'If the cat will after kind, /So be sure will Rosalind'. As editors have noted, Shakespeare exploits the strong sexual connotations of 'kind', to suggest not only that Rosalind will be true to her own essential nature, but also that this will find expression in the physical act of love ('kind': O.E.D. 3). There is, however, a further play on this complex word, which also suggests that Rosalind-Ganymede is involuntarily drawn to her own likeness, just as Orlando sees a finer reflection of himself in her masculine image.

This notion of 'likeness' is present (in F.) in the final stage image of the two boys holding hands which, as Kuhn points out, is a 're-enactment of the mock-marriage between Ganymede and Orlando in which Ganymede has said: "Give me your hand, Orlando"' (IV,i, 114).⁹⁹ It is similarly hammered home by Orlando's unrelenting rhymes and rhythms - the subject of Touchstone's scathing literary criticism (III,ii, 94-96, 111-112). As in Act V, however, 'the Lie Direct' is avoided: by both this very lack of artistic polish, which keeps us ever aware of the contriving hand of the poet, and by the 'if' which prefaces Orlando's images suggesting the mingling of 'kinds'. We might compare Twelfth Night, where Shakespeare similarly presents Nature drawing things 'to her bias' (V,i, 252), but equally forestalls the ultimate identification of Cesario and Orsino when Viola puts her own prohibition on the actual joining of 'likes' (V,i, 241-245). Shakespeare knew that 'likeness' must not be taken for reality itself, and in the later comedy, All's Well That Ends Well, he is at some pains to distinguish the hypothesis of similitude from the verisimilitude of metaphor.¹⁰⁰

The concluding couplets in the first part of Orlando's poem develop the idea that sexual performance is the only means of discovering love's true nature. The bawdy quibbles on 'nut' (ll. 107-108: O.E.D. 111.15) and 'prick' effect the most daring conjunction of male and female 'kinds' within 'one body', to suggest the sweetness and sting of love's expression:

He that sweetest rose will find
Must find love's prick, and Rosalind.

(ll. 109-110)

The syntax of this last line impressively mimics the wondrous discovery of essential femininity which has been concealed by an external masculine form. Orlando's bawdy unfolds the mystery of Mars and Venus, making the verse itself a discordia concors of the sacred and the profane.¹⁰¹ Here again the poem anticipates both Hymen's speech and Orlando's recognition in the final act of the play.

Orlando's poem also anticipates Oliver's paradoxical description of the 'youth (Orlando) calls his Rosalind':

The boy is fair
Of female favor, and bestows himself
Like a ripe sister.

(IV,iii, 85-87)

This too has been regarded as a textual crux, since 'bestows himself /Like a ripe sister' has been declared 'almost unintelligible'. Consequently the mismatch of pronoun and noun has been regularized, by the emendation 'right forester'.¹⁰² Yet such illogicalities are part and parcel of both the effects and meaning of a play which finds 'much virtue in it'. The verbal incongruity perfectly matches the ambiguous visual image presented by Rosalind-Ganymede. Oliver can repeat Orlando's description without penetrating Rosalind's disguise, since for him it can be understood to mean the youth's solicitous concern for Aliena, which is like that of an older

for a younger sister. At a deeper level, however, we can take the description as a reflection of Orlando's willingness to accept Ganymede in the likeness of a woman. It is because he is willing to suspend disbelief before this fiction, while retaining an awareness that he can not continue to 'live...by thinking' (V,ii, 50), that he is rewarded by the full metaphorical transformation when Ganymede becomes the Rosalind he would have him be. Like Ovid's Iphis and Pygmalion, Orlando is blessed with a healthy imagination. He is able to take part in a dream, but knows that it can be no substitute for the waking world. For Helena, in All's Well That Ends Well, the emotional struggle is far more difficult to resolve. But, since she too must decide whether or not it is possible to 'live by thinking', these are questions to which I want to return in the next chapter.

In As You Like It, III,ii, the cross-chat between Rosalind and Touchstone at 111ff. adds further weight to the suggestions of androgyny in Orlando's verse, through the series of horticultural puns ('infect', 'graff', 'medlar') which express the idea of cross-fertilization and hybridization. Rosalind's proposal to 'graff it with you' (l.115: another ambiguous pronoun) would augment the Clown's motley by a further mingle of male and female. The notion of apparent rottenness being 'right virtue' (the image of the 'medlar' fruit, ll.116-118) is a darker refashioning of Orlando's conceit for physical love, which anticipates Shakespeare's deeply ambivalent view of human sexuality in All's Well That Ends Well.

When Celia takes up the reading of Orlando's verse (III,ii, 122-151), the thought remains highly conceited and the notion of sexual ambiguity all-important. Anticipating Hymen's marriage conceit of 'two in one', Orlando 'peoples' (III,ii, 123 and V,iv, 142) his 'desert' by making 'Rosalind' a wonder who in herself reconciles art and nature, male and female. Her art-

surpassing beauty, commanded by Heaven but effected by Nature, is the 'quintessence of every sprite' (1.136). Like Cleopatra, whose highly equivocal 'majesty' contributes to her making, 'Rosalind' is a natural image of Pan in Proteus. In her the contraries coincide. By suggesting that all her 'many parts' are female, editors have done justice to neither the arcane thought nor the strain of bawdy which are curiously compounded in Orlando's verse tribute. For like Spenser's Venus biformis, 'Rosalind'

hath both kinds in one,
Both male and female, both under one name:
She sire and mother is herself alone,
Begets and eke conceives, nor needeth other none.¹⁰³

In Neo-Platonic thought androgynous form was an image of creation, the many in the one, 'the universal man', and it is this essential 'mystery' which finds expression through the unlikely medium of Orlando's doggerel verse. Thus 'Rosalind', who represents the world 'in little' (1.137) has

Helens cheeke, but not his heart.

This perplexing and paradoxical reading can be supported by two further pieces of external evidence, one from the Sonnets, the other from the Metamorphoses. The New Variorum editor asks us to compare Orlando's image of Helen with that in Sonnet 53:

On Helen's cheek all art of beauty set (1.7)

But the sonnet as a whole is well worth turning up for additional reasons. As even this one line suggests, it is characterized by the interplay of art and nature which is so important in As You Like It. Like Orlando's verse, the sonnet is richly paradoxical and esoteric in its frame of reference and yet down to earth in its redeployment of sonnet lore, so that Leishman takes No.53 as an example of Shakespeare's 'inverted Platonism'.¹⁰⁴ More importantly where Shakespeare's comedy is concerned, the notion of

sexual ambiguity is integral to the conception of the poet's friend as an art-surpassing image of natural plenitude:

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 blessed shape we know.
(11.5-12)

Both Adonis and Helen are recreated in the young man's beauty, even as he 'but one' (1.4) figures forth 'the spring and foison of the year'. As Stephen Booth has shown, the grammatical structure of the sonnet invites us to see both similarity and difference in Adonis and Helen who, like the seasons of the year, are 'two examples of the same thing'.¹⁰⁵ Despite the considerable differences of tone, the poem's riddling paradoxical structure and its central image of androgynous beauty invites comparison with the master-mistress conceit of Sonnet 20 - a poem whose bawdy puns return us to As You Like It (cf. particularly 11.13-14 and III,ii, 109-110).

But if Adonis and Helen together compound a unity from discord which defeats Time of his victories, they also do so singly. Shakespeare had, of course, celebrated the feminine beauty of 'Rose-cheek'd Adonis' in his early poem, fashioning him as a natural wonder - a permanent image of the world's contradictory and evanescent glories. But what of Helen who is more pertinent to our immediate purposes in As You Like It?

It is, I think, no accident, nor simply for the sake of an Irish joke, that at the conclusion of Orlando's verse Rosalind should remind us of Book Fifteen of the Metamorphoses:

I was seven of the nine days out of the wonder
before you came; for look here what I found on
a palm-tree. I was never so berhymed since

Pythagoras' time that I was an Irish rat, which
I can hardly remember.

(III,ii, 171-175)

The common theme of Orlando's 'tedious homily of love' (III,ii, 152) and Pythagoras' seemingly endless discourse on paradoxical change is 'wonder', a word which is repeated by both Celia and Rosalind in the remainder of III,ii. The criticism of Orlando's verse which 'had in them more feet than the verses would bear' (ll. 162-163) is a further reminder of Golding's 'fourteeners'. And Rosalind's reference to palm trees in Arden (like Celia's inversion of the proverbial saw about men and mountains (ll. 181-183) is a celebration of the artistic Impossibiliae which are enfranchised by Pythagoras' proof of natural miracles.¹⁰⁶

Shakespeare invites us to add the names of Rosalind and Orlando to Pythagoras' list of natural wonders. For the connection which Ovid forges between mythical and natural change is repeated throughout Arden, where branches and sentences are syntactically confused (III,ii, 132-134) and 'Rosalind' is 'spoken' by every palm tree in literalizing fulfilment of Duke Senior's metaphor (III,ii, 124, 172-173; II,ii, 16-17). The planting of exotic flora and fauna in an English forest, which has so perplexed literal-minded critics of Shakespeare's play, is, in fact, anticipated by Golding, who in a characteristic expansion places the fabulous phoenix, either

Uppon a Holmetree [that is, a holm-oak] or uppon a
Date tree...

(15. 437)

Ovid, himself, had merely specified 'the top-most branches of a waving palm' (XV. 396), but in a fortuitous illustration of Pythagoras' whole theme, his English translator brings the marvelous closer to home.

Golding often fills out his 'fourteeners' with expressions of astonish-

ment which, though true to the spirit of the Metamorphoses, are strictly superfluous to Ovid's text. Gordon Braden sees this as the combined effect of Golding's chosen metre and his basic 'diffidence' towards his material: 'both respecting and diffusing someone's attempt to impress'.¹⁰⁷ If the effect is incremental, these features are still further augmented in Orlando's verse which is, I think, Shakespeare's affectionate tribute to Golding. It is that same quality of astonishment, a more innocent exaggeration of Ovid's pose of wide-eyed naivety, that Celia parodies in her

O wonderful, wonderful! And most wonderful,
wonderful! And yet again wonderful! And
after that out of all whooping.

(III,ii, 188-190)

But the last laugh is, of course, on Celia. By her 'sudden' love for Oliver she proves indeed that there are 'greater wonders than that' (V,ii, 27). By the same token, Shakespeare's purpose is not to mock Golding, but rather to show how his translation has served as a positive intermediary between past and present, the esoteric and the ordinary. His 'Englishing' of Ovid is a perfect illustration of Florio's image of translation as 'Pythagoras his Metempsychosis'.¹⁰⁸ The changes are what keep the original alive. In his apology for the translator's art, Samuel Daniel similarly finds that a great original does not suffer when it is transformed into a different language:

Wrap Excellencie up never so much,
In Hieroglyphicques, Ciphers, Coracters,
And let her speake never so strange a speech
Her Genius yet finds apt deciphers.¹⁰⁹

It is just this quality in the 'after-life' of a fine original which Shakespeare celebrates and himself renews in As You Like It.

The demands of Golding's chosen metre have further consequences which

are pertinent to III,ii of Shakespeare's play - and this is where we come to the curiously bisexual Helen. In the Metamorphoses, Pythagoras concludes his list of natural wonders by comparing the self-generating phoenix to the sex-changing 'Hyen' which,

interchangeably...one whyle dooth remayne
A female and another whyle becommeth male againe.
(15. 451-452)¹¹⁰

Some thirty lines later Golding adds formal weight to Ovid's description of androgynous creatures, when metrical exigencies compel him to use the common name 'Helen' for both Helen of Troy and Helenus, the brother of Troilus, who thus becomes 'The prophet Helen, Priams sonne' (15. 483).

The indeterminate sexual status which results from this fusion of Helen and Helenus (repeated at 15. 500; cf. 15. 255) seems to have taken Shakespeare's fancy, for he exploited the ambiguity again in the song of Lavache in All's Well That Ends Well.¹¹¹ What may have delighted him is the fortuitous way the Pythagorean theme of changeful continuity, as reflected in Golding's metamorphosed Ovid, curiously matches the strange fortunes of Helenus, himself. For in The Aeneid, the Trojan warrior-priest is indeed reborn, enjoying an extraordinary second life as a Grecian king. His is a rare and curious history, which Aeneas finds 'a strange tale almost beyond belief' (III, 294). The image of paradoxical recreation, from female to male, from Trojan to Greek, is renewed in Sonnet 53, where Shakespeare celebrates the miraculous nature of the beloved who, in himself, reconciles all differences and ultimately transcends all changes by his 'constant heart' (l. 14).

The image of a human microcosm returns us to Orlando's creation of 'Rosalind', and brings us finally to 'Atalanta's better part' (III,iii, 144). 'Atalanta' is perplexing in much the same way as 'Helen', since here too a

single name represents more than one person, and the fact that there are two Atalantas in the Metamorphoses has complicated discussions of what Shakespeare might have meant by her 'better part'.

In some ways the two can be quite clearly distinguished. It is obviously the second, better known, Atalanta who is intended at III,ii, 272, when Jaques takes her fleet-footedness to characterize Orlando's 'nimble wit'. There are, however, significant continuities between the story of this Atalanta (Metamorphoses, X, 500ff/ 10, 648ff), which serves Venus as an admonition to Adonis on the dangers of the hunt, and the earlier story of the huntress who helps Meleager (VIII, 260ff/ 8, 343ff).¹¹² The situation of the boar-hunt is, itself, a constant, while both chases conclude with a goring which Ovid uses to point up the suggestions of ambivalent sexuality in the tales.

It is this last aspect of the stories which is most pertinent to Orlando's verse in As You Like It. In the inset story of 'Venus and Adonis' Ovid lingers over Atalanta's epicene beauty, which is fully revealed by the race. While Hippomenes admires the androgynous forma of the girl, she in turn is captured by just the same admixture of male and female in him (10. 742). Venus, the narrator of the tale, uses Atalanta's equivocal charms to refract simultaneously both her own beauty and that of Adonis:

But when
He [Hippomenes] saw her face and bodye bare (for why the Lady then
Did strippe her to her naked skin) the which was like to myne,
Or rather (if that thou wert made a woman) like to thyne:
He was amazde...

(10. 672-676)

In the tale of the first Atalanta, the motif of sexual ambivalence is even more pronounced. Ovid's style is wittily paradoxical. The face of the huntress strikes Meleager as:

virgineam in puero, puerilem in virgine.

(VIII, 323).

Labouring to keep up, Golding translates:

...such as in a Boy might be cald a Wenches face,
And in a Wench be cald a Boyes.

(8, 434-435)

But he is innocent of the double-entendre in Meleager's expression of love:

'O felix, siquem dignabitur' inquit
'ista virum!'

('O happy man', he said, 'if ever that maiden
shall deem any man worthy to be hers')

(VIII, 326-327; cf. 8, 440-441)

which is suggestive of Rosalind's riddling promise to marry Phoebe, 'if ever I marry woman' (V,iii, 114).

When the chase gets under way, Atalanta is simply the best man among the callow youths who participate in Ovid's mock-heroic version of the Calydonian boar-hunt.¹¹³ The 'heroes' fail miserably to spear the beast, but Atalanta's arrow is right on target (X, 381-383/10, 508-511). Meleager accordingly rewards her accomplishment with the promise of honours usually reserved for a man:

'meritum' dixisse 'feres virtutis honorem' (VIII, 387)

'For this thy valiant act due honour shalt thou have' (8, 515).

Anderson underlines the ironies which, if not so linguistically pointed, are not entirely lost in Golding's translation:

The short speech inserts the key ironic term of the whole episode: virtutis. The girl is to be honored for ability befitting a man: vir-tus.¹¹⁴

Atalanta, in short, emasculates her companions. Meleager's recognition leads to scenes of high comedy, as the youths scramble to recover their lost pride:

The men did blush, and cheering up each other courage gave
 With shouting, and disorderly their Darts by heaps they threw.
 (8, 516-517)

The boar hunt is transformed into a battle of the sexes, as the boastful Ancaeus sets out to show

... what difference is betwixt
 A wench's weapons and a man's.
 (8, 522-523)

Ancaeus addresses his challenge to Diana (the Goddess of Chastity, as well as the hunt) who released the boar on Calydon. The heavy sexual ironies are further underlined when Ancaeus is gored in the groin, and the boar makes its own comment on his vaunted masculinity. When, in a transposed key, the same motif recurs in the tale of Venus and Adonis, the sexual implications of the goring are less explicit (X, 713-716/ 10, 836-840). It is part of Ovid's technique to simply refer to an idea which has been fully developed elsewhere in the poem, relying on his audience to make the connections. In Shakespeare's Venus and Adonis, however, the sexual implications of the goring are clearly pronounced. In using the incident to point up both Adonis' essential femininity and the aggression of Venus (cf. particularly, ll, 1051-1054, 1105-1118), Shakespeare would seem to have drawn on his memory of both Ovidian sequences.¹¹⁵

The Calydonean boar-hunt is finally concluded by the hunting skills of Meleager. However, his determination to share both the spoils and the honour with Atalanta provokes more outrage from the youths, who continue to resent a girl's usurpation of their masculine deserts (VIII, 433/ 8, 569-571).

The most common gloss for 'Atalanta's better part' (if it is accepted that swiftness of foot is inappropriate in the context of Orlando's verse) is either her beauty, or her chastity. Thus, for example, Agnes Latham

cites Pliny on Atalanta's 'modest and chaste countenance'.¹¹⁶ In the Metamorphoses, however, it is precisely these 'maidenly' qualities which are most questionable, whichever Atalanta we may wish to invoke. The second Atalanta story, following those of Medea, Myrrha and Byblis, occurs in the context of tales about 'girls overwhelmed by unallowable passion who earn punishment by lust' (X, 153-154).¹¹⁷ At the same time, the highly equivocal beauty of the heroine mirrors the girlish immaturity of Adonis as well as the doubtful charms of Venus, the teller of the tale. When we turn to the huntress who helps Meleager, we find that not only is her beauty similarly androgynous, but her essential quality nothing less than a masculine virtus. Her 'honour' is certainly not in doubt. But, as used in this tale, the word has less to do with feminine modesty than martial and sexual aggression!

In sum, I am suggesting that 'Atalanta's better part' is, at least, in part, a bawdy quibble which, in the spirit of As You Like It, Shakespeare invites us to take which way we will. Like the name 'Helen', the phrase embraces both male and female, even as it yokes together art and nature, the profane and the sacred. For 'the better part of mee' is also the phrase which Ovid uses for his Time-defeating art (15, 989) and Shakespeare for the beloved who reflects his own finer, more enduring qualities (Sonnets 39 and 74)¹¹⁸ and in himself reconciles all differences.

Orlando's verse tribute to 'Rosalind' is a tissue of paradoxes. Even the way Lucretia's name is introduced (III,ii, 145) is something of a contradiction in terms. The epithet 'sad' virtually cancels 'modesty', by asking us to picture Lucrece after the rape when, however involuntarily, she is chaste no more. In his own version of the story, Shakespeare had stressed her lost integrity and shown that Lucrece, no less than Tarquin, becomes passion's slave (see, particularly, The Rape of Lucrece, ll. 1153, 1195-1196).

The roll-call of Helen, Cleopatra, Atalanta and Lucretia thus seems designed to question those very qualities which Orlando intends to commend. His summary of this world 'in little' is no less equivocal:

Thus Rosalind of many parts
 By heavenly synod was devis'd,
 Of many faces, eyes and hearts,
 To have the touches dearest priz'd.

(III,ii, 146-149)

'Rosalind' is a living emblem of nature's contradictory beauty and rich variety as mirrored in the world of words. As employed here, 'touches' wavers between the neutral meaning of 'distinguishing quality', 'characteristic' or 'trait' (O.E.D. 18) and the pejorative sense of 'blemish', 'stain' or 'taint' (O.E.D. 17).¹¹⁹ 'Touches dearest priz'd' is, in fact, another near paradox, aptly qualifying both the form and the content of Orlando's impure verse, which might be seen to take its inspiration from Golding's Ovid. 'Cleopatra's majesty' may thus finally be taken as symbolic of the whole: in art as in nature, it is the defect that makes for perfection.

Chapter VI

'DOUBTFULL WORDES' : ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

*The doubtfull wordes whereof they scan and canvas to and fro.
Which done, Prometheus sonne began by counsell wise and sage
His cousin germanes fearfulnessse thus gently to asswage:
Well, eyther in these doubtfull words is hid some misterie,
Whereof the Gods permit us not the meaning to espie,
Or questionlesse and if the sence of inward sentence deeme
Like as the tenour of the words apparantly doe seeme,
It is no breach of godlynesse to doe as God doth bid.
I take our Graundame for the earth, the stones within hir hid
I take for bones, these are the bones the which are meaned here.
Though Titans daughter at this wise conjecture of hir fere
Were somewhat movde, yet none of both did stedfast credit geve,
So hardly could they in their heartes the heavenly hestes beleve.*

(Ovid, Metamorphoses, 1, 460-472)

*Quelque diversite d'herbes qu'il y ait, tout s'enveloppe sous
le nom de salade.*

(Montaigne, 'De Noms')

*...The mother rejoiced in the name, for it was of a common
gender and she could use it without deceit. And so the trick,
begun with a pious fraud, remained undetected.*

(Ovid, Metamorphoses, IX, 709-711)

A lie is the wilful utterance of an articulate falsehood.

(St. Augustine, De Mendacio)

In his essay, De Noms, Messire Michel Seigneur de Montaigne, Chevalier de l'Ordre du Roy et Gentilhomme Ordinaire de sa Chambre, Maire et Gouverneur de Bordeaux, considers the insubstantial glory of names.¹ His subject is the social problems caused by the slippery nature of language; the refusal of the word to retain a unique form or be bound to any singular object. Subject to transforming errors of transcription within a single tongue and readily 'metamorphosing' across languages, proper names suffer further 'mutation' in the contemporary practice of naming 'everyman by

the name of his Towne, Manor, Hamlet, or Lordship'.² In France, there is no way of distinguishing between the younger brother of 'a good house', who has been 'known and honoured' under a given Lordship, and the 'stranger' who subsequently inherits the same estate and title. Blood lines have been further obfuscated by the technique of grafting new shoots onto illustrious old stock. The 'most obscure houses' and 'the basest upstart' raised by Fortune to a sudden eminence now have 'ajoyned' to them 'genealogicall titles new and unknowne to their fathers'. In this way, the original of the royal stock has long been obscured, with more gentlemen claiming royal descent than those who do not! If surnames are unreliable signifiers of nobility, 'Crests, Armes, and Coats have no more certaintie'. The heraldic symbols which purport to confirm identity can, in practice, be transferred from family to family or be purchased by the highest bidder. 'There is nothing wherein meet so many alterations and so much confusion'.

Montaigne's portrait of a society in flux leads him to a question at the heart of linguistic philosophy:

Let us somewhat narrowly search into, and for God's sake consider, on what foundation we ground this glorie and reputation, for which the world is turned topsie-turvie. On what do we establish this transitorie renoune, which with so great mind-possessing toyle and industrie we seeke and gape after?

What captures Montaigne's imagination, as it captures Hamlet's, is the disjuncture between the individual and his renown. In the end, can 'Peter' or 'William' be said in any sense to be related to their own reputation? 'Peter' and 'william' are, after all, 'but a word for al mouths...or three or foure dashes of a pen'. Given the variety of forms by which an individual is represented, the question is not even, 'What's in an name?', but, 'What's in a letter?': is it 'Guesquin, or Glesquin, or Gueaquin' who should be honoured for his martial victories? Moreover, since names are the common property of different families, races, countries and ages, with

history recording 'five Platoes' and 'eight Aristotles', what is there to prevent the 'horse-boy' from styling himself 'Pompey the Great?' The question should be put even more curiously, for in the final reckoning what does distinguish the groom and the triumvir:

.....after all, what means, what devices are there that annex into my horse-keeper deceased, or that other who had his head cut off in Aegypt, or that joyne unto them this glorified and far-renowned word, and these pen-dashes so much honoured, that they may thereby advantage themselves?

The introduction of Hamlet's long perspective signals the close of Montaigne's minute speculation. He ends the essay with the sardonic reflection that praise cannot touch the dead; only the living are 'tickled with the pleasure' of the poet's commendatory epitaphs. Fondly deceiving themselves that they will in turn win fame, the present generation chooses to forget that not virtue, itself, but the 'thirst to be praised' was the original motivating force behind the martial achievements of the past. In Montaigne's ironic analysis, honour is thus a self-consuming artefact. Born of language, it remains in the service of words, and has no existence outside the present mouthing of them.³

As a moralist, then, Montaigne readily distinguishes 'the vanity of words':

We are all hollow and empty, and it is not with breath and words we should fill our selves. We have need of a more solide substance to repaire our selves. An hunger starved man might be thought most simple, rather to provide himselfe of a faire garment, then of a good meales-meate: We must runne to that, which most concerneth us. (Florio's italics)⁴

Here, in 'De la Gloire', as throughout the closely related 'De Noms', the insubstantiality of words is underlined by the use of 'voix' as a deflationary synonym for 'nom'.⁵ It is a technique which Shakespeare exploits to great dramatic effect: in Falstaff's speech on honour; in Coriolanus where political power is seen to rest on 'voices';⁶ and in All's Well That Ends

Well, where human 'breath' is the bar to divine wisdom (II,i, 148) and Parolles, a 'nut' without a 'kernel' whose soul 'is his clothes' (II,v, 43-44), is the personification of Montaigne's 'hollow man'.⁷

As a literary artist, however, Montaigne is no less ready than Shakespeare's clowns to exploit the polysemic nature of words. If a great variety of herbs can be 'shuffled up together' under the name of salad, a similar range of material can be subsumed under the present catch-all title. The culinary observation which opens 'Of Names' is also a metaphor for the artistic strategy of Montaigne's essay, which is 'a gallymafry of divers articles'. The philosopher's curse - the generous, accommodating character of words - is the creative artist's blessing. Well aware that he is, as it were, biting the hand that feeds him, Montaigne is ready to acknowledge the inherent contradictions in his role of writer and moralist. 'Tant de paroles pour les paroles seules!' he exclaims in 'De La Vanité', protesting that he is not fooling when he recommends the introduction of coercive laws to inhibit 'scribblers', just as there are laws to contain 'vagabonds and idlers'.⁸ The coincidence of political instability and a mania for the 'busie idleness' of literary activity is a recurrent theme in the Essays. 'When', asks Montaigne, 'did the Romans fill so many volumes as in the times of their ruine?'.⁹ Like Shakespeare, he sees an intimate relationship between the hollow currency of language and the credulity of 'the common multitude'; the malleability of words and the pliant mettle of the people. Thus eloquence flourished in Rome 'when the commonwealths affaires have beene in worst estate, and the devouring Tempest of civill broyles, and intestine warres did most agitate and turmoyle them'.¹⁰

The contradictions in the writer's position are further reflected in 'Of Names' by Montaigne's dialectical method of enquiry into the status of language. Despite its deeply ironic conclusion, the essay opens with

instances of the integrity of name and object and concessions to the power of the word. Montaigne cautions parents to name their offspring with care, since there is some evidence to suggest that name is fortune. Certain royal names - Henry in England, Charles in France - would seem to have proved historically ill-fated. Other names would seem to possess an inherent virtue. A simple articulation of the name, 'Marie', is said to have transformed the life of a dissolute young man. At the sound of the Blessed Virgin's name on the lips of the young 'wench' he had persuaded to lie with him, the 'libertine' is instantly reborn. The 'vocal and auricular correction', concludes Montaigne, 'strucke right into his soule'. The church of Notre Dame la Grand at Poitiers, built to commemorate the youth's conversion, is thus a monument to the metamorphic potential in language. In this instance, indeed, the word proves to be 'a spell of much power' (Coriolanus, V,ii, 92).

Corroborative evidence of the moral efficacy of 'voix' is provided by the Pythagorean story of a group of young men who, 'being somewhat heated with feasting and drinking', were conspiring to 'go and ravish a chaste house'. The plot is intercepted and their ardour cooled when Pythagoras orders the minstrels to (literally) change their tune: 'and so by Solemne, grave, severe, and spondaicall kinde of musicke, did sweetly inchaunt, allay, and in-trance their rash, violent, and law-lesse lust'.¹¹ This ancient testimony to the transforming power of music complements Montaigne's modern instances of linguistic change. The disparate ingredients in his literary ragout variously attest to the centrality of the metamorphosis motif in De Noms.

The ambiguous ground which the writer-as-moralist occupies may be instanced instanced in one final anecdote from 'Of Names':

Was it not pretily said, and with a good grace, by one of my friends? There was a great companie bandied together about a quarell which a Gentleman had with another, who in

very truth had some prerogative of titles, honours, and allegiances above the common sort of Nobilitie; upon which word of his prerogative, every one seeking to equall himselfe unto him, alleaged, some one of-spring, some another, some the resemblance of his name, some of his armes, other-some an old far-fetcht pedigree, and the meanest of them to be the great grand-child of some King beyond the seas. When they came all to dinner, this man, whom hitherto they had all followed, in lieu of taking his wanted place, making low-lowting reverences, went to the lowest end of the board, entreating the companie to hold him excused, that through rash-unadvisednesse he had hitherto lived with them companion-like, but now being lately enformed of their right qualities, he began to know them according to their ancient degrees, and that it did not duly belong unto him to sit above so many Princes. And after he had acted his play, he began to raile upon them with a thousand injuries; saying thus unto them. For the love of God content yourselves, with what your forefathers have bene contented, and with the state whereto God hath called us (cf. Fr: et de ce que nous sommes): we have sufficient if we can maintaine it well, let us not disparage the fortune and condition of our predecessors; and reject we these fond imaginations, which cannot faile any man, whatsoever he be, that is so impudent as to alleage them.¹²

The story told by Montaigne's 'friend' is a projection of the deep anomalies in his own position as an essayist. The man who rails against the folly and duplicity of fine-sounding names exploits those very properties of language in acting out his own morality play. Advocating that the name be eschewed in favour of 'the thing itself', Montaigne's speaker is totally dependant on that capacity of language which enables him to say (pace Swift) 'the thing which is not'. As an immediate ironic pose, his Gulliver-like deference is at odds with his larger deflationary purpose. Castigating pretension, he becomes the chief actor in an imaginary charade and finds himself forced to lie.

II

Before turning to All's Well That Ends Well, I want to begin again, this time from a story in the Metamorphoses. Like 'Of Names', Ovid's narrative can, I believe, be used to illuminate Shakespeare's play.

The story of Iphis and Ianthe will also serve to recall the linguistic issues raised in earlier chapters.

In the Metamorphoses, the Iphis story is one of a series on the theme of impossible loves, which are further connected by the motif of speciosaque nomina (VII, 69) - 'gay titles' (7, 99), as Golding has it.¹³ The story immediately follows and is contrasted with the tale of Byblis, whose impossible love for her brother is cast as a 'tragedy' of lawless passion. In turn, it is followed by Orpheus' account of his own doomed love for Eurydice, and the thematically connected stories of Pygmalion and Myrrha, for which he is the narrator. Ovid's skilful deployment of Orpheus maximizes the linguistic self-consciousness of all these tales, and underlines his use of nomen as a unifying motif in the group.¹⁴ Pleading to the gods for the return of Eurydice, Orpheus protests that he is 'putting aside all false and doubtful speech' and telling 'the simple truth' ('falsi positis ambagibus oris vera loqui sinitis', X, 19-20). While Ovid savours the contradictions in the poet's pose as a man of truth,¹⁵ he points up a recurrent theme of these linked stories: the opportunities for duplicity inherent in language itself. As in All's Well, we are made aware of the near impossibility of speaking 'acutely' (I,i, 204), while 'doubtfull words' (7, 1065: vocibus ambiguis, VII, 821) are presented as both the curse of humanity and its blessing.

The story of Iphis (IX, 666ff/9, 787ff) is introduced as a Cretan 'wonder' which displaces the general amazement occasioned by the history of Byblis' unnatural passion. It concerns the birth of a child to humble but honest parents. The wife, Telethusa, is commanded by her husband, Ligdus, to practise infanticide, should the unthinkable happen and the yet unborn child prove to be a girl. However, the goddess Iris appears to Telethusa in a dream, advising her to disobey her husband and preserve

the child, whatever its sex. Ovid makes it clear that the morality of the situation is far from simple. Ligdus is characterized as a compassionate, religious man, who demands an irreligious act of his wife while praying to the gods that it need never happen. Telethusa is shown as a respectful and pious woman, who, to keep faith, must deceive her husband and her friends.

At this stage in the story, the counterpointing with the previous tale becomes important. As we have seen, 'Byblis' is a tale rich in moral and linguistic paradoxes.¹⁶ At times, it seems to suggest Macbeth, a play in which the word is put to 'uncreating' purposes and the witches are involved in 'a deed without a name' (IV,i, 49). When first she conceives her unnatural desires, Byblis wants to enjoy her brother only in her imagination. She longs to go on dreaming, so long as 'I awake doo still me undefylde keepe' (9, 569). However, she is soon unable to banish the 'foule filthy fyre' (9, 606) of her desires and, like Macbeth, she commits herself to a waking nightmare.

The course which Telethusa follows is very different. Caught in an emotional impasse between duty to her husband and love for the unborn child, she chooses to meet the impossible situation with hope and with prayer. Where Byblis acts to make her dream a reality, Telethusa raises her 'innocent hands' and prays that her vision might prove true (IX, 701-703/9, 829-830).¹⁷ More specifically, where Byblis had attempted to hide her illicit love under 'the sweet names of brother and sister' (IX, 558),¹⁸ Telethusa exploits linguistic ambiguity to avoid rather than practise impiety. When her husband calls the girl-child 'Iphis', she rejoices in the sexually ambivalent name. It allows her to perpetuate an initial untruth about the gender of the child without further deceit:

.....Joyfull was the moother of the same,
Bycause the name did serve alike to man and woman bothe,
And so the lye through godly guile forth unperceyved gothe.
(9, 835-838)

Although formally Telethusa's verbal sleight of hand corresponds exactly to the moral casuistry that Medea, Byblis and Myrrha practise by similarly exploiting linguistic doubleness,¹⁹ we are asked to see it as essentially different in kind. Ovid presents Telethusa's 'lie' as an act of faith: a 'pious fraud' (pia mendacia fraude, IX, 711).

That it is the spirit of Telethusa's deception which is all important is made clear at the climax of the story. When the grown Iphis falls in love with Ianthe, another girl, her love is essentially as misconceived as that of Medea for her father's enemy, Byblis for her brother, or Myrrha for her father. Yet (in Bottom's words) 'Reason and love keep little company'. What engages Ovid's attention is the contradiction common to all those passions: the paradox that the impossible nature of the love is what keeps it alive, testifying to its intensity and its curious kind of purity:

Iphis loves whereof she thinkes she may not bee
Partaker, and the selfesame thing augmenteth still her flame.
(9, 851-852).

The dénouement of the Iphis story may condition the way we read and understand the myth, but the humanity of the Metamorphoses is manifest in Ovid's desire to show the continuities between tragedy and comedy in this coincidence of forms.

Where Iphis parts company from Ovid's 'tragic' heroines is that (like her maker) she engages in linguistic and physical deceits while holding fast to the concept of difference: between the sexes; between word and object; between appearance and reality; between her dream and the waking world. Struggling with the same opposing impulses, Iphis rehearses in soliloquy the arguments which Byblis had used before her. But where the latter had adduced examples to support the union of 'likes' ('the gods have loved their sisters', IX, 497), Iphis forces herself to acknowledge that in all

of nature it is opposites which are drawn together. Where Myrrha will support her own incestuous love by arguing that animals mate at will among their own kin (X, 326ff), Iphis reminds herself that, though 'The Ram delyghts the Eawe' and 'The Stag the Hynde', 'A Cow is never fond / Upon a Cow, nor Mare on Mare' (9, 859-861). Unlike Byblis, who wants to change her name in order to deny her nature (IX, 487-488), Iphis, whose name already licenses permissiveness, resists self-deception and recognizes that nature's implacable laws are stronger than her own desires (IX, 758-759/9, 891-892).

At a critical point in their desire and deception, Iphis and Telethusa hold back. Like Pygmalion, who dare not ask Venus for 'yoon same wench of Ivory', but who prays instead for a wife 'leeke / My wench of Ivory' (10, 298-300), both mother and daughter are unwilling to cross the dangerous divide between similitude and the full metamorphic translatio. Where Medea, Myrrha, and Byblis use 'fair-seeming names' (speciosaque nomina, VII, 69) to 'confound the ryghts of name and kin' (10, 383-384), Iphis knows that 'likeness' to reality must not be taken for reality itself, and that, as Deucallion and Pyrrha discover, 'doubtfull words' can also enshrine fundamental verities.

How then is the tale of Iphis to end? On the one side, is Iphis with her passionate unchanging love for Ianthé, a love which has been 'frankly and freely' (9, 888-889) supported by the gods. On the other, is nature with its equally changeless iron law of opposites. Can the gods and nature be reconciled? Can the dream of Iphis survive in the everyday world? Iphis, herself, has already concluded that even the ingenuity of Daedalus would fail in this case. Ovid has, as it were, deliberately written himself into an impasse. If he is to conclude the narrative, his 'conning crafts' (9, 873) must surpass those of the infamous high-flyer!

The way out of the impossible situation in which both the characters and author find themselves is via a typical piece of Ovidian trickery. At once honest and dishonest, a sublime discovery and a cheap confidence trick, the deus ex machina resolution is 'a pious fraud'. The slow-motion transformation of Iphis as she leaves the temple - her hair growing shorter and her stride longer with every step - is designed to win our admiration. The fabulous and incredible nature of the event is complicated, however, by the fact that, as G. Karl Galinsky points out, Ovid chose to make Isis 'a contemporary and worshipped goddess, the deity who works the miracle'.²⁰ In any event, the wider narrative context - the telling of the tale itself, and the manner in which Ovid plays his trump card - all ensure that 'Iphis and Ianthe' is anything but the 'simple miracle tale' it has been taken for.²¹ We have been shown that questions of belief are quite complex. As Galinsky says, 'What is incredible to the sophisticated reader is quite possible to the faithful, such as Iphis' mother. Ovid, as so often, has it both ways...'.²²

The eleventh hour transformation of Iphis is a reversal of the process whereby 'Ganymede' becomes Rosalind, the girl Orlando would have 'him' be. The dénouement requires exactly the same kind of faith on the part of both the participants and the audience to the event, and, indeed, it turns on the same 'keeping of the word' (As You Like It, IV,v, 19). The intercession of the goddess is a direct response to the prayers of mother and daughter (IX, 770-781/9, 904-918), who, even at this late stage, petition, rather than sue for grace. In return for her aid, Isis is presented with a votive tablet which bears the inscription: 'The vows that Iphis vowed a wench he hath performed a lad (9, 933). The riddling language, like the conceits which characterize Telethusa's lie, expresses a complex truth and is not a wilful attempt to obfuscate reality.

The tale ultimately comes to rest on a note which we have seen to be thoroughly characteristic of the Metamorphoses:

Next morrow over all the world did shine with lightsome flame,
When Juno, and Dame Venus, and Sir Hymen joyntly came
To Iphys marriage, who as then transformed to a boay
Did take Ianthee to his wife, and so her love enjoy.
(9, 934-937).

The gods attend the wedding-feast, but priority is given - syntactically at least - to the natural world, with whose changes the linguistic ordering of the tale has kept faith.

III

In his Epistle, Golding offers no direct comment on the tale of Iphis and Ianthe. Sandys, however, summarizes the exegetical tradition in reading the myth as a demonstration of divine power:

By this the Ancients declared, that man should despair of nothing; since althings were in the power of the Gods to give; and give they what was justly implored.²³

John Lyly's employment of the myth in Gallathea had supported this reading, underlining dramatically the emphasis of Sandys' last clause:

Essentially, the allegorical meaning of Gallathea is the transition from fear, deceit and conflict to harmony under the aegis of destiny, which expands as the transition is effected. As the god has remarked, in an earlier soliloquy, 'Neptune should have beene entreated, not cosened'. When he is entreated, harmony is achieved.²⁴

In the final act of Lyly's play, the impossible love of Gallathea and Phillida is made possible precisely because Neptune's words have been heeded: Venus, who effects the necessary change of sex, has been 'entreated, not cosened'. The dénouement is anticipated in the play's central acts by Lyly's skilful uses of the disguise motif. A dramatic contrast between legal and illicit forms of deception demonstrates that, where disguise is concerned, the spirit of intention is all important.

Lyly's adaptation of mythic narrative in Gallathea is theatrically compelling and in many ways highly sophisticated. His curiously conservative Ovidianism is, however, as much a sympathetic reaction to the allegorical tradition of interpretation as a direct response to Ovid's individual telling of the Iphis myth.²⁵ As I have suggested, both Ovid's handling of the story itself and his skilful deployment of the myth in a larger narrative context, ensures that his version accommodates wider and more purely secular interpretations than the stress on divine justice in both Sandys and Lyly would seem to allow.

John Florio's allusion to the tale of Iphis in the preliminaries to A Worlde of Wordes (1598) is of help and interest here. The myth recommends itself to Florio because, in dedicating the Italian dictionary to his noble patrons, he chances upon a masculine image to characterize his work and explain its nature. The dictionary is 'a helpful retainer', who will 'lend a hand over a stile', hold 'a torch in a dark waie', and so on. The personification prompts Florio to reflect that some might take exception to his adoption of the 'male sexe' for a dictionary,

sithens, as our Italians saie, Le parole sono feminine,
e i fatti sono maschii, Wordes they are women, and deeds
they are men...²⁶

Florio rejects the proverb, however. The masculine gender, he feels, best characterizes his 'off-spring': 'his strength, his stature, and his masculine vigor (I would, naie I coulde saie vertue)'. His recourse is to the Iphis myth which permits him to reconcile male and female, word and deed:

.....But let such know that Detti and fatti, wordes and deeds with me are all of one gender. And although they were commonly Feminine, why might not I by strong imagination (which Phisicions give so much power unto), alter their sexe? Or at least by such heaven-pearing devotion as transformed Iphis, according to that description of the poet.²⁷

Florio's playful (though some might say ponderous) application

of the Iphis myth turns the religious orientation of traditional readings in new and secular directions. 'Heaven-pearcing devotion' now qualifies the writer's responsible employment of his imaginative gift. In short, his artistic integrity. To this extent, Florio's pragmatic application of the myth realizes the larger possibilities of Ovid's narrative and Lyly's drama, pushing the Iphis story further in the direction of All's Well That Ends Well. The heady confidence with which Florio assumes that, by fiat, he can totally unite word and deed is, however, totally antithetical to Ovid's narrative persona and destroys the delicate balance on which his Iphis story comes to rest. Though it can be excused by the decorum of literary dedication, Florio's hubristic overstatement fails to acknowledge that to 'entreat and not cozen' is as much an authorial constraint, as a thematic consideration. It is the means by which the writer, as well as his characters, saves his soul. What is absent from Florio's attitude is precisely that diffidence before the object of his creation which Ovid projects in Deucallion and Pyrrha, Pygmalion, Telethusa and Iphis. Praising the 'vertue' of his 'off-spring;', Florio describes the writer's pious intention, but his proprietorial attitude disables him from recognizing the fraudulent effects which are a consequence of all linguistic endeavour. He lacks the humility to appreciate that word and deed do not inevitably coincide, and that the two senses of the verb 'to mean' can be at loggerheads. What is signified is not necessarily what is intended.

Before turning to All's Well That Ends Well, it is worth underscoring Ovid's quite different, astringent analysis of poetic duplicity, and the humility which is present in his stories of impossible loves. 'Humility' is a word which seem to assort oddly with a poet so often perceived as an egoist. I have suggested, however, that it is this quality which is refracted in his merciless portrait of Ulysses, and is also mirrored in the juxtaposed stories which are thematically linked by nomen. The humanity

of the Metamorphoses is located in the continuities persisting between the essentially contrasted stories of Pygmalion and Myrrha, Iphis and Byblis, Cephalus and Medea. The linguistic bind is most marked in the case of the first pair. In terms of appearance, Pygmalion's longing entreaty for 'one like my ivory maid' is indistinguishable from Myrrha's attempt to cozen her father by asking for 'one like you', as a suitor. The coincidence of forms is absolute. The comedic ending to the artist's story turns on the sympathetic understanding of Venus, who 'knew what that prayer meant' (X, 278). As the obvious similarities between the two stories suggest, the generosity which Venus extends to Pygmalion requites in kind the 'wise conjecture' shown by Deucalion and Pyrrha in interpreting the 'doubtful wordes' of the oracle (Metamorphoses 1, 460-471). On each occasion, the listeners forego literal mindedness and prove willing to attend to 'the sence of inward sentence' (1, 465). Tragedy is averted by an act of interpretation. Venus recognizes that the spirit behind the common utterances can be totally different. Where Pygmalion words are an instance of what Shakespeare's Helena will call 'wishing well' (All's Well, I,i, 178), Myrrha's are an act of gross duplicity which, like her subsequent use of 'the bed-trick', breaks sexual taboos even as it crosses linguistic divides.²⁸

The distinction I am making holds good when we turn to Shakespeare's romantic comedies, where linguistic self-consciousness is frequently an indicator of healthy self-knowledge. Feste uses words as he wears the disguise of Sir Topas, knowing that 'a cowl does not make a monk' (Twelfth Night, I,v, 51). His honest counterfeiting is sharply distinguished from the unreflective narcissism which permits Malvolio (the well-titled) to wear the ridiculous cross-garters and make 'M.O.A.I.' spell his own name. Both Viola and Rosalind use language in the same purposive way that they put on their breeches. Cesario's admission to Orsino that (s)he loves

one of his 'complexion' and 'years' (II,iv, 24-27) is essentially guileless. 'Ganymede', affecting 'Rosalind's' 'more coming on disposition', does not lie when she claims that the real Rosalind will 'do as I do' (As You Like It, IV,i, 141). The double disguise permits her to speak the truth. On the other hand, Jaques, the melancholy moralist (whose name bears ironic testimony to the power of language to transform things base and vile), is completely unable to recognize himself in the word-mirror held up to him by Orlando (III,ii, 268-271). His linguistic slowness here is only one of several indications in the play that we must be wary of his own verbal pronouncements.²⁹

The dramatic action of both As You Like It and Twelfth Night recognizes and rewards the knowing deceivers by narrowing the gap between their appearance and aspirations. Rosalind is commended for her counterfeiting (cf. IV,iii, 179); Viola's disguise does 'haply...become the form of (her) intent' (I,ii, 54-55). As in the Metamorphoses, the virtue of similitude is recognized by metaphorical translatio. Yet even in Twelfth Night there are signs that the linguistic division of characters is far from absolute and the apportionment of praise and blame more complex than seems to be allowed for in the play's system of rewards. The unease we feel as an audience when the gulling of Malvolio is unduly protracted gives rise to a more general disquiet. It is a disquiet occasioned in the earlier tragedy when Hamlet, who is so anxious that outward signs should be seen to 'denote' him truly (I,ii, 83), is forced to recognize the coincidence of forms in his own expressions of real grief and the player's counterfeit sorrows. The same concern is experienced at a different level in King Lear, when the dramatist, himself, seems obliged to contemplate the morality of silence as an alternative to what is perceived as the inescapable duplicity of all verbal summations of experience. The question which begins to be articulated in the plays of Shakespeare's middle period is perhaps most difficult to answer in the form it is put in Measure for

Measure. What finally distinguishes the seemingly benevolent 'old fantastical duke of dark corners' (to whom Feste's tag about hoods not making friars is ironically applied) from the self-serving hypocrite in whose (virtuous-sounding) name the moralist's disguise is assumed? It is a question which is first presented directly, as a problem, in All's Well That Ends Well.

IV

In the opening scene of All's Well, Shakespeare confronts the contradiction, recognized but not resolved in Montaigne's De Noms, between the philosopher's and the artist's view of language. A comparison with Hamlet helps to make this clearer. The similarities in the dramatic situation at the beginning of the two plays are obvious and have often been remarked upon. The visual spectacle presented by Hamlet I,ii, and All's Well I,i, is, however, different in an important respect. In the tragedy, the sober-suited figure of Hamlet is a marked exception to the colourful dress of the court; in the comedy, all the assembled players wear black. Although Hamlet knows that his appearance is 'but the trappings and the suits of woe' (I,ii, 86), he is nevertheless anxious to present an image of himself to the world which is totally valid. There is a significant congruity between Hamlet's disgust that he

Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words,
And fall a-cursing like a very drab,
A scullion!

(II,ii, 581-583)

and Montaigne's lament that 'fair words', like women's 'paintings', 'bastardize and corrupt the essence of things'.³⁰ It is precisely because Hamlet wants to find a fixed 'shape' that can 'denote' him 'truly' (I,ii, 82-83), that the discovery of coincidence of forms between his own real grief and the player's affected sorrow occasions such self-loathing.

Though the second soliloquy and the action of the whole play demonstrate to the audience the profound continuities between deep feeling and feigning, between Hamlet's real distress and his 'antic disposition', his need for confirming evidence of Claudius' guilt and his resort to the fiction of 'The Mousetrap', this is something which Hamlet, himself, never comes to terms with. At the end of the play, it is the demonstrative 'show' of Laertes' grief for Ophelia to which Hamlet takes such great exception. He attempts to counter Laertes' 'thematic' elaboration of woe, his 'phrase of sorrow' and his dramatic 'emphasis', with a simple assertion of his own name and a plain statement of his love for Ophelia (V,i, 248-265).

There is a deep and unresolved contradiction at the heart of Hamlet's nature, which he shares with Montaigne. Though he clearly loves language and has a great facility with its multiple forms, he despises rhetoric for its speciousness. The same metamorphic plurality which breeds delight, also precludes an absolute knowledge of things. Hamlet's disgust at Laertes' 'mouthing' is totally congruent with his distaste for loud and demonstrative forms of theatre (V,i, 277; III,ii, 2). The charge of insincerity, however, fails to acknowledge that the 'temperance' and 'smoothness' which Hamlet admires in acting (and in Horatio), might be a less accurate representation of deep feeling than the 'ranting' which he finds so offensive (III,ii, 8). Though Shakespeare invites the audience to see that natural forms of feeling might be anything but 'modest' (III,ii, 20) in appearance - witness the extravagant bawdy of Ophelia's madness - Hamlet's notion of mimesis precludes such a recognition. He fails to appreciate the significant irony of his own admission that the 'bravery' of Laertes' 'grief' resulted in a 'towering passion' of his own (V,ii, 78-79).

What Hamlet finds so hard to come to terms with, Helena recognizes

from the start. When the Countess suggests that her excessive show of grief might be taken as a mark of insincerity, Helena responds with a paradox:

I do affect a sorrow, but I have it too.

(All's Well, I,i, 52)

Unlike Hamlet, Helena makes no pretense to total integrity. Though she clearly takes no comfort from the reflection, she recognizes that she is totally compromised by the image she presents to the world, which is simultaneously both true and false. The fact that Helena's first riddling words in the play are spoken as an aside is a further dramatic representation of scission.³¹ It underlines the fact that speech, like physical appearance, can, at one and the same time, both inform and misinform, communicate and conceal. Shakespeare, as George Steiner has noted, is ever attentive to the 'dual structure of discourse'. In All's Well, he makes us particularly aware that 'our outward speech has "behind it" a concurrent flow of articulate consciousness' and that 'In the majority of conventional, social exchanges, the relation between these two speech currents is only partially congruent'.³²

There is ample evidence in the opening scene of All's Well to support Steiner's view of the ubiquitous need for and practice of translation. Though as yet the characters all speak the same language - a situation which will change in the fourth act - they no longer seem part of the same linguistic community. The scene presents considerable critical difficulties. But if we have problems in comprehending and catching the tone of what is said, they are problems shared with the characters themselves:

Bertram: Madam, I desire your holy wishes.

Lafew: How understand we that?

(I,i, 57-58)

Lafew's question, itself indeterminate in tone, forces us to attend to alternative meanings and quite different tonal possibilities in what seems no more than a common courtesy. It is fitting that Lafew should alert us to the mingle of sacred and profane in Bertram's seeming pleasantry (cf I,iii, 32-33): it is a mixture which will recur in the play, with Lafew the invariable spokesman for both kinds of 'sense'. In the opening scene, his own language is scarcely transparent. 'I would it were not notorious', is his dry retort to Bertram's artless comment that he had not heard of the King's fistula (11.34-35). And he seconds the farewell speech of the Countess to her son with another courtly pleasantry which admits a variety of interpretations:

He cannot want the best
That shall attend his love.
(11.70-71)

The particular kind of ambiguity we find here will prove something of a hallmark of All's Well. The remark is at once highly conditional (in which case, 'that' has the sense of 'he who' and 'attend' of 'heed') and affirmatively predictive (in which case, 'that' is a pronoun for a quite different, unnamed, subject and 'attend' has the sense of 'wait upon' or 'wait for'). Such 'double-meaning' prophecies will recur throughout the play. The ambiguous grammatical structure, with its problematic pronouns and fusion of conditional and indicative verbs, might be seen as a miniature reproduction of the play's provocative title. It suggests that things can ultimately turn out for the best, if human beings are able to realize their full potential. Thus Lafew's 'deliberately and suitably vague phrase of courtly courtesy',³³ can be read as an unwitting prediction of the role Helena might 'yet' (an important word in All's Well) play in Bertram's life - if he proves true to his 'well-derived nature' (III,ii, 86).³⁴ (In this reading, 'the best' (1.70) becomes a synonym for 'Helena'.) The grammatical ambiguity makes an important contribution to the ambivalent

impression made by Shakespeare's comedy, which is both a tough-minded representation of things as they are, and an idealistic mimesis of things as they might be.

While All's Well offers a choice of interpretations, Shakespeare also manages to suggest that the particular emphasis given will depend on the predisposition of individual listeners. We are, however, invited to follow the example of the Widow Capilet in 'taking kindly' what is so dubiously offered (III,v, 100). In I,i, Bertram's farewell remark (to his mother or Helena: the Folio text is ambiguous),

The best wishes that can be forged in your thoughts
be servants to you!

(11.73-74)

can, indeed, be read in a tone which warrants that exclamation mark (an editorial emendation of the Folio). But we might also take the courtesy as an invitation to all who are attending, including ourselves, to interpret future events in the most charitable light possible. Such a generous reading does not obviate the slighter sharper suggestion that, if we choose to think the worst rather than the best, we will ourselves be the losers! This tonal fusion of sweetness and sting is characteristic of the barbed courtesies of All's Well, and is as much a hallmark of the play as the knotty ambivalent syntax.

The discussion above illustrates the difficulty of writing succinctly about All's Well. Not only is the play's mode of expression remarkably condensed, so that the unravelling of possible meanings becomes unwieldy but, also, it seems deliberately to invite a double response. We are repeatedly made aware of the factors which militate against Hamlet's poetics - his notion of verisimilitude and his ideal of fixed and singular denotation. In a play in which roles will prove to be no more determinate than words, Parolles is, in a sense not intended by Bertram,

'with all the spots o'th'world taxed and debauched' (V,ii, 206). The sin for which the 'counterfeit module' (IV,iii, 98) is a symbol and a scape-goat is in truth 'a general offence' (II,iii, 252). When Charles I wrote Parolles' name against the title of All's Well in his copy of the second Folio, he implied rather more than doubtless he intended. Parolles is a central attraction, not simply because of the charismatic charm of the Vice, but because his name impinges on all the other characters in the play and qualifies its highly self-conscious linguistic mode. The ad hominem jokes ask us to consider the relationship between Parolles' name and nature, but they also have the effect of imprinting the generic relevance of his incorrigibly plural designation on our consciousness. The habitual attitudes of All's Well - 'misdoubt', 'mistaking' and 'misprision' - prevail because all words are 'double-meaning prophecies' (IV,iii, 98-99) and puzzlement and doubt are the necessary consequences of any attempt at communication. The opportunities for what Ovid's Cephalus calls 'errorem nominis' (VII, 857) are legion. The disease is endemic in language and is bound to be catching.

An immediate symptom of the play's linguistic discomfort is that the dalliance with the word, which in Shakespeare we have come to expect of knaves and fools, extends here to all the characters in the play. We are constantly made aware of the problems caused by the polysemic nature of words, and by that discontinuity between the name and the thing designated, between a man and his fame, which fascinated Ovid and is the subject of Montaigne's essay:

Lafew: How called you the man you speak of, madam?

Countess: He was famous, sir, in his profession, and it was his right to be so: Gerard de Narbon

(I,i, 24-26)

insights in a way which renders them inert and mutually incompatible. As All's Well develops, the discontinuity between what people say and what they do - a feature of Hamlet which is also most pronounced in the case of Polonius - is similarly exaggerated. In the later play, as in the fifth act of Hamlet, the characters are frequently seen to act by default, in spite of rather than because of anything they might formulate in the way of a guiding philosophy.

The disjuncture between moral reflection and mode of action, which is such a ubiquitous feature of human behaviour in All's Well, is most immediately expressed in Helena's sardonic appraisal of her feelings towards Bertram and Parolles. 'Th'ambition' in her love for a man so much her social superior 'plagues itself', while the irrational affection she holds for his friend is no less self-defeating, being maintained in spite of everything she 'thinks' and 'knows' him to be (I,iii, 84-104).

When she characterizes the competing claims of different forms of 'sense', Helena is very like Hamlet. The comedy seems to have reached the kind of impasse which frequently arrests the momentum of the tragedy as a consequence of competing claims of judgment and feeling. When Hamlet, his sword poised ready to strike, suddenly hesitates before killing Claudius at prayer, the natural dynamic is, as it were, frozen into an enduring moment of statuesque artifice.³⁵ Hamlet reproduces exactly the pose of a 'painted tyrant' struck by the Player-Pyrrhus when he similarly hesitates before killing old Priam. 'A neutral to his will and matter', Hamlet, like Pyrrhus, does 'nothing' (III,iii, 73-95; II,ii, 471-486).

All's Well That Ends Well begins with just such a hiatus. In Helena,

We see a person who is, at first in some kind of stasis, locked up in herself and unable to advance...into the engagement of comedy; the verse that Helena speaks in this early part of the play is heavy with some kind of inhibition, a sense of total impossibility or failure.³⁶

paradox of infinite regression involving more than one concept of truth and more than one philosophy of language'.³⁹ In Hamlet, the gravedigger's perception of linguistic difficulty has led him to be more 'absolute' (1.133), a quality which the Prince finds unbecoming in one of his station. However, Hamlet's aristocratic intolerance of clowns speaking like courtiers may also reflect the fact that the gravedigger's linguistic fastidiousness is a parodic exaggeration of his own need for exact definition. Only when he has established the unequivocal justness of himself and his cause will Hamlet win the right to act, Yet his aspirations must founder on the twin relativities of logic and language so bathetically personified in the figure of the grave-digging clown.

In the final act of Hamlet, linguistic ambiguity causes the kind of social and moral problems which Montaigne characterizes in 'De Noms'. According to Osric, Laertes is 'an absolute gentleman, full of most excellent differences' (V,ii, 78). For the gravedigger, however, 'The Scripture says Adam digged' which proves he 'was the first that ever bore arms'. Thus 'gard'ners, ditchers, and grave-makers', who 'hold up Adam's profession' are the only bona fide 'ancient gentlemen' (V,i, 28-36).

This confrontation of heraldic and natural means of confirming true nobility becomes a major theme in All's Well, where the mighty 'differences' (O.E.D. 5: 'something added to a coat of arms as a mark of honour') which Osric so esteems are seen as emblems of dissension and no more reliable signifiers of aristocratic virtue than they are in 'De Noms'. The continuity between the tragedy and the comedy helps us to see the essentially linguistic orientation of the King's speech on nobility in All's Well, II,iii, which has been regarded largely in terms of the socio-political Renaissance debate of Virtue versus Nobility.⁴⁰ For Hamlet, the definition of noble action remains an unanswered question at the heart of his self-

scrutiny. What is certain, is that it is Ophelia's privileged status as a 'gentlewoman' which wins her a Christian burial. Neither the Clown, nor the Doctor of Divinity, can determine on the basis of law the degree of intentional action represented by her death, which thus remains 'doubtful' (V,i, 1-25, 220-228).

In All's Well, we are repeatedly made aware of the problems of intention and interpretation, which in Hamlet, are imaged in the circumstances surrounding Ophelia's death, the central 'play-scene', and the 'closet-scene'. In both plays, the moral problem at which Feste glances in Twelfth Night - the difficulty of proving reason with words grown false (III,i, 10-24) - shifts slightly as it deepens into a crux at the heart of philosophy: the extent to which language can serve as an instrument of self-knowledge and moral instruction. By the same token, both plays subject Hamlet's view of the 'purpose of playing' (Hamlet, III,ii, 20) to the severest scrutiny. If Claudius does indeed recognize himself in the mirror of 'The Mousetrap', the effect can hardly be said to be morally educative. For the King, the highly ambivalent figure of Lucianus is not so much a revelation as a reinforcement of his own self-image. Rather than proclaiming his malefactions, Claudius sets about becoming more of a murderer than he already is. The same irony is underlined in 'the Closet Scene'. There Hamlet's verbal 'daggers' enter Gertrude's 'ears' (III,ii, 386; III,iv, 95), seeming to act as an incisive moral antidote to Claudius' corrosive poison. For a fleeting moment, Gertrude recognizes the blackness of her own soul (III,iv, 88-91). But, despite Hamlet's contrary injunction (III,iv, 145-149), the 'flattering unction' is applied, and in the next scene we watch as Hamlet's moral instruction is glossed as the speech of madness.

In All's Well, verbal recognition of moral failings is similarly seen to carry no imperative to change. Parolles acknowledges that his 'tongue

is too foolhardy' (IV,i, 28); Bertram speaks freely of his own 'sick desires' (IV,ii, 35); Lavatch admits that he serves the Devil, whatever his disguise (IV,v, 31-41). The question which Dumaine asks of Parolles might be asked of Claudius. It is certainly applicable to most of the other characters in All's Well:

Is it possible that he should know
what he is, and be that he is?
(IV,i, 43-44)

The question has the moral force of Medea's famous maxim expressing the triumph of passion over reason: 'The best I see and like; the worst I follow headlong still' (7, 25). And the paradox accurately summarizes Helena's sense of commitment to a hopeless passion at the opening of Shakespeare's play. It helps us to see that Helena, who as Mark Van Doren long ago observed, is 'regularly concerned with visions of herself as animal mating',⁴¹ has as much in common with Ovid's 'tragic' heroines, as she has with Hamlet:

What first and perhaps most draws the attention about Helena is her appearance of taut rationality; her ability to analyse herself. But this impression is rapidly succeeded by the recognition that the self she is analysing is not at all rational and clear: it is the strength of the folk-tale heroine, driven into activity by strong and deep instincts and impulses - what Helena, herself, calls 'wishes', in fact.⁴²

Not the least strength of Barbara Everett's reading, is that it re-directs us to the folk-tale origins of All's Well, while conspicuously avoiding the patronizing attitude to the source genre which distorts so many discussions of the genesis of Shakespeare's dark comedy.

Helena's interview with the Countess in I,iii, is richer in meaning if read in the light of the struggles of Medea, Byblis and Myrrha to overcome their passionate natures.⁴³ The dénouement of Helena's story is close to that of Iphis: an impossible barrier to the fulfilment of

love is seemingly overcome. But Shakespeare, like Ovid, asks us to recognize an essentially lawless element in Helena's desire, which has the potential to take her and the play itself in a tragic direction:

Countess: You know, Helen,
 I am mother to you.

Helena: Mine honourable mistress.

Countess: Nay, a mother
 Why not mother? When I said 'a mother',
 Methought you saw a serpent. What's in 'mother'
 That you start at it?

 God's mercy, maiden! Does it curd thy blood
 To say I am thy mother? What's the matter,
 That this distempered messenger of wet,
 The many coloured Iris, rounds thine eye?
 Why, that you are my daughter?

(I,iii, 133-148)

Helena's extreme reaction is very like that of Byblis when she is similarly compelled to recognize the kinship which defines the impossible nature of her love. Though Helena is not Bertram's natural sister, she 'had her breeding at (his) father's charge' (II,iii, 113), and she suffers no less torment than Byblis who is joined by blood to the brother she so desires:

Helena: You are my mother, madam; would you were -
 So that my lord your son were not my brother -
 Indeed my mother! Or were you both our mothers
 I care no more for than I do for heaven,
 So I were not his sister. Can't no other
 But, I your daughter, he must be my brother?

Countess: Yes, Helen, you might be my daughter-in-law.
 God shield you mean it not! 'Daughter' and 'mother'
 So strive upon your pulse.

(II.156-164)

(Byblis) O Lord, if name of kinred myght
 Betweene us two removed bee, how well it would agree,
 O Caune, that of thy father I the daughtrinlaw should
 bee.
 How fitly myght my father have a sonneinlaw of thee.
 Would God that all save auncesters were common to us
 twayne.
 I would thou were of nobler stocke than I. I cannot
 sayne,
 O perle of beautie, what shee is whom thou shalt make
 a mother.

Alas how ill befallles it mee that I could have none
 Than those same parents which are thyne. So only still
 And not my husband mayst thou bee. The thing that hurts
 Is one, and that betweene us ay inseparably gothe.

(Metamorphoses, 9, 578-587)

In both speeches, highly confused feelings are projected in corresponding 'doubtfull words'. Byblis knows that the 'sweet name of brother and sister' (IX, 558) can conceal an illicit love, but she is equally aware that 'the name of kin' (9, 666) expresses the prohibition on her desire. For Helena, the same language similarly expresses both the insurmountable impossibility of her love and the means by which 'in law' it might be fulfilled. The kind of love which Byblis feels is that which, quite literally, dare not speak its name (9, 634). But the taboo which divides Helena and Bertram is seen by Shakespeare as no less absolute than that of incest:

The Count Rossillion cannot be my brother.
 I am from humble, he from honoured name;
 No note upon my parents, his all noble.
 My master, my dear lord he is, and I
 His servant live, and will his vassal die.
 He must not be my brother. (11.149-154)

The social differences which Byblis imagines would be her salvation, thus merely serve to double the impossibility of Helena's love. The ambiguous words, 'mother' and 'daughter', have a wishfulfilling capacity to realize Helena's dreams, but she recoils from the suggestion of a presumptive equality, which is no less shocking to her than the incestuous implications of the word, 'brother'.

In All's Well, the characters are repeatedly shown to be smugly self-satisfied with their own perspicacity. The Countess is well-pleased at 'finding' the true nature of Helena's affection:

What, pale again?
 My fear hath catched your fondness. Now I see
 The mystery of your loneliness, and find
 Your salt tears' head. Now to all sense 'tis gross:
 You love my son.

(11.165-168)

Shakespeare, however, asks us to see that what the Countess means by 'gross' to all 'sense' is quite different from what Helena understands by those ambiguous words, which serve only to express for her the enormity of her abnormal passion. Helena knows that, though her love may well be 'fond' in a sense not intended by the Countess - foolish rather than affectionate⁴⁴ - it can also be hidden under the speciosaque nominae (Metamorphoses, VII, 69) used by the Countess herself.

Helena's nervous determination to respect a decorum that is at once social and linguistic is the best illustration of what, in I,i, she means by 'wishing well':

Helena: 'Tis pity -

Parolles: What's pity?

Helena: That wishing well had not a body in't
 Which might be felt, that we, the poorer born,
 Whose baser stars do shut up in wishes,
 Might with effects of them follow our friends,
 And show what we alone do think, which never
 Returns us thanks.

(11.176-183)

Helena has asked herself the same questions as Byblis:

What meene my dreames then? What effect have dreames? and may
 there be
 Effect in dreames?

(Metamorphoses, 9, 590-591)

But she is compelled to give a different answer. Unlike Ovid's 'tragic heroines', Helena is unwilling to 'confound the rights of name and kin' (Metamorphoses, 10, 383-384) by exploiting the licence of language and dreams. Her linguistic fastidiousness in I,iii, is a mark of her virtue; the measure of her awareness that ambiguous language can all too easily be abused. What Helena avoids is precisely the kind of impiety which

Claudius practises behind a smokescreen of specious words, and which Hamlet's quip, 'A little less than kin, and less than kind' (I,ii, 65) is designed to expose. Where Claudius' unnatural act has confounded the most profound relationships of family and state, Helena expresses her Iphis-like determination to hold fast to the principles of difference - of sex and status - which are also enshrined in language and which prohibit the fulfilment of her desire: the legal 'effects' of her love.

Helena's speeches in I,i, and I,iii, are remarkable for their sonnet-like intensity. We are particularly reminded of those sonnets which express a deep sense of personal unworthiness together with an equally profound appreciation of the deterministic social structure which must forever keep kindred spirits apart. Sonnet 87, which presents this theme in images of faulty judgment, 'misprision' (l.11) and illegal possession, is particularly close in language and feeling to All's Well.⁴⁵ Like the sonnet speaker, Helena is aware that Bertram is 'too dear for (her) possessing' and that the flattering dream of 'having' must not be taken for the waking reality.

For Shakespeare, as for Ovid, the hazarding of principles of 'difference' and 'distinction' brings tragedy and madness in its wake. Conversely a retained sense of prohibition promises hope: if Helena continues to 'wish well', her dreams may yet prove true. The paradoxical notion of 'likeness' offers a saving grace. The word images the common blood-bond shared by people of different sex, station, age, nationality, and religion. It also expresses the artistic principle through which such differences can legitimately be reconciled.

In All's Well, this notion of 'likeness' is projected in the figure of Parolles, whose silk scarves advertise the 'fixed evils' (I,i, 102) of rhetorical speciousness. In the opening scene, the example of Parolles

saves Helena from 'self-love.....the most inhibited sin in the cannon' (I,i, 143). The same principle of linguistic multiplicity would also seem to save Shakespeare himself from an inhibiting hubris: the Florio-like presumption that male and female, word and deed, life and literature are indeed one and the same thing.

It is worth recapitulating here a point made in Chapter III:

With a story-teller, we are immediately aware of the story coming to us through someone who does not necessarily 'believe' the story, or believe that we will believe it, but who knows, and knows that we know, that that is not the point. The point is that he is telling us, and we are listening; towards the story itself it is possible to assume various stances of bravura and diffidence, whereas the novelist must usually pretend some much more rigorous and sober point point of view.⁴⁶

This, I think, is the authorial and affective aesthetic which emerges from the artistic stalemate of All's Well, I,i. In the play's opening scene, we watch as Shakespeare turns his back on Hamlet's theory of mimetic art and attempts to find a dramatic form which, like the folk-tale, retains the potential for fully realized meaning, but makes no pretense to any internal integrity of its own.

Stated broadly, the gist of my argument is that what stands behind All's Well, and is important for our understanding of Shakespeare's achievement in the play, is not so much 'Giletta di Nerbona', as what might be called the Ur folk-tale. The individual story is less important than its generic type, the tale of Impossibilities, which in turn is less important to Shakespeare than the narrative form itself, and the assumptions about the relationship between an author and his audience on which it rests. It is almost a *donnée* of All's Well criticism that the play becomes problematic in the course of its transformation from story to stage. I would argue that there is some truth in this, but

not as commonly understood. The assumption is that 'the folk-tale' is a simple and homogeneous form and that Shakespeare encountered 'nearly insurmountable problems' in taking 'an original one thread story' with 'archaic charm in the artless, undemanding manner of Boccaccio' and turning it into a drama 'with every incident and motive discussed in dialogue' and 'the morals of the characters explored'.⁴⁷

Leaving aside the obvious slight to Boccaccio, it should be clear from the opening chapter of the present study that such assumptions about the folk-tale genre are hopelessly ill-founded. In fact, while 'Giletta di Nerbona' is in itself a relatively simple story, it is set in a wider narrative context which allows Boccaccio to raise all kinds of complex issues.⁴⁸ 'Tancredi', the story which follows 'Giletta' in Painter's The Palace of Pleasure (and which has been seen as an analogue for the King's speech on nobility in All's Well)⁴⁹ is, in its own right, a highly sophisticated treatment of passion and incest. Boccaccio's handling of the theme of perverted pietas is much after the manner of Ovid's tales of lawless passion, and may have prompted Shakespeare to recall them in All's Well. The relationship between the father and the daughter in 'Tancredi' has, indeed, been compared to Ovid's 'Myrrha', which Boccaccio would have known in the original and as a contemporary Italian tragedy by Alfieri.⁵⁰

Like Ovid's stories of impossible loves, Boccaccio's 'Tancredi' is characterized by a high degree of verbal self-consciousness. Ghismonda, the heroine, addresses her father by his Christian name: as in Ovid's tales, the avoidance of the word which signifies kinship is an attempt to deny the inviolate natural order which is enshrined in language. But, as Guido Almansi has shown, the dénouement of the story, which concludes with Ghismonda's suicide, demonstrates the vital connections between

language and the real world, and can be read as 'a triumph of the word'.⁵¹

Ovid's Metamorphoses clearly provided Boccaccio with an important formal model for The Decameron. In each collection of stories, the use of internal narrators, framing devices, obtrusive stylistic features, and other 'alienation techniques' calls attention to the deliberate artifice of the work.⁵² It forces the reader to acknowledge that the singular meaning of any tale is less important than the possible meanings engendered by the interaction of groups of tales.⁵³ Those possible meanings are, in turn, subservient to the story-telling activity itself and the relationships between teller and tale, teller and audience, which it establishes.

I believe that, unlike modern critics of All's Well, Shakespeare regarded the folk-tale as a rich and complex genre which permitted a high degree of bourgeois realism, psychological 'inwardness' and ethical complexity within its redeeming framework of total artifice. Almansì's description of a key story by Boccaccio as 'an invitation to conduct a formalist reading of The Decameron' has much to recommend it to the student of Shakespeare's play.⁵⁴ The opening scene of All's Well might be compared to the story of Cepperello, which opens The Decameron, and serves as 'advance notice' of what the work will be: 'a tapestry of falsehood, a pack of lies'.⁵⁵ It is equally comparable to the Orphic framework which Ovid creates for the stories of impossible loves, in which the poet's pose as a man of truth is ironically subverted.

Hamlet might be seen as an expose of the failure of art to act as an agent of moral metamorphosis. The playwright may attempt to hold 'a mirror up to nature', but there is no guarantee that he has realized

his intended meanings in his work. Nor can he be sure that the images he has created will be 'taken' in the way they are meant. At both the authorial and affective levels, he must reckon with the relativities of individual 'misprision' - a word which is marvelously expressive of isolating idiosyncratic ways of seeing (All's Well, II,iii, 151; Sonnet 87, 1.11).⁵⁶

There are, I think, further reasons, both moral and pragmatic, which prompted Shakespeare to reject the kind of verisimilitude he had perfected, and to re-embrace the artistic 'supposes' with which, in a sense, he began. In his excellent article on 'the forms of self-consciousness' in Montaigne and Shakespeare, Robert Ellrodt has shown why the dramatist had to 'part company' with the essayist:

.....What is certain is that Hamlet's brooding introspection does not achieve, but defeats self-knowledge. Like Montaigne he is uncertain about his own motives, about the true cause of his delay....(IV,iv, 31-43). Professor Muir has noted it: 'It is a curious paradox that the one intellectual among Shakespeare's tragic heroes should be the least able to know why he acts or fails to act'. Could it not be a universal paradox, at least with intellectuals? Self-consciousness so exercised is apt to dissolve character and motive, as the literature of the modern age shows.⁵⁷

Montaigne led Shakespeare to a dead-end artistically. But there are larger reasons why the paths of the two writers should diverge. As Ellrodt also notes, Shakespeare, unlike Montaigne, was not self-centred.⁵⁸ There is more to Hamlet than the Prince: a crude measure that Shakespeare was interested in things other than the discovery of the self. Moreover, one can detect Shakespeare's antipathy to introspective self-consciousness not only as Professor Ellrodt suggests in the Sonnets (though 'the sin of self love' is laid bare in No.62), but also in a deep contradiction in Hamlet himself. Despite his desperate need to understand his own motivation, Hamlet is disgusted by the attempts of others to 'know' him through and through. His need to preserve some 'mystery' at the core of his personality

(cf. Hamlet, III,ii, 354-356) might be seen as a projection of Shakespeare's antipathy to the anatomizing of human nature. Similarly in All's Well, we are invited both to understand the Countess' delight in solving 'the mystery of (Helena's) loneliness' (I,iii, 166-167), and also to find it somewhat distasteful - quite apart from the fact that her 'solution' is so clearly inadequate. Both sequences would seem to reflect Shakespeare's readiness to reject the novelist's approach to character, towards which he seemed to have been developing, and to re-embrace the classical poet's perception 'that passion can make character enough'.⁵⁹

Faced with Osric's 'chough-like' spaciousness (Hamlet, V,ii, 85-86), Hamlet's response is characteristically ambivalent. Though he despises Osric's facility with the kind of language that calls attention to itself and forces a wedge between the signifier and the signified,⁶⁰ Hamlet can ape the idiom only too well. Almost involuntarily, he is drawn into a game of linguistic one-upmanship in which he proves the easy winner (V,ii, 112-119). Hamlet's obvious savour for linguistic variety is, like Montaigne's, at odds with his need to use words as a precision tool of thought. The counter side of Hamlet's nature is revealed when, with the help of a marginal gloss, he 'translates' Osric's 'yeasty' confections into the bread and butter language of everyday things (V,ii, 144-188).

Confronted by Parolles' plurality and equally frothy opinions (cf. Hamlet, V,ii, 88-89, 142-144; All's Well, IV,i, 19-20; V,ii, 37-40),⁶¹ Helena responds in a quite different way from Hamlet, and she takes the play itself in an alternative direction to that followed in the tragedy. By dramatically confronting the contradictory needs of the moralist and the artist, Shakespeare discovers in those inconsistencies of logic and language, which plague the philosopher in his search for truth, a new lease of life for the central characters of All's Well, and for his own art of possibilities.

The distance between the tragedy and the comedy might be measured in the differences between Helena's two soliloquies in the opening scene. The first (ll.78ff), in highly mimetic blank verse, conveys the free play of Helena's imagination and the minute by minute changes in her thoughts and feelings. The second (ll.212ff), sacrifices none of the intense feeling nor the pressure of thought, but they are contained and formalized by the couplets which, as G.K. Hunter notes, 'seem designed to raise the sense of inevitability and supernatural confidence'.⁶² We are simultaneously made aware of freedom and constraint; of Helena's idiosyncratic personality and of something much larger and more unfathomable of which she is, as it were, a symptom and not a cause. We begin to see that Helena, like Shakespeare's Venus and like Cleopatra, is 'both herself and Love' (I,iii, 208).⁶³

The 'outgoing decisiveness'⁶⁴ which Helena displays in her second soliloquy seems designed to dramatize the inhibiting effects of narcissistic self-involvement. It is also a powerful illustration of Professor Ellrodt's paradox: that self-consciousness both defeats self-knowledge and destroys characterization and motive. Helena's new-found freedom grows out of a contrary willingness to recognize the limitations of human understanding and self-control:

Impossible be strange attempts to those
That weigh their pains in sense, and do suppose
What hath been cannot be. (I,i, 220-222)

It is because Helena's 'supposing' is of a different order that she is able to acknowledge other forms of 'sense', besides reason and common sense.⁶⁵

What is most immediately fascinating about the dramaturgy of I,i, is that Shakespeare lets us see the moment when Helena makes this discovery:

Not my virginity, yet.....
 There shall your master have a thousand loves,
 A mother, and a mistress, and a friend,
 A phoenix, captain, and an enemy,
 A guide, a goddess, and a sovereign,
 A counsellor, a traitress, and a dear;
 His humble ambition, proud humility,
 His jarring concord, and his discord dulcet,
 (ll.162-169)

The break in the metre and meaning at l.162 has prompted the suggestion that there is corruption in the Folio text at this point, but the play's most recent editors are, I think, right to resist this interpretation.⁶⁶

'Yet' (l.162) is a word which in All's Well That Ends Well is used repeatedly to reinforce the title of the play. It is a word which simultaneously conveys regret that things are as they are, and hope founded on the possibility that things might still change. In the marvelously suggestive lines which conclude IV,iv, 'yet' is equated with both the natural cycle of renewal and the metamorphic potential in 'the word' itself:⁶⁷

Yet, I pray you.
 But with the word the time will bring on summer,
 When briars shall have leaves as well as thorns
 And be as sweet as sharp. We must away;
 Our wagon is prepared, and time revives us.
 All's well that ends well.... (IV,iv, 30-35)

The sweetness and sting is emblematic of the inseparable gain and loss which linguistic change shares with passion, 'the rose of youth' (I,iii, 125), and with the process of time. Barbara Everett turns to Milton's sonnets for a parallel. But these marvelously economic lines are remarkably close in spirit to Shakespeare's own most Ovidian sonnets, in which the re-creative power of poetry is matched against the miracle of time's revivals. As time is both a mower and a reaper, a violator and preserver of beauty, so language is seen as a destructive and creative force. It is in 'black ink' that 'love may still shine bright' (Sonnet 65).

In Helena's speech at I,i, 162-169, the conventions of the Elizabethan

sonnet tradition are simultaneously disparaged and held dear. Helena parts company here with Hamlet's poetics, with his ridicule of extravagant language as a travesty of true feeling. The strategy of All's Well is the antithesis of that which Shakespeare adopts in his dismissive Sonnet 130 ('My Mistress eyes are nothing like the sun'). Closer in spirit, as I have suggested, to the disturbing ambivalence of his own sixty-fifth sonnet, it is also closer to the strategy of Donne's 'The Canonization':

We'll build in sonnets pretty rooms.....

In Helena's speech at 162ff, we see her beginning to come to terms with both her own passionate nature and the irrevocable artifice through which it must find expression.

To understand the change in Helena, it is necessary to look closely at her dialogue with Parolles at 105ff. For it is Parolles who proves true to his double-meaning name by showing Helena that both emotional and linguistic extravagance can be as much a moral strength as a weakness. Helena and Parolles are often seen as simple opposites, but their interaction in I,i, is emblematic of their complementary roles throughout the play.⁶⁸ Their pairing would seem to reflect Shakespeare's conviction that truth and falsehood are anything but totally distinguishable.

What seems to have increasingly engaged Shakespeare's attention in the plays of his middle period is the way a coincidence of means can mask quite different ends, with only the imperfectly understood question of intention to keep them apart. The problem symbolized by the 'black ink' of Sonnet 65 recurs in Measure for Measure. Religious authority sanctions Duke Vincentio's application of 'Craft against Vice' (III,ii, 259),⁶⁹ but his adoption of the mantle of moral apostle is seen by Shakespeare as no simple expedient. The Duke's important speech which closes the third act announces, by its riddling paradoxes and jingle rhymes, the outlandish

fictiveness of his role. But the pejorative implications of the word, 'craft', a word with a very bad odour in Elizabethan England, are not disguised. The word recalls the dubious artistry of both Ulysses and Daedalus, and is used by Peacham to illustrate the figure of antanaclasis, a form of ambiguity which depends 'for its effect on the two or more meanings attached to the same repeated word':

Care for those things which may discharge you from all care....In youth learne some craft, that in thy age thou mayst get thy living without craft.⁷⁰

Shakespeare insists that the poet is a 'craftsman' in both senses of the word. Even when extraordinary measures are taken to obviate the charge of duplicity, the coincidence of forms between virtue and vice has to be acknowledged. Duke Vincentio's poetic mantle is a rejection of the disingenuousness of verisimilitude, an attempt at physically representing the virtue of an 'if'. But Lucio's description of 'the old fantastical Duke of dark corners' (IV,iii, 154) remains a hard charge to answer. The Duke would seem to act with the best intentions, but it is difficult to distinguish his mode of behaviour from that of 'honest Iago'.

In All's Well, Helena and Parolles are dependent upon each other and continually interact throughout the play. In I,i, it is Helena's gracious indulgence which allows Parolles his finest moment, when he plays Diogenes with a set-piece in support of 'the loss of virginity' (ll.122ff). This ironic praise for 'a thing without honour' was a well-known instance of the formal rhetorical paradox, which aimed specifically to win the 'admiration' of an audience. Significantly, Gorgias' praise of Helen was another famous 'Wondrer',⁷¹ and while in Shakespeare's play Parolles soon runs out of apt comparisons, Helena immediately challenges his verbal standing with a paradoxical 'Wondrer' of her own (ll.218-219), and it is she who wins the title of 'the admiration' in a later scene (II,i, 86).

Parolles' speech on virginity forces both Helena and the audience to recognize competing value systems in a world of moral and linguistic relativities:⁷² 'Loss of virginity is rational increase, and there was never virgin got till virginity was first lost' (11.126-127). The tension between the Pauline 'laws' of the 'mind' and 'members', to which Touchstone draws attention in As You Like It, will be felt throughout All's Well. But the immediate gift of Parolles to Helena is his demonstration that emotional turmoil can be creative as well as destructive, and the limitations of both logic and language turned to advantage:

Helena: How might one do, sir, to lose it (virginity) to her own liking?

Parolles: Let me see. Marry, ill, to like him that ne'er it likes. 'Tis a commodity will lose the gloss with lying; the longer kept, the less worth. Off with't while 'tis vendible; answer the time of request. Virginity, like an old courtier, wears her cap out of fashion, richly suited but unsuitable, just like the brooch and the toothpick, which wear not now. Your date is better in your pie and your porridge than in your cheek; and your virginity, your old virginity, is like one of our French withered pears: it looks ill, it eats drily; marry, 'tis a withered pear; it was formerly better; marry, yet 'tis a withered pear. Will you anything with it?

(I,i, 148-161)

Helena can, indeed, 'do something' with the lead offered by Parolles. In her rejoining speech, she responds in kind to his use of language: the punning ('marry', 'lying' and 'date'); the fusion of conditional and indicative moods (in the opening sentence); his knowing use of similitude as a figure with the power to effect material change. Parolles' imagistic shift from the 'likeness' of similitude to the full metamorphic translatio - 'virginity is like one of your French withered pears.....marry, yet, 'tis a withered pear' - is one which will be repeated in the play. As in Ovid's stories of Iphis and Pygmalion, metamorphosis in All's Well is the promised reward for a paradoxically lawful passion, 'not sin, and yet a

sinful fact' (III,vii, 48), and for a species of truthfulness which insists on its own mendacity. In the Metamorphoses, Telethusa's 'pious fraud' is exactly matched by the dénouement of her tale. In Shakespeare's comedy, which has similarly been mistaken for a simple miracle tale,⁷³ the deus ex machina resolution also corresponds to the dubious morality of the central protagonist. It is because the 'bed-trick' is a 'deceit so lawful', that 'Time and place/ May prove coherent with it' (III,vii, 38-49).

Taking the cue from Parolles, Helena uses the 'likeness' of art to escape from the confines of her own 'misprision'. Because she truly 'likes' - that is, desires - Bertram, she is ready to become more 'like' the kind of fashionable young woman he would readily seek out for himself. Because she fawn would have him, she is willing to feign. The same principles of risk and artifice are dramatized in both of the 'Impossibilities' in All's Well. To cure the King, Helena is ready to have her 'maiden's name' 'Traduced by odious ballads' (II,i, 172) - and Lavatch is pleased to oblige (I,iii, 68 - 77). To win Bertram, she is ready to quite literally take the place of the dubiously-named Diana, the goddess of both chastity and the hunt (I,iii, 207-208).

Thus when Helena seems to be characterizing - for the benefit of Parolles - the fashionable lovers Bertram might be expected to encounter at court, she is also forecasting - for her own benefit, and ours - the role she herself might still play. We are invited to see this linguistic scission in both negative and positive terms. What is sacrificed in consensus and communication, is won as a right of individual freedom and self-expression. No longer simply inhibiting, the ambiguous language acknowledges the human capacity to change. The unqualified adverbs and pronouns (see above p.261: 'there' in l.163 could be either), the ellipses, and incomplete grammatical structure admit the possibility that Helena might win Bertram . . . 'yet'. By exer-

cising her own passion and the premise of artifice, she will indeed succeed in revitalizing the oxymorons and conceits of traditional love poetry, which have become 'truth-tir'd with iteration' (Troilus and Cressida, III,ii, 172). At the end of the play, 'the jarring concord' and the 'discord dulcet' (I,i, 169) are transformed into the living conceit of the child in her womb (V,ii, 30-32) - a 'Wondrer' validated by the natural Impossibilia which Helena takes as her artistic manifesto at the conclusion of I,i,:

What power is it which mounts my love so high,
That makes me see, and cannot feed mine eye?
The mightiest space in fortune nature brings
To join like likes, and kiss like native things.

(11.216-220)

Parolles' great gift to Helena is his demonstration that the irrationality of her love is what keeps it alive. Its very impossibility is the stamp of its natural validity. The frequently advanced argument, that Shakespeare maximized the social distance between Helena and Bertram to lend psychological plausibility to the Count's dislike for 'a poor physician's daughter' (II,iii, 114), is thus essentially wrongheaded. As the hopelessly contrary love of Antony and Cleopatra will also show, love does not founder but is fostered by extremes and opposition. To this extent, the war is as good a 'learning place' (I,i, 74) as the court, and Parolles might be said to rehearse Bertram for the role he will ultimately play with Helena.

In All's Well, Shakespeare would seem to be working towards the kind of mythological provenance which matures in Antony and Cleopatra. Both plays demonstrate that, in Shakespeare's cosmogony, as in Ovid's, it is not 'likeness' but 'difference' which generates love. Art, however, like nature, plays its part in bringing together opposites as if they were indeed 'like likes'. The highly conditional premise permits conflicting

differences of sex, age, religion and rank to be reconciled.

When in I,iii, Helena is charged by the Countess to 'tell true' her feelings for Bertram, she answers one direct question with another:

Countess: Love you my son?

Helena: Do not you love him, madam?

Countess: Go not about; my love hath in't a bond
Whereof the world takes note. Come, come, disclose
The state of your affections, for your passions
Have to the full appeached. (I,iii, 184-189)

In spite of the Countess' impatience, Helena 'goes about' because she must. Her indirection is a sign of moral energy rather than evasive deceit. Helena knows that the truth is more elusive than the Countess allows, and that the single word, 'love' can signify a multiplicity of meanings. The range is as rich and various as Helena suggests in her survey of sonneteering attitudes at I,i, 103ff. It is comprehensive enough to include both the legal and self-justifying emotion represented by the Countess' 'bond', and the illicit, self-betraying kind of passion suggested by her word, 'appeached'. In All's Well, we are frequently reminded of this latter, tormenting form of 'love', the kind we most readily associate with Shakespeare's Sonnet 128 (cf. IV,iv, 21-25). Helena is now willing to confess to this extreme emotion, in the hope that it might be transformed from a destructive passion into a creative one:

My dearest madam,
Let not your hate encounter with my love,
For loving where you do; but if yourself,
Whose aged honour cites a virtuous youth,
Did ever, in so true a flame of liking,
Wish chastely and love dearly, that your Dian
Was both herself and love - O then, give pity
To her whose state is such that cannot choose
But lend and give where she is sure to lose;
That seeks not to find that her search implies,
But riddle-like lives sweetly where she dies.

(I,iii, 202-212)

Helena's appeal is cast in the name of the natural 'Wondrer', the primal conceit which has the power to reconcile differences and to produce a 'jarring concord' from Helena's humble position and presumptuous love, her chaste intentions and her passionate desires. Taking the cue from Parolles, and from Lavatch who also sees sexual desire as a great resolver of differences (I,iii, 49-54), Helena attempts to mediate between the Countess' opposition and her own resolve. The appeal is enfranchised by the linguistic hypothesis which avoids 'The Lie Direct' and yet permits the Countess to see her own past 'liking' and 'likeness' in Helena's present ardour. As in I,i, the figure of similitude facilitates an escape from the narcissistic self-involvement and fosters an empathy which crosses the divides of past and present, youth and age, humble and noble rank, licit and illicit forms of love:

Countess: Even so it was with me when I was young.
 If ever we are nature's, there are ours; this thorn
 Doth to our rose of youth rightly belong;
 Our blood to us, this to our blood is born.
 It is the show and seal of nature's truth,
 Where love's strong passion is impressed in youth.
 By our remembrances of days foregone,
 Such were our faults, or then we thought them none.
 (I,iii, 123-131)

The Countess' remarkable apology for passion might be seen as a counter-challenge to Hamlet's emotional and aesthetic distaste for demonstrative forms of feeling. Here, and throughout All's Well, passionate 'liking' is the 'show' of 'nature's truth'. The full-expression of feeling 'rightly belongs' to love, even as the figure of similitude opposes narrow perceptions of artistic versimilitude. The common enemy is a false singularity which accepts only a limited view of 'sense'.

Helena's role in I,iii, is made clearer if we notice a complementary sequence at the end of the play when Parolles is charged by the King to speak what he 'knows' about the relationship between Bertram and Diana:

King: Tell me, sirrah - but tell me true I charge you,
Not fearing the displeasure of your master,
Which on your just proceeding I'll keep off -
By him and by this woman here what know you?

Parolles: So please your majesty, my master hath been
an honourable gentleman. Tricks he hath had in him,
which gentlemen have.

King: Come, come, to th'purpose. Did he love this woman?

Parolles: Faith, sir, he did love her; but how?

King: How, I pray you?

Parolles: He did love her, sir, as a gentleman loves a woman.

King: How is that?

Parolles: He loved her, sir, and loved her not.

King: As thou art a knave and no knave. What an equivocal
companion is this!
(V,iii, 235-250)

The King's irritable 'Come, come to th'purpose' (1.241) exactly matches the Countess' impatient 'Go not about' (I,iii, 186), while Parolles equivocation is the counterpart of Helena's circumlocution. Parolles is, indeed, 'a knave and no knave', for his linguistic fastidiousness is no less a mark of his highly compromised nature than is Helena's at the opening of the play. Parolles is well aware that 'honourable', 'gentleman', 'true' and 'love' are all highly 'doubtful' words. By this stage in the action, they are words which have been subjected to the severest scrutiny. Here again, Parolles forces the King, the symbol of legal and linguistic intransigence, to ask the question, 'How?', and thus to investigate with full Aristotelian propriety the 'quality' of Bertram's loving.⁷⁴

In V,iii, Parolles Orphic indirection dynamically reinforces the dramatic image of the jewelled-rings, which also suggests that human love is multi-faceted, and both passion and chastity worthy of esteem.⁷⁵ By opposing the King's 'purpose', Parolles insists on the relativity of human perception and the difficult pathway to 'truth':

he that will
Reach her, about must, and about must go;
And what the hills suddenness resists, win so.⁷⁶

For all his equivocation, Parolles 'superfluous folly' has been displaced by the newly-rounded figure of Helena, while his 'poor decayed form' and outcast station similarly suggest that Helena's image of 'virtue's steely bones' (I,i, 102) may be in need of reappraisal. Helena's readiness to see herself as no more than an actress, 'the shadow of a wife...The name and not the thing (V,iii, 307-308), identifies her further with Parolles. Both of them are highly equivocal truth-tellers who might be seen to share the rhetorical function of 'fictional suppositions' which, as Quintilian explains, 'are exceedingly useful when we are concerned with the quality of an act' and are 'specially useful when arguing against the letter of the law' (contra scriptum).⁷⁷

This last quality of similitude is dramatized more fully in Measure for Measure, where Angelo's narcissism disables him from recognizing 'faults of his own liking' (III,ii, 250) and highly conditional 'fictional suppositions' are used repeatedly to argue against legal intransigence.⁷⁸ But in All's Well, the same figure is also identified with the New Testament virtues of humility, charity and pity. Because the Countess recognizes her own 'liking' in Helena's passion, she becomes less insistent on the 'bond' of love. In much the same way, Lavatch ultimately relinquishes the harsh judgmental attitude he adopts towards Parolles in II,iii. Recognizing that Parolles is 'a fool and a knave', Lafew takes on simultaneously 'both the office of God and the devil'. Following the example of Lavatch who 'pities' his distress in 'similes of comfort', Lafew offers Parolles the 'grace' for which he sues (V,ii, 19-54).

In All's Well, as in Measure for Measure, the rhetorical figure which admits the possibility that 'there but for the grace of God...' becomes a

fully dramatic plot motif in the 'bed-trick' substitution.⁷⁹ By literally taking the place of the ambiguously-named Diana, Helena is able to give full expression to a paradoxically conceived love which is both chaste and passionate, licit and illicit, a love based on a natural impossibility, but which exists in spite of reason, because it must.

Throughout the play, Shakespeare exploits fully the contradiction that Ovid also valued in the formal Impossibilia, which

can be to the poet either a way of talking about what would never happen, the absurd, or else (in formal contradiction to its traditional name) a way of describing miracles.⁸⁰

In the second act, Helena opposes the King's supercilious trust in 'learned doctors' and 'the congregated college' (II,i, 115-124) with 'fishes in the trees' impossibilities which themselves compound a discors concordia of classical and Christian exempla:

great floods have flown
From simple sources; and great seas have dried
When miracles have by the greatest been denied.

(II,i, 139-141)

Helena who 'knows she thinks' and 'thinks she knows' that France is 'not past cure' (II,i, 157-158), undercuts our own need to believe unreservedly in her restorative powers even as she forces the King to revise his myopic view of 'sense':

Methinks in thee some blessed spirit doth speak
His powerful sound within an organ weak;
And what impossibility would slay
In common sense, sense saves another way.

(II,i, 175-178)

The King's conversion is a triumph of 'wise credulity' (II,i, 175-178) over intellectual presumption, of intuition over logic and imagination over reason.⁸¹ It is also, of course, a triumph for the transforming power of poetry. In his contribution to the great Renaissance debate over

over whether rhyming or feigning most makes a poet,⁸² Shakespeare hedges his bets and takes no chances. The King reacts to the incantatory rhymes and rhythms of Helena's Medea-like spell (II,i, 160-168),⁸³ but he is equally responsive to the outlandishness of Helena's venture, her readiness to 'give and hazard all (she) hath' (All's Well, II,i, 183; The Merchant of Venice, II,vii, 9). It is the sheer implausible risk in Helena's behaviour which is the paradoxical guarantee of her 'rich validity' (V,ii, 192).

Here again Helena directly challenges Hamlet's poetics. She is not feigning precisely because she is so outrageously fictitious:

I am not an imposter, that proclaim
Myself against the level of mine aim.. (II,ii, 155-156).⁸⁴

Helena's disclaimer is a perfect dramatic projection of the story-teller's conditional contract with his audience. As in Parolles' speeches at I,ii, 150ff and III,vi, 55-57, 'I lie', the 'classic paradox of infinite regression', is reglossed as a form of linguistic change which can keep time with 'the rule of nature' (I,i, 134-135).⁸⁵ It is, however, thoroughly characteristic of Shakespeare's moral stringency in All's Well that Helena's metaphor should remind us of Polonius' 'indirection' (cf. Hamlet, II,i, 62-66). Her biased aim is, indeed, difficult to distinguish from his deviousness.⁸⁶

The opening of II,iii, complements Helena's anti-hypocritical stance in II,i, by projecting onto the stage our own confused responses to the apparent miracle we have just witnessed. The chorus-like detachment of Lafew's opening speech in defence of mystery and spirituality is immediately compromised by his earthy response to Helena as a sexual presence. As I have suggested, it is a discovery of All's Well that we all play many parts - not, as Jaques suggests, sequentially, but simultaneously. Lafew's sense of wonder is inseparable from the vicarious sexual pleasure which he

derives from the King's physical rejuvenation (11.25-26, 40-43). It is a pleasure which borders on prurience, so that Parolles' child-like insult, 'scurvy, old filthy, scurvy Lord!' (II,iii, 234) is not simply a slander.⁸⁷

Complementing Lafew's divided response to the miracle, the linguistic registers of II,iii, deliberately court bathos. We move from the overblown diction of 'farcinarius' and 'debile' (11.23,33) to obscurely funny expletives - 'Mor du vinager! Is not this Helen?' (1.43) - which invite laughter even as they express admiring amazement. Parolles' 'golden words' are sooner spent than Osric's (Hamlet, V,ii, 130). Weighty proper names, 'Galen and Paracelsus' (1.11), which recall the King's 'congregated college', assort strangely with the thingumajig mental torpidity of 'you shall read it in what-do-ye-call there' (11.21-22). After the prose eloquence of Lafew's opening speech, the scene progresses by snatches, as the two men botch up some kind of coherence from each other's unfinished clauses. Rather than being syntactically justified, the sense is confirmed by being emotively seconded with a 'Right, so I say', 'Just', or 'That's it, I would have said the very same' (11.13, 19, 34).

The gallymaufry of different idioms is a linguistic discors concordia; a formal representation of the contradictory elements of miracle and absurdity in the Impossibilia. In its projection of complex responses to a marvelous event, the scene is thoroughly Ovidian. At once detached and engaged, knowing and innocently wide-eyed, it acknowledges the element of wishfulfilment on the part of the beholders and yet solicits belief and respect precisely because the confidence trick is acknowledged. In short, the dramatist admits that he is, himself, no less of a 'pious fraud' than his heroine. By subverting any inclination to eloquence and aiming no higher than a broadside ballad,⁸⁸ Shakespeare proclaims himself 'against the level of (his) aim' and maintains his own integrity.

The scene prompts comparison with Antony and Cleopatra, II,vii, where an inebriated Antony and Lepidus consider the incomparable nature of the crocodile. Both scenes parody artistic attempts at finding the perfect mimetic 'likeness'. Helena, like the crocodile and Cleopatra, is a rare creature precisely because she is peerless. In Christian terms, she occasions belief because she contradicts reason: 'If it were according to reason it were no more a wonder; and were it to be matched, it were no more singular'.⁸⁹ Or, as Bottom, has it, 'Man is but an ass, if he go about to expound this dream' (A Midsummer Night's Dream, IV,i, 205-206). Parolles, who in any event can never find the mot juste, relies on the severely circumscribed vocabulary and simple repetitions, which for Shakespeare, as for Ovid and Saint Paul, are the only tenable responses to a miracle:

Nay, 'tis strange, 'tis very strange, that is
the brief and tedious of it.

(II,iii, 27-28)

All's Well That Ends Well provides ample evidence of the limitations of 'seeming knowledge' (II,iii, 5). But it also shows that human beings cannot rest easily in uncertainty. By the same token, the more words prove to be an inadequate medium for expressing true value, the more strenuous become the attempts to try to pin them down. As in the major tragedies, the quest for explanations and final causes is seen to correspond to a deep psychological need. "Finding out" and discovering how to 'take' people is a major preoccupation of all the characters in the play (cf. particularly, II,iii; IV,v; III,v,). By directly addressing itself to problems of interpretation, the play mirrors our own difficulties, reproducing our own failings and limitations as critics. So prevalent does the search for character definition become in the play, that it is subjected to parody:

Parolles: Go to, thou art a witty fool: I have found thee.

Clown: Did you find me in yourself, sir, or were you
taught to find me.

(II,iv, 31-33)

Lavatch's exposure of Parolles' strictly limited perspicacity is a warning to us all. Shakespeare invites us to see that a 'misprizing' of people and events is a necessary consequence of both the limitations of language and our own idiosyncratic angle of vision. And, indeed, the critical history of All's Well suggests that, like the characters in the play, we are ever ready to indulge in what Jane Adamson, who has noticed a similar affective continuity in Othello, calls 'the "comforts" of praise and blame'.⁹⁰ Shakespeare, however, encourages us to persist with our critical endeavours; we should take the sweet sense of Lavatch's meaning along with the sting:

....The search, sir, was profitable; and
much fool may you find in you, even to the world's
pleasure and the increase of laughter. (II,iv, 33-35)

By laughing at our own shortcomings, even as we adopt a superior attitude to Parolles' lack of critical insight, we vindicate the twin ends of poetry by finding both profit and delight in the energetic 'search' for meaning. Thus, whilst All's Well conspicuously rejects simplistic notions of mimesis, it nevertheless holds 'a mirror up to nature'. In its affective aesthetic, as in other respects, the play finds a roundabout way to the truth.

There are, of course, good pragmatic reasons for the regularizing of speech prefixes in modern editions of the play. Yet, because it is a discovery of All's Well that people realize themselves in different ways to different people, there are also good reasons why we should attend to the variety of appellations which Shakespeare used in the foul papers from which the Folio text was printed. There is an important sense in which

Bertram, who appears in the Folio as Ber., Count., and Ros., does indeed play a different role under each of those different names. The Countess (who is variously represented as Mo., Cou., Old Cou., and La.) similarly presents a different side of her character when she is acting as a mother (I,i) and when she is primarily aware of herself as an old noble woman (I,iii, 119-175).

Shakespeare's christening of characters in All's Well merits a whole study in itself. The names invite contradictory appraisals and it would seem that Shakespeare, after the manner of Montaigne in 'De Noms', wished to examine the possible connections between name and destiny. The presence of both 'Diana' and 'Helena' also seems to indicate that he was working towards the kind of mythological provenance which became important in Antony and Cleopatra and which had already been suggested in As You Like It.⁹¹

In All's Well, as in the earlier comedy, the myth of Diana and Actaeon is used to mirror the problems of interpretation. It helps us to see that the roles played by Diana and Bertram are highly ambiguous and invite a more complex response than either simple praise or blame. As the goddess of chastity, the mythological Diana could present an image of outraged innocence. But, as huntress, she could also be seen as a seductress and an unnecessarily harsh judge who condemned Actaeon for an accidental indiscretion. In All's Well, Diana's double-meaning name is reflected in the 'lawful deceit' in which she participates, and her dubious moral position is reflected in the riddling language with which she habitually justifies her behaviour:

Only, in this disguise, I think't no sin
To cozen him that would unjustly win.

(IV,ii, 75-76)

Because the play makes us aware that 'whatever is knowne...is knowne by the faculty of the knower',⁹² it is both funny and revealing when Bertram chooses to 'take' the seamier sense of 'Diana', making her into 'Fontybell', the 'modern' woman he would have her be (IV,ii, 1; V,iii, 216). It is even more delicious when he recovers from his faux pas only to suggest that her true title merits an heraldic 'addition' (IV,i, 4): by this stage in the play, 'Crests, Armes and Coats' have been thoroughly discredited as no more reliable signifiers than words themselves. Yet, because the name of this 'titled goddess' (IV,ii, 3) is inherently duplicitous, Shakespeare asks us to see that, though Bertram misleads Diana, he is also misled by her. Her name encourages his pursuit quite as much as it discourages it, and Diana's 'action' is, by her own admission, something less than lawful. Whatever her motive might be, she has 'cozened' Bertram, and, however distasteful his behaviour appears, he is not simply lying when he charges Diana with 'infinite cunning' (V,iii, 216).⁹³

'Parolles' is, of course, the central focus for the play's dialectical opposition of polysemy and linguistic singularity. Over its course, he is smoked out as a fox (III,vi, 95-97); nosed out as a fish (V,ii, 19-25); and 'taken' for a hen, a lark, and a bunting (II,iii, 211-212; II,v, 5-6). Figuratively translated into fur, fish and fowl he is, like Spenser's smooth-talking Archimago, identified by the traditional disguises of Proteus.⁹⁴ Frequently threatened with a whipping, Parolles is the object of disciplinary measures from the moment Lafew first 'finds' him (II,iii, 204). And when 'the double-meaning prophesier' is eventually put into a darkened room and locked in the stocks, the binding of Proteus is realized as a powerful informing myth.

Shakespeare, however, does not show us Parolles in his shackles. For the image to become fully dramatic, we must wait for King Lear, where Kent

is subjected to the same disturbing punishment for his runaway tongue. In All's Well, the binding of Parolles is the obverse of the fully theatrical image of Babel which is also presented in Act IV - though which is the positive, which is the negative image is one of the great questions raised by the play. For the moment, it is worth noting that: the King is also characterized as a 'Royal Fox' who can 'dance canary' (II,i, 69-73); the image of a double-meaning prophesier' is at least as applicable to Helena and Diana, who habitually employ riddling language, as it is to Parolles, who (like Kent) is frequently all too transparent; and Dumaine plays word-games even as he stands in judgment over Parolles for the same crime, refusing to answer Bertram 'as (he) would be understood' (IV, iii, 105).

Parolles is, of course, ultimately perceived by Bertram as a 'damnable both-sides rogue' (IV,iii, 217). The identification invites us to see him as a verbal trickster in the same tradition as Preston's Vice, Ambidexter, who physically represents 'two meanings in one word'.⁹⁵ However, one need only recall the verbal dexterity of Shakespeare's Richard III to recognize the poor quality of Parolles' manipulative ability. It is also interesting to note that the two lords who cause such editorial headaches should be given the family name 'Dumaine' - suggesting that they might equally be seen as 'Ambidexters'!⁹⁶

Parolles also cuts a pretty poor dash as a miles gloriosus. Although he is, as it were, 'puffed up' by the play's imagery, he never comes near the stature of a Falstaff. There is as little hard evidence of his boastfulness as there is of his verbal mastery, and though he has been seen as 'the most severly criticized' of all Shakespeare's boastful soldiers,⁹⁷ it is difficult to see why. Parolles' silk scarves hold the promise of a refinement he is never able to deliver, and his sartorial flamboyance is, itself, a kind of 'caveat emptor' which guards others against taking him at face value. Indeed, in the gulling scene, it becomes evident that

Parolles' extreme form of mendacity is his saving grace:

He hath out-villained villainy so far that
the rarity redeems him. (IV,iii, 265-266)

Dumaine's appreciation of Parolles is a variation on Touchstone's paradox, a further reminder that 'the truest poetry is the most feigning'. Yet, while it is clear that Parolles is in one sense no more of an impostor than Helena, Shakespeare makes it equally clear that Bertram cannot afford to accept Dumaine's 'nice' appraisal:

A pox on him! He's a cat still. (IV,iii, 267)

We are asked to see that, in a world of appearances where essences are illusory, what matters is not what one is, but how one is 'taken'. It is enough that Parolles is perceived as a corruptive influence. Shakespeare, however, underlines the ironic inadequacy of such judgments both by the marked discrepancy between 'telling' and 'showing', and by displaying Parolles' so-called faults in those who claim to be his betters. Only just out of ear-shot is the question finally posed by Lear:

.....change places and handy-dandy, which
is the justice, which is the thief?

(King Lear, IV,vi, 153-154)

Thus, on the face of it, 'Lafew' would seem to be a natural corrective to 'Parolles': opposing verbal profligacy with linguistic economy. Here again, however, there is contradiction as well as conformity in the name. Pregnant and pithy as Lafew's replies are, they frequently adopt the manner of saying 'the thing which is not'. In his own way, Lafew devalues the linguistic coin quite as much as Parolles by accepting it at something other than its face value. What is gained in economic compression is lost in expansive ambiguity. Shakespeare, of course, allows that those values might well be inverted, but, as an ironist, Lafew, at least, is no simple advocate of 'plain' speaking. Though he delights in 'finding' Parolles,

the discovery says little for his perspicacity and Shakespeare invites us to consider which really poses the greater danger - Parolles' 'fixed evils' and lattice-like transparency (II,iii, 212), or Lafew's dark, dry double-ness.

It is worth noting that both Lafew and Parolles cast themselves in the role of Pandarus. The former mediates between the King and Helena (II,i, 98); the latter is a go-between for Bertram and Diana (V,iii, 257-258). This self-casting points up the likeness between seeming opposites, while dynamically conditioning the way we 'take' the partners in the respective affairs, suggesting that their identities are also something less than fixed. 'Why', asked Wilson Knight, 'are Shakespeare's two-man chasing women, in A Midsummer Night's Dream and All's Well That Ends Well...both called Helena?'.⁹⁸ It is a good question because it is one which Shakespeare directs us to consider in the case of the later comedy:

Lafew: 'Twas a good lady, 'twas a good lady. We may pick a thousand sallets ere we light on such another herb.

Clown: Indeed, sir, she was the sweet-majoram of the sallet, or, rather, the herb of grace.

Lafew: They are not herbs, you knave, they are nose-herbs.

Clown: I am no great Nabuchadnezzar, sir, I have not much skill in grass. (IV,v, 12-19)

The dramatic point of this exchange, which can seem to turn on an obscure and even 'feeble' distinction between salad plants and scented plants,⁹⁹ is in fact central to the moral problems posed in All's Well. As in 'De Noms', the herbal image spotlights the difficulty of using an imprecise medium to make important and discriminating judgments about people. If a single word, be it 'herb' or 'Helena' can signify a variety of objects, how can we judge the peculiar qualities which are intended in any given instance of naming?

The name which Shakespeare chose for his heroine is all the more

interesting when one considers that 'Helen' was both a notable rhetorical instance of 'a thing without honour', and of nomen omen: 'a conviction that in some supernatural way a man's name might, if properly interpreted, contain the secret of his destiny, or reveal his true character' (my italics).¹⁰⁰ Even when 'the word is, or exactly represents, its essence or substance', the question of interpretation remains crucial. With the exception of a few God-given instances (Christ's naming of Peter: the rock), correct meaning is again seen to turn on the touchstone of the imperfect human understanding. G.K. Hunter suggests that 'Helena' is 'almost a synonym for "love"'.¹⁰¹ But, as both Parolles and Helena demonstrate, 'love' is itself a highly equivocal word, the meaning of which changes with the circumstances in which it is used. In certain classical forms, the actual caligraphy of 'Helen' contained an element signifying destruction: the power with which the name was synonymous was seen as a highly dangerous one. If, as has been suggested, the name could be read as a pun on 'destroyer of ships', Cassandra's cry, 'A Helen and a woe!' (Troilus and Cressida, II,iii, 111) is emphatically repetitious. When one also reflects that 'woman' was, itself, a favourite Elizabethan instance of false 'argument from the name' (cf. Fraunce: 'A woman is a woe man, because shee woorketh a man woe'),¹⁰² it becomes a case of truly compound tautology!

The name 'Helena' thus presents in a particularly exaggerated form the tension between fixed meaning and ambiguity, 'plain' speaking and riddle, fatalism and free will which is felt throughout All's Well. Despite her 'fixed intents', Helena is no less of an arrivistée than Parolles, and no less convinced of her own 'free scope' (I,i, 214). The various claims for her de facto nobility culminate in the King's great apology for her lack of name (II,iii, 116ff) and the Countess' readiness to accept Helena as 'all my child' (III,ii, 67). Yet the exchange at IV,v, which casts doubt on Helena's claim to be 'a herb of grace', looks back to an earlier

moment in the play when her indeterminate status is perceived as problematic. The Countess may praise Helena's application of natural gifts (I, i, 37-44), but she remains aware that, as an appellation for 'a poor physician's daughter', even a quite modest title may not universally be understood. When a steward is asked to convey a message to 'my gentlewoman', the Countess feels obliged to add, ' - Helen, I mean' (I,iii, 66-67).

We begin to see the sense in which Helena and Bertram, whose status as a 'gentleman' is similarly called into question, are not simply opposites but 'like likes'. Both must win the right to their titles. In I,iii, the Countess' diffident use of 'Helen' provides the perfect opening for the Clown. The snatch of a song which Lavatch performs (ll.68-77) permits us to infer that Helena might indeed share Bertram's lascivious nature. At the very least, it casts doubt on the status and integrity of this 'Helen' by asking us to consider her possible 'likeness' to that other 'Helen' of infamous renown.

The song of Lavatch - if indeed it is intended to be sung - maximizes the interpretative difficulties which we encounter elsewhere in All's Well: apparent incompleteness; indeterminate subjects and problematical pronouns; repetition with inversion which significantly alters the sense. Because it has come to be regarded as a crux, the song merits further consideration in its own right (see Appendix). The important point here is that the song forces us to acknowledge that 'Helen', like Lavatch's 'O Lord, sir,' is a common appellation which can accommodate more than one subject. By introducing a perplexing comparison between his own seemingly virtuous heroine and the 'ransack'd queen' of Troy (Troilus and Cressida, II,ii, 150), Shakespeare stimulates our interpretative energies. When we question the propriety of the dramatist's naming, we second his own 'good wit' with the 'forward child' of our own understanding and thus actively engage in the realization of the drama.

Shakespeare, however, asks us to see that the song of Lavatch and the character of 'Helen' can be interpreted in a number of different ways. As in As You Like It, III,iii, we are forced to recognize that a range of critical and theatrical responses are necessary for the on-going life of the drama. And the imperfect formal quality of All's Well brings the later comedy even closer to the open-ended and highly contentious stories of the Metamorphoses. Given Shakespeare's fondness for the collocation of 'Naso' and 'odiferous flowers of fancy',¹⁰³ Lafew may well be punning on Ovid's name in his lesson on linguistic varying at IV,ii, 16-17. Associated with both healing and redemption, 'the sweet marjoram of the sallet' and a herb of grace',¹⁰⁴ 'Helen' might equally be 'taken' for a herb of a very different nature. It is surely no coincidence that, later in the play, the name is confused syntactically with that of 'Maudlin', the most 'doubtfull' of all Christian saints.

Because, as Montaigne suggests, the rich 'diversitie' of 'herbs' is 'shuffled up together under the name of sallade', the name brings variety and savour to sentences. The changes in meaning also allow for changes in circumstance and the realization of alternative possibilities in an individual character. 'Sallets' is the word which serves Jack Cade in extremis as both 'a quart pot to drink in' and 'something to feed on' (2 Henry VI, IV,x, 14-15). And Ophelia's sweet herbal tributes offer instruction in the variety of human nature and the 'differences' between man and man.¹⁰⁵ 'There were no sallets in the lines to make the matter savoury', says Hamlet in his role of drama critic (Hamlet, II,ii, 437).¹⁰⁶ But it is just this salt and vinegar quality which Helena brings to All's Well and, by his choice of name, Shakespeare cautions us against 'taking' her for any singular 'thing'.

In Shakespeare's plays, as in comedy in general, clowns traditionally demonstrate the capacity of language to express both idiosyncratic meanings

and those of the community. The common etymology of 'conversion' and 'conversation' (Ln. 'convertere': to turn or to transform),¹⁰⁷ is revealed in the clown's favourite weapon, the pun, which, as Peter Davison has shown, is a celebration of both individualism and consensus in language.¹⁰⁸

The somewhat meagre clown's part, a subject of critical complaint against All's Well, may reflect the fact that in this play every man is locked in his own linguistic 'misprision' and community values are extremely difficult to come by. The underwritten part of Lavatch befits a play in which, at the climax of the comic sub-plot, the characters no longer speak or understand the same language and must rely on an 'interpreter' for communication. More importantly, however, since role assignment in All's Well is extremely tentative, Lavatch is neither a simple clown nor the only one! In II,iv, Parolles triumphantly 'finds' Lavatch a knave, but the scene shows the two continually changing places. In IV,iv, Lavatch suggests that he is

A fool at a woman's service, and a knave at a man's. (1.21)

By offering to serve Lafew in both capacities simultaneously, the clown manages to cast doubt on the sexual identity of the aging courtier (a bone of contention elsewhere in the play)¹⁰⁹ while indicating that his own role is no more determinate than that of the devil, who goes under many aliases (IV,v, 30ff). In All's Well, the jester's cap does not only fit 'him who plays the fool', and the part of the clown changes hands almost as frequently as the ring, that other eloquent emblem of human relativity.¹¹⁰ Here again, the play anticipates the handy-dandy world of King Lear, where the willingness of others to play the fool ultimately renders the traditional role expendable.

Shakespeare's diffident casting in All's Well is a dramatic projection

of human inconsistency and insufficiency. The dramatist acknowledges that he must contend with the same limitations of logic and language as the characters in the play, and can make no claim to have realized his intentions in the written word. Like the Metamorphoses, All's Well That Ends Well is an aleatory text whose meaning can only be realized in individual interpretation and the readings made manifest in performance.

If, however, Shakespeare is willing to recognize the limitations on his own artistic control over the drama, the achievement of the storyteller's detached attitude to his work is seen as no easy matter. In All's Well we are, on the contrary, constantly made aware of the emotional charge that can go into words and the effort expended in making them carry the full force of feeling. Where the action of Hamlet is advanced by a play-script, that of All's Well turns on the writing, receiving and interpretation of letters. Words may be reviled as corrupt and ineffectual, but the second acts of both plays reveal that language is indispensable. The imperative, 'write, write' resounds through the third act of All's Well like a call to arms (III,iv, 8 & 29). There are frequent reminders that, though language can be emasculated as 'breath' (II,i, 148), it can also be a force to be reckoned with:

Duke: So that from point to point now have you heard
 The fundamental reasons of this war,
 Whose great decision hath much blood let forth,
 And more thirsts after. (III,i, 1-4)

.....

1st Lord: Hath the Count all this intelligence?

2nd Lord: Ay, and the particular confirmations, point
 from point, to the full arming of the verity.

(IV,iii, 57-60)

Here every attempt is made to be punctilious and to use language with great precision. An equation is made between syntactic justification and

martial virtue: the pen is wielded as a sword.¹¹¹ We are asked to see, however, that that very resolution (the antithesis of the fractured conversation of Lafew and Parolles in II,iii, or Lavatch's snatch of a song) is itself the cause of bloodshed. 'Decision' proves to be destructive and 'intelligence' - a word used at III,vi, 28 to mean 'betrayal' - is seen to be self-defeating. As Helena says to the Widow Capilet:

If you misdoubt me that I am not she,
I know not how I shall assure you further
But I shall lose the grounds I work upon.

(III,vii, 1-3)

In All's Well, as in Hamlet, we are forced to consider the dangers of determinism and to see the potential value of irresolution.

The 'point' uniting the pen and the sword is also the point of law. In All's Well, one is frequently reminded of Montaigne's sardonic observation that military, religious and legal conflicts are a direct consequence of linguistic disputation: 'Most of the occasions of this world's troubles are Grammaticall'.¹¹² In the same famous passage of the 'Apologie of Raymond Sebond', Montaigne takes as his own emblem not only the scales of justice but the qualifying motto, 'Que scay-je?': 'What do I know?'.¹¹³ And throughout the essay, which, despite its title, is a devastating attack on the claim to unaided human reason, Montaigne freely admits that his own understanding and judgment are frequently wanting: '...my Touchstone...commonly found false and my ballance is un-even and unjust'.¹¹⁴

In All's Well That Ends Well, 'justice' is similarly revealed as a flattering gloss for 'esteem', the time-bound relativity and subjectivity of individual perception. Judgments theoretically based on reason are shown in practice to be dictates of 'sense' of a different kind (II,i, 123-124). And while 'sentences' - a form of absolutism at once legal and grammatical (I,iii, 74; III,ii, 60) - are further undermined by linguistic

frailties, Shakespeare delights in showing that only other people's words may be freely interpreted. One's own conclusions must be seen to carry a quite precise weight and have an unquestionable authority. Thus the King rejects Bertram's verbal assessment of Helena's 'desert' and, though he affects to scorn 'the mere word', would have Bertram appropriate his own royal estimation of Helena, which he believes more than counter-balances the phrase, 'a poor physician's daughter' (II,iii, 122, 152-154). The inexperienced youth, who begs leave to try his own untested vision, is required to submit his fancy to the King's eyes (II,iii, 105-108; 116-167) - much as in the earlier comedy Helena must 'fit (her) fancies to her father's will' and 'choose love by another's eyes', or submit to the full rigor of the Athenian law (A Midsummer Night's Dream, I,i, 118, 140).

Yet while the pen can be used as an instrument of violence and of legal intransigence, it is also the means by which powerful feelings find expression. Rinaldo is to 'set down sharply' the Countess' 'greatest grief', so that the unfeeling Bertram might feel the full 'weight' of her distress (III,iv, 31-33). The Widow Capilet¹¹⁵ expresses her empathy for the wife of a 'detesting lord' in similar terms:

I write, good creature, whereso'er she is,
Her heart weighs sadly. (III,v, 65-66; 1684-1685)

In modern texts, this Folio reading is usually emended to 'I weet' or 'I warrant'.¹¹⁶ However, the editorial change weakens a locution which Shakespeare uses with great care throughout the play. The Widow's words testify to the strength of her fellow-feeling for a distressed woman, and her expression recovers the full sense of commitment which, in a more innocent world, went with the setting down of words upon a page. At the same time, the very need to 'put it in writing' is felt as a mark of experience: a man's word is no longer 'as good as his bond'. As Feste says, 'Words are very rascals since bonds disgrac'd them' (Twelfth Night, III,i, 20).

At a time when easier methods of reproduction were devaluing the written word, Shakespeare recovers the primary meaning of 'to write' as signification: 'To form by carving, engraving, or incision, to trace in or on...a hard surface, especially with a sharp instrument' (O.E.D. 1(b)). The pen is well-fitted for violence, but the marks in the trees of Arden bear witness to Rosalind's 'virtue' and to the full vehemence of Orlando's love (As You Like It, III,i, 10). In All's Well, there is a moment when even Parolles feels the need to similarly commit himself. To steel himself for the recovery of the drum, he will 'pen down my dilemmas' and 'encourage myself in my certainty' (III,vi, 68-70). Parolles' highly ambiguous words provide a perfect image for the dialectical method of All's Well, itself, in which the process of writing is in part the suppression, in part the containment of doubt.

At the very end of the play, attempts are still being made to use language as a precision instrument. The characters remain in pursuit of the phantom 'plain' meaning:

King: Let us from point to point this story know
To make the even truth in pleasure flow.

(V,iii, 322-323)

The rhyme softens the King's reasonable resolution, bringing his idiom closer to Helena's creative use of ambiguous language. He is unaware, however, of how ironic that 'even' strikes us. Unmindful of the deep contradiction in what he says, France has forgotten his earlier intimation that 'More to know could not be more to trust'. (II,i, 206).

As with character notation, there are good pragmatic reasons why modern editors should emend the loose and seemingly wayward punctuation of the Folio. I have come to believe, however, that All's Well That Ends Well is a highly experimental text which formally mirrors its philosophical scepticism. Shakespeare was, I think, attempting to find a syntax which

would stimulate the interpretative energies of his audiences and be flexible enough to accommodate a variety of interpretations. The loose punctuation, like the indeterminate pronouns and the syntactic ellipses, allows for the realization in performance of quite different tones and meanings. Peppering the text with 'points' inevitably removes some of the creative ambiguity, taking the play closer to a 'distinction' (II,iii, 19: the rhetorical antithesis of 'doubtful') which is seen as both an irrepressible human need and a dangerous determinism.

In trying to mediate between our desire for a definitive reading of All's Well and our recognition that any such reading is necessarily delimiting, we could do worse than to follow the example of Helena as she progresses through the play. The central acts offer her and us lessons in criticism. Carefully exercised interpretative licence is seen to ameliorate the deterministic authority of fate, the law and language itself.

They are no easy lessons for Helena to learn. She is a lady possessed of a considerable 'will' (II,i, 202) - a word which is no less important in All's Well, than in Troilus and Cressida, Hamlet and the Sonnets, and which collocates a number of senses. What Helena calls her 'fixed intents' (I,i, 125) is an aspect of an instinct for possession which is both sexual and aesthetic. In the betrothal scene, Helena would seem to avoid the presumption of claiming Bertram as a right. The diffident offering of herself to 'imperial Love' is, in fact, much after the manner of Pygmalion's 'fearful prayer' to Venus when he nominates his choice of a bride (II,iii, 74-76; Metamorphoses, X, 274/10, 297). But more is required of Shakespeare's heroine who, like Pygmalion, must project not only her own integrity, but also that of her creator. Helena is obliged to recognize that her own 'liking' is matched by a considerable 'disliking' (II,iii, 121-122) on the part of Bertram, while her own appetite runs counter to the direction in which his 'will' takes him (III,vii, 27; IV,iv, 50). Helena's desire for

control must, accordingly, be balanced by a willingness to let Bertram have the freedom he so clearly needs.

This 'readiness' - to borrow the word with which Hamlet reconciles fate and free will - is inseparable from Helena's discovery that words and objects are not inevitably locked into a lifetime embrace. As her linguistic philosophy becomes less deterministic, so her attitude to marriage becomes more accommodating. Bertram's letter shows Helena that she has been guilty of the kind of lofty presumption which she has been quick to condemn in the King. When first she reads the letter, Helena pronounces it 'a dreadful sentence' (III,ii, 60). If the harsh judgment on her is to be overruled, Helena must find a way of making Bertram's seemingly implacable diction and syntax yield a milder meaning. One of the Dumaine brothers attempts to comfort Helena by distinguishing between the strokes on the page and the feeling behind the letter; the signification and what it can be taken to mean:

'Tis but the boldness of his hand, haply,
which his heart was not consenting to.

(III,ii, 78-79)

This liberal interpretative criterion corresponds to what the Countess elsewhere calls her 'slowness' when she introduces the claims of the heart against the head in mitigation of a harsh judgment on Lavatch (I, iii, 9-12). In III,iv, the Countess brings extra-textual criteria into play when she finds 'sharp stings' in the 'mildest words' of Helena's letter (1.18). And it is the Countess who sets an example in the earlier scene when she transposes Bertram's sentence, 'Till I have no wife I have nothing in France' (III,ii, 75), thereby making it clear to Helena that she is the stumbling block to Bertram's return. The transposition forces Helena to see that she herself is, as it were, the fixed condition which is preventing Bertram from complying with his substantive clause:

'Till I have no wife I have nothing in France.'
 Nothing in France until he has no wife!
 Thou shalt have none, Rossillion, none in France,
 Then hast thou all again. (III,ii, 99-102)

By accepting the onus of the action, Helena at once asserts her own free will and recognizes Bertram's ancestral birthright - a right of aristocratic possession enshrined in the title she is now careful to employ. 'No wife in France' has been discovered to mean something quite different from 'No wife, "point"', and Bertram's 'dreadful sentence' has proved as liberating as the riddles which, in a final rejection of the literal-mindedness of mimetic blank-verse, Helena will soon take as her own idiom. She has already begun to write a 'yet' in Bertram's 'never' (III,ii, 59), a word which Coleridge considered the most terrible in the language.¹¹⁷

Linguistic inconsistencies celebrate the human capacity to change and realize new selves. When in III,v, the action of the play moves to Florence, Helena and the audience discover aspects of Bertram's character which are not recognized in France, where his reputation is at a very low ebb. In Italy, however, Bertram's French identity is beside the point. As Diana says, 'What some'er he is, / He's bravely taken here' (ll.50-51). Shakespeare asks us to consider that Diana's 'Bertram' might indeed be different from Helena's 'Bertram', just as Diomed's 'Cressid' is not the same as Troilus' (Troilus and Cressida, V,ii, 126ff). As the earlier play shows, it is a possibility which perplexes as much as it pleases, but it helps to explicate a significant crux in All's Well.

Helena is often charged with wilful and gratuitous mendacity when she tells Diana that she does not 'know' 'the Count Rossillion' who has 'done worthy service' in Italy (III,v, 44-49). Helena is no ordinary saint.

Even her choice of the doubtfully-named St. Jaques as a patron suggests the dubious nature of her pilgrimage. Nevertheless, Helena chooses to interpret the words of Diana and the Widow with great scrupulousness here. According to Quintilian, we remember, propriety in the use of language 'turns not on the actual term, but on the meaning of the term, and must be tested by the touchstone of the understanding, not the ear'.¹¹⁸ Only in Bertram's absence from France, has Helena discovered that he has a kind of self that does not reside with her. Having encountered the Bertram who fits Diana's tall title 'But by the ear, that hears most nobly of him', Helena as yet does not, in the sense she chooses to understand the word, 'know' his face (II.48-49).

There is, of course, another Biblical sense in which Helena does not yet 'know' Bertram. And in All's Well we are frequently reminded that, in George Steiner's words, 'Eros and language mesh at every point'.¹¹⁹ The King uses words to 'build up' Helena's reputation as a 'breeder' of honour (II,iii, 130-133). He is himself transformed by the combined effects of her sexual presence and her poetry, much as, later in the play, an unnamed gentleman is similarly 'vanquished' by Helena's 'fair grace and speech' (V,iii, 133). Words contribute to the making of Bertram. The letter of the Countess begins to work his regeneration:

There is
something in't that stings his nature, for on the reading
it he changed almost into another man.
(IV,iii, 2-4)¹²⁰

But words alone cannot bring about his complete metamorphosis. They are, as it were, a rehearsal, and must be complemented by a fully theatrical 'performance' (II,i, 202).

The 'action' that Helena goes about (III,vii, 45-49) may, like Hermione's, be for her 'better grace'. But, as that doubtful word suggests, its legal standing is as questionable as Hamlet's production of 'The

Mousetrap' or the highly theatrical 'action' by which Parolles is 'tried' (III,vi, 15-16). More importantly than Hamlet himself, Helena comes to understand that 'our indiscretion sometimes serves us well' (Hamlet, V, ii, 7), and the effects of All's Well are consequently more radical than those of the earlier tragedy. The subsequent action of the play forces us to re-interpret Helena's ambiguous question in the opening scene:

Who ever strove
To show her merit that did miss her love?
(I,i, 222-223)

Because Helena has been striving to show (off) her own worth, she has neglected to consider Bertram's deserving. In the third act, however, she comes to see the limitations of a 'reserved honesty' (III,v, 61). Her own 'Ambitious love' is now re-glossed as a kill-joy emotion, no less mean-spirited than Juno's proprietorial interceptions of Jove's amorous adventures (III,iv, 5,13). What is required of Helena is a willingness to venture more herself. She must take great risks and even be prepared to embrace her own antithetical self-image, in order to give Bertram the licence which, as a young man, he values in Parolles and Diana.¹²¹

Helena, in other words, sees the full implications of Hamlet's final perception that good intentions can be realized only in performance (cf. Hamlet, V,ii, 30-31). The value of the 'plot' which is jointly undertaken by Helena and Diana is totally conditional upon its enactment:

Let us assay our plot, which, if it speed,
Is wicked meaning in a lawful deed,
And lawful meaning in a lawful act,
Where both not sin, and yet a sinful fact.
But let's about it.
(III,vii, 45-49)

The highly dubious strategem, couched in equally doubtful language which has the capacity to express a number of subjects simultaneously,¹²² circumvents a hubris which is both sexual and syntactic. The singular intransigence of the 'sentence' is avoided, and Bertram is liberated from

the 'bondage' of marriage:

He is too good and fair for death and me;
Whom I myself embrace to set him free.

(III,iv, 16-17)

The familiar sonnet conceit which concludes Helena's letter is revitalized by the dramatic action of the whole play, while Helena's hazardous venture is matched by Shakespeare's risk-taking in All's Well That Ends Well. 'Performance' is seen as the only means of expressing both sexual and literary intentions. Helena sets an example for Cleopatra who has 'such a celerity in dying' (Antony and Cleopatra, I,ii, 140), and the unusual conflation of tones in the comedy anticipates the more outrageous mingle of 'kinds' in the tragedy - a truly aleatory drama in which 'performance' is cast as a game of chance played for the very highest stakes.

The experience of Antony and Cleopatra can also help us to find value at the heart of the very darkest observations about human nature in All's Well That Ends Well. The metaphors which yoke together the military and amatory plots show that the violent expression of feeling is also a creative one. Words are 'engines of lust' with a capacity to 'blow up' women: begetting new life even in the vehemence of their destructive power (All's Well, III,v, 19-20; I,i, 113-114). Seen from one perspective, the rebellious 'sense' brings self-loathing and a recognition of self-betrayal in the wake of its revolution:

First Lord: Now, God delay our rebellion! As we are
ourselves, what things are we!

Second Lord: Merely our own traitors. And as in the
common course of all treasons we still see them
reveal themselves till they attain their abhorred
ends, so he that in this action contrives against
his own nobility, in his proper stream o'erflows
himself.

(IV,iii, 18-24)

The language is so powerful that we are, I think, compelled to endorse

the criticism, even as we question the credentials of those who express such moral indignation. Yet even here there is a paradoxical compensation for the violence of passion. Bertram, we hear, 'hath perverted a young gentlewoman' and 'fleshes his will in the spoil of her honour' (IV,iii, 13-15). The hunting metaphor partially indemnifies Bertram, by recalling the Actaeon myth and pointing up the dubious role of Diana.¹²³ Moreover, as in Sonnet 65, 'the spoil of beauty' (l.12) is seen as an intractable, if remorseless, part of the natural process. Bertram's passion is as much a mark of his natural nobility, as is Helena's in I,iii, and the approbation of the Countess is no less warranted in the case of her son: 'this thorn / Doth to our rose of youth rightly belong' (I,iii, 124-125). Bertram 'undoes himself by means of the very powers which make him noble':¹²⁴ he 'o'er flows himself' 'in his proper stream'. Dumaine's unwitting apology for passion echoes the pragmatism of Parolles on the 'getting of virgins' (I,i, 127). It also anticipates Antony and Cleopatra, where the 'o'er flowing Nilus' (I,ii, 46) is a central symbol for the paradoxical process of doing and undoing which dominates the play. Judged by the strictest moral canons, Bertram's 'performance', like the drama itself, is necessarily abhorrent. It is, nevertheless, the 'show and seal of nature's truth' (I,iii, 127).¹²⁵

We can also begin to discern in this sequence a process of natural self-regulation which compensates for the deficiencies of civic justice.¹²⁶ Shakespeare suggests that, in trumpeting 'our unlawful intents', we bring an 'action' against ourselves which finds our noble self-image to be something less than just (IV,ii, 20-26). The most famous crux in All's Well would seem to suggest that that very linguistic facility which enables reason to pander will, also gives men enough rope to hang themselves:

I see that men make rope's in such a scarre,
That wee'll forsake ourselves. (First Folio, ll.2063-2064)

Diana's riddle is certainly problematic.¹²⁷ But there is evidence elsewhere that 'ropes' or 'tropes' are, indeed, emblems of metamorphosis. Excess proves to be its own moderator, as verbal superfluity serves as the punishment as well as the crime. Lavatch is obliged to recognize that his catch-phrase will 'serve long, but not serve ever':

Do you cry, 'O Lord, sir!' at your whipping,
and 'spare not me'? Indeed your 'O Lord, sir!'
is very sequent to your whipping: you would answer very
well to a whipping, if you were but bound to't.

(II,ii, 49-52)

Revitalizing a dead metaphor, the Countess shows that a thoughtless blasphemy can become a supplicating cry for mercy, a plea which will, indeed, 'serve all men' (II,ii, 14). In much the same progression, Parolles, 'a snipped taffeta fellow' (IV,v, 2), is ultimately 'bound' by the silk scarves of his own rhetoric.¹²⁸ The 'chough's language, gabble enough and good enough' (IV,i, 19-20), spoken by Parolles' adversaries is a parodic exaggeration of his own verbal profligacy. It is a tongue 'the manifold linguist' finds unintelligible, although, like Lavatch, he understands the threat of punishment well enough and is similarly obliged sue for grace.

In his 'Sebond' essay, Montaigne suggests that the Babel myth is both a representation of and God's punishment for man's hubristic faith in his own discourse.¹²⁹ This interpretation of the myth might be seen to inform both the gulling of Parolles and Shakespeare's vivid characterization of the King's pride in II,i, and II,iii. Yet in All's Well as in Hamlet, judgment is not imposed from without. Both sexual and linguistic libertarianism are seen to carry the seeds of their own decay. Shakespeare presents a process of natural rather than divine justice, whereby things growing to a 'pleurisy' die in their own 'too much', destroying themselves with their own 'enactures' (Hamlet, IV,vii, 117-118; III,ii, 192).

This dynamic, revolutionary model is the playwright's answer to the moralist's ideal of linguistic stasis and singularity. At the end of his 'Sebond' essay, Montaigne describes a world of metamorphic flux in which 'nothing can be certainly established, nor of the one, nor of the other; both the judging and the judged being in continual alteration and motion'. Dependent on our truant senses for intelligence and caught up in a world of 'hathe beene' and 'shall be', human beings have no communication with 'things' outside themselves. Only God, who uniquely escapes the eternally syncopated dance of subject and object, is in a position to judge. He alone evades the 'declinations' of 'was and shall be'. He alone 'is'.¹³⁰

The King in All's Well, who attempts to isolate value from the metamorphic effects of time and language, speaks as God's earthly representative. As in Montaigne's essay, a connection is made between human inconsistency and variation in grammatical form, between 'declination' and 'declension':

If she be
All that is virtuous, save what thou dislikest -
A poor physician's daughter - thou dislikest
Of virtue for the name. But do not so.

....

Good alone
Is good, without a name: vileness is so;
The property by what it is should go,
Not by the title.

....

Virtue and she
Is her own dower; honour and wealth from me.

(II,iii, 120-143)

The reiterated present tense of the verb 'to be' is a reflection of the King's God-given judicial authority. It is also, as I have suggested, a reflection of Helena's peerless virtue and thus of the new-found faith of Shakespeare's humanist monarch.

The King's attempt to isolate 'good alone' can also be seen as a much

more worldly pragmatism. God's representative is also a human being who has lived long enough to see the linguistic depreciation of things he holds dear. His praise of Helena's intrinsic virtue is predicated on the total devaluation of the marks of honour - titles, names, heraldic emblems and ancestral trappings - by which society traditionally distinguishes honour.¹³¹ Shakespeare's King who can 'build up' and 'create' (1.142) a noble image for Helena would feel very much at home in Montaigne's France, where instant genealogies can be similarly manufactured to order or whim:

'Tis only title thou disdainest in her, the which
I can build up. Strange is it that our bloods,
Of colour, weight, and heat, poured all together,
Would quite confound distinction, yet stands off
In differences so mighty. ...

....

From lowest place when virtuous things proceed,
The place is dignified by th'doer's deed.
Where great additions swell's and virtue none,
It is a dropsied honour. ...

(II,iii. 116-120, 124-127).

Both 'differences' and 'additions' are used in a quite precise heraldic sense, while the context brings out fully that pejorative view of emblems which we find in Montaigne's 'De Noms' - the superficial 'ajoyment' of the word to the thing which marks its essential estrangement.

But the King's sickly-swelling metaphors have a truly Shakespearean density, suggesting both the questionable proposition on which the war is advanced (I,ii, 16-18; III,i, 17-19) and the sexual presumption and spiritual pride which is characterized elsewhere in the play. Like the exchange between the Countess and Lavatch in I,iii, the King's argument is deeply resonant of the language of 1 Corinthians, where St. Paul's caricature of 'puffed up' humanity is aimed at deflating a pretension which is at once spiritual, sexual and linguistic.¹³²

However, the moral criticism does not, as in Montaigne's essay, lead

to a pious conclusion.¹³³ Rather the perception of things as they might be is once again tempered by a ready acceptance of things as they are. The devalued heraldic emblems are not rejected but reinvigorated by the introduction of natural criteria. 'Great additions' are transformed into the procreative sexual impulse, while the common urge to breed overcomes 'distinctions' of breeding and the 'differences' between the sexes. Thus Lavatch had argued that the common denominator of cuckoldry can override differences of sex, age and doctrine:

If men could be contented to be
what they are, there were no fear in marriage; for
young Charbon the puritan and old Poysam the papist,
howsome'er their hearts are severed in religion, their
heads are both one: they may jowl horns together like
any deer i'th'herd.

(I,iii, 49-54)

'How many weighty strifes, and important quarrels', asks Montaigne, 'hath the doubt of this one sillable, hoc, brought forth in the world?'¹³⁴ If the question is implicit in the Clown's speech, so is the answer. Judged by a natural criterion which fosters a more generous spirit of understanding, 'differences' can prove to be creative rather than destructive. Men and women can meet on equal terms, and old papist and young purist feast on a communal dinner of fish and flesh: a doctrinal discors concordia in which they 'join like likes, and kiss like native things' (I,i, 219).

In All's Well this hypothesis is realized in the person of Helena, who is what Dromio of Syracuse would call 'an heir by nature':¹³⁵

She is young, wise, fair;
In these to nature she's immediate heir
And these breed honour; that is honour's scorn
Which challenges itself as honour's born
And is not like the sire. Honours thrive
When rather from our acts we them derive
Than our foregoers.

(II,iii, 130-136)

Helena's sexual vigour revitalizes the spent decorum of the heraldic tournament (1.133 and cf. IV,ii, 49-51). The King contrasts her natural

fecundity with the briefly tumescent sterility of a moribund aristocracy and the similar falling off of nouveau pretenders. His ironic characterization of the sexual braggard and miles gloriosus embraces both Bertram and Parolles, even as we hear in the King's speech both the voice of an old aristocrat bemoaning the decline of the chivalric code and that of a rejuvenated man who has responded to Helena's natural sexuality.

There are deep contradictions in the King's speech. It is, after all, a monarch who argues the case for a meritocracy! The speaker who has deprecated the traditional view of nobility stands very much on dignity when his own honour is 'at the stake' (l.148). Though he has mocked titles as pretentious 'additions', the King exploits the full weight of the Royal plural in compelling Bertram to change his assessment of Helena. Having deplored the speciousness of fine-sounding names, he is willing to use 'the name of justice' as an attractive gloss for the naked emotions of 'revenge and hate' (ll.163-164).

Yet it is not enough to condemn the King as disingenuous. Shakespeare asks us to see that, while his resolve is extremely unsympathetic, France 'must produce (his) power' (l.149). The very shift from 'I' to 'we' announces that the King now speaks with an authority larger than himself. His linguistic intransigence, which will admit no 'terms of pity' (l.165), is the determination of the law which he is obliged to represent.

The tonal contradictions in the King's speech are no less creative than the 'differences' which are its subject. The text offers the actor playing the part a wealth of opportunities which, like Helena's virtue, can be realized only in performance. That this argument is not simply a way of disposing of the play's problems, is made clear by the debate which follows the exchanges between Bertram and the King in II,iii:

Exeunt all but Parolles and Lafew, who stay behind,
commenting on this wedding

Lafew: Do you hear, monsieur? A word with you.

Parolles: Your pleasure, sir.

Lafew: Your lord and master did well to make his
recantation.

Parolles: Recantation! My lord! My master!

Lafew: Ay. Is it not a language I speak?

Parolles: A most harsh one, and not to be understood
without bloody succeeding. (11.183-190)

The exchange is symptomatic of the highly self-conscious nature of the dramatic action in All's Well, which is subjected to internal criticism by the characters in the play. By questioning Lafew's assessment of Bertram's response to the King as a 'recantation', Parolles alerts us to quite different tonal possibilities in the speech:

Bertram: Pardon, my gracious lord; for I submit
My fancy to your eyes. When I consider
What great creation and what dole of honour
Flies where you bid it, I find that she, which late
Was in my nobler thoughts most base, is now
The praised of the King; who, so ennobled,
Is as 'twere born so. (11.166-172)

In the BBC television production of All's Well, Bertram's speech was delivered by Ian Charleson with biting sarcasm. Shakespeare, however, asks us to see that other tones are latent in the words and quite different modes of presentation are possible. More importantly, we are asked to see that much turns on the predisposition of the listener to hear what he wants to hear. Like Hamlet's, 'I shall in all my best obey, you, madam', which Claudius chooses to 'take' as 'an honest and fair reply' (Hamlet, I, ii, 120-121), Bertram's response satisfies courtly decorum while registering linguistic scission and alerting the audience to the potential discrepancy between what is intended and what is understood.

The critical difference of opinion between Lavatch and Parolles invites us to reappraise the dialogue of Bertram and the King and to recognize competing tonal registers within any individual speech. Parolles, moreover, counters the King's determinism in other respects. 'Born under a charitable star' (I,i, 188), Parolles is as convinced as the Helena of I,i, of his own 'free scope'. When Lafew uses the words 'lord' and 'master' to define the relationship of Bertram and Parolles, the latter chooses to misunderstand a 'language' he finds 'harsh'. He similarly avoids the necessitarian implications of the word 'Count' by playing etymological variations on the name:

- Lafew: Are you companion to the Count Rossillion?
- Parolles: To any Count, to all Counts, to what is man.
- Lafew: To what is Count's man; Count's master is of another style.
- Parolles: You are too old, sir; let it satisfy you, you are too old.
- Lafew: I must tell thee, sirrah, I write man, to which title age cannot bring thee. (11.191-198)

It is clearly to Parolles' advantage to employ the noun in a way which detracts from his own inferior status. But the effect, once again, is to point up the common humanity which is concealed by titular 'differences'. In clarifying important distinctions between ambiguous conjugates, Parolles has no less a rhetorician than Aristotle to commend him.¹³⁶ Yet it is Lafew who proves to be the superior linguist. His coup de grace is the suggestion that, in quite a different sense to that intended by Parolles, his claim to manhood might be found wanting. It is a curious foreshadowing of a major theme in Macbeth and a further instance in All's Well of the limits of libertarianism.

Parolles seconds his challenge to the deterministic use of titles by

questioning the virtues of singularity and stasis:

Bertram: Well, we cannot greatly condemn our success;
some dishonour we had in the loss of that drum,
but it is not to be recovered.

Parolles: It might have been recovered.

Bertram: It might, but it is not now.

Parolles: It is to be recovered. But that the merit of
service is seldom attributed to the true and
exact performer, I would have that drum, or
another, or hic jacet. (III,vi, 50-57)

Here verbal conjugation is no longer an emblem of human insufficiency. Nor is inconsistency a signal for despair. Parolles' future conditionals challenge the tyranny of time, represented here, as elsewhere in the play, by the dreadful intransigence of finite tenses (cf. I,i, 18). Though Parolles' self-assessment has proved only too prescient, and he has not been commended for his 'performance', it is his achievement to find value at the heart of the most extreme linguistic scepticism. The multiple puns on hic jacet - the conventional opening to a tombstone epitaph, and a knowing invocation of the liar paradox - transform Parolles' mendacity into a 'lawful deceit' which directly challenges the King's linguistic philosophy:

The mere word's a slave,
Debauched on every tomb, on every grave
A lying trophy, and as oft is dumb
Where dust and damned oblivion is the tomb
Of honoured bones indeed. (II,iii, 136-140)

Here, as in Montaigne's 'De Noms' and the final act of Hamlet, the discontinuity between object and word, a man and his fame, is seen from the final mocking perspective of the grave where the divorce of physical and metaphysical values is most absolute. In Parolles' 'performance', however, the 'dumb word' is revitalized in the living testimony of spoken language. A highly conditional fiction becomes the means by which the power of recovery invested in the natural world might be revealed.

Parolles' hic jacet opposes the King's strict moralism in II.iii, with the far more accommodating view of mendacity characteristic of the Greco-Roman poetic tradition, rather than the Augustinian heritage.¹³⁷ The outrageous scheme for the recovery of the drum is, as Parolles well-knows, an 'impossibility' (IV,i, 45). His imaginative endeavour is, however, infinitely preferable to Bertram's fatalistic pragmatism, and is directly comparable to Helena's rejuvenation of the King, an achieved impossibility which signals the defeat of rationalistic accounts of experience.

Parolles transforms the King's 'lying trophy' into the 'glorious supposition' on which the 'bed-trick' rests - a supposition which is both the storyteller's premise and the Protestant's justification for faith.¹³⁸ The fruitful coincidence of these perspectives in the playwright's dramatic hypothesis is perfectly expressed in the King's contract with Helena, at the conclusion of II,i,

Here is my hand; the premises observed,
Thy will by my performance shall be served.

(II.201-202)

Helena's 'will' breeds new life into the King's courtly urbanities and solicits a like 'service' from him. The dubious morality of the King's requiting 'performance' is sanctioned, not only by the echo of the Lord's Prayer, but also the fictional hypothesis which disclaims any pretention to real equality, whilst permitting the partners to be 'like likes'.¹³⁹

The same semi-deceitful sexuality allows Helena to discover Bertram's 'well-derived nature' (III,iii, 88):

O my good lord, when I was like this maid
I found you wondrous kind. (V,iii, 307-308)

The conditional 'premise' releases in Bertram reciprocal qualities to those of Helena herself. His natural gentility and sexual generosity are, as

Barbara Everett notes,¹⁴⁰ wonderfully comprehended by Helena's word 'kind', the word which more than any other expresses her own claim to be a 'gentlewoman'.

Helena's triumph is a vindication against all odds of the paradoxical virtues of passion and playing represented in the common word 'performance'. Her achievement can be measured, not only against the negative view of human sexuality and mendacity which is well-represented in both Hamlet and All's Well, but also against those sonnets which express Shakespeare's sense of being tainted by the dark medium in which he works, and his association with the 'harlotry players'.¹⁴¹

I can think of no better challenge to the moralist's ideal of sexual and linguistic singularity than the exchanges between Bertram and Parolles in III,vi, and Bertram and Helena in V,iii. Similarly, there could be no better illustration of George Steiner's thesis, that the Babel myth is 'a case of symbolic inversion' than the burst of creative energy released in the cacophonous scene in All's Well which concludes with Parolles' acceptance of his own duplicitous nature (IV,iii, 320-330):

Uncertainty of meaning is incipient in poetry. In every fixed definition there is obsolescence or failed insight. The teeming plurality of languages enacts the fundamentally creative, 'counter-factual' genius and psychic functions of language itself.... Each different tongue offers its own denial of determinism. 'The world', it says, 'can be other'. Ambiguity, polysemy, opaqueness, the violation of grammatical and logical sequences, reciprocal incomprehensions, the capacity to lie - these are not the pathologies of language but the roots of its genius. Without them the individual and the species would have withered.¹⁴²

In the final act of All's Well That Ends Well, this liberal view of linguistic multiplicity is put to its most severe testing. Bertram's example shows how easily libertarianism can get out of hand. In his exchanges with Diana, words are for Bertram totally devoid of moral content, mere markers of metamorphic 'opinion', which can be changed to meet the sexual

exigencies of the moment (IV,ii, 30-32).¹⁴³ The linguistic coin becomes so worthless that it is withdrawn from circulation, and a Laputian-like attempt is made to rely on the language of things. Rejecting Bertram's 'unsealed' oaths, Diana puts her trust in the ring, which she hopes will hold its value and thus 'token to the future our past deeds' (IV,ii, 63).

We have had, however, ample evidence that physical symbols are scarcely more reliable signifiers than words. The military uniform of the miles gloriosus is a contradiction in terms. The velvet patch on his cheek is no less equivocal, and might 'token' an honourable wound or be 'taken' for an emblem of venereal disease. Lafew's linguistic fastidiousness alerts us to the fact that, in any event, 'A scar nobly got' and 'a noble scar' may not mean the same thing (IV,v, 96-97). Parolles is prepared to consider self-mutilation in order to avoid the imputation of dishonour (IV,i, 35-39); and it is 'Captain Spurio' who sports a cicatrice - on his 'sinister cheek' (II,i, 41-44).¹⁴⁴

Accordingly, the play's fifth-act experimentation with 'the art of the real' is a highly equivocal success. For all its concrete particularity, the ring proves to be a powerful expressionist symbol. Shakespeare presents a paradox which is also characteristic of the visual art of twentieth century Minimalists, whose works 'staked everything on...context for their effect, while claiming to have the density and singularity of things in the real world'.¹⁴⁵ In the brilliant dramaturgy of V,iii, Shakespeare's central artefact, the ring with its sparkling stone, changes in 'esteem' (1.1) as it is associated in turn with different characters in the play.¹⁴⁶

When the scene opens, the beauty and virtue of the (supposed) dead Helena are recaptured in jewel imagery. The much-maligned gift of expression proves once again to be a preserver of past values and a guaran-

tor of their future appreciation. As the King explains, in language which is deeply resonant of the great "Time" sonnets:

Praising what is lost
Makes the remembrance dear. (ll. 19-20)

The capacity of language to express 'counter-factuality', to say the thing which is not, is seen as a blessing as well as a curse. Verbal remembrancing in living speech is shown to have a richer authority than 'dumb' signs (cf. I,ii, 48-51).

By contrast, when the first ring is introduced, it proves ironically to be something of a 'lying trophy'. An ambiguous emblem of both Fortune and the King's a-temporal authority (ll. 84-87), the ring's value is no less changeable than the King's moods, which, in characteristically Ovidian images, are compared to the vagaries of the weather (ll.33-37). As the original gift of the King, the ring is also a reminder of Helena's powers of regeneration - powers which are now associated with the suspect science of alchemy (ll.101-105). Passing from the King, to Helena, to Bertram, the jewel briefly reflects the quickening aspirations - at once sexual and dynastic - of Lafew and his daughter, Maudlin, whose doubtful name would be legitimized by union with the house of Rossillion:

Come on, my son, in whom my house's name
Must be digested, give a favour from you
To sparkle in the spirits of my daughter,
That she may quickly come. (ll.73-76)

The extraordinary language, more suited perhaps to Shakespeare's Juliet than the aged Lafew, reflects the dubious nature of Maudlin's claim to be a suitor, even as the characterization of the ring as fool's gold reflects the doubtfulness of Bertram's pose as a widower. The ring which Lafew accepts from Bertram is not, in fact, the ancestral ring he takes it for, and, hence, not Bertram's to give, while Lafew's 'my son' (l.73) might be construed as presumptuously proprietorial.

We are not encouraged to believe in 'Maudlin'. The unabashed sexuality of Lafew's speech sketches a part we know Helena is well-suited to play. Bertram's speech at 11.44ff. seems similarly designed to accommodate her particular gifts. The speech complements Helena's ambiguously prophetic speech at I,i, 162ff. Both are problematic because pronouns are a particularly acute instance of what Ovid calls 'sine corpore nomen' (VII, 830). There is not, as it were, 'a body in't / Which might be felt' (I,i, 178-179)! Thus when Bertram speaks of the love that came to him too late, it is uncertain whether he is referring to Maudlin or to Helena. His 'shes' and 'hers' readily fuse and confuse the two, inviting us to see Helena as the most human of all Christian saints, and allowing for the probable impossibility that the supposed dead heroine might yet become Bertram's lost love.

That Bertram has a self which, however unwittingly, is capable of appreciating Helena's fineness, helps to mitigate the negative impression which he makes for much of the scene. Under pressure, Bertram reacts like an animal cornered. However inventive his extemporary fictions might be, the human capacity to lie is seen here as a totally unflattering attribute. The attitude to mendacity adopted by the play briefly takes on something of the intensity we find in Conrad's Marlow, who discerns 'a taint of death, a flavour of mortality in lies - which is exactly what I hate and detest in the world - what I want to forget'.¹⁴⁷

Given a 'choice of nightmares', however, Marlow opts for honest deceit rather than hypocrisy, and in Heart of Darkness, the gift of human expression is 'the pulsating stream of light' as well as 'the deceitful flow from the heart of an impenetrable darkness'.¹⁴⁸ In All's Well, the lie which carries the 'taint of death' is also the means by which time is cheated of his victories. One is again reminded of the highly paradoxical formulations of Sonnet 65:

where alack
 Shall Time's best jewel from Time's chest lie hid?
 (11.9-10)

In V,iii, as in IV,ii, the 'gem' of the real ancestral ring reflects both the honour of Bertram's 'six preceding ancestors' (1.97) and Diana's virtue, 'the jewel of our house' (IV,ii, 148). Both have been sacrificed only to be reinvigorated, and their 'rich validity' is contingent on a use which is only apparently abuse.

The central exhibits of V,iii thus denote a variety of values. The symbolic relativity of the rings is a further expression of the many kinds of feeling which have been imaged in the play's sonnet-like investigation of love. As already suggested, it is Parolles who underlines this Ovidian copiousness when he insists that 'love' is a highly complex word (11.236-250). While Parolles also demonstrates that there is nothing simple about 'telling true' (1.236), it is left for Helena to show that the many disparate values might still be reconciled and the two rings welded into a single band. Her own dubious actions retain the potential to make this new-forged ring a truly Ovidian symbol, reconciling change and continuity, novelty and tradition, and expressing, like the living conceit of the unborn child, sexual fulfilment within the bond of marriage:

Dead though she be she feels her young one kick.
 So there's my riddle: one that's dead is quick.
 And now behold the meaning. (11.300-302)

Diana's 'stage direction' can be seen as the culmination of a movement to free Helena from the falsity of words and Shakespeare, himself, from the hubris of fixed meaning. It is a moment of pure theatre which stands or falls on the 'performance' of the actress. Shakespeare transforms Montaigne's negative perception of linguistic change into the very source of the timeless continuity of meaning and value invested in language. As we are constantly reminded in the play's concluding lines, words are

indeed 'poor conditions' until ratified by confirming experience. The song of Lavatch might finally be taken as emblematic of the text of All's Well That Ends Well which is quite deliberately left 'unsealed' (IV,ii, 30). Highly ambiguous, metrically deficient in written form, in every respect problematic as it appears on the page, it may 'yet' be perfected in performance, if some latter-day Armin solicits a 'kind' response from his public. Making a King of the Clown, even as the epilogue makes a Clown of the King,¹⁴⁹ it can continue to give reciprocal pleasure to future actors and audiences 'day exceeding day'.

Chapter VII

THE NATURAL PERSPECTIVE OF ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

*The lustie earth of owne accorde soone after forth did bring
According to their sundrie shapes eche other living thing,
As soone as that the moysture once caught heate against the Sunne,
And that the fat and slimie mud in moorish groundes begunne
To swell though warmth of Phebus beames, and that the fruitfull seede
Of things well cherisht in the fat and lively soyle in deede,
As in their mothers wombe, began in length of time to grow,
To one or other kinde of shape wherein themselves to show..
Even so when that seven mouthed Nile the watrie fieldes forsooke,
And to his auncient channel eft his bridled streames betooke,
So that the Sunne did heate the mud, the which he left behinde,
The husbandmen that tilde the ground, among the cloddes did finde
Of sundrie creatures sundrie shapes....
For when that moysture with the heate is tempred equally,
They do conceyve: and of them twaine engender by and by
All kinde of things. For though that fire with water aye debateth
Yet moysture mixt with equall heate all living things createth.
And so those discordes in their kinde, one striving with the other,
In generation doe agree and make one perfect mother.*

(Metamorphoses, 1, 495-518)

*In all the world there is not that that standeth at a stay.
Things eb and flow: and every shape is made to passe away.
The tyme itself continually is fleeting like a brooke.
For neyther brooke nor lyghtsomme tyme can tarrye still. But looke
As every wave dryves other foorth, and that that commes behynde
Bothe thrusteth and is thrust itself: even so the tymes by kynd
Doo fly and follow bothe at once, and evermore renew.*

(Metamorphoses, 15, 197-203)

In Antony and Cleopatra, Shakespeare continues his attempt to find a form of theatrical language which can match the rich variety of the natural world and keep time with its changes. The play's opening image is one of fullness even to overflowing:

Nay, but this dotage of our general's
O'erflows the measure. (I,i, 1-2)¹

Philo is, of course, adopting a 'Roman' standpoint. He intends to criticize Antony for a lack of moderation and control. Yet his chosen figure

anticipates the play's central image for paradoxical and recreative vitality: the flooding Nile. What is intended as a negative criticism can also be taken as an appreciation of super-abundant life. We may remember that when Bertram 'in his proper stream o'erflows himself', the passion which seems to negate his nobility is also 'the show and seal of nature's truth' (All's Well, IV,iii, 23-24; I,iii, 127).² Unlike Bertram, Antony is no longer in his first 'rose of youth'. The 'thorn' of his passion may be all the more inexcusable. But, as the ambiguous word 'dotage' also suggests, his fond love for Cleopatra is, by the same token, all the more rare.

This natural perspective is not shared by all critics of Antony and Cleopatra, which has been seen as pre-eminently a Jacobean tragedy and a mannerist work of art. One can see why the notion of mannerism would seem to offer an attractive critical focus for the play. Arnold Hauser has shown that the High Renaissance claim to render the essence of life in artistic synthesis was rejected as a facile illusion by the mannerist artist. Exploiting the acknowledged breach between art and nature, the mannerist 'tried...to create a world of pure illusion, in which everything that seemed to them to be unacceptable in ordinary reality was put right, or at any rate altered, distorted, and subject to an artificial order'.³ Hauser, himself, treats Antony and Cleopatra as a quintessentially mannerist work, and Cyrus Hoy has used his description of the mannerist tendency to emphasize 'the narrow edge between imagination and reality, poetry and truth, dream and real life' as the key text for Shakespeare's late tragedy. He finds that 'the narrowness of this edge is nowhere more expressively demonstrated' than in the play's final act, 'where we are witness to the process whereby reality is transformed by the power of feeling'.⁴

Clearly, this focus can help to define the peculiar nature of those

moments of 'vision' which recur in the play. In addition to Cleopatra's 'dream' of Antony in the final act (V,ii, 76-91), one thinks of her similar attempt to evoke his image during his absence at the beginning of the play (I,v, 19-33), and of that great set-piece, the Enobarbus 'Cydnus' speech (II,ii, 194ff). These speeches give a poetic representation of their subjects which violently contends with the dramatic reality which elsewhere vies for attention by stressing the prosaic, possibly the sordid, and certainly the less than heroic qualities of the protagonists and their relationship. In each of these instances, Shakespeare deliberately calls attention to 'the narrow edge' between art and life in a way which anticipates his hazarding of the entire theatrical enterprise when Cleopatra provocatively steps out of character to reveal the squeaking boy blessed or cursed with this demanding female role (V,ii, 215-221).⁵

The critical history of the play reveals that Antony and Cleopatra has often been found wanting at the 'affective' level, problematic for an audience constantly faced with contrasting and conflicting viewpoints of character and event. It has been suggested that, faced with intransigent source material, Shakespeare failed to focus his mind.⁶ To invoke mannerism as an artistic representation of a world perceived as problematic, lends support to the contrary view that, in this play, Shakespeare deliberately calls attention to the dramatic inconsistencies. Indeed, the play would seem to provide its own emblem for the contemporary aesthetic when Cleopatra invokes the 'perspective picture' to see Antony 'painted one way like a Gorgon. /The other way's a Mars' (II,v, 116-117).⁷

There is, however, an inherent danger in pressing the mannerist analogy too closely to Shakespeare's play. Mannerism 'turns everything natural into the artistic, often the artful' and concentration on the artifactual elements of Antony and Cleopatra can lead to a neglect of the natural frame

of reference which Shakespeare gives his play. The vitality of Antony and Cleopatra, which so contradicts mannerist rejections of 'the unformed raw material of life', the 'spontaneous' and 'actual' stems directly from the play's foundation on the primary paradox which expresses 'the conflict of life itself'.⁸

Shakespeare's poetic and dramatic engagement with conflict and contradiction in Antony and Cleopatra is grounded on the ancient paradox that, in nature itself, only when opposing forces meet and interact is there an issue in creation. Throughout the play attention is drawn to the elemental conflict which generates and perpetuates life, and the concern with nature's wondrous metamorphoses is no less imposing than the interest in artistic transformations of reality. This natural perspective immediately qualifies and informs the play's self-conscious awareness of the nature of art and the role of the creative imagination. Shakespeare's play bears testimony to the continuing potency of the ancient concept of nature in the late Renaissance. Like the Greek notion of Physis from which it derives, Nature is shown to be a living metaphor, which provides a coherent way of knowing the world whilst formally conditioning the works which seek to give it imaginative representation. In Antony and Cleopatra the imaginative transformations of reality are meaningful only when seen in the wider context of natural change. The 'excellent falsehood' of poetic art must ultimately be related to the 'excellent falsehood' which is nature itself.

In writing Antony and Cleopatra, Shakespeare's close reading of Plutarch seems to have provoked an almost habitual recall of the Metamorphoses, and Ovid's poem provides a significant link between the 'ancient' and 'modern' impulses in the play. Hauser, for example, sees 'the period of the crisis of the Renaissance which is known as mannerism' as the period of historical

change par excellence.⁹ There are interesting continuities between his perception of the linguistic consequences of this preoccupation with change, and the aesthetic I was concerned to trace in the earlier chapters of this study:

So compulsive and so dominant is the use of metaphorical language in mannerist poetry that it is possible to speak of the prevalence of a metaphorism in it. This passion for the metaphor derives from a sense of life that apprehends everything as being in a state of permanent change and interaction, and it is therefore also possible to speak of a metamorphosis underlying the metaphorism and assigning it its proper place and meaning in the history of ideas.¹⁰

Hauser, then, is prepared to see a shifting reality behind the deliberate artifice of mannerist works. What can seem at first 'a mere swamping of matter in form' can ultimately be explained by 'a sense of impermanence so strong that it is hardly possible to do more than establish the continually shifting relations between all things'.¹¹ My own feeling, however, is that the 'metamorphosis' of Antony and Cleopatra is something rather different from this characterization of the stylistics of metaphysical doubt. Less anarchic, perhaps, and also less angst-ridden. Closer, in fact, to Coleridge's well-known praise of the play's 'feliciter audax...happy valiancy of style'.¹² Shakespeare seems to have found in Ovid's archetypal treatment of the theme of change a conceptual framework which could contain his own daring speculations on the instability of fact and value, and the difficulty of attaining finite perception when a changing human psyche mirrors a mutable world.

Antony and Cleopatra crackles with life. As Ovid's poem begins and ends by focusing on the elemental conflict which generates and perpetuates life, so Shakespeare's play constantly refers back to the basic matter of life, its component parts of earth, water, fire and air. At differing points in the action there is a peculiar dramatic concentration on the

dominant element - earth or water - while Antony's defiant aspiration to meet Caesar 'i'th'fire, or i'th'air' (IV,x, 4), would complete the natural sequence. Their opposition is seen as a Heraclitan war of antithetical forces acted out in a cosmic setting. For the extravagant conceits, whilst subject to the minutest irony, set with a literalizing and prescriptive exactitude the boundaries of vision beyond the edges of the known world. This is the only physical 'bourn' acknowledged by the characters who, 'peerless', will admit no comparatives. Facing Antony, his temperamental opposite, Caesar feels the need for a 'hoop' to 'hold us staunch', from edge to edge /O'th'world' (II,ii, 120-1). But the audience of Shakespeare's play, like Pythagoras' wondering listeners, are requested to stand back further and see the world as a constantly spinning orb. The sequential movement of night and day, season to season, and the large cycle made by the globe as it spins on its axis, are all given dramatic representation. At the end of the second act, the theme of the whirling world is taken up as a refrain by the reeling triumvirs. It is sustained at the opening of the third act, when Ventidius gives a poetic dissertation on the equivocal nature of martial success:

Who does i'th'wars more than his captain can
 Becomes his captain's captain; and ambition,
 The soldier's virtue, rather makes choice of loss
 Than gain which darkens him.

(III,i, 21-24)

It is one of many similarly patterned speeches, in which the expression of paradoxical and conflicting impulses is overlaid with a secondary sense of involuntary revolution.

In the Metamorphoses, human sensibility and action mirror the remorseless process of conflict and change in the natural macrocosm. Enobarbus draws attention to the similar dramatic unity of Antony and Cleopatra:

I see men's judgements are
 A parcel of their fortunes, and things outward
 Do draw the inward quality after them
 To suffer all alike.

(III,xiii, 31-4)

The model is expressed in Antony's reaction to the death of Fulvia:

There's a great spirit gone! Thus did I desire it.
 What our contempts doth often hurl from us,
 We wish it ours again. The present pleasure,
 By revolution lowering, does become
 The opposite of itself. She's good, being gone;
 The hand could pluck her back that shoved her on.

(I,ii, 123-8)

It is similarly felt in his description of the 'slippery people' who adopt the ascendant son of Pompey the Great when his father's 'deserts are past' (I,ii, 186-193). Caesar's identification of the dominion of change in the political sphere comments on his own pragmatic realism and keeps in the forefront the dynamic which governs the play:

It hath been taught us from the primal state
 That he which is was wished until he were;
 And the ebb'd man, ne'er loved till ne'er worth love,
 Comes deared by being lacked. This common body,
 Like to a vagabond flag upon the stream,
 Goes to and back, lackeying the varying tide,
 To rot itself with motion.

(I,iv, 41-7)

The image of the ebbing and flowing tide not only contributes to the metaphorical ordering of the play, but also qualifies the dramatic action itself. It is a dramatic action which simply cannot countenance stasis and can further itself only through the continuing interaction of competing emotional and physical forces. Antony draws attention to a brief moment of impasse when Octavia is caught between her husband and her brother:

Her tongue will not obey her heart, nor can
 Her heart inform her tongue - the swan's down feather
 That stands upon the swell at the full of tide,
 And neither way inclines.

(III,ii, 46-49)

But Octavia herself recognizes that the role of political 'mean' is an impossible one:

The good gods will mock me presently
 When I shall pray 'O, bless my lord and husband!';
 Undo that prayer by crying out as loud
 'O, bless my brother!' Husband win, win brother,
 Prays, and destroys the prayer; no midway
 'Twixt these extremes at all.

(III,iv, 15-20)

Plutarch savours the paradoxes of Octavia's situation:

'For now', said she, 'every man's eyes do gaze on me, that am the sister of one of the Emperors and wife of the other. And if the worst counsel take place (which the gods forbid!) and that they grow to wars, for yourselves it is uncertain to which of them two the gods have assigned the victory or overthrow. But for me, on which side soever victory fall, my state can be but miserable still'.¹³

In Antony and Cleopatra, however, the cross-currents of feeling which Octavia experiences are presented in terms of the natural dialectic which governs the play. The remarkable affinity between the philosophical patterning and metaphorical life of Shakespeare's play and the Metamorphoses is well-illustrated by comparing Ovid's characterization of Althaea's dilemma. Althaea is both brother to Meleager and sister to the two sons of Thestius, whom Meleager kills in the quarrel over Atalanta's claim to be recognized for the defeat of the Calydonian boar. (Shakespeare remembers the myth at IV,xiii, 2-3, for the characterization of Antony as the 'embossed' 'boar of Thessaly'). Thus Althaea is in no less of an invidious position than Octavia:

As mother and as sister both she strove what way to go:
 The divers names drew diversly hir stomacke to and fro.
 And as a Boate which tide contrarie beares
 Against the winde, feeles double force, and is compeld to yeelede
 To both, so Thesties daughter now unable for to weelde
 Hir doubtful passions, diversly is caried off and on.

(8,607-8,614-7)

When Althaea proves to be a 'better sister...than mother' and turns against Meleager, Ovid points up the paradoxes. 'She/In meaning to be one way kinde, doth worke another way/Against kinde' (620-622). In Antony and Cleopatra, Octavia's lament is an equally eloquent comment on the freak moment of stability. The language mirrors the elemental conflict which the play sees as the condition of life itself. Octavia makes her choice, and in III,vi, the dramatic current begins again - to rot itself with motion, or work for the foundation of a new order by doing what it undid.

The attempt at stasis capitulates under the dynamic of change. The middle scenes of the play are dramatically audacious, as they seek to convey almost minute by minute changes through a series of swiftly contrasting sequences. In All's Well, report is unreliable because words are inherently 'doubtful' and Fama often proves false. This concern persists in Antony and Cleopatra, where heroic reputations are at stake and political motivations open to question. II,ii, 29ff. is a brilliant critique of the politics of language. Much is seen to turn on the intention behind ambiguous phrases and how the behaviour of Antony, 'the word of war' can be interpreted. Though he is fated to lose to Caesar in more weighty games (II,iii, 26-29), Antony proves a skilful player, who can turn a flagrantly broken promise into a question of 'neglect', and is able to retain both his dignity and the upper hand by a decorous admission of partial culpability which masquerades as the simple 'truth' (ll. 96-102). But the presence of Enobarbus makes us aware that there is more 'manner' than 'matter' in these language games, and it is he who really translates the niceties of diplomatic temporizing into the plain speech of pragmatic necessity (ll. 107-110).

In Antony and Cleopatra, however, report is often untrustworthy simply because linguistic formulations cannot keep pace with the speed of events.

The news is 'old' before it is uttered and pronouncements on the state of events are quickly relegated to the status of 'dreams' (III,v, 1-5; II,i, 17ff). According to Enobarbus, time is so pressing that it overrides all value judgments; priority is given to what comes first, rather than what is the more important (II,ii, 11-12). But though the process is indiscriminate, it is hardly unproductive. 'Much is breeding' throughout the play, and in the build-up to Actium 'With news the time's with labour and throes forth/ Each minute some' (I,ii, 193; III,vii, 80-81). The notion that 'the tymes by kynd/ Do fly and follow bothe at once, and ever more renew' and the general view of the world as a great scene of natural change is nowhere more perfectly expressed than in Cleopatra's protesting invocation when Antony, the prime mover, is himself failing:

O sun,
Burn the great sphere thou mov'st in; darkling stand
The varying shore o'th'world.
(IV,xv, 9-11)¹⁴

If the dramatic action of Antony and Cleopatra seeks to be a faithful mimesis of a change-dominated world, the characterization of the play's chief protagonists is also fashioned to conform to this natural perspective. The baser and nobler elements which compose the life-stuff of the universe are part of their essential make-up. Though Caesar finds Antony 'th' abstract of all faults/ That all men follow', Lepidus recognizes that the paradoxical mixture of qualities is his natural inheritance:

I must not think there are
Evils enow to darken all his goodness.
His faults, in him, seem as the spots of heaven,
More fiery by night's blackness, hereditary
Rather than purchased, what he cannot change
Than what he chooses.
(I,iv, 10-15)

Cleopatra's character is similarly compounded. Constantly changing through-

out the play, she lays claim to be 'marble-constant' only in the final act. Even then, though she relinquishes all but her elements of 'fire and air', her ethereal predilections are inseparable from a very earthy sexuality, as she claims Antony for a husband and rushes to meet death in the guise of his embrace (V,ii, 286-295). The 'knot intricate of life' proves difficult to untie and the composition of contrarities persists beyond Cleopatra's death, moving Caesar to remark on her 'strong toil of grace' (V,ii, 346).

In All's Well, Helena risks losing her love because she strives to show her merit. By relinquishing her 'fixed intents' and allowing interpretative licence, she realizes alternative aspects of her own personality even as she discovers a 'kindness' in Bertram which was not readily revealed to her former self. Because the comedy itself grows with Helena's expanding vision, we are encouraged to find value in artistic imperfection and moral ambiguity. In Antony and Cleopatra, Shakespeare takes this perception further, so that negative qualities are seen to merit as great an emphasis as selected virtues. Thus Antony overcomes his angry reaction to slanderous comment, and finds value in the 'full licence' of report:

Name Cleopatra as she is called in Rome.
 Rail thou in Fulvia's phrase, and taunt my faults
 With such full licence as both truth and malice
 Have power to utter. O, then we bring forth weeds
 When our quick winds lie still, and our ills told us
 Is as our earing.

(I,ii, 107-112)

The image of ploughing which ensures productivity is closely related to the central Nile metaphor (cf. II,ii, 233-235 and Golding above), and the whole weight of the play is behind Antony's insight. He nevertheless remains predisposed to hear only what he wants to hear, and in Cleopatra this quality is exaggerated. She has no wish to be told that Antony has remarried, or that Octavia is all of thirty years old (II,v, 60; III,iii, 28).

The messenger is 'a proper man' only when he mirrors Cleopatra's needs and finds fault with Antony's new wife (III,iii, 47-48). The violence perpetrated on unfortunate messengers is something I want to return to in a moment. My point here, is that even unwelcome news is ultimately seen to be 'quickenings' news. Languishing for want of Antony, Cleopatra greets the messenger with,

O, from Italy!
 Ram thou thy fruitful tidings in mine ears,
 That long time have been barren.
 (II,v, 24-26)

And, when she has recovered from his unexpected and unwelcome information, there is an expansion in her appreciation of both Antony, himself, and her own feelings towards him - both of which are less pure than she is given to pretending:

Let him for ever go - let him not, Charmian.
 Though he be painted one way like a Gorgon,
 The other way's a Mars.
 (II,v, 115-117)

As characters, Antony and Cleopatra remain open to assessment, and here, as in other respects, Octavia serves as an important foil. Cleopatra is quite as determined to evade Octavia's finite appraisal of her nature, as she is to avoid becoming the puppet of Octavius. From the sanctum of her monument, she informs Antony,

Your wife Octavia, with her modest eyes
 And still conclusion, shall acquire no honour
 Demuring upon me.
 (IV,xv, 27-29)

It is a marvelously expressive comment, which combines suggestions of Octavia's 'quiet' virtues with the notion that any moral summing up or calling to account is necessarily a delimitation of experience. 'We murder to dissect': Cleopatra means to arrange her own 'briefest end' and avoid

such a character assassination.

Octavia is repeatedly associated with stillness. It is hoped that her 'beauty', 'wisdom' and 'modesty' can 'settle' Antony. If so, says Maecenas, she will prove a 'blessed lottery' (II,ii, 246-248). But Enobarbus knows that Antony prefers the thrills of 'fast and loose', Cleopatra's gypsy game, and that Octavia's 'holy, cold and still conversation' cannot satisfy him for long (II,vi, 120-121). As in All's Well, love and friendship are seen to thrive off licence and not bondage, so that the union of Antony and Caesar cannot hold and Octavia,

the band that seems to tie their friendship together
will be the very strangler of their amity.
(II,vi, 118-119)

Associated with 'still conclusions' rather than 'quickenings' news, Octavia is also identified with art rather than nature. Her political function is to give the lie to dangerous rumours - even if they are true. Agrippa suggests that, by the marriage of Antony and Octavia,

Truths would be tales,
Where now half-tales be truths.
(II,ii, 139-140)

And Antony accepts the hand of Caesar's sister with a double-edged comment which makes a mockery of the marriage vow:

May I never
To this good purpose, that so fairly shows,
Dream of impediment!
(II,ii, 149-151)

The associations of Antony and Cleopatra with the Sun and Moon, Mars and Venus, expands their characterization, increases the metaphorical richness of the play, and keeps the cosmic strife of opposing forces in the foreground. Like Ovid, Shakespeare exploits the double perspective of myth

to suggest that, at one and the same time, his main protagonists are the personification of natural forces and idiosyncratic personalities. Antony suggests that Cleopatra is 'cunning past man's thought'. His expression suggests that she is 'past the size of dreaming' (V,ii, 97), but the word 'cunning' clearly smacks too much of artificial contrivance for Enobarbus's liking:

Alack, sir, no; her passions are made of nothing but the finest part of pure love. We cannot call her winds and waters sighs and tears; they are greater storms and tempests than almanacs can report. This cannot be cunning in her; if it be, she makes a shower of rain as well as Jove.

(I,ii, 147-152)

Since, however, Ovid's Jove usually makes thunderclouds in order to practise amorous deceits, his argument is circular. Shakespeare's play constantly exploits the most extravagant effects of myth, only to show that they are based on natural premises.

The mythological and iconographical provenance of Antony and Cleopatra has often been explored.¹⁵ But the play is perhaps more remarkable for its rediscovery of the natural foundations of these sophisticated Renaissance topoi. Character is conceived in a dynamic way and the conflicting passions which govern the chief protagonists are seen as in some way generating the creative process itself. With both Cleopatra and Antony, we witness a movement towards the realization of potential. Yet we are simultaneously aware that the potential is already being realized in the present moment of experience:

Antony: Fie, wrangling queen!
Whom everything becomes - to chide, to laugh,
To weep; whose every passion fully strives
To make itself, in thee, fair and admired.
(I,i, 48-51)

Cleopatra: O heavenly mingle! Be'st thou sad or merry,
The violence of either thee becomes,
So does it no man else.
(I,v, 59-61)

Enobarbus:

I saw her once
Hop forty paces through the public street;
And, having lost her breath, she spoke, and panted,
That she did make defect perfection,
And, breathless, power breathe forth.

(II,ii, 234-237)

Each speech describes the realization of beauty, stature, grace. The paradoxical attributes are said to be 'becoming' because the speaker has a perception of unique fitness or decorousness. Pico della Mirandola's definition of beauty as 'nothing else than an amicable enmity and a concordant discord' was ubiquitous in Renaissance aesthetics.¹⁶ But Shakespeare's verse recovers the full complexity of the classical notion to reveal the natural foundations of the ancient 'mystery'. His usage of the word 'becoming' is an emblem of the synthesis of art and nature effected by the play as a whole. As an adjective, 'becoming' expresses artistic decorum (more properly here, decorous indecorum) and, as a verb, it expresses the primal paradox of life, where existence or 'being' is contingent on the continuity of the re-creative impulse. Shakespeare manages to convey the actual attainment of harmony and grace without sacrificing the suggestions of energy and motion.

For Coleridge, one of the distinguishing features of Shakespeare's plays is:

Signal adherence to the great law of nature that
opposites tend to attract and temper each other. Passion in
Shakespeare displays, libertinism involves, morality.¹⁷

It is an insight which, as I tried to establish in the earlier chapters of this study, also holds true for the Metamorphoses. In Shakespeare's early Ovidian comedy, A Midsummer Night's Dream, human action is everywhere seen to mirror the conflict and changes which occur in the natural world. The example of Helena and Demetrius shows that love thrives off contradiction, and in the stychomythic exchanges between Hermia and Lysander at I,i, 132ff,

we learn that love's history is a record of such crosses. But it is the example of Theseus and Hippolyta which most anticipates the mature vision of Antony and Cleopatra:

Hippolyta, I woo'd thee with my sword,
 And won thy love doing thee injuries.
 (I,i, 16-17)

Theseus' account of his wooing suggests the violence that is the act of love itself, a paradox close to the heart of Shakespeare's later tragedy.

Violence is the necessary correlative of change in the dramatic action of Antony and Cleopatra. To see the play's structure as essentially agonistic is to make the connection between Antony and Cleopatra's domestic broils and the subsequent theatrical contest of 'nobleness well-acted' in which Caesar and Cleopatra engage. This focus highlights the strange nature of the love-hate relationship between Antony and Caesar, revealing the sense in which they need each other as mighty opposites and why, after Antony's death, Caesar, no less than Cleopatra, has to find a new sparring partner. It also helps to 'place' the series of aggressive confrontations between the chief protagonists and their respective messengers. Violence, in this play, is seen as the means of preserving identity in the process of becoming. Hence Octavia, a mean between extremes, is characterized as untransmuted art. Like the stones cast by Deucalion and Pyrrha before they are transformed, she is 'a body rather than a life, /A statue than a breather' (III,iii, 20-21).

In All's Well, as we have seen, Shakespeare exploits highly ambiguous proper names to suggest that character is far from fixed. Herbal imagery refracts the variety of Helena's loving nature and we are discouraged from 'taking' her as any singular 'thing'. At the end of the play, she is freed from the falsity of words and her stage presence is itself 'the meaning'.

Antony and Cleopatra, a play full of superlatives, constantly returns to the idea that comparisons are odious. The tragedy begins with the idea that experience cannot be expressed quantitatively and can be realized only in performance:

The nobleness of life
Is to do thus -
(I,i, 36-37)

It is, however, in one of the richest speeches in the play that Enobarbus asserts that Cleopatra's person 'beggared all description' (II,ii, 203). Because the assertion of 'peerlessness' is itself a somewhat deceitful form of hyperbole, Shakespeare is willing to expose the confidence trick involved in this form of character-building. For Lepidus, Antony is the 'Arabian bird', and Caesar, 'the nonpareil', can be adequately praised only by invoking his name (III,ii, 11-14). The love-sick admiration of a weak and vacillating man for his heroes points up the ease with which Cleopatra shifts from praising to 'dispraising' Caesar (II,v, 107), and turns the idiom in which Antony and Cleopatra address each other into an ironic key.

Shakespeare may parody his own techniques, but his dynamic portrayal of character and the constantly shifting dramatic perspective do ensure that, in the theatre, any 'idea' of Antony or Cleopatra is kept in solution. Cleopatra's motives remain unfathomable (sometimes, as in the business over her treasure in V,ii, where they are quite clear in Plutarch), and our understanding of Antony is similarly controlled. Like Cleopatra's sense of his identity, it continues to develop with the play, expanding from her provocatively enigmatic and open-ended summary in the opening scene:

I'll seem the fool I am not. Antony
Will be himself.
(11. 43-44)

In All's Well, we are made aware that identity is realized at different moments in different ways. In Antony and Cleopatra we are brought face to face with the effects of time and change on the human personality. Caesar angers Antony by stressing the discrepancy between what 'was' and what 'is'. But Enobarbus's tragedy follows from a similar inability to come to terms with his leader's changing identity. His death acknowledges the inadequacy of his limited martial image of Antony, and is the ironic consequence of the failure to live by his own dictum that 'every time/ Serves for the matter that is then born in't' (II,ii, 9-10). Antony is a 'mine of bounty' just because he mirrors the seasonal flux, and 'diminution' is a necessary part of the cycle (IV,vi, 33; III,xiii, 197). Enobarbus might have profited from Caesar's counsel that Thidias should 'Observe how Antony becomes his flaw' (III,xii, 35).

Throughout the play, the main protagonists reflect the ceaseless process of dissolution and reintegration which obtains in the natural world, by constantly losing and finding themselves. In this respect, III,xiii, is a miniature of the wider canvas of the play. Amidst imagery of melting and fading, the scene works steadily towards a substantiation and redefinition of identity. Cleopatra and Antony almost literally lose their names - 'Authority melts from me', 'what's her name/ Since she was Cleopatra', 'not know me yet?' - before finding themselves and each other once more. The central paradox is one which is repeated throughout the Metamorphoses, where a change of fortune causes Ovid's characters to discover and assert their identity. As Leonard Barkan notes:

Metamorphosis becomes a means of creating self-consciousness because it creates a tension between identity and form, and through this tension the individual is compelled to look in the mirror.¹⁸

If Antony is not physically transformed, he is in this part of the play repeatedly associated with an animal at bay. And the Antony who feels that

he is no longer recognized by his servants and is compelled to proclaim, 'I am Antony yet', is very like the metamorphosed Actaeon who longs to cry out, 'I am Actaeon: know your Lorde and Mayster' (3,277).

Antony's reference to 'the midnight bell' (i, 184) acknowledges the natural recreative cycle which the lovers' recovery emulates, and their renascence is celebrated on Cleopatra's birthday:

It is my birthday.
I had thought t'have held it poor. But since my lord
Is Antony again, I will be Cleopatra.
(11. 185-187)

The formulaic moment is brief. Such definition is only an approximation in time and the positives must again be reclaimed. But it is a master-stroke of ironic timing that now, having used the scene to re-establish the self-hood of Antony, Shakespeare finally gives to Enobarbus the long-delayed decision to leave him.¹⁹

The Metamorphoses offered Shakespeare a poetic form for his ideas and a central metaphor for Antony and Cleopatra. The centrality of the Nile metaphor in the play has often been noted. Specific sources have been suggested, but it is generally attributed to an Elizabethan-Jacobean fascination with the East, and is thus seen to draw on the commonplace book of knowledge. One commentator, however, has linked Antony's protestation, 'By the fire /That quickens Nilus' slime' (I,iii, 68-69) to Ovid.²⁰

The most extended Nile reference occurs in the galley scene (II,vii). The tenor of the scene is established at the outset when a couple of servants describe Lepidus' initiation into the Bacchanalian rite. When Lepidus, himself, enters deep in discussion with Antony, he is already showing the effects of the wine. Consequently, the sequence tends to be read as a portrait of Lepidus' weakness: the subject of their discussion

is often overlooked. Yet this apparently trivial episode is, like the scene as a whole, a fine case of in vino veritas:

Antony: Thus do they, sir: they take the flow o'th' Nile
By certain scales i'th' pyramid. They know
By th' height, the lowness, or the mean if dearth
Or foison follow. The higher Nilus swells
The more it promises; as it ebbs, the seedsman
Upon the slime and ooze scatters his grain,
And shortly comes to harvest.

Lepidus: Y' have strange serpents there.

Antony: Ay, Lepidus.

Lepidus: Your serpent of Eygpt is bred now of your mud by the
operation of your sun; so is your crocodile.

Antony: They are so.

.....

Lepidus: What manner o'thing is your crocodile?

Antony: It is shaped, sir, like itself, and it is as broad as it
has breadth. It is just so high as it is, and moves with
its own organs. It lives by that which nourisheth it, and
the elements once out of it, it transmigrates.

Lepidus: What colour is it of?

Antony: Of its own colour too.

Lepidus: 'Tis a strange serpent.

Antony: 'Tis so; and the tears of it are wet.

Caesar: Will this description satisfy him?

Antony: With the health that Pompey gives him; else he is a very
epicure.

(17-28, 41-52)

The exchange delicately adumbrates the central concerns of the play. It conflates an unusual mixture of tones, and should no more be played simply for comedy than the directly comparable sequence in All's Well, II,iii (see pp. 273ff. above). As in III,ii, Shakespeare deliberately courts bathos by parodying the notion that Antony and Cleopatra are ineffable - an idea given extra force by Plutarch's report that the lovers 'made an order between them

which they called Amimetobian (as much to say, "no life comparable and matchable with it")...'.²¹ Yet, as in the earlier comedy, Shakespeare is also more generally concerned to mock the pretension of finding the perfect mimetic 'likeness'. Words are, indeed, inadequate, and the only tenable response to such marvels is one of inarticulate wonderment.

When, later in the scene, Lepidus, 'the third part of the world', is carried home drunk to bed and the rest join hands in a wild reel, the dignitas of the world leaders is severely undermined. Yet, as Emrys Jones notes, the prevailing sense is one of 'Olympian geniality'.²² This deeply ambivalent treatment of mythical and historical figures is highly characteristic of the Metamorphoses. In presenting and soliciting a similarly divided response to the marvelous, the earlier sequence is also thoroughly Ovidian. Shakespeare, like Ovid, manages to have it both ways. Antony's demonstration of Lepidus' gullibility comes close to being a parody of Pythagoras' dissertation on transmigration. Yet (like Golding's unsophisticated response) Lepidus' naive, child-like wonder does catch the sense of the mystery of things, which is so characteristic an effect of the natural descriptions in the opening and closing books of the Metamorphoses. The drunken motif liberates both characters and audience from the unreflective acceptance of the world, common to everyday life, and the Bacchic dance is a true act of religious celebration.

In the Metamorphoses, the paradoxical motion of the River Nile, whereby flood ensures foison and destruction creation, symbolizes the operative power of nature and the conflict which is life itself. Golding's version is particularly vibrant. His epithets - 'lively', 'fat', 'slimie' - seem to slide about in a sexual dance executed with a peculiarly native English vigour. The Nile sequence exemplifies the tendency of the translation to domesticate the exotic. It is the 'lustie earth' who basks in 'Phebus'

beames'. The conjunction of home-grown and classical diction hazards bathos, yet it is a stylistic discors concordia which reinforces Ovid's whole theme.

In Antony and Cleopatra, the Nile metaphor consolidates a number of associations for the two lovers, refers to the recreative dynamic of the play, and anticipates the paradoxical ending of the tragedy, in which death is presented as a victory won 'from the heart of the loss'. Like the Nilus mud, Cleopatra's imagination creates creatures 'new and strange' and also restores familiar shapes (I, 436-437). For her images are spun from natural materials:

O, Charmian,
Where think'st thou he is now? Stands he, or sits he?
Or does he walk? Or is he on his horse?
O happy horse, to bear the weight of Antony!
Do bravely, horse, for wot'st thou whom thou mov'st?
The demi-Atlas of this earth, the arm
And burgonet of men. He's speaking now,
Or murmuring 'Where's my serpent of old Nile?'
For so he calls me. Now I feel myself
With most delicious poison. Think on me,
That am with Phoebus' amorous pinches black
And wrinkled deep in time. Broad-fronted Caesar,
When thou wast here above the ground, I was
A morsel for a monarch; and great Pompey
Would stand and make his eyes grow in my brow;
There would he anchor his aspect, and die
With looking on his life.

(I,v, 18-34)

The earlier characterization of poetic hyperbole as an 'excellent falsehood' (I,i, 41) is translated here into the artless paradox of 'delicious poison'. The cluster of images, which associate Antony and Cleopatra with the sun, the mud of the Nile and the serpent it produces, grounds Cleopatra's vision in the living experience, and anticipates the natural props with which she creates her pageant of death. The passing reference to Caesar, when he was 'above the ground', absolves Cleopatra of immorality even as it exemplifies her inexhaustible appetite. The passing of love and lovers is made to seem as natural and inevitable as the rise and fall of the

ancient river. Even the tired old pun which sees sexual ecstasy as a kind of death recovers a deeply-felt profundity here, as throughout the play, because 'the wit of contradiction is founded in the nature of things'.²³

Cleopatra's insatiable sexuality - repeatedly associated with the infinite fecundity of the Nile - serves no less than her imagination to create positive value out of the negative and the partial. Her compulsive wilfulness when she offers her favours to Caesar's messenger is rebuked by Antony, who takes it as evidence of coldheartedness towards himself. Cleopatra's impassioned response is startling, even shocking:

Ah, dear, if I be so,
From my cold heart let heaven engender hail,
And poison it in the source, and the first stone
Drop in my neck: as it determines, so
Dissolve my life! The next Caesarion smite,
Till by degrees the memory of my womb,
Together with my brave Egyptians all,
By the discandying of this pelleted storm,
Lie graveless, till the flies and gnats of Nile
have buried them for prey!

(III,xiii, 158-167)

But the combined force of her particular language and her violent manner (the counterpart of Antony's own behaviour towards the messenger) reaffirms her essential nature for Antony, who immediately declares himself 'satisfied'. The speech contributes to the imagery of dissolution characteristic of this scene, yet in itself manages to convey the recreative potential which the whole scene ultimately recovers. Later in the play, Cleopatra expresses her abhorrence of Caesar's scheme to make her his puppet in similarly violent terms:

Rather a ditch in Egypt
Be gentle grave unto me! Rather on Nilus' mud
Lay me stark nak'd and let waterflies
Blow me into abhorring!

(V,ii, 57-60)

Despite the destructive vehemence of her passion, the image remains starkly

sexual. Shakespeare's daring collocations once more associate Cleopatra with the pregnant fecundity of the paradoxical Nile and the language, almost involuntarily, reaps a crop from seemingly barren ground.

The Nile metaphor provides a wealth of associations for both Cleopatra and Antony. While 'vilest things become themselves' in Cleopatra, at the end of the play Antony's enemy acknowledges that 'His taints and honours/Waged equal with him' (V,i, 30-31). Acting together, the lovers momentarily engender a more complex harmony. Small units in the play repeat the essential 'mystery' expressed in the dramatic icon of the arming scene (IV,iv):²⁴

Quarrel no more...

... By the fire
That quickens Nilus' slime, I go from hence
Thy soldier-servant, making peace or war
As thou affects.

(I,iii, 66-70)

Antony's speech links the discors concordia of Renaissance ethical decorum - the life committed to virtue and pleasure - to the ancient wonder on which it was based. The equilibrium is precarious and severely threatened by both Cleopatra's 'affections' and Antony's indulgence. Indeed, translated by Cleopatra into 'excellent dissembling', the formulation becomes heavily ironic. Yet Cleopatra was 'born with her affects', and the paradox also expresses love's natural recreative powers. Rehearsed by Cleopatra, Antony does 'become' both his amatory and his martial image. The conceit proves worth the carriage, and the scene ends with a sublimely simple intimation of time flowing and time held, which is a perfect emblem of the play:

Let us go. Come.
Our separation so abides and flies
That thou residing here goes yet with me,
And I hence fleeting here remain with thee.
Away.

The last act of Antony and Cleopatra effects the final synthesis of imaginative and natural creativity. After the swiftly changing scenes of the previous acts, it attempts to 'shackle accidents' and 'bolt up change' in a self-consciously fictive ending. But, despite Cleopatra's prediction at the end of act four, that ending is anything but 'brief'. Much is at stake, not least a place in history. The characteristic tension of life, expressed in the play's middle scenes through the turn-about sequence of victory and loss, is felt here chiefly as theatrical competitiveness, as Caesar and Cleopatra vie to up-stage each other for the title of victor ludorum and public acclaim. By this contest of 'nobleness well acted', Shakespeare counters the determinism of historical and literary posterity. As in All's Well, we are made to feel that everything is contingent on how things are carried off on the day, and that in every performance history can, as it were, be refashioned anew. The death of Antony, occasioned by his 'mistaking' of Cleopatra's feigned suicide, makes its own tragic comment on the dangers of acting. And towards the end of his play, Shakespeare, himself, seems deliberately to court disaster, when he allows his 'Cleopatra' to step out of character and break the illusion on which theatre depends. Yet the risk-taking on which love is seen to thrive is also the life-stuff of the drama, and as Cleopatra informs Mardian, her eunuch,

when good will is showed, though't come too short,
The actor may plead pardon.

(II,v, 8-9)

We are also made aware of competing value systems, which make 'success' a strictly relative notion. Throughout the play, there have been strong suggestions that, despite his need for agonistic combat, Caesar is above, rather than part of, the flux of daily existence. In III,vii, which charts the events leading to Actium, this sense of Octavius as a 'strange',

super-natural instrument is particularly strong. And in the galley scene, Caesar sees himself, not as a 'child o'th'time', but as a man in possession of it (II,vii, 98). He is very much the personification of Plutarch's Fortune, the 'planning goddess' who ushered in the pax Augusta.²⁵ In the closing pages of the Metamorphoses, however, this linear view of historical progress is contradicted by the natural dynamic which governs the poem as a whole, while the notion of Roma aeterna is superceded by the eternity of poetic achievement.²⁶ Just this tension is felt in the final speech of Shakespeare's tragedy, in which the poetic legend of the famous lovers is set against Caesar's place in the official voice of history.

Caesar would like to see the outcome of his match with Antony and Cleopatra as a draw. But, though he may have the last word, he is not responsible for the final effect of Shakespeare's unusual tragedy, which is closer to that suggested by the vivam on which the Metamorphoses finally comes to rest. In Cleopatra's view, Caesar, by aiming to be something more than nature, is something very much less,

'Tis paltry to be Caesar:
Not being Fortune, he's but Fortune's knave
(V,ii, 2-3),

a title which, as Michael Lloyd has noted, 'shows him as not even a player, but a card in fortune's game'. Antony, by comparison, is Nature's "'peece" in the vie-ing game with "fancie"',²⁷ and, like Cleopatra herself, a 'piece of work' composed of rather than from life.

Cleopatra's 'dream' of Antony (V,ii, 78ff.) is the play's most 'spacious mirror' for his largesse and magnanimity. His voice is identified with the harmony of the spheres and his name is made totally synonymous with the self-replenishing bounty of the natural world.²⁸ The weight of the whole play is behind Cleopatra's rejoinder to Dolabella's repudiation of her

dream, which provides a privileged view of the Formal Cause of the universe, normally denied to lives experienced totally in media res.²⁹

At the end of the play, natural images of discors concordia proliferate, finding their final representation in the serpent of the Nile, 'the kills and pains not'. The Clown tells Cleopatra that the worm's 'biting is immortal', and his misnomer is a beautiful linguistic example of defect made perfection. Following Antony's example, Cleopatra's ending is characterized by images of epithalamium and issue. Her insistence that she be seen as essential woman, as well as exceptional queen (IV,xv, 72-75), together with Charmian's invocation of 'A Lass unparalleled' (V,ii, 314), is reminiscent of those rather homely lines from Golding's translation of the Nile sequence:

And so those dischords in their kinde, one striving with the other
In generation doe agree and make one perfect mother.³⁰

And the comedic denouement is maintained when Cleopatra regards 'the pretty worm of Nilus' as a baby at the breast 'that sucks the nurse asleep'. The conceit recalls Venus' poetic metamorphosis of Adonis in the concluding stanzas of Shakespeare's early poem, and conveys the same Ovidian sense of a living and breathing continuity persisting in spite of - or rather because of - change.

This is not to deny that the play is a tragedy, if an unusual one. It has throughout been engaged with loss and defeat as much as with achievement and triumph. In the end, Cleopatra does die and (as Raleigh says) that's no jest. But, as Anne Barton has noted, the play elicits a response that 'flies in the face of normal tragic convention': 'we want Cleopatra to die'.³¹ By his own account, Antony dies in the high Roman fashion, and Caesar provides an encomium. But his death is imperfectly executed and based on the fallacy that Cleopatra has beaten him to a place in history.

As Barton says, the tragic metamorphosis which Cleopatra achieves is more complete than Antony's, while her up-staging of Caesar can be regarded as a triumph for both lovers.

I would argue, however, that Cleopatra's ending, though 'well done' (V, ii, 324), is not 'flawless' and therefore not the total artifice which Barton suggests. Despite the deliberate recreation of her 'Cydnus' image, Cleopatra resists the final artistic transformation. Even in death, she remains the antithesis of the statuesque Octavia. The contradictions are not stilled, but persist in Caesar's characterization of her 'noble weakness' and 'strong toil of grace'. The ministrations of Charmian is needed for the scene to be totally composed, and it is possible that she is frustrated in her attempts to 'trim' her mistress's crown. This would seem to be the guard's testimony (V, ii, 340-342), and I prefer to think of Cleopatra to the last, her crown 'awry', making defect perfection. Such a closing dramatic image would formally ratify the thematic conviction the play shares with Ovid's Metamorphoses, that an exclusively tragic view of life is necessarily falsifying and delimiting.³²

For Bacon, poetry's great appeal is its propensity 'to give some show of satisfaction to the mind...wherein the nature of things doth deny it'.³³ In Antony and Cleopatra, however, Shakespeare insists that it is from the nature of things that we must take our poetic consolations. If the play proceeds from a typically mannerist apprehension of the complex and problematic in human affairs, it eschews the mannerist exploitation of art to escape from a world perceived as hostile.³⁴ Confronting the crisis, the play recovers an ancient conviction that conflict and change are the necessary means by which life is perpetuated. This truth about the natural condition is graphically illustrated by the paradoxical motion of the River Nile and evidenced in the lives of Antony and Cleopatra.

Susan Snyder has summarized the opposing impulses which characterize the tragic response: 'Broadly speaking, tragedy expresses the two sides of the paradoxical attitude (to death) - recognition of necessity and resistance to the cutting off of human possibility - through plot and character, respectively'.³⁵ Snyder, herself, allows that this division is too strict, because it fails to take into account 'heroism expressed through tragic action'. Antony and Cleopatra, however, can be seen as exceptional to the degree that character in this play is plot. At the end we are, perhaps, less resistant than usual to 'the cutting off of human possibility' because everything in the play has shown us that those possibilities are only realized when the protagonists collaborate with, or 'become', the tragic process.

The double vision of myth, which Shakespeare uses to great effect for the quarrel of Oberon and Titania in A Midsummer Night's Dream,³⁶ is wonderfully exploited throughout Antony and Cleopatra. In a reversal of the familiar Elizabethan process of analogy, man is made the macrocosm which nature merely mirrors. Like the lovers of Donne's poem, 'who did the whole world's soule contract', Antony and Cleopatra overcome the elemented nature of the world, by embodying it. The language of perspectivism and paradox is used to create an art-surpassing image which, with Ovidian ambivalence, can be viewed with both ironic detachment and committed wonder. Since the conviction is won that this is the nature of the world, artistic conventions are revitalized and made newly profound. 'Call us what you will we are made such by love'. Attaining their fullest potential in the present moment of experience, Antony and Cleopatra, like the lovers of 'The Canonization', 'become' the old conceits, realizing, above all else, the notion that to die is also to live.

EPILOGUE

*But stay, I see thee in the Hemisphere
Advanc'd, and made a Constellation there!
Shine forth, thou Starre of Poets, and with rage,
Or influence, chide, or cheere the drooping Stage;
Which, since thy flight from hence, hath mourn'd like night,
And despaires day, but for thy Volumes light.*

*(Ben Jonson, 'To the Memory of My Beloved, the
Author Mr. William Shakespeare')*

*This Booke,
When Brasse and Marble fade, shall make thee looke
Fresh to all Ages: when Posteritie
Shall loath what's new, thinke all is prodegie
That is not Shake-speares; ev'ry Line, each Verse
Here shall revive, redeeme thee from thy Herse.
Nor Fire, nor cankring Age, as Naso said,
Of his, thy wit-fraught Booke shall once invade...*

*(L. Digges, 'To the Memorie of the Deceased Author,
Maister W. Shakespeare')*

*Wee wondred (Shake-speare) that thou went'st so soone
From the Worlds-Stage, to the Graves-Tyring-roome.
Wee thought thee dead, but this thy printed worth,
Tels thy Spectators, that thou went'st but forth
To enter with applause. An Actors Art,
Can dye, and live, to acte a second part.
That's but an Exit of Mortalitie;
This, a Re-entrance to a Plaudite.*

(I.M., 'To the Memorie of M. W. Shake-speare')

The commendatory verses which Heminge and Condell included among the preliminaries to the First Folio of Shakespeare's plays turn on the idea of metamorphosis. The most famous, Jonson's poem on his 'Beloved, the Author Mr. William Shakespeare', is also the most equivocal in spirit and tone. As a good classicist, Jonson keeps the decorum of the literary dedication by employing the traditional motifs of literary aspiration established by Horace and Ovid. The idea of the 'stellification' of the poet allows Jonson a series of puns on the closing word of his poem,

which suggest the illumination afforded to posterity by Shakespeare's work, hints at the affinity between his wit and that of Ovid, and is, itself, a witty reference to the considerable physical weight of the volume produced by Shakespeare's fellow actors in his memory. It is, however, difficult not to read the word, 'light', as a further moral judgment by the author of The Poetaster, which is Jonson's more considered opinion of both Shakespeare and the Roman poet from whom he drew his inspiration.

Whatever the precise feeling behind his verse might be, Jonson gives Shakespeare an apotheosis to match Ovid's at the end of his magnum opus. In his tribute, Digges names Shakespeare's favourite author and paraphrases the famous lines from the concluding book of the Metamorphoses that Shakespeare had refashioned in his sixty-fifth sonnet, and which were central in his response to Ovid. Nevertheless, one feels that Shakespeare himself would most have appreciated I.M.'s unpretentious lines, which relate the notion of metamorphosis not only to the literary text, but also the daily revivals of the actor on the stage. For Shakespeare was, first and foremost, a theatre poet, and it has been the object of this study to consider his translations of the idea of metamorphosis as he continued to experiment with forms of dramatic language which could match the rich variety of the natural world and keep time with its changes.

Because they often seem to synthesize Shakespeare's response to Ovid, the Last Plays were a frequent focus in earlier chapters. Gathering into themselves a lifetime's thought and imaginative endeavour, they are too rich a theme for the space which remains here. Yet, by way of conclusion, they might briefly be considered as distinctively Shakespearean renewals of the idea of metamorphosis.

The Winter's Tale is, as its title suggests, Shakespeare's most success-

ful theatrical projection of the story-teller's theme of natural change. He finds the perfect dramatic emblem for the story-teller's art in the knowing and naive stage ingenu, Mamillius, who commands attention with his archetypal tale, 'There was a man...', and his mother, Hermoine, who instinctively responds to the rules of her son's game. With this tableau, which retrospectively conditions the way we 'take' Leontes' more sinister 'playing' in the opening act, Shakespeare formalizes a decision taken much earlier in the tragedies and problem plays to reject the realistic dynamic of the novel. The bond between mother and son, is the commitment which Shakespeare asks of his audience: one of time and seeming attention for the duration of the play. The tableau anticipates the final scene, where Shakespeare's refashioning of the Deucalion and Pyrrha story and the Pygmalion myth is his most direct assertion of the values of 'doubtful words' and the morality of 'honest counterfeiting'. The prevention of hypocrisy is the premise on which the whole scene is founded. Because the limitations of the fiction are repeatedly acknowledged, the dramatist, his actors and his audience avoid being 'mock'd with art'. The rules of the game are complied with and we are 'precious winners all'.

Shakespeare's confident assimilation of the Ovidian authorial and affective aesthetic is nowhere better projected than in the character of Paulina, a mature, but not altogether grown-up, version of Mamillius, whose presence mitigates for the loss of the boy. Paulina's very name suggests the religious possibilities of Shakespeare's play - for those who chose to 'take' them. For those who do not, she is a thoroughly domestic figure, who makes the marvelous as 'lawful as eating' (V,iii, 111). A loose-tongued 'callat', she is also a somewhat bossy director, who recalls the early Helena of All's Well (and the Diana of the final scene), and anticipates Prospero in the hint of proprietorial irascibility shown to those who threaten her artistic control:

O patience!
 The statue is but newly fix'd, the colour's
 Not dry. (V,iii, 46-48)

As she casts herself in the role of Alcyone lamenting the loss of her Ceyx, there is, in Paulina's final speech, a self-mocking note of pathos which draws attention to her exclusion from the charmed circle of 'winners' and deftly corrects any impression of bardic omniscience. If this too is a beautiful projection of Shakespeare's refusal to be too ponderous, that effect has already been guaranteed by the presence in the play of Paulina's alter ego, Autolycus.

In the Metamorphoses, Autolycus is a 'wylie pie' who can make 'black things wyght, and wyght things black appeere' (II, 363). Inheriting the dubious artis of his father, Mercury, he is also the grandfather of Ulysses, whom Ovid uses similarly to refract the shady side of the artistic disposition. Like Ovid, Shakespeare is ever-ready to acknowledge the pejorative aspects of 'craft' and 'cunning' (XI, 312-315). His Autolycus, who disavows any attempt to cozen or defraud with, 'Why should I carry lies abroad?' (IV,iv, 265), admits the possibility that even disclaimers such as Paulina's can be disingenuously employed, while the most sublime fictions are no more nor less true than the commonest broadsheet ballad.

The story of Mamillius, Paulina, and Autolycus, The Winter's Tale is also 'th'argument of Time'. The pivotal fourth act appearance of the Chorus, who claims that the designing hand is his own, has a fundamental effect on the way we interpret the play. In the first half, Leontes' jealousy is a powerful negative portrait of the creative-destructive power of 'affection'. Yet Leontes can act as Florizel's advocate to the harsh-judging Polixenes just because the 'thought of such affections' (V,i, 220) permits him to appreciate the full force of the younger man's feeling for Perdita. As in All's Well, passion becomes a mark of humanity, 'the

show and seal of nature's truth'. The 'likeness' between Leontes and Florizel rehabilitates 'affection'. Since Florizel is ready to embrace 'madness' and be advised by his 'fancy' rather than his reason (IV,iv, 474-477), we are forced to reappraise the imaginative bond which unites the lover, the lunatic and the poet. The 'intention' of Florizel's 'affection' also 'stabs the center' (I,ii, 138), but we can recognize in the destructive vehemence of his love (IV,iv, 469-471), the agonistic principle of creativity which ameliorates the loss that is so tragically apparent in Leontes' passion.

Because Florizel is 'heir to (his) affections' (IV,iv, 472), he can appreciate (as Leontes could not in Hermione) the true quality of Perdita's 'playing'. His 'hymn' to this Princess turned Shepherd's daughter turned Pastoral Queen celebrates the natural process of doing and undoing as it is reflected in her metamorphic beauty and caught in the dance:

.....When you do dance, I wish you
 A wave o'th'sea, that you might ever do
 Nothing but that; move still, still so,
 And own no other function. (IV,iv, 140-143)

Human character is here completely identified with the natural process of change and renewal. So is artistic expression. The extravagance of Florizel's praise is fully justified by the mimetic verse, which realizes the perfected movement in the imperfect moment of present experience. It is, for me, one of the most sublime expressions of Shakespeare's idea of metamorphosis.

From an embarrassment of riches in Shakespeare's late work, I want to end with the song in The Tempest which also presents rather than represents so much of the play's meaning:

... Sitting on a bank,
 Weeping again the King my father's wreck,
 This music crept by me upon the waters,

Allaying both their fury and my passion
 With its sweet air; thence I have followed it,
 Or it hath drawn me rather. But 'tis gone.
 No, it begins again.

Ariel's Song

Full fathom five thy father lies;
 Of his bones are coral made;
 Those are pearls that were his eyes;
 Nothing of him that doth fade
 But doth suffer a sea-change
 Into something rich and strange.
 Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell:

Burden: Ding-dong.

Hark! now I hear them - Ding-dong bell.

In Ferdinand's account of his experience, man, nature, and the music are totally reconciled. After the opening sub-clause, 'Sitting on a bank...', we are led to expect the personal pronoun at the beginning of the substantive clause. But 'I', 'Ferdinand', becomes 'the music'. The personality of the speaker is subsumed by the 'sweet air', revealing the limitations of discourse as a medium of self-expression. The 'fury' of the waves and the violence of human 'passion' are totally equated, whilst Ferdinand's uncertainty about cause and effect - whether he actively followed or was involuntarily drawn by the music - also has the effect of removing artificial barriers between the self and the elemental forces of art and nature, which are united in the common word, 'air'.

The song gathers into itself both the elemental conflict and the human turmoil, as it 'sweetly' acknowledges both the loss and the gain in the common experience. The pain is acknowledged, but almost instantly dissolved, as the meaning of the word, 'suffer', shifts from 'endure' to 'undergo'. The song does achieve that sense of the wonderful in the completely natural for which Ovid's stories are constantly striving. Yet the discontinuity of the music - ''tis gone. No, it begins again' - suggests the tenuous hold we have on such mysteries. It is also a further expression

of that deprecation of eloquence we find in All's Well and Antony and Cleopatra. In its avoidance of paraphrasable sentiment, the song solicits acceptance of things as they are - the more valuable because their worth can only be appreciated intermittently and expressed inadequately in the essential 'strangeness' of words:

Hark! now I hear them - Ding-dong bell.

Appendix

THE TROY SONG

Cl. Was this faire face the cause, quoth she,
Why the Grecians sacked Troy,
Fond done, done, fond was this King Priams ioy,
With that she sighed as she stood, *bis*
And gaue this sentence then, among nine bad if one be
good, among nine bad if one be good, there's yet one
good in ten.

(I,iii, 68-77; ll.395-401)

The song of Lavatch in All's Well, I,iii, is reproduced above as it appears in the First Folio. In this form the ambiguities, which persist even in modern regularized versions, are maximized. There are, of course, compelling reasons why an editor would not want to reproduce F. My own purpose is not to discount the possibility of some degree of unintentional corruption, but to suggest that before wholesale emendations are undertaken several things might give us pause. Not the least of these is the immediate response of the Countess: 'What, one good in ten? You corrupt the song, sirrah' (ll. 78-79). In a play as self-conscious as All's Well, in which the characters frequently assume the role of literary critic to comment on problems of signification, syntax, and punctuation, we should not discount the possibility that the criticism of the Countess might be formal, as well as semantic. The Countess may well say more than she intends. Shakespeare, however, would seem to be calling attention to just this discontinuity between signification and significance; between the 'dumb' written word and that which 'breathes, even in the mouths of men' (Sonnet 81, 1-14).

The sequence in All's Well, I,iii, which includes the song of Lavatch focuses attention on the twin problems of authorial intention and critical understanding, much after the manner of As You Like It, III,iii, where the topic of poetry provides Touchstone with an opportunity to be true to his name. Like Touchstone in the earlier comedy, Lavatch presents a strong argument for generosity of understanding and interpretative freedom in questions of love, literature and religion.

At ll. 27ff., the change-changeabout catechism of the Clown and the

Countess makes us aware of the competing values of different forms of 'sense'. Lavatch's 'holy reasons' expresses the tension between the Pauline 'laws' of the 'mind' and the 'flesh' in its contradictory sacred and profane meanings.¹

Lavatch, as we have seen (p.299 above) creates from the 'differences' of sex, age, and doctrine, the 'likeness' of a discors concordia uniting male and female, young and old, Puritan and Catholic, art and nature (ll. 49-54).² In I,iii, he goes on to argue that specific clerical dress is less important than charitable intentions; generous ends of greater consequence than purity of means:

Though honesty be no puritan, yet it
will do no hurt. It will wear the surplice
of humility over the black gown of a big heart.
(ll. 90-92)

The speech is cryptic yet densely suggestive. Not for the first time in All's Well, we are reminded that Elizabethan notions of satire comprehended both senses of obscurity: darkness and difficulty.³ Lavatch acknowledges the possible charge of hypocrisy, yet manages to find virtue in moral indirection. His speech promotes a spirit of tolerance in religious, sexual, and artistic affairs. For the lines suggest not only his own dubious virtue, but also that of Helena, and - beyond them both - that of the play itself. Like the 'corrupt' song about Troy and the natural world to which it refers, all realize their ends by imperfect means, and do good, if at all, by default.

The significant tonal differences between As You Like It and All's Well That Ends Well are reflected in the apologies for poetry which are presented in the respective comedies. In the song of Lavatch, the relationship between 'fayning' and 'feigning', which Touchstone establishes, is expressed as a darker connection between sexual double-dealing and corruption in the world of words. The song, however, has the same layered density as Touchstone's heavily-veiled allusions. As the presenter, Lavatch is only the mouthpiece for the undisclosed speaker of the lines about Helen of Troy:

Was this faire face the cause, quoth she,
Why the Grecians sacked Troy.

Like the King on a subsequent occasion, we are obliged to ask, 'What "she"

is this?' (cf. II,i, 78). The ambiguous pronoun is usually taken to denote Hecuba, wife of Priam.⁴ The fact that Hecuba was an Elizabethan by-word for excessive lamentation, and her appearance in Metamorphoses, XIII, the standard text-book illustration of copia,⁵ adds dramatic point to this conjecture. However, the lines admit further possibilities, thereby fulfilling the same rhetorical criterion of variety in a different way, by arguing against singleness of authorial intention and critical interpretation.

At the end of the Metamorphoses, immediately preceding Ovid's famous tempus edax rerum, Pythagoras turns his attention to a particularly ironic victim of Time's changes:

And Helen when shee saw her aged wrinkles in
A glasse wept also: musing in herself what men had seene,
That by two noble princes sonnes shee twyce had ravisht beene.
(15, 255-257)

In the song of Lavatch, the bemused, incredulous voice might also belong to Helen herself. The repetition with inversion in l. 397 alters the sense of 'fond' from positive to pejorative, and might be seen as characterizing, first the tender love of Menelaus, then the dotting passion of Paris. The same conflict of meaning is felt again at I,iii, 165, where 'fondness' is used by the Countess in the sense of 'love', and 'taken' by Helena to comprehend the sense of 'foolish' (see p.253 above). Moreover, as printed in F., 'fond done' is not simply inverted:

Fond done, done, fond was this King Priams joy.

The effect of isolating 'done' by punctuation is to permit further readings of this word too. Here the final meaning turns on the vagaries of an individual production of Shakespeare's play, in which 'done' might be recited as a single syllable, or sung as a two syllable word with an unstressed feminine ending: 'donna'. Any metrical irregularities in the text can thus be justified in performance - made 'flowing' and 'even', to use the King's significant terms at the end of the play (V,iii, 325). 'Donna' can also be taken as a 'stage direction' - a mock courtesy from the Clown to the Countess (one remembers Feste's habitual 'Madonna'), who has just castigated her own reluctance to pass harsh judgment on Lavatch as a 'slowness' (l. 10). It is a 'fondness' which we 'take' as a mark of her loving kindness.

If we accept the Folio text, 'fondness' can thus be seen as either a masculine or a feminine attribute, while the F. punctuation also conditions the way we interpret the final clause in l. 397 of the Clown's song. In this form, 'fond' no longer qualifies the singular action of the preceding verb, but is brought into opposition with the final word in the line, 'joy': 'fond was this King Priams joy'. The effect is one of expansion, away from the particular incidents of the Trojan story - the seizure of Helen and the receiving of Paris into Troy - and towards the wider significance of the famous history as the exemplum par excellence of the metamorphosis of civilizations:

So Troy which once was great and strong as well in welth as men,
And able tenne yeeres space to spare such store of blood as then,
Now beeing bace hath nothing left of all her welth to showe,
Save ruines of the auncient woorkes which grasse dooth overgowe,
And tumbes wherin theyr auncetours lye buried on a rowe.

(Metamorphoses, 15, 465-469)

Thus, while 'King Priams joy' is usually taken to mean his son, 'Paris', it can also refer more generally to the King's delight in his own worldly power and authority - a 'joy' which was, by the very nature of things, a 'fond' illusion.

We have not yet exhausted the possibilities of l. 397. Priam, we remember, had other sons, one of them, like the balladeer Lavatch (I,iii, 57) gifted with the power of prophesy. This is how Golding continues to render Numa's Pythagorean account of the rise and fall of nations:

And as (I doo remember mee) what tyme that Troy decayd,
The prophet Helen, Priams sonne, theis woordes ensewing sayd
Before Aenaeas dowting of his lyfe in weeping plyght...

(15, 482-484)

Some lines later, metrical exigencies again compel Golding to, as it were, strip the prophet Helenus of his manhood:

Thus farre (I well remember mee) did Helens woordes extend
To good Anaeas. And it is a pleasure unto mee
The Citie of my countrymen increasing thus to see:
And that the Grecians victorie becommes the Trojans weale.

(15, 500-503)

Thus, not the least of the contradictory meanings signified by the 'doubtful' word 'Helen' are those of male and female.⁶

Like Touchstone's indirect quotations, the song of Lavatch is a kind of palimpsest. Shakespeare manages to make the literary transformations of the Troy story part of the extended meanings of the song fragment he creates for his clown. Like the recreation of Rome from the ashes of Troy, this too is a history of paradoxical 'becoming', and defect made perfection. Whilst it is possible to catch in Lavatch's song an oblique glance at the comic idiosyncrasies of Golding's translation, it is also possible to discern a kind of Shakespearean homage to one of the most sublime moments in Elizabethan drama - a moment which is also indebted to the fifteenth book of the Metamorphoses. As in As You Like It, III,iii, Ovid and Marlowe are linked in Shakespeare's mind with the idea of paradoxical 'mistaking'.

For, in the opening lines of the Clown's song, the lament of the classical Helen seems to reach us through the voice of Marlowe's Faustus, at that critical moment when he attempts to relate the phantom before his eyes to the historical beauty on whose ransom the world turned:

Was this the face that launched a thousand ships,
And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?
(V,ii, 97-98)⁷

The deep ironies in Faustus' situation add resonance to the questioning voice in All's Well, and underline the natural and artistic changes which are presented in the Troy song. As the sands of his life run away, Faustus rejects the traditional Christian path to grace, placing his own hope of regeneration in the ghost of the Helen who caused such destruction, but who might yet make him immortal with a kiss. The fondness of this hope is emphasized when Faustus is subsequently prepared to settle for the 'downward' metamorphosis of 'Pythagoras' metempsychosis' (V,ii, 184).

In Shakespeare's play, we are invited to relate these various 'Helens', the shades of historical and literary posterity, to the Helen who, summoned by the Countess, will shortly stand before us on the stage. A Helen, that is, who will likewise be presented as a prophet new-inspired, but who will reveal a 'strumpet's boldness' (II,i, 172) in rejuvenating the King and bedding Bertram. A Helen who has, indeed, attracted a considerable critical following as a bona fide miracle worker, but who is, by her own admission, 'the shadow of a wife...The name and not the thing' (V,iii, 300-301).

Helena's disclaimer holds good for the song of Lavatch, which similarly makes no pretense to the finite solidity of 'things' in the real world. While it seems to establish a binding law - that 'among nine bad if one be good, there's yet one good in ten' - the subject of that law is indeterminate. In yet another battle of the sexes, the Countess proclaims that the Clown 'corrupts' the song by increasing the incidence of badness among women. Lavatch protests that, since he meant to be understood as referring to men and not women, he has significantly improved the odds, with a consequent 'purification' of the song (ll. 80-86). The audience is forced to conclude that, since the syntactic justification is anything but absolute (as printed in F., ll. 399-401 revolve like the 'becoming' 'wheel' in Ophelia's mad song),⁸ the 'sentence' (l. 399) permits considerable interpretative licence. The imperfections in the unrealized text thus become the paradoxical means of its life-giving interpretations in future theatrical performances. In the Clown's highly ambiguous song about Helen of Troy, Shakespeare avoids the Florio-like presumption of making male and female, word and deed, one and the same thing.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. Except where otherwise noted, references and quotations are from Pèter Alexander (ed.), William Shakespeare, The Complete Works (London & Glasgow, 1951).
2. References are to Ovid, Metamorphoses, trans. Frank Justus Miller, Loeb Classical Library (London & Cambridge, Mass., Books I-VIII, 1977, Books IX-XV, 1976). References and quotations from this edition are distinguished in the text by the use of Roman numerals.
3. 'The Aesthetics of Mutilation in Titus Andronicus', Shakespeare Survey, 27(1974), p.16.
4. For a recent collection of articles on 'influence study', see Ronald Primeau (ed.), Influx: Essays on Literary Influence (Port Washington, N.Y. & London, 1977).
5. 'The Sense of the Past', in Primeau (ed.), Influx, p.29.
6. 'Timber: or, Discoveries', in James Harry Smith & Edd Winfield Parks (eds.), The Great Critics: An Anthology of Literary Criticism (New York, 1967), pp.264-265.
7. George Kennedy, The Art of Rhetoric in the Roman World (Princeton, 1972), p.419.
8. See his Metamorphosis: The Mind in Exile (Cambridge, Mass. & London, 1981), pp.24-61. See also the discussion at Ch.II, p.41 and n.51 below.

CHAPTER I

1. Gilbert Highet, The Classical Tradition (New York, 1957), p.62. For Ovide moralise, see, inter alia, Douglas Bush, Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition in English Poetry (New York, 1963); Jean Seznec, The Survival of the Pagan Gods: The Mythological Tradition and Its Place in Renaissance Humanism and Art (New York, 1961), Ch.III; Dorothy M. Robathan, 'Ovid in the Middle Ages', in J.W. Binns (ed.), Ovid (London & Boston, 1973), pp.191-209. The tradition of allegorizing Ovid, which reached its apotheosis in George Sandys' exhaustively annotated Ovid's Metamorphosis Englished, is summarized by L.K. Born in a seminal article 'Ovid and Allegory', Speculum, 9(1934), pp.362-379.

2. The Metamorphoses was first translated into English in 1560 with Thomas Howell's, The fable of Ovid treating of Narcissus translated into English metre, with a moral ther. into very pleasaunte to rede, by T.H. Howell's version of ll.342-510 of Book III established a trend for translations of individual tales from the poem in the 1560s. But, in 1565, such efforts were eclipsed by Golding's translation of the first four books. The completed work, published by William Seres, appeared two years later.

3. Citations are from John Frederick Nims (ed.), Ovid's Metamorphoses: The Arthur Golding Translation (1567) (New York, 1965). References to this edition of the poem are distinguished in the text by the use of Arabic numerals. For the relative unobtrusiveness of Golding as a moralizing interpreter, see Ch.V, pp.177-178 below.

4. For 'Jove in a thatch'd house', see the discussion of As You Like It at Ch.V, pp.178ff. below.

5. See Brooks Otis, Ovid as an Epic Poet, Second Edition (Cambridge, 1970), p.171.

6. In fact, in the Erysichthon, the metamorphosis works not on the main protagonist, but on his daughter; Erysichthon simply eats himself up - a wittily appropriate comment on his all-consuming passion, and a literalizing treatment of a dominant theme in the poem.

7. For a comparison of Ovid's Juno with Virgil's, see Otis, Ovid as an Epic Poet, pp.132-133.

8. See particularly ll.141-142, 176. Because Ovid appears to speak in propria persona here, the sequence has been read biographically as a covert protestation of innocence by Ovid over the affair which led to his banishment from Rome. See L.P. Wilkinson, Ovid Recalled (Cambridge, 1955), p.298. For a discussion of earlier treatments of the myth, see Otis, Ovid as an Epic Poet, pp.133ff. See also Ch.V, p.193 and n.63, p.196 and n.77 below.

9. For Ovid's use of the metamorphosis device as a way of avoiding issues of moral conflict see G. Karl Galinsky, Ovid's Metamorphoses: An Introduction to the Basic Aspects (Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1975), pp.14-15, 66, 102-103; Charles Segal, 'Myth and Philosophy in the Metamorphoses: Ovid's Augustanism and the Augustan Conclusion of Book XV', American Journal of Philology, XC(1969), p.266.

10. Metamorphoses, XIII, 949ff; XIV, 600ff; XIV, 824ff; XV, 745ff.

11. The unity of treatment is emphasized by Ovid's repetition of vocabulary and phraseology. See Segal, 'Myth and Philosophy in the Metamorphoses', pp.257-292 and also his 'Ovid's Metamorphoses: Greek Myth in Augustan

Rome', Studies in Philology, LXVIII (October 1971), No.4, pp.371-394. Both essays cite the lack of discrimination between these sequences as evidence of Ovid's anti-Augustan stance in the poem. Thus they form part of a critical debate which is not my concern here. For a review of that debate, and an opposing view that the poem should be judged in terms of its literary and aesthetic qualities rather than any political and ideological concerns, see Galinsky, Ovid's Metamorphoses, Ch.5.

12. Otis, Ovid as an Epic Poet, p.89

13. Ovid as an Epic Poet, p.344.

14. E.J. Kenney, 'The Style of the Metamorphoses', in Binns (ed.), Ovid, p.146, n.15.

15. See E.J. Kenney, 'Discordia Semina Rerum', Classical Review, N.S., 17(1967), pp.51-52. Noting the depiction of Daphne as the exception that proves the rule in the iconographical tradition, Kenney quotes the example of a 1517 Venetian edition of the poem with 57 woodcuts, of which only 5 illustrate the instant of metamorphosis. In an 18th century edition, only 25 out of the 130 illustrations focus on the moment of transition.

16. An early exception is John Dryden, one of the poem's most perceptive critics, but, of course, also a practising poet. See p.17 and n.31 below.

17. For example, Nicander's didactic poem, Heteroioumena. See Otis, Ovid as an Epic Poet, p.81; Wilkinson, Ovid Recalled, pp.145ff.

18. Wilkinson, Ovid Recalled, p.145. Examples are the stories of Meleager, Perseus, Pentheus, Achilles and the Rape of Proserpina.

19. See Galinsky, Ovid's Metamorphoses, p.49.

20. See Galinsky, Ovid's Metamorphoses, pp.49-51

21. Cf. A Midsummer Night's Dream, II,i, 115-116, and the discussion at Ch.III, pp.62ff. below.

22. It is no more a contradiction to speak of Ovid's gods as 'human' than it is to do so of Shakespeare's fairies in A Midsummer Night's Dream. As E.J. Kenney has remarked '...what could be more human than the gods of the Metamorphoses.' 'The Style of the Metamorphoses', p.145.

23. See William S. Anderson, 'Multiple Change in the Metamorphoses', Transactions of the American Philological Association, 94 (1963), pp.10-14. The story is discussed at Ch.IV, pp.163ff. below.
24. Kenney, 'The Style of the Metamorphoses', pp.142-145.
25. It is perhaps important to note both the Latin original and Golding's version of these opening lines. The thematic language of metamorphosis is somewhat diluted in Golding's 'wondrous feate' (1.2) and 'directly' (1.4): the tension between 'change' and 'continuity' expressed in mutastis and perpetuum is dissipated to some degree:
- In nova fert animus mutatas dicere formas
 corpora; di, coeptis (nam vos mutastis et illas)
 adspirate meis primaque ab origine mundi
 ad mea perpetuum deducite tempora carmen!
- Of shapes transformde to bodies straunge, I propose to entreate,
 Ye gods vouchsafe (for you are they ywrought this wondrous feate)
 To further this mine enterprise. And from the world begunne,
 Graunt that my verse may to my time, his course directly runne.
26. Kenney, 'Discordia Semina Rerum', p.52. See also Otis, Ovid as an Epic Poet, p.81: 'It is quite clear that what was supposed to harmonize the apparently contradictory elements of variety and continuity was the concept of change or metamorphosis.' For earlier workings of the chaos to cosmos structure, and the use of metamorphosis as a unifying device (in didactic poetry), see Otis, Ovid as an Epic Poet, p.311.
27. Galinsky, Ovid's Metamorphosis, pp.14, 43. See also Otto Steen Due, Changing Forms: Studies in the Metamorphosis of Ovid (Copenhagen, 1974) p.120: "It seems that what was apparently a principle of limitation has turned out to be a principle of poetic interpretation, or in other words: the poem is not primarily concerned with metamorphoses in the world but with the world as metamorphoses."
28. Ovid: A Poet Between Two Worlds (Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1945), p.99.
29. Ovid: A Poet Between Two Worlds, p.220 n.73; Wilkinson, Ovid Recalled, p.161.
30. While the reason for Ovid's banishment from Rome remains a mystery, Elizabethan writers usually ascribed his exile to the Emperor's displeasure at the character of Ovid's early poetry. See Clyde Barnes Cooper, Some Elizabethan Opinions of the Poetry and Character of Ovid (Menasha, Wisc. 1914), pp.29ff. See also Ch.V, pp.193ff. and n.63 below.

31. '...yet this may be said in behalf of Ovid, that no man has ever treated the Passions of Love with so much Delicacy of Thought, and of Expression, or search'd into the nature of it more Philosophically than he'. 'The Preface to Ovid's Epistles', ll.13-16, in James Kinsley (ed.), The Poems of John Dryden (Oxford, 1958), Vol. 1, p.178.
32. Ovid: A Poet Between Two Worlds, p.99.
33. Anderson, 'Multiple Change', p.8.
34. For a discussion of Kafka's use of the metamorphosis theme see Skulsky, Metamorphosis, pp.171-194; on Wallace Stevens, see Sister M. Bernetta Quinn, 'Metamorphosis in Wallace Stevens', Sewanee Review, LX(Spring, 1952), pp. 230-252.
35. See Galinsky, Ovid's Metamorphoses, pp.46ff; Otis, Ovid as an Epic Poet, p.364; Anderson, 'Multiple Change', pp.4-5.
36. Metamorphoses I, 568ff; II, 401ff; I, 452ff; VI, 146ff.
37. See Galinsky, Ovid's Metamorphoses, pp.45, 47
38. See Anderson, 'Multiple Change', pp.23ff.
39. Ovid Recalled, p.212.
40. For the general tenor of this argument, I am indebted to Galinsky, Ovid's Metamorphoses, Ch.1, particularly pp.61ff.
41. See Kenney, 'The Style of the Metamorphoses', pp.117, 131ff; Galinsky, Ovid's Metamorphoses, p.1.
42. See Galinsky, Ovid's Metamorphoses, pp.24-25.
43. Metamorphoses, III, 432-436; III, 141-142, 176.
44. Metamorphoses, VIII, 618-808; VII, 1-424.
45. 'An Essay of Dramatic Poesy', in Smith and Parks (eds.), The Great Critics, p.323.
46. Respectively, Metamorphoses, I, 588ff; II, 409ff; III, 193ff; VI, 382ff; VI, 549ff. Galinsky, Ovid's Metamorphoses, p.143.

47. Metamorphoses, VIII, 738ff. The Callymachean and Ovidian versions are compared by Otis, Ovid as an Epic Poet, pp.65ff; Galinsky, Ovid's Metamorphoses, pp.4ff.

48. For example, in Ovid's version of the Orpheus story (Metamorphoses, X, 3ff and XI, 1ff), the focus is the death of Orpheus, and not the loss of Eurydice, which was central in Virgil's version; the stories of Deianira, Medea, Dido, and Ariadne are either varied from the treatment in the Heroides, or as a consequence of that previous telling, glossed over in the Metamorphoses. See Wilkinson, Ovid Recalled, pp.148-149.

49. Kenney, 'The Style of the Metamorphoses', pp.131-132.

50. Ovid as an Epic Poet, p.76.

51. 'The Style of the Metamorphoses', pp.132ff.

52. 'Epistle to Pisos', trans. J.H. and S.C. Smith in Smith and Parks (eds.), The Great Critics, p.115.

53. The echo is noted by Galinsky, who gives his own translations of Ovid and Horace, Ovid's Metamorphoses, p.81. Due finds a further echo of Horace's Carmina, 1.26ff. Changing Forms, p.36. See also note 62 below.

54. II, 64.

55. See Galinsky, Ovid's Metamorphoses, pp.68-69.

56. For Ovid, Virgil and the changing sensibility of their times, see the indexes in Otis, Ovid as an Epic Poet, p.441, and Galinsky, Ovid's Metamorphoses, p.274. See also Kenney, 'The Style of the Metamorphoses', pp.116ff; Due, Changing Forms, pp.36-42, 158-165.

57. See Galinsky, Ovid's Metamorphoses, p.19.

58. On the rival claims of biography and game-playing in the Amores, see Wilkinson, Ovid Recalled, Ch.IV.

59. H. Bardon, 'Ovide et le Baroque', in N.I. Herescu (ed.), Ovidiana: Recherches sur Ovide, publiées à l'occasion du bimillénaire de la naissance du poète (Paris, 1958), p.76.

60. Gordon Williams, The Nature of Roman Poetry (Oxford, 1970), p.179. See also, Kenneth Quinn, Latin Explorations (London, 1963), pp.135-136: '..poetry

that sets out to explore, unravel, record the problems of human experience.. Ovid never writes..His role is strictly to entertain.'

61. Recourse to Johan Huizinga's Homo Ludens (London, 1949), could be seen as automatic here. But the pertinence of this seminal study to the Meta-morphoses is admirably developed by Galinsky, Ovid's Metamorphoses, pp.203-204.

62. Cf. Due, Changing Forms, p.41: 'But it should not be forgotten that Ovid's lusus is not only burlesque and lack of sincerity; he is neither a parodist nor a frivole (sic) poet - or that alone. His lusus is an act of balance between seriousness and levity, between respect and disrespect, between escaping from Virgil and following him.'

63. De Oratorio, II, 219; Galinsky Ovid's Metamorphoses, p.159, 193.

64. Galinsky, Ovid's Metamorphoses, p.59.

65. E.J. Kenney, 'Ovid' in The Oxford Classical Dictionary, 2nd Ed. (Oxford, 1970), p.765.

66. L.P. Wilkinson's paraphrase. The context of this passage and the question of belief are discussed in Ovid Recalled, pp.190ff.

67. Frank Kermode, The Sense of an Ending (New York, 1967), p.7.

68. Otis, Ovid as an Epic Poet, p.2.

CHAPTER II

1. See William Righter, Myth and Literature (London, 1975), p.5. Exceptions would include early proponents of the ritualist approach, who insisted on the primacy of deed over word, to make myth the explicatory record of a pre-existent ritual act. This approach is summarized and placed in historical perspective by K.K. Ruthven, Myth (London, 1976), pp.35ff, and Michael Grant, Myths of the Greeks and Romans (Harmondsworth, 1973), pp.138ff.

2. Myth and Literature, p.22.

3. Righter's attempt, for example, could also serve as a definition of the imagination, as Shakespeare's Hippolyta or Coleridge use the term. See Myth and Literature, pp.94-95. See also H.J. Rose: '..a pre-scientific attempt to explain some phenomenon, real and supposed, which excites the curiosity

of the myth-maker, or perhaps more accurately as an effort to reach a feeling of satisfaction in place of an uneasy bewilderment concerning such phenomena'. Oxford Classical Dictionary (Oxford, 1970), p.718. The second part of Rose's definition echoes Bacon's psychological theory of poetry: 'The use of this Feigned History hath been to give some show of satisfaction to the mind of man in those points wherein the nature of things doth deny it'. J. Spedding, R.L. Ellis, D.D. Heath (eds.), The Works of Francis Bacon, Vol.III, (London, 1857), p.343.

4. The studies by Righter, Ruthven and Grant (see n.1 above) open with this same apologia.
5. See Edgar Wind, Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance (Bungay, 1967), p.86.
6. De Natura Deorum, II, 24. Cited in Ruthven, Myth, p.10.
7. See Frankel, Ovid: Poet Between Two Worlds, pp.109-110; Wilkinson, Ovid Recalled, p.213; Otis, Ovid as an Epic Poet, pp.301-302.
8. 'Prima et maxime admiranda metamorphosis est, rerum creatio'. Fabularum Ovidii interpretatio tradita in Academia Regiomontano (Wittenburg, 1572), p.A7V. At the end of the sixteenth century, the scholarly editions of the Metamorphoses which contained the notes of Sabinus were much in demand, and the second complete edition of the poem to be published in England (Cambridge, 1584) contained his work. See T.W. Baldwin, On the Literary Genetics of Shakspeare's Poems and Sonnets (Urbana, 1950), p.63.
9. See Anderson, 'Multiple Change'; Due, Changing Forms, p.100.
10. See A.G. Lee (ed.), Metamorphoseon, Liber 1 (Cambridge, 1968), commentary at n.21-23, p.72.
11. S.K. Heniger, Jr., Touches of Sweet Harmony: Pythagorean Cosmology and Renaissance Poetics (San Marino, 1974), p.297. Heniger's book is a learned and lucid account of the conditioning effect of cosmological theory on Renaissance aesthetics. Rosalie Colie's work explores and elaborates the consequences of the same basic premise. See "Some Paradoxes in the Language of Things", in J.A. Mazzeo (ed), Reason and the Imagination: Studies in the History of Ideas, 1600-1800 (New York & London, 1962), pp.93-128 (particularly pp.106-109); Paradoxia Epidemica (Princeton, 1966). In her posthumously published work, The Resources of Kind: Genre Theory in the Renaissance, ed. Barbara K.Lewalski (Berkeley, 1973), Rosalie Colie inverts the process of analogy to show how genre theory operated in the Renaissance, not only as a closed literary system, but also as a flexible and accommodating means of perceiving the world. See Ch.III p.81 and also ns. 39 and 40 below.
12. Heniger, Touches of Sweet Harmony, p.340. The argument, necessarily truncated here, is argued through in close detail by Heniger, with reference to Sidney, Puttenham, and other Elizabethan theorists. See pp.287-364.

13. Heniger, Touches of Sweet Harmony, p.50. Isabel Rivers also suggests that the Metamorphoses was the most influential poem to work out the relationship between the artistic form of the work itself and the classical ideas it embodies. See Classical and Christian Ideas in English Renaissance Poetry (London, 1979), p.78.

14. Cf. I, 101-102 and I Genesis 27: 'Thus God created the man in his own image'. Unless otherwise indicated, all references are to the Geneva Bible of 1560. The absence of dogmatism in a Puritan translator is less remarkable than it might at first appear. Quite apart from Golding's literary scruples and the liberal character of the 'translation movement', the long moralise tradition and the harmonizing eclecticism of the Renaissance, ensured that Ovid had long been regarded as an honorary churchman, directly or indirectly enlightened by Mosaic wisdom. Calvin, himself, was a classicist who, in his Commentary on Genesis, saw nothing problematic in using Ovidian metamorphoses to explicate the transformation of Lot's wife into a pillar of salt. See M.W.S. Swan, 'A Study of Golding's Ovid', unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1942, pp.220-223. On Pauline metamorphosis, see p.41 and n.46 below. On Golding as a translator, see also Ch.V, pp.175ff, 184, 187, 214ff, below.

15. Cf. venae, I, 128. Ovid enjoys punning on this word, which could mean both 'vein' or 'seam', and 'natural disposition'. (See Lee, Metamorphoseon, n.128, p.86). He thus anticipates Shakespeare's extensive word-play on 'metal'/'mettle'.

16. See Harry Levin, The Myth of the Golden Age in the Renaissance (Bloomington, 1969), p.19.

17. Due, Changing Forms, p.101. For specific contemporary allusions, see Lee, Metamorphoseon, pp.87-88. For Ovid and pastoralism, see also Ch.V, pp.184ff. below.

18. IV,iii, 4-24.

19. See Ch.1, p.22.

20. Cf. I, 296: 'hic summa piscem deprendit in ulmo' : 'one takes fish caught in the elm-tree's top'.

21. 'Fishes in the Trees', Essays in Criticism, 24(1974), pp.20-38.

22. 'Fishes in the Trees', p.23.

23. The Dunciad; I, 67-68; Epistle to Burlington, ll. 119-176.

24. Nuttall, 'Fishes in the Trees', pp.28, 30, 22.

25. Ovid's Metamorphosis Englished, Mythologized and Represented in Figures. An Essay to the Translation of Virgil's Aeneis by G.S. (Oxford, 1632), p.7. Cf. Sidney's remark that the ancients 'never, or very daintily, match Hornpypes and Funerals'. 'Apologie for Poetrie', Smith and Parks, The Great Critics, p.227.

26. 'Fishes in the Trees', p.31.

27. 'Fishes in the Trees', p.33.

28. 'Fishes in the Trees', p.33.

29. Nuttall, 'Fishes in the Trees', pp.36-37, citing W.H. Auden, 'The Truest Poetry is the Most Feigning', Collected Shorter Poems, p.315.

30. As You Like It, II,i, 16; Sidney, 'Apologie for Poetrie', Smith and Parks, The Great Critics, p.226. Jonson's famous criticism of the indecorum of Elizabethan drama (Preface to Everyman in His Humour) is also relevant.

31. It is at this point that I part company with Nuttall. Quoting the marvelous concluding lines of the Epistle to Burlington, which show 'laughing Ceres' re-assumption of Timon's land, Nuttall seems to suggest that this assertion of 'Nature's own surrealism' is the final unconscious rebuke to Pope's argument ('Fishes in the Trees', pp.30-31). I cannot believe that the delicious irony was one which Pope, himself, was not aware of. Indeed, it seems possible that Pope - whose debt to Ovid goes beyond the pastoralism of Windsor Forest - is here deliberately inviting the kind of questions which Ovid raises in the Metamorphoses, and Shakespeare in As You Like It.

32. 1, 460-463. Cf. I, 388-389: 'interea repetunt caecis obscura latebris/ verba datae sortis secum inter seque volutant'. For Ovid's thematic development of 'doubtfull wordes' see Ch.IV, pp.111ff. For Shakespeare's use of 'doubtful wordes' in All's Well That Ends Well, see Ch.VI and Appendix.

33. When Ovid invokes 'the testimony of antiquity' elsewhere he is less provocatively polemical. See Fasti, IV, 203-204. Lee cites unambiguous deference to the ancients by Quintilian and Cicero. See Metamorphoseon, commentary at n.400, p.113. For the 'vocabulary of surprise', which frequently accompanies the transformation, see Anderson, 'Multiple Change' p.4.

34. Paulina fears that her powers will be deemed 'wicked' and 'unlawful' (V,iii, 90, 105). Rosalind is equally concerned to clear herself of damnable intent (As You Like It, V,ii, 57). Cf. also the careful discrimination

between white and black magic in The Tempest. God's was the first and only true act of creation, and Shakespeare does not want to be charged with usurping His powers.

35. The idea goes back to Anaxamander and Empedocles. Lee (Metamorphoseon, p.117) cites analogues in Horace, Lucan, and Manilius. For the development of the idea in Renaissance Neo-Platonic thought and aesthetics, see Wind, Pagan Mysteries, Ch.V. See also Ch.V, pp.212ff below.

36. See Robert A. Nisbet, Social Change and History (New York, 1969), Ch.1.

37. Due, Changing Forms, p.11.

38. For an application of Aristotle's dictum to the idea of metamorphosis (in Homer), see Skulsky, Metamorphosis, p.15.

39. For a detailed study of the chaiastic arrangement of the two sequences, see Roy Arthur Swanson, 'Ovid's Pythagorean Essay', The Classical Journal, 54 (1958-1959), pp.21-22.

40. See Otis, Ovid as an Epic Poet, p.301.

41. Fabularum Ovidii, pp.1^v - 2^f.

42. For Shakespeare's debt to Ovid/Golding in Sonnet 64, see J. Dover Wilson (ed.), The Sonnets (Cambridge, 1969); Stephen Booth (ed.), Shakespeare's Sonnets (New Haven & London, 1977), pp.245-246, 551-554; Baldwin, Literary Genetics, pp.273-274, 279, 280, 287. Baldwin frequently refers to, and sometimes takes issue with, Sir Sidney Lee's seminal work, Ovid and Shakespeare's Sonnets (Reprint from The Quarterly Review, April 1909).

43. 'Preface to the Fables', Smith and Parks, The Great Critics, p.362.

44. Ovid's Metamorphosis Englished, p.511. The voice in loudest disagreement with Sandys and Dryden is, perhaps, that of Galinsky, who sees Pythagoras' discourse as 'intentionally monotonous, dreary and long-winded'. In his view, Ovid meant the sequence to be a parody of the catalogue poem - deliberately avoided elsewhere in the Metamorphoses - and a foil to his own superior art. See Ovid's Metamorphoses, pp.104-107.

45. Something of a crux in modern criticism of the Metamorphoses, the arguments turn largely on the extent to which Pythagoreanism can be seen to lend philosophical coherence and unity to the whole poem. See Philip de Lacy, 'Philosophical Doctrine and Poetic Technique in Ovid', The Classical Journal, 43-44 (December, 1947), pp.153ff; Swanson, 'Ovid's Pythagorean Essay', (n.39 above). Recent studies have emphasized the stylistic and literary

function of the sequence, whilst rejecting with Otis (Ovid as an Epic Poet, p.423) the conclusion that Ovid was necessarily a Pythagorean. Earlier opinions are usefully summarized by D.A. Little, 'The Speech of Pythagoras in Metamorphoses 15, and the Structure of the Metamorphoses', Hermes 98(1970), pp.340-360.

46. 1 Corinthians XV, 51-52. With Golding's translation at 15, 205, compare XV, 185: 'momentaque cuncta novantur': 'and so the whole round of motion is gone through again'. Cf. also Sandys' translation: 'All in a moment change from that to this' (Ovid's Metamorphosis Englished, p.495). Golding's translation would also seem to reflect the language of 1 Corinthians II, 9: 'We speake the wisdome of God in a mysterie, even the hid wisdome, which God hath determined before the worlde unto our glorie...But as it is written, The things which eye hathe not sene, nether eare hathe heard, nether came into mā's heart, are, which God hathe prepared for them that love him'. This fusion of Ovidian and Pauline metamorphosis is particularly interesting in view of Shakespeare's presentation of 'Bottom's Dream' (A Midsummer Night's Dream, IV,i, 197ff).

47. Metamorphoses, XV, 364-390/15, 400-428.

48. '..rotten sides of broken ships do change / To Barnacles; O Transformation strange! / 'Twas first a green Tree, then a gallant Hull / Lately a Mushroom, now a flying Gull'. Sylvester's Du Bartas, 6th Day, 1st Week, ll.27-30. Cited Frank Kermode (ed.), Arden The Tempest, (London, 1954), n. at IV,i, 248.

49. Skulsky, Metamorphosis, p.56.

50. Antony and Cleopatra, III,xiii, 31-34.

51. Skulsky, Metamorphosis, p.61. See also n.44 above.

52. Metamorphoses, XV, 160-164/15, 178-182; As You Like It, II,ii, 163-165. For Shakespeare's allusions to Ovid's Pythagorean sequence in As You Like It, see Ch.V, pp.214ff. below.

53. Neither Pythagoras nor Jaques speak for the works in which they appear, yet each makes a vital contribution to the thematic concerns of that work. Similarly, their respective speeches have been harshly judged, as a result of the over-familiarity which breeds (in some cases, unfair) contempt. Jaques', 'All the world's a stage' is a Renaissance commonplace with a long classical ancestry (see E.R. Curtius, European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages, trans. Willard R. Trask [New York, 1953], pp.138-144). It is interesting, however, that an Elizabethan play, Damon and Phithias, attributes the idea to Pythagoras himself (cited H.J. Oliver (ed.), Penguin As You Like It (Harmondsworth, 1968), p.164).

54. For Spenser's indebtedness to Ovid, see S.P. Zitner (ed.), The Mutabilitie Cantos (London, 1968). The Ovidianism of The Faerie Queene is not, of course, restricted to the concluding cantos. In the context of the present discussion, it is interesting to note that, unlike some modern classicists, Spenser would seem to have taken the inter-connections between Metamorphoses I and XV as self-evident. See particularly The Faerie Queene, III,vi, 25-38, which are quite close to Ovid/Golding, and fuse elements from the opening and closing books of the Metamorphoses.

55. 'parte tamen meliore mei', XV, 874. Shakespeare uses just this phrase to speak, not of his art, but of his friend. See Sonnets 39, 1.2 and 74, 1.8. Kenneth Muir comments: '...whereas Horace (Odes, III, 30) and Ovid had been concerned merely with the immortality of their poetry, Shakespeare characteristically is concerned with the immortality of his verse - which in CVII he calls "this poor rhyme" - only in so far as it was a means of immortalizing his friend.' Shakespeare's Sonnets (London, 1979), pp.102-103. I would not wish to deny the commonplace nature of the theme of poetry's immortalizing power (on which, see J.B. Leishman, Themes and Variations in Shakespeare's Sonnets (London, 1967), pp.31ff), nor to deny the distinctiveness of Shakespeare's poetic attitudes. I would suggest, however, that Ovid's concern with personal glory is less extreme than is commonly supposed. The apparent egoism of the poem's closing lines is significantly qualified by the wider context of the Metamorphoses, which is as a whole concerned to examine the nature and role of poetic artifice. I would also suggest that, when Shakespeare remembers Book XV, his recall is conditioned by his response to the poem as an imaginative whole. For Shakespeare's use of the phrase 'the better part of mee' in As You Like It, see also Ch.V, p.221 below.

56. Galinsky, Ovid's Metamorphoses, p.175.

57. See the discussion at Ch.IV, pp.163ff below.

58. See, for example, II, 417-419, 453-456/2, 521-523, 564-566; IV, 81-83, 91-93/4, 101-102, 112-114; V, 285-287/5 362-364; IX, 93-94/9, 110-111; XI, 257-258/11, 293-294.

59. See the discussion of 'Ceyx and Alcyone' at Ch.III, pp.65ff below.

60. Galinsky finds it 'no accident that the unifying function of landscape is especially prevalent in the "Roman" books of the Metamorphoses'. Ovid's Metamorphoses, p.98.

61. See Hugh Parry, 'Ovid's Metamorphoses: Violence in a Pastoral Landscape', Transactions of the American Philological Association, 95 (1964), p.282.

62. Leonard Barkin sees the whole Theban panel in this section of the Metamorphoses (including the stories of Cadmus, Semele, Tiresias, Pentheus,

Bacchus, Narcissus, and Actaeon) as being unified by this same concern: 'The whole miserable destiny of Thebes goes back to this same combination of problems: seeing what is forbidden, offending the gods, and developing a transfigured and mirror-like identity'. See 'Diana and Actaeon: The Myth as Synthesis', English Literary Renaissance, 10 (1980), p.319.

63. Ovid's Metamorphoses, p.98.

64. See Charles Segal, Landscape in Ovid's Metamorphoses: A Study in the Transformations of a Literary Symbol (Wiesbaden, 1969), p.30.

65. See, for example, the stories cited at n.62 above. The role-reversal motif is readily observable, but there is a significant critical disagreement about the way it functions in the poem. Thus, for Skulsky it exemplifies the 'subversive tactics' of the Metamorphoses: the notion of a unique personal identity is exposed as a dubious psychological category, 'if..we do not know what it is to be a self' (Metamorphosis, p.34). For Barkin, however, the Theban stories dramatize the dawning of self-consciousness. Faced with his transformed image in the mirror, Actaeon wants, above all else, to assert his true identity: 'I am Actaeon!' (III, 230/3, 277). 'Diana and Actaeon', p.320. Barkin applies this insight to a reading of A Midsummer Night's Dream. I believe it also throws light on Antony and Cleopatra. See Ch.VII, pp.328-329 below.

66. Parry, 'Violence in a Pastoral Landscape', p.282.

67. John Hollander, The Figure of Echo: A Mode of Allusion in Milton and After (Berkeley & London, 1981), pp.7-8.

68. For the locus amoenus, see Curtius, European Literature, pp.192ff.

69. Parry, 'Violence in a Pastoral Landscape', p.271. This irony is lost in Golding's translation at 3, 272.

70. Romeo and Juliet, II,iv, 108-109.

71. Ovid usually points up the paradox. Thus, for example, when Salmacis conceives her great passion for Hermaphroditus, her ardour is compared to the reflected rays of the sun. See IV, 346ff/4, 426ff.

72. See Alastair Fowler (ed.), Paradise Lost (London, 1971), ns. at III, 601-605, 616-617, and IX, 739-740. Mercutio's bawdy impressively conflates many of these suggestions.

73. The Rape of Lucrece, ll.27-28; Titus Andronicus, II,i, 116.

74. Fulke Greville, 'Chorus Sacerdotum' from The Tragedy of Mustapha.
75. Parry, 'Violence in a Pastoral Landscape', p.283.
76. See Segal: 'Without such an infusion of imagination into landscape (and her, of course, Ovid's verbal artistry contributes greatly), parts of the Metamorphoses might be only talented pornography'. Landscape in Ovid's Metamorphoses, p.11.
77. See Ch.IV, pp.97-103.
78. Hamlet, I,ii, 157-164.
79. Medea's night-time activity is less of an exception in Golding than in the Ovidian text accepted by Miller. Cf. VII, 185-187. The crux is discussed by William S. Anderson, Ovid's Metamorphoses, Books 6-10 (Norman, 1972), pp.265-266.
80. Cf. Golding's translation of the parenthesis at 8, 106-107, with VIII, 85, 'heu facinus!', which Miller translates, 'Oh, the horrid crime!' and Sandys (Ovid Englished, p.267), 'O horrid act!'. In his annotated edition, Sabinus notes that Ovid's exclamation (Epiphonema) draws attention to Scylla's impiety (Fabularum Ovidii, Interpretatio, Ethica, Physica, et Historica, tradita in Academia Regiomontana...e in unum collecta studio... TT. (Cambridge, 1584), p.297. But Ovid also exploits the possibilities of an inflected language - the juxtaposition of nata and parentem - not available to Golding. See Anderson, Ovid's Metamorphoses, commentary at n.85, p.342. Golding's conscientiousness as a translator may be measured in his attempt to render the nexus of ideas comprehended in the classical notion of pietas by using 'nature' as the equivalent paradigm of moral values. See Chapter IV, pp.162ff and n.177 below.
81. The Byblis sequence begins at IX, 454/9, 540; the Myrrha, at X, 298/10, 327. Both stories are discussed at Ch.IV, pp.155ff.
82. See Anderson's commentary at VI, 486-489; VII, 185-188; VIII, 81-82; X, 368-370 (Ovid's Metamorphoses, pp.215, 265, 342, 507-508). The closest model is Virgil's account of Dido's tragedy, Aeneid, IV, 80ff. and 522ff, which is cited by both Erasmus (De rerum Copia) and Peacham (The Garden of Eloquence) to exemplify 'Temporis Descriptio'. See Rosamund Tuve, Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery (Chicago, 1947), p.112.
83. Metamorphoses, VI, 521. The echo is noted and discussed by Reuben A. Brower, Hero and Saint: Shakespeare and the Graeco-Roman Heroic Tradition (Oxford, 1971, pp.132ff.

84. M.C. Bradbrook, Themes and Conventions of Elizabethan Tragedy (Cambridge, 1960), p.98. Professor Bradbrook's book (first published in 1935) reflects the critical orthodoxy on Seneca's pervasive influence on Elizabethan tragedy, established by Eliot ('Seneca in Elizabethan Translation', in Selected Essays, Third Edition, (London, 1951), pp.65-108). Questioning this orthodoxy, later writers have noticed the Ovidian background to the play. See Howard Baker, Induction to Tragedy (Louisiana, 1939), pp.119-139; E.M.W. Tillyard, Shakespeare's History Plays (London, 1948), pp.137ff. Professor Bradbrook has modified her earlier judgment, and written more fully on the play in Shakespeare and Elizabethan Poetry (Harmondsworth, 1964), pp.96-101. J.C. Maxwell, in the Arden edition (London, 1953), finds that 'it is Ovid that is uppermost in (Shakespeare's) mind' (p.xxxiii). An influential article was Eugene M. Waith's, 'The Metamorphosis of Violence in Titus Andronicus', Shakespeare Survey 10 (1957), pp.39-49. See also the essays by G.K. Hunter, and Albert H. Tricomi in Shakespeare Survey, 27 (1977). Emrys Jones has recently argued for a neglected Euripidean influence in the play, in The Origins of Shakespeare (Oxford, 1977), Ch.3. On Ovid and Seneca, see also Ch.IV, pp.147-153 below.

85. Cited J.C. Maxwell, Arden Titus Andronicus, n. at II,iii,99 (p.43). Maxwell, himself, takes the meaning to be 'exactly that of the present at the dead of night'. However, the comparisons he cites from Hamlet, I,ii, 65, and Richard II, IV,i, 10, also point to moral paralysis in both man and nature, even if the time is not specified as exactly midnight.

86. See Ovid's characterization of Althaea at p.57, and Ch.VII, p.318 below.

87. Ovid's 'tragic' heroines are discussed at Ch.IV, pp.153ff below.

88. Ovid as an Epic Poet, p.340.

89. Cited Baldwin, Literary Genetics, p.49.

90. See T.W. Baldwin, William Shakspeare's Small Latine and Lesse Greeke, Vol.II, (Urbana, 1944), pp.193-194, 204-205.

91. Iliad, XVI, 482-484; Aeneid, II, 623-631. See Kenney, 'The Style of the Metamorphoses', p.152, n.119.

92. The simile also functions as dramatic irony: Myrrha will soon be transformed into a tree. See William Keach, Elizabethan Erotic Narratives: Irony and Pathos in the Ovidian Poetry of Shakespeare, Marlowe and Their Contemporaries (Hassocks, 1977), p.23.

93. Cf. Venus and Adonis, ll.11-12.

94. Cf. the observation of Seneca the Rhetorician (Controversiae, II,ii, 12) 'that Ovid, who had a considerable reputation as a scholar, was not so interested in argument as in the depiction of character and behaviour'. Cited Waith, 'The Metamorphosis of Violence', pp.41-42.
95. See Selected Essays, p.63. Ovid's characterization of Althaea's moral dilemma may be compared with Seneca's use of the same interpretative imagery for his Medea. See 'Medea', ll.937-947 in Seneca's Tragedies, trans. Frank Justus Miller, Loeb Classical Library (London and Cambridge, Mass., 1917) Vol.I, p.307. There are strong Ovidian echoes throughout the play (Althea, herself, is twice recalled), but Seneca may be remembering Ovid's lost play, Medea, as well as the Metamorphoses. See Wilkinson, Ovid Recalled, pp.115-116; C.D.N. Costa (ed.), Seneca (London, 1974), p.109. On the larger question of rhetorical vis à vis 'sincere' or 'mimetic' poetry, see Richard A. Lanham, The Motives of Eloquence: Literary Rhetoric in the Renaissance (New Haven and London, 1976), pp.1-64, and Ch.III, p.80 and n.87 and 88 below.
96. Cf. I, 495: abire in is one of the formulaic verbs which herald metamorphosis. See Anderson, 'Multiple Change', pp.2-3.
97. As Baldwin has demonstrated (Literary Genetics, pp.1-73), Shakespeare is indebted to Ovid/Golding for some of his fine detail in Venus and Adonis. Not noted by Baldwin, are the envious snatching briars at l.705, which Shakespeare also remembered at A Midsummer Night's Dream, III,ii, 29. The image would seem to have been suggested by the sensuous particularity of Jove's language at Metamorphoses, l, 614-616 - Shakespeare having transposed the god's emotion to the briars themselves.
98. See Wilkinson: 'Ovid catches the significant moment...and imprints it on our own mind' (Ovid Recalled, p.172). In the Arden edition (The Poems (London, 1969), p.20), F.T. Prince notes: 'These two lines show magnificently Shakespeare's concise evocation of landscape'. The compounds 'outstripping' and 'overfly' are a characteristic feature of Golding's translation. See Gordon Braden, The Classics and English Renaissance Poetry: Three Case Studies (New Haven & London, 1978), pp.16-17.
99. Shakespeare's poem gracefully accommodates historical interpretation of myth, as well as myth itself, thus extending the possible meanings of his own poem and redoubling the ambiguous tone of Ovid's narrative. For example, Adonis' riderless horse (ll.283ff) alludes to Platonic notions of unbridled passion (reflected in Golding's Epistle, ll.137-138), as well as reflecting Ovid's characteristic concern with the relationship between art and nature.
100. See. Ch.IV, pp.94ff.
101. On the problem of determining the tone of Ovidian similes used in widely disparate contexts, see Anderson, Ovid's Metamorphoses, commentary at VI, 455-457, p.212. On the problem of determining the 'kind' of poem Venus and Adonis is, See Kenneth Muir, 'Venus and Adonis: Comedy or Tragedy?', Shakespeare: the Professional (London, 1973), Ch.10).

102. Cited Colie, The Resources of Kind, p.12.

103. R.D. Williams, 'The Purpose of the Aeneid', Antichthon, 1(1967), pp.36-40. Cited Galinsky, Ovid's Metamorphoses, p.238.

CHAPTER III

1. Other sequences in the Metamorphoses which similarly chart the cosmic consequences of divine or human folly lie behind Titania's speech. See, particularly, the seminal Deucalion's Flood sequence (I, 242-244, 262ff/2, 284-285, 311ff); and the Plague of Aegina, which is sent by a jealous Juno because the land is named after her rival (VII, 523ff/7, 671ff). Titania's characterization of Winter, incongruously crowned with 'an odorous chaplet of sweet summer buds' (II,i, 109-111), was apparently suggested by Golding's four-line expansion of Ovid's 'et glacialis Hiems canos hirsuita capillos' (II, 30): cf. 2, 36-39. As Gordon Braden comments, 'the mockery is subliminally present in Golding's Winter, on whose shivering head a dove has metaphorically perched'. Classics and English Renaissance Poetry, p.47. Hiems takes his place in the orderly grouping of the seasons around Phoebus in the palace of the Sun-god. It is this seasonal decorum which both Ovid and Shakespeare travesty, to illustrate the cataclysmic consequences of the Phoebus-Phaethon and Oberon-Titania quarrels, respectively. On the background to Titania's speech, Harold Brooks also cites passages from Seneca's Oedipus, Medea and Hippolytus, and Spenser's Shepherd's Calendar. See the Arden A Midsummer Night's Dream (London, 1979), Introduction, pp.lxii, lxxxvi, and Appendix, pp.139-144.

2. Ovid was born at Sulmo, a hundred miles east of Rome, but spent almost a year in Sicily as part of a Grand Tour in his early twenties. See Wilkinson, Ovid Recalled, p.14.

3. Golding's reading of the Phoebus-Phaethon story illustrates how classical myth could be fitted to the English political model:

In Phaethons fable unto syght the Poet dooth expresse
The natures of ambition blynd, and youthful wilfulnesse.
The end whereof is miserie, and bringeth at the last
Repentence when it is too late that all redresse is past.
And how the weaknesse and the want of wit in magistrate
Confoundeth both his common weale and eeke his owne estate.
(Epistle, ll.71-76)

Golding takes eight more lines to explicate the tale, but, as usual, is a model of restraint when compared with Sabinus, who is incorporating the wisdom of Comes, and Sandys, who attempts to summarize the whole exegetical tradition. Sabinus works through the political parallels with dogged application. He underlines Ovid's contrast of divine ambition and mortal fallibility, by pointing to the difficulties and dangers of government (the model is a Republic, rather than a Commonwealth). The zodiacal hazards which Phaethon must encounter (II, 78-83) become the envious and factious groups which surround a ruler; the headstrong steeds, and emblem of the far from docile populace; Phoebus' chariot-driving instructions ('spare the lash...

and use the reins', II, 127), a lesson in wise government, and so on. Fabularum Ovidii (1584), pp.63-67. While Shakespeare is clearly interested in the political implications of the myth, his characterization of Richard II also develops other aspects of Metamorphoses, Book II, for example, the problems of indeterminate selfhood, and the imposing pressures of incompatible roles. Phoebus' losses, like Richard's, begin with a failure to arbitrate in a youthful quarrel. Richard's inability to marry the roles of King and man is mirrored in both Sol-Phoebus and Phaethon. The one cannot be both ruler and father; the other is unable to reconcile his privileged birthright with his 'morall, weake and frayle' limitations (2, 74). The description of Sol's palace (II, 1-30), one of the great set-pieces in the Metamorphoses, would seem to have provided a powerful image of regal splendour for Shakespeare, as it did for Spenser and Milton. However, Richard's impetuosity and defiance of his elders' warnings recall the son's behaviour rather than the father's. The Phaethon image, which becomes explicit at Richard II, III,iii, 178-179, is heralded in Gaunt's reference to Richard's 'rash fierce blaze of riot' (II,i, 33), and developed in a few lines later in York's '...deal mildly with his youth, / For young hot colts being rag'd do rage the more (11.69-70) - which is a direct echo of Phoebus' warning at Metamorphoses, II, 84-87. In 3 Henry VI, Phoebus-Phaethon images are similarly associated with the abrogation of kingly responsibilities, the disruption of temporal order, and the luxuriating of weeds in England's garden. See particularly, I,iv, 33-34, and II,iv, 11-12. For Richard III as the personification of primeval chaos, see Baldwin, Literary Genetics, pp.56-72.

4. See Ch.IV, pp.112ff.

5. The fantastically-crowned Lear at IV,iv, 3-6, might be seen as Shakespeare's re-working of the Old Hiems figure (see n.1 above), and as a living exemplum of the natural consequences of human irresponsibility.

6. Baldwin briefly considers Shakespeare's expression of this idea in Venus and Adonis, Romeo and Juliet, The Comedy of Errors, Othello, and Sonnet CXIV, as well as Richard III (see n.3 above). The idea was a Renaissance commonplace, but the Shakesperean contexts reveal his indebtedness to Ovid - and to Golding and Sabinus, who harmonized the classical account of the Chaos-Creation-Flood sequence with Genesis. Baldwin concludes: 'Shakespeare should have had parts of this system in numerous ways both in and out of grammar school, but the evidence now makes it clear that it was his study of Ovid which fixed the complex for him'. Literary Genetics, p.72.

7. See Ch.V, pp.182ff.

8. William Hubbard's, The tragicall and lamentable historie of Ceyx, kinge of Trachine, and Alcione, his wife (1569). See also p.80 and n.38 below.

9. The Psalmes of David and Others. With John Calvin's commentaries (London, 1571) sig* Vv. However, Golding does regard Ceyx's journey as an emblem of 'how vainly men are led / To utter perill through fond toys and fansies in their head'. He is thus moved to inveigh against 'Idols, doubtfull oracles and soothsayres prphecies' (Metamorphoses, Epistle, 11.236-239).

10. In a detailed study of Ovid's sources, Otis has shown how Ovid transformed 'a more or less typical legend of divine retribution into a quite different tale of human bereavment and sorrow'. Ovid as an Epic Poet, p.233. Although Alcyone begs her husband not to underestimate the power of the elemental forces, nor to trust in the intercession of the wind-god (XI, 430-431/11, 95-97), the impious pride, on which Sandys remarks (Ovid's Metamorphosis Englished, p.394), does not feature in Ovid's characterization of Ceyx.
11. Otis reads the story as 'an epic of man, in nature', and as Ovid's implicit rejection of Virgilian theodicy. See Ovid as an Epic Poet, p.258.
12. Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare, Vol.VIII (London & New York, 1975).
13. See Galinsky, Ovid's Metamorphoses, p.145. Humour, irony and literary playfulness are also emphasized by Due, who is concerned to challenge Otis' reading of the tale as a serious epic. See Changing Forms, p.146.
14. Cf. King Lear, III,i, 1-14; Pericles, III,i, 19; The Tempest, I,i, 13.
15. Golding's translation at 11, 570 and 573 is (doubtless fortuitously) suggestive of the Hesiodic cosmology. See Ch.II, p.37 above, and compare XI, 494, 497-498. Ovid's 'potentior arte est' (l.494) is, itself, more suggestive, perhaps, than is immediately apparent in Miller's translation: 'more mighty than his skill'. 'Ars' is a highly ambiguous noun (cf. Ars Amatoria!), which embraces both mean and honourable occupations, technical and artistic creativity, and a range of positive and pejorative connotations, from expertise to cunning.
16. Posthumous' 'final' words, 'his queen, his queen!' (I,iii, 5), echo those of Ceyx (XI, 544-545/11, 653-654). Other possible echoes of Ovid's story in Shakespeare's Romance would include the description of Cymbeline (who, like Aeolus, separates man and wife) as 'the tyrannous breathing of the north' (I,iii, 36), whilst the name 'Posthumous' suggests a literalizing fulfilment of Ceyx and Alcyone's prayers that the sea which bears Ceyx away should also return him to his wife. Shakespeare does not include a chiasmatically symmetrical scene to balance the departure scene, but he does experiment with perspective and point of view throughout the play, most notably in the curious scene (IV,ii) in which Imogen awakens beside the headless corpse dressed in her husband's garments. Her speech at ll.297ff is very reminiscent of the idiom in which Ovid's Alcyone speaks. Cf. particularly, Imogen's, 'The dream's here still. Even when I wake it is / Without me as within me; not imagin'd, felt' (ll.307-308), with Alcyone's 'It was but a shade, and yet it was my husband's true shade, clearly seen' (XI, 688-689). Imogen's slow identification of the 'corse', together with her description of him as 'this most bravest vessel of the world' (nautical imagery is used repeatedly for Posthumous, who, at the end of the play, 'anchors upon Imogen', V,v, 393), suggests at least a subliminal recollection of Ovid's tale by Shakespeare.

17. For a discussion of the contrasts in sound and metre between the two sections, see Otis, Ovid as an Epic Poet, pp.248-250.
18. '..the longest ever in Latin literature before Lucan'. Galinsky, Ovid's Metamorphoses, p.145.
19. Kenneth Muir makes a similar point about Shakespeare's mixing of dramatic 'kinds' in Cymbeline: '..it seems possible that the confusion of genres was designed to assist the creation of an imaginary world in which the poet's new symbolic method would have unrestricted scope. The interpenetration of opposites gave a moral significance to the romance material and set free the poet and his audience from the restrictions of realism'. The Sources of Shakespeare's Plays (London, 1977), pp.265-266.
20. On mannerism, See Ch.I, p.23 and Ch.VII, pp.312ff.
21. In Ovid's tripartite division of dream-tasks, it is the job of Icelos to assume the forms of animals, while Phantasos takes over the non-animate life - bushes, but not bears (XI, 638-643/11, 741-747). Morpheus is the most skilful actor: 'None other could so conningly expresse mans verrye face, / His gesture and his sound of voyce, and manner of his pace, / Together with his woonted weede, and woonted phrase of talk' (11, 737-739).
22. Golding's translation weakens the sense of Ovid's text here, by introducing the suggestion of a conditional mood. Cf. 11, 793-794.
23. In The Tempest, the natural analogue is present in Alonso's conviction that 'the billows spoke', 'the winds did sing', and 'the thunder...pronounced' (III,iii, 96-98). It is also implicit in Gonzalo's assumption (he has neither seen nor heard Ariel) that natural guilt and remorse, and not artistic contrivance, has brought about the change in the 'three men of sin' (11.104-110).
24. However, compare 11, 806-807: 'And yet the sea hath thee / Without mee'. Golding's translation is based on a different Latin text to that accepted by Ovid's modern editor. Both the Regius text of 1527 and the Sabinus of 1584 print, 'Et sine me te pontus habet'. Sandys' translation also reflects such an original: 'Poore I was wrack; yet thou without me drown'd' (Ovid's Metamorphosis Englished, p.384). It has not been determined which of the available annotated Latin texts Golding used for his translation, although, after comparing some 29, Swan concludes that it was probably a Regius of 1543 ('A Study of Golding's Ovid', pp.41ff). See also Braden, Classics and English Renaissance Poetry, p.15.
25. Reuben A. Brower has used The Tempest, V,i, to argue against the critical 'heresy of plot' and for the total fusion of drama and metaphor in Shakespeare. His observations about 'the double action of drama and metaphor', and the parallel movement from tempest to calm shores, moral and mental confusion to clear understanding, in the play, are equally valid for Ovid's

tale of Ceyx and Alcyone. Brower's further observation, that "'metamorphosis" is the key metaphor to the drama, but not the key metaphor to a detachable design of decorative analogies', might be compared with my argument at pp.77 ff. below and with Otis' comments cited at n.31. See Mirror on Mirror: Translation, Imitation, Parody (Cambridge, Mass, 1974), Ch.8, especially pp. 134-137.

26. G.S. Kirk, Myth: Its Meaning and Functions in Ancient and Other Cultures (Cambridge, 1970), p.258.

27. See Galinsky, Ovid's Metamorphoses, pp.202-203. Galinsky's discussion of the Philemon and Baucis story has influenced my reading of not only As You Like it (cf. Ch.V below), but also Shakespeare's Last Plays.

28. In the Epilogue to The Tempest, Prospero remains in character. As Anne Richter points out in her Introduction (Penguin, The Tempest (Harmondsworth, 1968), pp.50-51), this has the effect of absorbing the audience into the illusory play-world, rather than (as in the earlier comedies) returning the drama to an everyday world of nightly performances. Also Prospero's language is heavily theological: 'despair', 'prayer', 'mercy', 'faults', 'crimes', 'pardon'd', 'indulgence'. Even allowing for the theatrical application of these words, it is difficult to resist the conclusion that supernatural, rather than human, agencies are being invoked, and somewhat despairingly. If anywhere, it is in The Tempest that Shakespeare's idea of metamorphosis comes closest to Skulsky's view of Ovidian change as metaphysical doubt (See Introduction, p.9 and Ch.II, p.44 and n.51 above).

29. Ovid as an Epic Poet, p.255.

30. Cited Yeats, as a prefix to Responsibilities, (1914).

31. See Otis: 'But it is the theme of metamorphosis which dominates. The change of lovers into halcyon-birds has a truly cosmic significance: the hostility of man and nature transformed by love; death made into new life; human tragedy converted to cosmic beneficence'. Ovid as an Epic Poet, p.256.

32. These groups were not, however, totally antithetical, nor mutually exclusive. See Bush, Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition, pp.46-68.

33. 'Essay of Dramatic Poesy', Smith and Parks, The Great Critics, pp.322-323. Ovid, of course, was a dramatist, though his play, Medea, has unfortunately been lost.

34. Introduction to 'Annus Mirabilis', ll.129-138. Kinsley (ed.), Poems, Vol.I, p.47.

35. Cf. John Bayley: "But with Shakespeare the mere fact and story of consciousness replaces both action and idea". Shakespeare and Tragedy (London & Boston, 1981), p.6. On the intimacy of poetic and dramatic design in Shakespeare, see also Brower, Mirror on Mirror, Ch.9.

36. On this important point, see D.J. Gordon, 'The Renaissance Poet as Classicist: Chapman's Hero and Leander', reprinted in Stephen Orgel (ed.), The Renaissance Imagination: Essays and Lectures by D.J. Gordon (Berkeley, 1975), pp.102ff. See also Ch.V, pp.194ff., below.

37. Carew, 'An Elegie upon the death of Paul's, Dr. John Donne'. A full discussion of Donne's 'Ovidianism' is clearly outside the scope of this study. However, it is worth noting that modern criticism of Ovid's poetry - particularly where it is concerned with the role of wit and rhetoric and its relation to 'truth' - often reads like a recapitulation of arguments which recur over John Donne's poetry. Lanham's The Motives of Eloquence, pp.48ff. is a good example. It is also worth noticing how thoroughly 'Ovidian', in many of the senses established in this study, is a poem like 'The Sunne Rising'. In a dramatic and immediate form, Donne makes comic capital from incongruities inherent in the mythic tradition (Stuart and Christian, as well as Roman), for his characterization of Phoebus-Apollo as a pedantic and enfeebled voyeur. The poem reaches back through the medieval alba to Amores, I,xiii, where Ovid exploits Aurora's double identity, as goddess of the morning and a spiteful wife of a 'too-ancient husband'. This same incongruity is the starting point for the 'tragic' tale of Cephalus and Procris. Finally, Skulsky reads Donne's Metempsychosis as 'a harlequinade of doubt': the poem is thus thoroughly 'Ovidian' in his sense of that term. See 'Donne's "Sullen Writ"', Metamorphosis, Ch.7.

38. Collier, Hubbard's nineteenth-century editor, praises Hubbard's unique stanza form, and finds his version 'much superior' to that of Golding. However, as Bush has noted (Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition, p.315), Hubbard frequently borrowed whole lines and phrases from Golding. More to the point is Collier's comment that Hubbard's 'powers of expansion do not appear to have been great; he told his incidents briefly'. The tragicall and lamentable Historie of Two Faithfull Mates: Ceyx Kinge of Trachine, and Alcine his wife. Drawn into English Meeter by W. Hubbard, 1569. Ed. J.P. Collier (London, 1866), p.1.

39. The titles refer to books by, respectively, Susan Snyder (Princeton, 1979); John Bayley (New York, 1976); Rosalie Colie (Berkeley, 1973).

40. Barbara K. Lewalski, Introduction to The Resources of Kind, p.viii.

41. Shakespeare and Tragedy, pp.3-4.

42. Although the approach of each book is different, Colie's discussion (The Resources of Kind, pp.69ff.) of the ways Shakespeare 'played off not only kinds of love against one another, but also stylistic and generic milieux against one another', might be compared with Lanham's consideration

(The Motives of Eloquence, Ch.5) of the 'Superposed Poetics' of the Sonnets. Cf. also Alvin B. Kernan's analysis of the tension in the Sonnets, 'between the style of poetry required by patronage and the real feelings and complexities' which the poems discover, and which demand a different 'dramatic' style. The Playwright as Magician (New Haven & London, 1979), p.37. In his edition, Stephen Booth has compared the dynamic aesthetic of Shakespeare's Sonnets (as individual works and as a sequence) and the structure of his plays, with the formal characteristics of the Metamorphoses, 'in which Ovid straight-forwardly announces changes of topic, and in which the details of a new topic are regularly those of the preceding old one, and in which each topic anticipates, suggests and seems already to have begun on the topic that succeeds it'. Shakespeare's Sonnets, p.551.

43. Bayley, Shakespeare and Tragedy, p.9, citing Aldous Huxley, 'Tragedy and the whole Truth', in collected essays, On Art and Artists (London, 1960).

44. An interview given in 1957, cited Karen Schneider in an introduction to Georges Braque: The Late Paintings 1940-1963 (Phillips Collection exhibition brochure, Washington D.C., 1982).

45. In his commentary to the Arden Cymbeline (London, 1955), J.M. Nosworthy brings together the Ceyx and Alcyone sequence, Imogen's description of Posthumous' departure, and Edgar's description of the Dover straits. See notes to I,iv, pp.16-17.

46. Shakespeare and Tragedy, p.12.

47. Ovid Recalled, p.203.

48. See Braden, Classics and English Renaissance Poetry, p.51; Bayley, Shakespeare and Tragedy, pp.14-15.

49. Similar points are made by Braden (pp.51-54) and Bayley (pp.16-18), about Ovid and Shakespeare respectively.

50. Shakespeare and Tragedy, p.16

51. By protesting too much about the spectator's inconsequence (XI, 749-751/11, 863-865), Ovid calls our attention to his mediatory role.

52. The Winter's Tale, V,iii, 94-117; A Midsummer Night's Dream, IV,i, 144, 186; As You Like It, Epilogue.

53. AnneRichter's fine characterization of the 'brilliant but perilous' equilibrium between involvement and distance in Shakespeare's attitude to his audience also captures perfectly Ovid's poetic stance. The precariousness

of the equilibrium is felt in the Metamorphoses no less than the threat to the Elizabethan-Jacobean popular drama posed by the evanescent glories of the court masque. There is always the danger that, rather like the Bernini theatrical extravaganza of 1637, to which Righter refers, Ovid's poem will erase all distinction between art and nature, and so disturb rather than simply delight. Anne Righter suggests that, in The Tempest, the Shakespearean equilibrium is finally lost, with the epilogue to the play designed to remove all distinctions between the real world and the play. See Shakespeare and the Idea of the Play (Harmondsworth, 1967), and n.28 above.

54. See Elizabeth Story Donno, 'The Epyllion', in Christopher Ricks (ed.), The Sphere History of Literature in the English Language, Vol.2 (London, 1970), p.91. Other writers have found the term 'epyllion' problematic. See Lennet J. Daigle's review of Keach's Elizabethan Erotic Narratives, in Shakespeare Studies, XII, pp.332-335.

55. See Metamorphoses, X, 543ff./10, 626ff. and XIV, 695ff./14, 797ff. In neither of these instances would the artistic strategems appear to work. In the case of Venus (whose own story is one of several told by Orpheus within the thematic frame of 'prettie boys / That were the darlings of the Gods: and unlawful joyes / That burned in the breasts of Girls', 11, 157-159), the headstrong Adonis fails to heed her cautionary tale. Vertumnus' artistic failure is more equivocal: the story does not appear to be responsible for Pomona's change in attitude, but it does seem to weaken her resolve.

56. As You Like It, All's Well and The Winter's Tale are considered in Chs. V, VI and Epilogue.

57. Lanham, The Motives of Eloquence, p.59.

58. This transforming subjectivism is not, of course, peculiar to Jaques. Duke Senior is equally ready to 'translate' nature into art, and the play, as a whole, is much concerned with 'interpretation' as a form of metamorphosis. See Ch.V, pp.196ff.

59. See the quotations from Steiner's After Babel, heading Ch.V below.

60. The Motives of Eloquence, p.64. In Ch.II, I suggested why I do not accept Lanham's explanation as 'the whole truth'. There is an external referent for the poem's rhetorical structures - albeit a shifting and unstable one. The same is true in Shakespeare. Nature is a vital co-ordinant for the linguistic explanations of King Lear, and of All's Well and Antony and Cleopatra, where Shakespeare makes connections between natural and linguistic strategies particularly clear. See Chs.VI and VII below.

61. Shakespeare and Tragedy, pp.39-40.

62. Braden, Classics and English Renaissance Poetry, p.52.

63. Braden, Classics and English Renaissance Poetry, p.54, citing Walter Benjamin, 'The Storyteller', in Illuminations, trans Harry Zohn, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York), 1969), p.83.

64. Herescu, 'Avant Propos', Ovidiana, p.xi.

CHAPTER IV

1. See Walter J. Ong, S.J., The Presence of the Word (New Haven & London, 1967), p.x.

2. Ong points out that 'the Word of God' is also 'reciprocating': 'If the Word who became man is God's communication to man, he is also man's response to God. The Christian approaches the Father, 'in his name': "if you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it to you" (John 16:13, cf. Ephesians 5:20, Colossians 3:17)'. The Presence of the Word, p.13.

3. In his 'Epistle Dedicatorie', Florio explains the significance of his title: 'So cald she (i.e. Florio's 'Mistresse Muse') him, A world of wordes: since as the Univers contains all things, digested in best equipaged order, embellisht with innumerable ornaments by the universall creator. And as Tipocosmia imaged by Allessandro Cittolini, and Fabrica del mondo, framed by Thomaso Garzoni tooke their names of the universal worlde, in words to represent things of the world: as words are types of things, and everie man by himselfe a little world in some resemblances; so thought she, she did see as great capacitie, and as meete method in this, as in those latter, and (as much as there might be in Italian and English) a modell of the former, and therefore as good cause so to entitle it'. A Worlde of Wordes, or Most copiouſ, and exact Dictionarie in Italian and English (London, 1598), sig a5^r.

4. Figurative senses of nomen, 11A and 11B in Lewis and Short's revised A New Latin Dictionary, ed. E.A. Andrews (New York, 1879).

5. For Richard III as a protean actor-figure, see Waldo F. McNeir, 'The Masks of Richard the Third', Studies in English Literature 1500-1900, 11(1971), pp. 167-186.

6. For the 'fayn/feign' pun in As You Like It, see William Empson, Some Versions of Pastoral, revised edition (New York, 1974), pp.136-138. See also Ch.V, pp.171ff. D.J. Gordon's 'Name and Fame: Shakespeare's Coriolanus', reprinted in Orgel (ed.), The Renaissance Imagination, pp.203-219, is a learned and elegant essay, which makes many of the connections I have been striving for, with reference to Coriolanus and the classical tradition. See particularly, p.210.

7. See Ch.III, pp.71ff.

8. Cf. XII, 53-55, and compare with the description of the dream-shapes at XI, 613-615/11, 711-714. Despite the different 'rate of production', the dream and the word 'factories' in the poem are equally prolific. In each instance, Ovid compares the imaginative and verbal metamorphoses to minute by minute changes in the natural world. Marjorie B. Garber has used Ovid's dream sequence to illuminate Shakespeare's early comedies. See Dream in Shakespeare: From Metaphor to Metamorphosis (New Haven & London, 1974), p.4.
9. See Ch.VI, pp.296 and n.127.
10. See Tuve, Elizabethan Imagery, p.311. For rhetorical training in the grammar schools, see Baldwin, Small Latine, Vol.II, p.69-238.
11. See Baldwin, Small Latine, Vol.II, p.109.
12. Institutio Oratoria of Quintilian, trans. H.E. Butler, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass, & London, 4 vols. 1958-1968), VIII,vi, 2, Vol.III, p.301.
13. Quintilian, Institutio Oratoria: 'A noun or verb is transferred from the place where it properly belongs to another where there is either no literal term or the transferred is better than the literal (VIII,vi, 5). See also the important distinction between simile and metaphor at VIII,vi, 8-9, Vol.III, p.305.
14. Cited Nisbet Social Change, p.4. Stevens' work frequently serves as an illustrative focus in discussions of metaphor. See, for example, Terence Hawkes, Metaphor (London, 1972), where quotations from Stevens are used as chapter headings. On metaphor and metamorphosis, see also Ernst Cassirer, Language and Myth, trans. Suzanne K. Langer (New York, 1946), pp.83-97. Also n.8 above, and Ch.VII, p.315 below.
15. See Ch.VI, p.286 and ns.107 and 108.
16. Tuve, Elizabethan Imagery, p.100.
17. Metaphor and Reality (Bloomington, 1962), p.71.
18. Braden, Classics and English Renaissance Poetry, p.53.
19. 'Metamorphosis of Violence', pp.42-43. Waith cites the following examples: Metamorphoses, XII, 276-277; VI, 557-560; XII, 434-438. See also VI, 387-391; VII, 583-586.
20. See Galinsky, Ovid's Metamorphoses, pp.153, 179ff.

21. Galinsky, Ovid's Metamorphoses, pp.128, 151-152.
22. 'Epistle to the Pisos', Smith and Parks, The Great Critics, p.120.
23. Galinsky, Ovid's Metamorphoses, p.132.
24. 'The Metamorphosis of Violence', pp.47-48.
25. Cf. Johnson's famous comments (Notes on the Plays of Shakespeare, 1765) on 'Here lay Duncan, / His silver skin laced with golden blood' (Macbeth, II, iii, 108-109); and Coleridge's characterization of the effects of Shakespearean metaphor: 'You feel him to be a poet in as much as for a time he has made you one - an active creative being'. Cited Hawkes, Metaphor, p.49. See also Rosamund's Tuve's comment (Elizabethan Imagery, p.100) that 'All tropes ...give the reader his head'.
26. Waith, 'Metamorphosis of Violence', p.47.
27. See Ch.VII, p.337 and n.31.
28. Ovid Recalled, p.171.
29. Shakespeare and Elizabethan Poetry (Harmondsworth, 1964), p.62.
30. See Terence Hawkes (ed.), Coleridge on Shakespeare (Harmondsworth, 1969), pp.64-65.
31. See 'To the Memory of My Beloved, the Author Mr. William Shakespeare'. This poem appeared with the preliminaries to the First Folio; elsewhere Jonson was ready to criticize Shakespeare for a lack of this labour. On Jonson's commendatory poem, see also Epilogue, pp.340ff., below. Observations based on the text of Venus and Adonis seem in order (despite the notorious shortcomings of Elizabethan printers) in view of the circumstances in which 'the first heir' of Shakespeare's 'invention' was published, and the (near) critical consensus that it was printed from the author's fair copy. See Prince, The Poems, pp.xi-xvi.
32. Pertinent here is the rhetorical figure 'Icon', a type of similitude which meets the criterion of 'sensuous vividness'. Influenced by the doctrine of ut pictura poesis, such images 'magnify' objects in the sense of making them more impressive and worthy of attention. Peacham (The Garden of Eloquence, 1593) recommended that the figure should be used sparingly, as 'a singular jewel'. See Tuve, Elizabethan Imagery, pp.73, 90; and cf., Sister Miriam Joseph, Shakespeare's Use of the Arts of Language (New York, 1947), pp.143, 327.

33. Cited Colie, 'Some Paradoxes', p.103. John Hoskins' definition of 'synoeciosis' as 'a composition of contraries' is also relevant: '...by both intimateth the meaning of neither precisely but a moderation and mediocrity of both. This is a fine course to stir admiration in the hear- and make them think a strange harmony which must be expressed in such discords'. Directions for Speech and Style 1599-1600?, ed. Hoyt H. Hudson (Princeton, 1935), pp.36-37.
34. See Colie: 'Nature was the real artist: the rest is just trivial. God played a kind of game with the world, according to some seventeenth century commentators. He was a Heraclitan inventor of a world "compounded of contraries and Agreement of Discords"; his world was a discordia concors, a composition to which oxymoron was the appropriate figure of speech. The poet's task was to recreate those marvelous discords with his rhetoric...'. 'Some Paradoxes', pp.106-107. See also note 33 above. For an application of the notion of discors concordia to Renaissance ethics and aesthetics, see Wind, Pagan Mysteries, pp.81ff. For an historical survey of the literary applications of the doctrine, see Earl R. Wasserman, The Subtler Language: Critical Readings of Neo-Classic and Romantic Poems (Baltimore, 1959), Chs. III and IV. See also Ch.2, n.11.
35. See All's Well, V.ii, 35-38; IV,i, 11; IV,iii, 67-70, and Ch.VI below.
36. Paradise Lost, VI, 640-641. See H.V.S. Ogden, 'The Principles of Variety and Contrast in Seventeenth Century Aesthetics, and Milton's Poetry', Journal of the History of Ideas, X(1949), pp.159-182. Also n.3 above.
37. Madeleine Doran, Endeavors of Art (Madison, 1954), p.48.
38. Paradise Lost, V, 628-629. Cited Ogden, 'Principals of Variety', p.177. For the 'varying' of images to meet the criterion of 'delightfulness', see Tuve, Elizabethan Imagery, pp.117-138. For the identification of Ovid with rhetorical copiousness, see Appendix, p.349 and n.5.
39. Bibliotheca Eliotae, ed., Thomas Cooper (1559). Cited A. Bartlett Giametti (see following note).
40. 'Proteus Unbound: Some Versions of the Sea God in the Renaissance', in P. Demetz, T. Greene, L. Nelson, Jr., (eds.), The Disciples of Criticism (New Haven & London, 1968), pp.437-475.
41. For 'intention' as part of a larger ethical problem, see Colie, 'Some Paradoxes', pp.96ff.
42. Cf. Richard III, III,i, 82-83. The connection between acting and verbal misrepresentation is particularly clear in figures like Ambidexter in Preston's Cambises, who physically represents 'two meanings in one world'. See Peter

Davison, Popular Appeal in English Drama to 1850 (London, 1982), pp.79-80. For the verbal and physical 'nimbleness' of the comedy Vice and a summary of theories about his derivation, see F.P. Wilson, The English Drama 1485-1585 (New York & Oxford, 1969), pp.59-66. For the Vice figure as a theatrical attempt to answer the moral problem, 'How do good and evil co-exist (or, rather, exist together)?', see J.A.B. Somerset, '"Fair is foul and foul is fair": Vice Comedy's Development and Theatrical Effects', in G.R. Hibbard (ed.), The Elizabethan Theatre, Vol.V (Waterloo, 1973), pp.54-75. For the role of Parolles in All's Well, See Ch.VI, pp.277ff.

43. The Dunciad, B, IV, 247n. Cited Davison, Popular Appeal in English Drama, p.75.

44. For Montaigne's early appreciation of Ovid see 'Of the Institution and Education of Children' (I,XXV) in Montaigne's Essays, translated by John Florio, Everyman edition (London, 1965), Vol.1, p.187.

45. 'De Trois Commerces'. Cited Giamatti, 'Proteus Unbound', p.441.

46. Cf. Pico della Mirandola's famous question: 'Quis hunc nostrum chamaeleonta non admiretus?'. Oratorio de Hominis Dignitate: cited Giamatti, 'Proteus Unbound', p.439.

47. See Thomas Greene, 'The Flexibility of the Self in Renaissance Literature', in Demetz, Greene and Nelson, Disciplines of Criticism, p.260

48. See 'Of Cato the Younger' (I,XXXVI), Vol.1, p.246; 'Of Vanitie' (III, IX), Vol.3, p.183.

49. Dilys Winegrad, 'Language, Truthfulness and the Self-Portrait of Michael De Montaigne', in Raymond C. la Charité (ed.), O Un Amy! Essays on Montaigne in Honour of Donald M. Frame (Lexington, 1977), p.315.

50. See Robert Ellrodt, 'Self-consciousness in Montaigne and Shakespeare', Shakespeare Survey 28 (1978), pp.37-50. See also Ch.VI, pp.258.

51. Montaigne, 'Of the Vanitie of Words' (I,LI), Vol.I, p.345.

52. For a historical survey of negative readings of the Babel myth, see George Steiner, After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation (New York & London, 1976), Ch.2.

53. See 'Of Names' (I,XLVI), Vol.1, p.316, and compare the stronger French idiom, 'voix pour tous potage'. 'De Noms' (I,XLVI), in A. Thibaudet (ed.), Montaigne Essais (Bringes, 1958), p.315.

54. Troilus and Cressida, V,iii, 108.
55. Colie, 'Some Paradoxes', pp.98, 125, citing Jean Ozanam's, Mathematical Recreations (1708).
56. 'Multiple Change', pp.9-10.
57. Anderson, 'Multiple Change', p.2.
58. 1, 460, 464 (see heading to Chapter VI) and 7, 1065. Cf. Hamlet, I,v, 175-177, where 'doubtful' reinforces 'ambiguous'.
59. 'sed si modo nomina rebus addere vera placet: non hoc iniuria factum, verum amor est'. Cf. Golding: 'But if we in our heartes can finde things rightly to define, / This is not spight but love' (5, 652-653).
60. See Gordon, 'Name and Fame', pp.216-217.
61. Tristia, trans. Arthur Leslie Wheeler, Loeb Classical Library, (London & Cambridge, Mass., 1959), III,viii, 1-10, p.130.
62. See Anderson, Ovid's Metamorphoses, commentary at VIII, 215, p.353.
63. The thematic vocabulary alerts us to the fact that 'Daedalus' artistry is producing metamorphosis'. Anderson, Ovid's Metamorphoses, commentary at VIII, 199, p.351.
64. Anderson, Ovid's Metamorphoses, pp.495-496. On Ovid's use of his sources for the Pygmalion sequence, see also Otis, Ovid as an Epic Poet, pp.189-190 and appendix, pp.418-419.
65. Galinsky, Ovid's Metamorphoses, p.86, citing Fränkel, Ovid, p.96
66. Anderson, Ovid's Metamorphoses, p.501. See also Wilkinson's critique of Fränkel's 'Teutonic approach', Ovid Recalled, p.212.
67. Otis, Ovid as an Epic Poet, p.263.
68. See Ch.VI, pp.234ff. below.
69. Cf. X, 248-249. The art-nature opposition is, if anything, more pointed in Golding's translation, which prompts comparison with Sidney's famous description of the poet's capacity to make 'newe formes such as never

were in Nature'. See 'Apologie for Poetrie', Smith and Parks, The Great Critics, p.191.

70. Pygmalion's story is contrasted, not only with the major studies of passion (see below pp.153ff), but also with Ovid's version of the Midas myth (XI, 92ff/11, 104ff). The divine retribution suffered by Midas is a consequence of his lack of aesthetic judgment and his failure to distinguish between art and life. See Otis, Ovid as an Epic Poet, pp.192ff.

71. 'Now for the Poet, he nothing affirms, and therefore never lyeth...'. 'Apologie for Poetrie', Smith and Parks, The Great Critics, p.216.

72. See Anderson, Ovid's Metamorphoses, commentary at X, 287, p.500.

73. On Ovid's appearance in The Taming of the Shrew, see also Ch.V, pp. 169-170.

74. The contrast between the crude material (rudem lanem, VI, 19), and the fine art which is produced from it, is somewhat less pointed in Golding's 'newshorne fleeces' (6, 24). Even small details maintain the characteristic tension in the Metamorphoses between undifferentiated substance and peculiar form, continuity and change.

75. Ovid's Metamorphoses, commentary at VI, 18, p.153.

76. See Anderson: 'In recounting the temporary disguises or metamorphosis of deities, Ovid regularly uses the verb simulare and often adds the adjective falsus (cf.125), the connotations of which are not entirely dignified'. Ovid's Metamorphoses, commentary at VI, 26, p.155.

77. See Anderson, Ovid's Metamorphoses, pp.151-152. Otis considers the 'Arachne' in a context of other theodicies in the Metamorphoses. See Ovid as an Epic Poet, pp.146ff.

78. See Galinsky, Ovid's Metamorphoses, pp.82ff.

79. Hero and Leander, ll.143-144. Marlowe would seem to be remembering both Arachne's tapestry and Ovid's earlier description of the art-work on the doors to Sol's palace (II,iff).

80. Anderson, Ovid's Metamorphoses, commentary at VI, 127, p.167.

81. Galinsky sees such 'logical incongruity' as a basic poetic strategy in the Metamorphoses. See Ovid's Metamorphoses, pp.179ff.

82. 'Epistle to the Pisos', Smith and Parks, The Great Critics, p.126. Accommodating both Platonic and Biblical love, Sandys provides the traditional gloss on the moving power of poetry. See Ovid's Metamorphosis Englished, pp.355-356.
83. 'Epistle to the Pisos', Smith and Parks, The Great Critics, p.115. See also Ch.1, p.22 and n.52 above.
84. See Ovid's Metamorphoses, p.183 and n.45.
85. 'Epistle to the Pisos', Smith and Parks, The Great Critics, p.126.
86. See Otis, Ovid as an Epic Poet, p.282.
87. See Lanham, The Motives of Eloquence, pp.11ff; Brower, Hero and Saint, pp.123ff.
88. Ovid as an Epic Poet, p.282.
89. Cf.XIII, 382-383.
90. The Motives of Eloquence, p.12.
91. On ingenium, see also pp.139ff. below.
92. On Shakespeare's 'honesty' in Troilus and Cressida, see Bayley, Shakespeare and Tragedy, Ch.4, particularly, pp.100-102.
93. Antonius, cited Geoffrey Bullough, Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare, Vol.V (London & New York, 1964), p.46.
94. The Third Volume of Chronicles (1587). Cited Geoffrey Bullough, Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare, Vol.IV (London & New York, 1962), p.393.
95. Ovid's portrait of Ulysses invites comparison with Shakespeare's Henry V, as well as his Mark Antony. The Ulysses who 'ventring through the watch / commit(s) his persone to the nyght his buysnesse to dispatch' (13, 414-415), and who transforms a demoralized Greek army into the fighting force which sacks Troy by the power of his words (13, 290) is suggestive of Henry on the eve of Agincourt. The parallel becomes clearer when one notices that Henry's exploitation of the metamorphic power of language comes close to being parodied at Henry V, IV,iii, 96-106.

96. Cited Bullough, Narrative and Dramatic Sources, Vol.V, p.7.
97. 13, 527-428: the Biblical overtones of Golding's translation blend pathos with heroism. Cf. XIII, 353.
98. The Garden of Eloquence (1577). Cited Sister Miriam Joseph, Rhetoric in Shakespeare's Time: Literary Theory of Renaissance Europe (New York & Burlingame, 1962). p.21.
99. See n.76 above.
100. See Otis, Ovid as an Epic Poet, pp.284-285.
101. See Otis, Ovid as an Epic Poet, pp.122ff.
102. Geoffrey Bullough, Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare, Vol.I (London & New York, 1957), p.68.
103. For Shakespeare's debt to Plautus, see Leo Salinger, Shakespeare and the Traditions of Comedy (Cambridge, 1974), pp.172ff. Whilst arguing that Shakespeare's conception of comic plotting owes a lot to Plautus and Terence, Salinger also notes that 'Shakespeare's great innovation was to treat comedy lyrically as an emotional and imaginative experience, an inward metamorphosis' (p.172). The Ovidian influence is considered at Traditions of Comedy, pp. 219-220, 236-237, 282, 289-292, 310.
104. Hero and Saint, p.135
105. Ovid's Metamorphoses, commentary at VI, 478-479, p.214.
106. Hero and Saint, p.32.
107. See pp.98ff. above.
108. Ovid's Metamorphoses, commentary at VI, 585-586, p.227.
109. The Rape of Lucrece, 1.640; Othello, V,ii, 287; Antony and Cleopatra, III,xiii, 32 and III,xiii, 98-99; The Winter's Tale, III,i, 77.
110. See Coleridge's comments on Macbeth I,vi. Hawkes, Coleridge on Shakespeare, pp.213-214.

111. On violence in Antony and Cleopatra, see Ch.VII, pp.326ff.
112. Hero and Saint, p.131.
113. Anderson, Ovid's Metamorphoses, commentary at VII,11, pp.244-245.
114. Hamlet, II,ii, 581; I,ii, 159. On this unresolved contradiction in Hamlet's attitude to words and acting, see Ch.VI, pp.240ff.
115. 'The Metamorphosis of Violence', p.46.
116. Brower, Hero and Saint, p.131.
117. Brower, Hero and Saint, p.135.
118. For the Nile metaphor in Antony and Cleopatra, see Ch.VII, pp.329ff.
119. 'The Metamorphosis of Violence', p.48.
120. 'The Metamorphosis of Violence', p.48.
121. See Ch.II, p.57 and n.94.
122. Ovid's Metamorphoses, commentary at VI, 469-471, p.213.
123. Anderson, Ovid's Metamorphoses, commentary at VI, 472-474, p.214.
124. See Ch.II, pp.52ff.
125. Brower, Hero and Saint, p.135.
126. Ovid's Metamorphoses, commentary at VI, 563-564, p.225.
127. The thematic words are fictos (VI, 565), inane (VI, 568), falsis (VI, 569), non sic (VI, 570) - words used previously to characterize the disguises assumed by lustful gods. See Anderson, Ovid's Metamorphoses, p.225.
128. Anderson, Ovid's Metamorphoses, p.225. The ironies with which Ovid is concerned are directly comparable to those which Shakespeare explores in similar thematic language in Hamlet. Like Procne, who becomes an unwitting

actor in Tereus' play, Hamlet is totally compromised by Claudius' covert crime. See also the discussion at Ch.VI, pp.253-254 below.

129. Ovid's Metamorphoses, commentary at VI, 574-575, p.226. In Richard II, Gaunt uses a similar proverbial phrase - 'Teach thy necessity to reason thus:/ There is no virtue like necessity.' (I,iii, 277-278) - in a context which suggests that Shakespeare is working with a similar theme. It is the imaginative faculty which Gaunt intends should be stimulated by Bolingbroke's adversity. Bolingbroke, however, is not blessed (or cursed) with Richard's powers of supposing, and his immediate response to Gaunt (ll.294ff) neatly illustrates the difference between the two men. Baldwin finds that Shakespeare is recalling Ovid's Fasti (I, 493ff). See Small Latine, Vol.II, pp.427-428.

130. Studies in Words (Cambridge, 1967), pp.91-92.

131. See p.130 above.

132. Cf. XIII, 546: '..she fixed on vengeance and was wholly absorbed in the punishment her imagination pictured'.

133. See Anderson, Ovid's Metamorphoses, commentary at VI, 595-597, p.229.

134. Without necessarily invoking Ovid, various critics have noted that this paradox is the central problem posed by Shakespeare's tragedy. See, for example, Nigel Alexander, Poison, Play and Duel (London, 1971), pp.27, 115-117; Brower, Hero and Saint, pp.297ff.

135. Brower, Hero and Saint, p.71.

136. Anderson, Ovid's Metamorphoses, commentary at VI, 633-635, p.233. Just as Lady Macbeth argues that her husband is 'too full o'th'milk of human kindness' (Macbeth, I,v, 14), so Procne reaches her 'monstrous conclusion' via the perception that 'too much mother-love' (nimia pietate, VI, 629) has caused her to waver from her purpose. Anderson's comment is as apposite to Shakespeare's heroine, as it is to Ovid's: 'There can be no such thing as excessive pietas in a properly analysed situation, for pietas has absolute validity like virtus' (p.232).

137. Anderson, Ovid's Metamorphoses, commentary at VI, 667, p.236; cf. 6, 841-845.

138. See the discussion at p.99 above.

139. Hero and Saint, p.131.

140. See Muir, Sources of Shakespeare's Plays, pp.211ff.
141. Thomas Nash, 'Preface to Greene's Menaphon (1589)' in G. Gregory Smith (ed.), Elizabethan Critical Essays (London, 1904), Vol.1, p.312.
142. Hero and Saint, p.160, n.1.
143. The relationship between Ovid and Seneca is made more complicated in the case of Medea by Ovid's lost play of the same name. See Ch.III, p.78, n.33 above.
144. See Ch.II, pp.56ff above.
145. Seneca's Tragedies, trans. Frank Justus Miller, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass., & London, 1953), 'Medea' 1.910, Vol.I, p.304.
146. 'Medea' 11.904-910, pp.303-304.
147. Cited Brower, Hero and Saint, p.161.
148. Jasper Heywood's translation (1560), in H. de Vocht (ed.), Jasper Heywood and His Translations of Seneca's Troas, Thyestes, and Hercules Furens (Louvain, 1913), II, 1119-1121, p.133.
149. Heywood, II, 1267-1269, pp.138-139.
150. Seneca's Tragedies, 'Thyestes', 1.279, VolIII, p.114.
151. Heywood, IV, 2156, p.171 and V, 2338, p.178.
152. 'The Preface to the Reader', in E.M. Spearing (ed.), Studley's Translations of Seneca's Agamemnon and Medea (Louvain, 1913), p.126.
153. 'Chorus altered by the Translator', Studley's Translations, p.136.
154. Jason's duplicity is much more apparent in Seneca's version, since, like Euripides, he focuses on a later stage in Medea's history, over which Ovid passes in a couple of lines (Metamorphoses, VII, 394-397). Again, Seneca would seem to be interested primarily in ultimate consequences, where Ovid, palpably bored by the physical denouement, spends all his imaginative energy in characterizing the initial stages of Medea's passion, and the psychological tensions and literary conceits to which it gives rise.

155. Hero and Saint, p.116.
156. S.L. Goldberg, 'Shakespeare's Centrality', The Critical Review, 18 (1976), p.5.
157. Goldberg, 'Shakespeare's Centrality', p.5.
158. Goldberg, 'Shakespeare's Centrality', p.7.
159. See Anderson, Ovid's Metamorphoses, commentary at VII, 69-71, p.251 and X, 437-440, p.512.
160. Ovid's Metamorphoses, commentary at IX, 558-560, p.457.
161. Cf. The Rape of Lucrece, ll.1331-1358.
162. Ovid's Metamorphoses, commentary at X, 345-346, p.506.
163. See Ch.VI, pp.250ff below.
164. Anderson, Ovid's Metamorphoses, commentary at X, 462-464, p.513. The over-solicitous nurse had become a set-type in Roman literature, though Ovid would seem to be primarily indebted to Euripides' Hippolytus for this scene. See Otis, Ovid as an Epic Poet, p.227. Juliet's nurse, in Romeo and Juliet, is 'double diligent' in precisely the same way.
165. The narrator is Orpheus, and the story of Myrrha is one of the tales of 'maidens inflamed by unnatural love' (X, 153-154), which he tells as a foil to his own pure love for Eurydice.
166. The Passions of the Minde, Ch.4, p.68ff.
167. See, for example, 'The Intellectual Powers of the Soul', in Nosce Teipsum (Gerald Bullett (ed.), Silver Poets of the Sixteenth Century (London, 1947), pp.379ff); Troilus and Cressida, II,iii. 169-171.
168. Ovid's Metamorphoses, commentary at IX, 472-481, p.452.
169. Cf. 9, 720: Golding's translation maintains the note of uncertainty suggested by Ovid's use of the subjunctive mood.
170. Cf. Macbeth's 'Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill' (Macbeth, III,ii, 155). However, this line is usually seen as Shakespeare's version

of a Senecan 'tag' ('per scelera semper sceleribus tutum est iter', Agamemnon, 116) which was varied throughout Elizabethan drama. See E.F. Watling (ed. & trans.), Seneca: Four Tragedies and Octavia (Harmondsworth, 1966), p.30. Muir (The Sources of Shakespeare's Plays, p.213) quotes Studley's translation: 'The safest path to mischief is by mischief open still'.

171. Ovid's Metamorphoses, commentary at IX, 630-632, p.461. Such is the persuasive force of this kind of casuistry that, in several university classes, I have heard it argued (with no intended irony) that, up until the death of Banquo, Macbeth has 'only committed murder'!

172. The Medea sequence in the Metamorphoses falls into quite distinct episodes, with accompanying changes in point of view and narrative tone. See Galinsky, Ovid's Metamorphoses, pp.65ff.

173. Anderson, Ovid's Metamorphoses, commentary at VII, 19-20, p.245. Wilkinson, (Ovid Recalled, pp.205-206) notes that similar sentiments had been expressed by Euripides' Phaedra and Medea, 'in the days when Socrates was teaching that virtue was a matter of knowledge'.

174. Nosce Teipsum, Bullett, Silver Poets, p.357.

175. Thomas Wright, The Passions of the Minde, p.69. The same opposition of 'spirit' or 'soul' with 'sense' is also present in Brutus' contrast of 'genius' with 'mortal instruments' (see p.158 above).

176. See Baldwin, Small Latine, Vol.II, pp.436ff. From the Medea episode in the Metamorphoses comes what Frank Kermode has called 'the most resonant echo of Ovid in the whole corpus': Prospero's valedictory invocation to the spirits in The Tempest, V,i, 33-50. See Arden The Tempest, Appendix D, pp. 147-150. See also Muir, Sources of Shakespeare's Plays, pp.3-4, 212, 283.

177. Macbeth II,ii, is strongly reminiscent of this scene in the Metamorphoses, in which Medea steals to the King's chamber and induces a death-like sleep in both the King and his guards, before returning to persuade his daughters to commit the unnatural deed (VII, 321-330/7, 417-423). The reluctance of Pelias' daughters to observe their deed is also highly suggestive of a major theme in Shakespeare's tragedy. See 7, 438-744.

178. See Wilkinson, Ovid Recalled, p.408. The love of 'Shafalus' for 'Procris' serves Bottom as an exemplum of true fidelity (A Midsummer Night's Dream, V,i, 197). Thomas Edwards' version of the tale is, however, something of a travesty of Ovid's tightly structured sequence. His Cephalus and Procris (1595) is diffuse and obscure, with cryptic interspersed allusions to the contemporary literary scene. Edwards' poem is reprinted in Elizabeth Story Donno (ed.), Elizabethan Minor Epics (New York & London, 1963).

179. Otis, Ovid as an Epic Poet, pp.178-179, 410ff.

180. In the Ars Amatoria (III, 657-746), Ovid had used the second part of the myth as an exemplum on the need for trust between lovers. Comparison of the two versions reveals how skilfully Ovid adapted the story to meet the thematic concerns of the Metamorphoses.

181. See Ch.II, pp.48ff.

182. See Anderson, Ovid's Metamorphoses, commentary at VII, 721-722, p.317.

183. Anderson, Ovid's Metamorphoses, commentary at VII, 841, p.329.

184. 'It was customary in Rome for a close relative to catch the last breath of one who was dying, here obviously by kissing'. Anderson, Ovid's Metamorphoses, commentary at VII, 860-861, p.331.

CHAPTER V

1. See Peter B. Murray, '"Much Virtue in If" in Shakespeare's Comedies', Library Chronicle (University of Pennsylvania), 32(1966), pp.31-39; Maura Slattery Kuhn, 'Much Virtue in If', Shakespeare Quarterly, 28(1977), pp. 40-50.

2. Brian Vickers, The Artistry of Shakespeare's Prose (London, 1968), p.219. Cited Alexander Leggatt, Shakespeare's Comedy of Love (London, 1974), p.216.

3. 'Apologie for Poetrie', Smith and Parks, The Great Critics, p.216.

4. Steiner, After Babel, p.215, citing J.L. Austin's 'well-known paper on "Ifs and Cans" (1956)'.
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5. In Chs. V and VI, references and quotations are from the Arden As You Like It, ed. Agnes Latham (London, 1975).

6. Nashe, The Anatomy of Absurdity. Cited Cooper, Elizabethan Opinions, p.20. On the ubiquity of the bee analogy, see Cooper, p.9. For contradictions in Nashe's various pronouncements on Ovid, see Keach, Elizabethan Erotic Narratives, pp.158-159.

7. The punctuation here is crucial. I have printed the Folio reading (using Hinman's throughline numbers) after the reference in Alexander's

edition. Most editors introduce additional punctuation, making 'sweet' a synonym for 'Hermia'. However, the same creative ambiguity occurs at V,i, 99-100; 1896-1899, where Theseus is not simply addressing Hippolyta, but explaining to her his readiness to take 'the sweet sense' of a less than gracious offering.

8. The effect of Bottom's speech is (in Touchstone's words) 'to have honey a sauce to sugar'. Like Holofernes, he is over-zealous in complying with the rhetorical criterion of copia, for which Ovid was the outstanding model and example. See Baldwin, Small Latine, Vol.II, pp.204-205.

9. Empson, Some Versions of Pastoral, p.138.

10. My reading here is the emendation accepted by Richard David (ed.), Arden Love's Labour's Lost (London, 1968), p.99.

11. See Ch.VI, pp.289ff.

12. See Appendix, p.348 and n.1., below.

13. Quintilian, Institutio Oratoria, Butler (ed), Vol.III, p.199. Cited Baldwin, Small Latine, Vol.II, p.222. See also n.68 below.

14. Braden, Classics and English Renaissance Poetry, p.2. Pound's pronouncements on Golding's Ovid were made in Notes on Elizabethan Classicists (1915-1916); ABC of Reading (1934); and Confucius to Cummings (1964). They are conveniently brought together in Nims (ed.), Ovid's Metamorphoses, p.xiii.

15. T.W. Baldwin, review of the Nims edition of Golding's Ovid, Journal of English and Germanic Philology 66(1967), p.125. Cited Braden, Classics and English Renaissance Poetry, p.3.

16. Cited Swan, 'A Study of Golding's Ovid', p.223. For the politics of the translation 'movement', see C.H. Conley, The First English Translators of the Classics (New Haven, 1927).

17. Noted by Nims (ed.), Ovid's Metamorphoses, p.455.

18. Swan ('A Study of Golding's Ovid', pp.85-86) notes that similar effects derive from Golding's attempts to avoid ambiguities in English which would follow from less exact renderings of inflected endings. Thus 'ille' (II, 106), used with reference to Phaethon, becomes 'the wilful lad' (2, 139), and 'illa' (II, 434), with reference to the Arcadian nymph Callisto, becomes 'the wench' (2, 541).

19. See Ch.III, p.86; Ch.IV, pp.97ff.
20. Kenneth Muir has suggested that Bottom's name may derive from Mouffet's poem, of the Silkwormes, and their Flies. See The Sources of Shakespeare's Plays, p.73.
21. Henry Crosse, Grosart's Occasional Issues, VII, p.124. Cited Cooper, Elizabethan Opinions, p.34.
22. Braden, Classics and English Renaissance Poetry, p.12. Swan ('A Study of Golding's Ovid', pp.103-109) notes that in Golding, Ovid's 'temples' become 'churches' and his 'priests', 'Chapleyne's'. The Christian concept of grace is introduced from time to time, perhaps most notably in Golding's translation of the epitaph on the tomb of Aenas' nurse. Here 'a pious son' (XIV, 443) becomes 'a chyld of grace' (14, 502). Swan finds five echoes of the Bible or Book of Common Prayer, but they are neither very convincing nor significant.
23. See Ch.II, p.41 and n.46 above.
24. A Worlde of Wordes, sig. a3^f.
25. The phrase is used by Khun, 'Much Virtue', p.41.
26. A Worlde of Wordes, sig. a3^v-a4^f.
27. Montaigne's Essays, I, p.9. For Benjamin, see the citation which heads the present chapter. For Goethe, see Steiner, After Babel, pp.257-258, 260.
28. A Worlde of Wordes, sig. a4^f.
29. See A Worlde of Wordes, sig. a4^v, and Ch.VI, p.235 below. For Iphis and Ianthe (Metamorphoses, IX, 666-797) in Lodge and Lyly's Gallathea, see also Latham (ed.), Arden As You Like It, p.lxiii.
30. A Worlde of Wordes, sig. a5^f. See also Ch.IV, p.93, n.3. Multum in parvo was originally an Horacian conceit, but I hope to show that Shakespeare's reworking of the idea is essentially Ovidian in spirit. See pp.206ff. below.
31. Galinsky, Ovid's Metamorphoses, p.197.
32. See Ch.II, p.30; Galinsky, Ovid's Metamorphoses, p.199.

33. Otis, however, reads the Philemon and Baucis as a simple theodicy. See Ovid as an Epic Poet, pp.201-202.
34. Unlike Bolingbroke, who is not blessed with a transforming imagination. Cf. Richard II, I,iii, 277-303, and Ch.IV, p.139, n.129, above.
35. Ovid's Metamorphoses, commentary at VIII, 632, p.392.
36. The same emblems of rustic simplicity recur in Lodge's Rosalynde. Thus Corydon advises Aliena that 'care cannot harbour in our cottages, nor doo our homely couches know broken slumbers: as we exceede not in diet, so we have inough to satisfie: and Mistres I have so much Latin, Satis est quod sufficit'. See Bullough, Narrative and Dramatic Sources, Vol.II, p.189.
37. 'To his Worthy Friend Doctor Witty'.
38. See Chapter II, p.29 above.
39. 'The Heavenly Visitors', in Legends and Pastorals (London, 1961).
40. Colie, Resources of Kind, p.93.
41. 'Apologie for Poetrie', Smith and Parks, The Great Critics, p.209.
42. By comparison, Agnes Latham (Arden, As You Like It, p.xlv) comments on the essential lack of variety in Lodge's Arden: '...Contrasts of this kind are hardly developed at all by Lodge. All Lodge's people tend to speak with the same voice, invoke the same trite mythologies, and one is as likely as another to produce a Latin tag.....Lodge's range of characters is narrow. Even Le Beau in Shakespeare, stands out as somebody with an interesting standpoint of his own'.
43. See Galinsky, Ovid's Metamorphoses, pp.201-202.
44. Cf. Love's Labour's Lost, V,ii, 413. On the use of artifice to renounce artifice, See Bradbrook, Shakespeare and Elizabethan Poetry, pp.25-26.
45. See A Midsummer Night's Dream, II,ii, 188-189, and Ch.VII, pp.325-326 below.
46. Alexander Leggat has written well on this aspect of the play. See Shakespeare's Comedy of Love, pp.186-189.

47. See Ch.VI, pp.257-259, below.
48. See Galinsky, Ovid's Metamorphoses, p.202; Anderson, Ovid's Metamorphoses Books 6-10, commentary, pp.393-394.
49. Preface to the Fables, ll.252-253, Kinsley (ed.), Poems, Vol.IV, p.1450. Dryden is comparing Ovid's 'Description of Persons' with Chaucer's in the Canterbury Tales and finds the same visual qualities in the pen portraits of both poets.
50. Cf. VIII, 614-615.
51. '(Ovid) does not make it impossible for those who wish to read the story as a pious parable to read it that way. Besides, the original, serious intention of the myth is indispensable for a full appreciation of the humour and gently parodic tone of his version. We may put it as simply as this: by treating the myths humourously, Ovid also reminds us of their seriousness'. Galinsky, Ovid's Metamorphoses, pp.202-203
52. Bullough, Narrative and Dramatic Sources, II, p.160.
53. Arden, As You Like It, p.lxix.
54. The tone is one of 'take it or leave it', rather than 'as you like it' in Shakespeare's sense. One of Lodge's commentators notes that the tone of the address is rather different from that of his previous dedications and epistles: 'The half successes and half failures of his publications were beginning to gall, and he attempted, in his new sailor's jargon, to make a firm stand and a firm appeal as a writer'. Wesley D. Rae, Thomas Lodge (New York, 1967), p.59.
55. See Conley, The First English Translators, pp.85ff.
56. Cf. Lodge: '...But if Momus or anie squint-eied asse that hath mightie eares to conceive with Midas, and yet little reason to judge; if he come aboard our Barke to find fault with the tacking, when he knows not the showdes, ile downe into the hold, and fetch out a rustic pollax...and either well bebast him, or heave the cockscombe over boord to feede cods'. 'To the Gentleman Readers', Bullough, Narrative and Dramatic Sources, Vol.II, p.160.
57. Cooper, 'Elizabethan Opinions', p.8.
58. Gosson, 'The Schoole of Abuse', in O.B. Hardison (ed.), English Literary Criticism: The Renaissance (London, 1967), pp.87, 90, 92-93.

59. 'A Defence of Poetry', in Smith (ed.), Elizabethan Critical Essays, Vol.I, p.75.
60. 'A Defence of Poetry', in Smith (ed.), Elizabethan Essays, p.76.
61. Tristia, I,xi, 39-40, Wheeler (ed.), p.55; 'To the Gentleman Readers', Bullough, Narrative and Dramatic Sources, Vol.II, p.160.
62. The most famous reference to Shakespeare as an Ovidian poet is Francis Meres' praise of his 'mellifluous and honey-tongued' verse in Palladis Tamia. Wits Treasury 91598). In the commendatory verses included in the First Folio, Shakespeare's name is repeatedly linked with Ovid's. See the Epilogue, pp.340-341 below. In the verses prefixed to Ovids Banquet of Sence, two writers speak of Chapman as a reborn Ovid. See P.B. Bartlett (ed.), Poems (New York, 1962), p.52. For 'riches in a little Roome' and 'strooke dead', see Bartlett, Poems, pp. 65 & 67 (Ovids Banquet of Sence, stanzas 49 & 57).
63. Wheeler (ed.), Tristia, p.63; Chapman, Ovid's Banquet of Sence, ll.370-450. On the Actaeon parallel in Chapman's poem, see also Frank Kermode, Shakespeare, Spenser, Donne (London, 1971), pp.105, 107-108. For interpretations of Tristia, II, 163ff, see Wheeler's introduction, pp.xxiff; John C. Thibault, The Mysteries of Ovid's Exile (Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1964), pp. 73-74. See also Ch.I, p.13 and n.8, above.
64. For the critical history of the crux, see Richard Knowles (ed.), New Variorum As You Like It (New York, 1977), pp.188-190. It is interesting (and this I have not seen mentioned in connection with Touchstone's allusions) that Marlowe, Chapman and Ovid (with other classical poets) seem to be the subjects of oblique reference in Sonnet 86. This sonnet, one of the 'Rival Poet' sequence, also contains the phrase 'struck me dead' (1.6). Here it characterizes Shakespeare's 'tongue-tied muse' (80, 1.4; 85, 1.1). The idea of 'riches in a little room' is also present in Sonnet 86, as an image of Shakespeare's beloved friend, and of the poet's 'ripe thoughts', which are still-born in a tomb (the brain) which is also a womb (11.2-4). Cf. also Sonnet 85, where the Rivals' verse is described as a 'precious phrase by all the Muses fil'd' (1.4). See also, John Dover Wilson (ed.), The Sonnets (Cambridge, 1969), pp.189-190, and Introduction, lxii-lxxi
65. Cf. Reyher's suggestion (noted Knowles (ed.), New Variorum As You Like It, p.189) that Touchstone's words 'might be a veiled protest...against the burning on June 4, 1599, by order of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London, of copies of one, or more, of the surreptitious editions of Marlowe's translation of the Elegies of Ovid, (and) may...also refer to some difficulties about the publication of Hero and Leander'. The latter was entered in the Stationer's Register in September 1593, but, though it must have circulated in manuscript, does not seem to have been published until 1598.
66. The acute critical problems posed by a poem such as Ovids Banquet of Sence, which has been interpreted in quite contradictory ways, have been well-outlined and discussed by Kermode. See 'The Banquet of Sense', Shakespeare, Spenser, Donne, pp.84-115.

67. Scillaes Metamorphosis (1589). The poem is reprinted in Nigel Alexander (ed.), Elizabethan Narrative Verse (London, 1967).

68. Touchstone's name is, of course, closely associated with Robert Armin, the new jester in Shakespeare's company. The key notion is that of testing or trying, an idea easily transferred from the quality of metals to the 'quality' (a rhetorical term) of words. Agnes Latham notes (Arden As You Like It, p.lxvii) that Tutch in Armin's Two Maids of Moreclacke says 'O I am true metall one way, but counterfeit another'. In his own way, Armin seems to have been as interested as Shakespeare in the equivocal nature of verbal representations. Muriel Bradbrook's essay on 'The New Clown' establishes Armin's interest in 'the vogue of Paradoxes and Problems' and brings out the significant common interest in metamorphic language shared by Armin and Shakespeare. See Shakespeare the Craftsman (Cambridge, 1979), pp. 49-75, particularly pp.52-53, for the full title of Armin's jest book, Quips upon Questions (1600), which is, as Bradbrook notes, 'very revealing'. The importance of 'the touchstone of the understanding' in Quintilian's views about meaning in language (cf. n.13 above) is also central in Montaigne's thinking about language. See Ch.VI, p.286.

69. Elizabethan Narrative Verse, p.17.

70. See M.M. Reese, Elizabethan Verse Romances (London, 1968), p.268; also n.65 above. Problems of authorial intention and critical understanding are acute in Marston's poem, which the author claimed had been misunderstood when it first appeared in manuscript. In a poem appended to the published version, Marston argued that the 'Salaminia' titillations' which had been taken as serious eroticism had been intended only as a joke. The poem had, in fact, been meant as a satire on the excesses of Ovidian poems, and those readers who were taken in by his satire were now held up for ridicule. See Reese, Elizabethan Verse Romances, p.269; Donno, 'The Epyllion', p.94. The debate about whether Marston is being serious, satirical (or both) in his poem, the appended apologia, and in The Scourge of Villanie, where Marston continues the controversy, has continued in the present century. See Keach, Elizabethan Erotic Narratives, pp.134-161. See also p.203 and n.90 below.

71. Elizabethan Narrative Verse, pp.15-16. Ben Jonson continued the attack on Ovid and the Ovidians in The Poetaster (1601).

72. Eric Jacobsen, Translation: A Traditional Craft (Copenhagen, 1958), p.186.

73. In the introduction to his subsequent translation of 'the divine poem of Musaeus' (1616), Chapman states that his version will be different from Marlowe's 'partly excellent Poem' in 'Stile, Matter, and invention'. The implication is that Marlowe did less than justice by the Greek author of Hero and Leander, and his own version will do something to redress the wrong. See Braden, Classics and English Renaissance Poetry, p.114. This, of course, begs the question of whether Marlowe was attempting to give a close rendering of Musaeus in his version of Hero and Leander, a poem which is also heavily indebted to Ovid, but which is, above all, distinctively Marlovian.

74. Bartlett (ed.), Poems, p.52.
75. Bartlett (ed.), Poems, p.132.
76. Elizabethan Narrative Verse, p.5.
77. See Barkin, 'Diana and Actaeon', pp.317-359. Barkin finds the meeting of Bottom and Titania in A Midsummer Night's Dream, 'the fullest example in Renaissance literature of the Diana and Actaeon story' (p.352).
78. The 'sobbing deer' was a well-known Renaissance topos, and its ubiquity is very much the point of its appearance in As You Like It II,ii. Nevertheless, it is worth noting the continuities between the Lord's description of the 'poor sequester'd stag' (II,i, 43), and Golding's characterization of the transformed Actaeon (Metamorphoses, 3, 236ff). Like Shakespeare's deer, Actaeon is 'speckled' and 'hairy' and is similarly pictured weeping into a 'brooke'. Because he cannot speak, he also groans copiously. The stress on the deer's 'innocence' is also a very Ovidian feature of Shakespeare's description. See Barkan, 'Diana and Actaeon', p.323.
79. In the Metamorphoses, the Actaeon and Narcissus myths are closely related. Both are concerned with 'mysteries of identity' and share common motifs, such as 'mirroring'. See Barkan, 'Diana and Actaeon', p.321, and the citation at Ch.II, n.62 above. See also pp.209-210 and n.98 below.
80. John Brinsley translated the Tristia for use in schools. See Cooper, Elizabethan Opinions, p.5; Baldwin, Small Latine, Vol.I, p.380.
81. Nevertheless, Amiens makes a learned linguistic joke, even as he affects a nonchalant attitude towards naming. See Latham (ed.), Arden As You Like It, p.43.
82. Leggatt, Shakespeare's Comedy of Love, p.189.
83. See I,ii, 198 and IV,iii, 107-118, and Knowles (ed.), New Variorum As You Like It, pp.45 & 253. See also pp.204ff. below.
84. 'Apologie for Poetrie', Smith and Parks, The Great Critics, p.232.
85. Cited Cooper, Elizabethan Opinions, pp.29-30.
86. Some Versions of Pastoral, p.138.
87. See Appendix, p.348 and n.1 below.

88. Barkin points out that in The Merry Wives of Windsor the connections between cuckoldry, horns, and Actaeon are so well-established that 'it is possible to accuse someone of being a cuckold by merely calling him an Actaeon'. See 'Diana and Actaeon', p.351 and cf. Merry Wives, II,i, 106-109. I am suggesting that in As You Like It, where the same connections are equally well-established, Shakespeare makes the further identification of Actaeon with Ovid himself.
89. See Love's Labour's Lost, V,i, 41-59.
90. See Latham (ed.), Arden, As You Like It, pp.xlviii-xlix, and n.70 above.
91. For the parodic aspects of Ovid's story of Hercules and Achelous, which reduces the heroic conflict of Aeneas and Turnus to a quarrel over a girl, see G. Karl Galinsky, 'Hercules Ovidianus', Wiener Studien, 85(1972), pp.94-98.
92. Shakespeare might also be remembering the Cipus myth (Metamorphoses, XV, 565-621/15, 633-697), one of several stories of paradoxical gain from loss which illustrate the theme of Pythagoras at the conclusion of Ovid's poem. In the myth, Cipus' odious horns became the means of his future bounty - provided that he remains outside the walls of Rome and does not aspire to be crowned King. The myth is rich in political and literary allusions, and it is interesting that Touchstone introduces the idea of a 'walled town' for his pun on 'horn-works' at III,iii, 51-55 (See Knowles (ed.), New Variorum As You Like It, n. at 1666-9, p.194). The Cipus myth has been read as Ovid's ironic portrait of Augustus (hence providing further provocation for his banishment), and as 'a comment on the contrived nature of many Roman myths into which one could read almost anything' (Galinsky, Ovid's Metamorphoses, pp.210, 258). Both of these allusions would seem apposite to the context of Touchstone's remarks.
93. 'Much Virtue in If' (Reference cited at n.1 above).
94. 'Much Virtue in If', p.42.
95. p.161.
96. See Ch.IV, p.92 above.
97. p.157.
98. See 'Twelfth Night and the Myth of Echo and Narcissus', Shakespeare Survey, 32 (1979), pp.73-78; 'Art and Nature in As You Like It', Philological Quarterly, XLIX(1970), p.33.

99. 'Much Virtue in If', p.43.
100. See Ch.VI, pp.264ff.
101. For 'sweetness and sting' as attributes of the Mars-Venus conjunction, see Wind, Pagan Mysteries, p.91.
102. The emendation accepted by Lettson and Furness. See Knowles (ed.), New Variorum As You Like It, p.249.
103. The Fairie Queene, IV,ii, 41-43. Cited Wind, Pagan Mysteries, p.211.
104. Themes and Variations in Shakespeare's Sonnets, pp.163ff.
105. Stephen Booth, An Essay on Shakespeare's Sonnets (New Haven, 1969), p.103. Booth's whole chapter on 'Unity and Division, Likeness and Difference' is pertinent to my discussion. See particularly his remarks under 'Paradoxical Style', pp.96-110.
106. See Ch.II, pp.41-42.
107. Classics and English Renaissance Poetry, pp.38-39.
108. Reference cited n.27 above.
109. Daniel's poem was also published with the preliminaries to Florio's Montaigne (1603). The poem is cited by Steiner (After Babel, p.248) as the quintessential expressions of 'the humanist case' for translation.
110. Rosalind invokes both these natural wonders in a context which points up the metamorphosis theme in Shakespeare's comedy. The 'hyen' - an archaic form of 'hyena' which occurs uniquely in the canon at IV,i, 148 - serves Rosalind as an exemplum of wise contrariness, the kind of female perversity which keeps time with nature's changes and thus, paradoxically, keeps love alive. Her speech at IV,i, 138-148 is one of several apologies in the play for the essentially re-creative exercise of wit. The phoenix appears in Phoebe's letter (IV,iii, 17) as an example of an impossibilia. For us, it is an appropriate symbol of Rosalind's ambivalent sexuality - as her response to Phoebe's letter makes clear: 'Ods my will, / Her love is not the hare that I do hunt' (IV,iii, 17-18). Rosalind's exclamation is a miniature icon, which recalls Shakespeare's presentation of the hunter-hunted motif in Venus and Adonis. There, the Queen of Love is simultaneously the hunter of Adonis (ll.907-912) and, in her fear, the hare that she would have him hunt in preference to the boar (ll.679-708). Rosalind-Ganymede, who takes the offensive in wooing Orlando and is simultaneously the object of Phoebe's amorous designs, is in the same ambiguous position.

111. See Appendix, p.350 below.

112. The continuities are significantly pronounced to cause Golding to make a rare misidentification. As Swan notes ('A Study of Golding's Ovid', pp. 129-130), he translates the Atalanta who appears at 8, 427ff. as 'one / Of Schoenyas daughters'. But the Atalanta who was the daughter of Schoenus does not appear until Book 10.

113. See Anderson's commentary, Ovid's Metamorphoses, pp.357-358.

114. Ovid's Metamorphoses, commentary at VIII, 387, p.368.

115. Undoubtedly, Shakespeare recalled the Calydonian hunt sequence when composing his picture of the bristle-backed boar. Cf. Venus and Adonis, 11.619-628 and Metamorphoses, 8, 376-384.

116. Arden As You Like It, p.67. See also Knowles (ed.), New Variorum As You Like It, pp.161-62.

117. See Anderson, Ovid's Metamorphoses, p.518.

118. See Ch.II, p.45 and n.55 above.

119. Although the precise point of the jest is lost, much the same tension between 'innocent' and 'experienced' meanings of the closely-related word 'features' would seem to be intended at III,iii, 3-4.

CHAPTER VI

1. The author's titles appeared in this, their tallest form, on the title page of the second edition of the Essais (1582). Subsequent augmented editions simplified the title to Essais de Michel Seigneur de Montaigne. See E.J. Trechmann, The Essays of Montaigne, Vol.I (London, 1942), pp.xiii-xiv.

2. 'Of Names' (I, XLVI), Vol.1, pp.311-317. Unless otherwise indicated, quotations are from Florio's Montaigne (edition cited Ch.IV, n.44).

3. Cf. 'Of Glory' (II,XVI): 'As for my name, it is any bodies that have a minde to it. So shall I happily honour a Porter in my stead. And suppose I had a particular marke or badge for myselfe, what can it marke when I am no more extant? May it desseigne or favour inanity?

Doth not the grave-stone on such bones sit light?
Posterity applauds: from such a spright,
From such a tombe, from ashes blessed so,
Shall there no violets (in Cart-lodes) growe?

But of this I have spoken elsewhere (i.e. 'Of Names')'. Vol 2, pp.350-351. The question of whether a word, particularly as represented on tombstone epitaphs, can 'designate and bring into substance a thing with no substance' (Trechmann's translation: Vol.II, p.76) is of considerable consequence in All's Well. Cf. also Falstaff's speech on honour, which concludes with the deflationary heraldic image 'Honour is a mere scutcheon' (I Henry IV, V,ii, 135-140).

4. 'Of Glory' (II, XVI), Vol.2, p.341.

5. See Thibaudet, Essais, I, XLVI, pp.313-317 (edition cited Ch.IV, n.53). Cf. 'De La Gloire': 'Il y a le nom et la chose: le nom, c'est une voix qui remerque et signifie la chose; le nom, ce n'est pas une partie de la chose ny de la substance, c'est une piece estrangere jointe à la chose, et hors d'elle'. Essais, II, XVI, p.697. Florio translates: 'There is both name, and the thing: the name, is neither part of thing nor of substance: it is a stranger-piece joyned to the thing, and from it'. 'Of Glory' (II,XVI), Vol.2, p.340.

6. For 'voices' in Coriolanus, see Gordon, 'Name and Fame', pp.206-208. This article brings Montaigne's 'Of Glory' into fruitful interaction with Shakespeare's Roman play. Professor Gordon does not mention 'Of Names', although, as Montaigne points out (see n.3 above), the two essays are closely related. The latter helps to illuminate further the linguistic ironies which are central to Coriolanus. Cf., for example, III,ii, 106-109 and my comments at p.225 above: Volumnia argues that her words both create and destroy her son; his martial image is constructed of words and dependent on them for survival. John Bayley's discussion of Coriolanus points up the same kind of verbal ironies. See Shakespeare and Tragedy, Ch.6, particularly, pp.150,159.

7. Unless otherwise indicated, references in Chs. VI and VII are to the New Penguin All's Well That Ends Well, ed., Barbara Everett (Harmondsworth, 1970).

8. Essais (III, IX), p.1058; 'Of Vanitie' (III, IX), Vol.3, pp.183-184.

9. 'Of Vanitie' (III, IX), Vol.3, p.184.

10. 'Of the Vanitie of Words' (I, LI), Vol.1, p.346.

11. 'Of Names' (I, XLVI), Vol.1, p.313. Cf. The Merchant of Venice, V,i, 71-79.

12. 'Of Names' (I, XLVI), Vol.1, pp.314-315; 'De Noms', Essais, I, XLVI, p.315.

13. See Ch.IV, pp.154ff.

14. For the inter-relatedness of this group of stories, see Galinsky, Ovid's Metamorphoses, pp.86-92.
15. See Anderson, Ovid's Metamorphoses, commentary at X, 19, p.477. Cf. also, Ch.IV, p.120 above.
16. See Ch.IV, pp.154ff.
17. Golding's Telethusa raises her 'hardened hands' (9, 829). The discrepancy - explicable by the fact that Golding's Micyllus-Regius text would read durasque manus, where the text accepted by Miller reads purasque manus - is noted by Swan, 'A Study of Golding's Ovid', p.48.
18. Cf. Golding: 'Wee underneath the name of kin our pleasant scapes may hyde' (9, 666).
19. See Ch.IV, pp.153ff.
20. Ovid's Metamorphoses, p.182. The seminal re-creation sequence in Book I features just this same mix of mythic fantasy and contemporary 'realism'. See Ch.II, pp.37-38 above.
21. Otis, Ovid as an Epic Poet, p.263.
22. Ovid's Metamorphoses, p.182.
23. Ovid's Metamorphosis Englished, p.336.
24. Peter Saccio, The Court Comedies of John Lyly: A Study in Allegorical Dramaturgy (Princeton, 1969), p.145.
25. Despite Lyly's imaginative use of the disguise motif in the central acts of Gallathea, the resolution of the fifth act reinforces religious determinism. In the Metamorphoses, the amoral gods are even more likely than human actors to take on new forms for unjust purposes. In Gallathea, however, Lyly's deities assume false identities to reveal their power and expose, by contrast, the mistaken attempts of mortals to escape their destiny by means of disguise. See G.K. Hunter, John Lyly: The Humanist as Courtier (London, 1962), p.198; Saccio, The Court Comedies of John Lyly, pp.156-157. I would not want to deny the importance of the interpretative tradition in any imaginative response to a given myth. Myths are such powerful store-houses of ideas precisely because they accommodate the exegetical tradition. I am suggesting, however, that Lyly's conservative recasting of the Iphis myth narrows rather than expands the area of response.
26. 'Epistle Dedicatorie', sig. a4^v.

27. Florio gives the following translation of a free Italian version of the Iphis story (there is no nurse present in Ovid's temple scene):

Feeling more vigor in each part and strength
Then earst, and that indeede she was a boy.
Towards hir mother eies and wordes at length
She turnes, and at the temple with meeke joy
He and his nurse and mother utter how
The case fell out, and so he paide his vow. (sig. a4V).

28. See Ch.IV, p.157.

29. On Jaques as an unreliable witness, see Michael J.B. Allen, 'Jaques Against the Seven Ages of Proclan Man', Modern Language Quarterly, 42(1981), pp.331-346.

30. 'Of the Vanitie of Words' (I, LI), Vol.1, p.345.

31. See Steiner, After Babel, p.46.

32. After Babel, p.46.

33. Barbara Everett, All's Well, p.154.

34. The Countess seems to blame Parolles for Bertram's shortcomings. But the syntax at III,ii, 87-89 is flexible enough to suggest also that Bertram is responsible for his own failings.

35. This artistic 'freezing' of the natural momentum anticipates Shakespeare's characterization of Octavia in Antony and Cleopatra. See Ch.VII, p.317 below. The parallel is clearer if one notices Shakespeare's use of the natural metaphor at Hamlet, II,ii, 477-481: a thoroughly Ovidian restoration of the dynamic of change and continuity.

36. Barbara Everett, All's Well, pp.17-18.

37. Hamlet, V,i, 105-106. Cf. also V,i, 200 and Montaigne: 'Keep your selves in the common path, it is not good to be so subtill, and so curious. Remember what the Italian proverb saith:

Chi troppo s'assothiglia, si scarvezza

Who makes himselfe too fine
Doth break himselfe in fine'.

'An Apologie for Raymond Sebond' (II, XII), Vol.2, p.271. The echo is more striking because of the context in which it appears. Montaigne has cited the view that 'mans understanding (loses) itself; if it once goe about to sound and controule all things to the utmost ende' (p.268). And, in proving, the

severe limitations of human reason, he notes that 'the Physitians, the Philosophers, the Lawyers, and the Divines' are unable to answer the simplest physical questions, let alone solve the great metaphysical problems (p.269). This section of the 'Sebond' essay, which is also much concerned with linguistic problems, is, for me, one of the most convincing correspondences between Montaigne's Essays and Hamlet. It is not, however, among those cited by the play's most recent editor, Harold Jenkins, in the New Arden Hamlet (London, 1982). On Shakespeare and Montaigne, see pp.108-110. An excellent bibliography of Shakespeare-Montaigne studies is included in the notes to Robert Ellrodt's 'Self Consciousness in Montaigne and Shakespeare' (reference cited Ch.IV, n.50), an article which has stimulated my thinking about the plays of Shakespeare's middle period.

38. 'Sebond' (II,xii), Vol.2, p.233.

39. 'Some Paradoxes', p.109.

40. The King's speech is, of course, the locus classicus for all discussions of 'title' in All's Well. However, the number of contemporary treatises which recommend themselves as sources or analogues for the speech has tended to detract attention from the linguistic orientation of the speech - the extent to which (as in Montaigne) the debate about fame is essentially a debate about name. For Renaissance dubii on virtue v. nobility, see G.K. Hunter (ed.), Arden All's Well That Ends Well (London, 1967), p.xxxviii; Muir, Sources of Shakespeare's Plays, pp.172-173. For representations of the debate in the popular dramatic tradition (Henry Medwell's Fulgens and Luces, 1497), see Davison, Popular Appeal in English Drama, p.21.

41. Shakespeare (New York, 1939), p.185.

42. Barbara Everett, All's Well, pp.19-20.

43. See Ch.IV, pp.153ff.

44. The same ambiguity is exploited in the song of Lavatch, I,iii, 70. See Appendix, p.349 below.

45. See also Sonnets 36 and 39. The affinity between All's Well and the Sonnets has been discussed by Muriel Bradbrook, who regards the play as something of a failure because of the presence of unresolved sonnet emotions in it. See 'Virtue is the True Nobility', Review of English Studies, N.S. 1(1950), pp.289-301.

46. Braden, The Classics and English Renaissance Poetry, p.51. See also Ch.III, p.89 above.

47. Muir, Sources of Shakespeare's Plays, p.173; Geoffrey Bullough, Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare, Vol.II (London & New York, 1958), pp.379-380. Much the same point is made by Howard C. Cole in his study of transformations of 'the All's Well story' through Italian and French literature to Shakespeare. Cole summarizes the stress on simplicity as a feature of the source story in criticism from W.W. Lawrence to Clifford Leech with the pithy comment: 'The meaning of Helena's story is reserved for scholars; the meaning (of) the Giletta's is a matter for children'. The All's Well Story from Boccaccio to Shakespeare (Urbana, 1981), p.13.

48. See Cole, The All's Well Story, pp.12-32.

49. See G.K. Hunter, Arden All's Well, pp.xxv-xxvi; H.G. Wright, Boccaccio in England from Chaucer to Tennyson (London, 1957), p.214. Hunter also notes a verbal echo between Painter's 'Tancred' and Helena's speech at I,i, 90 (his text). Much the same idea is expressed by Ovid's Myrrha in far more riddling language, much closer in idiom to Shakespeare's Helena. See Metamorphoses, 339-345.

50. See Guido Almansi, The Writer as Liar: Narrative Technique in the Decameron (London, 1975), p.150.

51. The Writer as Liar, p.51.

52. See Almansi, The Writer as Liar, Chs. 1 and 2.

53. See Cole, The All's Well Story, pp.31-32.

54. The Writer as Liar, p.23

55. The Writer as Liar, p.24. Almansi's review of critical reactions to the Cepperello story makes fascinating reading for the student of All's Well. Critical attitudes to Shakespeare's Helena have been remarkably similar to those advanced for and against Cepperello, who has likewise been seen as either 'a sinner or a virtuoso artist'. Almansi's view is that Boccaccio encourages his readers to see that his hero is necessarily both of these things, while his story is 'an aesthetic model of literature as falsehood, and the artist as counterfeiter...a reminder of the irrevocable immorality of art'. The Writer as Liar, pp.24-55. This is very close to my own view of All's Well That Ends Well.

56. As used by the King at II,iii, 151, 'misprision' means both 'contempt' and 'error', together with 'an underlying quibbling allusion to the idea of "false imprisonment"'. Barbara Everett, Penguin All's Well, p.180.

57. 'Self-consciousness in Montaigne and Shakespeare', pp.47-48.

58. 'Self-consciousness in Montaigne and Shakespeare', p.49.
59. See Ch.IV, p.129.
60. See Montaigne, 'Of the Vanitie of Words' (I, LI), Vol.1, pp.347-349.
61. Had Shakespeare needed a literary model for Osric and Parolles, he might have found one in Montaigne's characterization of the Italian sonneteer, Pietro Aretino: 'in whom except it be an high-raised proudly pufft, mind-moving, and heart-danting manner of speech, yet in good sooth more than ordinarie, wittie and ingenious; But so new fangled, so extravagant, so fantastically, so deep-laboured; and to conclud, besides the eloquence, which be it as it may be, I cannot perceive any thing in it, beyond or exceeding that of many other writers of his age, much lesse that it in any sort approaching that ancient divinite'. 'Of the Vanitie of Words' (I, LI), Vol.1, pp.348-349.
62. Arden, All's Well, p.15.
63. The upper-case is mine. One is reminded of the line in Venus and Adonis (another tale of Impossibilities), which similarly calls for an upper-case emphasis not always recognized by editors: 'She's Love, she loves, and yet she is not lov'd'. (1.610).
64. Barbara Everett, Penguin All's Well, p.18.
65. This, of course, Hamlet is unable to do - at least, not until the very end of the play, when he begins to recognize the limitations of both reason and self-control. The riddling play on the word 'sense' is almost as important in Hamlet, as it is in All's Well. See particularly, III,iv, 71-80. Harold Jenkins' notes (Arden Hamlet, p.323), which are designed to remove the ambiguity from the word, do Shakespeare a disservice. Much of the meaning of Hamlet lies in the unresolved tension between the various meanings of this single word, which Hamlet is playing upon in characterizing his mother's submission of her reason to passion.
66. See Hunter, Arden All's Well, p.13; Everett, Penguin All's Well, p.157.
67. Barbara Everett (Penguin All's Well, p.204) is, I think, right in her suggestion that, in Helena's speech, 'the word' (1.31) refers back to "yet", with all its complex and quibbling senses', which Helena 'has just uttered twice'. However, 'the word' can also be taken in the generic sense of language itself, which in All's Well is shown repeatedly to be most rich wherein it appears most poor.
68. Several commentators have noticed continuities as well as contrasts between Helena and Parolles. Hunter (Arden All's Well, p.xxxiii) allows that there is a kind of osmosis between the positive and negative qualities of the

characters, although he still characterizes Helena and Parolles as Bertram's 'Good and Evil Angels'. Contrary to the usual opposition of Romance and Realism (on which see Anne Barton's introduction to All's Well in The Riverside Shakespeare (Boston, 1974), pp.501ff), R.A. Foakes notes that Helena and Parolles are equally obsessive and self-centered. Both counter the romanticism of comedy, by returning us to 'the intractable nature of things as they are'. See Shakespeare: The Dark Comedies to the Last Plays (London, 1971), pp.16-17. Richard Levin offers 'a cynical account of the play' which underlines the qualities of cunning and ambition which Helena and Parolles have in common. See 'All's Well That Ends Well and "All Seems Well"', Shakespeare Studies, XIII(1980), pp.131-144.

69. See Mathew Winston, '"Craft Against Vice": Morality Play Elements in Measure for Measure', Shakespeare Studies, XIV(1981), pp.229-248.

70. The Garden of Eloquence, cited Joseph, Rhetoric in Shakespeare's Time, p.340. On 'craft' as 'a key slippery term', see also Steiner, After Babel, p.219; also Ch.IV, pp.113, 125-126 above. On versimilitude as a form of deceit, and the problem of intention in art, see Colie, 'Some Paradoxes', pp.96-97.

71. See Colie, 'Some Paradoxes', p.103.

72. Rosalie Colie notes that paradox flourishes 'in relativity' and 'at the limits of discursive knowledge'. 'Some Paradoxes', p.109.

73. The emphasis on Helena as an instrument of Christian grace is perhaps most pronounced in the criticism of G. Wilson Knight, The Sovereign Flower (London, 1958), pp.93-161; R.G. Hunter, Shakespeare and the Comedy of Forgiveness (New York, 1965); and E.M.W. Tillyard, Shakespeare's Problem Plays (London, 1950), pp.100-115.

74. 'Quality' was the most important of the ten Aristotelian categories or 'predicaments', by which all things in the world could be investigated and defined. See Tuve, Elizabethan Imagery, p.284.

75. The paradox at V,iii, 248 is perfectly expressed in the jewel image of Sonnet 65, l.10. See p.309 below.

76. Donne, 'The Third Satire'.

77. Institutio Oratorio (V,x, 98-99), Vol.II, p.254. Shakespeare would seem to be indebted to Quintilian (Book VIII) for the important distinction between simile and metaphor in All's Well, V,ii, 1-25, and for the series of sordidae metaphorae which characterize Parolles' 'translation'. See Baldwin, Small Latine, Vol.II, pp.208-211.

78. See, for example, Measure for Measure, II,i, 9-16; II,i, 76-79; II,ii, 64-66.

79. See Nancy S. Leonard, 'Substitution in Shakespeare's Problem Comedies', English Literary Review, 9(1978), pp.281-301.

80. Nuttall, 'Fishes in the Trees', p.31. See also Ch.II, pp.31ff. above.

81. One could say that Helena inverts the charge which Hamlet brings against Gertrude in 'the Closet Scene': in All's Well, 'will panders reason'. The creative interaction of the various meanings of 'sense' in the comedy (cf. also I,iii, 245-246) also contrasts markedly with the tragedy, where the conflict is merely destructive. See also n.65 above.

82. See, for example, Sidney: '...it is not riming and versing that maketh a Poet...But it is that fayning...which must be the right describing note to know a Poet by'. 'Apologie for Poetrie', Smith and Parks, The Great Critics, pp.197-198. The debate is pertinent to All's Well, since it is frequently raised in the context of discussions about the role of 'the marvelous' in poetry. See, for example, Cinthio: 'There is nothing marvelous in what happens often or naturally, but there is in what appears impossible and yet is assumed to have happened if not in truth at least in fictions, such as the changes of men into trees...and other such things, which, though they are false and impossible, are still so accepted by custom that a composition cannot be pleasing in which these fables do not appear. And perhaps a poet is called a poet for this more than any other reason, for this name of poet signifies nothing other than maker. And not because of his verses but chiefly through his subjects he is called a poet..' 'On the Composition of Romances' (1549), in A.H. Gilbert (ed.), Literary Criticism: Plato to Dryden (New York, 1940), p.270. In the contest of feigning versus rhyming, the former is usually an easy winner. However, the appearance of All's Well would seem to have coincided with a rekindling of the controversy, due to the publication of Thomas Campion's Observations in the Art of English Poesie (1602) and Samuel Daniel's A Defence of Ryme (1602-3), which was written to refute Campion's attack on 'the childish titillation' of rhyming. It is interesting to note, in the context of Shakespeare's comedy, that Daniel appeals to 'Custom' rather than 'Law', and 'Nature' rather than 'Art', while his Defence has been called 'a Magna Charta against arrogance and affectation'. See Arthur Colby Sprague (ed.), Samuel Daniel: Poems and A Defence of Ryme (London, 1965), p.xxiii.

83. In the Metamorphoses, Medea's rejuvenation of Jason's father, Aeson, occurs in the first of Ovid's tales of impossible loves. Jason's petition on behalf of his father moves Medea to reflect on her own impure motivation in performing the miracle. One is reminded of Helena's painful awareness that the King's cure is motivated solely by her desire for Bertram. Cf. Metamorphoses, VII, 164-170/7, 225-235 and All's Well, I,iii, 226-230. For Shakespeare's use of 'ritual and cloudy incantation' at II,i, 160-169, see Tillyard, Shakespeare's Problem Plays, p.101, and cf. Wilson Knight, The Sovereign Flower, p.152.

84. Helena's words can, of course, be 'taken' to mean something quite different. Cf. Barbara Everett's gloss: 'I am not a charlatan, proclaiming

my marksmanship before I take aim - I know exactly what I think - that my skill has the power of curing you'. Penguin All's Well, p.173. Helena's speech has the mixture of assertive and conditional moods which is so characteristic of All's Well.

85. Cf. Sidney: 'Now for the Poet, he nothing affirms, and therefore never lyeth. For, as I take it, to lye, is to affirme that to be which is false... But the Poet never maketh any circles about your imagination, to conjure you to beleeve for true what he writes...in troth, not labouring to tell you what is, or is not, but what should or should not be'. 'Apologie for Poetrie', Smith and Parks, The Great Critics, p.216.

86. Harold Jenkins notes that Polonius' images for devious roundabout courses recur in Golding's Ovid. See New Arden Hamlet, p.233.

87. Levin notices Lafew's indulgence in a vicarious romantic liaison with Helena, but takes it as further evidence of Shakespeare's 'cynicism' in All's Well (see n.68 above). Like the King, Lafew is 'a lonely old man manipulated by a young charmer'. In the same way, the Countess 'betrays her son', by 'reliving her youth through Helena'. 'All's Well That Ends Well and "All Seems Well"', pp.136, 142. I have tried to show that, in its complex mixture of tones, All's Well is a far more sophisticated blend of idealism and realism than is allowed for in Levin's either/or reading of the play. The capacity to put oneself in another's position is shown to be as much a strength as a weakness. It is the means by which human beings escape both the limitations of the self and the inexorable march of time.

88. The suggestion that II,iii, 23 can be taken as a reference to a broad-sheet ballad (see Hunter, Arden All's Well, p.51 and cf. Everett, Penguin All's Well, p.176) is reinforced when one notices the coincidence of thought with II,i, 172.

89. Montaigne, 'Sebond' (II, XII), Vol.2, p.200.

90. See Othello as Tragedy: Some Problems of Judgment and Feeling (Cambridge, 1980), Ch.1.

91. See D.M. Bergeron, 'The Mythical Structure of All's Well That Ends Well', Texas Studies in Literature and Language, XIV, pp.559-568.

92. Montaigne, 'Sebond' (II, XII), Vol.2, p.306.

93. 'Infinite cunning' and 'modern grace' (V,iii, 216) are both paradoxical compounds of sacred and profane suggestions, reflecting the ambiguous roles played by Diana and Helena. It must be noted, however, that 'infinite cunning' is an emendation of the Folio's 'insuite comming'. See Hunter, Arden All's Well, pp.139-140; Everett, Penguin All's Well, p.214.

94. See The Fairie Queene, I,ii,x. For Proteus as a verbal trickster, see Ch.IV, p.106 and n.40, above.
95. See Ch.IV and n.42 above.
96. For the textual problems posed by the brothers Dumaine, see Everett, Penguin All's Well, p.218; Hunter, Arden All's Well, pp.xiv-xvii. The Lords exemplify an important feature of the All's Well text: problems which arise in the study, disappear in performance.
97. Anne Barton, Riverside All's Well, p.501.
98. 'What's in a Name?', The Sovereign Flower, p.199.
99. See Hunter, Arden All's Well, p.121.
100. For Giorgias' praise of Helen, see p.263 and n.71 above. For nomen omen see Davison, Popular Appeal in English Drama, p.76, citing W.B. Stanford, Ambiguity in Greek Literature (Oxford, 1939), p.35.
101. Arden, All's Well, p.xlviii.
102. Cited Joseph, Rhetoric, p.339.
103. See Ch.V, p.170 above.
104. For the healing properties of marjoram, see Montaigne, 'Sebond', (II, XII), Vol.2, p.155; Kenneth Muir (ed.), Arden King Lear (London, 1964), n. at IV,vi, 94, p.175.
105. When Ophelia in her madness 'speaks things in doubt' (Hamlet, IV,v, 6), herbal and heraldic metaphors characterize the variety of human nature as mirrored in 'distinctions' of meaning. Thus the recipient of Ophelia's 'rue' (the proper name for 'herb of grace') must wear it 'with a difference' (IV,v, 180). Harold Jenkins (Arden Hamlet, pp.539-540) suggests that the intended recipient of the rue is Claudius. But the pronouns at Hamlet, IV, v, 167-187 are no less problematic than in All's Well, creating a critical crux which can be solved only by the definition of an individual dramatic performance. Like All's Well I,iii, and IV,v, Hamlet IV,v, is directly concerned with the problems of interpretation posed by ambiguous language. As Jenkins notes (p.533), Shakespeare seems deliberately to invite us to make 'sense' of Ophelia's 'nothings'. However, he also seems to suggest that, given the predisposition of listeners 'to botch the words up to fit their own thoughts', the range of interpretations is limited only by the number of those in attendance. Ophelia's distracted snatches also draw attention to the role of change in human lives. (For specific suggestions of metamorphosis,

see Jenkins' notes at pp.532-533, 539). As in All's Well, a correlation is made between fatalism and fixed meaning, free will and ambiguity. Thus Ophelia's 'Lord, we know what we are, but know not what we may be' (IV,v, 40-41) recalls the tension between 'wills' and 'fates' in the Player's speech at III,ii, 181-210, just as her refrain, or 'wheel' (IV,v, 169), echoes the formal circularity of his speech (III,ii, 205). Both sequences anticipate Hamlet's disclosures to Horatio at V,ii, 8-11, 30-31, where philosophical problems of determinism are expressed in theatrical terms. Hamlet's new readiness to admit that 'performance' may outstrip 'plotting' can be seen as a projection of Shakespeare's willingness to concede that, in the drama itself, the need to allow for interpretative freedom significantly limits his own artistic control.

106. Cited Baldwin, Small Latine, Vol.II, p.202.

107. Cited Giamatti, 'Proteus Unbound', pp.455-456. Giamatti also notes that 'the epithet "ambiguus", traditionally used by classical poets for Proteus...maintains the sense of turning, being formed on ambi (around) and ago, -ere (to go)'. .

108. Popular Appeal in English Drama, pp.77-78.

109. Nowhere more so, than at V,iii, 73-76, where Lafew's identification with his daughter, Maudlin's sexual aspirations casts doubt on his gender, as well as his role of aged and detached observer.

110. See particularly II,ii, 27ff, where the Countess takes on the educative role of the wise fool, and compare I,iii, 13-16 and III,ii, 17-18, where the roles are again reversed and Lavatch fulfils his traditional function, by calling attention to linguistic metamorphosis and the process of semantic degeneracy.

111. Cf. Hamlet, III,iii, 386 and III,iv, 95, where Hamlet uses words 'like daggers'.

112. 'Sebond' (II, XII), Vol.2, p.233.

113. II, XII trans. Trechmann, Vol.I, p.526. Cf. Florio: 'What can I tell?', Vol.2, p.234.

114. II, XII, p.277. The essay takes the form of an argument against a group of objectors to Sebonds' Natural Theology, which Montaigne had translated at the request of his father. In spite of the nominal support, however, Montaigne's argument would seem to contradict Sebonds' assertion that men can learn all they need to know about God and religion by reading the book of His creation, the world of nature. As Donald Frame says, the essay is not so much an apology for Sebond, as 'evidence of (Montaigne's) complete disagreement' with him. See The Complete Essays of Montaigne (Stanford, 1948), p.319.

115. A choice of name which suggests a continuity between the philosophical-linguistic concerns of Romeo and Juliet (cf. II,ii, 33-60) and All's Well.

116. See Everett, Penguin All's Well, p.192; Hunter, Arden All's Well, p.86.

117. Unfortunately, I have been unable to locate the source of this remark.

118. See Ch.V, p.173 and n.13 above.

119. After Babel, p.38.

120. The suggestions of both Pauline and Ovidian metamorphosis prompt comparison with the transformation of Oliver (As You Like It, IV,iii), which similarly turns on a distinctly literary experience. See Ch.V, pp.198-199 above.

121. Helena's strategy is very like the self-denying ploys which Shakespeare adopts in Sonnets 88 and 89: submitting to the 'will' of his friend, and trying to prove the 'virtue' of one who is 'forsworn'.

122. See the excellent gloss provided by Barbara Everett, Penguin All's Well, p.195.

123. See Hunter: 'To "flesh a hound with the spoil" was to give it some of the flesh of the hunted animal to eat, to stimulate its hunting instincts. So, Bertram's will (lust) is to be fleshed (rewarded and stimulated) with the honour of the girl it has hunted down'. Arden All's Well, p.105. The moral paradoxes of the Actaeon myth are seconded in Dumaine's speech by the highly ambiguous language, which reminds us that the supposed Diana is, in fact, Helena.

124. Hunter, Arden All's Well, p.106. Cf. Everett's gloss for IV,iii, 20-24: 'all traitors...are expressing their own true treacherous natures; even so Bertram, here destroying his own honour, does it in a way characteristic of his own peculiar energies'. Penguin All's Well, p.199.

125. For a similar reading of All's Well, which stresses the play's concern with 'the intractable nature of things as they are', and representation of 'something in the bedrock of human beings', see Foakes, Shakespeare: The Dark Comedies, pp.16-17.

126. It is here that the spirit of All's Well, while endorsing Sebonds' Natural Theology, is most at odds with the argument of Montaigne's essay. See n.114 above.

127. Cf. Everett's text: 'I see that men make vows in such a flame / That we'll forsake ourselves' (IV,ii, 38-39), and see her note (Penguin All's Well, p.198). My own preference for the Folio reading is based on external and internal evidence. In The Taming of the Shrew (see Ch.IV, p.92 above), Grumio uses 'rope' as a malapropism for 'trope', while suggesting the metamorphic capacity of words to 'disfigure'. An interpretative gloss cited by the O.E.D. and by Brian Morris in the New Arden edition (London, 1981, p.189) brings out clearly the opposition of rhetoric and 'plain' speaking, and the notion of self-betrayal, which are both important in Diana's argument at IV, ii, 19ff, as elsewhere in All's Well: 'If we firste expresse our mynde in plaine wordes and not seeke these rope rype termes, which betraie rather a foole, than commende a wyse man' (Thomas Wilson, Art of Rhetoric, 1553). The emendation 'snare', for 'scarre', adopted by Jonas A. Barish (Pelican All's Well That Ends Well (New York, 1964), p.102) has the virtue of retaining the sense of 'trap', but the paradox of linguistic self-entrapment is lost. Yet elsewhere in the play 'scars' are seen as misleading signifiers which, like words, have a double capacity to harm both the person who must interpret their significance and the person who sports them. See III,ii, 120-121 and IV,i, 35-37, where physical 'hurts' are identified with self-mutilation. The scar imagery thus reinforces the central paradoxical moral: that in seeking to gain honour, either on the battlefield or in the bedroom, the pursuer often loses that which he already has (cf. IV,ii, 20-24 and IV, iv, 21-25). The notion that gain and loss are inextricably connected in the natural evolutionary cycle is mirrored in Diana's knotty reflexive syntax. The crux is also thoroughly characteristic of the discontinuity between intention and meaning, means and ends, which is mirrored in the title of All's Well. Diana speaks to Bertram, to herself, and to the audience, and her meaning is different in each case. While seeming to Bertram to indicate her submission to his arts of persuasion, Diana's conceit expresses her own recognition that he is betrayed by his own tongue (cf. IV,ii, 49-51). For the audience, the fault is not identified peculiarly with Bertram, but with human nature itself. Thus the crux also illustrates the generalizing tendency of many statements in All's Well.

128. For the association of taffeta with the changeable colours of rhetoric see Twelfth Night, II,iv, 71-74. For the more general use of cloth to characterize the various 'qualities' of tropes and figures (based on the idea of rhetoric as 'the dress of thought'), see Love's Labour's Lost, V,i, 406-408. The conceit is well-represented in All's Well, not only in the various descriptions of Parolles, whose 'soul...is his clothes' (II,v, 43-44), but also in the several pronouncements which characterize human beings and human life as 'mingle yarn' or 'linsey-woolsey' (IV,i, 11; IV,iii, 70). Cf. also Montaigne: "Man all in all, is but a botching and party coloured worke". 'We Taste Nothing Purely (II, XX), Vol.2, p.401.

129. See "Sebond" (II, XII), Vol.2, p.265. The Pauline text cited by Montaigne, 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and reprove the providence of them that are the most prudent' (I Corinthians, I, 19), also seems pertinent to Shakespeare's deprecation of conventional wisdom in All's Well.

130. (II, XII), Vol.2, pp.322-325; Trechmann, Vol.II, p.49.

131. See Gordon, 'Name and Fame', p.210.

132. 'Some are puffed up as though I would not come to you. But I will come shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power. For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power' (I Corinthians IV, 18-20). 'It is reported...there is fornication among you...And ye are puffed up' (I Corinthians V, 1-2). 'And as touching things sacrificed unto fools (cf. 'idols': Authorized Version), we know that we all have knowledge: Knowledge puffeth up, but love edifieth. Now, if any man thinke that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing, yet as he ought to know' (I Corinthians VIII, 1-2).

133. Cf. the concluding paragraph of Montaigne's 'Sebond' (II, XII) in Trechmann's translation, Vol.II, p.53.

134. 'Sebond" (II, XII), Vol.2, p.233.

135. Cf. The Comedy of Errors, II,ii, 68-108.

136. See Joseph, Rhetoric in Shakespeare's Time, p.338.

137. See Steiner, After Babel, p.219.

138. For 'glorious supposition', see The Comedy of Errors, III,ii, 50. The speech of Antipholus of Syracuse (ll.29-52) makes several connections which are of consequence in All's Well: between Ovidian and Pauline metamorphosis; and (through the puns on 'lie' and 'supposition') between sexual and theatrical 'performances', which are seen as hazardous but essentially re-creative activities. See also All's Well, IV,iii, 289-292, where Parolles asserts that his own 'seeming' was an essentially lawful deceit, undertaken to 'beguile the supposition' of Bertram.

139. This same fusion of sexual, theatrical, and religious connotations is felt at III,vi, where Bertram promises that, if Parolles' 'mystery in stratagem ends in the recovery of 'this instrument of honour', he (Bertram) will 'grace the attempt for a worthy exploit', while the Duke will reward him 'even to the utmost syllable of your worthiness' (ll.58-65). One is reminded of Montaigne's comments on the Eucharist and the pivotal significance of the single syllable 'hoc' (see p.299 above). Parolles' enterprise does not 'speed well'. Yet there is a curious sense in which Bertram's ad hominem joke is fulfilled and Parolles paradoxically rewarded by his humiliation. Transubstantiated into just one of his protean forms, Parolles does indeed become 'the thing itself' - the Word made fish, if not flesh! (cf. I,iii, 52; III,vi, 79 and 98; V,ii, 20-22).

140. Penguin All's Well, p.215.

141. See, particularly, Sonnets 36 and 111. For Mistress Quickly's tag, 'harlotry players', see 1 Henry IV, II, iv, 385 (cited Leishman, Themes and Variations in Shakespeare's Sonnets, p.227).

142. After Babel, pp.234-235. One might set against Steiner's celebration of the diversity of tongues Montaigne's view of linguistic multiplicity, as symbolic of the instability of philosophical opinion which contradicts the dream of human rationality. See 'Sebond' (II, XII), Vol.2, p.256. It is, however, fascinating to note Montaigne's sardonic prescription for a kind of Esperanto (Latin, French, Spanish, or Gascoine words with Italian terminations added) which would be understood in Italy despite its nonsensical content. The 'chough's language' born of individual 'fancy', which Shakespeare creates, might be seen as the artist's response to the moralist's challenge. In view of the extremely paradoxical effect of All's Well, IV, iii, it is also worth noting the tension between the myths of Babel and Pentecost in the Old and New Testaments. The coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts II, 1-4) is also associated with speaking 'foreign tongues' and with a form of communication which overcomes linguistic differences between man and man. See G. Wilson Knight, The Christian Renaissance (New York, 1963), pp.82, 240.

143. On 'opinion' as a traditional source of disquiet in discussions of 'honour' see Gordon, 'Name and Fame', pp.210-211.

144. Cf. the definitions of those decidedly suspect words in Florio's dictionary: Spurio - 'a whores sonne whose father is not know (sic), a bastard, one base borne. used also for a counterfeit (A Worlde of Wordes, p.393); sinistra/sinistro - 'pertaining to, or that is on the left hand. Also a mischiefe, a mischance...Also contrarie, against, or opposite to a mans desire or expectation...' (p.373). Even the Captain's regiment (II, i, 42) is dubiously suggestive: while both spino and spina are associated with kind of 'prick' and 'prickle', the latter is also a type of heraldic emblem (p.389).

145. Robert Hughes, The Shock of the New: Art and the Century of Change (London, 1980), p.394.

146. Cf. Sonnet 96, ll.5-9.

147. Heart of Darkness (Harmondsworth, 1973), pp.38-39.

148. p.68.

149. In the Epilogue, the play's thematic concern with role-reversal and reciprocal generosity of spirit is extended to the relationship between the actors and the audience. In performance, the 'public means' of the common player can (pace Sonnet 111) 'breed' a natural gentility.

CHAPTER VII

1. In this chapter, references and quotations are from the New Penguin Antony and Cleopatra, ed., Emrys Jones (Harmondsworth, 1977).
2. See Ch.VI, p.295 above.
3. Arnold Hauser, Mannerism: The Crisis in the Renaissance and the Origin of Modern Art (London, 1965), p.29.
4. Hauser, Mannerism, pp.342-346; Cyrus Hoy, 'Jacobean Tragedy and the Mannerist Style', Shakespeare Survey, 26(1973), pp.49-67.
5. Cf. Cleopatra's 'Now I feed myself / With most delicious poison' (I, v, 26-27), and Enobarbus' 'I will tell you' (II,ii, 195). In each case, the lines 'frame' the verse, separating it from the rest of the dialogue. In the final act, Cleopatra's 'Think you there was or might be such a man / As this I dreamt of?', Dolabella's reply, and the Queen's rejoinder, effect a more complex border which similarly draws attention to the artifice of Cleopatra's 'dream'. Hoy sees the opening speech in the play - with Philo's 'Look where they come. / Take but good note, and you shall see in him / The triple pillar of the world transformed / Into a strumpet's fool. Behold and see.' - as a typically mannerist device for linking fiction and reality, 'the domain of art with the world of the spectator'. 'Jacobean Tragedy and the Mannerist Style', p.63. Such framing devices are, however, equally characteristic of the much older art of the Metamorphoses.
6. H.A. Mason, 'Telling versus Showing', Shakespeare's Tragedies of Love (London, 1970), p.262.
7. See Hauser, Mannerism, pp.13, 143, 383, 387. Inga-Stina Ewbank has considered Webster's plays in the context of the contemporary vogue for perspective painting. See 'Realism or "A Cunning Piece of Wrought Perspective"', in B. Morris (ed.), John Webster (London, 1970), pp.159-198.
8. Hauser, Mannerism, pp.283, 13.
9. Mannerism, pp.6-11.
10. Mannerism, pp.294-295.
11. Mannerism, p.295.
12. Hawkes, Coleridge on Shakespeare, p.269.

13. Shakespeare's Plutarch, ed. T.J.B. Spencer (Harmondsworth, 1964), p.221.
14. However, Emrys Jones notes that the word 'shore' may 'be a term of contempt, meaning 'sewer'. See Penguin Antony and Cleopatra, pp.269-270.
15. See, *inter alia*, Ernest Schanzer, The Problem Plays of Shakespeare (London, 1965), pp.132-183; Raymond B. Waddington, 'Antony and Cleopatra: "What Venus did with Mars"', Shakespeare Studies, II (1966), pp.210-224; John Coates, 'The Choice of Hercules', Shakespeare Survey, 31 (1978), pp. 44-52. Janet Adelman surveys the play's mythological contexts in her enormously rewarding, The Common Liar (New Haven, 1973). In arguing that the Metamorphoses provided a peculiarly powerful stimulus to the Shakespeare of Antony and Cleopatra, the present study ultimately rejects the unqualified thesis suggested by Adelman's chapter-heading, 'Tradition as Source'. Like Ovid, Shakespeare adopts a paradoxical and conceited mode as the only linguistic and dramatic mimesis of a change-dominated world. In its imitative recovery of the natural mystery which sustains the imaginative wonder, the play further emulates the revitalizing impulse of Ovid's poem.
16. See Wind, Pagan Mysteries, Ch.V, pp.81-96.
17. Hawkes, Coleridge on Shakespeare, p.115.
18. 'Diana and Actaeon', p.322.
19. In 'The Life of Marcus Antonius', the defection of Enobarbus (Plutarch's Domitus) precedes the battle of Actium. See Spencer, Shakespeare's Plutarch, pp.252-253.
20. J.A.K. Thomson, Shakespeare and the Classics (London, 1952), pp.148-150. Though Adelman does not refer to the Metamorphoses in this context, the Ovidian Nile locus supports her discussion of the function of the Nile and water imagery in Antony and Cleopatra. See The Common Liar, pp.66-68, 127-129, 142-149.
21. Cited Emrys Jones, Penguin Antony and Cleopatra, pp.35-36.
22. Penguin Antony and Cleopatra, p.22.
23. George Williamson, The Proper Wit of Poetry (London, 1961), p.31.
24. See Coates, 'The Choice of Hercules', pp.49-50.

25. See Michael Lloyd, 'Antony and the Game of Chance', Journal of English and Germanic Philology, 61(1962), p.548.
26. See Galinsky, Ovid's Metamorphoses, pp.45-46, 254.
27. Lloyd, 'Antony and the Game of Chance', pp.552, 554. The article is largely concerned with exploring Shakespeare's use of gaming imagery in Antony and Cleopatra.
28. As Emrys Jones notes (Penguin Antony and Cleopatra, p.277), 'his bounty...an Antony it was..', though frequently emended to '...an Autumn it was', is fully prepared for, by both the immediate context and the play as a whole.
29. Kermode, The Sense of an Ending, p.7.
30. G.R. Hibbard has noted that "'A lass unparallel'd", the off-spring of a marriage between a native English word, that first appears around the year 1300, and a neologism, deriving ultimately from the Greek, for which the O.E.D. gives no example prior to 1594', is in itself 'a microcosm of the style that informs the play'. See 'Feliciter Audax: Antony and Cleopatra, I,i, 1-24', in P. Edwards, I-S Ewbank, and G.K. Hunter (eds.), Shakespeare's Styles (Cambridge, 1980), pp.95-109.
31. "'Nature's Piece 'Gainst Fancy": The Divided Catastrophe in Antony and Cleopatra', Bedford College Inaugural Lecture, (London, 1973), p.16.
32. Such a closing image would, paradoxically, also support Barton's thesis that Shakespeare employs the divided catastrophe uniquely in Antony and Cleopatra, because the form 'seems to reflect not the dubious symmetries of art but life as we normally experience it'. "'Nature's Piece 'Gainst Fancy"', p.4.
33. The Advancement of Learning. (Reference cited Ch.II, n.3.).
34. Hauser, Mannerism, p.27.
35. Comic Matrix of Shakespeare's Tragedies, p.11.
36. See Ch.III, pp.62ff. above.

APPENDIX

1. At first the Countess plays the role of judge-cum-cleric, with Lavatch

taking the part of the betrothed-defendant who questions the basis of the system of law by which he is being tried. Because the Clown can also claim to be acting in the name of the law, the roles of judge and defendant are reversible, as the Countess' 'your worship' (1.31) makes clear.

2. In the writings of St. Paul, the contradictions and paradoxes of the 'Law' are ultimately dissolved and harmonized in the life-producing cycle of natural change. (Though it is not his purpose), Wilson Knight's 'Essay on St. Paul' (The Christian Renaissance, pp.122-144) brings out the significant continuities in thought and imagery between Ovid and the Apostle - especially between the final book of the Metamorphoses and the great passage on Immortality at I Corinthians XV, 35ff. See particularly, pp. 131-139.

3. The reasons, both pragmatic and aesthetic, comprehend the obvious dangers of direct statement, and the etymological confusion of satira and satyros, which led to the cultivation of a deliberate roughness. See A.J. Smith (ed.), John Donne: The Complete English Poems (Harmondsworth, 1971), p.469.

4. See Everett, Penguin All's Well, p.163: Hunter, Arden All's Well, p.24.

5. See Baldwin, Small Latine, Vol.II, pp.193-194.

6. See also Ch.V, p.217 above.

7. J.B. Steane (ed.), Christopher Marlowe: The Complete Plays (Harmondsworth, 1969), p.330.

8. See Hamlet, IV,v, 168-169, and Ch.VI, n.105 above.

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