



## Using Virgil, Ovid and Petrarch Anew: Framing and Reframing Diana in the Canon

by Agnes Lafont

To apply the notion of framing to Shakespeare's reception of the classical tradition is to show how the selection of the sources from which the definition of the myth of Diana arises is reworked on the Shakespearean stage. To re-frame Shakespeare is also to re-consider the origins of his knowledge of the classics.<sup>1</sup> Classical mythology both questions and informs early modern creativity, as it shapes the reactions of Renaissance readership and audiences. To trace the various sources of the necessary compound mythological allusion, be they from Ovid,<sup>2</sup> Virgil or Petrarch or from the three altogether, is to analyse their interactions, their *bricolage* that draws on a common cultural material in a more or less deliberate, elusive or subversive fashion. This leads us to trace how Shakespeare frames the classical heritage and thus appropriates it through the lens of the myth of Diana. In the Shakespearean canon, this goddess is evoked in her own name about 56 times but she is also present through a combination of possible *exempla* that Shakespeare modifies either by erasing or hiding some conventional interpretation or attribute, or else by twisting the original reading of the emblematic figure or even by adding new aspects to the classical deity. Singularized and anatomized

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1 See Mary Thomas Crane, *Framing Authority, Sayings, Self and Society in 16<sup>th</sup> century England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993). The question is not only how the text is made up of "textual fragments" (Crane, 4) but also how the allusion coheres or makes sense around one mythological figure. Here our case study is that of Diana. This goes along the lines followed by Ann Moss, exploring "connections and contrasts of ideas within a text" in order to go "beyond the level of the linear plot"

2 A number of specific studies of the interaction between Shakespeare and Ovid are available: Jonathan Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993). Charles Martindale discusses the relationship Bate saw between Shakespeare and Ovid's text in 'Shakespeare's Ovid, Ovid's Shakespeare: a Methodological Post-script,' in *Shakespeare's Ovid: the Metamorphoses in the Plays and the Poems*, ed. A. B. Taylor (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000), 198-215. David Scott Wilson-Okamura's new survey of *Virgil in the Renaissance* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010) interestingly places the classical author in the printing trade of the period and draws a number of enlightening parallels between the uses of Virgil as a source in several European countries. As for Petrarch, I found very useful Nancy J. Vickers's analyses on Diana in the *Rime Sparse*, see "Diana Described: Scattered Woman and Scattered Rhyme", *Critical Inquiry*, 8, 2, 1981, 265-79.

through the use of motifs such as Diana at her bath, naked Diana, hunting Diana (4 times explicitly in relation with the *fabula* of Actaeon in Shakespeare), the figure is also constantly reworked by addition: Diana as Cynthia/Phoebe or the moon; Venus under the guise of Diana; Diana as Hecate. This recomposition of the image of the classical deity as it was perceived in Antiquity and in other works during the period leads to the re-framing of a new goddess in Shakespeare's work, close to the paradigm of "modest wantons" (*The Rape of Lucrece*, 401), which presents a difficult – yet typical – *discordia concors* between beauty and chastity.

My contention is that we need to reframe our way of perceiving classical mythology in our own time. In order to do so, we need a somewhat archaeological approach to Shakespearean drama, to see how Shakespeare and his contemporaries frame the classical heritage to put it into a new perspective, thus telling something about its time and metatheatrically about itself. To consider the normative or emblematic use of Diana as the *paragone* of virginal chastity will first unveil that mythology is more than often subverted by the general economy of the play in which the mythological allusion is inserted. We will then address some instances in which tensions between Diana and Venus express the uneasy concord between sensuality and modesty in an idealised beautiful Lady. In a form of parody, the canonical deity is used both to serve and to debunk the Petrarchan ideal of *la Belle Dame sans mercy*, "the fair, the chaste and unexpressive she" (Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, 3.2.10). Irony becomes the tool that reframes the perception of what is "classical" in the early modern period.

***"As chaste as Diana:" Framing is endorsing tradition and thus commenting on the price of virginity in early modern culture.***

Traditionally Diana is associated to purity, chastity as virginity, and offers the symbol of untouched, preserved integrity. The figure can be found in several plays to insist on this theme of wholeness; it is presented as the essential quality of a Roman unmarried vestal by Coriolanus: "[...] chaste as the icicle / That's curdied by the frost from purest snow, / And hangs on Dian's [Diana] temple: dear Valeria!" (*Coriolanus*, 5.3.64-7). More strikingly, her name is invoked by Othello:

My name, that was as fresh  
As Dian's [Diana] visage, is now begrimed and black  
As mine own face. If there be cords or knives,  
Poison, or fire, or suffocating streams,  
I'll not endure it. Would I were satisfied! (*Othello*, 3.3.392-395)

Metaphorically, honesty and chastity associated to snow and ice are white notions. Her name is also evoked to strengthen an argument. In *Pericles*, Simonides explains that his daughter Thaisa will remain confined and will not receive the knights:

One twelve moons more she'll wear Diana's livery;  
This by the eye of Cynthia hath she vow'd,  
And on her virgin honour will not break it. (2.5.10-12)

This is of course ironical since he has an affair with his daughter and does not want her to marry. Diana is opposed to lust, therefore to Venus, in *Much Ado about Nothing*:

Claudio - Out on thee, seeming! I will write against it.  
You seem to me as Dian [Diana] in her orb,  
As chaste as is the bud ere it be blown.  
But you are more intemperate in your blood  
Than Venus or those pampered animals  
That rage in savage sensuality. (4.1.56-61)

Yet, paradoxically, the tutelary goddess of maidens is also a menacing figure: Portia in *The Merchant of Venice* sees her as a threat to her marriage. "If I live to be as old as Sibylla, I will die as chaste as Diana, unless I be obtained by the manner of my father's will" (1.2.24-25). In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Diana is used both pejoratively (as a threat to fecundity) but also as a remedy to idle love (an ally to Anteros) "Dian's [Diana] bud o'er Cupid's flower / Hath such force and blessed power" (4.1.56). This unambiguous image of antidote to lust / unlawful love however is of course counterbalanced by the numerous and scattered references to Diana within the text which make up a complex and shifting figure, overlapping the strict definition of the symbol of continence as a punishment used by Theseus (1.1.65-89).

Diana is the defender of endangered virginity: Marina in *Pericles* calls for Diana's help while in the brothel (16.142-145); Emilia in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* is also submitted to an ordeal and her fidelity to Diana must be overcome by her lovers. Maidenhead becomes a condition of possibility of the wedding for the lady and in that respect, Diana is not celebrated as a potent deity of her own anymore but as the ancillary deity to Cupid, Venus and Love. To marry Diana's altars must be abandoned in favour of those of Love. Thus Helen in *All's Well That Ends Well* strictly associates the deity to virginity:

Helen (*rising*) Now, Dian, from thy altar do I fly,  
And to imperial Love, that god most high,  
Do my sighs stream. (2.3.73-77)

Furthermore, in some cases, Shakespeare's Dianas are also married women. Innogen, the faithful wife of Posthumus in *Cymbeline*, is also described as "the Dian of that time" (2.5.7.) in reference to her mother-in-law. Posthumus rages thus after he is misled into believing that she has betrayed him with Giacomo:

We are all bastards;  
 And that most venerable man which I  
 Did call my father, was I know not where  
 When I was stamp'd; some coiner with his tools  
 Made me a counterfeit: yet my mother seem'd  
 The Dian [Diana] of that time: so doth my wife  
 The nonpareil of this. O, vengeance, vengeance! (2.5.2-8)

The audience is then made to understand that married fidelity corresponds to virginity for wives. In that respect, virginity is at the origin of the persecution of the lady:

Giacomo - Your daughter's chastity, there it begins.  
 He spake of her as Dian [Diana] had hot dreams  
 And she alone were cold, whereat I, wretch,  
 Made scruple of his praise, and waded with him  
 Pieces of gold 'gainst this which then he wore  
 Upon his honoured finger [...]  
 (5.5.179-184)

The high price of the wager, gold, is justified by the perfect fusion between the lady and Diana. This emblematic use of the mythological register, which is to be found in several plays, already offers a variety of interpretations. No matter the potential normative use of mythology, its insertion within a dramatic context activates various potentialities it subsumes and in the case of the figure of Diana, its interactions with the figure of Venus are telling.

### Shakespeare's Diana: *chasse and chasse d'Amour*

Shakespeare's mythology is reframed through the selection in the sources he operates. He then plays on Petrarchan and Virgilian influences to redefine the hunt as *servitium amoris*. When Venus dresses up like Diana, their attributes are close and indeed may seem interchangeable. The lady must present herself under the appearance of a "modest wanton" thus becoming a living oxymoron who combines Diana's chastity to Venus's beauty to try and reach a difficult *discordia concors*. In Marlowe, *Dido queen of Carthage* (1594),<sup>3</sup> Venus dressed as Diana favours the meeting between Aeneas and Dido; yet their union is impossible. Dido, as the archetypal faithful widow, finally falls in love with the Trojan hero but eventually dies, forsaken. The love encounter occurs while they are hunting and the queen is dressed up as a huntress:

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<sup>3</sup> Christopher Marlowe, *Dido Queen of Carthage and The Massacre at Paris*, éd. H.J. Oliver, The Revels Plays, London: Methuen, 1968. (*editio princeps*: *The tragedie of Dido Queene of Carthage : played by the Children of her Maesties Chappell*, London: Thomas Woodcocke, 1594).

Aeneas, think not but I honour thee  
That thus in person go with thee to hunt.  
My princely robes, thou see'st, are laid aside,  
Whose glittering pomp Diana's shrouds supplies (3.3.1-4)

Closely following the Virgilian intertext, Marlowe explicitly refers to the goddess of the hunt. In Thomas Phayer's translation, *The whole .xii. bookes of the Æneidos of Virgill* (London, 1573):

Most like vnto Diana bright when shee to hunt goth out  
Upon *Eurotas* bankes, or through the cops of *Cynthus* hill,  
Whom thousands of the ladie Nimphes await to do her will.  
Shee on her armes her quiuer beres, and all them ouershines,  
And in her brest the tikling ioy her hart to mirth enclines.  
So Dido came, and freshly glad among the prease shee past.  
(I. 474-79)<sup>4</sup>

Yet Dido uses Dian's clothes, the athletic goddess with a short dress, as a decoy, thus unveiling her body; from *venatio* to *chasse d'amour*, the hunt becomes a trap for the hunter. The common link is provided by Diana's attributes:

Fair Trojan, hold my golden bow a while,  
Until I gird my quiver to my side.  
(III.3.7-8)

The place on stage where the *chasse d'amour* takes place is the very place where Aeneas met his mother Venus and killed the deer which allowed him to feed his starving men: "here you shot the deer" (III.3.51), "And here we met fair Venus, virgin-like, / Bearing her bow and quiver at her back" (III.3.54-55). It seems that this accumulation of deictic adverbs is meant to draw the attention of the audience to the fact that Venus and Diana's territories overlap in a dangerous proximity. Diana's woods are used as the setting for seduction as the traditional pun on "deer"/"dear" is once more activated. Yet the amorous meeting is doomed by the presence of the virgin goddess and its failure reveals the incompatibility between *amor* and *venatio*.

Shakespeare in *Venus and Adonis* (1593) takes up this Virgilian theme of the reversed hunt on a different mode, ironically turning Venus into a prey of love; he draws on a well-known passage of *the Metamorphoses* translated thus by Abraham Fraunce, in *The Third Part of the Countesse of Ynychurch* (1592):

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4 Virgil, *Aeneid*, I.498-503. Many translations were available. Quotes in this paper are from Thomas Phayer (1510 ?-1560), *The whole .xii. bookes of the Æneidos of Virgill. Whereof the first .ix. and part of the tenth, were conuerted into English meeter by Thomas Phaër Esquire, and the residue supplied, and the whole worke together newly set forth, by Thomas Tnyne, Gentleman*, London: Abraham Veale, 1573. [STC 24801].

Sometimes unto the woods, and pleasant parks she resorteth,  
 With tuckt-up garments, and Quiver, like to Diana  
 (sig. M2 r<sup>o</sup>, p. 44 r<sup>o</sup>)

Interestingly Arthur Golding in his 1567 translation of *The Metamorphoses* substituted the lunar hypostasis, Phoebe, to Diana, in his narrative of the *fabula* of Adonis:

Through bushy grounds and groves,  
 And over Hills and Dales, and Lawnds and stony rocks shee roves,  
 Bare kneed with garment tucked up according to the woont  
 Of Phebe (Golding, X. 618-21)

This 16th century alteration of the Latin version thus emphasizes the contemporary conflation between the goddess of the hunt and that of the moon, Phoebe:

*Per iuga, per silvas dumosaque saxa vagatur  
 Fine genu vestem ritu succincta Dianae  
 Hortaturque canes tutaeque animalia praedae*  
 (Ovid, X. 535-7)

There is an obvious parallelism between the Ovidian and the Virgilian materials: Dido and Aeneas and Venus and Adonis, two tragic *exempla* of failed loves, seem to be defeated because of the dangerous proximity of the two lovers with the threatening Diana. In *Venus and Adonis*, Venus, even if she wants to seduce young Adonis, is not ready for a death hunt. Contrary to Diana, the goddess of love does not care for deep forests and cautiously warns her beloved against the potential dangers of the hunt, as Fraunce's translation clearly shows:

Sweete boy, looke to thyself, goe not too oft to the forrest,  
 Where sharpe-tusked boares, and rav'nous woolus be resorting,  
 And strong stoordy Lyons are each where fearfully roaring  
 Parks and lands are walkes more meete for yonker Adonis  
 Harts and Hyndes are game more fit for gentle Adonis.  
 (sig. M2 r<sup>o</sup>- v<sup>o</sup>, p. 44 r<sup>o</sup>- v<sup>o</sup>)

The contrast between “forrest” and “parks and lands” underscores how delian qualities are undermined by the venerian rhetoric of “pleasant delights”. The opposition between the types of game is also telling: “harts” plays on “heart”. Thus the impetuous Venus staged by Shakespeare in *Venus and Adonis* acts under the dangerous guise of the Huntress, without her unswerving chastity. The parallelism linking the activity of the hunt to that of the hunt of love (dating back to Ovid in his *Ars amatoria*) turns a Diana into a Venus. Yet, once again, the outcome of the love story is lethal because of the intervention of a boar, reminiscent of the Calydonian boar once revengefully sent by Diana herself.

This contamination between the realms of Diana and that of Venus is also to be found in two sonnets by Shakespeare: sonnet 153 and 154. These two anacreontic poems, probably inspired by Marianus Scholasticus, in *The Greek Anthology*,<sup>5</sup> present the same anecdote dealing with the strength of Cupid's fire, able to warm up the cold waters of chastity. The nymphs "that vow'd chaste life to keep" (154, l.3) or a virgin "a maid" (153, l.2) steal Cupid's darts while he is asleep.

[...] his love-kindling fire did quickly steep  
In a cold-valley fountain of that ground ;  
Which borrowed from this holy fire of love  
A dateless lively heat, still to endure  
(Sonnet 153, l.3-6)  
This brand she quenched in a cool well by,  
Which from love's fire took heat perpetual  
(Sonnet 154, l.9-10)

The warmth of love, illustrated by the lexical field of fire, is opposed to the coolness of chastity: in sonnet 154, cold water, heated by the power of a Cupid / Anteros, becomes a thermal water healing diseases; in sonnet 153, this water cannot heal the wounds of love since it was heated by Cupid / Eros.

Love's fire heats water, water cools not love  
(Sonnet 154, v.14)

Once again Diana's territory (be it the forest or the fountain) is invaded by Venus and Cupid. This time however its power is tamed into a helpful means to rule passion. This is one of the major functions of the figure of Diana in Shakespeare: she helps faithful love to triumph. Shakespeare selects elements from the classical sources to re-frame the normative use of the deity as the goddess of chastity and adapt it to create a new goddess that will preside over faithful marriage.

### ***Reframing the Virgo as a Virago***

The codes of Petrarchism are present within the Canon to describe the conventional tormented lover; in *Twelfth Night*, Orsino compares himself with Actaeon's sorrow when he saw naked Diana at her bath; in *Romeo and Juliet*, before meeting Juliet, Romeo laments the cruel indifference of a beautiful lady he loves, conventionally named Rosalind:

*Romeo.* [...] she'll not be hit  
With Cupid's arrow; she hath Dian's [Diana's] wit;  
And, in strong proof of chastity well arm'd,

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<sup>5</sup> Simonds Munoz, 109-10 and 133 note 27.

From love's weak childish bow she lives unharm'd.  
 She will not stay the siege of loving terms,  
 Nor bide the encounter of assailing eyes,  
 Nor ope her lap to saint-seducing gold (1.1.205-211)

The war between Diana and Cupid is close here to a psychomachia by **Pietro Perugino** (1448-1523); the cruel fair lady described echoes Orlando's Petrarchist vision of Rosalind as "the fair, the chaste, and unexpressive she" (3.2.10), a diffraction of the figure of Diana in French and Elizabethan love sonnet sequence.

*Orlando* – Hang there, my verse, in witness of my love;  
 And thou thrice-crownèd queen of night, survey  
 With thy chaste eye, from thy pale sphere above,  
 Thy huntress' name [Diana] that my full life doth sway. (3.2.1-4)

Yet the reference to the Petrarchan intertext is more often reframed and mocked or used ironically than used as a *topos* in Shakespeare.

In *The History of King Edward III*, King Edward uses mythology to praise the Countess of Salisbury. At first, close to the literary games related to the Petrarchist Diana, mythology then takes on a more educative value. The ideal of chastity embodied by Diana seems to be questioned by the ironical comments of the lover. When the king decides to reveal his love to the married Countess, he requires that his secretary Lodowick helps him to write a love sonnet: two texts are juxtaposed when the performance text becomes a critique of a mythological poem. Lodowick uses Diana to celebrate the Countess. He relies on the *cliché* of love in the 16th century which could be summarised by a line in *Astrophel and Stella* (1591) by Sir Philip Sidney: "Love is chastenesse" (sonnet 48).

More fair and chaste than is the queen of shades (2.308)

This veiled mythological allusion to Diana seems to echo the contemporary poetry of Giles Fletcher the Elder in *Licia* (1593):<sup>6</sup>

Diana-like she lookes, but yet more bolde:  
 Cruell in chase, more chaste, and yet more fayre.  
 (sonnet XXXI, v.7-8)

Yet the dramatic text creates a distortion between the vision of the amorous king and that of the poet. The king criticises the image of the moon which offers a dull portrait of the lady:

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6 Fletcher, Giles (the Elder) (1549?-1611), *Licia, or Poemes of loue, in honour of the admirable and singular vertues of his lady, to the imitation of the best Latin poets, and others. Whereunto is added the rising to the crowne of Richard the third*, Cambridge: John Legat, 1593. [STC (2<sup>nd</sup> éd.) 11055].

Compar'st thou her to the pale queen of night [Diana],  
Who, being set in the dark, seems therefore light?  
(2.310-311)

The play on words on “light”, “bright” and “not heavy”, conveys the ambiguous nature of the moon, a symbol of mutability. The king refuses to consider chastity as a positive quality – indeed the countess he wishes to seduce is the faithful wife of one of his vassals; the conventional pun which combines hunt and chastity (chased/chaste) is perverted by the fact that he turns the huntress into game, thus giving her a passive role. “For I'd rather have her chased, than chaste” (2.320).

Therefore tension stems between this poetical text and the course of drama: Edward first draws attention to the fact that poetry is but a *compendium* of conventional metaphors then he plays with their meanings to finally dismiss them as clichés: “Out with the moon line!” (2.321). The audience cannot but laugh at this interpretive game; though learned, Edward is a bad reader, taking mythological allusions in their literal sense, like Phoebe in *As You Like It*, thus providing a satire of love poetry. Yet this sarcastic treatment of Petrarchan love cannot hide that his reasoning is specious: in the name of an assumed sincerity (in fact the Countess is neither a virgin nor a widow), he criticises the use of myth after showing the interpretive difficulties it brings along: “Love cannot sound well but in lovers' tongues.” Yet another matter is underlying. How to make a virtuous and faithful lady favourable to his entreaties? If myth is dismissed by Edward III it is rather because it teaches a lesson that he is willing to forget: chastity has to be protected.

In *As You like It* Petrarchism is parodied through the image of Diana. Orlando and Ganymede / Rosalind are both compared or associated with the figure of Diana. Thus Orlando's neo-Petrarchist poetry is mocked by Celia and the same imagery of fruitless virginity used by Shakespeare to threaten disobedient daughters is turned into sarcastic condemnation of conventional love discourse:

He hath bought a pair of cast lips of Diana. A nun of winter's sisterhood kisses not more religiously. The very ice of chastity is in them.  
(III.4.14-16)

“Cast” means “molded” or “thrown away” thus creating an ambiguity in the image of the purchase, “bought”; ironically, the lady mocks the Petrarchan posture. Diana is associated to cold, frigidity and sterility: “winter,” “ice,” “sisterhood,” “nuns” in the same lexical field as the one Theseus uses in the opening scene of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to threaten the disobedient Helena (1.1.65-89). Ganymede satirically draws a comparison between herself and Diana when imagining the sort of wife Rosalind would be to Orlando:

I will be more jealous of thee than a Barbary cock-pigeon over his hen,  
more clamorous than a parrot against rain, more new-fangled than an

ape, more clamorous in my desires than a monkey. I will weep for nothing like Diana in the fountain, and I will do that when you are disposed to be merry. I will laugh like a hyena and that when thou art inclined to sleep.

(IV.1.136-43)

Once again the allusion draws on a reading of the figure *in malo*: the tears of the shrew convey a comical portrait of powerlessness and sterility. Besides, the deity is quoted among a bestiary related to the humours of the young wife. There is a juxtaposition of elements resorting to a low register and some to mythology – this proximity of Diana and the hyena (almost paronomastically) constitutes two opposite poles of beauty and ugliness, of chastity and lasciviousness.<sup>7</sup> The heterogeneity creates a new diffraction, a new reframing, of the figure of Diana, creating a degraded image of love but also transposes the negative discourse on women in a woman's voice.

Phoebe, yet another name for Diana, presents a new type of variation on the theme of amorous hunt in that play; to the noble couple Orlando / Rosalind corresponds the pastoral couple of Silvius and Phoebe. While Rosalind sharply criticizes the Petrarchan metaphors used by Orlando

[Rosalind's] frown might kill

(IV.1.100)

[His heart is] wounded [...] with the eyes of a lady.

(V.2.24)

Phoebe, a follower of Diana etymologically, also casts doubts about the truthfulness of her shepherd lover; she literalises poetic conceits and clichés to undermine their lack of sincerity:

I would not be thy executioner.

[...] Thou tellst me there is murder in mine eye

'Tis pretty sure and very probable,

That eyes that are the frailest and softest things,

Who shut their coward gates to atomies,

Should be called tyrants, butchers, murderers.

Now I do frown on you with all my heart,

And if mine eyes can wound now let them kill thee.

Now conterfeit to swoon, why now fall down;

Or if thou canst not, O for shame, for shame,

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7 François Laroque suggests this reading of “Diana / hyena” in « Motley's the only wear: *As You Like it* ou la bigarrure », (77-91), 88-89, in *As You Like it: Essais Critiques*, éd. Jean-Paul Debax and Yves Peyré, Toulouse: Presses Universitaires du Mirail, 1997.

Lie not, to say that mine eyes are murderers.  
Now show the wound mine eye hath made in thee,  
Scratch thee but with a pin, and there remains  
Some scar of it, lean upon a rush  
The cicatrice and the capable impressure  
Thy palm some moment keeps. But now mine eyes,  
Which I have darted at thee, hurt thee not;  
Nor I am sure there is no force in eyes  
That can do hurt.  
(III.5.1-27)

The binary system is founded on the opposition between supposition “and if” and rock-solid evidence “now” repeated six times. The cumulative process and the insistence on the thematic of the eye as a murderer give a bloody tinge to this anti-love declaration: the length of the tirade itself underlines the rhetorical inflation given to the theme of love at first sight. Eyes are plethoric: whether the eye is a metonymy of the beloved (l.10; l.20 “eye” is also “P”), or the eye in general (as it is defined l.12 or l.26), or also an ironical plurality of eyes, baffling by the sheer increase of their numbers of occurrences (l.16; l.19; l.24).

Parody is very effective here since Phoebe, this stronghold of chastity, falls in love with Ganymede / Rosalind at first sight. Everything that had been condemned is then redeemed in the most conventional manner: “Who ever loved that loved not at first sight?” (III.5.83). The aside sheds an ironical light on her previous sarcasms. When she composes a rhymed bout to confess her infatuation with Ganymede, she uses an identical set of metaphors:

If the scorn of your bright eyne  
Have power to raise such love in mine,  
Alack, in me, what strange effect  
Would they work in mild aspect?  
(IV.3.51-54)

The same synecdoche is reversed to be applied in a positive manner this time. The vocabulary of fight and violence is taken up once again to be transferred on the metaphor of the amorous hunt.

Why 'tis a boisterous and cruel style  
A style for challengers. Why, she defies me [...]  
(IV.3. 32-34)

This reversal unveils the inherent ambiguity that lies at the core of the figure of Diana: to defend one's chastity becomes a means to entice one's lover. Rosalind's neologism takes up all its meaning: “She Phoebe me” (IV.3.40). However this

ambiguity does not show the extent of Diana's power. On the contrary the unwilling surrender of Phoebe to Cupid's dart only symbolises the blindness of an ill-understood chastity which ridicules the Lady. It seems that Diana has started the fight but that Venus has ended the match on the mode of comic reversal.

Shakespeare's re-framing of the mythological goddess of the hunt combines tradition/ competitive *imitatio* and invention: while the use of the Petrarchan material in the rewriting of the myth of Diana resorts to convention in *Romeo and Juliet* (and also in *Timon of Athens* where it functions on the metaphorical level), it resorts to parody in pastoral love comedies (*Twelfth Night* and *As You like It*) where the tragic potentialities of the figure are then de-activated. The interplay between Ovidian/Petrarchan/Virgilian discourses and also between literary genres (poetry and drama) is at the core of mythological effectiveness. Commonplace books and mythocritical literatures, dictionaries and emblem books are less important than the effective uses of mythology on stage. Interestingly in a form of Chinese-box effect, when Shakespeare reframes Ovid he might re-enact the potentialities of Virgilian story-telling: the matter of time however is not relevant to mythological creation in the Renaissance. It is fascinating that many stories about the same figure, not dating from the same period but roughly studied as the "classics", should recompose a new perspective to think about contemporary ideas. Thus, to study the allusion to the virgin Diana may help us to reframe the status of virginity on the Shakespearean stage, to see how the huntress gradually becomes a deity that presides over marriage.

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