HOMOSEXUAL DESIRE IN SHAKESPEARE'S ENGLAND

A CULTURAL POETICS

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In three respects Horace's love lyrics must have startled, bothered, and intrigued Renaissance readers. The Roman poet writes about love, not as an idealistic young suitor eager for ungranted favors and untasted delights, but as a jaded man of the world, someone who has traversed Venus's myrtle groves and come out the other side. Nothing could be less like Petrarch praising Laura or Astrophel gazing upon Stella. Furthermore, Horace writes about sexual desire between males with a matter-of-factness that avoids romanticizing that desire no less than it refuses to be embarrassed by it. He drops all the masks. There, simply, it is. Nothing could be less like Aufidius insinuating his admiration of Coriolanus in ardent metaphors, or Barnfield wooing "Ganymede" in the vestments of pastoral, or Musidorus battling Pyrocles in the disguise of an Amazon, or Sir Voluptuous Beast lusting after goats. Finally, for a Renaissance reader able to buy or to borrow a copy for himself, Horace's love lyrics offered an experience of sexual desire quite unmatched by anything we have encountered so far not only in the intensity of that desire but in its *intimacy*. As texts for private reading, Horace's *Carmina* might seem to invite the same kind of socially licensed fantasizing as romance narratives like Sidney's *Arcadia* and Ovidian *epyllia* like Marlowe's "Hero and Leander." But those texts, after all, are third-person narratives. Storyteller and reader band together in looking at "them." The protagonists of the story exist somewhere else, in a fictional place and time that are home to neither storyteller nor reader. In Beaumont's "Salmacis and Hermaphroditus," the most intimate relationship is not between the lovers or even between the reader and the lovers but between the narrator and the reader. With his sensuous turns of phrase and coy wit Beaumont's persona intrudes between us and the lovers from beginning to end. In lyric poems the intimacy, ostensibly at least, is between poet and lover. The reader, if not an out-and-out eavesdropper, is cast as a secret sharer, a privileged witness to someone else's private life.

All three things that distinguish Horace's *Carmina* distinguish also the love poems that were published in 1609 as *Shake-speares Sonnets. Never before Imprinted*. Verbal echoes of Horace's *Carmina*, heard throughout Shakespeare's plays, suggest that Shakespeare had firsthand acquaintance with the Latin text, probably in one of the editions annotated by Denys Lambin.[2] Echoes of Horace in Shakespeare's sonnets are not so direct as in

the plays, but Shakespeare's love poems are unlike any other sonnet sequences written in English during the sixteenth century in the very ways that Horace's love poems also differ: they are focused on what love is like after sexual consummation, not before; many of them (in Shakespeare's case, most of them) are addressed, not to a woman, but to another man; and they are nondramatic, subjective, private. Each of these three features has attracted serious critical notice only in our own day.

Thoroughly unconventional in Shakespeare's sonnets is what amounts to an obsession with sexual experience. Stephen Booth's ingenuity has revealed how charged these poems are—even the most idealistic ones—with sexual puns.[3] It is sexual desire, to be sure, that ignites the freezing fires of Sidney, Spenser, Samuel Daniel, and all the other English disciples of Petrarch, but only in Shakespeare's sonnets does sexual desire remain uncontained by spiritual metaphor. Metaphors connect; puns disjoin. The way in which ideology and power are aligned with feeling in most sonnet cycles of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries defines a sexuality that satisfied perfectly the idealistic sensibility of the Renaissance. When we look for the transformations that these poems work on sexual desire, we can see at once why they fascinated Renaissance writers and readers: the scenario of indefatigable male pursuing unattainable female serves to focus, and thus control, sexual desire at the same time that it confirms the structures of power in Renaissance society. By investing the objects of their desire with ideal significance Petrarchan poets manage to deprive sexual energy of some of its frightening power to overwhelm. And by directing that energy into sonnets they confirm, as we shall see, the power of men over women. Amid these well tried ways of harmonizing feeling, ideology, and power Shakespeare, like Horace, sounds a distinctly discordant note.

A second difference in Shakespeare's sonnets concerns the objects of desire. As Horace in his odes, Shakespeare in his sonnets uses erotic images quite indifferently in talking about his affections, whether those affections concern his mistress or the male friend to whom most of the poems are addressed. To Renaissance philologists the homoeroticism of Horace's verses proved even more of a challenge than Ovid's *Metamorphoses* or Virgil's eclogues. Some of the humanists fulminated; some of them philosophized; some of them kept a tactful silence. As the commentators go, Denys Lambin, whose edition of the *Carmina* Shakespeare seems to have read, is remarkably matter-of-fact.

For the lines "Me neither woman now, nor boy doth move" Lambin provides this paraphrase:

> After many words the poet declares that he is unsuited and (if I may say so) no longer equipped for love, and according to his judgment and wish he is giving up such fancies, absurdities, and extravagances. He then confesses that he is still under love's power. Even though he ought, at his enfeebled age, to stay away as far as possible from such softness [*a tali mollitie*] and extravagance [*ac nequitia*], he is nevertheless called back to his former wantonness [*ad pristinas lascivias*], set on fire by his love for the boy Ligurinus.[4]

Mollitia (softness, mildness, effeminacy), *nequitia* (worthlessness, badness, extravagance), and *lascivia* (playfulness, sportiveness, wantonness) are not exactly neutral words, but Lambin refrains from the platonizing ingenuity of Christophoro Landino (Venus should turn her attentions instead to Horace's friend Paulus Maximus—young, noble, handsome, virtuous, and eloquent, a latter-day Aeneas worthy of a latter-day Dido) and the moral outrage of Hermannus Figulus ("These people were accustomed to loving boys dishonorably and foully. This infamous and filthy indecency is mentioned by St. Paul").[5] Hermanus Figulus is incensed by sodomy. What bothers Landino is not that Horace talks so frankly about sexual desire, or even that he talks about sexual desire between men, but that he so conspicuously lacks a Renaissance lover's idealism. What Landino would really like to do is transform Horace's odes into Renaissance sonnets.

But not such sonnets as Shakespeare's. Since the eighteenth century, if not before, the homoerotic images in certain of Shakespeare's sonnets have seemed an embarrassment, something that needs to be explained away. "It is impossible to read this fulsome panegyrick, addressed to a male object, without an equal mixture of disgust and indignation": so George Steevens, writing in 1780, on Shakespeare's playful ways with "prick" in sonnet 20. Edmund Malone's reply, drafted ten years later, has remained the standard academic line ever since: "such addresses to men, however indelicate, were customary in our author's time, and neither imported criminality nor were esteemed indecorous."[6] Only with changes in our own time in what counts as "customary" have homosexual readings of Shakespeare's sonnets come to seem anything other than wild imaginings from the likes of Oscar Wilde in "Portrait of Mr W. H." Despite its legalistic exactitude with Shakespeare's diction, Martin Green's *The Labyrinth of Shakespeare's Sonnets: An Examination of Sexual Elements in Shakespeare's Language* (1974) failed to change many academic minds at the time it was published. Since Joseph Pequigney's *Such Is My Love* (1985) Malone's argument has finally begun to be questioned, however reluctantly. Pequigney makes no compromises with "Renaissance friendship": Shakespeare's sonnets, Pequigney argues, document a sexually consummated love affair between the persona and the male friend about whom most of the poems are written.

Among academic critics, at least in print, Pequigney's argument is still far from being accepted as dogma.[7] Pequigney takes several critics to task for refusing to acknowledge publicly what they have believed about the poems privately. In a preface that has been read by tens of thousands of undergraduates W. H. Auden, for example, insists on the sonnets' "mystical" and idealistic view of the young man and derides attempts to claim Shakespeare for "the Homintern." Yet Auden himself is reported to have confessed to a gathering at Igor Stravinsky's apartment, in the very year he wrote the preface, that "it won't do just yet to admit that the top Bard was in the homintern."[8] If the report is true, Auden's hypocrisy has had especially unfortunate results, since even open-minded psychoanalytic critics like C. L. Barber and Richard P. Wheeler have used him as a homosexual "authority" to discount any physical relationship between Shakespeare's persona and the fair young man of the first 126 sonnets.[9]

For our purposes here, what is important is not whether particular poems and particular passages "prove" that Shakespeare the man did or did not have sexual relations with a certain other man but how the sonnets as poems insinuate sexual feeling in the bonds men in general made with one another in early modern England. Shakespeare's speaker articulates that connection, not through what he does or what he says to the friend directly, but through what he thinks and what he says to us as readers. Shakespeare may have made his living as a dramatist, but, as Heather Dubrow points out, his sonnets are surprisingly undramatic compared to the sonnets of Sidney, Spenser, and Daniel.[10] Seldom are they addressed to another person as if he or she were actually present. Almost never do they arise out of a specific, immediate incident. Rather, they are personal reflections on events that have taken place at some indefinite time in the past, events that have an existence primarily in the poet's mind. Like Horace with his dreams of Ligurinus, Shakespeare's speaker evokes friend and mistress not as real presences, but as mental images. In several sonnets the friend figures as a "shadow" who

disturbs the poet's sleep. As a discourser about homosexual desire, the persona of Shakespeare's sonnets might in some ways seem to resemble Virgil's Corydon and Barnfield's Daphnis. Are they not also men who struggle with their desires in the solitude of lyric verse? There are, however, subtle but important differences in the audience to which these voices speak. Virgil's Corydon and Barnfield's Daphnis speak directly to Alexis and to Ganymede. Shakespeare's persona speaks to himself. In both cases we as readers are privileged to "overhear," but in Shakespeare's case we share with the speaker a privacy and secrecy different in degree and in kind from the much more public performance that goes on in pastoral monologues.

Shakespeare's sonnets are, in a special sense, *confessions*. For putting sex into discourse there are, according to Foucault, two grand strategies: *ars erotica*, in which pleasure for its own sake is the subject, and *scientia sexualis*, in which the subject is not pleasure but truth. It is the second strategy—earnest, cerebral, perplexed—that has dominated western discourse about sex. First in religion, then in science, discourse in pursuit of the truth about sex has most often taken the form of confession:

> The confession was, and still remains, the general standard governing the production of the true discourse on sex. It has undergone a considerable transformation, however. For a long time, it remained firmly entrenched in the practice of penance. But with the rise of Protestantism, the Counter Reformation, eighteenth-century pedagogy, and nineteenth-century medicine, it gradually lost is ritualistic and exclusive localization; it spread; it has been employed in a whole series of relationships: children and parents, students and educators, patients and psychiatrists, delinquents and experts.

In these varied circumstances confession has assumed varied forms: diaries, letters, autobiographical narratives, consultation reports, affadavits. The process of taking an instrument of religious discipline and putting it to secular uses began in the sixteenth century. What has changed about confession in the course of this secularization is where the emphasis falls:

> It is no longer a question simply of saying what was done—the sexual act—and how it was done; but of reconstructing, in and around the act, the thoughts that recapitulated it, the obsessions that accompanied it, the images, desires, modulations, and quality of the pleasure that animated it. For the first time no doubt, a society has taken upon itself to solicit and hear the imparting of individual pleasures.[11]

In Shakespeare's sonnets we have, I believe, just such a record of "thoughts," "obsessions," "images," "desires," "modulations," and "quality of the pleasure" as Foucault describes. At least one of the sonnets (number 62, "Sinne of selfe-love possesseth al mine eie,/And all my soule, and al my every part") reads like a confession in the religious mode. Confession in other sonnets is less direct, perhaps, but all the more compelling in how it situates the speaker and what it asks from a reader.

As a way of putting sex into discourse, confession works in three ways: it individualizes the speaker, it assumes that he or she speaks to some kind of authority figure, and it sets as the goal of his or her speaking a revelation of truth. Confession assumes different forms, depending on who stands as the authority figure. In a religious confession—and in the psychiatric "confession" that is its twentieth-century equivalent—the authority figure is a priest or an analyst. In a legal confession he (only rarely she) is a policeman or a judge. If Shakespeare's sonnets are likewise confessions, who is the authority figure? Who listens as the poet speaks about his thoughts, obsessions, images, and desires? In the specific case of confession, as in more general ways, moral discourse and legal discourse about sexuality differ fundamentally from poetic discourse about sexuality in the relationship they set up between audience and authority. In a nice ambiguity, the "confessor" is the one who listens as well as the one who speaks. Likewise with "taking confession": it is a ritual act that *both* communicants perform. The listener to the confessions recorded in Shakespeare's sonnets is not, in fact, an authority figure at all: he, or she, is a collaborator. We as readers become "confessors"; we ourselves "take confession." Speaker and listener are bound together in a pact of secrecy. The speaker of Shakespeare's sonnets, because he asks for our imaginative complicity, ends up confessing *us*.

In the identity assumed by the speaker and in the response they ask from a reader, Shakespeare's sonnets are homologs to private life. All of the myths we have encountered so far in this book are, as it were, in the public domain. Communal experience is the very subject of the Myth of Combatants and Comrades. The Myth of the Passionate Shepherd articulates the sexual desires and, possibly, the sexual behavior of an entire age-group. "Gentlemen readers" as a social group are the assumed audience in the Myth of the Shipwrecked Youth, just as another social group, the young men of a village, were the actual performers of the morris dances and wooing rites that acted out

the same temporarily licensed desires. Society—or at least all the people who presume to speak for society—is a dominating presence in the Myth of Knights in Shifts. And the plays in which Marlowe dramatizes the Myth of Master and Minion were conceived as communal experiences from the ground up, as scripts to be acted, heard, watched, thought about, and remembered by men in groups. Shakespeare's sonnets are different. They situate the speaker and the listener within the enlarging sphere of personal privacy and communal intimacy that was being shaped in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by several forces: by the consolidation of state authority and the "privatization" that this new sense of "public" implied for life beyond the state's concern, by the Protestant Reformation with its stress on individual religious experience, by the spread of literacy and printing and the private reading that both technologies made possible.[12]

One way of investigating the "history of private life" in the Renaissance, Orest Ranum proposes, is to take stock of "the sites where intimacy flourished." Increasingly in the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the houses of people of means—merchants, professionals, and gentlemen as well as noblemen—acquired a new depth. Beyond the public spaces of such houses, beyond the rooms where one received visitors, carried on business, and entertained, there were private chambers, places where one could be alone, where conversations could be enjoyed with one or two intimates, where public life could be left behind by crossing a threshold.[13] Sir Simonds D'Ewes was sequestered in just such a chamber, within the precincts of the Temple, when he shared with a classmate from Cambridge "things . . . that weere secrett as of the sinne of sodomye, how frequente it was in this wicked cittye, . . . especially it being as wee had probable cause to feare, a sinne in the prince as well as the people."[14] Prominent among the pieces of furniture in such chambers was often a cabinet or chest in which personal treasures could be locked up and hidden away, ready to be taken out, handled, and looked at in private or, as a special favor, shown to a friend. Examples of such cabinets, many of them elaborately carved and marquetted, are preserved in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.[15] Books, flowers, letters, rings, and miniature portraits in jeweled cases were among the souvenirs of intimacy that might be taken out and shared. To find out the secrets of a friend's love life, symbolized in these carefully guarded objects, one had, literally and figuratively, to penetrate a series of protective enclosures: the outer rooms, the private

chamber, the ornamental cabinet, the case made of jewels and precious metal within which the image of the friend's lover was set. One can understand King James's sense of outrage when Sir Edward Coke searched the Earl of Somerset's "caskett" and discovered a letter the king had written to his sometime favorite.[16]

It is to this private space, Patricia Fumerton has argued, that Renaissance sonnets belong.[17] The very diction of the poems tells us that. In her analysis of *The "Inward" Language* in sonnets by Wyatt, Sidney, Shakespeare, and Donne, Anne Ferry has noted that the two commonest metaphors for examining one's inward state are entering a chamber or closet and reckoning one's accounts. Lacking *our* terms for inward experience—"self" as an independent noun, "inner life," "personality," "consciousness," "feeling"—speakers of early modern English most often referred to the contents of the heart as "secrets." That term implies not only that the heart harbors hidden meanings but that a key exists for unlocking those meanings, for making the heart's contents known in words and for revealing those contents to others.[18] Renaissance sonnets, especially those of Sidney and Shakespeare, present themselves as inventories of the poet's heart, as secrets divulged, as confidences shared. The reader, unless he or she happens to be the beloved person addressed by the poems, becomes perforce the poet's confidant. In the act of reading we share the poet's secrets. We play the role of intimate friend.

The physical and psychological circumstances in which we read these poems today are, to say the least, different. Most twentieth-century readers first encounter Shakespeare's sonnets in a book: neatly printed, most likely annotated, cheaply or luxuriously bound, packaged as a commodity that anyone with the money and the inclination can buy, read or not read, preserve or mark up, keep for oneself or give to someone as a present or sell back to the campus bookstore at the end of term. The poems belong to no one in particular, and the book that contains them can be put to a variety of uses. In two essential ways the earliest readers of Shakespeare's sonnets were unlike us: they were linked to a circle of friends, and they read the poems in manuscript, in handwriting that was familiar and intimate. The hand that had written out the poems was their own or that of a friend. The voice they heard in their heads as they read belonged to that hand. For perhaps fifteen years, from the time Shakespeare wrote them until the London bookseller Thomas Thorpe printed them in 1609, Shakespeare's sonnets were *private* poems in a

more than figurative sense. They belonged to what twentieth-century scholars, standing on this side of the Gutenberg revolution, have called the "manuscript culture" of early modern England. Before the fifteenth century, all literary culture was manuscript culture. The technology of print, even while making it possible for individuals to buy books of their own and to read them in solitude, served to heighten the contrast between public and private. A manuscript, what was in it and who got to read it, was a radically more personal affair than a book. In the short run at least, print culture actually helped to strengthen manuscript culture by giving it an identity as something gentlemanly and exclusive.[19] By the end of the sixteenth century, when Shakespeare was writing his sonnets, manuscripts were private concerns in a way they had not been before the invention of movable type. Hence Francis Meres's reference in 1598, eleven years before the poems saw print, to Shakespeare's "sugred Sonnets among his private friends."[20]

Two of the sonnets, in fact, comment directly on the manuscript culture in which the poems were originally written and read. Sonnet 77 ("Thy glass will show thee how thy beauties wear"), the better known of the two, seems to have been penned to accompany the poet's gift of a manuscript book on whose "vacant leaves" the friend can leave his "mindes imprint."[21] The speaker's unflinching gaze at the wrinkles the friend can see by looking in the mirror, implicitly reflected in the lines that the friend will ink on the book's "waste bla[n]ks" (77.10), indicates one use of private manuscripts: the noting down of *sententiae*, of thoughts useful to remember. The catalog of clichés that Polonius dictates to Laertes ("these few precepts in thy memory/See thou character. Give thy thoughts no tongue,/Nor any unproportioned thought his act") explains all too clearly why tablets like the one Shakespeare sends to his friend were sometimes called "commonplace books."[22] Quite another use for such manuscripts is indicated by sonnet 122. Here, five poems short of the disenchanted end of the sonnets addressed to the friend, the poet explains why he has refused the gift of a similar book of blank leaves, why he has made bold "to give them from me" (122.11).[23] "Thy guift, thy tables, are within my braine/Full characterd with lasting memory" (122.1-2). Why, then, write it all down? The poet will remember the friend forever—"Or at the least, so long as braine and heart/Have facultie by nature to subsist" (122.5-6). That qualifier, in such sharp contrast to the grand eternizing claims the poet has earlier made for his verse,

and for his love, is one of many galled ironies that give bite to the superficially smooth lines of sonnet 122. Has the friend sent the book with expectations that the poet will fill it up with still more poems in praise of his beauty? If so, sonnet 122 illustrates a second use of poems in manuscript, as tokens of courtship and amorous intrigue.[24] The commonplace book associated with Richard Barnfield contains both kinds of poems, moral *sententiae* like Tichbourne's elegy "My prime of youth is but a frost of cares" and fantasies of sexual adventure like "The Shepherd's Confession."

Both of these conventional uses of manuscript poetry, the didactic use prescribed in sonnet 77 and the amorous use implied in sonnet 122, are exemplified in Shakespeare's sonnets as a whole. Sonnets 1 to 19 are hortatory poems, verses of just the sort the poet urges the friend to copy out in his commonplace book. Is it, perhaps, these very poems about the ravages of time that the poet has in mind in sonnet 77? The wise, knowing speaker of the first nineteen sonnets urges the friend to preserve his beauty, in the first fourteen poems by marrying and begetting children, in sonnets 15 and 16 by begetting children but also by allowing the poet to immortalize him in lines of verse, and finally in the last three sonnets of the group by relying on the poet's verses alone. With sonnet 20, marriage, children, and didactic argument are left behind. The ensuing sonnets read like love poems.

As different as they may be in purpose, sonnets 77 and 122 share a common idea about how inadequate poetry is for telling the truth. Central to both poems is a distinction between the mind of the writer and the text that he writes. "The vacant leaves thy mind's imprint will bear," the poet tells the friend in sonnet 77.

> Look what thy memory cannot contain,
> Commit to these waste blanks, and thou shalt find
> Those children nursed, delivered from thy brain,
> To take a new acquaintance of thy mind.
>
> (77.9-12)

What is so striking in this image of poems as "brain-children" is the *estrangement* the poet feels from his own offspring. Look again, perhaps at some later time, at what you have written, at what has been "delivered from thy brain," and you may not recognize it; you may be obliged to take up "new acquaintance," as with infants who have been "nursed" into children. Perhaps

the poet is intimating his own regret at the fulsome panegyrics he wrote in an earlier frame of mind, but a dissociation between the imagining mind and the writing hand occurs often enough in the sonnets to strike the reader of these poems as a general truth. The whole point of sonnet 122 turns on the difference, the now painful difference, between the poet's mental impressions of the friend and the tablet the friend has given him for putting those impressions on paper. Most often in the sonnets this distinction takes shape as simple truth versus painted illusion. As early in the sequence as sonnet 21, "painted beauty" is contrasted with the friend's natural good looks ("my love is as faire/As any other mothers childe") (21.2, 10-11). The contrast between "true plaine words" and "grosse painting" (82.12-13) comes into its own in sonnets 82 to 99, when the narrative context introduces a rival for the friend's attentions, a more facile poet "by spirits taught to write/Above a mortall pitch" (86.5-6). Through all of the sonnets, even the most ecstatic, we are made to confront again and again the gap between imaginative experience itself and the poems the poet writes about that experience. It is this self-consciousness in the sonnets that prompts Joel Fineman to claim Shakespeare as the inventor of the subjectivity we now take for granted in all lyric poetry.[25]

Shakespeare did not lack models, however. It was from Sidney's sonnets, Anne Ferry argues, that Shakespeare learned how to manipulate "inward language" to create such a powerful sense of subjective presence. A "sense" of presence is precisely what both poets create. After elaborately setting in place all the enclosures that separate viewer from portrait miniature and reader from sonnet, Fumerton finds at the heart of both kinds of objects not the promised secrets themselves but only "the artifice of secrecy." The private self is ultimately "unrepresentable."[26] Ferry is closer to the truth, I believe, in frankly accepting that what Shakespeare creates in his sonnets is not inwardness itself—art, after all, is never the real thing—but an *illusion* of inwardness. Shakespeare manages to do that in four ways: by picking up on Sidney's clue and playing up the inadequacies of poetic rhetoric to tell the heart's secrets; by implying major narrative events that happen *between* sonnets, "offstage" as it were, in an "outward" public world somewhere else; by depicting this outward world as vicious and hostile; and by granting his beloved an "inwardness" as strongly implied as the speaker's own.[27] As a result, Shakespeare's sonnets do not so much *express* an inward life as *imply* it.

Not every reader of Shakespeare's sonnets in manuscript was made privy to all of the poet's secrets; not every reader heard the whole story. To judge from surviving manuscripts, such readers must have been few. Where 69 manuscripts datable to before 1700 contain poems by John Donne, only 20 such manuscripts contain sonnets by Shakespeare. Where 150 different poems by Donne were copied out and passed from friend to friend, only 12 of Shakespeare's sonnets exist in seventeenth-century copies. When the multiple copies of individual poems are added up, we are left with nearly 4,000 separate items for Donne—nearly 4,000 instances of a poem by Donne being read, liked, and copied.[28] With Shakespeare's sonnets, or so the surviving manuscripts attest, that happened only 24 times. Only two of Shakespeare's sonnets appear in more than one manuscript, and one of those two sonnets appears in only one additional copy. For all intents and purposes, it was only the sonnet numbered 2 in the 1609 printing ("When fortie Winters shall besiege thy brow") that seems to have had anything like the currency of Donne's love poems in the manuscript culture of seventeenth-century England. Significantly, perhaps, sonnet 2 contains none of the homoerotic imagery that characterizes so many of the other sonnets. Five of the twelve seventeenth-century manuscripts that include sonnet 2 entitle it "To one that would die a maid," and one other manuscript sets it down as "A lover to his mistress."[29] By a few strokes of a collector's pen, Shakespeare's poem about the tyranny of time, spoken by one man to another, could be made over into a *carpe diem* poem of seduction, spoken by a man to a woman. If it occurred to any of the Oxford students and inns-of-court men who put together most of these collections of verse that sonnet 2 might be a poem addressed *to* a person like himself, rather than a poem that could have been written *by* a person like himself, none of the surviving manuscripts indicates it. The compiler would, in that case, have written the poem down for just the opposite reason. In its sententious solemnity, sonnet 2 might have recommended itself to Polonius, who might in turn have recommended it to his son for its sober advice on marrying and begetting heirs. Which way Margaret Bellasys read the poem (she owned the miscellany that is now British Library Add. MS 10309) remains an open question. "Fortie winters" in her version of the poem have advanced to "threescore."

Two other sonnets by Shakespeare had been put to amorous uses—but in print, not in manuscript—before Thomas Thorpe

made all of the poems public in 1609. The sonnets that became numbers 138 and 144 in Thorpe's edition had already been printed, along with verses from *Love's Labors Lost* and poems by other writers, as *The Passionate Pilgrim* in 1599, the whole volume being ascribed by the printer to "W. Shake-speare."[30] As a heterogeneous miscellany of poems about love *The Passionate Pilgrim* is not at all unlike the private manuscript miscellanies that have chanced to survive. The printed volume may, in fact, derive from such a manuscript. Shakespeare's poems are interspersed with poems by other writers that struck the collector's fancy. From *The Passionate Pilgrim*, as from the seventeenth-century manuscripts, one would get no idea that most of Shakespeare's sonnets are addressed to a man. The poem that opens *The Passionate Pilgrim*—"When my love swears she is made of truth,/I do believe her though I know she lies"—is one of the sonnets that comes toward the end of the sequence when it was printed complete seven years later. In the context of the 1609 volume, this particular sonnet figures as the twelfth in a series of sometimes playful but often ascerbic poems about the persona's mistress. In the very different context of the 1599 volume it sets a tone of sportive sensuality that sounds through the whole collection. And it establishes a thoroughly heterosexual image of lovemaking that turns even the four poems about Venus and Adonis into amusements that the poet may have contrived to amuse his mistress. Certainly the first poem in *The Passionate Pilgrim* radically alters our twentieth-century understanding of the second. In this context, "Two loves I have of comfort and dispaire" reads like an allegory in which the poet struggles with a desire that is completely heterosexual. When he declares, "The better angell is a man right faire:/The worser spirit a woman collour'd il," a reader has nothing to make him think that these are persons, not personifications. The choice seems to be between loving and not loving, not between loving a man and loving a woman.

The Passionate Pilgrim seems to have made little if any difference in the manuscript culture to which Shakespeare's sonnets still belonged. Even after all the sonnets were published in 1609, it was the same single sonnet, "When fortie Winters shall besiege thy brow," that continued to appear most often in private manuscripts. Only a few of these manuscripts seem to be based on the 1609 quarto; most of them continue the tradition of friends copying poems from friends. A reprinting of *The Passionate Pilgrim* in 1612 takes no account of the 1609 complete edition and even preserves readings that are thought of today as corrupt, such as the couplet of the first poem: "Therefore Ile lie with Love, and Love with me,/Since that our faults in Love thus smother'd be" (sig. A3). It was in the looser form of the manuscripts and *The Passionate Pilgrim* that John Benson reprinted the sonnets in 1640. In addition to the sonnets from the 1609 quarto Benson includes non-Shakespearean poems from *The Passionate Pilgrim*, and he rearranges them all to suit his own taste.

In looking at Shakespeare's sonnets from the point of view of Renaissance readers we have, then, something much more fluid than the 1609 quarto would suggest. For Renaissance readers these were verses *ad hoc* and *ad hominem* with respect not only to the poet, his friend, and his mistress but to *themselves*. Sixteenth-century manuscripts were "properties" of their owners in both the legal and the psychological senses of the word. In the critical parlance of our own day, Shakespeare's sonnets were constantly being deconstructed and appropriated to the interpretations and the uses of different readers. The history of their dissemination in manuscript and print offers a radical demonstration of how a text, once out of a writer's hands, "belongs" to nobody. *The Passionate Pilgrim* is simply the first of these deconstructions to appear in print. More than any other texts we have considered in this book, Shakespeare's sonnets occupy a highly equivocal position on the border between public and private.

With Shakespeare's sonnets, as with Donne's poems, we should perhaps distinguish *degrees* of privacy. Judging from the number of surviving manuscripts and from the particular poems recurring in them, Arthur Marotti proposes that Donne's satires and elegies enjoyed a much wider circulation in manuscript than did the love lyrics that were collected and printed after his death as *Songs and Sonnets*. Beyond the lady (or ladies) so forcefully addressed in the love poems, only a small coterie of Donne's friends must have seen them and then only in loose sheets, as individual poems, and not as an entire collection.[31] To surmise from the few manuscripts that survive, Shakespeare's "sugred Sonnets among his private friends" must have been very private indeed. *Shake-speares Sonnets. Never before Imprinted*: the subtitle to the 1609 quarto says it all. As a complete group these poems had never been made public, had never been bought and sold, had never passed from one stranger's hand to another in exchange for a coin. From manuscripts limited to Shakespeare's "private friends" to manuscripts containing only one or two of the sonnets to *The Passionate Pilgrim* to *Shake-speares Sonnets* to John Benson's edition of 1640: in that progression we can read a

made all of the poems public in 1609. The sonnets that became numbers 138 and 144 in Thorpe's edition had already been printed, along with verses from *Love's Labors Lost* and poems by other writers, as *The Passionate Pilgrim* in 1599, the whole volume being ascribed by the printer to "W. Shake-speare."[30] As a heterogeneous miscellany of poems about love *The Passionate Pilgrim* is not at all unlike the private manuscript miscellanies that have chanced to survive. The printed volume may, in fact, derive from such a manuscript. Shakespeare's poems are interspersed with poems by other writers that struck the collector's fancy. From *The Passionate Pilgrim*, as from the seventeenth-century manuscripts, one would get no idea that most of Shakespeare's sonnets are addressed to a man. The poem that opens *The Passionate Pilgrim*—"When my love swears she is made of truth,/I do believe her though I know she lies"—is one of the sonnets that comes toward the end of the sequence when it was printed complete seven years later. In the context of the 1609 volume, this particular sonnet figures as the twelfth in a series of sometimes playful but often ascerbic poems about the persona's mistress. In the very different context of the 1599 volume it sets a tone of sportive sensuality that sounds through the whole collection. And it establishes a thoroughly heterosexual image of lovemaking that turns even the four poems about Venus and Adonis into amusements that the poet may have contrived to amuse his mistress. Certainly the first poem in *The Passionate Pilgrim* radically alters our twentieth-century understanding of the second. In this context, "Two loves I have of comfort and dispaire" reads like an allegory in which the poet struggles with a desire that is completely heterosexual. When he declares, "The better angell is a man right faire:/The worser spirit a woman collour'd il," a reader has nothing to make him think that these are persons, not personifications. The choice seems to be between loving and not loving, not between loving a man and loving a woman.

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transformation of hand and voice into *things*. Personal utterances are turned into commercial commodities. Topical immediacy fades into literary distance. Particularity becomes universality. J. W. Saunders's metaphor about sixteenth-century publishing seems right:

> All through the period of manuscript circulation there was a steady expansion of the reading audience outwards from the first circle of intimates. The widening circulation was a continuous process, like the circular ripples on a pond when a stone disturbs the surface, from the poet's intimates at the source to the unconnected enthusiasts and ultimately the printers on the fringes.[32]

If sixteenth-century printers were on the fringes and sixteenth-century purchasers were beyond that, where do *we* stand as twentieth-century readers? To situate ourselves in Saunders's metaphor is to realize what a huge imaginative distance we have to bridge to see Shakespeare's sonnets in their original social context.

In printing all of Shakespeare's sonnets in 1609 Thomas Thorpe seems to have gone to extraordinary lengths to preserve the "private" character the poems had in manuscript. The purchaser is invited to feel lucky to have laid hands on poems "never before imprinted." Thorpe cryptically signs himself "T— T—" on the title page and dedicates the volume "TO . THE . ONLIE . BEGETTER . OF . THESE . INSUING . SONNETS . Mr. W. H.," setting up a mystery that was probably no more solvable then than now. In styling himself on the dedication page as a "WELL-WISHING . ADVENTURER" who is "SETTING . FORTH," Thorpe may implicitly be casting the *reader* in that role. There is something clandestine about the whole affair. Thomas Thorpe calculated well. If John Donne's poems were made for New Criticism, William Shakespeare's sonnets were made for the Old Historicism. The vast majority of what has been written about the sonnets in the past three hundred and fifty years has been concerned with sleuthing out who is who and what "really" is going on between the lines. The fact that little is known about Shakespeare the man and absolutely nothing about the people he is talking about makes the game all the more challenging.[33]

One other way in which Thorpe may have played up the sonnets' secrecy, lost entirely in twentieth-century reprintings of the poems, is their orthography. When the subject was love and the purpose at hand was intrigue, Renaissance poets would

sometimes write out their sentiments in double-speak. In the diaries he kept while a musician and music tutor in several well-to-do households Thomas Whythorne records doing, more than once, just what Maria, Sir Toby, and Sir Andrew do to Malvolio with a forged letter from Olivia in *Twelfth Night*. Enamoured of a rich widow who employed him, though unsure of how she really felt about him, Whythorne sent her a poem that begins:

> Mizdeem mee not wythout kawz why
> Althouh I talk familiarly
> If thus mery I shuld not bee
> Great pryd thei would then judg in mee
>
> I may keep that eevn all the day
> Altyms and howrz in honest way
> And mean nothing az yee mistrust
> To serv az thrall t'obey their lust[.]

Four more stanzas keep insinuating, and yet denying, desire. "I mad this song sumwhat dark & dowtfull of sens," Whythorne notes in his diary, "bekawz I knew not serteinly how shee wold tak it, nor to whoz handz it miht kumen after that she had read it." If she liked what he intimated, she would keep the poem a secret. If she scorned his sentiments or misunderstood them, she might show the poem to others. Either way, Whythorne was safe: "it is so mad as neither shee nor no other kowld mak any great matter thereof, spesially, if I miht hav kum to th awnswering therof."[34] In the sharing of amorous secrets deniability was all. If the right person read them, poems like Whythorne's were full of secret clues that made the amorous message clear. If the wrong person read them, such poems could be taken "straight," as literary exercises. Whythorne was, after all, a professional writer and performer of songs. On other occasions, in other households, with other women, Whythorne used the same strategem, often with notable success.

Whythorne has entered his verses in his diary in a fair italic hand that differs from the secretary hand in which he has written the rest, setting the verse apart as a different kind of discourse. Writers of verse in manuscript had a number of other ways of indicating such differences in discourse and of signaling the presence of secrets: by giving certain words special emphasis, by writing them larger, by putting them in italics, by using capital letters. Olivia's forged letter, for example, includes these lines:

I may command where I adore,
But silence like a Lucrece knife
With bloodless stroke my heart doth gore.
M.O.A.I. doth sway my life.

(2.5.103-106)

It is the "alphabetical position" (2.5.117) of the last line that sends Malvolio's ingenuity running—straight into the trap laid for him by his enemies. Just possibly Thomas Thorpe played similar tricks with capital letters when, in exchange for sixpence a copy, he revealed *Shake-speares Sonnets. Neverbefore Imprinted* to a public readership.[35]

The teasing, if teasing it is, begins on page 1 with the first stanza of the first sonnet:

From fairest creatures we desire increase,
That thereby beauties *Rose* might never die,
But as riper should by time decease,
His tender heire might beare his memory.

(1.1-4)

Modern editions almost invariably turn "beauties *Rose*" into "beauty's rose." That way, the line becomes less distracting for a twentieth-century reader to scan, but distraction may be just what Thorpe intended. As it happens, *Rose* is capitalized, though never again italicized, throughout the entire volume. The names of other flowers—lily, violet, marigold, canker—may or may not be capitalized. Rose always is. Does that signify, or does it not? The first response of anyone who has read early modern manuscripts or books firsthand is to doubt it. Only in the late seventeenth century did the orthography of English begin to assume the rule-bound rationality that is still taught in schools today if not always followed in practice. When they talk about capitalization at all, most sixteenth-century authorities on orthography limit their rules for capitalization to the first word in a sentence and to proper names—and then proceed to ignore what they have just said by capitalizing whatever they want to emphasize! John Hart is virtually alone in including among his rules for capitalization "the appellatives of everi notable thing which is to be referred to the discretion or pleasure, of the writer."[36] Add to that the slapdash speed and sloppy proofreading of much early modern printing, and the case for the significance of "beauties *Rose*" looks weak. Stephen Booth speaks for most twentieth-century scholars in regarding the punctuation, capitalization, and italics of the 1609 quarto as "a printer's whims, errors, or idiosyncracies." George Wyndham was clearly imagining a writer with a Victorian education, working with Victorian printers, when he argued more than a hundred years ago that Shakespeare himself must have edited and proofread the 1609 quarto himself because its orthography bespeaks a mind well acquainted with grammatical niceties and Greek and Latin etymology.[37]

Perhaps it is neither a painstaking Shakespeare nor a whimsical typesetter who is responsible for the volume's orthography but wily Thomas Thorpe. Perhaps the capitalization and italics are part of Thorpe's strategy for marketing *Shake-speare's Sonnets* as a revelation of secrets. A reader's suspicions on page 1 that *Rose* refers to some secret personage, some equivalent to Petrarch's Laura/laurel or Sidney's Stella/star, are confirmed when "Sweet Roses" are set in figurative parallel with "you, beautious and lovely youth" (54.11, 13), when "Roses of shadow" are contrasted with the true "Rose" of the friend's beauty (67.8), when the beauty of the friend's "budding name" is likened to "the fragrant Rose" (95.2, 3), when "the deepe vermillion in the Rose" in the poet's verses is said to be "drawne after you" (98.10, 12), when the poet concludes a sonnet by affirming, "For nothing this wide Universe I call,/Save thou my Rose, in it thou art my all" (109.13-14). To read "beauties *Rose*" aright we need to invoke, not orthography or biography, but *rhetoric*. It is not the rules about how people capitalized words in early modern English that are relevant here, or even proofs about who the person beneath the cipher might be, but the effect of these capitals and italics on readers beyond Shakespeare's immediate circle of intimates. "Great letters" could function as a raised eyebrow, a knowing smile, a sly wink. Other aspects of Thorpe's little book—its title, its dedication, its indecipherable connection with the author—suggest that *certain*, though by no means all, capitalizations and italics in the book may be part of its design as a revelation of secrets. By 1609 "Shake-speare" on the title-page was a personage, a commodity of known value. Whom he was writing about may not have been so well known—or even very important. If J. W. Saunders is right that printing a private manuscript was like dropping a stone into a pond and producing circles ever more remote from the poet and his intimates, we should not assume that every purchaser, or even most purchasers of Thorpe's quarto would know who the poet's "Rose" might be. Less important than knowing for sure was the illusion of getting close to a famous person's secrets.

Such secrets as the sonnets yield are revealed only gradually.

At first reading, the situation in the first nineteen sonnets seems straightforward enough: the poet, old enough to know the ravages that time can wreak on beauty, urges a younger male friend to brave Time's tyranny by marrying and begetting children. The speaker and his friend exist in a social universe of two, in a world divided between "you" and "me." Thus, in sonnet 15 ("When I consider every thing that growes/Holds in perfection but a little moment") the speaker describes his own way of defying Time, by creating poems that "counterfeit" the friend's beauty; in sonnet 16 ("But wherefore do not you a mightier waie/Make warre uppon this bloudie tirant time") the speaker turns to the young man and suggests the "mightier way" in which *he* can defy Time, by procreating living images of himself in "lines of life" that will outdo the persona's "pupil pen." All of the early sonnets turn on this separateness of speaker and friend. Speaking across that great divide, the persona defines for his friend a particular sexuality, one way out of many possible ways of conceptualizing sexual desire. The botanical images Shakespeare uses in sonnet 16 are typical of all nineteen sonnets in the opening sequence:

> Now stand you on the top of happy hours,
> And many maiden gardens yet unset,
> With virtuous wish would bear your living flowers,
> Much liker than your painted counterfeit.
>
> (16.5-8)

Again and again in these early poems the friend's beauty is imaged as a flower (1, 5, 6, 12, 18); his youthfulness, as morning (7), as spring and summer (1, 3, 5, 6, 13, 18), as the Golden Age in Ovid's account of creation ("this thy golden time," 3.12). The sexual vitality of these images is strongest, perhaps, in sonnets 5 ("Those howers that with gentle worke did frame,/The lovely gaze where every eye doth dwell") and 6 ("Then let not winter's wragged hand deface,/In thee thy summer ere thou be distil'd"), where the friend's semen is likened to perfume with which he should "make sweet some viall" (6.3).

As we have seen more than once in connection with Spenser, this was a vision of sexuality supremely satisfying to the Elizabethan imagination: by relating human sexual activity to the regenerative cycle of nature this particular way of imagining sexual desire fuses the physical and the philosophical. In political terms it subordinates individual desire to a higher authority, to the divinely ordained scheme of the universe. The Epithala-

mion that Spenser wrote for his own marriage, for example, lovingly describes, stanza by stanza, all the activities of the wedding day, culminating in the elaborate ceremonies of preparing bride, bridegroom, and bedchamber that were one of the most sociable features of sixteenth-century weddings. When the guests have all departed and he turns to the physical initiation of his bride and himself, Spenser casts the climactic rite in the same vegetative images that define sexuality in Shakespeare's first nineteen sonnets. He invokes, first, Diana, goddess of the moon that shines through the bed-chamber window, goddess of chastity, goddess of "wemens labours"; then Juno, goddess of wedlock; then Genius, the patron of generation,

> in whose gentle hand
> The bridale bowre and geniall bed remaine,
> Without blemish or staine,
> And the sweet pleasures of theyr loves delight
> With secret ayde doest succour and supply,
> Till they bring forth the fruitfull progeny.[38]

Spenser in his Epithalamion and Shakespeare in his first nineteen sonnets succeed in the one thing that commentators like Landino were most anxious to do in their readings of Latin love poetry: to combine the physical, philosophical, and political aspects of sexual desire into a viable whole. In Foucault's terms, they have coordinated structures of ideology and power with individual feeling to produce a discourse about sex that was intellectually and emotionally compelling to sixteenth-century readers.

In Shakespeare's first nineteen sonnets, if not in Spenser's Epithalamium, the harmony among ideology, power, and feeling is less settled than it first appears. Discordant questions about power and its relationship to feeling are left unresolved. As gestures of rhetoric, Shakespeare's early sonnets seem to be selfless attempts on the persona's part to convince the young friend of a more experienced vision of sexual desire—a view that sees desire in a wider frame of time than an adolescent can. In that sense each sonnet is a gesture of power directed toward two objects: toward time and toward the friend. The couplet of sonnet 15 nicely catches this complexity: "And all in war with Time for love of you/As he takes from you, I engraft you new" (15.11-12).

Many readers have noted the pun here on "engraft": it suggests the Greek root *graphein*, "to write," at the same time that it sets up the images of horticultural grafting in the next sonnet.

Shakespeare's early sonnets are an attempt to impose his vision simultaneously on time and on the friend. Despite the pun, sonnets 15 and 16 keep the two senses of "engraft" entirely separate: the poet creates, the friend procreates. The persona himself keeps his distance from sexual desire. And that is exactly where most editors and critics since Malone have tried to keep him. Then comes sonnet 20:

> A Woman's face with natures own hand painted,
> Haste thou the Master Mistris of my passion,
> A womans gentle hart but not acquainted
> With shifting change as is false womens fashion,
> An eye more bright than theirs, lesse false in rowling:
> Gilding the object where-upon it gazeth,
> A man in hew all *Hews* in his controwling,
> Which steales mens eyes and womens soules amaseth.
> And for a woman wert thou first created,
> Till nature as she wrought thee fell a dotinge,
> And by addition me of thee defeated,
> By adding one thing to my purpose nothing.
> But since she prickt thee out for womens pleasure,
> Mine be thy love and thy loves use their treasure.

With this poem four things change dramatically: the ends to which the poet speaks, the language that he uses, the imaginative setting in which he situates himself, and the self-identity he assumes.

Quite suddenly, hortatory verse starts sounding like amatory verse. A reader who is out for secrets is forced to reconsider what he or she has read already. As Pequigney argues, we can see in the first twenty sonnets a progression in which the poet's sexual feelings for the friend, held carefully in check at first, gradually emerge as the poet's real subject. Homosocial desire changes by degrees into homosexual desire. The word "love" first enters the sonnets very obliquely indeed when the poet appeals to the friend's "selfe love" as a motive for begetting progeny (3.8). In sonnet 5 love is still a property of the friend, though more ambiguously so, when the poet remarks "the lovely gaze where every eye doth dwell" (5.2). The personal significance of that word for the poet becomes increasingly clear—and increasingly physical—as he begs the friend to have a child, to create another self "for love of me" (10.13), as he ventures to call him "love" (13.1) and "deare my love" (13.11), as he goes to war with time "for love of you" (15.13), as he defies time to carve wrinkles in "my loves faire brow" (19.9), as he boasts "My love shall in

my verse ever live young" (19.14). Is "my love" in this line a name for the friend, or does it refer to the poet's feelings?

"Love" and "my love" emerge after sonnet 13 as the poet's favorite epithets for the young man. Speaking to him and speaking about him, the poet refers to the young man by that title more than twenty times. Only seven times does the poet refer to him as his "friend." "Love," "lover," and "lovely," as Booth points out, were ambiguous if not ambivalent in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century usage. They might or might not suggest sexual desire, depending on the context.[39] The context in Shakespeare's sonnets is, to say the least, equivocal. "Love," on equal terms with "mistress," is likewise how the poet speaks to and about the woman who is the subject of the 27 sonnets printed toward the end in Thorpe's edition. Only once does he call her his "friend." We have, then, two people—and three terms for talking about them. At one extreme is "mistress," with its explicitly sexual reference. At the other extreme is "friend," with its largely nonsexual reference. In between is "love," which can be sexual, or nonsexual, or both. "Two loves I have," declares the poet in sonnet 144,

> of comfort and dispaire,
> Which like two spirits do sugiest me still,
> The better angell is a man right faire:
> The worser spirit a woman collour'd il.
>
> (144.1-4)

We do no more than respect an ambiguity in early modern English if we follow Shakespeare's example and refer to the young man, not as the poet's "friend," but as his "love."

Questions about love reach a crisis—for the poet, for his readers, and presumably for the young man—in sonnet 20. The issue here is easy enough to state but not so easy to decide: is sonnet 20 a *denial* of sexual desire, or is it an *avowal*? The *literal sense* of what the poet says certainly indicates denial. "Love" versus "love's use": the terms the poet/speaker uses to draw his distinctions derive from Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. *Philia*, the highest of human bonds, is premised on the *equality* of men as one another's peer; *eros*, a lesser bond, thrives on *inequality*, on needs that each partner fulfills for the other. All of the preceding sonnets, we see in retrospect, have been arguments in an implicit debate. In effect, Shakespeare has been addressing the great question in classical ethics that is posed so often in Shakespeare's comedies about courtship: which has the greater claim

on a man, friendship with other men or sexual ties with women? The procreational images of the first nineteen sonnets would seem to place the poet/speaker of the first nineteen sonnets squarely with Daphnaeus, the spokesman in Plutarch's dialogue "Of Love" who urges Bacchon to marry. When Daphnaeus says of marriage that there is "no knot or link in the world more sacred and holy," Protogenes, the critic of women and praiser of pederasty, counters with the "higher" values of male friendship:

> This bond in trueth of wedlocke . . . as it is necessary for generation is by good right praised by Polititians and law-givers, who recommend the same highly unto the people and common multitude: but to speake of true love indeed, there is no jot or part thereof in the societie and felowship of women . . . . For amitie is an honest, civill and laudable thing: but fleshly pleasure, base, vile, and illiberal.[40]

Here is just the distinction between "love" and "love's use" that Shakespeare draws in sonnet 20. In Plutarch's dialogue, Bacchon's marriage transpires during the very time the debaters are having their argument, making their conclusion—or rather their lack of one—a moot point.

In sonnet 20 the issue is likewise left unresolved. *What* Shakespeare's speaker says is above reproach; *how* he says it has left many readers since George Steevens uneasy, whatever Edmund Malone may have said to reassure them. There is something playfully salacious about those puns on "thing" and "prick" that distinctly recalls Richard Barnfield's poems. Indeed, the whole conceit of sonnet 20, casting a male in the role most sonnets would assign to a female, recalls Barnfield's sonnet 11 ("Sighing, and sadly sitting by my Love,/He ask't the cause of my hearts sorrowing"). In Shakespeare's sonnet 20, as so often in Barnfield, sexual innuendo seems to be working at cross purposes to moral innocence. To lament that the friend has "one thing to my purpose no-thing" might seem to imply that friendship and sexual passion, "love" and "love's use," are two separate things. The tone, however, makes one wonder just what the persona's "purpose" is. Does he find other parts of the beloved's anatomy more commodious? If Shakespeare is citing Plutarch, he calls him to witness on both sides of the case.

Shakespeare's speaker may side with Plutarch's Daphneus on the issue of "love" versus "love's use," but he echoes Protogenes, Plutarch's homosexual apologist, when it comes to which kind of beauty is superior, male or female. The diptych

that sonnet 20 forms with sonnet 21 is hinged on a contrast between the young man's fresh face "with natures own hand painted" (20.1) and the "painted beauty" (21.2) that inspires the muses of most other poets. The implied contrast *within* both poems is between male and female, as it may be also *between* them. Male beauty is superior to female, according to Plutarch's Protogenes, for just the reasons Shakespeare's speaker cites: "it is not besmered with sweet ointments, nor tricked up and trimmed, but plaine and simple alwaies a man shall see it, without any intising allurements" (fol. 1133). Whatever suspicions a reader may have about the sonnet's tone are encouraged by the capitalizations and italics in Thorpe's edition. "Woman," "Master Mistris," and "*Hews*" are all tricked out as possible code words, as possible keys to a closely guarded secret that has been hinted at since "beauties *Rose*" in sonnet 1. The tone of sonnet 20, so troubling to modern readers, seems perfectly consonant with the myths we have been exploring in this book. In its social, narrative, and rhetorical contexts, sonnet 20 comes across as an extremely sophisticated version of "Come live with me and be my love."

There is a sense, then, in which the early sonnets are gestures of power not just toward time and toward the friend but toward the poet's own self: they are attempts to convince not only the friend but the persona himself that the cosmic heterosexuality exemplified in Spenser's Epithalamion has highest claims on erotic desire. They argue Elizabethan orthodoxy. For the friend, the early sonnets are poems of persuasion; for the persona, they are poems of renunciation. The whole scenario here seems uncannily similar to Barnfield's eclogues. We encounter the same pair of characters, the same implied setting, the same double sense of time, the same tension between conventional and unconventional sexualities. Like Barnfield's Daphnis toward the end of the eclogues, Shakespeare's persona in the first nineteen sonnets speaks as an older man to a younger, as experience to innocence, as disciplined desire to overpowering beauty. Both speakers counsel marriage. Implicit, perhaps, in Shakespeare's luxuriant images of flowers and trees is the pastoral landscape in which Barnfield plays out his erotic fantasies to their ultimately chaste end. There is the same sharply divided attitude toward time: both poets celebrate the pleasures of morning, of spring, of "this thy golden time," but both are just as keenly conscious of time's destructive power. Finally, both sets of poems turn on the same conflict between male-male attachments

and heterosexual passion. That is to say, Shakespeare's early sonnets, like Barnfield's eclogues and sonnets, enact the rites of wooing that make up the Myth of the Passionate Shepherd.

Sonnet 20 may be a poem of courtship, but Shakespeare does not stop there. Like Horace, but unlike most Renaissance poets who write about love, Shakespeare goes on to write about what happens when emotional desire becomes physical act. John Donne's love poems, infamous as they may be in this regard, are all about the before ("Come, Madame, come, . . . / Off with that girdle") and the after ("Busie old foole,/unruly Sunne,/Why dost thou thus,/Through windowes, and through curtaines call on us?").[41] They *imply* the physical and emotional realities of lovemaking, but they do not talk about them directly. Those emotional and physical realities are Shakespeare's very subject in the poems that succeed sonnet 20. Quite in keeping with all the other ways in which the sonnets play off experience itself against the words that would inscribe it, sexual experience in the sonnets resides largely in puns. Many of the puns that Stephen Booth has caught and cataloged occur not just once, in individual sonnets, but are sustained through the whole sequence: "have" (52.14, 87.13, 110.9-12, 129.6), "use" (2.9, 4.7, 6.5, 20.14, 40.6, 48.3, 78.3, 134.10), "will" (for male and female sexual organs as well as for sexual desire: 57.13, 112.3, 134.2, 135.passim, 136.passim, 143.13, 154.9), "pride" (for penis: 64.2, 52.12, 151.9-11), and "all" (for penis, likely by analogy with "awl": 26.8, 75.9-14, 109.13-14). As heard by Booth, the couplet to sonnet 109 embodies something more substantial than sentiment:

> For nothing this wide Universe I call,
> Save thou my Rose, in it thou art my all.
>
> (109.13-14)

"All" or "no-thing": when it comes to homosexual puns, most academic readers of Shakespeare's sonnets have insisted on the nothing. Booth gallantly tries to have it both ways, noting the possibility of homosexual doubles entendres but finding a metaphorical excuse for their presence. Of sonnet 98 ("From you have I beene absent in the spring") he says, for example:

> The language of this sonnet and of sonnet 99 ["The forward violet thus did I chide"] is full of unexploited relevance to sexual love . . . . All these senses remain dormant throughout the poem; they function only to the extent that such a concentration of potentially suggestive terms gives a vague aura of sexuality

> to the poem and thus . . . reinforces the persistent and essential analogy Shakespeare draws between the speaker's relationship with a beloved and the traditional courtly love poet's relationship with a mistress.[42]

Joseph Pequigney will have none of this. The sonnets to the young man trace the course of a sexually consummated love affair, Pequigney argues, and in the sexual puns of the sonnets about the young man, no less than in the sexual puns of the sonnets about the mistress, Shakespeare is talking about the psychological and anatomical realities of sexual love. As a record of a love affair, the sonnets about the young man tell a three-part story, with a beginning (sonnets 1-19, in which the poet falls in love), a middle (sonnets 20-99, in which the poet's passion "finds fruition in sexual acts"), and an end (sonnets 100-126, in which the poet's love wanes).[43]

In this story of wooing, winning, and ruing, the diptych of sonnets 20/21 is the turning point. Sexual puns introduced in the next several sonnets continue through the one hundred twenty-five that follow. The rite of passage from sexual innocence to sexual experience is marked ceremonially in sonnet 22 ("My glass shall not persuade me I am old/So long as youth and thou are of one date"), with its exchange of hearts from one lover's breast to the other's and its echoes of St. Paul's text on man and wife as "one flesh," appointed in the *Book of Common Prayer* to be read during the marriage rite:

> For all that beauty that doth cover thee,
> Is but the seemely rayment of my heart,
> Which in thy brest doth live, as thine in me.
> How can I then be elder then thou art?
>
> (22.5-8)

If the application of the biblical text seems metaphorical here, it persists as the subtext in all the later sonnets that imagine the friend's relations with the poet's mistress in blatantly fleshly terms, as body closing with body and shutting the poet out. The next sonnet in the sequence worries the distinction between figures of speech and things themselves until it becomes hard to say just where words give place to bodies. With its wordplay on "actor," "part," "fierce thing," "love's strength," and "decay," sonnet 23 makes us see how being (1) an actor in the theater, (2) a player of lovers' word games, (3) a writer of poems, and (4) a performer in bed are all aspects of the same thing:

As an unperfect actor on the stage,
Who with his feare is put besides his part,
Or some fierce thing repleat with too much rage,
Whose strengths abondance weakens his owne heart;
So I for fear of trust, forget to say,
The perfect ceremony of loves right,
And in mine owne loves strength seeme to decay,
Ore-charged with burthen of mine owne loves might.

(23.1-8)

The rival poet who later emerges in sonnets 78 to 86 thus poses a threat to the persona on two fronts: sexual as well as rhetorical. The nine poems in this group are packed with sexual puns on "pen," "will," "spirit," and "pride." The rival poet finds it much easier than Shakespeare's speaker/poet/lover both to make love and to make poems out of love. Alerted by sonnet 23, a reader who is looking out for secrets should be ready by the time he gets to sonnet 26 ("Lord of my love, to whome in vassalage/Thy merrit hath my dutie strongly knit") to see the puns for penis that Booth finds in "show my wit" (26.4), "all naked" (26.8), "tottered loving" (26.11), and "show my head" (26.14).[44] In this context, the linked paired formed by sonnets 27 ("Weary with toyle, I hast me to my bed") and 28 ("How can I then returne in happy plight/That am debard the benifit of rest?"), in which the friend's "shadow" (27.10) haunts the poet in his bed and keeps him from sleeping, figures as Shakespeare's version of Horace toiling in his dreams after Ligurinus. What emerges in the sonnets that follow immediately after 20/21 is not so much a narrative context as a rhetorical one: these poems invite us not only to read *between* the lines, to deduce the story that has inspired them, but in a quite particular way to read *within* the lines, to decode puns and so make ourselves privy to secrets—secrets that are specifically sexual.

Along with the shifts in sonnet 20 in purpose and in language comes a shift in the the implied world of the poems, in the imagined setting within which the persona and his two loves, male and female, play out their drama of sexual desire. The pastoral images of the first twenty sonnets are replaced by chambers and closets (46), beds (27, 142), chests (48, 52, 65), mirrors (63, 77), and clocks (57). The delights of the *locus amoenus* give way to the confidences of the bedchamber. It is in just such a setting that we often overhear Shakespeare's persona in the confessions that succeed sonnet 20. In sonnet 27 ("Weary with toyle, I hast me to my bed") the love appears to the poet in his bed "like a jewell

(hunge in ghastly night)" (27.11). The cabinet of secrets that is implicit in this conjunction of bedchamber, jewel, and the sonnet itself as secrets committed to paper is noted explicitly when the poet returns to the same scene later in the sequence. Once the persona begins to imagine his love betraying him, the love-as-jewel turns into something to be locked up, something that must be protected from theft. Setting out on a journey, the persona tells his love in sonnet 48, he carefully stowed away his valuables. But his love—"thou, to whom my jewels trifles are"—cannot be secured so easily:

Thee have I not lockt up in any chest,
Save where thou art not though I feel thou art,
Within the gentle closure of my brest,
From whence at pleasure thou maist come and part.

(48.5, 9-12)

The image here is like a figure-ground puzzle: it wavers between the figurative idea of the friend's image locked away in the persona's heart and the physical reality of his love enclosed in the persona's embrace. By sonnet 52 images of jewels and chests, of locking things up, have taken on specifically sexual meanings:

So am I as the rich whose blessed key,
Can bring him to his sweet up-locked treasure,
The which he will not ev'ry hour survay,
For blunting the fine point of seldome pleasure.

(52.1-4)

The jewels here may recall the persona's mental image of his love in sonnets 27 and 48, but the suggestion of appetite in the fourth line, the fear of "blunting the fine point of seldome pleasure," invites us to read the poem in graphically physical terms. The "sweet up-locked treasure" may be not so much an idealized image of his love as a very real part of his love's anatomy.

In this new imaginative space after sonnet 20, questions of public versus private take on an urgency that is absent entirely from the first nineteen poems. As early as sonnet 25 ("Let those who are in favor with their stars,/Of publike honour and proud titles boast") the poet sets up a contrast, often to be repeated, between worldly ostentation and the homely fact of the friends' love for one another. Not always is that separation between public and private felt so happily. Troubled imaginings in sonnet 36 ("Let me confesse that we two must be twaine,/Although our undivided loves are one") of a time when the poet may not

"acknowledge" the friend nor the friend show "publike kindnesse" to the poet seem to have less to do with the young man's possibly higher social station than with "bewailed guilt" on the part of the poet—dark hints of wrongdoing that are sounded again in sonnets 88 ("With mine owne weakenesse being best acquainted,/Upon thy part I can set downe a story/Of faults conceald" [5-7]), 89 ("Say that thou didst forsake mee for some falt,/And I will comment upon that offence"), 90 ("Then hate me when thou wilt, if ever, now,/Now while the world is bent my deeds to crosse"), 112 ("Your love and pittie doth th'impression fill,/Which vulgar scandall stampt upon my brow"), 120 ("That you were once unkind be-friends mee now"), and 121 ("Tis better to be vile then vile esteemed,/When not to be, receives reproach of being").

After the persona's first avowal of sexual desire in sonnet 20, we would expect, according to the progression of myths we have been following in this book, a moral or legal intervention, on the part of the poet's conscience if not from some other person. Even Barnfield, for all his salacious imaginings, lays aside his illicit desires for the "higher" concerns of epic poetry—and for marriage. In Shakespeare's sonnets no such thing happens. We hear nothing about moral reservations. No thought of the law provokes fear. In the course of his self-confessions after sonnet 20 Shakespeare's speaker struggles with problems of authority, to be sure, but those problems have nothing to do with moral philosophy or the law. They concern instead authority in being the lover of another man and authority in writing about homosexual love.

The familiar, even complacent role the poet enjoys in the first nineteen sonnets ends abruptly after sonnets 20/21: to declare homosexual desire—and to *act* on it—changes everything. Conventional structures of ideology and power explode; the fragile proprieties of the first nineteen poems are shattered. In the early sonnets power is all on the persona's side. His age, his experience, above all his powers as a poet put him in command of the situation at hand. Both the sonnet as a medium and orthodox heterosexuality as the message are firmly under his control. As long as he plays the sage older friend, it is he who is doing the acting; the young friend's role is to react. Admitting his passion changes all that. "I" and "you" no longer have their comfortable separate identity. The poet who doubts his own abilities in sonnet 23 ("As an unperfect actor on the stage") is quite another person from the poet who confidently went to war with time in

sonnet 15 ("When I consider every thing that growes,/Holds in perfection but a little moment"). Critics customarily speak of the young man as the poet's "friend," but the perplexed relationship described in the sonnets after 20/21 is anything but Aristotle's *philia*, with its easy mutuality between men who are equals.

Different from the first nineteen poems in the relationship they imply between speaker and listener, the love sonnets to the young man differ just as much from the sonnets about the mistress. The frustrated idealism of sonnets 20 through 126 stands in the sharpest possible contrast to the resigned cynicism of the sonnets addressed to the so-called "dark lady." Many of the latter have, indeed, something of Horace's genial urbanity about them. "Therefore I lye with her, and she with me,/And in our faults by lyes we flattered be" (138.12-14): for all their cynicism, sonnets 127 to 154 communicate a mutuality, a sensual understanding between speaker and listener, that so often is painfully not the case in sonnets 20 through 126. Shakespeare devotes 126 highly varied sonnets to the young man and only 28 alternately affable and sarcastic sonnets to the mistress for the same reason that the fourth- and fifth-century Greeks devoted so much more attention in their philosophical writings to the love between men and boys than to the love between men and women: in each case it was the bond between male and male that seemed the more complicated and problematic.[45] Once Shakespeare's poet has declared his passion, the rhetoric of friendship no longer seems adequate. Rapture, jealousy, self-advertisement, self-denigration: the shifting moods and shifting roles of sonnets 20 through 126 run absolutely counter to Renaissance ideas of friendship. Apologists for the sonnets as testimonials to friendship have not read their Aristotle, Cicero, and Montaigne.

Lacking a ready-made rhetoric, Shakespeare's poet has to find his own. With respect to social class, gender, and the rest of society the poet keeps positioning and repositioning himself and the young man he calls "love." The fact that the youth is addressed several times as if he were a nobleman, while Shakespeare himself was at best an upstart gentleman, has been seized upon by all the detectives in pursuit of "Mr. W. H." More important than the friend's actual social status, however, is how the persona uses the language of social difference: he subjectifies it and ironizes it. When the object of his passion was female, a male poet in early modern England faced no such existential problems. He did not have to choose what to say, only how to say it. In sonnet 106 Shakespeare's poet casts himself in the con-

ventional poet's role, as a pillager of the past, as a browser through old manuscripts who puts dusty clichés to fresh uses:

> When in the Chronicle of wasted time,
> I see discriptions of the fairest wights,
> And beautie making beautifull old rime,
> In praise of Ladies dead, and lovely Knights,
> Then in the blazon of sweet beauties best,
> Of hand, of foote, of lip, of eye, of brow,
> I see their antique Pen would have exprest,
> Even such a beauty as you maister now.
>
> (106.1-8)

In "old rimes" it is "Ladies," not "lovely Knights," who are customarily the object of the poet's attentions. If we have let ourselves be seduced by the rhetoric of courtly love, we may be a little startled by the last line of these two glib quatrains, by the incongruity between that distinctly odd verb "master" and the conventional "beauty" that is its syntactical object. Here, in fact, is the same arch tone, the same playful teasing about gender that we encountered in sonnet 20. Is there a pun on that capitalized "Pen" that parallels sonnet 20's pun on "prick"?

"Master Mistris": ambiguities of syntax in that epithet in sonnet 20 are bound up with ambiguities of power in the sonnets as a whole. Are the two words in apposition? Is it "master-mistress" with a hyphen? The line is then a kind of in-joke between persona and friend, as the persona quips about the young man's gender. Is one word subordinated, grammatically and sexually, to the other? Is the young man "the *master* mistress of my passion," as opposed to the persona's "lesser" mistress, the woman of sonnets 127 to 154? The line in that case becomes a witty compliment of the sort the persona has been serving up in the previous nineteen poems, but it also foreshadows the dark jealousies of persona-love-mistress as a *ménage à trois*. If we bite Thomas Thorpe's bait and accept "W. H." as a cipher for the young man addressed in these poems, it is worth remembering that the abbreviation "Mr." in late sixteenth-century orthography more likely stands for "Master" than "Mister."

Whichever way we read the phrase, the word "master" points up the reversal of meaning that has overtaken the word "mistress" since the Middle Ages. In the context of courtly love "mistress" originally designated the lady as a setter of tasks for her servant-knight. By Shakespeare's time, however, the word had taken on the specifically sexual meaning of "a woman who illic-

itly occupies the place of wife" (OED 11)—and with that meaning all the Judeo-Christian assumptions about the husband as "head" of the wife (Ephesians 5:22-23). The earliest citations in the *Oxford English Dictionary* all occur in contemptuous contexts that see compliant woman as a source of pleasure for predatory man. Mistress Quickly fails to make the OED, but the title fits her perfectly. The difference between the literal and the secondary meanings of the word "mistress" turns, indeed, on whether the lady has granted sexual favors or not. If she holds off, she remains in control, a "mistress" in the original courtly sense; if she gives in to the suitor's desires, she gives up her power and becomes a "mistress" in the secondary sexual sense. Questions of power are neatly decided by the question of sex or no sex.

If *Paradise Lost* celebrates the fortunate fall, Petrarchan sonnets celebrate the fortunate refusal. At first glance, the scenario of suitor prostrate before his mistress would seem to give all the power to the lady. She, after all, has the prerogative of saying no. That much is only natural. Among animals at least, it is females that do the choosing of sexual partners. There is a very good biological reason why that should be the case: in the great scheme of things sperm are plentiful, eggs are scarce. The physical consequences of sexual activity are much more serious for a female animal than for a male. Females have a right to be choosy.[46] From the social games they played if not from the observations they made of animals, Renaissance sonneteers seem to have recognized this basic fact about rituals of courtship. At the very beginning of the sonnet tradition, in Dante's *La Vita Nuova*, we discover a fundamental anomaly: the poet may be firmly in control of his medium, but he is not in control of the lady. The medium becomes, then, a way of extending control from poem to person. A sonnet shows us poetry in just the terms that Renaissance critics like Sidney and Puttenham best understood it: as a species of oratory, an art of persuasion.[47] It is a strategem on the suitor's part to bend the lady's will to his own. It is a male's attempt to defy the dictates of biology. It is Art's revenge on Nature.

The lady may have the prerogative of saying no, but, for the persona at least, her power stops there. In holding off she in fact gives the male speaker just the opportunity he needs to celebrate his own prowess: to make a public display of his feelings, to show off his ingenuity as a poet, to turn the woman with her disconcerting *otherness* into a managable image in a poem. The dramatic conventions of the Renaissance sonnet grant the lady a

reality only as an object of the male persona's desires. "Look into thy heart and write": Sidney's advice to himself indicates just where the writer's interest—and the reader's—lies, not on the lady but on the suitor. The poet, not the mistress, is the *subject*, in every sense of the word. Seen in its rhetorical context, a Petrarchan sonnet is a power ploy of speaker over listener; seen in its social context, it is a power-ploy of a man over a woman; seen in its sexual context, it is power-ploy of male over female. Change the gender of the listener from female to male, and all of the delicate alliances of feeling, ideology, and power are called into question. "Master Mistris": Shakespeare's yoking together of those two words reminds us that there is no real equivalent in English for a man as a lover of a man. "Master" comes with all the suggestion of superior power that "mistress" implies, but with none of the suggestion of sexual subjection. In a relationship between two men, of what use are the conventional terms "master" and "mistress"? Who exercises power over whom?

If the rhetoric of courtly love fails him, Shakespeare's poet is equally dissatisfied with the roles assigned to lovers by the Myth of Master and Minion. "Lord of my love," the persona addresses the friend in sonnet 26, "to whome in vassalage/Thy merrit hath my dutie strongly knit." Only when the friend returns some mark of favor will the persona "boast how I doe love thee" (26.1-2, 13). So humble is the persona's posture that one might take sonnet 26 as an exercise in polite convention, as an appeal for money perhaps or as a cover letter for other poems, if the persona did not elsewhere present himself even more abjectly—and even more sarcastically. Sonnet 57 asks in mock-sincerity,

> Being your slave what should I doe but tend,
> Upon the houres, and times of your desire?
> I have no precious time at al to spend;
> No services to doe til you require.
>
> (57.1-4)

If we trust our ears, we may suspect that the nature of those "services" is sexual. Sixteenth-century pronunciation facilitates a pun on "hours"/"whores" (the friend may require such services from other retainers besides the speaker), spending time "at all" can be read as a noun as well as an adverb, and "to do" is one of the sonnets' commonest circumlocutions for "the act of genera-

tion." Sonnet 58 continues the conceit of vassal/slave—and the pun on "hour" that renders it sexual:

> That God forbid, that made me first your slave,
> I should in thought controule your times of pleasure
> Or at your hand th'account of houres to crave,
> Being your vassail bound to staie your leisure.
>
> (58.1-4)

With the same edge of irony sonnet 110 ("Alas 'tis true, I have gone here and there,/And made my selfe a motley to the view") casts the friend as "a God in love" to whom the persona is "confin'd" as a votary (110.12). The persona is at his most vulnerable, perhaps, in sonnet 94 ("They that have powre to hurt, and will doe none"). His willingness to put down his guard, to give himself up to his love's frightening power, seems all the more remarkable when compared with the persona's self-containment in the first nineteen sonnets. One hears in sonnets 26, 57-58, and 94 proof of Sir William Cornwallis's warning in his essay "Of Friendship and Factions": "That part of Friendship which commaunds secrets I would not have delivered too soone, this is the precioussest thing you can give him, for thereby you make your selfe his prisoner."[48] In other sonnets the poet tries on the roles of lord and vassal the other way around. During love-making (if we grant "have" its sexual force) it is the persona who plays the monarch: "Thus have I had thee as a dreame doth flatter,/In sleepe a King, but waking no such matter" (87.13-14). And in 114 the persona wonders whether he always puts the best appearance on whatever his love has done because, "being crown'd with you," his mind "doth . . . drinke up the monarks plague this flattery" (114.1-2).

On other occasions, in other moods, Shakespeare's poet turns from the political roles of lord/vassal and vassal/lord to roles inscribed by the family. Is there something of the father, as well as the friend, in the persona who speaks in sonnets 1 through 19? That role is implicit later on, in paired sonnets 33 ("Full many a glorious morning have I seene,/Flatter the mountaine tops with soveraine eie" and 34 ("Why didst thou promise such a beautious day"), both of which turn on a pun between "Sun" and "son." In general, however, the heavy mantle of father does not rest well on the speaker's shoulders after sonnet 20. Being older and wiser serves his purpose as long as he is emotionally disengaged, but once he has given in to desire years and experi-

ence become a cause for regret. Among the most bitter of the sonnets is 37, in which the persona looks at his love's sexual exploits "as a decrepit father takes delight/To see his active childe do deeds of youth" (37.1-2).

If not friend and friend, if not knight and lady, if not master and minion, if not father and son, who *are* the lovers to one another? A more complicated tie than all the rest is implied in sonnet 82. Complaining about the rival poet who has threatened his sovereignty since sonnets 20/21, Shakespeare's poet concedes,

> I Grant thou wert not married to my Muse,
> And therefore maiest without attaint ore-looke
> The dedicated words which writers use,
> Of their faire subject, blessing every booke.
>
> (82.1-4)

It may, in this instance, be the gender of the poet's muse that inspires an allusion to marriage, but in other sonnets the poet needs no such excuse. "So shall I live, supposing thou art true,/Like a deceived husband" (93.1-2), he confesses in sonnet 93. The poet as husband and his love as wife keep their metaphorical identities through the whole sonnet, until they acquire truly mythic dimensions at the end: "How like *Eaves* apple doth thy beauty grow,/If thy sweet vertue answere not thy show" (93.13-14). In the very next poem the roles are reversed. As a gesture of submission, as an act of obeisance spoken in third person, as a return to the argument of the earliest sonnets in urging the poet's love to "husband natures ritches from expence," sonnet 94 implicitly casts the *love* as husband and the *poet* as wife. Sonnet 97 ("How like a Winter hath my absence beene") seems to do the same, as the poet contrasts "the teeming Autumne big with ritch increase" with his own feelings of sterility and emptiness:

> Yet this aboundant issue seem'd to me,
> But hope of Orphans, and un-fathered fruite,
> For Sommer and his pleasures waite on thee,
> And thou away, the very birds are mute.
>
> (97.5-8)

In the metaphors of sonnets 82, 93, 94, and 97 we find overt expression of a subtext that Stephen Booth sees running through the whole sequence. The paradox avowed in sonnet 36 ("Let me

confesse that we two must be twaine,/Although our undevided loves are one") and affirmed in the exchange of hearts and the sharing of one identity in sonnets 22, 34, 39, 42, 62, 109, 134, and 135 is the very mystery that makes a sacrament of human marriage. "Ye husbands love your wives, even as Christ loved the Church and hath given himself for it": St. Paul's words in Ephesians 5:25-33 were appointed in the Elizabethan *Book of Common Prayer* to be read at the end of the marriage rite when there was to be no sermon.

> For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This mystery is great, but I speak of Christ and the congregation. Nevertheless, let every one of you so love his own wife, even as himself.[49]

St. Paul may have been talking primarily about a religious mystery; the 1559 *Book of Common Prayer* is quite explicit—much more explicit than its twentieth-century counterpart—in talking about the mysteries of sex. Matrimony, the priest says in his greeting,

> is not to be enterprised nor taken in hand unadvisedly, lightly, or wantonly, to satisfy men's carnal lusts and appetites, like brute beasts that have no understanding, but reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God, duly considering the causes for which matrimony was ordained.
>
> (p. 290)

Of those three causes—procreation, avoiding fornication, and giving "mutual society, help, and comfort" (pp. 290-291)—the first two are concerned with sex. After such a preamble, one can understand why the spiritual metaphor of "one flesh" in Ephesians 5 would have such physical force, why listeners like Shakespeare would find it easier to remember the fleshly vehicle than the spiritual tenor. It is Ephesians 5, and "The Form of Solemnization of Matrimony" in which it is embedded, that provides the context for one of Shakespeare's most famous sonnets. "Let me not to the marriage of true mindes/Admit impediments": sonnet 116 is an implicit answer to what the priest is instructed to say before anything else to the man and the woman who have presented themselves for marriage:

> I require and charge you (as you will answer at the dreadful day of judgment, when the secrets of all hearts shall be dis-

> closed) that if either of you do know any impediment why ye may not be lawfully joined together in matrimony, that ye confess it.
>
> (p. 291)

One word of the priest's charge, "impediment," sounds out in sonnet 116. Two other words, "secrets" and "confess," inspire the sonnets as a whole. Like the marriage of man and wife in the *Book of Common Prayer*, "The marriage of true minds" in sonnet 116 may have a physical as well as a spiritual aspect. "True minds" can mean not only the true "affections" (OED II.15.b) that readers conventionally find in the phrase, but the true "intentions" (OED II.14) of two people who present themselves for marriage before a priest. Only twice in the sonnets addressed to the mistress does Shakespeare's poet make even the remotest allusion to these marriage texts from the *Book of Common Prayer*.[50]

What we can observe in the course of the first 126 sonnets is, then, a constantly shifting attempt on Shakespeare's part to bring structures of ideology and structures of power into the kind of viable alignment with feeling that we find in more conventional love poetry. In the sonnets Shakespeare seeks to speak about homosexual desire with the same authority that Petrarch assumes in speaking about heterosexual desire. In pursuit of that end Shakespeare invokes three different modes of discourse: Horace's language of erotic experience, the traditional language of courtly love, and the language of Christian marriage. On very few points are those three languages in accord. Shakespeare's sonnets to the young man not only record what happens between the speaker and his love; the sonnets also play out the conflicts and inconsistences in the conventional ways the poet has for explaining what happens—to himself, to his love, to us as sharers of his sexual secrets. Shakespeare's sonnets test the limits of the love sonnet as a genre. In the hands of other sixteenth-century poets, sonnets serve to confirm those interlocking structures of power and ideology—and feeling—that define Renaissance heterosexuality. In testing the soundness of those structures Shakespeare tests also the verse form in which the structures that define sexuality are turned into words and are made accessible to the imagination. To take the terms of courtly love and Christian marriage and apply them to a subject to which they do not conventionally belong is to force a reexamination of both the terms and the subject. Society may dictate the terms, but the use to which Shakespeare has put those terms is a

radical choice. The result is, or can be, something *new*. In *Shake-speares Sonnets. Never before Imprinted.* we have an exercise in the "conditioned and conditional freedom" held out by Pierre Bourdieu's idea of social *habitus*. Out of the already tried "strategies" open to him as a writer, out of the "matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions" that he shared with his contemporaries, Shakespeare improvised a new form of discourse.[51] It will not do to say that Shakespeare's sonnets cannot be about homosexual desire since no one else in early modern England addressed homosexual desire in just these terms.

Using a new imaginative vocabulary to talk about an old subject brings Shakespeare to a conclusion altogether different from that of poets in other sequences of sonnets. Traditional sonnet sequences control sexual desire by transcending it: caught up in an impossible conflict between his own hot desire and the lady's cold disdain, the Petrarchan poet turns desire into art and lover's lust into philosopher's zeal. Only Spenser manages to have it both ways by actually marrying the lady in question. In the matter of closure, as in everything else, Shakespeare's sonnets present an anomaly. How critics read the ending seems to depend very much on how they have been filling in the narrative gaps along the way. C. S. Lewis speaks for older, idealistic critics when he singles out sonnet 144 ("Two loves I have of comfort and dispaire") and sees a psychomachia between Comfort and Despair going on through all the poems. The sequence ends "by expressing simply love, the quintessence of all loves whether erotic, parental, filial, amicable, or feudal."[52] From a psychoanalytical point of view C. L. Barber and Richard P. Wheeler find special significance in sonnet 114 ("Or whether doth my minde being crown'd with you/Drinke up the monarks plague this flattery?") and its articulation of the persona's hard-won "self-*regard*, with all that implies as against entire dependence on the regard of the friend."[53] For Pequigney the sonnets' end is the affair's end. The two pairs of parentheses that take the place of a final couplet in the quarto printing of sonnet 126 ("O Thou my lovely Boy who in thy power,/Doest hould time's fickle glasse[,] his sickle, hower") are, Pequigney proposes, pregnant with meaning. They imply that "the poet is entering upon a course of gradual detachment or falling out of love. The parenthetical message might then be translated, 'the rest is silence.'"[54] Showing how rhetorical devices in the poems serve to communicate psychological states, Heather Dubrow compares the last two poems printed in the quarto, verses whose ultimate inspira-

tion is not Petrarch but Anacreon, with the Epithalamium that Spenser puts at the end of the *Amoretti*. In both cases the reader encounters a shift in genre and a stepping back from the intense emotionality of the earlier poems. But the subject of sonnets 153 ("*Cupid* laid by his brand and fell a sleepe") and 154 ("The little Love-God lying once a sleepe,/Laid by his side his heart inflaming brand") is "the very impossibility of achieving distance from love and the inaccessibility of any finality, any cure." Perhaps, then, there *is* no closure.[55]

If, on the other hand, we look at the poems as an attempt to read homosexual experience in the idiom of courtly love and according to the ideals of Christian marriage, the volume of *Shake-speares Sonnets* ends by making us realize, and feel, the void between sexual experience and the metaphors we have to talk about it. "O Thou my lovely Boy": the poet's parting gesture toward the lover whose fickleness has caused him such anguish is to give up the whole enterprise, to fall back on a cant term, to look at sodomy from the outside and to see it as an act of aggression. The fact that Shakespeare's poet takes the power on himself makes the ending all the bleaker. Once he took up arms against Time in defense of the young man's beauty. Now he joins forces with Nature, "soveraine mistress over wrack" (126.5), in envisioning the young man's destruction. "O thou minnion of her pleasure," he sneers as he gives up the struggle and lays down his pen (126.9). Here is anything but the "mutuall render onely me for thee" (125.12) that the poet has desired and the lover has refused. The other person, Shakespeare's poet discovers, remains an*other* person, forever fugitive from all attempts to fix him in imagination. We come away from the sonnets with a sense that the conflicts of ideology and power are never really resolved. Horatian odes, Petrarchan sonnets, the Christian marriage rite: none of these can tell the whole truth about sex. Out of all the homosexualities studied in this book, the homosexuality inscribed in Shakespeare's sonnets is the most compelling because it is not end-stopped. The enjambment of Shakespeare's lines with life continues even when we have come to the sonnets' end.

What is *not* cast aside at the end of the sonnets is the fact of sexual desire. In this respect the Myth of the Secret Sharer is different from all the other modes of poetic discourse in this book. If these myths do not close with an absolute denial of homosexual desire, as with The Shipwrecked Youth and Knights in Shifts, they end with the isolation of the hero who persists in

acknowledging that desire. One thinks of Antonio in the Myth of Combatants and Comrades, of Virgil's Corydon and his English-speaking imitators in The Passionate Shepherd, of Edward II in Master and Minion. "Me neither woman now, nor boy doth move,/Nor a too credulous hope of mutuall love": if by the end Shakespeare's persona finds himself in the position of Horace's urbane lover, he does so not for any of the reasons that isolate the other heroes. It is not structures of power or structures of ideology, social disapproval or moral dogma, that set him apart, but problems of authority. He is alone in his subjectivity. Like Montaigne, Shakespeare remains acutely aware, as none of his English contemporaries seem to be, that sexuality is something we can know only "in circumlocution and picture." It is this self-conscious subjectivity that puts the Myth of the Secret Sharer closest of all six myths to our own experience of sexual desire in the twentieth century.

With Shakespeare's sonnets the several progressions outlined in chapter 1 come to an end. From the universal ways of expressing male bonding in human society that we surveyed in chapter 2 we have arrived at an eroticized form of male bonding specific to the culture of early modern England. The sexual potentiality in male bonding, steadily mounting through the sequence of six myths, reaches a literal and figurative climax in Shakespeare's sonnets. Devious metamorphoses of desire in the first five myths end in the confidences of the Secret Sharer. When homosexual desire has become its own explicit subject, we have completed the move, in social terms, from license to licentiousness. We have moved also from public ways of playing out homosexual desire to private ways, and from forms of symbolic discourse that were "legible" to all early modern Englishmen, illiterate and literate alike, to forms of discourse that were accessible only to a small, highly sophisticated readership. In psychological terms, that narrowing of social focus entails a move from conscious control of sexual desire toward greater daring and risk, not only politically but artistically. In the Myth of the Secret Sharer we witness the invention of a new mode of discourse about homosexual desire where none existed before. In chronological terms, finally, we have moved from seasonal rituals that antedate written records to an experience of sexual desire that seems distinctively modern. Our survey has extended from expressions of desire that were current throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to one that is highly idiosyncratic to its author and to its historical moment. Shakespeare's sonnets

could not have been written thirty years earlier. Thirty years later they were not being understood.

It would be nice to end this book on a triumphant note, to celebrate the fact that Shakespeare, once and for all, broke through the cultural constraints of his time in portraying homosexual desire with such candor and subtlety. Sadly, that is not case. Shakespeare may have subverted the sexual rules of early modern English society, but most writers and readers have not been able to follow him in that act of rebellion. The anomalous quality of Shakespeare's sonnets seems to have been apparent from the very beginning. References to them among contemporary readers are in fact few; transcriptions into commonplace books are rare; imitations by other poets are almost nonexistent. The 1609 first printing was apparently enough to satisfy demand until 1640, when John Benson published *Poems written by Wil. Shakespeare Gent.*[56] To produce a marketable commodity Benson tried several ways of bringing Shakespeare's sonnets in line with Caroline taste. First, he rearranged them, so that any sense of an underlying plot is destroyed. Next, he supplied many of the sonnets with a title (e.g., Sonnet 122, "Upon the receit of a Table Booke from *his Mistris*"), turning each poem into a little move in the game of courtly love, into a conventional task that the poet has set for himself. Other sonnets he regrouped under thematic headings: "The glory of beautie," "Injurious Time," "True Admiration," to take the first three. Sonnets treating the same theme he sometimes printed continuously, sometimes singly, so as to give an impression of formal variety. From *The Passionate Pilgrim* he incorporated Shakespeare's verses from *Love's Labours Lost* as well as poems attributed to Shakespeare but assigned today to other writers. Finally, Benson changed certain of the masculine pronouns to feminine. Given Benson's other manipulations of Shakespeare's text, it is surprising how seldom this radical editing is necessary. In addition to sonnet 122, he supplies misleading titles for sonnet 125 ("An entreatie for her acceptance") and sonnets 113-114-115 (printed continuously as "Selfe flattery of her beautie"). In effect, Benson depersonalizes and "de-privatizes" the poems, turning the "I" who speaks them into a generic type, into a universal Lover. The object of this Lover's desires becomes an equally unspecific Mistress. The success of Benson's editing can be witnessed in a copy of *Poems written by Wil. Shakespeare Gent.* now in the Folger Shakespeare Library. Manuscript notes in an almost contemporary hand amplify the spirit

of the editor's own emendations. Benson's title for sonnet 20 ("The exchange") was not quite enough, however, to explain away all the paradoxes of the "master mistress." The seventeenth-century owner of the Folger volume was clearly puzzled—until he (or she) decided that the poet must have settled his affections on a most unusual lady. "The M^{ris} Masculine" reads the owner's clarification.

All in all, Benson's Shakespeare would have been quite at home on the shelf next to Edmund Waller. That was just the form in which readers of the sonnets, such readers as there were, encountered the text until George Steevens reprinted the 1609 quarto more than a century later, in 1766. Steevens's disgust at sonnet 20 has been noted already. Edmond Malone's edition of 1790, with its reassuring remarks on what was "customary" in Elizabethan England, helped to ease such doubts. With his full critical apparatus of preface and notes, Malone reinstated the "I" who had been obliterated by Benson—but in a guise that was acceptable to the middle-class readers of late eighteenth-century England.[57] By and large, that is still the guise in which most readers imagine the persona today. To us, the poet of Shakespeare's sonnets may seem much more sophisticated psychologically and rhetorically than he did to Malone, but the "I" who speaks in these poems has never quite shed the middle-class values that Malone attributed to him in 1790. It was with thanks to Malone that Wordsworth could say of the sonnets, "With this key Shakespeare unlocked his heart," and open up these formerly closed texts to Romantic and post-Romantic readers, who imagine the persona of the sonnets to be just such a person as themselves. Until they were taken in hand by Malone, Shakespeare's sonnets were "marginal" texts like those that feminist critics of the past twenty years have been excavating and rehabilitating, or in many cases habilitating for the first time. We don't have to rediscover Shakespeare's sonnets as texts, but we do have to rediscover them in their sixteenth-century cultural context, as discourses of homosexual desire. Malone, and most readers after him, have not been quite so outspoken as Steevens in their responses to the sexual subject of the sonnets. Instead, they have quietly contrived to *contain* these poems, not within the culture of sixteenth-century England, but within their own culture's ways of understanding the relationship between male bonding and homosexual desire. The most recent is Joel Fineman, who argues that Shakespeare uses the *rhetoric* of Plato-

nizing homosexual desire to create a thoroughly heterosexual subjectivity.

Benson's edition of 1640 is a sign that the cultural moment of Shakespeare's sonnets had passed, that the ambivalent alliances between male bonding and sexual desire that demanded such sensitive and varied treatment in poetic discourse was beginning to assume the schematic opposition that finally emerged as social dogma in the late eighteenth century and has remained in effect until today: a supposition that male bonding and male homosexuality are opposites, not different aspects of the same psychological and social phenomenon. Shakespeare's sonnets address the connection between male bonding and male homosexuality with a candor that most readers, most male readers at least, have not been willing to countenance. If that connection now seems clearer, this book will have done in a small way what Shakespeare's sonnets did so much more expansively in the sixteenth century: out of already familiar characters and plots, ideas and feelings it will have created a more liberally imagined world for one of the many modes of human sexual desire.

widely printed, and widely translated compendium *De casibus virorum illustrium* (1358), in which the lives of history's famous men are shown, one by one, to have followed the turning of Fortune's wheel. On the importance of Boccaccio's model to English tragedy see J. M. R. Margeson, *The Origins of English Tragedy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), pp. 85-111.

32. Friedrich Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art* (1835), trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 2:1196: "a single action will under certain circumstances realize an aim or a character which is one-sidedly isolated in its complete determinacy, and therefore . . . will necessarily rouse against it the opposed 'pathos' and so lead to inevitable conflicts. The original essence of tragedy consists then in the fact that within such a conflict each of the opposed sides, if taken by itself, has *justification;* while each can establish the true and positive content of its own aim and character only by denying and infringing the equally justified power of the other. The consequence is that in its moral life, and because of it, each is nevertheless involved in *guilt.*"

33. Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1980), pp. 193-221. "Marlowe's protagonists rebel against orthodoxy, but they do not do so just as they please; their acts of negation not only conjure up the order they would destroy but seem at times to be themselves conjured up by that very order" (p. 210, echoing Karl Marx in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte,* "Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please").

CHAPTER SEVEN

1. Horace, Odes 4.1.29-40, trans. Henry Rider in *All the Odes and Epodes of Horace* (London, 1638), pp. 93-94. Selected odes had been translated and published by John Ashmore in 1621, but the homoerotic poems are not among them. On Horace's reputation and influence in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries see Gilbert Highet, *The Classical Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1949), pp. 244-250, and Valerie Edden, "'The Best of Lyrick Poets,'" in *Horace*, ed. C. D. N. Costa (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), pp. 135-159.

2. T. W. Baldwin reaches this conclusion by noting that Shakespeare's allusions to Horace incorporate elements of Lambin's commentary. See *William Shakspere's Small Latine & Lesse Greeke* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1944), 2:497-525.

3. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, ed. Stephen Booth (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1977). In addition to a lightly edited text Booth provides a facsimile of the 1609 quarto and a full commentary. In that commentary sexual puns figure prominently.

4. *In Q. Horatium Flaccum . . . Commentarii*, ed. Denys Lambin (Frankfurt: Andreas Wechel, 1577), 1:214: "posteaquam multis verbis ostendit, se iam ad amorem esse ineptum, atque (ut ita dicam) mancum, denique iudicio tandem, ac voluntate ab huiusmodi deliciis, ineptiis, ac

nequitiis abhorrere: nunc vi amoris coactus fatetur se, quamvis aetate iam ingravescente a tali mollitie, ac nequitia remotissimus esse debeat, amore Ligurini pueri incensum tamen ad pristinas lascivias revocari." The copy of Wechel's edition now in the Alderman Library of the University of Virginia was once owned by Philemon Holland, the translator into English of Plutarch's *Moralia* and Suetonius's *Lives of the Caesars*.

5. Christoforo Landino and Hermanus Figulus in *Quincti Horatii Flacii Venusini, Poetae Lyrici elegantis, Opera* (Basel: Henricus Petrus, 1580), cols. 801, 798-799. Earlier editions had been published by Petrus in 1545, 1555, and 1570. Among the commentators who pass over passages like this in silence is Henri Etienne. Cf. Horace, *Opera*, ed. Henri Etienne, 2d ed. (Paris: Henri Etienne, 1588), p. 90.

6. The remarks of Steevens and Malone are quoted by Joseph Pequigney, *Such Is My Love: A Study of Shakespeare's Sonnets* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1985), pp. 30-31. For an overview of how "The Question of Homosexuality" was addressed by critics during the nineteenth century and the earlier part of the twentieth century, see Shakespeare, *The Sonnets*, ed. Hyder Rollins, New Variorum Ed. (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1944), 2:232-239. Stephen Booth begs the question by quipping, "William Shakespeare was almost certainly homosexual, bisexual, or heterosexual. The sonnets provide no evidence on the matter" (*Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 548).

7. The grudging agreement that Pequigney's book has received is typified by Robert M. Adams's review in *The New York Review of Books*, 33 (1986): 50: "This is certainly a book that had to be written, that will make impossible any return to the old vague euphemisms, but that, after reading, one will be glad to keep distant in one's memory if one wants to enjoy the sonnets themselves—which also, by their sustained rhetoric, distance the very topics that Pequigney wants to lift into the foreground."

8. Quoted in Pequigney, *Such Is My Love*, pp. 79-80.

9. C.L. Barber and Richard P. Wheeler, *The Whole Journey: Shakespeare's Power of Development* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1986), p. 171: "The sonnets to the mistress make clear that genital relationship with her was crucial, if conflictual. W. H. Auden, a particularly trustworthy witness in this matter, mocked the eager claims of 'the Homintern' on the Sonnets; he described the love for the young man as 'mystical' and observed that such passionate devotion, enthralled by a special type of mortal beauty, rarely survives physical union."

10. Heather Dubrow, *Captive Victors: Shakespeare's Narrative Poems and Sonnets* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1986), pp. 171-190.

11. Michel Foucault, *The History of Homosexuality, 1: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon, 1978): 63. See also Antony Easthope's brilliant application of Foucault's ideas in "Foucault, Ovid, Donne: Versions of Sexuality, Ancient and Modern" in *Poetry and Phantasy* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1989), pp. 47-62.

12. First suggested by Philippe Ariès, these are the three causes isolated and studied by various authors in *A History of Private Life*, vol. 3: *The Passions of the Renaissance*, ed. Roger Chartier, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1989). On the three forces individually see Yves Castan, "Politics and Private Life," pp. 21-67; François Lebrun, "The Two Reformations: Communal Devotion and Personal Piety," pp. 69-109; and Roger Chartier, "The Practical Impact of Writing," pp. 111-159.

13. Orest Ranum, "The Refuges of Intimacy," in *A History of Private Life*, 3:207-263. Other sites include walled gardens like the one that figures in Simon Foreman's erotic dream about Queen Elizabeth. (See chapter 1, above.)

14. *The Diary of Sir Simonds D'Ewes 1622-1624*, ed. Elisabeth Bourcier (Paris: Didier, 1974), p. 92. The occasion of this sharing of secrets, and the secrets themselves, are described in chapter 5, above.

15. In addition to the illustration on page 226, see examples pictured in the Victoria and Albert Museum handbook on *English Cabinets* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1972). Such pieces of furniture were not restricted to rich people. A simple wooden version, its surface painted to look like fancy inlay work, is in the collection of the Agecroft Hall museum, Richmond, Virginia.

16. *The Diary of Sir Simonds D'Ewes*, p. 93.

17. Patricia Fumerton, "'Secret' Arts: Elizabethan Miniatures and Sonnets," rpt. in *Representing the English Renaissance*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1988), pp. 93-133.

18. Anne Ferry, *The "Inward" Language: Sonnets of Wyatt, Sidney, Shakespeare, Donne* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1983), pp. 1-30.

19. According to Ann Baynes Coiro, "Seventeenth-Century Commonplace Books and the Structure of Poetic Sequences" (paper delivered at the annual meeting of the Modern Language Association, December 1989), the 1620s and '30s witnessed, not the decline of manuscript culture that we might expect from the proliferation of printed books in the seventeenth century, but a fresh flourishing. With the rise of Puritan political power, manuscript culture acquired a distinctly royalist identity, especially in Oxford colleges. Coiro's argument was confirmed by Arthur F. Marotti, "The Poetry of Feargod Barbon, Edward Bannister, Nicholas Burghe, Peter Calfe, Sir Humphrey Coningsby, Margaret Douglas, John Finet, Lewison Fitzjames, John Lilliat, Andrew Ramsey, John Ramsey, Richard Roberts, William Skipwith, Henry Stanford, Thomas Wenman, and Others" (paper delivered at the annual meeting of the Modern Language Association, December 1989).

20. Francis Meres, *Palladis Tamia. Wits Treasury* (1598): "As the soule of *Euphorbus* was thought to live in *Pythagoras*: so the sweete wittie soule of *Ovid* lives in mellifluous & hony-tongued *Shakespeare*, witnes his *Venus* and *Adonis*, his *Lucrece*, his sugred Sonnets among his private friends, etc." Reprinted in C. M. Ingleby, *et al.*, *The Shakespere Allusion-Book: A Collection of Allusions to Shakespere from 1591 to 1700*, ed. John

Munro (London: Chatto & Windus, 1909), 1:46.

21. Sonnet 77, line 3 in *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, ed. Stephen Booth (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1977), p. 69. All my quotations from the sonnets are transcribed in the original orthography from the facsimile of the 1609 quarto that Booth prints on pages facing his edited modern-spelling versions. Further quotations are cited in the text by sonnet number and line number.

22. *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, 1.3.58-60, in William Shakespeare, *The Complete Works*, ed. Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), p. 742. Further quotations from Shakespeare's plays are taken from this edition and are cited in the text and by act, scene, and line numbers.

23. I follow Stephen Booth, and most other readers of sonnet 122, in assuming that the table's leaves are blank and that "thy record" in line 8 refers to what is "full characterd with lasting memory" in the poet's brain, not to anything that has been written down in the tables by the friend himself. See Booth's notes on the possible ambiguity, *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, pp. 412-413.

24. For this distinction between the two very different uses of verses in manuscript I am indebted to Mary Ellen Lamb, "Thomas Whythorne's *Autobiography* and the Social Contexts of Manuscript Transmission" (paper delivered at the annual meeting of the Modern Language Association, December 1989).

25. Joel Fineman, *Shakespeare's Perjured Eye: The Invention of Poetic Subjectivity in the Sonnets* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1986).

26. "Sidney can only achieve the inner *through* the outer, the private *through* the public, the sincere self *through* self-display. One could argue that his private self is, therefore, not at all private since it is dependent on the public. But one could counter that it is intensely private since it is unrepresentable. Perhaps we might best propose that Sidney's and Hilliard's artifice of secrecy constitutes the first step or threshold ushering in the 'modern' idea of self at a distance from public expression" (Fumerton, "'Secret' Arts," p. 126).

27. Ferry, *The "Inward" Language*, pp. 170-214.

28. The surviving seventeenth-century manuscripts that include poems by Donne, almost all of them dating from the 1620s and '30s, are cataloged in Peter Beal, *Index of English Literary Manuscripts, 1450-1625*, (London: Mansell, 1980), 1.1:243-568. Poems by Donne were transcribed more often than those of any other British poet of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

29. The twelve manuscripts, which like those containing poems by Donne date mostly from the 1620s and '30s, are cataloged and described in Beale, *Index of English Literary Manuscripts, 1450-1625*, 1.2:452-453. Part of this evidence is studied by Gary Taylor, "Some Manuscripts of Shakespeare's Sonnets," *Bulletin of The John Rylands University Library of Mancester* 68.1 (1985): 210-246.

30. *The Passionate Pilgrim* (1599), facsimile edition ed. Joseph Quincy

Adams (New York: Scribners, 1939). My quotations from *The Passionate Pilgrim* are taken from Adams's edition and are cited in the text.

31. Arthur F. Marotti, *John Donne, Coterie Poet* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1986), pp. 3-24.

32. J. W. Saunders, "From Manuscript to Print: A Note on the Circulation of Poetic MSS in the Sixteenth Century," *Proceedings of the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society* 6 (1951): 523.

33. Detective by detective, century by century, Samuel Schoenbaum provides an amusing narrative of these attempts in *Shakespeare's Lives* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970).

34. *The Autobiography of Thomas Whythorne*, ed. James M. Osborn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), pp. 40-41. For this reference I am indebted to Mary Ellen Lamb, "Thomas Whythorne's *Autobiography* and the Social Contexts of Manuscript Transmission" (paper delivered at the annual meeting of the Modern Language Association, December 1989).

35. On the price of quartos see F. R. Johnson, "Notes on English Retail Book Prices 1550-1640," *The Library*, 5th ser. (1950): 83-112.

36. John Hart, "The Opening of the Unreasonable Writing of Our Inglish Toung" (1551) [BL MS Royal 17.c.VII], ed. Bror Danielsson in *John Hart's Works on English Orthography and Pronunciation* (Stockholm: Almquist & Wiksell, 1955), p. 162.

37. George Wyndham made this argument in his edition of Shakespeare's *Poems* (1898). For an account of the 1609 text and a summary of responses to Wyndham's argument see Shakespeare, *The Sonnets*, ed. Rollins, New Variorum Ed., 2:1-18. Booth remarks on the quarto's orthography in his preface to *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, pp. xiv-xviii, and in an extended note on sonnet 129, pp. 447-452.

38. *Epithalamium*, ll. 383, 398-403, in Edmund Spenser, *The Works*, 8, ed. C. G. Osgood and H. G. Gibbons (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1947): 251.

39. Booth, *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, pp. 431-432.

40. Plutarch, *Moralia* 767, trans. Philemon Holland in *The Philosophie* (London, 1603), fols. 1132-1133. Further quotations are cited in the text by folio number. Connections between the sonnets and the plays with respect to the scenario of two male friends parted by a woman are explored in Cyrus Hoy, "Shakespeare and the Revenge of Art," *Rice University Studies* 60 (1974): 71-94.

41. John Donne, Elegy "To his Mistris Going to Bed" and "The Sunne Rising," in *The Elegies and The Songs and Sonnets*, ed. Helen Gardner (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), pp. 14, 72.

42. Booth, *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, pp. 98-99.

43. Pequigney, *Such Is My Love*, pp. 209-210, summarizing the argument he has made in earlier chapters.

44. Booth, *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, pp. 175-178.

45. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 2: *The Use of Pleasure*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon, 1985): 187-225.

46. Heather Trexler Remoff, *Sexual Choice: A Woman's Decision* (New

York: Dutton, 1984), pp. 3-11. The same observation about the expendability of males is made by Walter J. Ong, *Fighting for Life: Contest, Sexuality, and Consciousness* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1981), pp. 52-56.

47. Puttenham defines love poetry, like other forms of verse, according to its original use: "There were an other sort, who sought the favor of faire Ladies, and coveted to bemone their estates at large, & the perplexities of love in a certain pitious verse called *Elegie*, and thence were called *Eligiack*: such among the Latines were *Ovid, Tibullus, & Propertius*." *The Arte of English Poesie*, ed. Gladys Doidge Willcock and Alice Walker (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1936), p. 25. Sidney has these origins in mind when he sets up his criterion as to whether a love poem is good or not: "But truly many of such writings as come under the banner of unresistible love, if I were a mistress, would never persuade me they were in love: so coldly they apply fiery speeches, as men that had rather read lovers' writings . . . than that in truth they feel those passions, which easily (as I think) may be bewrayed by that same forcibleness or *energia* (as the Greeks call it)." *Defence of Poetry*, ed. J. A. Van Dorsten (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1966), pp. 69-70.

48. Sir William Cornwallis, *Essayes* (London: Edmund Mattes, 1600), sig. E3v.

49. *The Book of Common Prayer 1559: The Elizabethan Prayer Book*, ed. John E. Booty (Charlottesville: Univ. of Virginia Press, 1976), p. 297. Further quotations are cited in the text. Booth's remarks on Ephesians 5 occur in connection with sonnet 36, pp. 192-195.

50. The reference in sonnet 134, though addressed to the mistress, still concerns the poet's male love: "So now I have confest that he is thine,/And I my selfe am morgag'd to thy will,/My selfe Ile forfeit, so that other mine,/Thou wilt restore to be my comfort still" (134.1-4). The allusion to "one flesh" in sonnet 135 ("Who ever hath her wish, thou hast thy *Will*") leaves St. Paul and spiritual concerns far behind.

51. Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1977), pp. 72-95.

52. C. S. Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century Excluding Drama* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954), p. 505.

53. Barber and Wheeler, *The Whole Journey*, p. 195.

54. Pequigney, *Such Is My Love*, pp. 202-207.

55. Dubrow, *Captive Victors*, pp. 221-222.

56. A full account of the critical reception of the 1609 quarto and of Benson's edition is offered by Sidney Lee in the introduction to his facsimile edition of *Shakespeares Sonnets . . . The First Edition 1609* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905), pp. 51-62.

57. Margreta de Grazia discusses Malone's canonization of the quarto sonnets and the effect of his apparatus on subsequent readings in *Shakespeare "Verbatim": The Reproduction of Authenticity and the 1790 Apparatus* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1990), chapter 3, "Individuating Shakespeare." See also her essay "Locating and Dislocating the 'I' of Shakespeare's Sonnets," in *William Shakespeare: His World, His Work, His Influence*, ed. John F. Andrews (New York: Scribners, 1985), 2:433-444.