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Sophie Chiari

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In and Out: Shakespeare's Shifting Sonnets. From *Love's Labour's Lost* to *The Passionate Pilgrim*

Sophie Chiari, Université Clermont Auvergne, IHRIM (UMR 5317)

While Shakespeare's *Sonnets* did not appear in print before 1609, some of his sonnets were actually published before that date, which seems to suggest that there was hardly such thing as the so-called 'private' circulation of poems in early modern England.¹ In a miscellany of twenty sonnets and lyrics entitled *The Passionate Pilgrim* (1598-1599) and printed by William Jaggard, one can find three poems from *Love's Labour's Lost*, a play whose earliest extant quarto edition dates back to 1598.² Jaggard's collection, which also comprised poems by Richard Barnfield, Bartholomew Griffin (the author of a 1596 sonnet sequence entitled *Fidessa, More Chaste than Kinde*), Christopher Marlowe and, possibly, Sir Walter Raleigh, sold so well that a reprint of 1612 included additional poems by Thomas Heywood. Central to my argument in this essay is the fact that, in such a collection, Shakespeare's poems are no longer supposed to be spoken on stage but are presented as written poetic language. Now, as a preamble to my subsequent analysis, I would like to make three immediate observations:

- 1) Because the poems in *Love's Labour's Lost* were primarily aimed at spectators, they immediately bypassed the traditional class distinctions generated both by manuscript sonnets (generally first intended for private circles) and by printed ones (aimed at educated readers).
- 2) While the aristocratic craze for sonnets meant that they were almost immediately circulated to the detriment of their preservation, Berowne's, Longaville's and Dumaine's 'sugared' sonnets to the French ladies (4.2 and 4.3) also circulate for the worst in the realm of Navarre, their contents being badly distorted by their fair recipients.
- 3) These sonnets were highly ironical in their original context, but once decontextualized, they became part of an anthology in which they are deprived of their satirical flavour. Against

¹ I refer here to Francis Meres's 1598 allusion, in his *Palladis Tamia*, to Shakespeare's "sugared sonnets among his private friends." See Francis Meres, *Palladis Tamia: Wit's Treasury*, ed. D.C. Allen (New York, Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 1938), fols. 280v-281. However, some early modern poems such as verse libels, for instance, did remain confined to manuscript circulation because they were too openly defamatory to be published.

² All quotations from the play are taken from William Shakespeare, *Love's Labour's Lost*, ed. William C. Carroll (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009). Unless otherwise indicated, references from other Shakespeare plays are taken from William Shakespeare, *The Complete Works*, eds. John Jowett, William Montgomery, Gary Taylor and Stanley Wells (Oxford, Oxford University Press, Second edition, 2005).

all odds, they were just as successful in Jaggard's collection (which cashed in on the fashionable practice of textual collecting)³ as in Shakespeare's innovative comedy.

In this paper, I will therefore focus on the transgeneric circulation of these three love sonnets in order to look at the nature of poetic transaction in 16th-century England. This will eventually lead me to reassess the nature of the relationship between William Jaggard, the printer still often accused of having 'stolen' Shakespeare's poems for his *Passionate Pilgrim*, and Shakespeare himself, who certainly shared with Jaggard an acute sense of commercial strategy. Were these two men, who belonged to the same world, enemies or shrewd collaborators? Without claiming to make any definitive conclusion on the subject, I intend to shed some light on what remains a vexed issue in Shakespeare studies.

1. Manuscript sonnets in *Love's Labour's Lost*

Love's Labour's Lost is a play primarily devoted to the interaction between the spoken and the written word. Witty conversations abound, and love poems circulate in manuscript, just like the vast majority of early modern sonnets during Shakespeare's time. By the end of the 16th century, there must have been a special excitement in the reading of titillating verse in manuscript, or sonnets devoted to the dangerous topic of succession (dealt with in Shakespeare's Sonnet 7, for instance),⁴ which greatly preoccupied and strongly displeased the Queen of England.

In *Love's Labour's Lost*, the young men, too, are preoccupied with issues of succession, as we can guess that, if Ferdinand intends to marry, it is primarily to get an heir, anxious as he is to secure his posterity. Yet, the lords' sonnets, unlike Shakespeare's sonnets (when not mediated by any dramatic character other than Will), conceal this fundamental political issue under the varnish of the conventional love-at-first-sight motif. No matter how anxious these immature young men may be about their destiny and their masculinity, they have to put up a bold front and so, they decide to focus on amorous games. Engaged in a 'civil war of wits' (2.1.222), the lords fight *with* and *against* words, and in this battle, the pen stands for the penis. In fact, *Love's Labour's Lost* sheds fresh light on the traditional representation of women as blank

³ On this particular aspect, see Marjorie Swann, *Curiosities and Texts: The Culture of Collecting in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001).

⁴ Cathy Shrank, "Counsel, Succession and the Politics of Shakespeare's *Sonnets*" in *Shakespeare and Early Modern Political Thought*, eds. David Armitage, Conal Condren and Andrew Fitzmaurice (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009), 109.

pages waiting to be filled by the male pen/penis.⁵ For one soon realizes that the ladies are impenetrable, and that the lords' pens are improper. In fact, they do not lead to pleasure but to *penance* and *repentance*. Each sonnet in the play, then, turns out to be a mortification of sorts, or an unwitty self-punishment paving the way for the final penances imposed on the four lords.

Be that as it may, the young men, at the beginning of the comedy at least, try hard to make the French maids experience a special *frisson* brought about by their deeply idiosyncratic style of letter-writing. Manuscript culture making their otherwise poor poems unique pieces, they hope to flatter (and conquer) the French ladies by giving them the impression that they are the recipients of unique poems, which is, and is not, the case. This is the case because each poem is handwritten and is not multiplied by any printing press. Incidentally, this absence of reproduction indirectly reflects the absence of royal progeny in the play. And this is not the case because the poems are so fraught with clichés that, instead of giving the ladies the impression of uniqueness, they create an impression of *déjà vu* which turns out to be totally counterproductive. Being educated and clever, the French Princess and her ladies-in-waiting disapprove of such conventional poetry devoid of creative imitation.⁶ Their feeling is exactly that of the spiteful Phantastes in act 2, scene 2, of a 1607 play by the Cambridge-educated playwright Thomas Tomkis and aptly entitled *Lingua: or The combat of the tongue, and the fiue senses for superiority*. Indeed, Phantastes blames the 'sonnet-mongers' for their artificial language and idealized descriptions:

Oh heauens, how haue I bene troubled these latter times with Women, Fooles, Babes, Taylers, Poets, Swaggerers, Guls, Balladmakes, they haue almost disrobed me of all the toyes and trifles I can deuise, were it not that I pittie the poore multitude of Printers, these Sonnet-mungers should starue for conceits, for all *Phantastes*. But these puling Louers, I cannot but laugh at them and their Encomions of their Mistresses. They make forsooth her hayre of Gold, her eyes of Diamond, her cheekes of Roses, her lippes of Rubies, her teeth of Pearle, and her whole body of Iuory: and when they haue thus Idold' her like *Pigmalion*, they f[...]ll downe and worship her. *Psyche*, thou hast laid a hard taske vpon my shoulders, to inuent at [...]uery ones aske, were it not that I refresh my dulnesse once a day with my most Angelicall presence, 'twere vnpossible for me to vndergo it.⁷

⁵ Susan Gubar, "'The Blank Page' and the Issues of Female Creativity" in *Writing and Sexual Difference*, ed. Elizabeth Abel (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1982), 73-93.

⁶ See for instance the sharp dialogue between Rosaline and the Princess in act 5: "*Rosaline* [...] Nay, I have verses too, I thank Berowne; / The numbers true, and were the numbering too, / I were the fairest goddest on the ground. / I am compared to twenty thousand fairs. / O, he hath drawn my picture in this letter! / *Princess* Anything like? / *Rosaline* Much in the letters, nothing in the praise" (5.2.3440).

⁷ Thomas Tomkis, *Lingua: or The combat of the tongue, and the fiue senses for superiority A pleasant comoedie*,

There is no denying the fact that the lords of Navarre feed on ‘taffeta phrases’ (5.2.406) and idolize their mistresses, just like the poor poets ostracized by Tomkis in his Jacobean comedy—a comedy, it must be said, written when the craze for sonnets was already on the wane. Yet, the young men are not the only ones to blame. In Shakespeare’s England, the circulation of love poems typically involved a certain kind of reciprocity between the poet and its addressee. In other words, more often than not, ‘the transcribed versions of the poems would include the recipient’s own revisions, so that the poem became even more definitively the owner’s, not the authors; and often as not the author’s name would be indicated only by initials, or not at all.’⁸ The ladies, here, fail to appropriate their lovers’ poems. As a consequence, they never inscribe their comments in the margins—it must be noted, though, that the Princess is not even given this possibility as Berowne has written “o’both sides the leaf, margin and all” (5.2.8)—and do not respect the implicit rules of courtly correspondence. Actually, they are so obsessed with the material objects offered by their wooers (Shakespeare makes it clear that the Princess receives a jewel from the King, Rosaline a picture of her from Berowne, Katherine a pair of gloves from Dumaine, and Maria, some pearls from Longaville) that they forget that the main gifts are the poems themselves, not the objects accompanying them. All in all, if the lords are naïve, the maids are presented as cynical consumers. They clearly belong to a culture of commodification that seems at odds with the idea of manuscript culture so dear to the young lords of Navarre. The lords and their hypothetical mistresses therefore represent the early modern tensions at work between manuscript and print culture: both existed side by side, but they put very different qualities to the fore. To put it simply, whereas a manuscript sonnet could freely emphasize its own extravagance, printed verse had to comply with tacit rules and codes in order to attract a wider readership. And, in *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, the fact is that, extravagance definitely appears as a specific male quality.⁹

2. De/recontextualization: From the stage to the printed page

At London, Printed by G. Eld, for Simon Waterson, 1607. STC (2nd ed.) 24104, sig. D3r-v. Tomkis’s play was quite successful as it went through several editions throughout the 17th century (1617, 1622, 1632, 1657, and one more printing, which is not dated).

⁸ Stephen Orgel, “Introduction,” in *The Sonnets*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, [1996], 2006), 5.

⁹ On male rhetorical extravagance, see for instance Robert Cockcroft, *Rhetorical Affect in Early Modern Writing: Renaissance Passions Reconsidered*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, p. 167.

As Richard Dutton observes in *Shakespeare, Court Dramatist*, '[a]t 2,651 lines, although unexceptional by the standard of Shakespeare's own histories and tragedies, the play is the longest of the 1590s romantic comedies.'¹⁰ In effect, the title page of the 1598 quarto reads: 'Newly corrected and *augmented* By W. Shakespere' (my emphasis) and there are reasons to believe that indeed, the printed play as we have it in Q1 reflects an augmented version of a shorter text aimed at public performance. If we are to believe its 1598 advertisement, the script we actually possess represents the text '[a]s it was presented before her Highness this last Christmas,' which suggests, as Dutton convincingly argues, that the available quarto text, which includes obvious revisions and second thoughts resulting in a number of textual muddles, is in fact a text revised by Shakespeare for a performance at the court of Elizabeth I.¹¹ His reworkings notably consist in expanded passages, and what interests me here is that the lords' sonnets are *not* part of these expansions. They were here right from the beginning, constituting the text's essence, so to speak. While they must have been successful among the young Elizabethan courtiers who could (or couldn't) recognize themselves in the figures of the four ambitious poets of Navarre, Shakespeare knew that their comic potential could also work quite well in public performances, where they probably generated fewer jaundiced smiles than at court, and more frequent fits of laughter.

Importantly, the lords' poems functioned on several levels depending on the place where the play was being staged. In a court performance, they mainly worked as metadramatic tools,¹² commenting on the spectators' literary pretensions. In a public performance, they were used as both props and discourse. Indeed, Shakespeare does not simply show us a variety of awkward *billets doux*, he also allows us to hear them being read aloud. He therefore inserts a number of monologues characterized by the insistent use of the first-person pronoun—the young heroes turn out to be particularly narcissistic lovers—and by a mock confessional tone. Navarre and his friends are speaking poetry, but a poetry full of Petrarchan clichés which turns out to be both an obvious parody of Shakespeare's own art and, more subtly perhaps, a way of articulating the otherwise inexpressible difficulties of love.

¹⁰ Richard Dutton, *Shakespeare, Court Dramatist* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2016), 129.

¹¹ *Ibid.* For another take on this issue, see for example John Kerrigan, "Love's Labour's Lost and Shakespearean Revision," *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 33 (1982), 337-39.

¹² On the difference between "metadramatic" and "metatheatrical," see Charles Whitworth, "Love's Labour's Lost: Aborted Plays Within, Unconsummated Play Without", in *The Show Within: Dramatic and Other Insets. English Renaissance Drama (1550-1642)* (ed. François Laroque, Montpellier, Astraea n°4, 1992, 109-126: "'Metadramatic' is, I take it, a more inclusive term which embraces all sorts of images and references, metaphors such as "All the world's a stage", and "Life's but a walking shadow of a poor player", for example. 'Metatheatrical' I would want specifically to the business of the theatre, technical terms and references – how to bring moonlight into a chamber, how to produce tears by squeezing an onion in a napkin" (112).

The budding poets, moreover, reproduce the same errors as those frequently made by Shakespeare's own rival poets, caught in a sometimes sterile rivalry and constrained by the demands of rich patrons whose tastes, whether good or bad, had to be taken into account. In the play, each young lover vies with his friends in order to distinguish himself from their production and to acquire fame; and each piles up hyperboles, paradoxes, and Petrarchan tropes related to sight, tears and despair. Interestingly, the young ladies are both the patrons and the addressees of the love poems, which deeply complicates the task of the lords of Navarre.

As a matter of fact, the lines produced by Ferdinand and his friends sound particularly hollow as they rely on all the clichés of the genre, including meteorological metaphors (the heavens, the thunder, the clouds, the air, the sun) aligning climate with emotions. Berowne's love poem is no exception. It is not introduced as a sonnet, but as a 'stanza' (4.2.92)—a relatively new word at the time, since the first recorded use of the term in the *Oxford English Dictionary* dates back to 1596.¹³ It is thus up to the listener to construe Berowne's fourteen lines as a sonnet:

Nathaniel [*Reads*] 'If love make me forsworn, how shall I swear to love?

Ah, never faith could hold, if not to beauty vowed!
Though to myself forsworn, to thee I'll faithful prove;
Those thoughts to me were oaks, to thee like osiers bowed.
Study his bias leaves and makes his book thine eyes,
Where all those pleasures live that art would comprehend.
If knowledge be the mark, to know thee shall suffice.
Well learned is that tongue that well can thee commend,
All ignorant that soul that sees thee without wonder;
Which is to me some praise, that I thy parts admire.
Thy eye Jove's lightning bears, thy voice his dreadful thunder,
Which, not to anger bent, is music and sweet fire.
Celestial as thou art, O, Pardon love this wrong,
That sings heaven's praise with such an earthly tongue'.

(4.2.93-106)

¹³ Cf. Jaques's mention of the 'stanzo' in Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, ed. Michael Hattaway (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009), 2.5.14-15: 'Come, more, another stanza—call you 'em "stanzos"?' See Hattaway's footnote, 128. The word 'stanza' or 'stanzo' appears only twice in the Shakespeare canon, while the word 'sonnet' and its derivatives crop up no less than fourteen times. This term being new in Shakespeare's England, we may presume that the audience paid particular attention to the poems called as such.

Uttered by a placid curate to whom they were not destined, Berowne's lines will never be interpreted as a sonnet by the incompetent onstage audience embodied by the schoolmaster Holofernes. This should come as no surprise in a play featuring male characters systematically 'ill at reckoning' (1.2.34). Yet, Berowne's love letter actually constitutes a recantation sonnet, in which the cumulative and antithetical effects of 'forsworn,' 'swear,' 'faith' and 'faithful' convey the paradoxical state of the speaker, imprisoned in his own game: while he had promised to vow himself to a life of chastity to meditate and study, he is now bound to love a woman and make her his principal source of knowledge. Now, as Shakespeare mocks the excesses of this sonnet craze, he also tries to reassess the conditions of reception of love poetry in general. Here, Nathaniel's ventriloquism probably distorts the noble intentions of Berowne, who writes to his dark lady without ever mentioning the colour of her skin.

These fourteen lines were reprinted in William Jaggard's *The Passionate Pilgrim* (1599). Regarding the title of this anthology, Berowne's poem perfectly fits the collection. The young man, in his sonnet, blends amorous and religious overtones,¹⁴ and this mixture is put to the fore in the very title of Jaggard's miscellany. While for 21st-century readers piety and passion seem poles apart, this was not the case in early modern England. As noted by Joseph Sterrett, the period was marked by the "fairly easy ability to read the language of erotic love from within a perspective of spiritual devotion and to read spiritual devotion in terms of erotic love."¹⁵ Shakespeare aligned his sonnets with such abilities, and Jaggard cultivated this appealing association in order to sell his anthology to a wider readership.

At the same time, spiritual devotion and erotic love correspond to the two-part structure characterizing the plot of *Love's Labour's Lost*, as the lords of Navarre are first seen as spiritual devotees before showing their true colours and revealing their frustrated sexual appetite. No wonder then if, in *Love's Labour's Lost*, the four male characters keep writing missives to cruel and mocking French ladies. They are thus continually shown in the very act of creating sonnets. Yet, their respective creations prove particularly sterile.

Berowne's sonnet is the first one introduced to the audience, and it is the only one not to appear in the famous eavesdropping scene of 4.3, also known as the play's sonneteering scene and containing the mock purple patches of poetry uttered by the King, Longaville and Dumaine. The King's sonnet, conveying the speaker's egotism and misogyny, has never been

¹⁴ Cf. Romeo and Juliet's sonnet in act 1, scene 5 of the eponymous play, which similarly relies on religious imagery (shrines and atonement) and on the rhetoric of love. See William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet* (ed. René Weis, London, Bloomsbury, The Arden Shakespeare, 2012), 1.5.92-105.

¹⁵ Joseph Sterrett, *The Unheard Prayer: Religious Toleration in Shakespeare's Drama* (Leiden, Brill, 2012), 51.

detached from the play, contrary to the other two. It is difficult to say why, but that may have something to do with the fact that the King's poem does not really deal with the persona's feelings for an unreachable mistress. Indeed, Ferdinand's verse is devoted to *self*-love, which actually negates man's capacity for genuine love. In sixteen (rather than the traditional fourteen) lines, the King thus complacently imagines that the Princess's eyes send 'beams' onto the tears flowing down his cheeks to create an image of her there.

Longaville, as a willing votary of the King of Navarre, accepts the argument of women's eyes as evidence of their heavenly or Goddess-like status. He soliloquizes—or he thinks he soliloquizes—as follows:

Longaville This same shall go.

(He reads the sonnet)

'Did not the heavenly rhetoric of thine eye,
'Gainst whom the world cannot hold argument,
Persuade my heart to this false perjury?

Vows for thee broke deserve not punishment.

A woman I forswore, but I will prove,

Thou being a goddess, I forswore not thee.

My vow was earthly, thou a heavenly love;

Thy grace being gained cures all disgrace in me.

Vows are but breath, and breath a vapour is.

Then thou, fair sun, which on my earth dost shine,

Exhals't this vapour-vow; in thee it is.

If broken then, it is no fault of mine.

If by me broke, what fool is not so wise

To lose an oath to win a paradise?'

(4.3.51-64)

This 14-line poem actually follows up on Berowne's own poem by dealing with perjury. It is, like Berowne's verse, submitted to public shaming as it is heard by the wrong recipients in a hilarious eavesdropping scene. This, if anything, shows the interchangeability of the young men in the comedy. Here, Longaville reproduces the sonnet pattern, but his sonnet is strikingly devoid of complex images and ambiguous meanings. This absence is easily understood in the context of the play, as the lords who dream of their 'little academe' are never seen studying a single book. Shakespeare thus conveys Longaville's inexperience as

much as his lack of literary practice. Yet, the sonnet was decontextualized and reprinted in *The Passionate Pilgrim* (1599), which means that, against all odds, Longaville was in fact totally identified with Shakespeare. So, whereas the stage emphasized the distance between the speaker and the writer (a distance still increased during court performances which emphasized the tropes of *mise en abyme* and irony particularly appreciated by the noble audience), the page annihilated it and compelled a reading of the sonnet as the sole product of the speaker.¹⁶ The same thing happened with Dumaine's embedded poem, endowed with a similarly transparent meaning, and whose function of parody also entirely disappeared in Jaggard's miscellany.

In his own poem, Dumaine conventionally envies the intimacy of natural elements—here, air or the wind—with the maid (namely Katherine) he would like to seduce:

Dumaine (*Dumaine reads his sonnet*)

'On a day—alack the day!—
Love, whose month is ever May,
Spied a blossom passing faire
Playing in the wanton air.
Through the velvet leaves the wind,
All unseen, can passage find;
That the lover, sick to death,
Wished himself the heaven's breath.
"Air," quoth he, "thy cheeks may blow;
Air, would I might triumph so!
But, alack, my hand is sworn
Ne'er to pluck thee from thy thorn.
Bow, alack, for youth unmet,
Youth so apt to pluck a sweet.
Do not call it sin in me,
That I am forsworn for thee—
Thou for whom Jove would swear
Juno but an Ethiop were,
And deny himself for Jove,
Turning mortal for thy love.'"

¹⁶ On the literary refashioning of the sonnets operated by Jaggard's miscellany, see Lindsay Ann Reid, "'Certaine Amorous Sonnets, Betweene Venus and Adonis': fictive acts of writing in *The Passionate Pilgrime* of 1612," *Études Épistémè*, 21, 2012. Website: <http://episteme.revues.org/419>, Date accessed: 16 August 2016.

(4.3.93-112)

Like Romeo who, as he falls in love, feels suddenly compelled to write ‘numbers’ (i.e. verse) (‘Now is he for the numbers that Petrarch flowed in,’ Mercutio observes in 2.4.38-39), the young lords of Navarre, once enamoured, irrepressibly turn to the poetic clichés of the time. To make things worse, Dumaine does not stick to the standard iambic pentameter but offers instead a series of odd trochaic tetrameter couplets, thereby illustrating the loss alluded to in the play’s title. Indeed, his four-foot lines look like maimed pentameters whose harmony and grace they obviously lack and, with their falling rhythm, they celebrate love without conviction. Moreover, the poet’s attempt at self-reflexivity turns here into sheer flattery. To this excessive sentimentalism, some early modern poets opposed an anti-sentimental approach. In 1599, Michael Drayton bluntly asserted in the prefatory material to his *Idea*:

No farre-fetch’d Sigh shall ever wound my Brest,
Love from mine Eye a Teare shall never wring,
Nor in Ah-mees my whining Sonnets drest,
[...]
(1. 5-7)¹⁷

Where Drayton dismisses old-fashioned models, Shakespeare’s mock-poem constitutes a basic defence of all the clichés of the genre. Yet, for all its deficiencies, Dumaine’s sonnet is of great interest precisely because the context, and only the context, still allows us to understand that it is actually multi-layered: underneath its naivety, the poem hints at fashionable discourses and at Renaissance self-fashioning.

Dumaine’s twenty-line poem is too long to be what we would call today a ‘real’ sonnet. But strict definitions of the sonnet were still rare at the time. Broadly defined, sonnets were often perceived as little songs, no matter how many lines they comprised.¹⁸ So, musicality was probably one of the main features of the Elizabethan sonnet, which functioned as part of courtship ritual.¹⁹

It should then come as no surprise that Dumaine’s verse was published in *The Passionate Pilgrim* AND in *England’s Helicon* (1600), edited by Nicholas Ling. I will not, here,

¹⁷ Michael Drayton, *Idea*, 1599, “To the Reader of these Sonnets.”

¹⁸ On sonnets and late codification, see Rémi Vuillemin, *Le recueil pétrarquiste à l’ère du maniérisme* (Paris, Honoré Champion, 2014), 31-39.

¹⁹ Heather Dubrow, “The Sonnet and the Lyric Mode,” *The Cambridge Companion to the Sonnet*, eds. A.D. Cousins and Peter Howarth (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011), 33.

particularly focus on Ling's version, for the simple reason that it was obviously based on Jaggard's. Indeed, in both cases (i.e in Jaggard's collection and in Ling's book), lines 106 and 107, two lines of self-rebuke, disappear ('Do not call it sin in me, / That I am forsworn for thee—'). Be that as it may, by being reinserted in *England's Helicon*, Dumaine's sonnet acquired a new meaning. Its very irrelevance was turned into absolute relevance and its distancing effect into a unifying principle. The marred Arcadia of *Love's Labour's Lost* was, in other words, transformed into a real pastoral, as Ling was keen to situate 'the Muses' spring on native soil as the locus of a shepherd nation of poets, living and dead, featuring such notables as Sidney, Spenser, Marlowe, Raleigh, Drayton, Lodge and Greene.²⁰

3. *The Passionate Pilgrim*: 'Piracy' and/or Literary Business?

Let us now briefly return to the example of *The Passionate Pilgrim*. The collection was published in a small octavo edition after September 1598, and a second edition was published in 1599. The work was never entered in the Stationers' Register—which does not necessarily mean that it was a surreptitious publication.²¹

Its compiler, William Jaggard, boldly advertised *The Passionate Pilgrim* 'By W. Shakespeare' notwithstanding the fact that it contained only five pieces by the poet-playwright. It is worth noting that it also included an intriguing text entitled 'Willobie His Avisa' by Henry Willobie. In this strange poem, Shakespeare is a haunting presence, as 'Willobie seeks to recruit Shakespeare's persona to strengthen the praise he offers his own idealized mistress, "Avisa" or "A".'²² As noted by James P. Bednarz, the speaker 'consequently uses Shakespeare's triangle as the basis for his own fantasia.'²³ Apart from that odd piece, and apart from the three poems or "songs" extracted from *Love's Labour's Lost*, which had already been published as part of the printed text of the play and which, if one is to believe the pedant Holofernes, were 'neither savouring of poetry, wit, nor invention' (4.2.139-40), Jaggard's unauthorized volume included manuscript copies of sonnets 138 ('When my love swears that she is made of truth / I do believe her though I know she lies') and 144 ('Two

²⁰ James P. Bednarz, *Shakespeare and the Truth of Love: The Mystery of 'The Phoenix and the Turtle'* (New York, Palgrave, 2012), 100.

²¹ See John Jowett, *Shakespeare and Text* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 51.

²² James P. Bednarz, *Shakespeare and the Poets' War* (New York, Columbia University Press, 2001), 125.

²³ *Ibid.*

loves I have, of comfort and despair, / Which like two spirits do suggest me still').²⁴ Curiously, the two sonnets are not exactly similar to those printed in 1609. Paul Edmondson and Stanley Wells observe that, '[o]nce regarded as debased texts, they are now more commonly thought of as early versions of the poems that Shakespeare later revised.'²⁵ In all likelihood, Jaggard acquired these two sonnets from 'one of the "private friends" to whom they had been entrusted.'²⁶

Amusingly, a very clear-sighted Shakespeare seems to have guessed what would happen to his sonnets. For, in *Love's Labour's Lost*, Berowne's poem is similarly 'pirated'²⁷ by Costard, who is the mock 'private friend' having a privileged access to Berowne's sonnet—a privilege which is all the more ironic as Costard is probably unable to read fluently, given his low social origins. Costard, out of malice or absent-mindedness, exchanges the sonnet with Armado's letter and gives Berowne's poem to the wrong lady, the illiterate Jaquenetta. She, in turn, becomes the unwitty pirate of Berowne's lines since, exactly like Jaggard a few years later, she circulates them without the permission of their author. The reader's reaction is then embodied by Nathaniel who, reading the poem aloud, distorts it so much so that Holofernes immediately despises it: 'Here are only numbers ratified, but for the elegancy, facility, and golden cadence of poesy, *caret*' (4.2.108-10). Shakespeare thus perfectly understood that, once divulged, a sonnet could simply lose its substance. Of course, in *Love's Labour's Lost*, he mainly evokes a traditional manuscript culture. The sonnet read aloud by Nathaniel will never be printed in the Arcadian, machine-free world of the lords of Navarre. Yet, the playwright emphasizes the possible discrepancy between the conception and the reception of love poetry when readers do not coincide with the addressee and, ironically, he also shows, later in the play, that love poems reaching their addressee can fail as badly as those literally missing their target.

²⁴ See Arthur F. Marotti, "Shakespeare's Sonnets and the Manuscript Circulation of Texts in Early Modern England", in *A Companion to Shakespeare's Sonnets*, ed. Michael Schoenfeldt (Chichester, Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 185.

²⁵ Paul Edmondson and Stanley Wells, *Shakespeare's Sonnets* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004), 4.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

²⁷ I'm using the term on purpose here. Jaggard was notably portrayed as a 'pirate' by Swinburne who wrote that he was 'the infamous pirate, liar, and thief who published a worthless little volume of stolen and mutilated poetry, patched up and padded out with dirty and dreary doggerel, under the senseless and preposterous title of *The Passionate Pilgrim*.' See Algernon Charles Swinburne, *Studies in Prose and Poetry* (London, Chatto and Windus, 1894), p. 90. This has recently been undermined by critics like Patrick Cheney, but the 'pirate' libel has unfortunately lingered, partly because it provides us with an apparently convenient explanation for the publication of *The Passionate Pilgrim*, and partly because it implies a moral judgement on Jaggard, turning him into a dishonest, yet fascinating figure.

Jaggard, as to him, was too pragmatic to miss his. Even though the whole enterprise has often been seen as fraud (a vision inherited from 19th-century criticism),²⁸ it was apparently perfectly legal, and it was probably triggered (partly at least) by Francis Meres's famous comments on Shakespeare's 'sugared sonnets' in his *Palladis Tamia* (1598). Because Meres's praise created a demand for new sonnets, Jaggard calculated that he had enough prospective buyers to run the risk of publishing a dubious volume. These buyers were not part of the elite, but certainly dreamt of being invited in the restricted circles of the nobility to discover what court poetry was about. Jaggard's ploy, therefore, was to recreate the conditions of coterie poetry reading and to give his readership a seemingly privileged access to Shakespeare the learned poet, as opposed to the popular playwright whom most Londoners were already acquainted with. To increase his prospects, he must have been anxious that his miscellany should be perceived as authentically Shakespearean. So, he logically included poems which, albeit not all written by Shakespeare, were devoted to 'a theme popularly associated with him: hence the inclusion of several sonnets on the love of Venus for Adonis (Shakespeare's erotic narrative currently seeing its fifth printing in six years).'²⁹ This hypothesis seems confirmed by the fact that, in order to cash in on the playwright's success, Jaggard 'had [the collection] distributed by William Leake at the sign of the Greyhound in St Paul's Churchyard, the same bookseller who offered *Venus and Adonis*.'³⁰ The poems are only printed on one side of the page, so that, as critics tend to think, careless buyers may have thought that it contained more poems than it could boast of. I would add another tentative explanation here: many cheap and popular books like almanacs, for instance, included blank pages so as to allow their readers to

²⁸ I refer here to my previous footnote. Moreover, Jaggard was far from being the only compiler to ascribe a miscellany to one particular author, regardless of the various poets represented in the volume. A(n) (in)famous example is that of Thomas Newman who, in 1591, published the first edition of *Astrophil and Stella* (STC 22536) as *Syr P.S. His Astrophel and Stella*. This quarto actually included thirty sonnets written by Samuel Daniel as well as texts by Thomas Campion, Fulke Greville, and another poet. Margaret P. Hannay speaks for instance of an "unauthorized, corrupt edition" (in *Philip's Phoenix: Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke* [New York, Oxford University Press, 1990], 69). If, indeed, it was corrupt, it was not completely unauthorized. In fact, as Joseph Loewenstein explains, 'Newman's *Astrophel and Stella* is a boundary case.' When it appeared, 'Burghley commanded that Newman's edition be confiscated' and, as a consequence, a revised text was published the same year by... Newman himself. See Joseph Loewenstein, *The Author's Due: Printing and the Prehistory of Copyright* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2002), 102. On the perception of Jaggard's enterprise as a 'fraud' or, alternatively, as a 'tribute,' see Lois Potter, who usefully summarizes the debate in *The Life of William Shakespeare: A Critical Biography* (Chichester, Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 260-61.

²⁹ John Roe, "'Willobie his Avisa' and 'The Passionate Pilgrim': Precedence, Parody, and Development," *The Yearbook of English Studies*, Vol. 23, Early Shakespeare Special Number (1993), 114.

³⁰ James P. Bednarz, "'The Passionate Pilgrim' and 'The Phoenix and Turtle,'" *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's Poetry*, ed. Patrick Cheney (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007), 115. See, too, Reid, "'Certaine Amorous Sonnets, Betweene Venus and Adonis': fictive acts of writing in *The Passionate Pilgrime* of 1612," paragraph 18: 'It seems likely that, from the start, *The Passionate Pilgrime* was envisioned by Jaggard as something of a companion piece to Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*. This intention is only confirmed on the title pages of 1612, when Jaggard subtitled the repackaged and expanded contents of the third edition "Certaine Amorous Sonnets, betweene Venus and Adonis".'

write their own comments on them. Jaggard, albeit unconsciously, did the same with his collection. He, in fact, tried to reproduce the scribal possibilities proposed by manuscript texts in his printed collection—a collection related to the traditional practice of commonplacing.

Interestingly, Jaggard's wish to create an ambivalently titled short anthology which could seem to be from Shakespeare 'encouraged him or his agents to select verse from the period which looked Shakespearean' and, as a result, 'his book gives us some insight into the qualities in Shakespeare's poetry which were valued at the time'³¹: witty eroticism, Ovidian style, story-telling capacities. Even though Jaggard was a cheat (albeit a well-informed one not trespassing legal bounds), he was also clearly appreciative of Shakespeare's poetic qualities, so much so that he came to occupy an important position in the printing of the poet-playwright with the publication of the 1623 Folio. So, he can be seen as much as a corrupter (who could 'also be reviled for John Benson's degraded anthology of Shakespeare's Poems in 1640'³²) as the celebrated publisher of the First Folio.

It is difficult to know for sure what Shakespeare thought when *The Pilgrim* first appeared, but, according to Thomas Heywood, the playwright would have disapproved of *The Passionate Pilgrim*'s lengthened third edition (1612). In an often-quoted letter to Nicholas Okes,³³ Heywood declares:

Here, likewise, I must necessarily insert a manifest injury done me in that worke, by taking the two epistles of Paris and Helen, and Helen to Paris, and printing them in a lesse volume under the name of another, which may put the world in opinion I might steake them from him, and hee, to doe himself right, hath since them published in his own name: but, as I must acknowledge my lines not worthy his patronage under whom he hath publisht them, so the author, I know, much offended with M. Jaggard (that altogether unknowne to him), presumed to make so bold with his name.³⁴

³¹ John Kerrigan, "Shakespeare's Poems", in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare*, eds. Margreta de Grazia and Stanley Wells (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, [2001], 2003), 66.

³² James P. Bednarz, "Canonizing Shakespeare: *The Passionate Pilgrim*, *England's Helicon* and the Question of Authenticity," *Shakespeare Survey, Theatres for Shakespeare*, 60 (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007), 266.

³³ Okes was Heywood's new printer. He had previously reprinted Shakespeare's *The Rape of Lucrece* (1607), first printed by Richard Field in 1594. Interestingly, while Heywood praised his "'care and workmanship" in *An Apology for Actors* (1612), Ben Jonson 'alluded to him as a "ragged rascal" in *Time Vindicated*.' See Marta Straznicky, "Appendix B. Selected Stationer Profiles" in *Shakespeare's Stationers: Studies in Cultural Bibliography*, ed. Marta Straznicky (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 274.

³⁴ Thomas Heywood, *An Apology for Actors*, London, 1612, G4 r-v.

It must be said that Heywood himself had been pilfered by Jaggard, who had reproduced nine poems from *Troia Britannica* (1609) in the third edition of his *Passionate Pilgrim* (1612), without any authorization. All the same, many have taken for granted Heywood's grievance all the more so as he overtly mentions Shakespeare's presumed dissatisfaction with Jaggard's methods to plead his own case. Until quite recently, critics, in particular, have insisted on the unexpected impact of Heywood's accusation, since after his venomous statement, the original title-page of Jaggard's miscellany was soon to be replaced by a new title-page which did not mention Shakespeare's name anymore.³⁵

This correction proves rather intriguing if one considers that Shakespeare had apparently never thought of asking Jaggard to correct the misleading title of his anthology before, whereas he had had plenty of time to do so. The compiler, after all, had presented him as an author³⁶—that was surely nothing to complain about—and had increased the publicity surrounding his name. My view, here, is that Heywood's complaint was more a literary posture—something close to a common trope of anger—than a real expression of indignation. Shakespeare may (or, more probably, may not, but we will never know) have voiced his resentment to Heywood, but that point is not central to my argument. What I want to suggest here is that the clever Jaggard probably fully understood Heywood's literary game, the young writer being in quest of a 'literary respectability' that Shakespeare, his elder, had already acquired several years ago.³⁷ The printer entered it willingly and subsequently changed the title-page of this third edition, thereby creating more buzz around his already well-known anthology, with the silent (and amused?) approval of Shakespeare and Heywood³⁸ (the latter having managed to recall attention to his own works through a rather simple device). Doing so, he killed two birds (or three, actually) with the same stone: by reacting so promptly to Heywood's comment, he served him as well as he continued to serve Shakespeare (being now

³⁵ The first 1612 title page read: 'THE | PASSIONATE | PILGRIME. | OR | Certaine Amorous Sonnets, | betweene Venus and Adonis, | newly corrected and aug- | mented. | By W. Shakespere. | The third Edition. | Where-unto is newly ad- | ded two Loue-Epistles, the first | from Paris to Hellen, and | Hellens answere backe | againe to Paris. | Printed by W. Iaggard. | 1612.' It was then corrected as follows: 'THE | PASSIONATE | PILGRIME. | OR | Certaine Amorous Sonnets, | betweene Venus and Adonis, | newly corrected and aug- | mented. | The third Edition. | Where-unto is newly ad- | ded two Loue-Epistles, the first | from Paris to Hellen, and | Hellens answere backe | againe to Paris. | Printed by W. Iaggard. | 1612.'

³⁶ On this, see Patrick Cheney, *The Passionate Pilgrime in Shakespeare, National Poet-Playwright* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004), 153.

³⁷ David Kathman, "Heywood, Thomas (c.1573–1641)" in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004), np. Website: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13190>. Date accessed: 17 August 2016.

³⁸ Well before this incident, Heywood had already fully understood the advantage there was to appear close to the successful Shakespeare. His play *The Rape of Lucrece* (written around 1606-1607 and printed in 1608), for instance, followed Shakespeare's narrative poem rather faithfully, and it was a hit.

elevated to a striking absence on *The Passionate Pilgrim*'s title-page) and to make his own compilation prosper.

The fact is that, in 1609, Shakespeare presumably authorized the publications of his sonnets because he was aware of the increasing financial possibilities offered by the print market, particularly in the plague year of 1609, rather than because he meant to protect his literary creations from 'pirates.' That the poet-playwright did not bear any particular grudge against the printer is reinforced by what we know of Jaggard's career. Indeed, the latter did not become a renegade after the publication of *The Passionate Pilgrim*. On 17 December 1610, he 'became official printer to the City of London.'³⁹ In spite of his working methods, the very actors of Shakespeare's troupe eventually entrusted him with the production of nothing less than the First Folio. The supreme irony, at least for those critics still condemning Jaggard as a 'pirate,' is that *he* was the one who printed that Shakespeare's plays had been 'abused with diverse stolen, and surreptitious copies, maimed, and deformed by the frauds and stealthes of injurious imposters, that exposed them.'⁴⁰

Shakespeare, after all, had always known what it was like to be plagiarized: the actors of his company each day re-appropriated his lines in order to deliver them to the audience. The fact that he was a poet-playwright probably changed his conception of the poetic transaction. Poetry was for him a means to establish privileged links with a specific category of the population, which he could not really do with his plays at the Globe. Indeed, the main consumers of poetry were the aristocrats. 'The exact proportion of English society made up by the nobility and gentry is not known,' Peter Hyland observes, 'but it is estimated to have been no more than 2 per cent.' Yet, this small elite constituted 'a very powerful and very privileged group [...].'⁴¹

But with the advent of print culture, an educated middle class, including women, started reading poems, too. So, if the enclosed sonnets in *Love's Labour's Lost* seem adapted both to a popular audience eager to mock the manners of the court and to an elite likely to perceive Shakespeare's tongue-in-cheek humour transpiring behind the lords' bad poems, the detached sonnets reproduced in a commonplace book of sorts were designed to please a readership that actually bridged the gap between low and high. This readership did not only ask for delightfully familiar clichés but also for an exciting courtly flavour and Jaggard, already a

³⁹ Stanley Wells, "Jaggard, William (c.1568–1623)" in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004), n.p.. Website: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/37592>. Date accessed: 7 April 2016.

⁴⁰ William Shakespeare, *Mr. William Shakespeares comedies, histories, & tragedies: published according to the true originall copies*, London, 1623, sig. A3.

⁴¹ Peter Hyland, *An Introduction to Shakespeare's Poems* (New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 10.

‘successful businessman’ by then,⁴² simply seized the possibility to combine the two in one and the same book. It is tempting to imagine that Shakespeare secretly applauded such ingenuity, all the more so as, for him, there was no such thing as bad advertising. Publicity being all that mattered, he could not have been unaware that the reappropriation of his sonnets, be it ‘unauthorized,’ served his reputation more than it damaged it. By the turn of the 17th century, he was the fashionable writer to look at, his name was selling, he could not ask for more. If anything, Jaggard’s so-called ‘piracy’ (and a very legal one at the time) may simply have showed him the way to ‘authorize’ the publication of his own sonnets.

Conclusion

In *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, a witty comedy essentially devoted to the poetic power of language, Shakespeare does not only stage poems-within-the-poem. He shows their power of interaction with the external world. Wendy Wall duly reminds us that ‘[c]oterie circles [...] encouraged a “con-verse-ation” (“verse” from the Latin “vertere,” meaning “to turn”), a turning back and forth of scripted messages between writers’⁴³ and, I would add, readers. This was participatory literature in the broadest sense of the term.

Shakespeare, in this play, also comments on their reception and tells us that there is, in fact, no such thing as the ‘private’ circulation later mentioned by Meres in his *Palladis Tamia*: once written and released, sonnets necessarily became public matters. Shakespeare’s *mise en abyme* of poetry in *Love’s Labour’s Lost* is also strikingly visionary in the sense that, by emphasizing the decontextualization, circulation and misinterpretation of several sonnets or pseudo-sonnets composed by the lords, the play forecasts its own destiny. In other words, the young poet-playwright insists on the fact that poems released for public circulation, be it manuscript or print, always escape from the control of their authors.

Therefore, Shakespeare knew right from the beginning that ‘[o]thers felt free to transcribe, alter, and arrange [his sonnets] as they saw fit.’⁴⁴ He abdicated his freedom for the sake of what I would call ‘collaborative poetics.’ Poetic writings, and sonnets in particular, moved from one place to the other, were transcribed, compiled, rewritten, and carelessly scattered by

⁴² Wells, “Jaggard, William (c.1568–1623),” n.p.

⁴³ Wendy Wall, *The Imprint of Gender: Authorship and Publication in the English Renaissance* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1993), 35.

⁴⁴ Marotti, “Shakespeare’s Sonnets and the Manuscript Circulation of Texts in Early Modern England,” 185.

their all-powerful readers. Like Armado in *Love's Labour's Lost*, these empowered readers were, in fact, pretty 'sure' that they would 'turn sonnet[s]' (1.2.149-50).

Why not, then, work *with* them rather than *against* them?