Horses and Hermaphrodites: Metamorphoses in *The Taming of the Shrew*

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE WORLD OF NATURE and the world of human beings is always of special interest in Shakespeare's plays; and in discussing the "romantic" comedies critics since Northrop Frye have routinely noted the alternation in settings between the "normal world" and the "green world of romance."[1] Just as routinely they have excluded *The Taming of the Shrew* from discussions of "romantic" comedy on the grounds of its "realism" and its farcical qualities.[2] I should like to suggest that important elements of romance do in fact lie under the surface of this play and that an appreciation of these elements helps to illuminate its picture of the interaction of natural and human worlds. Some of the links between the worlds are supplied by Ovid.

I

It is a truth universally acknowledged that Shakespeare was well-versed in Ovid and that Ovidian literature shaped and permeated his writing. In the playwright's early works Ovid's influence is manifest especially in *Venus and Adonis* and *Titus Andronicus*. *The Taming of the Shrew* virtually advertises its Ovidian connections, with two Latin lines from Penelope's letter to Odysseus in *Heroides* actually quoted in Cambio's first Latin lesson with Bianca (II.i.28–29). There is a reference to *The Art to Love* (the *Ars Amatoria*) in the second Latin lesson (IV.ii.7).[3] There are allusions in the play to the outcast Ovid and to Adonis and Cytherea, Daphne and Apollo, Io, Leda's daughter, Europa, Dido, Hercules, and the Cumaean sybil, all of whom Shakespeare could have learned about in the *Metamorphoses*. Even two dogs have Ovidian names: Echo and Troilus. And most suggestively for my purposes, there is, at the crucial moment

[1] *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1957), p. 182.

[2] H. B. Charlton, *The Taming of the Shrew* (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 1932), p. 6 Charlton is typical in his contention that no Englishman would find the play romantic. He concedes germinal romanticism to the Bianca plot but finds none in the main plot.

[3] References to *The Taming of the Shrew* and other Shakespearean plays are drawn from *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974).

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of the play, a submerged but significant reminder of the myth of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus.

Superficially it might seem that the mythical and supernatural world of Ovid, with its obvious affinity for the gory surrealism of *Titus* and the rowdy eroticism of *Venus and Adonis*, would be antithetical to the realism and farce of *The Taming of the Shrew*. But I will argue that an appreciation of Ovidian overtones can move our perception of the comedy in the direction of romance, thereby enhancing our pleasure in the complexity of a play that is often thought to be lacking in subtlety.

Metamorphoses ought to be useful in comedy—a form committed by its very nature to the belief that people can change. Muriel Bradbrook has illustrated the use of metamorphoses in early Elizabethan dramas such as *The Old Wives' Tale*, *Love's Metamorphoses*, and *The Maid's Metamorphosis*. She observes, however, that the influence of such Ovidian transformations rapidly faded, and that Shakespeare never employed the device at all, since his comedies are concerned with the subtler forms of change involved in growing up.[4] I think that Bradbrook is essentially right. Although there are hints of Ovidian metamorphoses in the transformations of Bottom and Falstaff, these metamorphoses pose a basic threat to comedy since the changes are nearly always for the worse.

Ovid's metamorphoses are, in fact, not true changes at all but terminal revelations of stasis.[5] People turn into animals, trees, or stones because they cannot grow. Shakespeare's changes are more likely to be genuine. They are signaled by mini-metamorphoses such as metaphors, pretenses, disguises, or stage images. They are distinctive in that they may be temporary or reversible, and they are often progressive rather than static or regressive.

Whereas in Ovid people turn into animals, a primary motif of *The Taming of the Shrew* is the elevation of animals into people—and not only into people but into suitable spouses, a rather more difficult feat. In the Induction Sly is transformed from a monstrous swine-like beast (Ind.i.34) into a happy husband and a lord. And Kate and Petruchio move through a whole zoo of animal metaphors before they achieve the dignity of a human marriage. Each tries insistently and repeatedly to demote the other to bestial status. And while their refusal to respect the gap between animal and human in the Chain of Being is the stuff of low comedy, it is also a violation of humane interrelation. For Kate and Petruchio an important progressive image is that of the horse, and I shall pay particular attention to its uses throughout the play.

II

For the purposes of my discussion it will be helpful to abandon, at least for the moment, the received view of this play as a realistic farce controlled by the masterful Petruchio. It is true that the title invites this view and that folktales and analogues support it, but it is worthwhile to entertain the possibility of a

[4] *The Growth and Structure of Elizabethan Comedy* (London: Chatto & Windus; repr. Baltimore: Penguin, 1963), p. 88. ''Growing up'' involves, of course, the development of potentialities already present. Metamorphosis in Ovid involves the denial of potentialities.

[5] See Irving Massey, *The Gaping Pig: Literature and Metamorphosis* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1976). Shakespeare's use of Ovidian metamorphoses is discussed in my ''Animals as Agents of Revelation: The Horizontalizing of the Chain of Being in Shakespeare's Comedies,'' in *Shakespearean Comedy*, ed. Maurice Charney, special edition of *New York Literary Forum* (1980), 79–96.

subtext which runs counter to this traditional interpretation—a subtext resonant of romance and fairy-tales in its depiction of two flawed lovers in quest of an ideal union. This approach flies in the face of long critical practice and requires a considerable suspension of disbelief, but it will, I believe, prove fruitful.

First, consider the "Induction." Why is it there? Why is it open-ended? Why does it linger repeatedly and, it seems, needlessly on details of sport and hunting? Why the persistent talk of dreams? Why the theme of deferred sexual consummation? And finally why is Sly taken for his metamorphosis to the Lord's "fairest chamber" hung round with "wanton pictures," presumably those described later by the servants as representations of the metamorphoses of Adonis, Io, and Daphne?

The use of the induction or frame is, of course, a standard device of distancing, of signaling a movement from the "real" world to a domain of instincts, romance, and supernatural possibility. The classic instances are *The Thousand and One Nights* and *The Decameron*, but there are many other examples. The frame is not, however, a favorite Shakespearean device. The closest approaches to it in his other plays are the Theseus-Hippolyta plot in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and the use of Gower in *Pericles*. In both cases the frame encloses a fluid romantic world within the fixed perimeters of known history. The repeated references to dreams in the Induction of *Shrew* and Sly's resolve at the end to "Let the world slip" can be seen as creating a similar effect. The chief difference is that the frame in *The Taming of the Shrew* is open-ended.

Metaphors of the hunt and the use of hunting scenes serve regularly in Shakespeare as transitions between the worlds of history and romance, especially between the city and the forest.[6] On one level this is predictable and obvious. Hunting is a sport that takes civilized man into the woods. But in myth and fairy-tale the journey into the forest world is commonly an exploration of the instinctual and especially of the sexual. In *Shrew* the Lord moves from his offer to Sly of a "couch / Softer and sweeter than the lustful bed" of Semiramis (Ind.ii.37–39) by natural progression to his offer of gorgeously trimmed horses, soaring hawks, and baying hounds. The servants switch easily back to images of lust—Venus', Jupiter's, and Apollo's. These metaphors alert us to the important themes of animality and sexual pursuit in the play proper, and they ought also to sensitize us to the play's mythological overtones.

The fair chamber hung round with wanton pictures prepares, of course, for sexual themes. But even more important, it is a landmark on the road to romance. Frye points out that what he calls romances of descent frequently begin with scenes of passing through a mirror—as in the case of Lewis Carroll's Alice—or of sleep in a room with such modulations of mirrors as tapestries or pictures. Such sleep, says Frye, is typically followed by dreams of metamorphoses.[7] In the case of Sly, as in the case of the chief protagonists in *Shrew* proper, the metamorphoses we behold represent improvement, progress. Although Sly's transformation is superficial and externally imposed, we are not allowed to witness his regression. And the play convinces us that Kate and

[6] Note that II.ii in *Titus Andronicus* marks a transition from town to forest; IV.i and ii in *Love's Labor's Lost* precede the scenes of male capitulation; IV.i.103–39 in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* marks the end of the "dream," and II.i and IV.ii in *As You Like It*, with their hunting references, punctuate the green world of Arden.

[7] Northrop Frye, *The Secular Scripture* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1976), pp. 108–9. For other pertinent passages on romance conventions, see pp. 142–43, 105, 115, and 139.

Petruchio are permanently altered. Only the merest trace of true Ovidian metamorphosis—the relevation of stasis—remains buried in the play. I hope to demonstrate this, as well as to show that the deferral of sexual consummation (made bearable for Sly by the diversion of the players) also energizes the courtship of Kate and Petruchio (premarital and postmarital)—not consummated, I suggest, until the latter's final invitation, "Come, Kate, we'll to bed."[8]

III

As we turn from the Induction to the play itself, the most obvious romance convention is that of the paired heroines. It is never safe, of course, to ignore the possible influence of available actors when one analyzes Shakespeare's practice in characterization; one remembers perforce the dark and blonde pairs of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and the double female roles of *The Comedy of Errors, Love's Labor's Lost* (redoubled), *The Merchant of Venice, The Merry Wives of Windsor, Much Ado About Nothing, As You Like It*, and *Twelfth Night*. But, although available actors may have facilitated its realization, the theme of the multiplication of lovers seems to have been central to Shakespeare's romantic comedy. Often such multiplication serves to emphasize the urgency and irrationality of sexual instincts. In *Shrew* it suggests rather the two sides of one psyche.[9] One cannot make too much of the fact that Bianca and Katherina are sisters: the plot demands it. However, the dark, sometimes demonic older sister and the fair, milder younger sister *are* recurrent figures of romance (Frye cites the example of *Arcadia*), and frequently one sister is killed off or sacrificed in the renewal of the other's life. The argument for linking Bianca and Katherina can be made quite directly: the elder sister complains that she is being made a "stale" (one meaning of the word is "decoy," i.e. double) for the younger sister (I.i.58); Bianca's suitors hope to "set her free" by finding a husband for her sister (I.i.138); and the younger sister appears literally bound and enslaved to the elder at the start of Act II. When Katherina is carried away from her own marriage feast, her father placidly proposes to "let Bianca take her sister's room" (III.ii.250).

Early in the play Katherina has been identified by everyone as an animal—not only seen as a shrew but also assaulted with an extraordinary thesaurus of bestial and diabolical terms. She is called devil, devil's dam, fiend, curst, foul, rough, wild cat, wasp, and hawk, to offer only a selection of epithets and adjectives. Bianca, by contrast, appears sweet, gentle, and compliant until two wry but tell-tale metaphors surface toward the end from the disappointed lovers, Tranio and Hortensio. The former remarks her "beastly" courting of Lucentio; the latter calls her a "proud disdainful haggard" (IV.ii.39). At the very moment that Kate is graduating to full human and marital status at the play's end, Bianca reveals her own animality with references to heads and butts, and heads and horns. Her words imply acceptance of animal status: "Am I your bird? I mean to change my bush" (V.ii.46). At this point she says that, though "awaken'd," she means to "sleep again" (V.ii.42–43); and she virtually vanishes, reappearing only as a shrewish echo in two final rebellious lines. The two figures

[8] It is noteworthy that Shakespeare again uses the strategy of play as foreplay in delayed consummation in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Tempest*.

[9] The same approach might be used in the case of other such paired siblings as those of *The Comedy of Errors* and *Twelfth Night*.

have merged into one—one more fully human than either of the parts. This is the technique of folk tales rather than of realistic drama.

IV

The relationship of the two girls to their father is also of considerable interest. According to Bruno Bettelheim, children in fairy-tales are turned into animals by parental anger.[10] Baptista's favoritism toward his younger daughter is abundantly clear in the first scene: he assures her of his love; he praises her delight in music and poetry; and he singles her out for private conversation. Later (II.i.26) he angrily chides Kate as a ''hilding of a devilish spirit'' (''hilding'' is a word applied to a horse in its earliest appearance in the *OED* in 1589); and, when a potential suitor for her appears, Baptista actually tries to discourage him. In fairy-tales children transformed into animals are regularly turned back to humans by love, especially in marriage; but in addition they must establish harmonious relationships with the offending parent. It is significant, I think, that both Bianca and Kate are married in the presence of ''false'' fathers. Baptista never acknowledges a loving relationship with Kate until her transformation is revealed at the very end of the play; than he finally offers ''Another dowry to another daughter, / For she is chang'd, as she had never been'' (V.ii.114–15). Bianca is married with the blessing of her own father (on the wrong man) and that of the Pedant, Lucentio's substitute father. The potential merging of these fathers into one true father is signaled on the road to Padua after the turning point between Kate and Petruchio when Kate says to Vincentio, Lucentio's true father, ''Now I perceive thou art a reverend father.'' And Petruchio goes even further when he discovers the old man's identity, insisting '' . . . now by law as well as reverend age, / I may entitle thee my loving father'' (II.v.48, 60–61). As daughters merge into one, so do fathers. In the last scene ''jarring notes'' are said finally to ''agree,'' and Bianca and Lucentio welcome each other's true fathers (V.ii.1–5). Lucentio has aptly summed up the situation with his declaration, ''Love wrought these miracles'' (V.i.124).

The forces working to metamorphose humans into animals are not merely parental, however. Katherina is associated with more animal metaphors than any other female character in Shakespeare. The images come from every direction, but especially from Petruchio. A great deal of the humor of the first meeting between Kate and her suitor (II.i.181–278), for example, depends on the determination of each to reduce the other to subhuman status. She connects him successively with a join'd-stool, a jade, a buzzard, a cock, and a crabapple. He responds by associating her with a turtledove, a wasp, and a hen—and of course his resolution to tame her implies the sustained hawking analogy underlying most of his behavior.[11] In their first encounter each wishes to reduce the other to a laboring animal. Kate starts with ''Asses are made to bear, and so are you,'' and the double (or perhaps triple) entendre of Petruchio's riposte, ''Women are made to bear, and so are you,'' helps to activate a second ani-

[10] *The Uses of Enchantment* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976; repr. Vintage, 1977), p. 70. Bettelheim cites hedgehogs and porcupines. Shrews belong to the same biological family and share the reputation of being unpleasant to deal with. For a discussion of the relation of shrews as animals to shrews as women, see the New Arden edition of *The Taming of the Shrew*, ed. Brian Morris. (London: Methuen, 1981), pp. 121–24.

[11] For an analysis of the methods of hawk-taming and their use in the play, see George Hibbard,

malistic analogy which underlies the play—the fallacious picture of beast and rider as a suitable emblem for harmonious marriage.[12]

V

There can be no doubt that the equation of women with horses was operative in Elizabethan culture. Perhaps the most relevant example is that of one of the possible sources of Shakespeare's play, the long poem called "A Merry Jeste of a shrewde and curst Wyfe, Lapped in Morrelles Skin for Her Good behavyour" (London, 1580). The poem is of special interest because it too features two sisters (rather than the three sisters of the old play *The Taming of a Shrew* or the one sister of the source of the subplot, Gascoigne's *Supposes*),[13] the younger and more docile of whom is cherished by the father and disappears early in the tale. In this poem the groom (the double meaning of this word invites equine elaboration) quarrels with his wife and in his anger mounts his old horse Morrell, a blind, lame nag unable to draw and given to falling in the mire; as he rides away, the groom conceives the idea of killing the horse, flaying it, and wrapping his wife in Morrell's skin "for her good behavior." There is no need to recount the brutal details of how he carries out his plan. The point is clear: he wants his wife to be a horse and, in effect, succeeds in turning her into one.

The association of women and horses surfaces also in other Shakespearean plays—notably in Cleopatra's envy of Antony's horse (I.ii.21) and in Hermione's reference to women being ridden by their husbands (*The Winter's Tale*, I.ii.94–96). In *The Taming of the Shrew* Gremio swears that he would give Kate's bridegroom "the best horse in Padua" and declares that in Petruchio's search for money he would wed "an old trot with ne'er a tooth in her head, though she have as many diseases as two and fifty horses." This grim marital metaphor materializes in the description of Petruchio's arrival at his wedding mounted on exactly such a horse; meanwhile, Petruchio himself has visibly deteriorated to match the horse. The play does not accept the emblem of horse and rider as a proper model for marriage. On the contrary, the Petruchio of this scene is, like his specifically characterized lackey, "a monster, a very monster in apparel, and not like a Christian . . . " (III.ii.69–70). Biondello says that it is not Petruchio who comes, but "his horse . . . with him on his

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"*The Taming of the Shrew*: A Social Comedy," in *Shakespearean Essays*, ed. Alwin Thaler and Norman Sanders, Special Number 2, *Tennessee Studies in Literature* (1964), 15–28; and Margaret Loftus Ranald, "The Manning of the Haggard or *The Taming of the Shrew*," *Essays in Literature* 1 (1974), 149–65.

[12] This idea is touched on by Marianne Novy, "Patriarchy and Play in *The Taming of the Shrew*," *English Literary Renaissance*, 9 (1979), 264–80. Since I wrote this essay I have also heard a good development of the use of the horse and rider emblem in a paper by Joan Hartwig, "Horses and Women in *The Taming of the Shrew*," delivered at the Southeastern Renaissance Conference, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 27 March 1982 (forthcoming in *Huntington Library Quarterly*). Although asses can be ridden, they are more likely to be beasts of burden, which is the primary analogy implied by Kate. As Petruchio picks up the image, however, it suggests (1) that women must bear burdens; (2) that women must bear children; (3) that women must bear males in the sex act; and even perhaps (4) that women as representative of passion must be "ridden" by rational male "riders."

[13] *A Pleasant Conceited Historie, called The Taming of a Shrew* (London, 1594). Whether this play is a source, an analogue, or a bad quarto of Shakespeare's play is still debated, but opinion seems to be moving toward the idea of bad quarto. *Supposes* was printed in *The Posies of George Gascoigne* (London, 1575).

back.'' Baptista's remonstrance that ''That's all one'' and Biondello's enigmatic and apparently gratuitous ''A horse and a man / Is more than one / And yet not many'' (III.ii.84–86) might even be taken as a mock description of marriage—in which man and horse are one flesh. Petruchio has come, not like a proper bridegroom, but like a parody of the centaur at the wedding feast. However, he has none of the virility of the mythical centaur arrived to rape the bride. He looks readier for ''The Battle of the Centaurs to be sung by an Athenian eunuch to the harp'' than for sexual consummation.[14] And though Shakespeare's play has nothing comparable to those lines in *A Shrew* that overtly reveal the bride's readiness for marriage,[15] most stage productions supply some sign of her awakened interest in her suitor. Her disappointment in Petruchio's tardy and tawdry appearance reflects more than a concern about his breach of etiquette.

And yet the aura of the centaur is not altogether lacking. Petruchio does commit a sort of rape in carrying off his bride against her will. Nor is his comparison of Kate to Lucrece and Grissel unapt; he proceeds to treat her like each of these women in turn. There have been some overtones of the monster in Petruchio right from the start. Critics have often been conditioned by interpretations of the play that depict Petruchio as the wise teacher experienced in animal psychology,[16] and by productions which encourage a blind enjoyment of his macho self-confidence. And yet the text does not necessarily support such responses. From the start Petruchio displays an irrational irascibility that leads his servant to call him mad and drives his friend Hortensio to rebuke him for the treatment he accords his ''ancient, trusty, pleasant servant Grumio'' (I.ii.47). When the violent hero speaks of his coming to Padua as a way of thrusting himself ''into this maze'' (I.ii.55) in order to wive, there may be some doubt as to whether he should be linked with Theseus or with the minotaur. As understandable as the expectation of a good dowry was to an Elizabethan audience, Petruchio's single-minded insistence that wealth is the burden of his wooing dance, and his willingess to accept a Xanthippe or worse if she is rich enough, seems the extreme of folly even to his friends. He compares himself and Kate to two raging fires which will consume ''the thing that feeds their fury'' (II.i.132–33). His thoughts of wooing are formulated with hunting analogies: ''Have I not . . . heard lions roar? / Have I not heard the sea . . . / Rage like an angry boar chafed with sweat?'' (I.ii.200–202). And his courtship repeatedly reminds us of the hawking metaphor in which he sees himself as the hunter. Hunters in mythology, however, are often themselves in danger of metamorphosis, and from the moment of his venereal triumph Petruchio is transformed into a beast. Granted that his transformation is in part assumed, it nonetheless seems excessive and shocking. He is, says Baptista, ''An eyesore at our solemn festival'' (II.ii.101), and his gross behavior in the church is carefully removed from view on stage. He is a ''grumbling groom,'' ''a devil, a devil, a very fiend'' (III.ii.155), and indeed Kate's journey with him to his

[14] Shakespeare's association of Centaurs with the story of how the Centaurs invited to the wedding feast of Theseus' friend Pirithous tried to carry off the bride, Hippodamia (note the horse allusion in ''Hippo''), and thus precipitated a bloody battle, is apparent in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, V.i.44–45, and *Titus Andronicus*, V.ii.203.

[15] In *A Shrew*, sig. B3, Kate says in an aside, ''But yet I will consent and marry him, For I Methinkes have livde too long a maid . . . .''

[16] See, for example, Robert B. Heilman, ''The *Taming* Untamed, or The Return of the Shrew,'' *Modern Language Quarterly*, 27 (1966), 147–61.

country house is for her a descent into hell. The fairy-tale of the two sisters is now eclipsed by shades of Pluto and Proserpina, or of Beauty and the Beast.

VI

The quester one finds in a fairy-tale or romance is frequently accompanied by a dwarf or an animal. It is therefore both amusing and fitting to discover that Grumio, the first to speak in the new hellish setting of Petruchio's house, is a sort of dwarf, "a little pot" (IV.i.5) and a "three-inch fool" (IV.i.23),

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THE waggoner, behoulde, is hedlonge throwen,
And all in vaine doth take the raine in hande,
If he be dwrawen by horſes fierce vnknowen,
Whoſe ſtomacks ſtowte, no taming vnderſtande,
They praunce, and yerke, and out of order flinge,
Till all they breake, and vnto hauocke bringe.

That man, whoe hath affections fowle vntamide,
And forwarde runnes neglecting reaſons race,
Deſerues by right, of all men to bee blamide,
And headlonge falles at lengthe to his deface,
Then bridle will, and reaſon make thy guide,
So maiſte thow ſtande, when others doune doe ſlide.

Inteſtina

Figure 1. From Geoffrey Whitney's *A Choice of Emblemes* (London, 1586).

and that one of Petruchio's first acts is to call for his spaniel Troilus. Dogs, one recalls, are regularly resident in the lower world. Rather more significant is the description of the newlyweds' journey. In addition to the association of horses with women, it is a Renaissance commonplace that horses represent the passions, which must be reined in by the rational rider for a harmonious and moderate life. The skilled equestrian or the chariot driver (see Figure 1, and note the reference to horses which do not understand "taming") is a model for well-governed individual existence. The marital goal of Kate and Petruchio will be, not to ride each other but to ride side by side, in control of their horses,

back to Padua. It is a goal constantly frustrated. The curious account of their problems with their horses en route to Petruchio's country estate has no parallel in *The Taming of a Shrew*. The idea might have been suggested by Morrell's tendency to fall in the mire or by a passage in Gascoigne's *Supposes*, where Paquetto speaks of the "foule waye that we had since wee came from this *Padua*" and expresses his fear that the mule "would have lien fast in the mire."[17] In Shakespeare the reported incidents (III.ii.55–84) serve as fitting prologue to the scenes at Petruchio's house. Both Kate and her husband, it seems, have lost control of their passions (i.e., they have been thrown from their horses) as they came down a "foul hill." Kate's horse has actually fallen on her, and she has waded through dirt, "bemoiled" and disoriented. The suggestion that her former identity has been destroyed is supported by the discussion among the servants about whether or not she has a face of her own (III.ii.99–104), and later by the report that she "knows not which way to stand, to look, to speak, / And sits as one new risen from a dream" (IV.i.185–86). Unlike Proserpina, she is eager to eat in this frigid underworld but instead is starved (literally and figuratively), denied proper apparel (cf. Grissel), and assaulted with "sermons of continency" (IV.i.182–83).

VII

Throughout Act IV Petruchio continues to speak of his wife as an animal, explicitly as a falcon (IV.i.190–96), and to treat her accordingly. I have never found these scenes very funny. For me, they reinforce Curtis' observation that by now "he is more shrew than she" (IV.i.85–86). Kate justly complains that her husband wants to make a puppet of her (IV.iii.103). The promised journey to her father's house is aborted by their quarrel over the time, and the horses to be ridden to Padua remain unmounted at Long-lane End (IV.iii.185). In IV.v it appears likely that travel plans will be canceled again as the two start out for Padua a second time and momentarily disagree. But this disagreement leads to the turning point of their relationship. Kate learns to play Petruchio's game and acquiesces in his apparently whimsical identification of the sun as the moon.

It is at this moment that one encounters the submerged evocation of Ovid to which I referred earlier. Petruchio continues his game by addressing Vincentio as "gentle mistress." Hortensio protests that it "will make the man mad, to make the woman of him." But now the "game" turns suddenly into a kind of shared vision. Following Petruchio's lead, Kate greets Vincentio as "young budding virgin," and then goes on to say,

> Happy the parents of so fair a child,
> Happier the man whom favorable stars
> Allots thee for his lovely bedfellow.
> (IV.v.39–41)

Editors have noted[18] that this speech echoes Salmacis' words in Golding's translation of the *Metamorphoses*:

> . . . right happy is (I say)
> Thy mother and thy sister too (if any be:) . . .

[17] Gascoigne, p. 18.
[18] See, for example, the Arden edition, ed. R. Warwick Bond (London: Methuen, 1904; rev. & repr. 1929), p. 132.

But far above all other, far more blisse than these is she
Whom thou for thy wife and bedfellow vouchsafest for to bee.[19]

What has not been analyzed is the logic and significance of the connection. In Ovid Salmacis is addressing Hermaphroditus, the young man who subsequently fuses with her to become a hermaphrodite.

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Figure 2. "Matrimonii Typus," a woodcut from Barthélemy Aneau's *Picta Poesis ut Pictura Poesis Erit* (Lyon, 1552).

The language takes on obvious relevance in *The Taming of the Shrew*, where the speakers are transforming a man metaphorically into a woman. The word "bedfellow" evokes the idea of sexual consummation; and the hermaphrodite was a popular Elizabethan emblem for the miracle of marriage, which joined

[19] Quoted in Geoffrey Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957), I, 169–73, as a source of *Venus and Adonis*, As in Petruchio's speech earlier (IV.v.30), Ovid's passage also contains reference to white and red (apples and Ivorie) in the face of the object of observation. A few lines further on the passage reads,

And even as *Phebus* beames
Against a myrour pure and clere rebound
With broken gleames;
Even so his eyes did sparcle fire.

The lines are comparable to Kate's:

Pardon . . . my mistaking eyes,
That have been so bedazzled with the sun . . . .

Ovid's original may be even closer to Shakespeare than Golding's translation. It reads:

flagrant guoque lumina nymphae,
non aliter quam cum puro nitidissimus orbe
opposita speculi referitur imagine Phoebus . . . .

See Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in the Loeb Classical Library, with translation by Frank Justus Miller. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1977), p. 202, ll. 347–49. The word "nitidissimus" suggests "bedazzled." The same passage, echoed in *Troilus and Cressida* (II.iii.241) in a speech by Ulysses to Diomed, is even closer to the Latin. Ovid himself echoes Odysseus' speech to

male and female (see Figure 2).[20] One emblem (see Figure 3) features, above the figure of the hermaphrodite, the sun and moon (on male and female sides respectively), reinforcing the idea of the union of these qualities in marriage and adding resonance to Shakespeare's scene, where the two heavenly bodies

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Figure 3. "In sponsalia Johannes Ambii Angli & Albae Rolleae D. Arnoldi Medici Gandavensis filiae," a woodcut from Johannes Sambucus' *Emblemata* (Antwerp, 1564).

have become interchangeable. The alchemical Rebis features a similar image of the hermaphrodite flanked by sun and moon (see Figure 4), symbolizing the first stage of the "chemical marriage" which produces pure gold.[21] Another emblem (Figure 5) shows the male and female being joined under a burst of light from heaven, comparable to the light that has "bedazzled" Kate's eyes. At this moment the hell of estrangement is lifted. Kate explains her vision as the result of "eyes, / That have been so bedazzled with the sun / That everything I look on seemeth green" (IV.v.45–47). As a couple she and Petruchio have emerged from the underworld of lost and mistaken identities to the green world presided over by the true father (cf. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *As You Like It*). It is this moment that makes consummation possible. The same moment leads Hortensio to resolve to marry his widow and presumably coincides with the nuptial ceremony of Bianca and Lucentio. And following this moment, Kate and Petruchio mount their respective horses and ride to Padua.

Nausicaa (6.149–59) in Homer's *Odyssey*. Although it does not prove Shakespeare's knowledge of Greek, the original is followed by an intriguingly apposite elaboration: "And for yourself, may the gods grant you all that your heart desires; a husband and a home . . . and oneness of heart . . . For nothing is greater or better than this, when a man and wife dwell in a home in one accord, a great grief to their foes and a joy to their friends" (6.180–5). The translation is by G. Karl Galinsky, *Ovid's "Metamorphoses": An Introduction to the Basic Aspects* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1975), p. 188.

[20] For a discussion of hermaphrodites in poetry, see William Keach's *Elizabethan Erotic Narratives* (New Brunswick: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1977), Chapter 8.

[21] I am indebted to Robert Kimbrough for directing my attention to the Hermetic androgyne.

Beryl Rowland suggests that the Latin word *equus* is related to the word for equal—because horses drawing a chariot needed to be well-matched.[22] It is pleasant to suppose that some sense of this meaning inheres in Shakespeare's image, even though it is obvious that the idea cannot be pushed too far. There

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MATERIA PRIMA.

Figure 4. "Aurelia Occulta Philosophorum," from Basilius Valentinus' *Theatrum Chemicum*, vol. 4. (Strasbourg, 1613).

can be no question that the view of the dominant male and the submissive female survives to the end of the play. It would be absurd to argue otherwise. And yet the substitution of the vision of the hermaphrodite with its two human components for the earlier images of horse and rider or falcon and falconer is progress. And in independence of mind and liveliness of spirit the two riders do seem well matched.

VIII

In the final scene of the play bestial metaphors and figures of the hunt reappear—but with a difference. They are no longer in the mouths of Kate and Petruchio except when Kate rebukes the other women as "unable worms" (V.ii.169). The widow's reference to the shrew is dismissed by Kate as a "very mean meaning" (V.ii.31). Bianca speaks of head and butt, and head and horn, and "becomes" a bird to be hunted and shot at (V.ii.46–51). Petruchio denigrates Tranio's greyhound imagery as "something currish" (V.ii.54) and insists on the distinction between his wife and his hawk and hound (V.ii.72–73). The transformation of the protagonists bodes "peace . . . and love, and quiet life." In this context the trial of Kate (a trial is a recurring feature of the final stage of romance) culminates in the revelation of her true identity and prepares the way for the long-deferred consummation.

[22] *Animals with Human Faces* (Knoxville: Univ. of Tennessee Press, 1973), p. 107.

The end of this play is not the social celebration characteristic of festive comedy. It shows, rather, the kind of individual salvation typical of romance. As Petruchio says, "We three are married, but you two are sped." The figurative transformation of Bianca into a bird is a true Ovidian metamorphosis—the revelation of terminal stasis. The lonely lovers create a private sanctuary for themselves, but the surrounding world continues to be paralyzed by its illusions.[23]

The benign green world of *The Taming of the Shrew* is explicitly manifest only in the brief shared epiphany of the main protagonists. The violence, both psychic and physical, and the bestial metaphors belong to another kind of natural world—a world of nightmares and unrestrained instincts. The bestial metaphors are not merely weapons in the war of attempted manipulation of others; they are also passing pictures in a fluid scene where transformations are still possible. The very assertion of false images facilitates their confrontation and

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Figure 5. "Humana Origo et Finis," a woodcut from Barthélemy Aneau's *Picta Poesis ut Pictura Poesis Erit* (Lyon, 1552).

rejection. In the end it is possible to believe that Petruchio has given up his view of Kate as goods and chattels or as his horse or his falcon, even as Kate has relinquished her headstrong humor. It is, after all, the "sped" Hortensio and Lucentio who persist in the assertion that Petruchio has succeeded in "taming" "a curst shrew." Petruchio himself is equally "tamed."

I am willing to concede that this is not the most obvious reading of the play. Still, if the romantic subtext I have attempted to trace is actually operative, it should not be totally ignored; and a stage production might effectively emphasize it. It demonstrates an oblique, probably unconscious, use of source materials which is, I believe, typical of Shakespeare. It also reveals the poet's uncanny ability to modify a standard tale of male supremacy with a humane vision which helps to account for the survival of his most sexist comedy as a play acceptable to and even pleasurable to modern audiences—truly a miraculous metamorphosis.

[23] This idea is elaborated in Novy, p. 277.