



Breaking the Vacuum: Ricardian and Henrician Ovidianism

Citation

Simpson, James. 1999. Breaking the vacuum: Ricardian and Henrician Ovidianism. *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 29(2): 325-55.

Published Version

<http://jmems.dukejournals.org/>

Permanent link

<http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:2643646>

Terms of Use

This article was downloaded from Harvard University's DASH repository, and is made available under the terms and conditions applicable to Other Posted Material, as set forth at <http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:dash.current.terms-of-use#LAA>

Share Your Story

The Harvard community has made this article openly available.
Please share how this access benefits you. [Submit a story](#).

[Accessibility](#)

Breaking the Vacuum: Ricardian and Henrician Ovidianism

James Simpson

Girton College

Cambridge, United Kingdom

Thomas Wyatt, who was born 1503, died of natural causes in October 1542. In 1536, and again in 1541, he had come very close to dying of a sharp-bladed unnatural cause. In 1536 he was implicated in the series of executions surrounding the fall of Anne Boleyn, and in 1541 his enemies profited from the execution in 1540 of Wyatt's most powerful protector, Thomas Cromwell. He was arrested for treason and imprisoned in the Tower; before his trial the Privy Council ordered that all his household goods as would be "mete for the Kinges Maiestes use" should be sent to London, and that Wyatt's family and servants be evicted from the house, once the servants had been given some wages and a "good lesson to use themselves honestly."¹ Wyatt escaped death on this occasion not by his detailed and powerful defense, which he may never have delivered, but rather by the intervention of Queen Katherine Howard, soon to be beheaded herself; he also confessed to all the charges, "yelding himself only to His Majesties marcy."²

Henry Howard, earl of Surrey, who was destined for decapitation in 1547, wrote this sonnet in praise of Wyatt after his death:

Dyvers thy death doo dyverslye bemone.
 Some that in presence of that lively hedd
 Lurked, whose brestes envye with hate had sowne,
 Yeld Cesars teres uppon Pompeius hedd.
 Some that watched with murdrers knyfe
 With egre thirst to drynke thy guyltless blood,
 Whose practyse brake by happye end of lyfe,
 Weape envyous teares to here thy fame so good.
 But I that knowe what harbourd in that hedd,
 What vertues rare were tempred in that brest,

Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies 29:2, Spring 1999.

Copyright © by Duke University Press / 99 / 1999 / \$2.00.

Honour the place that such a jewell bredd,
And kysse the ground where as thy corse doth rest
With vaporde eyes; from whence such streames awayle
As Pyramus did on Thisbes brest bewayle.³

This is a suicidal poem, not only because the reference to Caesar implicates the king among those falsely mourning Wyatt, but more powerfully because the last line expresses a powerful, even erotic desire for suicide.⁴ The very structure of the sonnet generates suicidal aggression, since it aims both to excite tears and to incriminate by tears: apparent distinctions between diverse ways of grieving for Wyatt collapse, as both groups of “some” in the first two quatrains turn out to be identical. The only true tears are those of Surrey himself, whose act of publishing a statement of communal grief for Wyatt recoils into a repudiation and exposure of communal grief. This sonnet was published along with two other elegies for Wyatt probably not long after October 1542, as the first of Surrey’s verse to be printed.⁵ Jealously guarding his exclusive passion for Wyatt as alone authentic, however, Surrey arouses a public only to embarrass and antagonize it. The opening gesture of communal activity is displaced by a trenchant fencing off of private, if now inaccessible, spaces.

The ferocity of Surrey’s publicly displayed privacy is an index of a fragile and dangerous social world, where professions of authenticity are immediately and plausibly subject to alternative, suspicious readings. Surrey himself does this here, just as, of course, he invites the very same reading of his own “sincerity.” The reference to Caesar’s feigned grief, for example, refers to Wyatt’s own sonnet on this very theme, “Caesar, when that the traitor of Egypt,” since that sonnet argues that “every passion / The mynde hideth by colour contrary / With fayned visage.”⁶ I do not suggest that Surrey is insincere here, but the suicidal extremity of his grief may itself protect Surrey from charges of insincerity, since his own family had most to gain by, and were delighted by, the execution of Wyatt’s patron Cromwell; Píramus, too, regards himself as responsible for what he takes to be Thisbe’s death.⁷ Just as the extremity protects Surrey, though, it also equally exposes him by (correctly) presaging his own death.

Surrey’s elegy is exemplary of what are taken to be “Renaissance” predicaments. In the first place its voice is acutely conscious of history as needing, if unlikely to achieve, resurrection. A tradition normally derived from Petrarch sees historical thinking as ideally governed by the need to recover what has been lost from the classical past.⁸ Such a view is produced

by Italian humanists in the fourteenth century, so the standard account runs, and underwrites the humanist enterprise of resurrecting ancient societies “in their own terms.” In English literary history, Wyatt and Surrey activate this narrative. In contrast with medieval insensitivity to historical difference and change, so it is argued, Surrey and especially Wyatt are most fully awake to historical difference; in them the “historical consciousness” is most active.⁹ Wyatt in particular stands at the “opening of the mature humanist endeavor in England,” by virtue of his “diachronic poetry.”¹⁰ Thomas M. Greene (an authoritative exponent of this position) argues that such a view of the past must of necessity be elegiac, since it implies a “historical solitude,” an intervening period of loss (the Middle Ages), which isolates and impoverishes the historical consciousness, and from which the past must be recuperated.¹¹ In this sonnet Surrey certainly represents himself as isolated and impoverished, even if the past he needs to resurrect has been almost surreally foreshortened in time, since it is the immediate, rather than the classical past that escapes him. The classical past, in fact, is itself metaphorically revived only to constitute the time of loss, since the false are weeping, now, “Caesars teres uppon Pompeius hedd.” The English poetic past is also evoked only to be neutralized as a larger source of tradition. Chaucer’s famous lines “And kis the steppes where as thow seest pace / Virgile, Ovide, Omer, Lucan and Stace” (*Troilus and Criseyde*),¹² with its own echoes of Statius (*Thebaid*, 12.816–17), here gives way to the concept of tradition possible only as an act of commemorating irredeemable loss: “And kysse the ground where as thy coorse doth rest.”

In the second place, Surrey’s sonnet represents itself as the product of a mobile, divided, and self-fashioning voice, another cardinal feature of the “Renaissance” predicament. In scholarship, we might conveniently derive this tradition from Burkhardt’s “Discovery of the Individual” in the Italian Renaissance, but the concept still flourishes, lately readapted to suit the history of subjectivity.¹³ In contrast to the “radical stasis of the medieval personality” (Greene again),¹⁴ the “Renaissance” self, or subject, is endowed with a confusing yet potentially limitless multiplicity. This psychic potential, of which Petrarch is again taken to be the originary exemplar, demands the intervention of a “fashioning” hand. As we have already seen, Surrey’s sonnet unquestionably reveals the self-fashioning subject, since the courtiers who weep for Wyatt are revealed as actors in a theatrics of grief with its own complex and deceptive code. More dangerously and profoundly divided from himself here, however, is Surrey himself. The whole enterprise of this sonnet distinguishes the duplicitous multiplicity of masks used by Wyatt’s

enemies from Surrey's own singular and integrated experience of grief. This integrity can only be expressed, however, by marking its impossibility, in the absence of Wyatt. A Piramus without Thisbe lies marked for suicide precisely because Piramus's identity is so intimately bound up with that of his lover. Surrey's homoerotic grief is so extreme that he even distorts the Ovidian narrative, in which Thisbe weeps over the nearly dead Piramus (*Metamorphoses*, 4.55–166), to suggest that it is he, Surrey, who expires. The enterprise of the sonnet might be to expose false "diversity": the evocation of Chaucerian pluralism in the opening line gives way, after all, to a very un-Chaucerian affirmation of the one, singular authentic response. This integrity turns out, however, to be itself an example of "diversity," since not only does the sonnet present a double address ("thy guyltless blood"; "that hedd"), but its voice irreducibly differs from "itself," complaining the impossibility of its integrity. The poem may well expose false diversity, but its own voice never escapes "diversity" of a radical kind.

Within the terms of contemporary periodization, then, this is very much a poem of the "Renaissance" or "early modern" period (proponents of either term promote the same periodic features). Reflection on Surrey's little poem confirms the standard recitation of cultural history, whereby "Renaissance" poetry manifests these two defining features of modernity: historical solitude and the consciousness of self as open to construction. Wyatt and Surrey are championed by virtue of writing with an acute historical consciousness out of a historical vacuum. Greene makes the point explicitly: "Both [Wyatt and Surrey] must have been aware of themselves as attempting something new, as filling a vacuum. (This is the way they were perceived during the remainder of the century and for that matter today)."¹⁵ The vacuum behind them, so the standard account runs, is both historical and psychological: Wyatt and Surrey are on the one hand the avatars of a wholly new sense of the unstable, Petrarchan self, and are also conscious of writing across a "cultural rupture."¹⁶

The severity with which periodic distinctiveness is maintained by modern scholarship finds its exemplar and occasionally its justification in claims made by a critical tradition begun by the likes of Surrey himself. The antiquary John Leland (?1503–52), for example, also wrote an elegy for his friend Wyatt. He dedicated it to Surrey in 1542, as one of the few things Leland published before his madness in 1547. In it he recounts Wyatt's apotheosis; asserts that Wyatt was in England the poetic equal of Dante and Petrarch in Italy; declares that Wyatt was a phoenix, whose death has produced another, in Surrey; and, among other things, has it that the English

language was uncultivated and its verse unworthy of note ("sine nomine") before Wyatt polished it. If Wyatt was a phoenix, he is implicitly the first.¹⁷ Leland's elegy exemplifies what we might call militant humanism, quite unembarrassed about eliding poetic with imperial honors (e.g., apotheosis), and quite untroubled by the extraordinary claims he makes for Wyatt's historical novelty.

In this article I want to challenge this powerful account of Wyatt and Surrey's periodic distinctiveness. The main thrust of my challenge will be made by arguing that we find exactly the same contours of divided selves and selves isolated in history much earlier in British literary history. If Surrey's poem exemplifies the larger point that the "Renaissance" produces elegy, I will here argue the reverse—that elegy produces the Renaissance, or important aspects of it, at any rate. And if that holds true, then what are traditionally labelled as the defining features of "Renaissance" poetry are characteristic of a powerful and various tradition of courtly and Ovidian elegiac writing in English and Scots from Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess* right through to Wyatt and Surrey. This tradition consistently alerts readers to the ways in which a self fragmented by its thralldom to power disrupts any sense of historical continuity.

The secondary thrust of my argument will be to dismantle the idea that Wyatt and Surrey exemplify a rediscovered "historical consciousness." Sixteenth-century claims for Wyatt and Surrey's historical novelty (claims replicated in the twentieth century) are made within the larger cultural environment of a radical restructuring of the past. As I shall argue in section 2, royal policy in the 1530s and 40s itself attempts to create something of a historical vacuum, whereby all that preceded must be read under the title of Henry's own imprimatur. Claims of extraordinary and improbable historical novelty are produced by a political imperative to distinguish the brilliant present from the superstitious past. This is the primary need of Tudor historiography, a need that antiquaries such as Leland amply fulfilled.¹⁸ What distinguishes the possibilities for the recuperation of both self and history in the Ovidian tradition I will delineate is the discursive freedom available to a given writer: the tighter the discursive constraints, the smaller the possibilities of restoring a sense of historical contour and continuity. The emphatically "Renaissance" qualities of historical rupture and division of self are especially pronounced, therefore, in writers who operate from the threatened margins of a fragile and dangerous discursive environment. The sixteenth-century consciousness of the past in elegiac poetry, "thirl[ed] [pierced] with the poynt of remembraunce" as it often is, distinguishes itself only by virtue

of the extreme menace surrounding and producing it.¹⁹ Contrary to the standard account, historical consciousness is the one thing that is *unavailable* to Henrician Ovidians.

The period between Chaucer and Surrey offers an extremely rich variety of elegiac poetry; I choose to center discussion on the periods 1380–99 and 1520–47, since both these historical sequences mark the high points of monarchical centralism in the period 1350–1547, or at least (in the earlier decades) *claims* to central power.²⁰ Both equally produce elegiac love poetry of a high order. All Ovidian love poetry is sensitive to the ways in which elegy draws on, yet seeks to neutralize, history; this double move characterizes both the elegiac writing produced in the 1380s and 90s, and that of the period 1520 to 1547. What distinguishes these two bodies of writing, however, is the greater discursive freedom enjoyed in the earlier decades, a freedom that allows reentry into the current of social and historical life.

I

Chaucer's "Complaint unto Pity," of uncertain date but almost certainly post 1372, generates extraordinary power by virtue of its self-cancelling. The work of 119 lines divides into two sections: a narrative (1–56), in which the narrator recounts his impulse to complain to Pity, only to find her dead "and buried in an herte"; and the recitation of a formal complaint, the text that the narrator had prepared to read to Pity, whom he now finds dead. He recites the now useless document to us (57–119). This whole poem swallows itself, since it can only enact its impotence. The complaint, which the narrator holds "written in my hond," presents itself fictionally as having been written before his discovery of Pity's death, and is therefore itself now useless. Not only is it useless, but the mourners at the graveside (Beauty, Jolyte, Assured Maner, Honeste, and Wisdom, for example) are agreed as to the time at which the narrator will be executed. Accordingly, the narrator dares not show the text of his "bille" to his enemies, though he does reveal it to his readers. Once we read it, however, we realize that whatever narrative openings it may have allowed have already been cancelled in the formulation of the legal document in the first place. It sets up an opposition between Pity and the tyrant Cruelty; without Pity, "ther is no more to seyne" (77): "ye sleen hem that ben in your obeisaunce" (84). Even as they are made, however, these pleas collapse into a recognition that Pity herself embodies the Queen of the Furies (92), indistinguishable from her tyrannical enemy Cruelty. The very formulation of the means to legal redress insists on the impos-

sibility of redress, and the impotence of the plaintiff's voice in a tyrannical environment: "What nedeth to shewe parcel of my peyne?" (106). The document ends with an affirmation of what the impulse of its composition had originally denied (i.e., Pity's death):

Sith ye be ded—allas that hyt is soo—
Thus for your deth I may wel wepe and pleyne
With herte sore and ful of besy peyne.

Narrative falters in this situation, since all the resources of narrative are defeated. The very sequence of time is destroyed, since everything must always remain already as it is. The poem gestures toward narrative sequence along the lines of "first I found Pity dead, and then I read out the bill I had written before I knew of her death"; but the "Complaint" reveals that Pity's death underwrites the entire text as its premise. The temporal stasis is underlined by the identity of the last line with the second; and, furthermore, the second stanza deliberately confuses the tenses. Most of this text reads in a simple past tense, as if it were a narrative that happened once in the past; the second stanza, however, quietly reveals that all this has happened before, many times: "And when that I, be lengthe of certeyne yeres, / Had evere in oon a tyme [i.e., continually] sought to speke, / To Pitee ran I al bespreynt with teres." The legal forms of the work also establish the idea of a "process," both legal and literary, only to highlight the case's completion, and to reaffirm the plaintiff as the already-sentenced criminal. Even the finality of death, both Pity's and the narrator's, turns out to be subject to the rule of desire-driven repetition: "Ever setteth Desir myn herte on fire" (101).

This text, then, rests marooned in the self-division of its voice. That voice has no option but self-destructively to seek its coherence in communion with another whom it knows to be hostile and inaccessible. It also unmoors from ethical stabilities, since his enemies include Honeste and Wisdom. And this self-division corrodes, as it must, any sense of historical sequence: the desire for union in time so tyrannically dominates as to dissolve time altogether. An acute consciousness of the necessity and uselessness of the document itself replaces any sense of historical sequence, as the voice impotently writes itself out of society and history.

Chaucer's "Complaint" has no known source; all its features are, however, ultimately Ovidian. The very act of writing a document that the author knows to be useless already evokes the Ovidian tradition of the *Heroides*, the series of letters written by often dying heroines, just as it provokes

a very Ovidian awareness of the act of writing itself.²¹ The most instrumental and bureaucratic of forms, such as petitionary letters and formal bills, are used precisely in order to underline their impotence as diplomatic instruments; this impotence provokes an intense consciousness of the act of writing in and for itself, as the only possible expression of a divided self. The use of legal forms for amatory purposes also draws on broadly Ovidian tactics, since Ovid's amatory works all represent a collapse of properly distinct discursive realms into the one field ruled by the tyrannical figure of Cupid: the legal, medical, pedagogic, political, and military, for example, all cede to the amatory.²² The very use of the forms of public affairs and civic responsibility itself implies a turning away from that world, from which the Ovidian narrator is an exploitative recusant. Refusal of the world of public affairs, however, turns out in Ovid's amatory poems merely to replicate the relentless pressures of that public world in private "affairs": the narrator of the *Amores*, for example, consistently expresses the unrelenting pressures of a tyrannical Cupid. Love might seem to offer privacy and retreat, but that asylum turns out to be every bit as political as the world outside it, since it stands under the remorseless jurisdiction of the tyrannical boy-prince Cupid. In this political environment the subject is at once driven and impoverished by his allegiance to an unrelenting power, to the point that all solidarities, including solidarities within the self, become evanescent, vitiated as they are by deception and its consequent distrust.²³ Precisely because the subject is under threat of demolition, it dominates and divides self-consciousness to the point of fragmenting narrative and uncoupling historical sequence.²⁴ The very forms, both metrical and structural, of Ovid's amatory poems in the voice of a despairing lover (*Amores*, *Heroides*) are fragmented with respect to history, produced as they are from a massive asymmetry between self and its world: defeated but rampant desire exploits history, but has no interest in historical sequence or meaning.²⁵ At the same time, these texts, and especially the *Heroides*, express the pathos, the "historical solitude," of history's victims. In this summary account of Ovid's amatory postures, I readily concede that I have omitted what is funny in them, but I do so because the reception of an Ovidian tradition by English and Scots vernacular poets tends to reaccentuate the darker underside of Ovid's brilliantly surfaced and sophisticated works. The potential violence of Ovidian love, for these poets, hovers always close to the surface.

The "Complaint unto Pity" may be an especially streamlined and poignant example of Chaucer's Ovidianism, but it is exceptional only insofar as it offers no escape from the relentless demands of ineluctable power.

The problematic it explores generates each one of Chaucer's pre-*Canterbury Tales* works, which includes most of the poetry written before 1390. This sequence comes to a dead end with the lurid and powerful *Legend of Good Women* (first composed 1386–88), the most thoroughly, if darkly, Ovidian of all these works. Although these poems vary enormously in length, each incorporates and is generated by lyric complaint.²⁶ In this article I focus not on Chaucer (who is in any case often taken as the exception to the medieval norm),²⁷ however, but rather on Gower, another thoroughgoing Ovidian poet of the 1380s and 90s. Gower's *Confessio Amantis* (1390–93) is driven by an Ovidian deflection, even neutralization of history, just as it reveals the conditions in which history and politics can be reactivated and reformed by the elegiac experience.

The mid-1380s were dangerous times for members of Richard II's household and affinity. In the "Wonderful" Parliament of 1386, the Lords and Commons successfully resisted the king's claims for a massive fiscal subsidy, and went a good deal further by having the king's chief ministers dismissed and his chancellor impeached. A commission of fourteen lords was set up to govern the country, while Richard himself, at the age of twenty, was still officially not of an age to rule. Richard responded by withdrawing from London and framing a set of questions to judges, the answers to which condemned his principal opponents as traitors, and therefore worthy of death. The five main lords opposed to the king themselves responded with an "Appeal for Treason" against Richard's most powerful supporters. The upshot of this was a brief civil war in late 1387, in which the Lords Appellant defeated the king's army, marched to London and confined the king; and forced him to summon Parliament. This Parliament, the so-called "Merciless Parliament," met in February 1388 and convicted eight of the king's closest supporters of treason, all of whom were executed, with many more being expelled from court.

These conditions were certainly dangerous for any writer associated with either of the factional parties: the author and minor bureaucrat Thomas Usk was beheaded in 1388, and Chaucer seems to have made a strategic withdrawal from public life at this time.²⁸ The discursive conditions in which writers associated with the royal court may have worked are suggested by the "Record and Process" of Richard's own renunciation of the throne in 1399.²⁹ Of course this document is a highly charged piece of political propaganda. I refer to it here not by way of suggesting, or denying, that these really were the discursive conditions within which Chaucer and Gower worked between 1386 and 1390, when the *Confessio* must first have been

composed. What I do suggest is that however much the document accuses Richard of tyrannical and willful appropriation of discursive power, it does not accuse him of any wholesale restructuring of English discursive history (of the kind we find in the reign of Henry VIII). Richard is consistently accused of exercising an arbitrary will, “pro sue libito voluntatis,” and in each case this exercise of arbitrary will exemplifies specifically discursive infringement. He is accused of willfully distorting the process and altering the records of Parliament, by exploiting, contrary to Parliament’s intention, a concession to effect some business on officers’ powers (“Rex fecit Rotulos Parliamenti pro voto suo mutari et deleri, contra effectum concessionis predictae”);³⁰ when challenged on the dispensation of arbitrary justice, Richard fiercely replied that the laws were “in his mouth,” or “in his breast,” and that he did, by his own willful judgment, whatever pleased him (“secundum sue arbitrium voluntatis . . . quicquid desiderii eius occurrerit” [16]); he ordered sheriffs to arrest and imprison anyone speaking publicly or privately against him (20); and he so terrified his counsellors that they dared not speak the truth in giving counsel (23). The refrain of these charges is reference to the king’s arbitrary exercise of “arbitrium voluntatis.” The document also records a sermon by Archbishop Arundel, in which the king’s childish will is personified: “Cum igitur puer regnat, Voluntas sola regnat, Ratio exul.”³¹

If the young Richard is described as tyrannical, it may be no coincidence that the rule of a tyrannical will generates Gower’s *Confessio*. In the prologue the narrator speaks from a philosophical position of rationalism, to attack the division of the contemporary political world. In Book 1, however, the narrator himself falls prey to this very division, as he succumbs to the power of the boy-prince Cupid, and so abandons the matter of politics and history. These shifts in narratorial position invoke the opening of Ovid’s *Amores*, where the narrator recounts that he was about to write powerful and historical matter, when Cupid laughed and stole a metrical foot, to produce elegiac couplets. The poet complains at this improper invasion of discursive fields rightly belonging to other deities, when Cupid shoots him and commands that Ovid’s own pain be matter for his poetry. This leaves the poet both cut off from the public world, emptied of matter, but equally under a new and unremitting “political” regime: “uror, et in vacuo pectore regnat Amor” [I burn, and Love reigns in the abandoned heart] (*Amores*, 1.1.26). Being a subject to Cupid determines the “subject” of Ovid’s poetry, just as, in Gower’s poem, the subject status of Amans, the narrator’s name under the dispensation of Cupid, also produces the material of the entire poem. Venus, who appears after Cupid, demands that Amans confess himself to her priest

Genius, by way of confirming that he serves without hypocrisy. Amans's Ovidian confession to Genius, which occupies the rest of this long poem, is generated in response to this demand for evidence of truthful service in love.³² If the confession should reconfirm Amans's integrity as a faithful subject to Cupid, however, the rest of the poem can only confirm the impossibility of psychic integrity under the tyrannical regime of Cupid. Amans can only speak from, and deepen, the fissures of a self already divided.

This psychic division occasionally surfaces explicitly, as in Amans's account of the psychomachia within the person of which he is a part; here the two principal parts of the soul, will and reason, gather psychological forces around themselves in the manner of courtiers gathering adherents (3.1120–92). Of course there is a certain comedy in Amans's position, since he seems innocent of many of a lover's "sins," often wishing, in fact, that he *could* have been guilty. Comedy also derives from the bathetic incongruence of scale between Amans's own little problem and that of the exemplary stories he is offered. Or so it seems initially; as the *Confessio* progresses, the destructive self-division of Amans tends to converge with the same destructive forces represented in the stories themselves. Furthermore, his self-division gradually shifts into a corrosive self-hatred and despair, to which he confesses in Book 4. He confesses "in Tristesse al amidde / And fulfild of Desesperance" (3498–99):

And I, as who seith, am despeired
 To winne love of thilke swete,
 Withoute whom, I you behiete,
 Min herte, that is so bestad,
 Riht inly nevere mai be glad.
 For be my trouthe I schal noght lie,
 Of pure sorwe, which I drye
 For that sche seith sche wol me noght,
 With drecching of myn oghne thoght
 In such a wanhope I am falle,
 That I can unethes calle,
 As forto speke of eny grace,
 Mi ladi merci to purchase. (4.3468–80)

Even as Amans lays claim to integrity here, he denies it, since alienation from the larger self to which he ideally belongs premises his utterance. Just as he is barred access to "himself," so too does he remain isolated within such soci-

ety as he represents around him. Dominated by desire, he either obsessively distrusts everyone who has dealings with his lady, or else has no interest whatsoever in people who have no bearing on the fulfillment or thwarting of his desire (e.g., 2.17–78).

Amans's isolation from "himself" equally implies an alienation from history and historical meaning. In a thoroughly Ovidian manner, Genius, like the *praeceptor amoris* of the *Ars amatoria*, frequently adduces stories from large scale historical sequences, especially from the histories of Troy and Alexander, by way of encouraging the lover's enterprise. Almost by definition, these stories are emptied of their historical sense, partly because the sequence of which they form a part has been fragmented and randomly dispersed across the poem, and partly because Amans could not be less interested in historical meaning in the first place. There are no fewer than sixteen narratives drawn from the Benoît/Guido corpus of Troy and its bloody aftermath, which are especially relevant to Gower's London, itself often, if tentatively, called "Troynovant."³³ These stories do not, however, add up to a coherent narrative, because the order of their presentation has no relation to their original sequence, and also because they are deployed in such a way as to evacuate their political significance. Amans himself, for example, adduces the example of Achilles leaving aside his arms in order to win the love of Polixena (4.1693–1710), by way of arguing, against Genius, that a lover need not be a soldier. Amans would make a poor soldier, and so this is very Ovidian in both its comedy, and in the terrible resonances of the Achilles and Polixena story that are evoked only to be ignored.³⁴

So Amans exemplifies the self-divided narrator: "Thus am I with myself oppressed" (3.49), and this self-division at once marks his division from the political and historical world. His incapacity to think historically (or at least in narrative sequence) is underscored in Book 6, where Amans explicates his reading practice. Asked to confess to the sin of "love delicacy," Amans confesses himself "guilty," since he thinks endlessly about his lady; if he hears of her being spoken about, or if he hears her singing, then he is "fro miself so ledd, / As thogh I were in paradis":

And ek in other wise also
Fulofte time it falleth so,
Min Ere with a good pitaunce
Is fedd of redinge of romance
Of Ydoine and of Amadas,
That whilom were in mi cas,

And eke of othre many a score,
 That loveden longe er I was bore.
 For whan I of here loves rede,
 Min Ere with the tale I fede;
 And with the lust of here histoire
 Somtime I drawe into memoire
 Hou sorwe mai noght evere laste,
 Whan I non other fode knowe.
 And that endureth bot a throwe. (6.875–90)

This is very much a case of reading for the pleasure, or “lust” of the text; but Amans’s pleasure deludes, since the therapeutic comfort it ministers lasts only a short while, before, presumably, the process repeats itself. One of the reasons why the comfort of these texts evanesces is because, in Amans’s reading, their historical difference and contours are flattened: each lover, past or present, is “in my case,” reduced to a simulacrum of Amans himself. He might draw these stories “into memoir,” but Amans’s memory, governed by a tyrannical desire alone, has no depth. His shallowness of reception applies not only to these stories, but also to each of the eighty or so narratives offered him in the *Confessio*. The whole work, indeed, is effectively a representation of reading remembered, since Genius acts in the service of desire to reproduce stories from the thesaurus of images which he controls.³⁵ And Amans “reads,” or remembers, each of these stories recast as a romance or potential romance, as a narrative of lovers that “were in mi cas.” The narrative of Paris and Helen, for example, along with the exempla of Achilles and Polixena, and Troilus and Criseyde, are used to make the point that men should not initiate love affairs in temples (5.7195–7609). Genius concludes by saying that Amans can seek love where he will, but should beware of doing so in holy places, as if the disastrous narratives of Paris, Achilles, and Troilus would all have been romances had they not initiated their loves in temples. He evokes tragedy only to ignore it. Like Chaucer’s *Troilus and Criseyde*, Gower’s English poem owes profound debts to Ovid’s *Amores*, a work also generated from the same subjection; that also manifests an exploitative recusancy from the world of public affairs; and that also deploys only to ignore memory of history’s disasters. The *Confessio*, like the *Amores*, is driven by the iterative force of desire, which seeks refuge from the relentlessness of history by fragmenting it.

In itself, this signals a poor starting place for narrative; to generate narrative the *Confessio* has recourse to another Ovidian voice, that of the

praeceptor amoris, the voice who both encourages love with practical stratagems, in the *Ars amatoria*, and who apparently teaches how to stop loving, in the *Remedium amoris*. In Gower's poem Genius fulfills the same role as Pandarus in Chaucer's *Troilus*, since both act as teachers in the art of love, just as both offer remedies against the inevitable delusions of love. Through these voices both poets recognize the limitations of elegy, limitations that are at once emotional and political.

Both Pandarus and Genius draw on Ovid for examples; both use proverbs by way of instructing the lover; and both devise stratagems. Pandarus himself describes his own activity as "engyn" (3.274), and well he might, since the principal sense of the word is something like "skillful contrivance." The first three books of *Troilus and Criseyde* are full of Pandarus's constructions in the service of Troilus; indeed the narrator likens his activity to that of an architect, who sends "his hertes line out fro withinne / Aldirfirst his purpos for to wynne" (1.1068–69).³⁶ The word *engin*, however, also has a psychological sense, meaning "imagination" (Latin *ingenium*); the technologies that Pandarus engineers, his "engines," are produced by his *engin*, or imagination. This psychological sense predominates in Gower's Genius figure, who represents the imagination of the narrator, an imagination in the service of Amans, just as Pandarus's *engin* serves a desiring Troilus.³⁷

Pandarus and Genius themselves both act like architect-poets, shaping their matter according to a plan. In both cases, however, the planning exposes convergences between the worlds of the lover and the brutal historical world on which he has turned his back. The planning in both cases reveals that whether we regard the amatory narratives as a digression from the historical or vice versa, both tell the same story. In these elegies what had looked like the place of asylum turns out to replicate the brutality of the world from which it had seemed to escape.

Thus the story of Amans, for all its bathetic helplessness, converges with the world from which Amans has turned. This is especially true of the relation between Books 6 and 7. In Book 6, which treats Gluttony, Amans confesses to an all-consuming, even self-destroying psychological obsession, to the exclusion of all solidarities; dominated "with fantasie and with desir," he goes to bed and feeds himself with fragmented erotic images of his lady:

Bot yit is noght mi feste al plein,
 Bot al of woldes and of wissches,
 Therof have I my fulle disshes,

Bot as of felinge and of tast,
 Yit mihte I nevere have o repast.
 And thus, as I have seid afor,
 I licke hony on the thorn,
 And as who seith, upon the bridel
 I chiewe, so that al is ydel
 As in effect the fode I have. (6.922–31)

By the end of Book 6, Amans is understandably “fed up” with this repetitively sterile psychological round, and, having heard earlier of Aristotle’s instruction of Alexander, asks for a digest of that cursus, for, as he says, “min herte sore longeth” to understand it (6.2408–19). Genius, too, “longeth sore” for a change of subject, something drawn from “the scoles of Philosophie.” In Book 7, which immediately follows, Genius produces stories from the treasury of the imagination, as he has done throughout the *Confessio*, but here the imagination is governed by rational desire, and not by sexual desire alone.³⁸

The story of Lucretia is the longest narrative he tells in Book 7. Whereas Chaucer’s Lucrece in the *Legend of Good Women* remains a “relic” to Cupid in her readiness to suffer, the narrative in Gower’s poem exposes the political motives and consequences of cupidinous rapacity. The story is told from Ovid, *Fasti*, 2.685–852, and relates both the treacherous betrayal of the Gabines by Aruns (son of Tarquin) and his subsequent rape of Lucrece. The description of his desire for Lucrece closely parallels that of Amans. As Aruns goes to bed, his rapacity having been aroused by Lucrece’s fidelity, he replicates her image in imaginative reconstruction: “he pourtrieth hire ymage” in elaborate detail (7.4868–903), in precisely the way Amans had earlier “fed on” his lady in imaginative refection. Aruns is subject both to his will and imagination in his determination to rape Lucrece, whereby the sexual and military activities of “this tirannysshe knyght” (7.4889) become indistinguishable. The world of elegy has been brought into direct contact and identity with the political world that it replicates. There can be no escape from politics, since the psyche itself constitutes a “political” arena.

Aruns is subject to Cupid, and subjects his imagination to desire, in precisely the way Amans is and does. This might suggest that the lover cannot escape tyranny, since both the private and the public worlds of this poem turn out to be governed by tyrants. In the *Confessio* Gower certainly hints at the possibility of elegy and tragedy coalescing into one extended nightmare, but that is not at all the position of the poem as a whole. On the contrary,

Gower affirms the possibility of psychic reintegration, whereby the imagination, personified by Genius, operates as a mediator between abstract reason and sensual desire. The very possibility of the Lucrece story, told as an exemplum against tyranny in sexual and political practice, and ending with the exile of kings, itself testifies to the possibility of an imaginative remembrance of stories that is not driven by concupiscent desire; an alternative, fully ethical and political exercise of the imagination is possible. The poem as a whole is a fable of the psyche, in which the relations of the soul mirror the ideal practice of (Gowerian) politics, whereby the abstract principle of law, the king, has commerce with the body politic by the mediation of counsellors (or Parliament) capable of imaginative apprehension. The poem does register the capacity to escape from Cupid's jurisdiction, and to return to the political discourse of the prologue. That return to the public world is, however, profoundly reformist. In this poem sexual desire, and by association the body politic, is by no means simply repressed by abstract, monarchical reason. On the contrary, Gower recognizes the erotic as a fundamental aspect of the political order; that recognition is only possible, however, by an act of imaginative remembrance and apprehension, achieved by the regenerative, "genial" principle of Genius himself. Equally, such remembrance turns out to be a remembrance of poetic tradition, since poetry (as distinct from pure philosophy) is the sole medium capable of remembering and imagining the exemplary particularities of sensual pain and pleasure through narrative. For this reason Amans (now a reintegrated John Gower) can mount a moving, revisionary conspectus of many of the stories with which he has "fed" himself earlier in the poem, and which he now observes from a position of sympathetic detachment (8.2440–2744).

The *Confessio*, then, like the *Parlement of Foules*, reinstates sexuality at the heart of the political, and in so doing represents an Ovidian modification of the Neoplatonic and imperialist Latin traditions to which these poems address themselves.³⁹ These elegies are capable of a return to the political and historical world, of transgressing the jurisdiction of the apparently irresistible power of a tyrannical Cupid. That return can only be made, however, by an implicit and, in Gower's case, occasionally explicit critique of political absolutism.⁴⁰ The politics of these poems are generated in a real sense from the body's interaction with reason. They oppose the absolutism of an abstract and transcendent reason deriving from inspired intuition of universal order. Mediation that incorporates the whole body politic, by Parliament and/or counsel, stands at the heart of these works.

In the 1380s and 90s, then, some substantial Ovidian elegies allow for ways of recovering history and reforming the practice of politics. Elegy that seems to turn its back on the world represented in tragic, historical narratives can finally address that world both by way of questioning its assumptions and reforming its brutalities. Let us now observe the operations of elegy in poetry of the period 1520 to 1547, another period of English literary history characterized at the same time by elegiac poetry, extremely dangerous politics, and potentially tyrannical kings. By contrast with much of the elegiac poetry of the 1380s, what we observe in the last two decades of the reign of Henry VIII are Ovidian postures wholly locked out of any possibility of reentering the current of history. In this poetry the poetic persona remains both threatened and mesmerized by an absolute power, unable to escape the historical dislocations and emotional circularities that such a position necessarily entails.

If the 1380s were dangerous times for anyone of political consequence associated with the court, the same applies to the 1530s. Henry's divorce initiated massive discursive changes in England: this is most obviously true of the break with Rome, but the consequences of that break filter down to restructure English society in a multitude of ways. Obviously such radical breaks with the past create crises of allegiance for some consciences, but crises of conscience aside, the discursive environment becomes plainly dangerous for *everyone* engaged in the newly enlarged field of politics. In this revolutionary period monarchical power both advances forward into familial and institutional structures, and at the same time withdraws itself into a heightened privacy. Power withdraws into the "privy chamber," which at once concentrates yet veils the king's governance.⁴¹ The advance of monarchical power can be seen in a variety of ways. New structures of surveillance are, for example, established, where life or death might often hang on the interpretation of single remarks or gestures.⁴² At a more popular level, monarchical power restructures and distances the past: the liturgical year is restructured with the abolition of many feast days; or, for example, the structure by which the community of the living communicates with the dead is nationalized and minimized, with the abolition of Purgatory, of fraternities, and of chantries.⁴³

These movements of central power are effected and backed up by punitive legislation designed to restructure discursive history. In 1542, for example, an act is passed to purge the kingdom of false doctrine. The act bans Tyndale's Bible, and along with that "all other bookes and wrytinges in

the English tongue, teaching or comprysing any matiers of Cristen religion, articles of the faithe or holy scripture . . . contrarye to that doctrine [established] sithens the yere of our Lorde 1540." These "shalbe . . . clerlie and utterlie abolished, extinguished and forbidden to be kepte or used."⁴⁴ This might sound like a matter of religious books alone, but as the act proceeds, its extraordinary scope emerges, designed as it is to restructure nothing less than the entire geography of English discursive history. Bibles in English not translated by Tyndale are excepted, as long as all annotations and preambles are either cut out or blotted as to be unreadable; furthermore, all of the king's "proclamations, injunctions, translations of the Pater Noster, Ave Maria, and Crede, psalters, primers, prayers, statutes and lawes of the Realme, Cronicles, Canterbury tales, Chaucers bokes, Gowers bokes and stories of mennes lieves, shall not be comprehended in this act," unless, the act continues, the king should change his mind.⁴⁵ These exceptions make the import of the act only more draconian, since they exclude, by implication, any other literature printed before 1540 apart from the king's official publications, histories, and the works of Chaucer and Gower.⁴⁶ From this division of permissible from illicit matter, the act goes on to divide licit classes of, and spaces for readers: noblemen and gentlemen can read the Bible, or have it read to their families within their house, orchards, or garden; merchants can read it in private; noblewomen and gentlewomen are allowed to read the Bible in private, though not to anyone else; no other woman, and no man below the status of merchant is permitted to read the Bible, or, presumably, any other books banned by the act.⁴⁷

In acts of this kind, the antiquity of a text effectively ceases to legitimate anything. Discursive history begins anew from 1540, because the king says it will. Books that are allowed from before that date are permissible, again, simply because the king wills that they be so, and the king's will might, the act takes care to point out, change. Neither a projected future nor any sort of past legitimate texts: on the contrary, discursive legitimation is wholly a matter of the king's arbitrary desire. Of course this act is promulgated toward the end of Henry's reign, but the implicit supremacy of the king's will over any and all forms of discursive practice can be found in royal proclamations much earlier in the mid-1530s.⁴⁸

As I argued in my introduction, scholars detect the first flowerings of English "Renaissance" literature in this discursive environment, in the poetry of Wyatt especially. In this section, I shall look to the elegiac secular writing of Wyatt and Surrey by way of suggesting that the discursive features hailed as characteristic of "Renaissance" poetic practice are in fact continu-

ous with the Ovidianism of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century writing; I also argue that the specific turn given to Ovidian postures in the Henrician period are the product of the peculiarly repressive discursive conditions of the Henrician court. So far from being the product of a liberating rediscovery of the past, this body of elegiac writing insists on the inability of the poetic self to escape from the erosions of the present into any sense of "historical consciousness."

Petrarch occupies a critical place in the narratives of scholars determined to insist on the periodic uniqueness of the "Renaissance." In an extremely well-worn account, Petrarch towers as "one of western Europe's seminal figures," introducing a quite new discourse of divided, unstable psychological life.⁴⁹ "Petrarchism," we are told, "was in fairly precise ways the distinctive genre of the English Renaissance, its literary life bracketing the era. . . . So the historical record *almost compels* us to discuss Petrarchism in terms of the period concept" (my emphasis).⁵⁰ On the very rare occasions when these accounts do mention Ovid, it is very much in passing, and he is in any case distinguished from Petrarch as the poet of "real sexual consummation."⁵¹ From the discussion of Gower's Ovidian postures in the previous section of this article, I hope it will be incontrovertibly clear just how distorted is this account of Petrarch's influence. The anxiety to shore up the periodic distinctiveness of the "Renaissance" leads these critics, in my view, to peculiar omissions of Ovid in their account of just how "seminal" Petrarch was in the matter of representing the psyche as threatened, divided, and mobile. The deletion of Ovid from these literary histories is equally a deletion of a long history of Ovidian poetry in English behind Wyatt and Surrey (not to speak of a massive European tradition of elegiac writing from at least the twelfth century).⁵²

The accounts of "Renaissance" scholars are, I am arguing, seriously lacking in historical depth. Curiously, however, the importance attached to Petrarch in these accounts relates centrally to Petrarch's truly historical consciousness. As someone who feels himself irredeemably cut off from a classical past, Petrarch is often hailed as the first European capable of a truly historical understanding. As I argued in my introduction, translators of Petrarch, notably Wyatt and Surrey in English, are by association understood to mark crucial stages on the way to a "humanist" historical consciousness.⁵³ Although "Renaissance" scholars do not make the connection, Petrarchan elegy and the peculiar, pathetic cast of Petrarchan historical consciousness are deeply connected: historical consciousness and consciousness of self always stand in symbiotic relationship. If the self is divided, then it is, by the

same token, cut off from historical continuities, and vice versa.⁵⁴ Let me now turn to some examples of Wyatt's and Surrey's elegiac poetry, by way of arguing that Petrarch provides a perfect model for early Tudor elegiac writers unable to regain a historical consciousness, locked as they are into the spiralling and relentless erosions of a marooned self. Unlike the elegiac poetry of the 1380s, this body of writing cannot move beyond the jurisdiction of an absolute power, often figured as Cupid; it is therefore *unable* to regain and reform the public, political, historical world that Ovidian elegy always implies. Such poetry, I suggest, stands in significant relation to its discursive context, in which not only must Wyatt and Surrey frequently disown their own incriminating pasts, but also in which royal policy has arbitrarily interred a national past. Close imitation of powerful models in this context turns out not to be exemplary of a truly historical consciousness, so much as of the reverse.

Comparison of a long elegiac poem of the 1380s and 90s with the very short lyrics of the 1530s and 40s is unusual but justifiable in various ways. Both works or sets of works belong to the same elegiac mode, to use Alastair Fowler's terminology.⁵⁵ This in itself justifies the comparison, but so too do the reading and writing habits of Henrician courtiers themselves. In the so-called "Devonshire" Manuscript, for example, we find, among the many Tudor love lyrics, some of which were composed in the Tower, amatory excerpts from longer poems, and especially from *Troilus*, by Hoccleve and Chaucer.⁵⁶ For Ricardian as for Henrician readers, courtly elegy was made up of a continuous spectrum of verse from the very short form to the very long.⁵⁷

In *Troilus and Criseyde* Troilus retreats to his "chambre . . . allone" as soon as he is wounded by the sight of Criseyde, there to sing alone the first Petrarchan song in English (1.400–420). Like Petrarch, Petrarchan imitators also retreat into the small rooms, or *stanze*, of poetry, and elevate what had been minor forms in so doing. Whereas both Chaucer and Gower refer to their "balades, roundels, and virelayes" as a marginal, almost throwaway, aspect of their oeuvre,⁵⁸ in the sixteenth century small, retracted forms become the prime vehicle of elegiac expression. Petrarch's introduction of the sonnet, first translated in English in that form by Wyatt, is certainly a peculiarly apt form for the expression of an unresolved and divided voice, capable as it is of various smaller "rooms," or stanzas, which set contesting positions of the same voice against each other. But the novelty of the sonnet, and particularly of the sonnet sequence of later Elizabethan poetry, should not be allowed to occlude the fact that earlier forms like the roundel

and balade were also exploited for the expression of a voice locked into a cycle of divided positions. Neither should it be allowed to disguise the Ovidian background to these retracted forms, whose absence of full narrative context sharpens the poignancy of emotional biography. Later Elizabethan sonnet sequences, no less than, say, Charles d'Orléans's wonderful sequence of short forms in English verse (1415–40) are attempts in the vernacular to imitate the model of Ovid's *Amores*. Whatever the short form used to express this Ovidian posture, however, it is consistently exploited by Surrey, and especially by Wyatt, for nearly the same ends of expressing a voice isolated in time and trapped into its own undoing.

The neutralization of voice in Wyatt's poetry appears forcibly in his exploitation of lines that are formally highlighted, such as first lines or refrains: "Behold, Love!"; "Was I never, yet, of your love grieved"; "Farewell, Love, and all thy lawes for ever"; "Though I my self be bridilled of my mynde"; "Patience"; "What no, perdy, ye may be sure!"; "My lute be still, for I have done"; "In eternum"; "It is impossible."⁵⁹ Each of these lines, taken from poems in the Egerton manuscript, is set into formal relief only in order for its claim to be denied. The effect of this self-directed irony in each case paralyzes the voice as agent, caught as it is in stasis between the undecidable poles of two opposed claims. This effect contributes to the poems' own uncertain status with regard to time, since the affirmations of cause and effect that each lyric makes are inevitably incapacitated: Wyatt's distinctive "But since . . ." promises yet never achieves logical advance. The resources of narrative are repeatedly paralyzed within poems, and from poem to poem, until the very categories of change and stability in time themselves become indistinguishably blurred:

Each man me telleth I chaunge moost my devise.
 And on my faith me thinck it goode reason
 To change [purpose] like after the season,
 Ffor in every cas to kepe still oon gyse
 Ys mytt for them that would be taken wyse,
 And I ame not of suche maner condition,
 But treted after a dyvers fassion,
 And therupon my diver[s]nes doeth rise.
 But you that blame this dyver[s]nes moost,
 Chaunge you no more, but still after oon rate
 Trete ye me well, and kepe ye in the same state;
 And while with me doeth dwell this weried goost,

My word nor I shall not be variable,
But alwaies oon, your owne boeth ferme and stable.⁶⁰

Unravelling this remarkably dense work can only lead to a voice alienated both from itself and from us. The opening affirmations suggest a hearty acceptance of the common view that one should change one's badge of allegiance, or "device" to suit one's own interests in changing circumstances. As the logic of the poem progresses, however, it becomes clear that the voice has no trust whatsoever in this common approbation of changeful self-interest; on the contrary, this voice is different from that of "each man" precisely by virtue of his faithful adherence. Faithful adherence, however, demands change, in the ability to learn how to "convert my will in others lust."⁶¹ Two kinds of wisdom are being abjured by this voice, then: the worldly wise "wisdom" that encourages self-interested change, and the higher, Stoic wisdom that encourages stability of self. The stability of this voice is wholly dependent on changeful others, to the point that stability and change become interchangeable, just as the last line undoes its apparent meaning, since he is, in one sense, *already* "ferme and stable" in his faithful mutability. In this state where stability in time can only be defined by repetitive and exhausting diversity, "my word and I" must remain fractured. The plain style of this poem, and possibly its metrical irregularity, are themselves expressive of a plainness that cannot be direct.

Tottel was the first printer of this poem, just as he was the first to print most of Surrey's shorter verse, whereas the lyric poetry of both poets had earlier circulated only in manuscript.⁶² Tottel, whose *Miscellany* was first published in 1557, divides the Wyatt collection into amatory poems and others, mostly satires. For the amatory poems he invents titles of this kind, for example: "The louer laments the deth of his loue" (number 102). In itself this is a perfectly reasonable procedure, and one that is followed by modern editors, but it does have the effect of diminishing, in two ways, the discursive resonance of these elegiac poems. In the first place, it is probable that some of these lyrics are not love elegies at all: Tottel's heading "The louer laments the deth of his loue," for example, introduces a sonnet ("The pillar perished is . . .") considered by critics to refer to the execution of Wyatt's patron, Thomas Cromwell, in 1540; it certainly translates a sonnet by Petrarch lamenting the loss of his patron. In the second place, these poems, even when they are clearly expressions of unrequited love, have a significant relation to the political. As with all Ovidian elegy, the intensity of desire is expressed by strategic use and deflection of political and historical

matter: the elegiac lover is always at the same time the courtly lover, and he formulates the experience of love in exactly the terms of courtly manoeuvre. The social condition of the lover always parallels, and is often indistinguishable from, that of the isolated, threatened, and unrequited suitor for courtly recognition.

Wyatt and Surrey are both striking for this Ovidian formulation of unrequited love in the terms of courtly operation. Surrey's "When ragyng love with extreme payne" (no. 1), for example, is entitled innocuously enough by Tottel "The louer comforteth himself with the worthinesse of his loue" (no. 16). In the text itself, however, the lover's comfort is of a particularly uneasy kind: in his "extreme payne," "at the poynte of death," the voice calls to mind the Trojan War, and takes comfort in the fact that his love is worthier than Helen's, for whom so much blood was shed. So, the argument of the poem runs, "I never will repent, / But paynes contented still endure" (25–26). This logic of self-justification is put under critical pressure, however, by the atrocity of the war remembered only to be dismissed: the narrator recalls not only the ten years' war, in which many "a bloudy dede was done," but also the fleet becalmed, "Till Agamemnons daughters bloode / Appeasde the goddes that them withstode" (11–12). By the time we arrive at the lover's self-justification, the horrors of war have been confronted only to be ignored. The poem's logic claims to justify the lover, while in fact its justification serves only to underline the massive and disabling asymmetry that pertains between the lover and his world.

Wyatt's oeuvre is even more sharply characterized than Surrey's by Ovidian resonances between the political and the amatory. Many of the poems draw on the language and forms of political redress only to expose their incapacities. Take, for example, the rondeau "Behold, Love":

Behold, Love, thy power how she despiseth!
My great payne how litle she regardeth!
The holy oth, wherof she taketh no cure
Broken she hath: and yet she bideth sure,
Right at her ease: and litle she dredeth.
Wepened thou art: and she vnarmed sitteth:
To the disdaynfull, her liff she ledeth:
To me spitefull, without cause, or mesure.
Behold, Love!

I am in hold: if pitie the meveth,
Goo bend thy bowe: that stony hertes breketh:

And, with some stroke, revenge the displeasure
Of thee and him, that sorrowe doeth endure,
And, as his lorde, the lowly entreath.
Behold, Love!

This lyric invokes jurisdictional boundaries only to efface them. The complainant addresses Love as one who can punish the apostasy of his lover, but the very ease of the apostate undoes the form of the request, since it becomes clear that the lover represents, rather than resists, Love. By the time "Behold Love" has been repeated three times, "Love" is grammatically no longer a vocative, but an object. Initially we observe the lover addressing his lord, Love, whereas the last command is to us: it is we who are to behold the single and absolute power of Love, embodied in the cruelty of the lover. This re-valence of the refrain neutralizes the apparent enterprise of the whole piece: as the roundel circles in on itself, we understand that the solidarities and jurisdictions implicit in the opening address collapse. An environment of unrelievable, unmeasurable threat replaces the civil order; here the psyche can be conscious of nothing but its own vulnerability before a hostile and impersonal power. The civil order implicit in the first line, indeed, turns out itself to be drained of any real powers of civic redress, since the voice of the poem is in the first place that of an informer prompting a lord to strike in vengeance. The whole poem implies that a speaker is already so deeply "in hold" that he can do nothing but recapitulate his own subservience.

This lyric of Wyatt, then, which is wholly characteristic of his oeuvre, works very much within the same traditions we observed in Chaucer's "Complaint unto Pity." What distinguishes Henrician from the fourteenth-century elegiac work more broadly, however, is the complete incapacity of the later period to voice anything but the paralysis at the heart of elegy. Nowhere in Wyatt's elegiac poetry do we find, in structural, stylistic, or conceptual categories, any movement out of that disabling pain into the more complex stylistic and emotional jurisdictions of Chaucer's or Gower's wider elegiac output. Nowhere, that is, does Wyatt's elegiac poetry move from the threatened margin at whose center looms an absolute, faceless and unrelenting power. Whether or not that power is impersonated by Wyatt's "lover" or his political enemies is indifferent, since in both cases the operations of power are identical: "I love an othre and thus I hate my self" expresses in a "love" poem the same experience of enthralled fragility we find in the poem lamenting the loss of Cromwell: "And I my self my self alwayes to hate."⁶³ The discursive conditions implied by Wyatt's elegiac poems possess the simplicity of abso-

lutism. The oeuvre is singular, entirely coherent in the restrictiveness of each poem's conceptual positioning and style, a style whose plainness disowns craft only to reveal an inescapably crafty world. Why elegy should be represented in such singularity in this period, while the earlier tradition is characteristically variegated both formally and discursively, is a very large question. It can only be answered, indeed, in the context of a larger investigation in which the discursive narrowing of the earlier sixteenth century could be confirmed from many perspectives. Here I can only conclude by observing that the astonishing burst of Ovidianism in the late fourteenth century has the discursive freedom to reactivate and reform the political world from an elegiac base.

Of course there are many other shorter courtly poems from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries that also express love's hopelessness and cruelty.⁶⁴ Sixteenth-century elegiac poets up to the 1550s speak, however, consistently in the mode of Echo, as anorexic voices repetitively unable to generate civic solidarities from within the experience of Cupid's tyranny. They speak like Echo, or, by the same token, like Dido on the point of suicide, having no comfort "But in the wynde to wast [their] wordes," unable to challenge or reform the political world by which they are crushed.⁶⁵ Contrary to the standard view of cultural history that these are the poets who reactivate a sense of history, historical and civic consciousness are the victims of these poignant and often beautiful poems.



Notes

- I am extremely grateful for the comments of Tony Spearing and Barbara Nolan on a version of this essay delivered at the University of Virginia. I am also grateful to David Aers for his astute editorial comment.
- 1 Cited from *The Life and Letters of Sir Thomas Wyatt*, ed. Kenneth Muir (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1963), 177.
 - 2 Ibid., 187–209, 210.
 - 3 Citation from *Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey: Poems*, ed. Emrys Jones (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), no. 29. All further citations of Surrey's poems are from this edition, and are cited by item number.
 - 4 Surrey's poetics have been described as "suicidal" by Jonathan Crewe, *Trials of Authorship: Anterior Forms and Poetic Reconstruction from Wyatt to Shakespeare*, The New Historicism 9 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), chap. 2.
 - 5 *Tottel's Miscellany*, ed. Hyder Edward Rollins, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1928), 2:154. All references to poems in *Tottel's Miscellany* are to this edition and are cited by item number in the body of the text.

- 6 *Collected Poems of Sir Thomas Wyatt*, ed. Kenneth Muir and Patricia Thompson, Liverpool English Texts and Studies (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1969), no. 3. All further references to Wyatt's poems are cited from this edition by item number in the body of the text.
- 7 For the Howards' delight at Cromwell's arrest, see Edwin Casady, *Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey*, Modern Language Association Revolving Fund Series 8 (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1938), 79–80.
- 8 For a lucid account of this position, see Erwin Panofsky, *Renaissance and Renascences in Western Art* (New York: Harper and Row, 1969; first published 1960), chap. 1.
- 9 Thomas M. Greene, *The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry*, Elizabethan Club Series 7 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), chap. 12 (246).
- 10 *Ibid.*, 263.
- 11 *Ibid.*, chap. 1.
- 12 Cited from *The Riverside Chaucer*, gen. ed. Larry D. Benson, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 5.1791–92. All further references to the works of Chaucer are from this edition, given by line numbers parenthetically in the body of the text.
- 13 The seminal work is Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958; first published as *Die Cultur der Renaissance in Italien: Ein Versuch* [1860]), part 2, "The Development of the Individual." The more recent history of the concept derives from a seminal article by Thomas M. Greene, "The Flexibility of the Self in Renaissance Literature," in *The Disciplines of Criticism: Essays in Literary Theory, Interpretation, and History*, ed. Peter Demetz, Thomas Greene, and Lowry Nelson Jr. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), 241–64. Stephen Greenblatt's influential *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980) is indebted to and develops Greene's article. For a critique of the simplistic way in which this view is almost always underwritten by a conviction that medieval subjectivity was both stable and conceivable only within larger collectivities, see David Aers, "A Whisper in the Ear of the Early Modernists; or, Reflections on Literary Critics Writing the History of the Subject," in *Culture and History, 1350–1600: Essays on English Communities, Identities, and Writing*, ed. Aers (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992), 177–202.
- 14 Greene, "Flexibility of the Self," 246.
- 15 Greene, *Light in Troy*, 245.
- 16 The phrase is from *ibid.*, 245.
- 17 John Leland, *Naeniae in mortem Thomae Viati equitis incomparabilis* (London, 1542); STC 15446. See Muir, *Life and Letters*, 262–69, for a translation of the entire text. See also *Wyatt: The Critical Heritage*, ed. Patricia Thomson (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), 24–27. For another sixteenth-century account of Wyatt and Surrey that stresses their signal importance as "the first reformers of our English meetre and stile," see George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie*, ed. Gladys Doidge Willcock and Alice Walker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1936), 60. For Leland's epideictic poetry more generally, see James P. Carley, "John Leland in Paris: the Evidence of His Poetry," *Studies in Philology* 83 (1986): 1–50.
- 18 See James Simpson, "Ageism: Leland, Bale, and the Laborious Start of English Liter-

- ary History, 1350–1550,” *New Medieval Literatures* 1, ed. Rita Copeland, David Lawton, and Wendy Scase (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 213–35.
- 19 Citation from Chaucer, *Anelida and Arcite*, line 211; see Lee Patterson, *Chaucer and the Subject of History* (London: Routledge, 1991), chap. 1.
 - 20 For Richard II’s claims to absolute power, see Nigel Saul, “Richard II and the Vocabulary of Kingship,” *English Historical Review* 110 (1995): 8549–77. For the reality of Henrician centralization and concentration of power, see Geoffrey Elton, *The Tudor Revolution in Government: Administrative Changes in the Reign of Henry VIII* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959).
 - 21 References to the act of writing, and its uselessness, are frequent in the *Heroides*; see, for example, *Ovid: Heroides and Amores*, ed. and trans. Grant Showerman, 2nd ed., rev. G. P. Goold (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977), 3.1–4, 3.98, 4.7–16, 7.3–6, 10.139–52, and 11.1–6. All further references to *Heroides* or *Amores* are to this edition.
 - 22 For this aspect of Ovid’s amatory poetry, see Joseph B. Solodow, “Ovid’s *Ars Amatoria*: the Lover as Cultural Ideal,” *Wiener Studien* n.s. 11 (1977): 106–27.
 - 23 For Ovid’s distrust of even the most intimate communication with his lover, see, for example, *Amores*, 2.5.51–62.
 - 24 In all his amatory poetry, Ovid refers exploitatively to historical narratives, only to dismiss their properly historical value. The essence of the position is expressed in *Amores*, 3.12.15–16: “cum Thebae, cum Troia foret, cum Caesaris acta, / ingenium movit sola Corinna meum.”
 - 25 The fragmented sequence of the *Amores*, for example, has no very precise relation to historical order. Ovid himself makes play of the metrical relation of elegiac couplets to the proper meter of what he calls tragic poetry: Cupid steals a foot of the hexameter to produce a five foot line, and a hobbling meter, unable to sustain the long march of historical narrative (*Amores*, 1.1–4); the very meter of Ovid’s elegiac poetry is therefore dependent on, yet recusant to, a tragic, historical mode.
 - 26 For which see W. A. Davenport, *Chaucer: Complaint and Narrative*, Chaucer Studies 14 (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1988).
 - 27 See, for example, A. C. Spearing, *From Medieval to Renaissance in English Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), chaps. 1 and 2.
 - 28 See Paul Strohm, “Politics and Poetics: Usk and Chaucer in the 1380s,” in *Literary Practice and Social Change in Britain, 1380–1530*, ed. Lee Patterson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 83–112. For Chaucer’s representation of these dangers, see James Simpson, “Ethics and Interpretation: Reading Wills in Chaucer’s *Legend of Good Women*,” *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 20 (1998): 73–100.
 - 29 The text is translated in *Chronicles of the Revolution, 1397–1400: The Reign of Richard II*, ed. Chris Given-Wilson, Manchester Medieval Sources Series (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), 168–89. The Latin text (from which citations are drawn here) is in *Rotuli Parliamentorum*, ed. J. Strachey and John Pridden, 6 vols. (London, 1783), 3:415–53.
 - 30 Paragraph 8 in Given-Wilson, *Chronicles of the Revolution*; all further references are to this document by paragraph numbers, and are given in the body of the text. See also paragraph 19 for willful distortion of parliamentary procedure. (Latin text from Strachey, *Rotuli Parliamentorum*, 3:418.)

- 31 Strachey, *Rotuli Parliamentorum*, 3:423.
- 32 For the Ovidian quality of Amans's confession, see James Simpson, *Sciences and the Self in Medieval Poetry: Alan of Lille's "Anticlaudianus" and John Gower's "Confessio Amantis"*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature 25 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 143–44. For the question of Amans's "truthfulness," I am indebted to Lynn Dunlop, "Cities without Walls: The Politics of Melancholy from Machaut to Lydgate" (Ph.D. diss., University of Cambridge, 1998), chap. 3. All citations from the *Confessio Amantis* are from *The English Works of John Gower*, ed. G. C. Macaulay, 2 vols., EETS c.s. 81–82 (London: Oxford University Press, 1900–1901). Further references are given parenthetically in the text by book and line number.
- 33 For a list of Troy stories in the *Confessio*, see Simpson, *Sciences and the Self*, 221 n. 29. Gower himself calls London "New Troy" at *Confessio Amantis*, first recension, Prol. 37. For the controversy raised by this appellation in the 1380s, see Patterson, *Chaucer and the Subject of History*, 161.
- 34 For the tragic narrative of Achilles and Polixena, see James Simpson, "The Other Book of Troy: Guido delle Colonne's *Historia destructionis Troiae* in Fourteenth- and Fifteenth-Century England," *Speculum* 73 (1998): 397–423.
- 35 The word *thesaurus* "treasure-chest" is the very word used by psychological theorists in the Aristotelian tradition to describe the imagination. For Aquinas's usage, see Simpson, *Sciences and the Self*, 259 n. 34.
- 36 Lines drawn from a treatise on poetics: Geoffrey of Vinsauf, *Poetria Nova*, trans. Margaret F. Nims (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1967), 16–17.
- 37 See further Simpson, *Sciences and the Self*, chap. 6. For the larger history of the concept of Genius, see Jane Chance Nitzsche, *The Genius Figure in Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975). *Ingenium* was a common alternative for "imagination" in psychological discourse, particularly from the twelfth century as influenced by medical theory. See Tullio Gregory, *Anima Mundi: La filosofia di Guglielmo di Conches a la scuola di Chartres*, Pubblicazioni dell'istituto di filosofia dell'università di Roma 3 (Florence: Sansoni, 1955), 167–71 ("Frequente lo scambio tra *phantasia* e *ingenium*," 171 n. 2). See, for example, (?) Bernard Sylvestris, who consistently divides the brain into *ingenium*, *ratio*, and *memoria* (whereas amongst spiritual writers the first member of that trio is *imaginatio* or *phantasia*):

Tria namque sunt que sapientiam perfectam reddunt, ingenium, scilicet vis inveniendi, ratio vis discernendi inventa, memoria vis conservandi. In cerebro autem sunt tres cellule quas alii ventriculos vocant: prima anterior in qua est ingenii exercicium; secunda est mediana in qua est vis rationis; tertia est postica in qua est vis memorie.

Cited from *The Commentary on the First Six Books of the "Aeneid" of Vergil Commonly Attributed to Bernardus Sylvestris*, ed. Julian Ward Jones and Elizabeth Frances Jones (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1977), 47. For many examples of the trio deployed by spiritual writers, see A. J. Minnis, "Langland's Ymaginatif and Late-Medieval Theories of Imagination," *Comparative Criticism* 3 (1981): 71–103. For the relations of Genius in the poetic tradition within which Gower is working, see Alan of Lille, *De planctu Naturae*, ed. N. M. Häring, in *Studi medievali* ser. 3, 19 (1978): 797–897. Alan, who also describes the imagination as the "ingenialis . . . potentia"

(828), describes Genius as an artist responsible for the production of pictures drawn from the imagination. On Genius's garment we see how "ymagines momentanee viventes tociens expirabant, ut a nostre cognitionis laberentur indagine" (875); with his pen, Genius draws images into life: "stili obsequentis subsidio imagines rerum ab umbra picture ad veritatem sue essentiae transmigrantes, vita sui generis munerabat" (876). As in Gower's poem, Genius is at the same time a force of sexual desire and artistic image-making.

- 38 Precisely because the *ingenium* has allegiances to both sensual desire and to reason (since it mediates these psychic forces), it is capable of rational discourse. For the most subtle description of *ingenium* as capable of both sensual and of philosophical apprehension, see John of Salisbury's account of the faculty, in his *Metalogicon*; cited in full by Simpson, *Sciences and the Self*, 185–86.
- 39 For a full account of the poetic Neoplatonism of the twelfth century, see Winthrop Wetherbee, *Platonism and Poetry in the Twelfth Century: The Literary Influence of the School of Chartres* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972). For a larger argument about the way in which this Neoplatonic tradition is received and critiqued by fourteenth-century English poets, see Simpson, *Sciences and the Self*, chap. 9.
- 40 For a discussion of the way in which writing in the court of Richard II mediates "between absolutism and difference," see Lee Patterson, "Court Politics and the Invention of Literature: The Case of Sir John Clanvowe," in Aers, *Culture and History*, 7–42.
- 41 See David Starkey, "Intimacy and Innovation: The Rise of the Privy Chamber, 1485–1547," in *The English Court: From the Wars of the Roses to the Civil War*, ed. David Starkey (London: Longman, 1987), 71–118.
- 42 See, for example, the letters sent to Cromwell by his spies from all over the kingdom, in G. R. Elton, *Policy and the Police: the Enforcement of the Reformation in the Age of Thomas Cromwell* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972). Both Wyatt and Surrey were in the position of having to defend their lives against charges of having spoken improperly. For Wyatt, see Muir, *Life and Letters*, 196–98; and Patricia Thomson, *Sir Thomas Wyatt and His Background* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), chap. 1. For Surrey, see Arturo Cattaneo, *L'ideale umanistico: Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey*, Biblioteca di studi inglesi 53 (Bari: Adriatica, 1991), chap. 1.
- 43 For which see Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400–1580* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), part 2. I do not mean to suggest that the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries were without their own acts of cultural repression; see Nicholas Watson, "Censorship and Cultural Change in Late-Medieval England: Vernacular Theology, the Oxford Translation Debate, and Arundel's Constitutions of 1409," *Speculum* 70 (1995): 822–64.
- 44 *Statutes of the Realm*, 11 vols. (London, 1810–28; repr. London: Dawsons, 1963), 34 Henry 8, chap. 1.1, 3:895. I have punctuated the text.
- 45 Ibid.
- 46 For the prints of Chaucer and Gower to which this act refers, see, respectively, James E. Blodgett, "William Thynne," in *Editing Chaucer: The Great Tradition*, ed. Paul G. Ruggiers (Norman Okla.: Pilgrim Books, 1984), 35–52; and Tim William Machan, "Thomas Berthelette and Gower's *Confessio Amantis*," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 18 (1996): 1439–66.

- 47 *Statutes of the Realm*, 3:896.
- 48 For Henrician censorship more generally, see D. M. Loades, "The Theory and Practice of Censorship in Sixteenth-Century England," in his *Politics, Censorship, and the English Reformation* (London: Pinter, 1991), 96–108.
- 49 Gary F. Waller, *English Poetry of the Sixteenth Century*, 2nd ed. (London: Longman, 1993), 73. See also Greene, "Flexibility of Self."
- 50 William Kerrigan and Gordon Braden, *The Idea of the Renaissance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 158.
- 51 Waller, *English Poetry*, makes no sustained reference to Ovid in his discussion of Petrarchanism; the very distorted account of Ovid as the poet of "sexual consummation" is cited from Kerrigan and Braden, *The Idea of the Renaissance*, 175.
- 52 For the vast tradition of the European love lyric before the sixteenth century, see Peter Dronke, *Medieval Latin and the Rise of the European Love-Lyric*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968).
- 53 See especially Greene, *Light in Troy*, chap. 12, where Petrarch is accorded the status of an honorary classical poet, insofar as Wyatt's imitations of Petrarch are presented as exemplary of Wyatt's rediscovery of a classical antiquity and his genuinely historical consciousness. Wyatt's poetry simply will not bear this freighting; see, for example, Helen Cooper, "Wyatt and Chaucer: A Reappraisal," *Leeds Studies in English* 13 (1982): 104–23; "Wyatt is generally no more—if no less—dependent on sources and influences than any other significant English writer before the eighteenth-century invention of originality" (105). Writers unconcerned to shore up the specifically "Renaissance" distinctiveness of Wyatt give a much truer picture of continuities of tradition between Chaucer and Wyatt. See, for example, John Stevens, *Music and Poetry in the Early Tudor Court* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), chap. 8; and Patricia Thomson, *Sir Thomas Wyatt*, chap. 5. There is sixteenth-century precedent for Greene's treatment of Petrarch as an honorary classical poet, for which see Joachim Du Bellay, *La Deffence et Illustration de la Langue Francoyse*, ed. Louis Terreaux (Paris: Bordas, 1972), 74–77; and Greene, *Light in Troy*, 100.
- 54 Greene, *Light in Troy*, brushes against the perception: "Quite possibly the discovery of history came the more readily to him [Petrarch] because he was by birth a dislocated individual" (100).
- 55 Alastair Fowler, *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 106–11. For Fowler, modes derive from genres, but they deploy the repertoire of genre only incompletely: "modal terms tend to be adjectival" (106), and "they never imply a complete external form" (in the way generic categories do) (107). The generic variety of the *Confessio* (as distinct from the generic specificity of Wyatt's poetry, for example) is itself an aspect of my larger argument that poetry of the earlier period traverses a variety of stylistic and discursive jurisdictions.
- 56 For the history of this fascinating manuscript, see Raymond Southall, "The Devonshire Manuscript Collection of Early Tudor Poetry, 1532–41," *Review of English Studies* n.s. 15 (1964): 142–50. For the "medieval" contents of the manuscript, see E. Seaton, "'The Devonshire Manuscript' and Its Medieval Fragments," *Review of English Studies* n.s. 7 (1956): 55–56.

- 57 For accounts of the rhetorical coherence of lyric writing, from the very short, free-standing lyric to the lyric embedded in longer forms, see Rossell Hope Robbins, "The Middle English Court Love Lyric," in *The Interpretation of Medieval Lyric*, ed. W. J. H. Jackson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 205–32; and Rossell Hope Robbins, "The Structure of Longer Middle English Court Poems," in *Chaucerian Problems and Perspectives: Essays Presented to Paul Beichner*, ed. Edward Vasta and Zacharias P. Thumby (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1979), 244–64.
- 58 Citation from *Legend of Good Women*, F. 423. See also *Confessio Amantis*, 1.2727.
- 59 Muir and Thomson, *Collected Poems of Sir Thomas Wyatt*, nos. 1, 9, 13, 27, 39, 45, 46, 71, and 77 respectively.
- 60 Ibid., no. 10. The emendations are prompted by Muir's notes.
- 61 Citation from Jones, *Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey: Poems*, no. 13, line 17.
- 62 For the manuscript evidence of Wyatt's verse, see Muir and Thomson, *Collected Poems of Sir Thomas Wyatt*, xi–xix. The vast majority of Wyatt's verse survives from four manuscripts, all of which seem to have been either for private use or for circulation among an intimate group. See Arthur F. Marotti, *Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 37–44. The same seems to be true of the surviving manuscripts of Surrey's work; see *The Poems of Henry Howard Earl of Surrey*, ed. Frederick Morgan Padelford, rev. ed. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1928), 259–60.
- 63 Citations are from Muir and Thomson, *Collected Poems of Sir Thomas Wyatt*, nos. 26 and 236 respectively.
- 64 For a collection of which, see *Secular Lyrics of the XIVth and XVth Centuries*, ed. Rossell Hope Robbins, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955). For the manuscript environments of these works, see Julia Boffey, *Manuscripts of English Courtly Love Lyrics in the Later Middle Ages*, Manuscript Studies 1 (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1985).
- 65 Citation from Muir and Thomson, *Collected Poems of Sir Thomas Wyatt*, no. 53. Muir and Thompson do not note Wyatt's recollection here of Dido's letter in *Heroides*, 7.3–8. Number 131 is explicitly in the voice of Dido; compare Surrey's sonnet, "Alas, so all thinges nowe doe holde their peace" (Jones, *Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey: Poems*, no. 7), which, via Petrarch, is ultimately dependent on Dido's preparation for suicide (*Aeneid*, 4:522–28).