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Kate's Ovidian metamorphosis in Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*

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Abstract

Ovid's influence on Shakespeare's production has been recognized ever since 1598, when Francis Meres linked the two authors in his rhetorical exercise "A Comparative Discourse of our English Poets with the Greeke, Latine, and Italian Poets": "[a]s the soule of Euphorbus was thought to live in Pythagoras: so the sweete wittie soule of Ovid lives in mellifluous and hony-tongued Shakespeare". The English playwright has often been inspired by Ovidian themes throughout his production; in particular, metamorphosis plays a central role in his dramatic works. This article aims to provide a brief overview of similarities and differences between Ovidian and Shakespearean metamorphoses of female characters' appearance and voice after being subjected to male violence. In particular, it focuses on the outcome of such transformations and questions whether Shakespeare followed Ovid in staging metamorphoses which change the character's appearance but leave intact its inner world or whether he pursued a more complete kind of transformation which mutates the character's emotional and psychological assets too. This qualitative differentiation will be tested in *The Taming of the Shrew* (1593), a play which offers a wide range of explicit and implicit references to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Kate's transformation from curst shrew to obedient wife in particular will prove useful in understanding whether the metamorphic process affected her inward core and thus diverged from the Ovidian tradition.

Keywords

Shakespeare, Ovid, metamorphosis, reception studies, *The Taming of the Shrew*

1 Ovid, Shakespeare and the role of metamorphosis

Ovid's influence on Shakespeare's production has been recognized ever since 1598, when Francis Meres linked the two authors in his rhetorical exercise "A Comparative Discourse of our English Poets with the Greeke, Latine, and Italian Poets": "[a]s the soule of Euphorbus was thought to live in Pythagoras: so the sweete wittie soule of Ovid lives in mellifluous and hony-tongued Shakespeare" (Meres 1598: O01v). For what concerns *Metamorphoses* in particular, Bate's list of all the metamorphic episodes in Shakespeare's works shows the ample use the English playwright made of all the fifteen books of the Latin poem:

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> the Golden Age (Book One); Phaethon (Book Two); Actaeon, Narcissus and Echo (Book Three); Pyramus and Thisbe, Salmacis and Hermaphroditus (Book Four); Ceres and Proserpina (Book Five); Arachne's tapestries depicting the Olympian gods as rapists and seducers, Tereus and Philomel (Book Six); Medea (Book Seven); the Calydonian boar, Baucis and Philemon (Book Eight); Hercules and the shirt of Nessus (Book Nine); Orpheus, Pygmalion, Venus and Adonis (Book Ten); Ceyx and Alcyone (Book Eleven); Ajax and Ulysses, Hecuba (Book Thirteen); the philosophy of Pythagoras, Julius Caesar (Book Fifteen) (Bate 1993: 23)[1].

Shakespeare's familiarity with *Metamorphoses* was possibly due to the presence of the Ovidian work in school curricula. In the sixteenth century, almost all syllabuses prescribed Ovid's poem for the teaching of Latin and rhetoric for grammar school students[2]. In the late 1520s, Cardinal Wolsey recommended the Ovidian poem to teachers to "mark every orthography, every figure, every graceful ornament of style, every rhetorical flourish [...] all passages that ought to be imitated and all that ought not" (Colet, Wolsey 1529: A4r-v)[3]. His works were also present in various forms on the early modern literary market: annotated editions and commentaries were often in line with the moralizing tradition of *Ovid moralizé*, an exegetical current that derived its name from an anonymous translation of Ovid's works and prioritized allegorical and biblical readings of the Ovidian literary production[4]; mythological handbooks, such as Thomas Cooper's *Thesaurus* (1565), Stephen Batman's *Golden Booke of the Leaden Goddes* (1577) and Abraham Fraunce's *Third part of the Countesse of Pembrokes Ivychurch* (1592) (Bate 1993: 27); translations such as George Turbervile's *The Heroycall Epistles of the Learned Poet P. Ovidius Naso Translated into English Verse* (1567) and Thomas Churchyard's first three books of the *Tristia* (1572), which offered an Anglicized rendition and a complex, political interpretation of such writings (49). Among these, the most popular translation of this period was Arthur Golding's *Metamorphoses* (1567), an instant editorial success thanks to its vernacular vocabulary and lively narration. Although it is little probable that Shakespeare encountered Golding's work during his school years "given the understandable slowness with which new literature percolates down to the schoolroom" (Taylor 2000: 3), many linguistic borrowings suggest he knew both Golding's translation and the Latin original very well and possibly consulted them side by side (Bate 1993: 8)[5].

It is in this context that Shakespeare became acquainted with the Latin poem on distressing emotions and physical transformations. However, in

his works, Shakespeare often translates Ovid's physical metamorphosis on a more psychological and metaphorical, though not allegorical, level. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Bottom's transformation from man to ass is one of the very few instances of such conventional Ovidian transformations. As a result of his marked interest in inward changes, Shakespeare discards Ovidian external, divine powers as engines of the metamorphic process and emphasizes the role of internal dramatic mechanisms. In his comedies, transformations are usually generated by love and its most natural outcome, marriage (Hoy 1984: 294). In *Love's Labour's Lost*, Berowne signals how love changed the King and his companions by means of animal metaphors ("[t]o see a king transformed to a gnat!", IV.iii.166). In tragedies, revenge and, later, equally disruptive emotions, such as revenge and blind ambition, pride and regret drive the characters' actions and mutate their minds and hearts.

Most importantly, Shakespeare differs from Ovid in the outcome of such metamorphic events. In the Latin poem, metamorphoses initiated by gods' fury or jealousy change the victim's outward appearance and vocality but leave its inner world intact. Although turned into animals, Io and Europa do not forget their beloved ones and tirelessly try to communicate with them. The stability of such changes is testified by the lack of emotional or psychological changes in the characters who endure physical metamorphosis. Once transformed, they keep their "mind of before" (Ovid, ed. Marzolla 2015: XXIV), namely the thoughts and feelings they had prior the transformational moment which they preserve in their newly-acquired animal bodies. In this light, Ovid's poem may be considered a paradoxical framework which presents "changes which preserve, alterations which maintain identity" (Zajko 2004: 42). Since its metamorphoses do not produce true alterations in the subjects' inner world, they may also be defined as "terminal revelations of stasis" (Roberts 1983: 160)[6].

Contrariwise, in Shakespeare's plays, metamorphoses seem to ignite a continuous and potentially endless process of inward investigation and alterations. These are dramatically signalled by "mini-metamorphoses", that is "metaphors, pretences, disguises, or stage images" which mark the protagonists' temporary mutations which eventually lead to its final inward transformation (Roberts 1983: 160). Before committing the most horrendous deed, Othello's internal struggle between his love for Desdemona and his jealousy fed by Iago's lies causes in him abrupt changes of mind and heart. Given the gradual creation of wholly new identities,

Shakespearean metamorphoses cannot bear the label of "terminal revelation of stasis". On the contrary, they may be defined as "progressive" since they slowly substitute the character's "mind of before", thus his feelings and thoughts, with something altogether new (Roberts 1983: 160).

The qualitative differentiation between metamorphoses which alter the characters' inner world and those which leave it intact does not jeopardise the tight link between such transformative processes and language. In both authors, physical and inward changes are anticipated and signalled by alterations of the victim's linguistic means. In Ovid, Daphne's transformation is elicited by her heartfelt prayer to her father, the river god Peneus, and completed by the loss of her voice as a laurel. In *Othello*, the Moor's adoption of Iago's lexicon proves his agreement with the standard-bearer's murderous intentions. To both Ovid and Shakespeare, then, characters' identities are "created and transformed by the very process of verbal articulation" (Roberts 1983: 160), which marks the birth of new dramatic *figurae* through displays of rhetorical mastery, verbal fertility and linguistic play (Bate 1993: 3).

The choice of *The Taming of the Shrew* (1593)[7] depended on its high number of explicit allusions to Ovidian works and the *Metamorphoses* both in its Induction and in its main plot. Besides Ovid himself (I.i.33), the play hints to *Fasti* (II.i.289), *Heroides* (I.ii.245)[8] and "[t]he Art to Love", that is *Ars Amatoria*, (IV.ii.8). Allusions to *Metamorphoses* can be found mostly in the first two acts and cover a wide range of characters and stories, such as those of the Sybil of Cumae (I.ii.69)[9], Leda (I.ii.242)[10], Hercules (I.ii.255)[11], Ajax (III.i.50-51)[12] and Pegasus (IV.iv.5)[13].

Within this Ovidian context, Kate's transformation into a tamed wife may prove useful in marking differences between Ovid's and Shakespeare's handling of the metamorphic process. Kate's dismissal of her aggressive, unruly verbosity in her final monologue seems to show how Shakespearean transformations lead to an evident change in the character's heart and mind. Although this interpretation may seem straightforward, some scholars have offered a discordant interpretation, suggesting that Kate's independence of thought is not "substituted by", but "disguised as" linguistic agreement with patriarchal status quo[14]. In the following section, I will investigate Kate's behavioural and linguistic metamorphosis in order to spot similarities or differences with Ovidian transformations which preserve the character's "mind of before".

2 "For she is chang'd, as she had never been": metamorphoses and new identities in *The Taming of the Shrew*

The Taming of the Shrew stages one of the most well-known behavioural metamorphoses in the English dramatic production, that of Kate from curst shrew to obedient wife. In some readings, especially in those which consider the play a farcical rendition of shrew taming narratives, Kate's final monologue is read as proof of her progressive transformation into a loving subject of her husband's authority[15].

This deeply transformative effect of metamorphosis on Kate's inwardness may be first hinted at in the Induction scene, where the Lord tricks the drunkard tinker Cristopher Sly into believing he was a gentleman. Here, references to the myth of Echo (Ind.i.24)[16], Io (Ind.ii.55)[17] and Apollo and Daphne (Ind.ii.58)[18] anticipate themes, which concur in identifying Kate's metamorphosis as inevitable. Like in these Ovidian myths, Kate and Bianca unwillingly act as preys of male violent desire (Bate 1993: 119)[19]. Both authors mark this kind of unbalanced relationships by associating male physical violence with female metamorphosis. This cause-effect relation reverberates in Kate's story, where her transformation from shrew into tamed wife is elicited by Petruchio's violent taming technique.

Besides, the Ovidian metamorphic myths mentioned in the Induction show a tight connection between physical and linguistic transformation: after their metamorphoses, Echo, Europa and Io lose their human forms and language and are provided with new linguistic means which jeopardize communication. The restraint of the female character's ability to express herself also resurfaces in Kate's transformative process in *The Taming of the Shrew*, where she often turns her independent verbosity into a linguistic mirror for male desires. In one of the key scenes of the play, she acts like an early-modern Echo as she merely repeats Petruchio's last words in order to avoid his tantrums and convince him to travel to Padua:

> Petruchio I say it is the *moon*.
> Katherina I know it is the *moon*.
> Petruchio Nay, then you lie; it is the *blessed sun*.
> Katherina Then, God be bless'd, it is the *blessed sun*;
> (IV.v.16-19, my emphasis).

The presence of mythological characters such as Daphne and Echo may seem to anticipate the definitive quality of Kate's final transformation: nor

the Ovidian characters nor Kate should regain their original appearance and vocality. This is seemingly supported by the dramatic frame itself, which does not show Christopher Sly's regression from gentleman back into tinker. If the Induction is programmatic of the play's main plot (Bate 1993: 119), then its references to the transformations of Sly and the Ovidian female characters should offer some insights on Kate's metamorphic model as a process which deeply affects its subjects and grants no inversion to their original self.

Like in the Ovidian myths so far encountered, Kate's contrarian attitude remains unchanged until Petruchio resorts to his violent taming methods. Before meeting him, Kate snaps at one of Bianca's suitors who spoke rudely to her (I.i.61-65), threatens and strikes her younger sister (II.i.1-22) and breaks the rules of filial deference due to her father (II.i.31-36). After her strenuous defence against Petruchio's advances by means of verbal aggressions ("I'll see thee hang'd on Sunday first", II.i.292) and physical assaults ("[t]hat I'll try. [*She strikes him*]", II.i.218), she gradually gives in her linguistic power as he resorts to violent taming techniques.

The first account of Kate's gradual transformations is given by Grumio, Petruchio's servant, as the couple is travelling to Verona. Grumio relates the spouses fell from their horses and how Kate "waded through the dirt to pluck [Petruchio] off me [Grumio]" (IV.i.69-70) and "pray'd that never pray'd before" (IV.i.70-71) when confronted with her husband's rage against his servant. This is Kate's first act of generosity displayed on stage, which may represent her gradual loss of her shrewish identity. This reading seems to be supported by Grumio's following account of the spouses' first night together. Here, he depicts Kate as an emblem of female endurance and patience ("she, poor soul, / Knows not which way to stand, to look, to speak. / And sits as one new risen from a dream", IV.i.171-73) and compares her to mythological and literary examples of such female qualities: "[u]nlike 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)" (Roberts 1983: 167).

Kate's submissive new identity is put to the test throughout Act IV Scene III. Here, her shrewish verbosity reappears as soon as she snaps at Grumio's unfulfilled promises (IV.iii.31-35) and counters Petruchio's decisions both in their meeting with the tailor and the haberdasher and in their first departure to Padua. Her stubbornness sometimes even allows

her bursts of anger and frustration which voice her will to reconquer physical and emotional independence ("[m]y tongue will tell the anger of my heart, / Or else my heart, concealing it, will break", IV.iii.77-78). However, in light of a "progressive" reading, Kate's switches between these two behavioural modes, namely the shrewish and the submissive ones, may be considered as "mini-metamorphoses", that is necessary steps of a "continuous and potentially endless process of inward investigation and alteration" (Roberts 1983: 160). While in the *Metamorphoses* female characters usually undergo sudden physical transformations which immediately cast on them their ultimate morphed figures, Kate suffers a behavioural, if not psychological change, which requires more time and effort to take over her former self completely. Moments of resistance and occasional relapses are unavoidable passages in any human process of inward transformation and as such may testify to the deeply transformative quality of Kate's ultimate metamorphosis.

The conclusion of the play seems to strengthen this last hypothesis. At the end of Act IV, Kate has learnt a paradoxical lesson, namely to yield her physical and verbal power to Petruchio in order to satisfy her desires:

> Petruchio Nay, then you lie; it is the blessed sun.
> Katherina Then, God be bless'd, it is the blessed sun;
> But sun it is not, when you say it is not;
> And the moon changes even as your mind.
> What you will have it nam'd, even that it is,
> And so it shall be so for Katherine.
> Hortensio Petruchio, go thy ways, the field is won (IV.v.17-23).

Kate's metamorphosis seems definitive as soon as her vocality turns into an exclusive means of support of her husband's and patriarchal *status quo* more at large. In Act V Scene II, her final monologue proves her acquisition of a new linguistic identity. As Daphne, Io and Europa lost their speech and acquired new vocal expressions after their metamorphoses, so Kate's transformation into a dutiful wife is signalled by the loss of her shrewish tongue, which is substituted by a new, socially acceptable rhetoric. Like Echo's, Kate's new verbal means is devoid of personal signifiers and depends on male language for its existence and legitimacy. Unconceivably for her former shrewish self, her final tirade against ungrateful women praises men's role within family and society in conventional terms. She refers to the husband's role within marital relations in terms of pre-eminence and

possession that link his authority over his wife to that of the king over his subjects ("[s]uch duty as the subject owes the prince, / Even such a woman oweth to her husband", V.ii.155-56). The balance between the sexes seems to be ultimately restored in openly patriarchal terms: women are "soft and weak and smooth, / Unapt to toil and trouble in the world" and thus naturally subjected to men, who commit their "body / To painful labour both by sea and land, / To watch the night in storms, the day in cold" (149-51).

In this light, Kate's metamorphosis into a tamed wife seems "progressive" and rather definitive since it provides the subject with a new identity and allows no regression into its former self. However, a closer inspection of the Induction scene and the last two acts of the play may contradict this reading and suggest that Kate has not truly lost her shrewish self through the metamorphic process.

3 "Seeming to be most which we indeed least are": metamorphoses and the "mind of before" in *The Taming of the Shrew*

The Induction scene seems to offer Ovidian models of female metamorphosis, namely Echo and Daphne, which deeply affects the subject's both outward and inward worlds and point to the definitive loss of linguistic independence as the ultimate result of forced transformations. However, both myths prove how the nymphs' minds remain unscathed by their physical alterations: Echo does not lose her capacity to love and falls prey of Narcissus' beauty and Daphne still shivers when Apollo touches her bark. The superficial quality of such metamorphoses is also proved by other two Ovidian figures mentioned in the Induction, that is Io and Europa. In the Latin poem, both women embody the link between male physical violence, linguistic change and physical metamorphosis. Still, they also prove how their minds are not affected by such transformations, which even become reversible. If the Induction scene is to be considered programmatic to Kate's story, then it should suggest how her metamorphosis will not only be superficial, but also temporary.

This hypothesis seems to be strengthened by Sly's own metamorphosis into a gentleman. Although it may represent "progress [since] we are not allowed to witness his regression" (Roberts 1983: 161-62), Sly's transformation is embedded in a highly performative context and proves not to

affect his "mind of before": despite his new status, Sly orders an unrefined "pot o' th' smallest ale" (Ind.ii.76) and addresses his "wife" with rather uncomely manners. The hypothesis of his apparent metamorphosis may also be supported by *The Taming of A Shrew* (1594), an anonymous analogue or earlier draft of the Shakespearean play which provides further proofs of the resistance of Sly's "mind of before". There, the closing of the dramatic frame shows how the tinker realizes he has never truly turned into a gentleman but they only dreamt about it ("I have had / The bravest dreame to night, that ever thou / Hardest in all thy life", G2r). In *The Taming of the Shrew*, the impossibility for unwanted transformations to alter the subject's core essence surfaces in the last two acts as well.

In the previous section, Act IV Scene V seemed to testify to Kate's surrender to Petruchio in adopting his language and worldview. Yet, peculiar linguistic choices hint at a different reading of the scene which show how Kate maintains her "mind of before" and only gives Petruchio the impression of being in control of her voice in order to fulfil her desire of going to Padua. Her witty reference to "rush-candle" may be seen as ironically downplaying Petruchio's categorical affirmations and her following stress on verbs of cognition ("I know it is the moon"), subtly underlining the difference between her objective observations and Petruchio's subjective, slightly nonsensical, claims ("I say it is the moon", IV.v.5). Also, her greeting of Vincentio proves how easily she can linguistically resist Petruchio's verbal and practical authority. By praising the old man's appearance, Kate subtly appropriates male language of courtship and reverses gender conventions by acting like the wooing man who casts his linguistic authority on his silent love object. Her domineering stance is reinforced by the hidden literary echo of the Ovidian myth of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus, which proves not only the superior role of woman within the couple, but also her capacity to be the aggressor[20]. To educated spectators, Kate's praise of Vincentio's beauty may have recalled Salmacis' greeting to Hermaphroditus and created a close imaginative link between the two women:

> KATE *Young* budding virgin, fair, and fresh, and sweet,
> Whither away, or where is thy abode?
> *Happy the parents of so fair a child*,
> *Happier the man* whom favourable stars
> Allots thee *for his lovely bedfellow*" (IV.v.36-40, my emphasis),

> [*y*]*outh*, O most worthy to be thought a god, if you are a god, you must be Cupid, or, if you are mortal, *whoever engendered you is blessed*, and any brother of yours is happy, any sister fortunate, if you have sisters, and even the nurse who suckled you at her breast. But far beyond them, and far more blessed is she, *if there is a she, promised to you, whom you think worthy of marriage* (Ovid [ed. Kline 2004: IV.317-26], my emphasis)[21].

Though often considered a proof of Kate's ultimate transformation into a tamed wife, her final monologue too shows linguistic signs of contextual irony which may undermine the hypothesis regarding her progressive and definitive metamorphosis into a new, tamed woman. Her lines "our strength as weak, our weakness past compare, / That *seeming* to be most which we *indeed* least are" (V.ii.175-77, my emphasis) address the contrast between appearance and reality and hint at the performances or deceits women are capable of in order to survive in an oppressive society. Kate reminds her audience how women can feign excellent qualities when they truly have none.

The theme of female deceitfulness and resistance is developed in the following passage, "[t]hen *vail* your stomachs, for it is no boot, / And place your hands below your husband's foot" (V.ii.177-79, my emphasis). If considered an alternative spelling for "to vail", namely '[t]o lower in sign of submission or respect' (OED: "vail, v.2b."), this sentence seems at first to suggest other women to bend their will to their husband's. However, if "to veil" is interpreted as "[t]o hide or conceal from the apprehension, knowledge, or perception of others", possibly also as "to treat or deal with in such a way as to disguise or obscure; to hide or mask the true nature or meaning of" (OED: "veil, 4a."), then Kate's advice underlines the chance for women to conceal their stomachs (their true passions and emotions) from their husbands and play the necessary social role of the obedient wife (Kingsbury 2004: 79). Lastly, her powerful gesture of submission – offering to place her hand below Petruchio's foot – can also be considered an ironical rendition of idealized female subjection. Scholars have pointed out how it could stand for an exaggeration of pre-reformation wedding rituals which prescribed that brides "prostrate [...] at the feet of the bridegroom" and "kiss his right foot" (Howard 1904: 306-07)[22]. Kate enhances the performativity of this gesture as she claims to be ready to "place [her] hands below [her] husband's foot", thus risking the pain of having her hands crushed by Petruchio's booted feet (Kingsbury 2004: 77). In this light, Kate's sense of self seems to have resisted her behavioural alterations,

which rather have granted her a legitimate voice and place in society, and it surfaces behind a veil of modest, patriarchally-approved rhetoric.

4 Conclusions

This re-reading of the Induction scene, Act IV Scene V and Act V Scene II of *The Taming of the Shrew* has unveiled linguistic cues and Ovidian references which show how Kate's "mind of before" may have survived in her behavioural compliance to Petruchio's will and societal rules. This hypothesis shows the limits of the qualitative distinction between Ovid's metamorphosis as "terminal revelations of stasis" and Shakespeare's "more [...] genuine [...] and often progressive rather than static" changes (Roberts 1983: 180). In particular, it suggests how such a distinction is unfit for *The Taming of the Shrew*, where Kate's "mini-metamorphoses" do not signal a transformative progression towards a new identity, but rather mark her struggles to maintain her former self. While she tunes down her aggressiveness in her attitude and vocality, she eventually maintains her independence of thought and her relish for linguistic games.

The superficiality of Kate's transformation, which does not affect her shrewish nature, may also be suggested by other dramatic elements in the play which fall outside of her character. Petruchio's own transformation ("I warrant him, Petruchio is Kated", III.ii.243) seems to maintain rather than challenge his core essence. As himself explains, he is willingly to play the madman to pay Kate back with her own medicine and break her curst humour with similar tantrums. When Kate seemingly surrenders her linguistic powers to him, Petruchio drops his nonsensical requests and violent impositions on his wife and exits the play with the same title he was given in Act I, that of "tamer" of rebellious shrews ("thou hast tam'd a curst shrow", V.ii.189). Similarly, Bianca's transformation is ultimately less radical than it may seem. Conventionally considered the emblem of female virtue, her metamorphosis into a shrew comes as a surprise at the end of the play. Harsh answers to her guests, plain displays of boredom, bawdy jokes and general unruliness now characterize the meek virgin who used to patiently bear her sister's strikes. Still, she also undergoes subtle "mini-metamorphoses" which may reveal how her meekness has always been just for shows. In Act III Scene I, she oversteps her father's authority and secretly encourages the courtship of Lucentio during their

Latin lessons. As she pretends to translate from Ovid's *Heroides*, Bianca suggests her master not to lose hope and later in the play, she explicitly breaks her maiden's modesty by admitting to Lucentio she hopes he will prove "master of your art", that is of Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* (IV.ii.9). Given these precedents, her metamorphosis at the end of the play does not transform, but rather reveals her true nature to her family and friends. The Ovidian metaphor she uses to compare herself to a bird who skillfully escapes its hunters seems rather apt as it suggests the fixed quality of her change, which may have altered her marital status but not her shrewish disposition ("[a]m I your bird? I mean to shift my bush, / And then pursue me as you draw your bow", V.ii.46-48).

In conclusion, the investigation of Ovidian influence in Kate's transformation from shrew to tamed wife has added further elements which may contribute to explain the many ways in which Shakespeare adapted Ovid's works and *Metamorphoses* in particular. His close reading of the Latin poem and necessary adaptation to the early modern stage has led the English playwright to borrow only some features of the Ovidian metamorphic process. In both authors, outward transformations, either physical or behavioural, of female characters are tightly linked to linguistic changes and do not alter their "mind of before". Despite the harsh changes they must bear, women maintain both their opinions and feelings and may even find new ways to communicate them. As Io and Europa succeed in expressing themselves despite their animal bodies, so Kate understands how to appropriate linguistic patriarchal conventions and disguise her social scorn beyond apparent compliance to patriarchal rules. Also, the study of Kate's metamorphosis in light of the Ovidian myths mentioned in the Induction has eventually offered further support to the so-called 'revisionist reading' of the play, which considers Kate's change as ironical and performative. Given these results, it would be useful to carry out this kind of investigation on other Shakespearean comedies, such as *Much Ado about Nothing* and *Love's Labour's Lost*. These future analyses may help understand whether Shakespeare consistently framed female metamorphoses against a rather explicit Ovidian background. Also, they may unveil whether such Ovidian metamorphic myths can be considered programmatic of the changes affecting Shakespere's female characters and whether Ovidian and Shakespearan metamorphoses eventually maintain the characters' "mind of before".

Notes

1 Although Books XII and XIV seem the least used, they were probably consulted by Shakespeare for the battle of the Centaurs and Lapithae in *Titus Andronicus* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and for Circe's enchantments in *The Comedy of Errors*. See Weber (2015) and Forey (1998).

2 See Mack (2016).

3 "[s]i qua orthographia, si qua figura, si quod egregium orationis decus, si qua exornatio rethorica, [...] si quid imitandum, si quid non imitandum sit [...]".

4 Codified in the fourteenth century by French writers, it became a fundamental starting point for many theological commentaries and translations of the *Metamorphoses* which contributed to the circulation of these texts. Besides the anonymous *Ovid moralizé*, the commentary *Metamorphosis Ovidiana moraliter ... explanata*, usually ascribed to Thomas Walleys but authored by Pierre Bersuire, also contributed to the circulation of the allegorical interpretation of the Latin texts.

5 An Aldine edition of the *Metamorphoses* (1502), now in the Bodleian Library in Oxford, is even believed by some to once be property of Shakespeare himself since it bears the signature 'Wm She' and a note by one 'T N' dated 1682 which explains how "[t]his little Booke of Ovid was given to me by W. Hall who sayd it was once Will. Shakesperes". Although this testimony may not be authentic – Shakespeare's son-in-law's name was John Hall and died in 1635 – it should at least be given some credit since "Shakespearian forgery did not become a vogue until the mid-eighteenth century" (Bate 1993: 28). Also, even if not belonging to Shakespeare himself, it may prove a worthy exemplar of the kind of books he may have owned and so attentively read.

6 See also Massey (1976).

7 All quotations are drawn from Shakespeare (ed. Morris 2002).

8 Book I, "Penelope Ulixi". In Act II Scene I, Tranio's mention of Paris ("Lucentio shall make one, / Though Paris came in hope to speed alone", II.i.245-46) may hide an implicit reference to *Heroides*, XVII.103-04: "oculos an Paris unus habes? / Non tu plus cernis sed plus temerarius audes, / nec tibi plus cordis sed magis oris adest"; "or is Paris the only one with eyes? / You see no more than them, but you dare more rashly: / you've no more judgement, but less composure".

9 Quotations from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* are drawn from Ovid (ed. Goold 1916). Translations of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* are drawn from Ovid (ed. Kline 2004; cf. XIV.135-38).

10 Ovid (ed. Kline 2004: VI.103-28), where she is depicted by Arachne, and Book VIII.260-328, where she is mentioned as the mother of the twins, Castor and Pollux.

11 His myth is referred to in many books (*Metamorphoses*), mainly VII.404-24, IX.1-417, where it also told his transformation into a constellation, XI.536-649, XII.290-326, XIII.399-428 and XV.199-236 and 259-306.

12 Ovid (ed. Kline 2004: XIII.1-122 and 382-98).

13 Ovid (ed. Kline 2004: IV.753-803, Book V.250-93 and Book VI.103-28).
14 See Korda (1996) and Detmer (1997).
15 See, for example, Shakespeare (ed. Barton 1974); Boose (1994); Blake (2002).
16 Ovid (ed. Kline 2004: III.339-401 and 474-510).
17 Ovid (ed. Kline 2004: I.588-600): "[v]iderat a patrio redeuntem Iuppiter illam flumine et 'o virgo Iove digna [...] pete' dixerat 'umbras altorum nemorum' (et nemorum monstraverat umbras) [...] quodsi sola times latebras intrare ferarum, praeside tuta deo nemorum secreta subibis, [...] ne fuge me!' fugiebat enim. iam pascua Lernae consitaque arboribus Lyrcea reliquerat arva, cum deus inducta latas caligine terras occuluit tenuitque fugam rapuitque pudorem"; "Jupiter first saw her returning from her father's stream, and said 'Virgin, worthy of Jupiter himself, [...] find shade in the deep woods! (and he showed her the woods' shade). But if you are afraid to enter the wild beasts' lairs, you can go into the remote woods in safety, protected by a god, [...] Do not fly from me!' She was already in flight. She had left behind Lerna's pastures, and the Lyrcean plain's wooded fields, when the god hid the wide earth in a covering of fog, caught the fleeing girl, and raped her".
18 Ovid (ed. Kline 2004: I.525-30): "[p]lura locuturum timido Peneia cursu / fugit cumque ipso verba inperfecta reliquit, / tum quoque visa decens; nudabant corpora venti, / obviaque adversas vibrabant flamina vestes, / et levis inpulsos retro dabat aura capillos, / auctaque forma fuga est."; "[h]e would have said more as timid Peneïs ran, still lovely to see, leaving him with his words unfinished. The winds bared her body, the opposing breezes in her way fluttered her clothes, and the light airs threw her streaming hair behind her, her beauty enhanced by flight". The themes highlighted by the myth of Echo, Io and Apollo and Daphne in the play's Induction will resurface in the reference to the myth of Europa in Act I Scene I.
19 Although aware of its impressionistic nature, I would suggest a comparison between early modern visual representation of Hades' abduction of Persephone (Book V.385-424) and Petruchio's abduction of Kate in the marriage scene (III.ii.231-37).
20 Ovid (ed. Kline 2004: IV.368-72): "perstat Atlantiades speratаque gaudia nymphae / denegat; illa premit commissaque corpore toto / sicut inhaerebat, 'pugnes licet, inprobe,' dixit, / 'non tamen effugies. ita, di, iubeatis, et istum / nulla dies a me nec me deducat ab isto'"; "'The descendant of Atlas holds out, denying the nymph's wished-for pleasure: she hugs him, and clings, as though she is joined to his whole body. "It is right to struggle, perverse one," she says, "but you will still not escape. Grant this, you gods, that no day comes to part me from him, or him from me". See Bate (1993: 123-24); Zajko (2004: 42).
21 "Nec tamen ante adiit, etsi properabat adire, / quam se conposuit, quam circumspexit amictus / et finxit vultum et meruit formosa videri. / tunc sic orsa loqui: 'puer o dignissime credi / esse deus, seu tu deus es, potes esse Cupido, / sive es mortalis, qui te genuere, beati, / et frater felix, et fortunata profecto, / si qua tibi soror est, et quae dedit ubera nutrix; / sed longe cunctis longeque beatior illa, /

si qua tibi sponsa est, si quam dignabere taeda".

22 "[t]unc procidat sponsa ante pedes ejus, et deosculetur dextrum; tune erigat eam sponsus" (Surtees Society Publications, 63, 20 n.). See also Legg (1903: 189-90); MacGregor (1905: 36); Boose (1991: 182-84); Kingsbury (2004: 77).

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