Marlowe's Ovid: The "Elegies" in the Marlowe Canon

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Introduction: “Small things with greater may be copulate”: Marlowe the Ovidian

Marlowe’s rendition of “aptari magnis inferiora licet” (*Am*. 2.17.14) in my title demonstrates his subtle apprehension and multiplex reanimation of his predecessor’s signature concept, *ars*, in *All Ovids Elegies* (D4 / 2.17.14). In the *Amores*, the narrator has long since ironically identified himself as precisely the thing he says he is not, the *desultor Amoris* (*Am*. 1.3.15), that amusingly inept circus-rider of love.¹ Here he modulates his general lament about masculine susceptibility to the overrated charms of vain womankind to a specific complaint addressed to the elusive and narcissistic object of desire herself, the pseudonymous Corinna, with the claim that a lesser being may be joined to one greater, for the mutual satisfaction of both parties. One who reads “intratextually” in either the ancient or early modern version of the sequence with this line in mind may recognize the speaker’s uncanny habit of making double-edged statements that redound ironically on him. The desultor so often voices his perception of his superiority to Corinna elsewhere in the *Amores* that he may be betraying this very tendency here. He believes that he, rather than she, is “magnis,” though he, with characteristic pedantry, buttresses his point with several examples, in this case a “mythological brocade” of overpowering goddesses enrapturing yet ennobling the men they enslave: Calypso and Ulysses, Thetis and Peleus, Venus and Vulcan.² His transformative skill as *poeta*, he implies, signifies that he is the divine one, creator and maker, his subject merely the vessel, the weaker one at that.

In the sourcetext and translation in both its forms, the fragmentary *Certaine of Ovids Elegies* as well as the relatively complete *All* version, the youthful and inexperienced speaker frequently shows such pronounced imperviousness to the implications of his statements. The sponsoring poet implies in his droll authorial distance that it is, for example, presumptuous of the cuckolding desultor to blame this married woman for the feelings he projects onto her. Marlowe preserves this irony and improvises on this customary dynamic of love poetry that Ovid helped engender in the *Amores*, a sturdily rooted trunk that sprouted various branches: troubadour *cansos*, *La vita nuova*, the *Rime sparse*, the lyric output of the Pléiade, and the poetry of Sidney, Spenser, and their successors in the seventeenth century such as Donne, Carew, and Waller, as well as the *Elegies* itself. This pseudo-sonnet-sequence valorizes and parodies such venerable poetical traditions dependent on the idea of the resentful *amans* who reveals more about himself than he realizes in his attempt to decipher his *domina* who is so incomprehensible to him.

¹ Volk on idea of persona in Ovid. Marlowe does not translate the phrase. Marlowe does not translate this phrase in the *Elegies*, rendering it instead: “I loue but one, and hir I loue change neuer” (E3).
² The phrase that describes Ovid’s “profuse” use of such a device is Boas’s (44). He demonstrates in his landmark study, in a general way (29-42): in spite of errors in translation, “its counterbalancing merits and its importance in Marlowe’s development have not been sufficiently recognized” (30).
Diction in the English line above partially illustrates this concept. Though the adjective “copulate” is not an exact equivalent to the infinitive “aptari,” it constitutes a clever substitution, its sardonic sexual edge in the tradition of the *magister et praeceptor Amoris* (master and teacher of Love) as Ovid was often known to medieval and early modern readers from his persona in the *Ars amatoria*. 3 “Small things with greater may be copulate” can also be understood as an allegory of imitation and authorship. Marlowe reveals his desire to be joined to Ovid as he modestly understates his own worth. Yet in the very act of writing these seven words, encompassing translation, imitation, and improvisation, he competes with his predecessor, whose presence manifests itself in his other works, especially his plays. For this reason and many others, the *Elegies* is an essential text for apprehending Marlowe’s poetical sensibility, though probably one of his least studied for its own sake, with the exceptions of the Manwood Elegy and *Lucans First Booke*. 4 In his desultor’s “I speake old Poets wonderfull inuentions” (*AOE* E2° / 3.5.17), he would seem to enunciating his own method.

No definitive reason for Marlowe’s choice of the *Amores* for translation can be assumed, in spite of some recent and appealing arguments by Patrick Cheney, Ian Frederick Moulton, and Georgia E. Brown. 5 This first-person sequence of poems, similar to those of the earlier Latin neoteric elegists Gallus, Propertius, and Tibullus, recounts an adulterous relationship with a rich and unhappily married woman, Corinna, who, for these intertwined reasons, is spectacularly unfaithful to her *vir*, or husband. In his guise of *praeceptor Amoris*, Ovid boasts in the

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3 Rare as an adj. But the noun not infrequent, and Sh. uses in play in which he pays tribute to Marlowe, in Touchstone’s line, “I presse in heere sir, amongst the rest of the Country copulatiues” (*AYL* 5.4.56), cited in *OED* (copulative n. B. 4): “Used humorously of persons about to be coupled in marriage. *Obs.*” Though it is tempting to detect a strong pun on “copulate,” as an adj. in Marlowe’s time it has no sexual meaning whatsoever: “Connected, coupled; conjoined, united” (copulate, adj. and n.). First historical example of the verb as “To unite in sexual congress” (v. 3 intr.) does not occur until 1632, when it began, as most such terms do, as a euphemism.

4 Georgia E. Brown: “Our appreciation of Marlowe’s poems is not only hampered by our narrow understanding of the classical ideal, we also prefer texts that confirm our values of individualism, distinction, and authenticity of voice. We denigrate texts . . . which are translations or imitations because they supposedly lack originality, and conform to collaborative models of production which we are only just beginning to appreciate.” See “Marlowe’s Poems and Classicism,” in Cambridge Companion, 106. Marjorie Garber explains the metaphor of writing and revision in the corpus: “Patterns of intertextual reference, texts ‘deconstructing’ or undoing other texts, and authors asserting competing authority recur throughout Marlowe’s plays.” See “Here’s nothing writ’: Scribe, Script, and Circumspection in Marlowe’s Plays,” *Theatre Journal* 86 (1984): 301: 301-20.

Ars, his comic guide to seduction that complements this preceding text, that even though her name was pseudonymous, he made her famous. Therefore, his later disavowal in his exile poetry, the Tristia, that these erotic works were autobiographical has struck some readers as unconvincing, a de profundis from his forced exile on the Black Sea. Marlowe does not seem to have been aware of these biographical complications or to have understood how they had informed the perceptions of his predecessors in their reception of Ovid as well as his own. Also, the social, sexual, and moral milieu of the Amores would be just as difficult to recreate for a writer of the sixteenth century as it would be for anyone contemplating such an undertaking in the twenty-first. There is no precise equivalent for begging a eunuch guarding the door of a married woman to allow entry in order to cuckold his master, her husband, or for asking quarter from a cruel Cupid who leads a triumphal procession celebrating the lover’s humiliating downfall, only approximations. Freudian or Lacanian psychosexual paradigms cannot be projected back onto Ovid and his translator as facilely as some may wish they could be. No indisputable date of composition for

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6 “et multi, quae sit nostra Corinna, rogant” (Ars amatoria 3.538) [and many ask who my Corinna might be]. Numerous passages in the Tristia attempt to be self-exculpatory, e.g., “non ego mordaci destrinxii carmine quemquam, / nec meus ulius crimina versus habet” (2.563-64) [I have never injured anyone with a satirical poem, my verse contains charges against no one]. This passage probably refers to the Amores: “ad leve rursus opus, iuvenalia carmina, veni, / et falso movi pectus amore meum, / non equidem vellem” (339-41) [I returned once more to my light task, the songs of youth, disturbing my heart with false love. Would that I had not]. Ovid argues that his other erotic poetry, such as the Ars, could not possibly have been harmful: “neque me nuptae didicierunt furta magistro, / quodque parum novit, nemo docere potest. / sic ego delicias et mollia carmina feci, / strinxerit ut nomen fabula nulla meum” (2.347-50) [no brides have learned deceptions through my teaching; nobody can teach that of which he knows too little. I have written trifes and tender verses but in such fashion that no scandal has ever touched my name]. Texts of the Latin poetry follow (and translations in square brackets are based on) the Loeb editions: Heroides and Amores, tr. Grant Shoverman, 2nd ed. rev. G. P. Goold (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986); Tristia [and] Ex Ponto, tr. Arthur Leslie Wheeler (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1924, rpt. 1985); The Art of Love and Other Poems, tr. J. H. Mozley, 2nd ed. rev. G. P. Goold (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985).

7 Early modern English readers could have read about Ovid’s mysterious “carmen et error” (Tr. 2.207) in a number of places, such as Thomas Cooper’s Thesaurus Linguarum Romanarum et Britannicarum (London: H. Wykes, 1565): “The cause of his exile is uncertain, saynynge some suppose it was for abusesyng Iulia, daughter of the emperour Augustus, although the pretence of the emperour was for the makynge of the booke of the crafte of loue, wherby yonge myndes might be styred to wantonnes. He lyved at the tyme when Christ our sauiour was conuersaunte with vs here on earth” (N3r). Thomas Underdowne’s headnote to his translation of the Ibis is similar but also contains the brief passage from late antiquity that is the source of the Ovid-Julia legend: “The cause of his banishment is vncertain, but most men thinke, & I am of that opinion also, that it was for vsing too familiarly Julia, Augustus his daughter, who of hir selfe too much enclined to lasciuousnes, vnto whome he wrote many wanton Elegies, vnder the name of Corinna, as Sidonius plainly affirmeth. ‘et te carmina per libidinoso / notum, Naso tener, Tomosque missum, / quondam Caesareae nimis puellae, / fico nomine subditum Corinnae’ [And gentle Naso, you were notorious for lascivious poetry, and exiled to Tomis, once excessively enamored of the daughter of Caesar, known secretly under the fictitious name of Corinna]. See Ovid his inuictue against Ibis, Translated into English méeter (London: Thomas East and Henry Middleton, 1569), Avii. Sidonius Apollinaris (430-79), later canonized as St. Sidonius, included this passage in his Carmina (23.158-61). Ovid was banished in 8 CE, as was Julia, who was Augustus’s granddaughter, not his daughter. The confusion arose because Julia’s mother had the same name, and was exiled for the same reason nine years earlier (1 BCE): adultery and fornication. For a close reading of the evidence, see Ronald Syme, History in Ovid (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 215-19.
the *Elegies* can be assumed, either. Most scholars think of this work as juvenilia, a production at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge or even earlier, at the King’s School in Canterbury, though it could have been the last thing Marlowe wrote before his (inevitably invoked) visit to Elinor Bull’s residence in Deptford.

These recent studies by my three named predecessors indicate a significant modulation in critical thinking about the *Elegies*, one that changes the key provided by an earlier model that seemed unconcerned with its possible worth as poetry and even contemptuous of the very idea, tending instead toward complex bibliographic issues. A maverick commentator from this earlier era, J. B. Steane, shrewdly observed of some followers of this trend:

“Charges of incompetence and immaturity have so crabbed the approach that one feels a frowning countenance to be expected of the discriminating reader throughout. For myself, I find it impossible to maintain beyond a few lines.”

This pre-existing critical tradition, the alleged incompetence of the translator, is epitomized by one of Marlowe’s most justly celebrated twentieth-century editors, who devotes not one but two substantial essays to the topic. She says: “One begins to question the efficacy of the Elizabethan education system when an Archbishop Parker scholar can make such elementary mistakes.” In this, she may have been prompted by an even earlier editor whose almost every footnote—relentlessly and obsessively—details such errors.

I offer a methodology that differs from these dual critical traditions but depends on both nevertheless. I propose to use the *Elegies* as a way to read Marlowe, with four principles in mind. First, in spite of the considerable differences of this text from the rest of his canon, there is some relation to it, as well. His reconstituted Ovidian speaker echoes the vaunting of Tamburlaine, the intellectual arpeggios of Faustus, the scheming and perfidy of Gaveston, and Mortimer, the emotional devastation of Edward and Isabella, and the metaphorical calisthenics of Leander and Neptune as they attempt to seduce their prey. Second, the *Elegies* reflects the influence of Erasmian

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9 Roma Gill, “Snakes Leape by Verse,” in *Christopher Marlowe*, ed. Brian Morris (New York: Hill and Wang, 1968), 133-50; 137. Her other essay on the subject is “Marlowe and the Art of Translation” in *A Poet and a Filthy Play-maker*: *New Essays on Christopher Marlowe*, ed. Kenneth Friedenreich, Roma Gill, and Constance Kurtyama (New York: AMS Press, 1988), 327-42. Her edition is *All Ovids Elegies, Lucans First Booke, Dido Queene of Carthage, Hero and Leander* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987). L. C. Martin’s *Marlowe’s Poems* (London: Methuen, 1931) explains that “In the present edition the attempt has been made to show not only when but, so far as possible, how Marlowe went astray” in translation, which the editor asserts was occasioned by the “line-for-line” method, or metaphrase, “which may go some way to account for the gauckeries of grammar and verse-making.” Yet he posits that the use of a misleading commentary might have been responsible (16). In the Revels or second Methuen edition meant to update Martin’s, Millar MacLure is more generous: “one who sets himself to translate Latin elegiacs into closed English pentameter couplets is not engaged in the diversion of an idle hour, and Marlowe carries it off with remarkable success.” See *The Poems: Christopher Marlowe* (London: Methuen, 1968), xxxii. Lee T. Pearcy also argues that the Elegies is mainly metaphrase in *The Mediated Muse: English Translations of Ovid, 1560-1700* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1984), 4-19.
humanist pedagogy according to Richard Mulcaster’s *The First Part of the Elementarie* (1582) and Roger Ascham’s *The scholemaster* (1570), especially the complementary concepts of *imitatio* and *aemulatio*: “This *imitatio* is *dissimilis materiei similis tractatio*; and also, *similis materiei dissimilis tractatio*, as Virgill folowed Homer.” Its blunders, including the most egregious, suggest that Marlowe, like many other early modern readers of classical literature, consulted (and may have been led astray by) a commentary. Third, this much reprinted text was the standard English *Amores* until the Glorious Revolution, part of the larger phenomenon of pan-European Renaissance Ovidianism and its most pronounced London manifestation, the frenetic book trade of the 1590s. Thomas Vautrollier was given a ten-year patent to publish the works in Latin in 1574. Virtually the entire canon was rendered into English twice over before 1630. Fourth, as I argued in a previous study, it is truly similar enough to a sonnet sequence to suggest that it participates in the genre, at least vicariously: a series of love poems ostensibly about or to a woman, with the writer serving as his own chief subject, along with the *ars poetica*. Accordingly, the

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10 I.e., dissimilar in subject matter but similar in treatment, and vice versa. Though Ascham defines *imitatio* as “a facultie to expresse liuelie and perfetlie that example which ye go about to folow,” one may also work variations: “This he altereth and changeth, either in propertie of wordes, in forme of sentence, in substance of the matter, on in one or other conuenient circumstance of the authors present purpose.” See *The scholemaster or plaine and perfite way of teachyng children, to vnderstand, write, and speake, the Latin tong but specially purposed for the priuate brynging vp of youth in entlemen and noble mens houses, and commodious also for all such, as haue forgot the Latin tongue* (London: John Daye, 1570), 47r, 45v, 47v, respectively. For Mulcaster, see *The First Part of the Elementarie Which Entreateth Chiefly of the right writing of our English Tung* (London: Thomas Vautrollier, 1582).

11 Although Martin and MacLure both speculate that this is true, only the more recent work of Pearcy makes specific connections between a commentary, that of Dominicus Marius Niger Venetus (Basel, 1543-50), and Marlowe’s readings. See “Marlowe, Dominicus Niger, and Ovid’s *Amores*,” *Notes and Queries* 27 (1980): 315-18. Cheney and Strier repeat some of his findings but then in their running commentary read Niger very closely against some of the “mistakes” for which Martin and Gill prosecute Marlowe, with results that are valuable for scholarship on the *Elegies*. Martin posits editions with commentary printed at Basel (1568) and that of Philip Plantin at Antwerp (1575), but without any examples or close reading (*Marlowe’s Poems*, 16). Actually, many fulsomely annotated Continental editions were available to early modern readers, e.g., Bartholomew Merula on the erotic poetry (Venice, 1494); Raphael Regius on the *Metamorphoses* (Venice, 1497); Jacobus Micyllus’s vigorous revision of these two editions with further commentary (Basel, 1543); Georgius Sabinus (Cambridge, 1584). See also Ann Moss, *Ovid in Renaissance France: A Survey of the Latin Editions of Ovid and Commentaries Printed in France before 1600* (London: Warburg Institute, 1982).

Amores could be said to have informed the concept of the sonnet sequence itself, since it served as an important influence on lyric poetry from the earliest troubadours to La vita nuova and the Rime sparse, which both revise and Christianize Ovid’s foundational work. This, then, may well be the best explanation for Marlowe’s choice of text for translation, this series of elegiac meditations in narrative form as adjunct to Du Bellay’s L’Olive, Ronsard’s Sonnets pour Hélène, Sidney’s Astrophil and Stella, Daniel’s Delia, Drayton’s Idea, and eventually, Shake-speares Sonnets.  

ERIKA thinks that the paragraph on p. 26 would work better here. But it’s still later, too.

Other critics have tried to describe Marlowe’s inheritance such as Matthew Proser, who has detected elements of what he calls the “classic Ovidian spirit” in the plays and poetry. These include “urbanity, wit, satiric impulse, and, of course, eroticism, along with mythological interest, lyricism, shapeliness, and a peculiar combination of emotional sophistication and clarity,” all essentially related to the master’s “practice of structural control.” These observations are solid and should be kept in mind. My task is to explain Marlowe’s Ovidianism somewhat differently by determining exactly how translating the Amores into the Elegies profited him as a writer, which would aid in our understanding of why he may have undertaken such a task in the first place.

Maybe also here explain the whole thing about the disingenuous title. Don’t mean to say that this is the only Ovid Marlowe knew or owned. But this is the one we know he did for sure.

Also: this is a kind of literary archaeology or even paleontology. Fossils, dinosaurs, pottery shards, and sometimes, entire sarcophagi or pieces of glass.

The translation appeared at the apex of early modern European Ovidianism. This cultural phenomenon included painting, sculpture, poetry, and drama informed by Metamorphoses-oriented mythological matter; humanist debate about the poet’s fitness for inclusion in programs of education; the establishment of important editions of the opera, from the two editiones principes of 1471 (i.e., Andreas, Rome; Puteolanus, Bologna) to the

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13 For the idea of the Amores as a proto-sonnet sequence, especially for Dante and Petrarch, see my Harmful Eloquence: Ovid’s “Amores” from Antiquity to Shakespeare (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 91, 116-19. For an extended discussion of the Elegies as participatory in the sonnet genre, and its likely influence on Shakespeare, see 133-53. Stephen Orgel puts it eloquently: “this is Marlowe’s sonnet sequence, the psychomachia of a poet-lover whose love is both his creation and his ultimate monomania, frustration, and despair.” See his edition, Christopher Marlowe: The Complete Poems and Translations (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971), 233. John Roe: “if Marlowe’s special misogynistic character prevents his becoming involved in the sonnet movement which was then gathering pace, he delights in amorousness as much as any sonneteer.” 41.

14 Proser, p. 85.
three-volume Second Aldine in 1515-16 (Naugerius, Venice); and, in a somewhat peculiar development, the translation into English of virtually all the works between the ascent of Elizabeth and the Interregnum, from Arthur Golding’s *Metamorphoses* (1567) to John Sherburne’s *Heroides* (1639).¹⁵ This pan-Renaissance enthusiasm for Ovid represents an extension of the obsession with him manifest in medieval culture, reflected in the thousands of fragmentary quotations from his works in writers such as Isidore of Seville, manuscripts of poetry and philosophy, and collections such as the *Anthologia Latina*. Pedagogues demonstrated his utility in the schoolroom in their *accessus ad auctores* and other educational texts. Writers as diverse as Prudentius, Martianus Capella, the anonymous authors of *De vetula*, the *Ovide moralisé* and the *Ovidius moralizatus*, Andreas Capellanus in *De amore*, and Jean de Meun in *La roman de la rose* parodied, recast, and Christianized the *Metamorphoses* and other parts of the corpus, just as tapestry-makers, painters, and sculptors did.¹⁶

Marlowe’s rendition of the *Amores* is one of the myriad texts, translations, and commentaries devoted to Ovid that helped constitute six hundred especially productive years of imitation and emulation of this *auctor*, from the Latin poetry of late antiquity to the twelfth-century allegorical *integumenta* to the seventeenth-century statuary of Bernini and the poetry of Waller and Milton. His sixteenth-century version of the desultor, a being with an identifiable, distinct, and even pungent personality, may reflect the emergent early modern idea of the individual, perhaps more defined and less corporate than the medieval conception of *humanum genus*.¹⁷ His reanimation and recasting of this nuanced persona with closed couplets and contemporary idiom suggests competition with as well as homage to the ancient author, a distance felt across time in which the past is truly past, as in Petrarch’s letters to Cicero and Vergil, such epistolary activity similarly involving presumption as well as praise. Marlowe’s transformation of this Ovidian speaker into a callow Elizabethan gallant who accompanies John Davies’s fools and clowns in his satirical *Epigrammes*, the text bound with both versions of the *Elegies* and allegedly printed in Holland, is analogous to the many examples of *aemulatio* in this extended *aetas Ovidiana*, from Guillaume IX to

¹⁵ Though it is somewhat hackneyed to excuse oneself from attempting to provide a detailed description of such trends because so much has been written elsewhere so very well, I must nevertheless argue that the cliché constitutes a valid observation in this case and relegate the matter to somewhat overlong footnotes dedicated to the excellence of my elders and betters who have preceded me. Barkan, Burrow, collections such as Cambridge Companion to Ovid, Martindales, and so on. Lerner. Account of early eds. of Ovid, see Possanza, 318-22; general renaissance stuff, Burrow, Jameson


writers from his own time. These include Shakespeare’s parodic evocation of the Metamorphoses in Titus Andronicus (1594) and Venus and Adonis (1593), Jonson’s use of Ovid himself as a character in Poetaster (1601), and Chapman’s apparent critique of the sensibility of the magister in Ovids Banquet of Sense (1595). The Elegies, then, was very much of its moment as well as for all time.

Ovid’s immensely variegated reception across time naturally constructed his reputation in Marlowe’s formative years. Poststructuralist theory has destabilized formerly fixed notions of what constitutes these interrelated, multiplex entities so that our perception of how our forebears actually regarded the two authors must remain elusive. Although plenty of testimony exists to the effect that medieval and early modern readers considered Ovid to be wanton, immoral, and even amoral, it is nevertheless true that a substantial number of others from the time period thought of him as infallible on matters that would seem to us to be incongruent with what we think we know about him—such as morality. For example, Thomas Winter (1604) cites lines from the Amores to begin and end his translation of the Huguenot Guillaume Du Bartas’s La Sepmaine; ou, Creation du monde. George Abbott, Professor of Divinity and Master of University College, Oxford, refers to Ovid as “effeminate” in a sermon devoted to Jonah (1600), but then quotes him, expertly, seventeen times in the same document as an unassailable authority on moral, even Scriptural matters. The Welsh divine Gervase Babington seems unafraid to reconstitute lines that he does not appear to use in the proper context, in this case a commentary on Genesis (1592). He illustrates the precept that it is wise to moderate anger by delay with an anecdote devoted to St. Ambrose, who counseled the Emperor Theodosius to create a law postponing executions for thirty days to avoid injustice, “to the ende, that if anger had anye way made the iudgment too sharpe, this respite and tyme, myght againe moderate it accordying vnto iustice. For vtr fragilis glacies, interit ira mora [AA 1.374]. As ire in time doth melt away, so time makes anger to decay.” However, Ovid’s line from the Ars seems divorced indeed from such a godly purpose. It encourages a prospective lover to enlist a maid to arouse her lady’s anger at him so that his attempt to appease her will make him seem earnest in love and therefore more make him more effective in seducing her. Christianizing this notorious manual of


19 Raymond B. Waddington asserts that Ovid’s Banquet of Sense satirizes the fashion for the erotic epyllion and “ridicules the image of the erotic Ovid by making him protagonist of a seduction poem.” Thinks Chapman’s continuation presents “correct” type of Ovid, from Amores to Metamorphoses. Aha. Met. correct, Amores not. See The Mind’s Empire: Myth and Form in George Chapman’s Narrative Poems. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1974, p. 156
seduction seems to have been a custom of that country, since the manuscript informally known as “St. Dunstan’s Classbook,” dating from the ninth century, includes three didactic religious texts bound together with the first book of the *Ars*, annotated with Welsh glosses. The Ovid that Marlowe inherited, then, may not have been considered quite as transgressive or subversive in his time as we may think, certainly an integral part of the humanist curriculum he experienced at King’s, along with the future Bishop of Salisbury, a kinsman of Leonard Digges, John Lyly’s younger brother, and the grandson of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Such schooling was fueled by its Ascham-infused Erasmian concepts about imitation, emulation, and translation that provided the pedagogical superstructure that underlies so many poetical monuments in early modern English literature. The practice was never simply a matter of learning a metaphrastic type of translation in which a student should adhere to a word-for-word method, but much more dense and allusive and complex, one that encouraged great creativity, to immerse oneself completely in the grammar and poetics of an author, and emerge not as a verbatim copy of him or some type of mascot, but very much as one’s own poet. The assertion “To move from prose to verse it was necessary only to juggle the words around” mischaracterizes this essential part of Marlowe’s education, not just at King’s, but at Corpus Christi.

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22 Peary, *Mediated*, 5. Thinks like a classicist. A statement on the next page actually invalidates this assertion, even as he tries to support it: “If we know the original or consult it, then the translation creates in our mind a constant tension as we attempt, in couplet after couplet, to reconcile expectation with performance, the Ovid we know with the Ovid Marlowe gives us.” (6). Marlowe’s originality and his non-metaphrasing made extremely clear in Peary’s brilliant and subtle analysis of how Marlowe is “Ovidian” in his approximation of the magister’s effects with creating sententiae and subtly modulating the use of the caesura from Latin to English. More so than Golding, he achieved “tightness, balance, a sense of one word placed to weigh against another. His translation imitates this quality throughout and becomes Ovidian even though it does not copy Ovid at every line or in every feature.” The translation is “the first English Ovid to translate style equally with substance and to attempt to give the general effect as well as the specific meaning of its original” (10). Urry (99-107) source for the schoolmates, and explain them a little better.
The Amores must have been part of this learning, just as it was for the troubadours, philosophers, theologians, and schoolmasters who cited or emulated this text in the centuries preceding the sixteenth, from the poets of the Anthologia Latina to François Villon. Marlowe may have first encountered and then developed an affectionately proprietary interest in it while engaging himself in the Erasmian pedagogical technique known as copia in compiling his commonplace book, as Ascham and Mulcaster had recommended. Students in the humanist schoolroom at King’s or Cambridge might copy, translate, emulate and annotate various flores, choice quotations from ancient authors like Ovid, in what must have been an intensely creative and therefore invigorating compositional experience. So, an especially rich and allusive passage in a Marlowe play or poem, one, for example, based on a line adapted from the Amores itself (1.13.40), such as Faustus’s “O lente, lente, currite noctis equi” (DFa H2’/ 5.2.77), just as cleverly wrenched from its original context as the passages cited above, probably reflects a practice that the author followed, just as Spenser had, from his earliest studies. One school text, John Brinsley’s Ludus Literarius (1627), based on traditional humanist methods that informed Marlowe’s schooling, even recommends Ovid as matter for beginners in the practice. Although early modern English writers do not quote this text with the same frequency as the Metamorphoses, Tristia, or Heroides, the explanation that this relative underrepresentation can be attributed to its notorious status as forbidden reading—which would account for its attraction to the allegedly transgressive Marlowe as a translation project, as well as its ensuing inclusion in the

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23 Hexter, Alton and Wormell, and so on.
25 the goal is fluidity, ease, in Brinsley. 192-3 “Take Flores Poëtarum, and in every Common place make choise of Ouids verses, or if you find any other which be pleasant and easie: and making sure, that your Schollers know not the verses aforesaid, vse to dictate vnto them as you did in prose. Cause also so many as you would haue to learne together, to set downe the English as you dictate. // Secondly, to giue you, and to write downe all the words in Latine verbatim, or Grammatically. //Thirdly, hauing iust the same words, let them trie which o[f] them can soonest turne them into the order of a verse: which they will presently do, being trained vp in the vse of the translations; which is the same in Effect. // And then lastly, reade them ouer the verses of Ouid, that they may see that themselues haue made the very same; or wherein they missed: this shall much incourage and assure them.” Then build on this. At first, 194 “euer to keepe the very phrase of the Poet, there or in other places, onely transposing the words or phrase, or changing some word or phrase, or the numbers or persons, or applying them to matters which are familiar, as they did in imitating Epistles. This may be practised, each to bring first a verse or two thus changed . . . // As they proceed, to cause them to contract their Lectures, drawing seuen or eight verses into foure or fiue, or fewer: yet labouring to express the whole matter of their Author in their owne verse, and every circumstance, with all significant Metaphors, and other tropes and phrases, so much as they can.” Vergil the pattern they should follow, and they should do this kind of emulating, which is what this is, “contracting a certaine number, as some 5. or 6. a day, for some of their exercises, striuing who can express their Author most liuely. By which daily contention you shall find, that those who take a delight in Poetry, and have sharppnesse & dexterity accordingly, will in a short time attaine to that ripenesse, as that they who know not the places which they imitate, shall hardly discerne in many verses, whether the verse be Virgils verse, or the Schollers.
Bishops’s Ban of 1599—is not entirely credible. Indeed, this youthful work, known as *Ovidius sine titulo* in the early Middle Ages, attends to subjects such as abortion, impotence, adultery, and fornication, anticipating most all the Seven Deadly Sins. Yet early readers did not necessarily consider the desultor who narrates the elegies with such vaunting and hypocrisy to be a surrogate for the author, or that Ovid was advocating such behavior, since they also knew he repeatedly emphasizes the distinction between his poetry (jocund) and life (chaste), and believed him, as William Fowldes (1603), deriding the notion that he was merely wanton: “For though his Muse was wanton, as he playned, / Yet Ouids life was chaste, and neuer stayned.”

Just as Winter, Abbott, and Babington saw nothing amiss in recasting the erotic wisdom of the *Ars* as support for Christian authority or other types of moralia, others used the *Amores* in this fashion also. Hugh Kinder’s translation of Levinius Lemnius’s ethical treatise, *The sanctuarie of saluation, helmet of health, and mirrour of modestie and good maners* (1592), features a rendition of *Amores* 1.9 into poulter’s measure to buttress the claim that old men should moderate their desires and even abstain from sexual activity, preceded by this learned gloss:

> most chiefly in olde age, inordinate lusts must be restrayned, and the entrie into luxurie stopped,
> which as it is shamefull for youth: so, as Cicero saith, it is most filthy and unseemly for olde age. For as in warre and in the campe souldiers haue neede of strength, haue neede of nimblenesse, haue neede of valiauntnesse to suffer and indure labour and trauayle: euen so in loue and in accomplishing the pleasures thereof, strength is requisite to sustaine the labours of the night, to overcome and abolish the tediousnesse of matrimonie, to beare and abide the conditions of a malapert wife, of an imperious and stately dame. Wherefore neither warre nor loue is meete for

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26 Amores in western culture, see your own essay in HE. Lots of imitations, from Baptista Mantuanus to Petrarch to troubadours to Milton, whose own Latin elegies echo Amores sp. 1.17-24, 3.2, 4.1-4. Donne. Shakespeare’s Sonnets. Spenser, in FQ 3 with Paridell and Hellenore. The hundreds of times Ovid is used as an authority on all kinds of matters, from building armor to moral philosophy to Christian ethics to exempla for Puritan sermons. The jocund / chaste dichotomy in Tristia and much imitated and quoted, by Robert Herrick and others. “crede mihi, distant mores a carmine nostro—/vita verecunda est, Musa iocosa mea—” (Tr. 2.353-54) [I assure you, my character differs from my verse (my life is moral, my muse is gay)]. See Tristia and Ex Ponto, tr. Arthur Leslie Wheeler (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1924), 80-81. For Fowldes, see The strange, wonderfull, and blody battel betweene Frogs and Mise. London: Printed by S. S. for John Bayly, 1603, B3v. Mistake that Cheney makes about Amores as forbidden dance can be traced to Jacobsen: Cheney 49 believes the Eric Jacobsen argument that Amores a cultural taboo. Notes that it had no humanist apparatus. Jacobsen: Translation: A Traditional Craft. Copenhagen: Gyldendanske Boghandel-Nordisk Forlag, 1958. Maybe not exactly the forbidden dance after all.
olde men, because either of them caryeth with it many troubles, griefes, and inconueniences, for
the which olde age is ouer weake, and an vnequall match and vnmeete to indure them.\footnote{27}

This would seem to be the opposite of Ovid’s apparent intention for the poem’s bracing first lines, designed to
demonstrate his desultor’s arrogance in boasting of his sexual prowess, which argues that a true lover should persist
in chasing women just as a soldier worth the salt should pursue war. The unseemly desires of elderly gentlemen is
surely a secondary concern, though their inability to sustain the labors of the night in order to abolish the tedium of
marriage is nevertheless a condition to be lamented, a point supported by Ovid’s elegiac sequence, which implies
that it was not necessarily forbidden reading. Dominicus Niger would not have otherwise bothered to write an
extensive and fulsome commentary on the Amores that was often reprinted, adapted, and openly consulted by
readers throughout the sixteenth century, including Marlowe.\footnote{28}

What do some of Marlowe’s contemporaries have to say about the Amores? His theatrical collaborator
Thomas Nashe quotes it more than any other Ovidian text in his works, including the Metamorphoses, in an
astonishing variety of contexts in his many prose treatises, without much concern for its allegedly forbidden nature,
even though he provides the appropriate boilerplate in his de rigueur disclaimer on the utility of erotic poetry in The
Anatomie of Absurditie (1589):

I woulde not hue any man imagine, that in praysing of Poetry, I endeuour to approue Virgils
vnchast Priapus, or Ouids obscenitie. I commend their witte, not their wantonnes, their learning,
not their lust: yet euen as the Bee out of the bitterest flowers, and sharpest thistles gathers honey,
so out of the filthiest Fables, may profitable knowledge be sucked and selected. Neuerthelesse
tender youth ought to bee restrained for a time from the reading of such ribauldrie, least chewing
ouer wantonlie the eares of this Summer Corne, they be choaked with the haune before they can
come at the kernell.\footnote{29}

\footnote{27} The sanctuarie of saluation, helmet of health, and mirrour of modestie and good maners wherein is contained an
exhortation vnto the institution of Christian, vertuous, honest, and laudable life, very behooeufall, holsome and
fruitfull both to highest and lowest degrees of men, tr. by Hugh Kinder (London: Hugh Singleton, [1592]), 81. The
translation of 1.9: “All louers play the souldiers part, and Cupid hath his campe: / O Atticus beleeue mee well, all
louers play this part. / A man that able is for warre, his age is meete for lust: / Old men for warres both vnfit are, and
loue forsake they must.”
\footnote{28} Pearcy’s important note (1980) that basically proves M used the Venetian Marius Dominicus Niger’s P. Ovidii
Nasonis Poetae Sulmonensis Opera Quae Vocantur Amatoria (Basle: Joannem Hervagium, 1549).
\footnote{29} The Anatomie of Absurditie: Contayning a breefe confutation of the slender imputed prayses to feminine
perfection, with a short description of the seuerall practices of youth, and sundry follies of our licentious times
For an author who wrote *The Choise of Valentines* (c. 1594) and happily circulated this pornographic poem in manuscript under its other name, *Nashe His Dildo*, this seems to be quite a disingenuous statement. His sense of humor is rarely absent from his writings. His benevolent Summer castigates Winter in *Summers Last Will and Testament* (1600), “Let none beleeue thee, that will euer thriue,” for making frosty observations such as this: “Whoredome hath Ouid to vphold her throne, / And Aretine of late in Italie.” Nashe may have also wanted us to notice Winter’s hypocrisy, since later in the same speech, he uses the *Amores*, which surely helped the *magister Amoris* uphold whoredom’s throne, as a moral exemplum. Two other divergent examples should suffice to demonstrate the unreliability of twenty-first-century allegations that early moderns found amatory verse indecent or unsuitable for reading. A poem attributed to Robert Greene (1592), the acerbic condemner of Shakespeare and other playwrights such as Marlowe, discusses “the vanitie of wanton writings” in tetrameter couplets, but describes the *magister Amoris* as “Quaint” (i.e., skilled, clever, crafty) and “Chiefest Poet of his time,” one who “chaunted all of loue,” much “Of faire Corinna and her hew” and their relationship:

> How they loued and how they greed,  
> And how in fancy they did speed.  
> His Elegies were wanton all,  
> Telling of loues pleasings thrall, [sic]  
> And cause he would the Poet seeme,

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30 For the quotations, respectively, G4, G2v, Winter’s quotation, *Amores* 3.8.25-26:  
Nas, that could speake nothing but pure verse,  
And had more wit then words to vttre it,  
And words and choice as euer Poet had,  
Cride and exclaimde in bitter agonie,  
When knowledge had corrupted his chaste mind,  
*Discite qui sapitis non haec qua scimus inertes,*  
*Seg trepidae acies, & fera bella sequi.*  
You that be wise, and euer meane to thriue,  
O studie not these toyes we sluggards vse,  
But follow armes, and waite on barbarous warres. (G3-G3v).  
Ossa-Richardson: says of Nashe’s multiplex quotation of Ovid: “we discover in these quotations a disruption of tenor and vehicle, related to the distortion of signs found elsewhere in the work” “we find the Roman author often deliberately misquoted, and his words existing at a peculiar distance from their original meanings” (591). His phrase “downward transposition” (953). Tends to lower Ovid.
That best of *Venus* lawes could deeme.

Though this version of Greene seems to be uncharacteristically moralistic, the lines do not necessarily condemn this incarnation of Ovid. They simply explain why his “Elegies” were in their entirety “wanton” (rebellious, undisciplined, not necessarily just lewd). This speaker, or the author who created him, agrees with the sentiments attributed to the same Augustus who banished Ovid, “as he said, so thinke I,” that poetry exists “To shew precepts to make men wise,” and “Tis shame and sinne then for good wits, / To shew their skill in wanton fits,” a quality that the surviving works credited to Greene exhibit in overplus.  ^{31}  For a second example, the critic William Webbe, in his *Discourse of English Poetrie* (1586), has clearly read the objections of the moralists and naysayers such as Stephen Gosson to plays and verse that delights as well as moves and teaches and uses the very example of the erotic Ovid, whom he praises as “a most learned, and exquisite Poet,” (Cv) to confound them. Though his poetry besides the *Metamorphoses* and *Fasti* may “tend to the vayne delights of loue and dalliance . . . yet surely are mixed with much good counsayle and profitable lessons” (Cii).

{\footnotesize  if the ill and vndecet prouocations, whereof some vnbridled witts take occasion by the reading of laciuious Poemes, bee objected: such as are *Ouid* loue Bookes and *Elegies, Tibullus, Catullus, and Martial* workes, with the Comedies for the most part of *Plautus* and *Terence*: I thinke it easily aunswered. For though it may not iustlie be denied, that these works are indeede very Poetrie, yet that Poetrie in them is not the essiall or formall matter or cause of the hurt therein might be affirmed, and although that reason should come short, yet this might be sufficient, that the workes themselues doo not corrupt, but the abuse of the vsers, who, vndamaging their owne dispositions by reading the discoueries of vices, resemble foolish folke, who comming into a Garden without anie choise or circumspectio[n] tread downe the fairest flowers and wilfullie thrust their fingers among the nettles.  ^{32} 

^{31} The uses to which Greene has been put in the last two centuries, to serve whatever agenda there may be by a particular critic or scholar who wants to assert something about Elizabethan drama, popular culture, Shakespeare, or hackwork often uses him, and much forged in his name to server particular uses. See the excellent introduction, “Re-imagining Robert Greene,” by Kirk Melnikoff and Edward Gieskes, to *Writing Robert Greene*, 1-24. For the poem, see Greene, Robert. “Greenes Ode, of the vanitie of wanton writings.” *Greenes Vision*, B2-B2”. The primary meaning of “wanton” according to *OED* (s.v., adj. A.1.a) was “Undisciplined, ungoverned; not amenable to control, unmanageable, rebellious,” and in the secondary sense (A.2.a) “Lascivious, unchaste, lewd. Also, in milder sense, given to amorous dalliance.”

^{32} *A Discourse of English Poetrie, Together, with the Authors iudgment, touching the reformation of our English Verse* (London: John Charlewood for Robert Walley, 1586), C”, Cii, Diiti-Diiti, respectively.
This anticipates Nashe’s sentences from the *Anatomie*, but the argument was hardly new at the end of the sixteenth century, since it is almost exactly the same justification that schoolmasters used from Carolingian times through the Reformation for reading profane texts along with the sacred, including the *Ovidius sine titulo*, which a twelfth-century commentator writing an introduction for students explained was intended to give pleasure, but which pertains primarily to ethics, uncannily similar to Kinder’s use cited above.33 The poetry causes no identifiable “hurt,” nor does it “corrupt,” but is instead misused by the “abuse of the vsers” who damage “their owne dispositions.” This subtly echoes Ovid’s own explanation of the differences between a writer’s art and life, and though he or she may devote the latter to the former, the two entities can never be exactly the same. Therefore, as Webbe observes, “Ouid, in his most wanton Bookes of loue and the remedies thereof, hath very many pithie and wise sentences, which a heedefull Reader may marke and chose out from the other stuffe.” Should we then assume that many of his readers, perhaps Marlowe among them, agreed, as Babington and Abbott obviously did, or instead thought of this as special pleading, or that the *Amores* needed special justification to be read? The *Ars* itself is much more graphic, and at the same time, astonishingly, was immensely popular as a school text, from St. Dunstan’s Classbook to the Wynkyn de Worde production, *The flores of Ovyde de arte amandi with theyr englysshe afore them* (1513), which selects some of the master’s choicest erotica for use as a teaching tool. Ovid’s comically didactic treatise actually seems to endorse all the behaviors that the desultor exhibits in the *Amores*, but the latter was hardly a forbidden book.34

It should also be remembered that Marlowe renders the *Amores* into the *Elegies* when Elizabethan conceptions of this poetical form and genre were especially flexible, reflective of a larger 1590’s poetical trend for speakers to appear dramatic, to be cynical and sarcastic, and even to appear obscure, this development part of a larger pan-European movement. The Florentine Luigi Almanni (1495-1556) may have been the first vernacular elegist as part of the revival of the literary form in the Renaissance, eros-oriented, with mistresses and emotional pyrotechnics. Sir John Harington’s liberal quotations and imitations of lines from the *Ars amatoria* and *Amores* in his translation of Ariosto’s *Orlando Furioso* (1591) helped make Ovid’s erotic poetry familiar to English readers, such as the preface to Book 4 that cites the first line of *Amores* 1.9 to explain its allegory: “Militat omnis amans &

33 “Ad ethicam spectat”; “Vtilitas est delectio.” In Hexter, 224. For a more accessible version of an accessus, see Minnis and Scott, Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism, p. 27
habet sua castra Cupido. / All louers warriers are, and Cupid hath his campe.” Nashe and Donne tried the new form in *The Choise of Valentines* (c. 1594) and the *Elegies* (c. 1598) respectively, and three verse collections alone published in the year of Marlowe’s death (1593) also prominently feature elegies: Thomas Lodge’s *Phyllis Honoured with Sonnets, Elegies, and Amorous Delights*, Barnabe Barnes’s *Parthenophil and Parthenophe*, and Giles Fletcher’s *Licia*. Shakespeare’s appropriately-named Proteus, Ovid’s favorite god, in *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (1591-92) refers to this poetical fashion and even invokes the *Amores* convention of the amans complaining outside the residence of the domina: “your dire-lamenting Elegies, / Visit by night your Ladies chamber-window / With some sweet Consort” (3.2.81-3). In this case, the poetical genre and its convention of histrionic emotional display would appear to be satirized, albeit gently, by a playwright who read Marlowe’s translation and emulated his Ovidianism throughout his poetical and dramatic career.

Marlowe generated his own association with his ancient predecessor by his rendition of the *Amores* and then his subtle quotation and reprocessing of this translation in his plays and in *Hero*, along with other allusions and imitations. Laurie Maguire has rightly observed that Marlowe was best known in print as an Ovidian poet. However, the earliest critical commentary that links the two writers is difficult to pinpoint. The alleged co-author of *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, Nashe, supplies a passage from the All text (2.3.3-4) about castration in a paragraph criticizing those who “gelt religion or Church-liuings” in *The Unfortunate Traveller* (1594). He therefore confers the status of an authority on his departed colleague, whose couplet serves as the medium for transmitting ancient

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35 1607 ed., p. 30. Find 1591. It is even possible that Harington’s tr. reprocesses “How apt her breasts were to be prest by mee” (1.5.20) in “Two ivory apples seemed there to grow / Tender and smooth and fittest to be prest” (7.14). See H. Klein, Das weibliche Portrait, p. 345.

36 his models Tibullus and Propertius as much as or more than Ovid. Some of following Alan Armstrong 421. also Robert Ellrodt, Les Poètes métaphysiques, 3:191, 326-8: Elizabethan conception of the genre of elegy very flexible, but part of penchant in 1590’s for poetic speakers to take dramatic stances, to be cynical and sarcastic, and to be obscure. For sh. connection see see James R. Simeon, Word for Word: Shakespearean Utterance, U Mass, 2002. Armstrong, 424 speakers in Donne’s elegies and Ovid’s “not only define themselves as deviants from ethical norms, but also expect their audiences to see the logical fallacies of their self-justifying arguments, as they themselves do.” Armstrong, 426 “they are self-conscious, omniscient speakers, who themselves recognize and intend their reflexive irony,” unlike Propertius’s. For Sh, line numbers are Riverside, and text is F1. For Proteus in Renaissance, see Giamatti, “Proteus Unbound”

37 “Marlovian Texts and Authorship,” 47. Also, John Roe: “Marlowe is probably the quintessential Ovidian poet among his contemporaries for reasons which are both compelling and yet a little disquieting. He reproduces Ovid’s remarkable imaginative scope, and he revels in his freedom to do pretty much as he likes in his poem. Metamorphosis for him means mercurial inventiveness.”

38 Unfortunate traveller. AOE: “Who first depriude yong boies of their best part, / With selfe same wounds he gaue he ought to smart.” See Anthony Ossa-Richardson, “Ovid and the “Free PLay with Signs” in Thomas Nashe’s The Unfortunate Traveller.” Modern Language Review 101 (2006): 945-56. Severe misunderstanding of the Ovidian locus, though: thinks the passage is about O’s frustration that his sexual advances have been rejected by a man, whereas the actual provenance is that the desultor Amoris feels sorry for Bagoas the eunuch because he is one and can’t understand desire for a woman.
wisdom to readers who had no Latin in lines that Nashe could have just as easily rendered into English himself. He makes another possible allusion in The Anatomy of Absurditie (1589), which echoes the traditional wisdom about the utility of texts whose themes are not always wholesome: “they that couet to picke more precious knowledge out of Poets amorous Elegies, must haue a discerning knowledge, before they can aspire to the perfection of their desired knowledge.” Surely Marlowe would have preferred these tacit tributes over the nasty portrait of him, courtesy of Thomas Beard (1597), as an atheistical “barking dogge” through whose “nosthrils” the Lord had justly “put” His Almighty “hooke,” or Greene’s condescending inference (1592) that he was merely the creator of theatrical blowhards such as that tinhorn “Tamburlan,” who enjoyed “daring God out of heauen.”

II

Allusions to the Elegies or to Marlowe’s Ovidianism seem to have begun in earnest in the early seventeenth century. The first quarto of The Merchant of Venice (1600) features Portia making direct reference to either Certaine or All, the moon sleeping with Endymion (1.13.43). Jonson’s Poetaster (1601-02) cites almost verbatim Elegies 1.15, on Envy, an utterance that frames the entire play and its issues, since its character Ovid seems at times to represent the playwright’s projection of Marlowe or criticism of him, just as Chapman’s own Nasonical caricature appears to serve as a type of burlesqued Marlovian figure in Ovid’s Banquet of Sense (1595). Sir John Harington’s rendition of Amores 2.4 into quatrains, “Ovid’s Confession,” may have been written as early as 1593 and seems to

39 Anatomie, Ciii. Since “Elegies” is formatted in roman type in the blackletter text as a proper name such as a book title, it may indeed refer to Marlowe’s translation, which would date its first mention as very early indeed. It is also possible that he refers to Ovid, since Webbe’s example above suggests that Elegies and Amores were interchangeable titles. No English book before 1589 uses “elegies” in its title, and only Gascoigne’s The Steele Glas (1576) and Spenser’s Daphnaida (1591) feature “eliege,” but in the sense familiar to moderns, a death poem. OED (elieg y n.2) provides the definition as Marlowe and his contemporaries knew it: “Vaguely used in wider sense, app. originally including all the species of poetry for which Greek and Latin poets adopted their elegiac metre.” However, its earliest historical example, Jaques’s sardonic comment on Orlando’s poetical efforts, “Elegies” on trees in AYL, c. 1616, is clearly wrong, since the citation from Webbe above is 1586, and Nashe is 1589. 40 Beard and Greene. Cheney notes Thomas Beard’s seemingly offhand comment, that Marlowe was “by profession a scholar,” is interesting because it maintains that he was indeed a scholar and professed himself to be such. On p. 262, Cheney observes that Beard has really gotten it right: M “was a scholar, a playwright, and a poet—not a playwright and then a poet.” (Republican Authorship, 261). Gill, “Marlowe and the Art of Translation,” says much the same thing. Hero twice as long as Musaeus’s poem. M shows himself “an Autolycus amongst authors—the snapper-up of unconsidered trifles.” He is perhaps, like Musaeus, grammatikos: an expert scholar, teacher, translator, great knowledge of poetics and rhetoric (338).

41 Marlowe strongly identified with Ovid in 1590’s. See Huntington, Ambition, Rank, 130.MV 5.1.120: “Peace, how the Moone sleepe with Endimion,” Boas, 30, thinks it’s a coincidence not a deliberate borrowing. Moul 37: the Ovid in Poetaster a Marlowe figure, too. Cain in his ed. of Poetaster identifies O’s language of parting from Julia as Marlovian in its exuberance, and O’s closing epigraph as Marlovian-Chapmanesque (23.) Perhaps play enacts J’s rejection of the Ovidianism of the 1590’s for the more socially engaged Horatian model, Cain 19-23. Carr and Waith agree, as does Mulvhill. But see Kostow as a disagreer. Hardin on Ovid in 17th c. England in bibl. “Come, sovereign odors, come,” big long speech, sounds “Marlovian” in Banquet.
revise or respond to the version in the *Elegies*. The tragedy sometimes attributed to John Marston, *The Insatiate Countess* (1613), quotes and reprocesses a dozen lines from three of the *All* poems, as R. W. Dent discovered in the middle of the last century. It is alleged that the two writers “meet” in the second edition of *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1624), although the verb may represent something of an overstatement. Robert Burton uses lines from *Hero* as analogous to short passages from the *Metamorphoses* and the *Amores*. Aston Cokaine’s blank verse and prose *The Tragedy of Ovid* (1662), published the year before the first *Doctor Faustus* revival on the Restoration stage (1663), reconfigures some motifs from the *Amores* that may reflect a reading of Marlowe’s translation. An immensely repentant Ovid, a “Noble Poet” who has “Subdued his Passions, and is now become, / As rigid in his behaviour, as the gravest / Of all the ancient Philosophers” reveals his innocence of the “error” for which he was legendarily banished, an affair with Augustus’s granddaughter Julia, and reverses the famous tag from the *Tristia* (2.207), “if I were faulty, / It was an Error in me, not a Crime,” with a twist: “For if I ere enjoy’d her, it was through / Her craft; I taking her to be another.” Cokaine intriguingly reconstitutes Cypassis, Corinna’s hairdresser (Am. 2.7, 2.8), into a bawd who aids in the play’s marriage plot and who sounds suspiciously like the old woman who defames the desultor to his married mistress (1.8): “were not Ovid timorous hee’d confess, / He Julia veild under Corinna’s Name.” This sympathetic version of the *auctor*, “great Virgils Equal” who “dies here of a broken Heart” may be Marlowe-infused, although that would be difficult to ascertain, however appealing an idea it may be.

The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries disapprove strongly of the *Elegies*, in keeping with this era’s distrust of their author, and it is not until the twentieth century that the translation, much like his other works, emerges from the darkness of misguided critical moralism. Thomas Warton’s magisterial history of English verse (1781) decries the poems because they “convey the obscenities of the brothel in elegant language” and “are seldom tinctured with the sentiments of a serious and melancholy love.” In his landmark edition of Marlowe (1850), the

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42 An alternate title of the poem is “To lyve in lust I make not my professyon,” and the British Museum manuscript copy is headed with “Ovids confession translated into English for generall Norris 1593.” It was first published in Harington’s 1618 Epigrams (2.85) and then reprinted in 1625 and 1633-34. See Ruth Hughey, ed., *The Arundel Harington Manuscript of Tudor Poetry*, 2 vols. (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1960), 1:253-54, 2:350-52.

43 See book notes under Burton. Tromly says this p. 207 but he gets it wrong. He says Anat. 3.2.2.4, but earlier Dent. Marston’s *The Insatiate Countess* (1613) quotes *All Ovids Elegies* and reprocesses the lines in a similar way to Burton that suggests a later reading: RW Dent, “Ovid, Marlowe, and The Insatiate Countess.” N&Q NS 10 (1963): 334-5. Play draws from Elegies, 1.8.43 and 113-14; 2.9.29-34 and 37-38; and 3.2.33-34. It’s not until the early 20th c. that a critic, Douglas Bush, consciously analyzes *Hero* in light of Ovid, and beyond parallel passages? Look at his earlier article in PMLA. (1929). After this, the floodgates opened.

great Shakespearean editor Alexander Dyce suggests about the *Elegies* and the man who wrote it, “one is almost tempted to believe it was never intended by him to meet the eye of the world, but was made, merely as a literary exercise,” as if he were a somewhat dewy pre-Romantic poet such as Thomas Chatterton or Thomas Gray. A. C. Bradley (1880) remarks of the text’s burning by the Bishops, “it would have been no loss to the world if all the copies had perished.”45 A. C. Swinburne’s sweeping statement (1908) deserves to be quoted in full because of its virulence:

Had every copy of Marlowe’s boyish version or perversion of Ovid’s *Elegies* deservedly perished in the flames to which it was judicially condemned by the sentence of a brace of prelates, it is possible that an occasional bookworm, it is certain that no poetical student, would have deplored its destruction, if its demerits—hardly relieved, as his first competent editor has happily remarked, by the occasional incidence of a fine and felicitous couplet—could in that case have been imagined.

This is an ironic judgment from a writer whom Oscar Wilde described as “a braggart in the matter of vice, who had done everything he could to convince his fellow citizens of his homosexuality and bestiality, without being in the slightest degree a homosexual or a bestializer.”46 Perhaps because of C. F. Tucker Brooke’s detailed attention to the text in his landmark edition of Marlowe (1910) and the accompanying work of the philologists and annotators

45 *Warton:* “The E{LEGIES} of Ovid, which convey the obscenities of the brothel in elegant language, but are seldom tinctured with the sentiments of a serious and melancholy love, were translated by Christopher Marlowe below mentioned, and printed at Middleburgh without date. The book was ordered to be burnt at Stationers hall, in 1599, by command of the archbishop of Canterbury and the bishop of London.” *The History of English Poetry, from the Close of the Eleventh to the Commencement of the Eighteenth Century.* 4 vols. London: Printed for J. Dodsley, 1774-81, 3:420. *Dyce:* “This version of the *Amores*, taken altogether, does so little credit either to Marlowe’s skill as a translator or to his scholarship, that one is almost tempted to believe it was never intended by him to meet the eye of the world, but was made, merely as a literary exercise, at an early period of life, when classical studies chiefly engaged his attention. We look in vain for the graces of Ovid. . . . I doubt if more can be said in praise of this version than that it is occasionally spirited and flowing.” [note, though, that he does not describe *Amores* as unfit text.] *Works* 1:xlv, 1850. *Bradley:* “The translation of Ovid’s *Amores* was burnt on account of its indecency in 1599, and it would have been no loss to the world if all the copies had perished. The interest of these translations is mainly historical. They testify to the passion for classical poetry, and in particular to that special fondness for Ovid of which the literature of the time affords many other proofs. The study of Virgil and Ovid was a far less mixed good for poetry than that of Seneca and Plautus; and it is perhaps worth noticing that Marlowe, who felt the charm of classical amatory verse, and whose knowledge of Virgil is shown in his Queen Dido, should have been the man who, more than any other, secured the theatre from the dominion of inferior classical dramas.” “Christopher Marlowe.” 411-26. In Thomas Humphrey Ward, ed., *The English Poets. Selections with Critical Introductions by Various Writers and a General Introduction by Matthew Arnold.* London: Macmillan, 1880. 4 vols., 1:415.

who were his contemporaries, as well as a change in mores characteristic of this time period, Una Ellis-Fermor (1927) could write:

Yet the *Elegies* only express a part of what must have been in Marlowe’s mind at this time, for the country into which they lead him is untouched by that fine, clear wind of thought which inspires *Tamburlaine*, the first work of his independent growth. In the *Elegies* of Ovid he found part of what he sought—a full and irresponsible love of life—just as in his other early translation, the first book of the *Pharsalia*, he found a partial expression of his thirst for sovereignty and love of arms. But it is possible that, in the ardour of first discovery he over-estimated the completeness of the agreement between Ovid’s poetry and his own need. Certain it is that when he had finished the *Elegies* he laid the theme aside and wrote nothing else in that spirit.\(^{47}\)

One may object to the facile psychologizing and accompanying biographical speculations in this excerpt. Yet the critic’s lack of disapproval, even her implied acceptance of the unbridled sensuality of both translation and source text is quite apparent, comprising its own “fine, clear wind of thought.” She finds no reason to excuse or explain the subject matter or to condemn the author. And even in the idea that there was no “completeness of the agreement” between the sixteenth-century writer and his ancient predecessor’s work, Marlowe is clearly identified by a critic, perhaps for the first time, as a truly Ovidian poet. Fifteen years later, F. S. Boas saw nothing amiss in such an equation or with the divergence from traditional morality: “We are probably doing the youthful Marlowe no wrong when we find, in part, an illustration of a similar academic ‘rake’s progress’ in his choice of the *Amores* for rendering into English verse.”\(^{48}\)

The philologists and the bibliographers dominated study of the *Elegies* in the first seventy-five years of the twentieth century, with the examination of parallel passages and speculation about printers and dates and possible editors, all of which established a foundation for serious theoretical and literary analysis of Marlowe’s Ovidianism.

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47 Christopher Marlowe, 1927, p. 11.
48 *31 intriguing analogy that Boas does not quite connect or explain—M’s second year at Cambridge, 1581, featured a course in dialectic that he took. This part of Pilgrimage to Parnassus, dramatic structure, when Philomusus and Studiosus pass through lands of Logic and Rhetoric and are “beguiled” by Amoretto, the voluptuary, to “pervert poetry into the instrument of sensual passion.” “We are probably doing the youthful Marlowe no wrong when we find, in part, an illustration of a similar academic ‘rake’s progress’ in his choice of the *Amores* for rendering into English verse.”

*31 it would be a mistake to assume that the translation is just an excuse to get sexy. Ovid known to be learned, as Turberville had said in his dedicatory epistle to Heroides tr. It is “no undiluted series of erotic imaginings. It is in part, an antiquarian and mythological handbook.”
and habits of translation. This is to say that the critical site devoted to Marlowe as a writer so indebted to this illustrious predecessor began where virtually all other such classical-modern conjunctions have germinated: in academic tracts, notes, and short articles from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In these writings, there is generally no attempt at synthesis or coherent analysis, simply passages that are said to inform or emanate from one another, set in type side by side. William Lyon Phelps (1912) found echoes of Ex Ponto and Tristia in Tamburlaine, Douglas Bush (1929, 1932) detected traces of the Elegies in Hero, and Mary Masterson Wills (1937) suggested that the corpus reflects knowledge of George Turberville’s rendition of the Heroides (1567). There are similar studies by T. W. Baldwin (1942, 1944), Donald Baker (1959), and as previously mentioned, Dent (1963).49 J. M. Nosworthy (1953, 1964) and Fredson Bowers (1972) attempt to establish a printing chronology and a pattern of editorial recension in their detailed bibliographical studies.50

Ian Frederick Moulton (1998, 2000) speculates about the cultural anxieties that the Elegies may have aroused that occasioned its inclusion in the Bishops’ Ban. He argues that it seems to “raise potentially troubling issues of sexual power and masculine gender identity,” namely, that the tendency of Marlowe’s desultor to enthrall himself with women engages with a general (and irrational) early modern fear about the debilitating effects of heterosexual desire, even to the extent of unmanning the state and its military might. More than the Amores itself, this translation “celebrates effeminacy and argues for the pleasures of subjection. It is better, the volume suggests, to be a captive of pleasure than a conqueror of men,” especially the “impotence elegy” (3.6) which equates the supposed effeminate nature of love poetry with sexual dysfunction. It is even possible that the text “may thus be interpreted as advocating seriously what Hero and Leander advocates laughingly: that the blurring and shifting of gender boundaries is desirable and the loss of traditional masculine gender identity is a price worth paying in sensual delight.”51 I would add to my predecessor’s impressive number of references a familiar one that he does not include. E. K. provides an apposite definition in his notes to the January eclogue of The Shepheardes Calender. Even “pæderastice,” sex with boys, is preferable to “gynerastice, that is the loue which enfameth men with lust toward

51 Moulton, before porn, 104. Earlier is Printed Abroad. Of special interest to me is his attention to that first edition, and his arguments are essential to framing my own about the Elegies in the first chapter.
woman kind.” Granted, it is a natural critical activity to relate our own obsession with sexuality, sexual preference, homophobia, and gynophobia to what we may perceive as a similar tendency in an earlier era. Elizabethans happily performed the same act of backward projection, such as Marlowe’s reconfiguration of Ovid’s young Roman roué into a gallant from his own milieu. But this sort of trans-epochal speculation is always a dicey proposition. For example, it could be said of this aforementioned elegy, with its allegedly dangerous description of masculine impotence associated with moral and poetical “softness,” that its very success as poetry and translation invalidates such a claim. Its excellence is the opposite of flaccidity of both kinds. And it is just as likely that Marlowe, and Ovid before him, is making a satirical point about the boastful desultor who is so astonished to discover that he cannot perform at will after all in the fashion that he so vauntingly insists that he can. Moulton’s thesis attributes more importance and cachet to Marlowe’s translation, in this case *Certaine*, than seems warranted, but it is still scintillating and should be considered along with other important recent studies. It is probably not accidental that as Ovid’s own reputation crested in the twentieth century, Marlowe’s stock as a poet in the same mode who emulated him also rose considerably. Just as Hermann Frankel (1945), L. P. Wilkinson (1955), Brooks Otis (1966), and Ronald Syme (1978) championed a classical writer whom the nineteenth century did not always seem to take seriously or esteem, commentators such as William Keach (1977) and S. Clark Hulse (1981), along with the aforementioned triad of Cheney, Brown, and Moulton, analyze his influence on his early modern heir and celebrate it. The work of Heather James (2006, 2009) has been particularly instructive in this sense, especially her political reading of Marlowe’s Ovidian inheritance as demonstrated in the *Elegies* itself. Dympna Callaghan argues for Ovid’s presence in the Manwood elegy, arguably Marlowe’s last poem, in the most important essay published to date on his Latinity (2010). As it happens, he frequently cites tags from ancient writers and the Vulgate. Alfred Dorrinck (1907) notes that Marlowe quotes Ovid three times, the *Amores* once in *Faustus* and a line each from the *Heroides* and *Metamorphoses* in *Edward II*. However, he imitates and

52 find sig number for gynerastice in SC.
53 give citations for all these mothers. Keach says AA and Amores more important in Hero than Heroides. Georgia Brown in Redefining 102-77 talks a lot about Ovidian infl in Marlowe.
54 James in her article: Poet’s Toys, 126 “Ovidian elegy approaches its political commitments” as “a mode of engagement: it takes up the expressive liberties of classical republicanism, which had been compromised if not wholly lost for the purposes of open political debate, and finds room for them in ‘the pastoral fields of Ovidian lyricism’” as Levin puts it [on his p. 32] and also in her “Ovid in Renaissance English Literature.” In *A Companion to Ovid*, edited by Peter Knox, 423-41. London: Blackwell, 2009
55 Dympna, and then Dorrinck, p. 18: Amores 1.13.40, O lente lente, in Faustus, 16.74. Heroides 7.187, Quam male convenient, in E2 1.4.13; and Met. 6.195, also in E2, 4.6.53. Quotes Vergil slightly more, as well as Terence and Seneca. Many refs. to Vulgate
emulates his ancient predecessor much, much more, in countless ways, which creates a proportional conundrum. Although his relatively modest surviving opus of seven plays, two translations, an epyllion, and a few short poems would seem to be dwarfed by the enormous shadow of Ovid’s massive output, the prospect of narrowing and streamlining one’s critical focus when considering the two writers together is daunting because the influence seems so pervasive in all Marlowe’s works. Attempting to account, for example, for all the echoes, imitation, or emulation of the *Metamorphoses* in just *Hero*, not to mention the whole corpus, is a fool’s errand. Therefore, I argue that it would be more productive to relate Marlowe’s translations of the *Amores*, the Ovid that he demonstrates to us that he knew most intimately, to the rest of his works, and that such comparison can be accomplished without distorting our view of them, of him, or of the *auctor* whom he esteemed so very much as his plays demonstrate. Indeed, the *Metamorphoses* is full of high drama, low comedy, and every type of anamorphic distortion and rhetorical excrecence in the original and in Arthur Golding’s English translation, and its many examples of “dramatic” speech can be seen in Shakespeare’s plays especially. However, Marlowe’s rendering of the *Amores* into the *Elegies* in the voice of the desultor compelled him to learn an extremely important technique that he would need to master as a professional playwright in the London theaters: creating the illusion, in poetical form, of a human being speaking to others, and to himself or to an audience in soliloquy.

III

Patrick Cheney’s landmark *Marlowe’s Counterfeit Profession* (1997) almost singlehandedly created a serious critical site for the study of Ovidian influence in the author’s canon, so its importance cannot be overestimated. The beginning of the book, and in some ways its entire thesis, depends on a multiplex reading of the *Elegies* that is close as well as generic, one of the first not concerned with bibliography or translation. Therefore, anyone writing on the subject must confront its challenging ideas. Cheney theorizes that Marlowe conceived “a complex, multi-genre idea of a literary career, in direct professional rivalry with England’s great national poet, in order to pen a poetics of counter-nationhood,” that he self-consciously constructed an “Ovidian” professional model for himself, a threefold progression from amatory elegy to tragedy to epic, in determined opposition to the tripartite

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56 Velz, Ovidian soliloquy in Shakespeare.
57 Weil’s analysis of soliloquies in plays analogous to technique of desultor. Their timing and “energetic pace” tend to prevent “an immediate critical response” from the audience. Persuasive also because of their many figures of speech, “particularly suited to stirring the spleen and staying the brain” in the way that Puttenham describes in Arte of English Poesy, meant to deceive. (see Merlin’s Prophet, 14).
“Vergilian” *cursus* that Spenser is said to have followed, from pastoral to the *Aeneid.* Furthermore, “because Ovid dramatizes an ‘Ovidian career idea’ in the very document that Marlowe himself translates,” the *Amores,* this early modern work enacts precisely the same plan as the ancient text in its execution. The counter-Vergilian-Spensarian schedule, then, resulted in this pattern: the *Elegies* and “Passionate Shepherd,” love poetry; *Doctor Faustus,* *Dido,* *Tamburlaine,* *Massacre,* *The Jew of Malta,* and *Edward II,* all tragedies that emulate and overgo both Ovid and Spenser, who both either attempted to write in the genre and failed or whose effort has been lost to history; *Lucans First Book* and *Hero and Leander,* epic (premature) in the mode of the *Metamorphoses* and *The Faerie Queene.*

Virtually everyone, then, who investigates Ovid in Marlowe praises Cheney’s book or accepts its tenets uncritically. Some reviewers considered the thesis overdetermined and schematic. Neither approach to this important work of criticism seems justified at this juncture.

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58 For the quotation and following material, see 4 and 7. *Marlowe’s Counterfeit Profession: Ovid, Spenser, Counter-Nationhood.* Toronto, 1997. He also thinks M’s tr. of Am. “collapses the Vergilian triad into pastoral and epic, eliding the georgic; he scrambles the sacred generic order, putting epic before pastoral: he minimizes the high ring of poetic fame designed to valorize the poet of Empire.” Thinks “he is identifying with Ovid, and he is critiquing ‘the Virgil of England.’” (8). M “could have found Ovid replacing the Vergilian triad of genres (pastoral, georgic, and epic) with an Ovidian triad: amatory poetry, tragedy, and epic.” So Am begin with plan to write epic, then admits to amatory leanings, then plan to go to tragedy. Thinks the “programmatic poems” 1.1, 2.1., 2.18, 3.1, and 3.15 (14) “highlight the drama of Ovid’s turn from elegy to the ‘area maior’ (III.xv.18) of tragedy and epic.” Thinks this alleged cursus predicts the three genres he wrote in before exile: elegiac poetry (Am, AA, Her and Fasti), then Medea, then Met. M the first writer in the west to tr. this cursus and to “make it literally his own.” Thinks there’s no question: M definitely following career model of Ovid.

59 Quotation, p. 10. Then, “Quite literally, Marlowe’s career begins where Ovid’s did, since Marlowe inaugurates his career by translating Ovid’s inaugural poem. As our discussion has anticipated, Marlowe, in his translation of the Vergilian distich in *Amores* L.xv, reinscribes the Vergilian progression from pastoral to epic in Renaissance terms and contextualizes his (mis-)translation as a counter to Spenser’s self-presentation.” (10-11). In writing tragedy at all, Marlowe overgoes Ovid by writing his kind of tragedy, and also outdoes Spenser, who had also hoped to write in the same kind of form (89). Ovidian tragedy is, to Ch., the “tragic ideology inscribed in Ovidian myths of daring, contestation, and rivalry. The most important of these myths . . . are those of Phaethon, Icarus, Actaeon, and Orpheus.” All important archetypes in M’s tragedies except JM (90).

60 What did reviews say? Lisa Hopkins thinks he seems cavalier about dates or wrongheaded, such as Lucan at end of career, or dating controversies about DF. Problem with basing thesis on an alleged sequence of works. “Points . . . recur with something of the relentlessness of a monomania, essentially because for Cheney, every aspect of Marlowe’s writing works to underpin the great central truth that Marlowe presents himself as an Ovidian alternative to Spenser’s Vergilian self-presentation as ‘the New Poet’” for the sake of counter-nationhood. See Review of *Marlowe’s Counterfeit Profession: Ovid, Spenser, Counter-Nationhood,* by Patrick Cheney, *Early Modern Literary Studies* 5.1 (1999): 11. For other important reviews, see Thomas Cartelli, Review of *Marlowe’s Counterfeit Profession: Ovid, Spenser, Counter-Nationhood,* by Patrick Cheney. *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 13 (2001): 254-59. See also Richard A. McCabe, Review of *Marlowe’s Counterfeit Profession: Ovid, Spenser, Counter-Nationhood,* by Patrick Cheney. *Review of English Studies* 50 (1999): 230-31. Claude J. Summers, “Cheney never faces up to the inherent unlikelihood of any poet stringently limiting himself to so schematic a career schedule. Writers may sketch career paths in their youth, but they rarely foresee the contingencies that [465] actually shape careers” (464-5). Also, “the adoption of a career path based on genre is not likely to be enforced so rigorously as Cheney suggests.” Real challenge to his thesis is there’s no surviving example of Ovid’s Medea and it’s not clear that Hero is an epic. Praises Cheney for creating idea of Ovidian tragedy for M to follow. “Cheney sees Marlowe presenting Faustus as ‘an Ovidian erotic poet contesting the authority of kings, gods, and other poets, like Spenser.’
Indeed, the study assumes a certain chronology for the Marlowe canon that does not exist, a point that a theater historian would argue almost immediately, since the dates of quartos or performances, and even the notations in Philip Henslowe’s diary or contemporary accounts of a play that might be Tamburlaine, for example, cannot be fixed beyond dispute. Just as we may not be able to ascertain, for instance, that Hero was a late composition, we have no evidence that the Elegies was an early work. Cheney does not distinguish between the Certaine or All versions, an oversight that might not influence his generic model but would affect the idea of reception, since we would need to know which iteration subsequent writers actually read. He also maintains the familiar and perhaps anachronistic modern dichotomy between the racy, sensuous Ovid and staid, conservative Vergil, whereas early modern writers such as Marlowe tended to see the opposite paradigms when it suited them just as their medieval forebears had. Aeneas, one should remember, is not entirely straitlaced, all too ready to murder the world’s most beautiful woman until his mother prevents him, and happy to fornicate in a cave with a gorgeous and willing queen, also, bizarrely, at his mother’s behest, albeit supernaturally. Ovid’s constant authorial undermining of his libidinous and naive desul tor in the Amores, in the manner of a puppeteer jerking the strings of his marionette, could be seen as an affirmation of the prerogative of the very ruling class that the young man attempts to violate in his trysts with the patrician Corinna, as Marlowe nicely renders it: “If loftie titles cannot make me thine, / That am descended but of knightly line” (COE E3 / 1.3.7-8). None of this was lost on Chaucer, Shakespeare, Spenser—or Marlowe. Cheney’s “could have” and “maybe” quickly harden into certainty about one who planned works that “in fact form a career pattern which conforms to the Ovidian model.” A curmudgeon from a department of classical studies who wished to disturb the thesis might note that the calendar poem, the Fasti, does not seem to be included in a meaningful way, and that the “lost” tragedy Medea may not actually have been written in the first place, in spite of what is considered to be its single surviving line. A she or he studying English or comparative literature could observe that Edward II, Tamburlaine, and The Jew of Malta are not entirely tragedies, and that even if Marlowe’s move to this genre demonstrates that he “radically rewrites the Ovidian cursus for Western culture,” to claim he had done so because Ovid “had failed to write it,” i.e., Medea, represents circular reasoning. Can we really say that Lucan and Hero are

[218] This is how he posits the idea of an Ovidian model in the absence of any evidence. (465). thinks [rightly] that Ch wrong to classify Hero as epic. It’s an epyllion, a totally different thing: nothing necessarily epic about it. (466). “the book suffers from a thesis that is overdetermined and overly extended. Its typology of intertextuality becomes increasingly less convincing the more it is invoked. It finally stretches credulity to argue that all of Marlowe’s works are single-mindedly metadiscursive and self-reflexive and that every echo of Spenser is motivated by professional rivalry.” (466) Review of Marlowe’s Counterfeit Profession: Ovid, Spenser, Counter-Nationhood, by Patrick Cheney. Modern Philology 98 (2001): 463-67.
epic? The program laid out for both Vergil and Ovid sounds suspiciously like that of the doctoral candidate composing a thesis, or even the three-part process of that degree in an American university, with coursework, examinations, and a dissertation, rather than reflecting the stature to which Cheney claims Marlowe wished to elevate himself, in which he used the “English Machiavellian movement” to “advance his literary authority as a writer of tragedy in early modern culture.” 61

Yet, at the same time, it is not impossible to create a serviceable chronology for the Marlowe canon, or at least one that assumes that the Elegies were apprentice or student work. Why not? The subsequent plays and poetry sometimes quote the translation or work variations on its themes in a way that suggests it preceded everything else. And, for that matter, my study posits that both All and Certaine of Ovids Elegies certainly could have functioned as preparation for a career in the theater, writing speeches and creating characters, as well as the life of a poet turning lines, and himself with them, on the Muses’ anvil. Elizabethan pedagogues and schoolmasters praise Vergil unreservedly, Ovid less so, and no one ever suggested to the censorious Bishops that the any part of this Augustan poet’s opus, even the homoerotic Eclogues, be part of any Ban and the subsequent auto da fe, contemplated feminicide and speleological fornication aside. Paradigms do not need to be rigid, or to include every work by the writers in question, or to discount tragic patterns in related plays that are not necessarily tragedies. Marlowe was not Harry Levin’s overreacher, Richard Baines’s blasphemer, or the transgressive and violent playwright whose dabbling in espionage, necromancy, tobacco, and boys resulted in a predictable fate approaching Dantean contrapasso, just short of what his Edward II suffers in his final moments. Yet he was probably the daring writer Cheney so effectively analyzes, one who believed in emulation as well as imitation and who sought to overmaster Vergil, Ovid, and Spenser in making tragedies that these three predecessors could not have composed, and who thought of himself as an innovator who reconceived the epic as amusing amatory epyllion or violent historical poetry. A playwright and poet from the early modern period could well have had a plan of study, composition, and publication, just like a doctoral student hoping to grow up into a professor who engages in these three same activities at a more advanced professional level of production. Cheney’s idea that Marlowe “could have found his own commitment to secrecy and counterfeiting in Ovid, who repeatedly emphasizes the individual’s need for

61 Quotations: 10 and 11, 12, respectively. To be fair, Cheney indeed posits the possibility that Medea was a red herring in Ovid’s career. 42 Notes that M does not translate Am. 2.18.13-14, which refer to his tragedy. Ch. thinks perhaps he was ignorant of the tragedy, but then again, claims most ren. writers knew about it. Not nec. Notes that in Tristia 4.10 he cuts the “area maior phase out of his literary career.” (46). Maybe it didn’t exist. Also notes that Ovid himself says in Tr. 5.7.25-30 that he has composed nothing for the theater. Hmm.
deception, in matters of love as well as in art,” seems indisputable, one that I have myself previously advanced about the influence of the auctor on the erotic poetry of the West and its practitioners, such as Marlowe and Shakespeare. I argue that the Elegies represents more than a planned first step in a career as an Ovidian poet, more than an apprenticeship for a certain kind of vocation such as playwright. For Marlowe, it constituted an essential act of poetic composition, translation, and scholarship, since the material over which he labored so intently never quite left him, and the peculiar Ovidian tincture of his Amores, along with the Metamorphoses and Heroides he knew so well, remains discernible in his subsequent work.

IV

Other critics have tried to describe Marlowe’s inheritance such as Matthew Proser, who has detected elements of what he calls the “classic Ovidian spirit” in the plays and poetry. These include “urbanity, wit, satiric impulse, and, of course, eroticism, along with mythological interest, lyricism, shapeliness, and a peculiar combination of emotional sophistication and clarity,” all essentially related to the master’s “practice of structural control.” These observations are solid and should be kept in mind. My task is to explain Marlowe’s Ovidianism somewhat differently by determining exactly how translating the Amores into the Elegies profited him as a writer, which would aid in our understanding of why he may have undertaken such a task in the first place.

Erika thinks this would be better, maybe p. 4. So moved, but still here just in case.

I see four tendencies in Marlowe’s work that demonstrate the freedom his inheritance granted him and its considerable benefits. What did it allow him to do? First, it helped him begin an Ovidian career, as Cheney puts it, and the translation may have indeed exemplified the first phase of such a cursus. More important, perhaps, is that the activity allowed Marlowe teach himself to write poetry in the first place by emulating his culture’s premier poet, every bit as eminent as Vergil, and to immerse himself in Ovid’s rhetoric, humor, and wit. He could also fulfill a need he appears to have had to be innovative, even subversive, in the act of rendering this text into English for the first time. Second, he could submit himself to a truly challenging task, the discipline of turning Latin elegiacs into rhyming distichs in iambic pentameter, and thereby inventing the effective closed couplet in English as he learned to create his own poetical voice. Third, as a translator, he could experiment with variations on his sourcetext by deciding whether he preferred what Dryden would later describe or metaphrase and paraphrase, or if such distinctions mattered to him. Whether they did or not, he could decide whether the commentary he used to help him,

62 p. 60. My idea in Harmful Eloquence.
63 Proser, p. 85.
that of Dominicus Niger, offered advice that was worth heeding. Fourth, the translation ultimately helped prepare Marlowe for a career as a playwright, if it was indeed apprentice work as most commentators have surmised, or to keep him engaged, even if fashioning the *Elegies* was a parallel to dramatic writing or an opportunity to extend himself in a new way. It helped teach him to write soliloquies and to inhabit and develop in his rendition of the desultor what would later be referred to as a character, a recognizable simulacrum of a human being. So many hours spent with this Ovidian person are apparent in the many figures in the canon who resemble him: Barabas, the narrator of *Hero*, Gaveston, Edward, Mortimer Junior, some of the speakers in *Massacre* and *Dido*, and even Tamburlaine himself. Since these concepts are germane and essential to my argument, I will return to them frequently in the course of this study, in more detail in the first chapter, on the *Elegies*, and then as motifs in my analyses of individual plays.

concepts, themes: curiously Ovidian emotional detachment from the fates of his characters even though human emotion and suffering portrayed keenly is part of Amores and Marlowe. Charlton and Waller: one “characteristic” sensibility that Marlowe exhibits, according to H. B. Charlton and R. D. Waller, is a “complete detachment from ordinary human sympathies” (56). Karl Galinsky and Ovidian indifference: “People may suffer, experience the most unusual passions, and reach an impasse that begs for some profound discussion, but neither does such an exploration materialize nor do they die: they just are metamorphosed into animals, plants, or stones.” See *Augustan Culture: An Interpretive Introduction* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 263

Charlton and Waller’s judgment on Marlowe as playwright suggests an Ovidian inheritance: “It has always been less obvious that he was less apt in the interplay of character and in the consistent unfolding of situations than he was in the exposition of emotional states and aims. He was a master of the more violent states of feeling, in which there is no thought which is not also an emotion.” Heroes such as Faustus and Tamburlaine: Not even Faustus’s speeches “have any marked intellectual quality. These heroes desire and suffer; they do not think. Marlowe studies passionate possession in situ as Browning studies intellectual self-consciousness” (59). Curious fusion of the Machiavellian and Ovidian aspects—one is quite like another, in my opinion. authorial undermining of protagonists not that different from how Ovid undermines, as well.

Arthur Lindley’s intriguing argument that Marlowe’s protagonists are Protean in best humanist tradition as exemplified by Pico della Mirandola’s *De hominis dignitate*, 6-7. Part of the self-fashioning bit w Greenblatt. This wd. apply well to desultor. [put in intro also]
Godshalk, World Picture, on Marlowe: “His vision is radical in its criticism, conservative in its nature. He is never a preacher, but always a seer, and his moral vision of the insanely aggressive world is turned into art.” (37) The Elegies. “Marlowe’s vision is a world of human evil.” Diff from Sh., who is optimistic, a la Tmp., M looks at the world “with the savage indignation of Swift.” The plays end “with evil conquering evil.” (223)

D. J. Palmer thinks that Ovid and Machiavelli are essential to Marlowe’s naturalism. “The spirit of Ovidian naturalism is reflected in the libertine indulgence of sensual appetite, while the lawless, anarchic conflict which Marlowe presents as the natural state of society could be described as Machiavellian,” though this could have come from Lucretius, too (157). My pt: what he describes as Machiavel is also in the Ovid of the Elegies.

Constants, motifs:
secret subversive puppeteer author undermining his subject in Elegies, becomes same as playwright with characters, or even trickier, as if one of these subversives were actually writing the play itself.
Ovidian Archpoet manifesting himself in play, ars, guile
blowhard seducer and rogue whom the play undermines. Megalomania. Hyperbole
dissimulations, autoincrimination, disorderly sexuality, misogyny, and amorality”
passages in Elegies “say” plays, just as passages from plays reciprocally “say” Elegies
Ovidian allusions and associations
Dangers of sexual disorder, social and personal, as well as sexual comedy
indifference, almost clinical, to human suffering. Autistic. Evil humor, jocular
Frequent return to Elegies 1.1, like opening soliloquies for Faustus, JM, Tamburlaine’s first speech
scenes or incidents from plays sometimes work as tableaux that reconfigure moments from Elegies. Speaking emblem.
Moments of self-definition.

V

The sections of the book. Since a Marlowe chronology is difficult to establish, even trying to figure out if Elegies were early productions, it might be best to avoid an argument that posits a chronology that may not exist. Elegies as proving ground for rest of corpus, or just reflecting it. So, following the Mark Thornton Burnett precedent of writing about the plays in the date of order of publication, approximately

importance of introductory elegy? Important in every play. Fulfillments and perversions of apercus. Undermining of the hero. Emotional bizarreness somewhat disguises a secret longing for traditional morality. Desultor a type of the Vice. Figure of the Ovidian poet? art concealing art.

Chapter 1: My first chapter therefore concentrates on this text, with special attention to Certaine, to examine it as something analogous to a sonnet sequence, to engage with my predecessors who have tried to account for its existence, why it may have been censored, and how and why the ten poems therein may have been put in the order they were. I discuss its conformity to the contours of sonnetdom as well as its differences from the genre and argue for a different model to explain the ordering, mostly the interrelation of the poems to each other that the compiler seems to have intended to create. I then explain how the poetry is more Elizabethan than Roman, and what translating the Amores allowed Marlowe to do and to accomplish, especially as a maker of drama, and to then talk about how Ovid has always been perceived as dramatic, and why he would then be a natural model for Marlowe, especially in the act of translating the Amores itself.

following the approximate publication date order established by Mark Thornton Burnett

Chapter 2: Tamburlaine

Marlowe obviously not leaving the Elegies behind, if Tamburlaine plays comprised his next work. The hero owes much to the desultor, especially the vaunting and ranting, insensitivity to the needs of others, self-absorbed. Many ghostly correspondences, even a comparison by Tamburlaine at Zenocrate’s death that she is more desirable than Helen, Catullus’s Lesbia, and Ovid’s Corinna from the Amores. Overt sexuality of Elegies sublimated in the plays but clearly not dissipated, just redirected and sometimes repressed. Here we can also see how Marlowe’s work with
couplets taught him how to write blank verse, and though the latter seems less demanding than the constraints of rhyme, the demand provides a comfort and benchmark, also, that might have made blank verse sound a tiny bit intimidating. Just as Ovid undermines his desultor, so Marlowe does with Tamburlaine. Failures of rhetoric. Blind to the needs of women, whether casually seduced by desultor or slaughtered by Tamburlaine, whether overmastered like Zenocrate and Corinna. Both writers use women to show how insensitive their heroes are. Love’s war especially reverberates from Amores / Elegies to Tamburlaine.

verse form transformation, from couplets to blank verse, but couplets still there.

Chapter 3: Dido

Just as Ovid’s “rewriting” or distillation of Vergil’s epic in his own (Met. 13.623-14.582) suggests tribute rather than trivialization, Marlowe’s tragedy ought not to be viewed as a profanation of the Aeneid into a puppet-show, a crib for a lazy schoolboy, or a children’s pageant, but rather as homage to his two ancient predecessors, especially when elements of parody can be detected. Similar dynamics animate Dido and the Elegies: prurient gazes; a master authorial puppeteer undermining his protagonists with a wicked sense of humor; thematical statements that illuminate both texts; and “the sowre of loue” for one and all, as Anna expresses it.

Chapter 4: Edward

Edward II is especially rich in subtle Ovidian patterns. Their diversity suggests that the playwright considered the auctor an essential component in portraying the troubled monarch and his milieu, especially in the conception of character, tableau, and metaphor. It provides two of the three occasions in which the Latin Ovid surfaces in his works, both in appropriately ironic fashion. Mortimer Junior, Gaveston, and their peers allude knowingly and piquantly to the story of Actaeon and other familiar mythology, an indication that the paradigm of mutability that fuels Ovid’s epic underlies the action of Edward II. Indeed, Marlowe’s continual change of perspective, designed to skew audience expectations and sympathies, constitutes a metamorphic pattern. Elegies / Amores matter here, too. The desultor’s dissimulations, autoincrimination, disorderly sexuality, misogyny, and amorality infuse Edward II from Gaveston’s opening soliloquy to the destruction of Mortimer Junior and Isabella at the finish. In the act of translating, Marlowe learned Ovid’s technique of maintaining an ironic authorial separation from his speaker, which he then employed in his realizations of Tamburlaine, Faustus, Barabas, and the Guise. Similarly, this distancing principle informs the conception of virtually every figure in his English history. Like Gaveston, Ovid’s amoral lover and his fellows discredit themselves further with every subsequent aside or soliloquy, since these modes themselves re-emphasize the falsity of the original attempt at ingratiation with the reader or spectator. Phrases that occur in elegies and the play: speake faire, prettie wenches sodomitical—not just the gay, but the straight. Disorder.

Chapter 5: Massacre

Its fragmentary and unfinished nature does not conceal the Ovidian elements, sometimes recreating tableaux from the Elegies such as the ianitor guarding the door from the cuckold, the anonymous Soldier keeping the Duchess of Guise free from the advances of her lover Mugeron, the favorite of Henri. Other allusions seem to occur. Ovidian inlay about writing and writers. Similar distancing technique by author from characters as we see in Elegies / Amores. Ovidian humor and wit, sometimes very dark, but very funny. Violence and grotesquerie. In some instances, it is as if the desultor is writing the play. The Guise is a desultor figure, clearly. Megalomania. Rancid jocularity.
playwrighting surrogate, surrogate playwright.

Chapter 6: Hero

The form of the epyllion is almost by definition Ovidian, and Marlowe surely indebted to Metamorphoses as well as to the two Heroïdes devoted to Hero and Leander, which he could have accessed either in Latin or in their translated English forms. Allusions to Elegies therein, and even quotes a couplet from his own translation. Main concern of a chapter is to build on the work of my predecessors about the most significant editorial intervention in the poem besides the additions by George Chapman and Henry Petowe, the transposition of a crucial passage related to the consummation of the lovers, and to demonstrate as those have before me that this was an illegitimate move, simply
because the perpetrator did not appear to understand a certain component of human sexuality, and that the original 798-line Blount quarto of 1598, without sestiads, is the best way to read the poem. The translation of the Elegies itself gives a clue as to Marlowe’s probably motivations for writing the story the way he did. A poem full of fissures and gaps. Rich descriptive technique from Elegies as well as Metamorphoses. psychology of desire, portrayal of feelings.

Chapter 7: Faustus

This most discussed of Marlowe’s works contains one of the three Latin lines from Ovid he quotes in the corpus, and, fortuitously, this one is from the Amores. Misquotes it. Only play where he mentions Ovid specifically. The delight that Faustus seeks is similar to the desultor’s. Wants to get laid. Ovidius Magus. Play reprocesses some of the angst that the desultor expresses. I reinvestigate the notion that Faustus represents his carnal desires as diabolic. Lines in the play that “say” the desultor and Elegies. Use of “art” corresponds to the “ars” of the Elegies and of Ovid generally. Curious that sometimes the desultor sounds like the morality character that Faustus is descended from, just like Faustus sounds like someone who wants to chase women. Same distancing effect by Marlowe of undermining his own hero by autoincrimination. Faustus’s first soliloquy like the first of Elegies. (these are constants in the book, maybe make clearer in introduction.) Occasional misogyny here too. Pursuit of knowledge and experience.

Chapter 8: JM

Barabas one of the most obvious manifestations of the desultor himself. If this M’s last play, perhaps his most concentrated version of the de. His Ovidianism clear to seventeenth century writers and theatergoers. Change in tone between the two halves of the play can be explained as Ovidian. Some recent interpretations of Barabas fit the desultor also, which suggests a possible line of transmission: an outsider, figure of social disorder, an embodiment of theatricality and a playwrighting surrogate for Marlowe himself. Manic nature, obsessiveness. Erotic elements in JM seem Ovidian as well. Relish in his own misdeeds. Amorality. And autoincrimination, authorial distancing and sabotage, first soliloquy, occasional misogyny. Ars!

concordance 1654
most used substantive in M is “lord” (510x). Second most is “love” (421x)
most common verbs are “be” (1205), “will” (798), “shall” (722)
and of course “I” (3011) and “my” (2506).
“l” and “my” are M’s fifth and sixth most frequently used words, only words of this frequency not articles or prepositions. (conc. 1655): see comparison with Shakespeare.

all very egotistical, works for desultor and all like him.

Arthur Lindley attributes to his students in their naïveté: M’s “characters are obnoxious to an astonishing degree and with astonishing frequency” (1).