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Hero and Leander and the Eavesdropping Reader

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During the last decade of the sixteenth century, the reading experience which appropriated the mythological poem was as much collective as individual, as much aural as visual, and as much theatrical as poetic. Because poets like Marlowe produced their mythological narratives at times when the theaters were closed, and because the young men who circulated such narratives defined theater as emotional necessity, poems like *Hero and Leander* became natural correlatives to the privately defined dramatic experience. The theatrical aspects of the epyllia, the manner in which the poets posited a fictional audience to hear their poems, and the manner in which the poets used their narratives to shape and organize that audience dictated a special flow of participation between reader—or auditor—and love poem—or play.[1] The reader's voyeurism—or, more specifically, the "tension between an envious spectator and the impassioned engagement he mocks and by which he is seduced"[2]—defines one aspect of this special participation. His eavesdropping, the tension between his curious listening and the impassioned words he strains to hear, attempts to mock, and discovers to be seductive, defines a second aspect of his critical involvement.

Hero and Leander's relating of bliss and explication of love depends upon the reader's immediate experience of both of these tensions. The rhetorically self-conscious, sexually preoccupied young men who apparently listened to dramatic readings of *Hero and Leander* about the Inns of Court and great houses of England needed, after all, to learn not only how to see love fully and aright but also how to listen to and speak of love attentively and maturely. Astutely, both Marlowe and Chapman encourage the reader to indulge the expectations of an eavesdropper in addition to those of the voyeur. At numerous junctures in the doubled

poem, the reader is asked to prick up his ears at the sexually charged dialogue of the lovers. At numerous instances, he is teased into thinking he will hear a declaration more sexually explicit than he actually does. Perpetually, he is beckoned to join the listeners in the poem: "everyone so hears, / As all their senses climb'd into their ears" (V. 88). Each installment of the poem insures that the reader is seduced as much by what he hears within its sensuous language as by what he sees within its provocative images. By countering the assault upon the concupiscent eye with a forceful and persistent assault upon the wanton ear, Marlowe and Chapman render next to impossible the reader's escape from seduction and sin.

One of the principal motifs in the doubled *Hero and Leander* is the manner in which the reader's voyeuristic status and eavesdropper's identity alternate and coalesce. From the opening sestiad, Marlow and Chapman implicate seeing and hearing as interdependent and progressive acts of erotic mediation between beholder and beloved or, more narrowly, between reader and text. When Marlowe first avers that Hero's shining beauty may "[steal] away th' enchanted gazer's mind" (I. 104), he alludes to precisely such a fusing of senses. If one is enchanted, one is, after all, laid under a spell. One is delighted—or deluded—by song or incantation.[3] In the reader's case, Marlowe makes it clear that love enters through the ear perhaps even before it enters through the eye. Invoking the mythic vignette of Odysseus and the Sirens, Marlowe describes the effect of Hero's beauty on all her "standers by" (I. 106), a group which includes the attending reader as well as the attendant guests of Sestos, with a reference concerned explicitly with hearing:

> For like the sea-nymphs' inveigling harmony,
> So was her beauty to the standers by. (I. 105-06)

By means of this reference, Marlowe simultaneously warns the reader from and seduces him toward the "inveigling" harmony of the sea-song at hand. He suggests that the reader's auditing of the lines which conjure and celebrate Hero's beauty and later twine together man and woman is akin to Odysseus' auditing of the Sirens' forbidden incantations. But the reader's hearing courts greater risks and dangers than does the hearing of Odysseus in its flirtation with both the poem's and Hero's allurements. Through

such listening, the reader courts the entrapment traditionally associated with the Sirens' songs and, given the association of the Sirens with death and drowning, begins to invite the variously sinful and fatal possibilities of drowning in love's seas.[4] Traditionally applied to the discourse of demons and seducers, the adjective "inveigling" confirms that the reader's aural curiosity invites entrapment and beguilement. But the adjective also develops the notion that the reader's listening may render him blind. Derived from the Old French *aveugle*, "to inveigle" means to blind as well as to deceive and ensnare. "To blind in mind or judgment" constitutes what was for the Renaissance the primary meaning of the verb.[5] With this meaning, Marlowe doubles back to his previous conflation of the effects of hearing and seeing in the image of the "enchanted gazer" (l. 104). He implies that the harmonious lines of both Siren-like women and Siren-like songs represent a beauty which must be both regarded and listened to carefully. Most important, he asks the reader to consider anew love's genesis and power. He upsets, at least for the moment, the reader's safe and easy assumption that love takes control of an individual after it enters by the eye to suggest that, in the case of the Sestian courtiers, love corrupts and commandeers the individual because it enters through the ear.

Marlowe's alteration of proper Neoplatonic love-doctrine emphasizes that, in this poem, the reader cannot listen to love's *agon* without testing his academic understanding of love and discovering that love's effects are not always predictable. Through the alteration, Marlowe forces the reader to look more closely at his motives for and methods of reading the poem. In effect, he forces him to come to grips with the way in which his aural curiosity, his desire to hear all of love's secrets, makes him vulnerable to both love and the love poem in a special way.

In order to suggest the erotic dimension of the readers' listening, Marlowe soon demonstrates that love similarly enters through the ear in the case of Hero. Yoking together the imagery of speech and fire and rhetorical display and physical disportment, Marlowe reintroduces the idea that a love-besotted listener almost necessarily hears amorous rhetoric as a Siren-song of love:

> And now begins Leander to display
> Love's holy fire, with words, with sighs and tears,

> Which like sweet music entered Hero's ears,
> And yet at every word she turn'd aside,
> And always cut him off as he replied.
> At last, like to a bold sharp sophister,
> With cheerful hope thus he accosted her. (l. 192-98)

Such hearing insists that the verbal prerogative predicate a physical response—here, the physical signing of the body expressed in sighs, tears, and movements of recoil. Such hearing also predicates a cycle of frustration. As soon as Hero hears Leander speak, she begins to flirt with him, to invite and reject and play the coquette with his hopes. It is as if her very auditing of Leander's amorous pronouncement engenders her own sexual savvy, her rising intuition of how to play bait-and-switch with a prospective lover.

Hero need not so problematize Leander's speaking. She could hear innuendoes of celestial harmony in the sweet music which enters her ear in much the same way that the reader could hear a verbal intimation that the music of Leander's words is sweet because it is perfectly tuned, because it is in fact a correlative to the music of the spheres; but the erotic expectations of reader and maiden alike dictate that they hear in the words something to be eschewed and avoided, even something forbidden. Hero's response to the sweet music makes Leander plead that she hear in his speaking something less offensive and rude:

> "Fair creature, let me speak without offence,
> I would my rude words had the influence
> To lead thy thoughts, as thy fair looks do mine."
> (l. 199-201)

The reader who is familiar with the poem—or who reads the poem in context of erotic figura in other epyllia—hears either a salacious prediction or tantalizing echo of the manner in which Love enters a more sexually symbolic "brib'd but incorrupted garrison" (V. 253) to fill it with the strains of "'Io Hymen'" (V. 254).

Ironically, such hearing on the part of the reader links him not only with the Hero who Leander knows has converted his words into something rude, but also with Leander himself. The reader hears something lascivious in the lovers' exchange only after he has experienced a short-circuiting of legitimate response akin to that experienced by Leander. Together, the reader's rhetorical exercise—his endeavor to second-guess and answer the motives of

the text, to perceive pleasure in its lines and express that pleasure to himself—and Leander's rhetorical *essai* are short-circuited by Hero's rapid deflection of Love's complete pronouncement. The reader's affinities with Leander—his university training and his love of logic[6]—draw him to an aggressive definition of rhetoric's employment. Accosting the words he hears much as Leander "accosts" with words the woman he would love (l. 198), the reader experiences aural and rhetorical satisfaction by forcing a sexual value upon the words before him, by forcing the words to surrender what he decides must be their secrets. Unfortunately, erotic pleasure so gained is ultimately one-sided. Internalized and silent, such pleasure is effectively expressed only to the self, never to the other. It feeds on private obsessions and it confirms the eavesdropper's estrangement.

Marlowe's focus on how and why Hero participates in such a pattern of deflected response is acute. The first thing that the reader hears Hero say out loud is a declaration of utter self-concern which in many ways seems to substitute the verb "to hear" for the verb "to love" and to establish both listening and loving on the condition that Hero be fashioned as idol: "Were I the saint he worships, I would hear him" (l. 179). The desire to hear what Leander says about her as he makes his private confession is the desire which draws Hero ever closer to her would-be lover: "And as she spake those words, came somewhat near him" (l. 180). For Hero, speaking and listening have little to do with the other and everything to do with the self. When Hero surprises Leander at his prayers, her blush signifies her shame over her self-serving aural presumption to implicate the reader who even now endeavors to hear all that either lover might secretly breathe. Caught at her eavesdropping, Hero appears to Leander in the simultaneous glow of her newly discovered shame and sexual knowingness. Her reaction predicates erotic delight upon sexual betrayal for the first time in the poem to hint that aural curiosity and misdirected eavesdropping initiate a sequence of response which cannot help but problematize the process of defining love.

Hero emerges from her eavesdropping to engage in a communicative exchange which is ostensibly open and sanctioned. But the dialogue which ensues is choked and awkward. Like the mute listener who crouches in the antechamber of Venus' temple—or the mute reader who silently begs the poem to tell him of love—

Hero cannot speak out loud to the individual whose words she covets and aches to hear. Face to face with Leander, Hero practices the arts of eloquence as ritual pantomine. Leander responds in kind with graphic, inevitable gesture. Neither apparently can risk his or her words being heard and analyzed by the beloved:

> These lovers parled by the touch of hands;
> True love is mute, and oft amazed stands.
> Thus while dumb signs their yielding hearts entangled,
> The air with sparks of living fire was spangled,
> And Night, deep-drench'd in misty Acheron,
> Heav'd up her head, and half the world upon
> Breath'd darkness forth (dark night is Cupid's day).
> (I. 185-91)

Because Hero avows from the start that she will hear Leander only on the condition that she will be "the saint he worships" (I. 179), and because she persistently deflects the very words she would hear, diverting Leander's response and rendering the normal linguistic motives of her lover inoperative, the lovers are trapped within a dissociative and reductive form of interchange. So defined, amorous speech asks the hearer to substitute *tactus* for *auditus*. It fashions the lover-listener as a counter-Plato, a celebrant who replaces the highest sense with the lowest as he sinks deeper into sensuality and further away from reason.[7] It leaves him grasping at and gasping after Love's carnal embodiment rather than auditing and attending Love's ideated meaning. It even literalizes perversely the hermetic, Neoplatonic notion of a silent mystical union with the beloved.

Here, of course, the reader is warned away from an overly eager aural appropriation of the poem's amorous words. Marlowe suggests that Hero's and Leander's listening deforms both love's poetry and love's discourse. Converting speech to erotic ends, the amorous listeners ironically reduce the opportunities for understanding and interrelation through the very activity which should free such options. Marlowe defines the lovers as prototypes of bad listeners and bad readers alike. The instances in which the two lovers ply or appropriate "rhetoric to deceive" (I. 338) are almost too numerous to detail. Leander's lengthy peroration against virginity, ostensibly founded upon classical authority and derived from bookish sources, gives rise in the reader's ear—and apparently

Hero's also—to a number of meanings more commonplace and sexual than learned and academic. His "dutiful service" which may Hero's "love procure" (l. 220) echoes off the idea that "service" in the form of sexual attention will allow Leander to obtain a body for his bed and appropriate Hero as a "nun" of Venus (l. 212) in the sense revealed in Stephen Gosson's *Schoole of Abuse*.[8] His declaration that "Vessels of brass oft handled, brightly shine" (l. 231), culled from Ovid's *Elegies* (I, viii, 51-52), resounds less in the context of its source than in the contexts of Renaissance anatomical symbolism and human sexual response. The eavesdropping listener, eager to hear something piquant and new in the linguistic contours of the familiar phrase, seizes upon the idea that it is the symbolic correlative of the vessel—the woman—which Leander would see handled, touched, and brought to glow. Leander's related suggestion that women are "like untun'd golden strings . . . / Which long time lie untouch'd, will harshly jar" (l. 229-30) is, apparently, heard and understood similarly by Hero. When Hero first begins to yield to Leander's arguments and love, she enacts, almost ludicrously, one facet of her lover's previous statement:

> Wherewith she yielded, that was won before.
> Hero's looks yielded, but her words made war;
> Women are won when they begin to jar. (l. 330-32)

The reader hearkens to the sexual puns in the words "won" and "one" and in the anatomical allusion in "jar." Later, when Leander knocks at the symbolic door of the solitary tower, maiden and reader alike double back again to the idea of a celestial music predicated upon physical contact and exchange:

> Breathless albeit he were, he rested not
> Till to the solitary tower he got,
> And knock'd, and call'd, at which celestial noise
> The longing heart of Hero much more joys
> Than nymphs and shepherds when the timbrel rings,
> Or crooked dolphin when the sailor sings.
> (ll. 229-34)

As Marlowe asserts, Leander uses "these arguments . . . and many more" (l. 329) to make palatable to Hero the idea of abandoning her virginity. Numerous as they are, Leander's arguments do have one thing in common: the tendency to make their

appeal less to logic than to the concerns of the flesh. Hero, apparently, hears Leander's address as what it is—"rhetoric to deceive a maid" (l. 338). But though Hero recognizes the seductive turn of Leander's words, though she admits that she should abhor "such words as these" (l. 339)—words which channel her attention away from her proper vows to Leander's improper avowals—she cannot help but "like them for the orator" (l. 340). The impact of Hero's ascendant sexuality on both her hearing out and her interpretation of Leander's words is intense. If Leander has tried to corrupt Hero through words, Marlowe implicitly suggests that Hero condones and perpetuates such corruption. As the lovers ultimately pervert together the proper sexual relationship between man and woman, as their fantasy of a sexual sin is a shared experience, so their perversion of language is a double enterprise. It is together that the lovers limit the non-literal meaning of language to the carnal, the merely erotic. Leander speaks in metaphoric terms which are potentially sexual in their reference. But it is Hero's listening which delivers Leander's words over to celebrate not the order and purpose of procreation but the act of intercourse and the carnal rudiments thereof.

The reader is a lewd listener after Hero's own heart. He hears in Leander's peroration the same sort of allusions to sexual sin and profanation that cause Hero actually to sigh out her confession—"Aye me" (l. 339)—that she is more than willing to listen and respond to all his suggestive double-talk. Like Hero's listening, the reader's eavesdropping leaves him leering at declarations such as "Then shall you most resemble Venus' nun, / When Venus' rites are perform'd and done" (l. 319-20), hearing of a mechanical act which couples harlot and knave rather than an ordered exchange which binds two lovers. This identity between the reader and the erring lover is crucial, of course, to the reader's eventual recognition that such a program of reading and listening lifts the veil of metaphoric language merely, as Maureen Quilligan puts it, "to lift up skirts, to discover physical objects only."[9] Again and again, the reader discovers himself listening to the poem in such a way that he hears talk of genitalia, sexual entry, and sexual orgasm. When Leander arrives at Hero's tower and the narrator declares, "wide open stood the door, he need not climb, / And she herself before the pointed time / Had spread the board" (ll. 19-21), the reader's ear turns with the notion that Hero waits for Leander in

the attitude and position of sexual readiness. He hears that Hero opens her innermost parts to her lover, that Leander need not climb Hero's legs in order to enjoy these parts, and that Hero spreads out her body to invite her lover "to board" her. He hears all this at the same moment that he collides with the fact that Hero's board might be, after all, just an ordinary table, spread with food. Momentarily deflated, the reader recognizes that his sexually motivated listening borders on the absurd as well as the uncivil.

But the allure of such listening is strong and insistent. Consigned to make sport with words while the lovers make sport with one another, the eavesdropping reader continues to coax the most physical meaning possible from the words tantalizingly presented to him. When Marlowe makes bookish reference to the fable of the cock and jewel, the reader consequently hears something more than the implied *moralitas* that Leander, like the cock in the fable, fails to appreciate when it is offered him:

> Like Aesop's cock, this jewel he enjoyed,
> And as a brother with his sister toyed,
> Supposing nothing else was to be done,
> Now he her favour and good will had won.
> (ll. 51-54)

He hearkens to an allusion that Leander toys here with that jewel which was previously shown to signify Hero's maidenhead. He even hears that Leander implements such joyful enterprise by means of his sexual organ.

The reader's aural strategy is much the same as he listens to the opening of the Neptune interlude. Here, a stripped Leander leaps into the rising billows of the sea to cry, "Love, I come" (ll. 154); Neptune descries, albeit wrongly, that the youth beckons his embrace; and the reader hears that both the youth and the god make their declarations in the throes of rising sexual excitation.[10] In the reader's ear, Leander's declaration resounds against the notion that Leander may well experience a sexual emission even as he swims to his love. The succeeding statement that "the sapphire-visag'd god grew proud" (ll. 155) delivers the aural suggestion that yet a second individual is swollen with desire. The final statement that Neptune makes "his capering Trition sound aloud" (ll. 156), predicating sound on the condition of

Neptune's proud tumescence, flushes the eavesdropping reader with what he hears as sure talk of sexual orgasm.

The reader has his fun with the lines cited above. But the point remains that his fun is repetitious. His erotic hearing always doubles back either to an earlier moment in the poem which attaches a sexual value to a given linguistic motive or to an earlier moment in his own experience which has trained him in the erotic connotations of certain words in certain contexts. His aural titillation derives from echoes, from moments in which he hears one sound collapse, backwards, into that which is familiar. So derived, the reader's titillation and delight must eventually give way to boredom. It signals him, much as Leander is signaled in his frustrated communion with Hero, that some "rites or other . . . [are] neglected" (II. 64). As far as the reader is concerned, the neglected rites pertain to a manner of listening he has not yet engaged, a manner of listening which is critical and corrective. Such listening springs in part from the recognition that Neptune's erotically obsessed aural expectations make him into a fool as he twice mishears Leander. But they spring also from the reader's first-hand experience of the insufficiency of erotic pleasure and knowledge so gathered and defined. If the reader does not assume the eavesdropper's role and all the lonely frustrations that go with it, he will never attempt to augment and emend Hero's and Leander's reductive understanding of love and language with any real zeal or conviction. Like the deafened lovers, the reader must hear in the terms of love's discourse the means to his own self-serving erotic ends. If he does not listen to the poem in such a mode of desire, he cannot experience—for he cannot initiate—the arduous transaction Marlowe intends to occur between what Barthes might call "the pleasure-value of the text and the moral-value of its themes."[11] He cannot learn about loving or listening, and he cannot learn how to appropriate language to clarify his conceptions about sexuality.

Problematically, Marlowe's poem postulates a love which both predicates and is predicated upon a system of silences. From the early moment that Hero and Leander chose to speak by "the touch of hands" (I. 185) through all the moments in which Hero refuses to engage in "parley" for fear of being "counted light" (II. 9), the poem's major interlocuters establish a pattern of approach in

which conventional modes of verbalization subside behind an onslaught of whispers, pants, sighs, and charm-like kisses. The closer the lovers get to their moment of sexual communion, the less they speak to one another. Leander obtains a truce with Hero through the apparent aegis of diplomatic speech. But once he mounts her quivering breast, his speech, so the narrator implies, is quick and inconsequential:

> Wherein Leander on her quivering breast,
> Breathless spoke something, and sigh'd out the rest;
> Which so prevail'd, as he with small ado
> Enclos'd her in his arms and kiss'd her too.
> And every kiss to her was as a charm. (ll. 279-84)

At the conclusion of Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*, the silence which ensues seems less to define a perfect equilibrium of love than to criticize the hypothesis of such an equilibrium. The lovers in the poem and the would-be-lover who has both playfully and critically listened to their tale are brought up against both the necessity for words and the necessity to heed them carefully. For all her earlier refusals to speak and listen, Hero laments in the end, so we are told, that she still does not know how to talk to Leander:

> Again she knew not how to frame her look,
> Or speak to him who in a moment took
> That which so long, so charily she kept,
> And fain by stealth away she would have crept.
> (ll. 307-10)

She descries that the silence of their love points to an emptiness and insufficiency between them. Leander, who had so much to say about the drawbacks of virginity and the advantages of the unvirgined state, is curiously mute in the conclusion. He neither addresses Hero's fear and shame nor celebrates the fruition of their love. The lovers' gradual negation of the capacity of listening to effect a unity and understanding at long last erases Leander's apparent faith that one can join not only subject and object but also man and woman through words.

If the lovers find themselves so bereft at the conclusion of Marlowe's lines, so too does the reader. The extinguished voices of the lovers, the negated possibilities of erotic discourse and mediation, and the manner in which amatory poetry and interpretation have given way to detraction establish a special problem for

the reader who, like the lovers, is also a co-creator of the poem's meaning. That problem addresses the necessity to reform and reconstruct the text in such a manner that one does not remain trapped within the invidiously private sexual and rhetorical circles from which Hero and Leander never escape.

Chapman's continuation of Marlowe's poem documents precisely this predicament. As Marlowe's reader, Chapman reestablishes an interpretive dilemma which has to do both with sexual mastery and intellectual or philosophic expertise. Like Marlowe, Chapman explores the interrelationship of the dual activities of the reader as eavesdropper. Chapman similarly addresses lovers and readers who must deal with the ramifications of a sexually motivated program of listening.

The second installment of the doubled *Hero and Leander* re-presents the possibility that the lovers may gather joy and recompense through words. In Chapman's conclusion, the reader hears Hero and Leander variously attempt to lift their self-imposed ban on speech. The third sestiad opens with a description of Leander fairly brimming with talk of Hero and love before his sister, Hermione. The sixth sestiad closes with Hero insistently pronouncing Leander's name, avowing that "all her sounds, / Accents, and phrases" be "analys'd" in her lover (VI. 254-56). The irony, of course, resides in the fact that Hero and Leander are never again presented with an opportunity to exchange all their newly discovered words. In Chapman's installment, the lovers are left only to soliloquize or to talk to those figures who intrude upon their private plaints and fantasizings.

If this turn of events frustrates the lovers who apparently come to believe, somewhat after the fornication, that they have much to say to one another, it also frustrates the eavesdropping reader who has long been hanging on the lovers' ambiguous parley. Chapman calls attention to such predilections on the part of the reader in the middle of Sestiad III by means of a direct address: "The next night's horror, which prepare to hear: / I fail if it profane your daintiest ear" (III. 181-82). The adjective "daintiest," echoing against Marlowe's application of the descriptive term, pulls the reader back to talk of sexual display and availability. The echo calls him to associate his "daintiest ear" with Hero's "daintiest parts" (II. 270)—that is, with the sexual genitalia which Leander aches to savor and to touch. In turn, the association establishes a

basis for him to evaluate more critically how the sensory organ which affords him the opportunity merely to hear the poem also affords him the opportunity to receive the immediate frictional impulse of sexual exchange. The extreme ramifications of the echo's suggestiveness bring the reader face to face with the deforming potential of his participation in the poem's delights. Hearing becomes a symbolic means of touching, palpitating, and even fusing with no mere sexual entity, but a beloved who properly belongs to another. It establishes a relationship which is both aberrant and adulterous, and it is precisely such a relationship that the eavesdropping reader is wont to pursue. The implications here are perverse, disquieting, and inescapable. The reader discovers that the same conditions which afford him the opportunity to take a proper part in the poem must necessarily draw him into a perverse participation in love. His dependence on a vicarious role as a member of the audience sets him up to be an eavesdropper. His eavesdropping, in turn, threatens to tip and overturn the delicate balance between participation and detachment any member of a critical audience must maintain.

Marlowe and Chapman, of course, attempt to insure that the reader's eavesdropping alternates with a type of audition which is more disciplined and sublimated. The reading dynamics of any style as excessive as that of the two installments of the poem force the reader to a double sort of listening. In one phrase, the reader hears persistent talk of illicit sexual interactions. In the next, or even in the same, he hears of newly discovered worlds or cosmological order and civil form. On the one hand, what his ear construes seems almost literally dictated by his personal sexual knowledge and sexual predilections. On the other, it derives from his knowledge of classical thought and literature and his ability to lift the veil of allegory beyond the level of physical reference only.

Chapman engages the reader in such double-listening in a number of instances. When the reader hears of Leander's return to Hermione after his night of bliss, he descries two very different events—one concerned with auto-erotic ecstasy, the other with the mythic genesis of Love:

> His most kind sister all his secrets knew,
> And to her singing like a shower he flew,
> Sprinkling the earth, that to their tombs took in
> Streams dead for love to leave his ivory skin,

> Which yet a snowy foam did leave above,
> As soul to the dead water that did love,
> And from thence did the first white roses spring
> (For love is sweet and fair in every thing)
> And all the sweeten'd shore as he did go,
> Was crown'd with od'rous roses white as snow.
> (III. 73-83)

As eavesdropper, he hearkens to the orgasmic suggestiveness of the shower which falls to the earth, the "streams dead for love" (III. 77), and the "snowy foam" (III. 78). He delights to think that what was to be Leander's secret conversation with his sister vouchsafes him another vicarious thrill. But the reader also hears the orgasmic reference resolve into an allegorical recapitulation of Aphrodite's birth from the foam that formed around the severed genitals of Uranus.

Chapman's reader discovers that his listening entertains a similarly doubled response when he hears of the manner in which Leander is surprised by Ceremony:

> But as he shook with passionate desire
> To put in flame his other secret fire,
> A music so divine did pierce his ear,
> As never yet his ravish'd sense did hear.
> (III. 105-08)

Here, audition is initially dictated by a semiotics of desire. The passionate shaking of the lover's body reverberates against the passionate shaking of that "golden tree" with which Marlowe suggested Hero's genitalia (II. 300). Leander prepares to light the flame which shall consume him, and the reader prepares to take his own pleasure as the poet addresses the secret sexual rite. When Chapman redirects the focus, seeming, with a contradictory "but," to begin to break off both the narrator's apparent talk and Leander's apparent experience of auto-erotic stimulation, the words which the reader hears become self-reflexive. If Leander's ear is here pierced with a music which ravishes all his senses, the reader's ear and senses have been similarly ravished all along. The dramatic address of Leander's hearing brings the reader up against the workings of his own hearing, and the resulting self-consciousness brings him up against the workings of the text.

Both the piercing and the ravishing would, of course, suggest a sexual penetration to almost any ear. The Renaissance understood that "to ravish" was not only to sweep or carry away but

also to seize and even violate an individual, especially a woman.[12] Similarly, the Renaissance was attuned to the verb's additional negative connotations, its association, for instance, with the activities of spoiling and corrupting. But the Renaissance also understood that "to ravish" could mean to carry away or remove from earth by means of mystical transport.[13]

Carefully listening to and evaluating the words which tie him to Leander, the reader begins to discern that for reader and lover alike hearing may transform self and sense in two ways. In one manner, the verb "to ravish," especially in conjunction with the verb "to pierce," allows the reader to persist in taking vicarious pleasure from words which conjure sexual images. The reader denies that the poet has signaled a change in the text and continues to construe what he hears in the mode of desire. On the other hand, the verb's heavenly associations signal the reader that the persistent transformation of words into a series of metaphors that delight a heightened sensuality is insufficient unto itself. Such associations allow the reader to gainsay an appreciation that in love and listening alike one may thrill to a sense that is other than corporeal.

Throughout the continuation, Chapman manipulates the occasions of the eavesdropping reader's sexual excitation to force critical self-circumspection. His references to and addresses of the reader's listening, more numerous than Marlowe's, prepare for this critical redirecting by heightening the reader's awareness of how much he wants to hear the poem. Chapman professes that he fails if he profanes the listening ear; he wishes that his verse were ended in order that none might hear of Hero's descent to sin (VI. 79-80); and the reader is made self-conscious of his own desire not only to hear of unspeakable, uncivil profanation, but to hear of such things as soon as possible. Chapman's references to other people's hearing, also more numerous than those of Marlowe, similarly focus the reader's attention. Each response to hearing modeled in the text—the joy with which Leander's father hears of Leander's intended vows (III. 161-62), the imitative fear and sounds with which Hero's matron attends her shrieks (III. 316-20), the stern heat with which Venus' ear rejects Hero's false arguments (III. 384-85)—presents the reader with an alternative which must be weighed in relation to his attitudes and reactions concerning love's audition.

The most detailed and extensive of these references to or focuses upon other individuals' hearing occurs in Sestiad V in the Teras episode. The opening of this interlude presents the reader with a series of references to hearing which would seem to describe a program of listening strikingly similar to his own. The dwarf's attendants prepare to listen by fixing eyes and ears alike upon the teller and, as they listen, "all their senses [climb] into their ears" (V. 87). The revelers at these nuptials audit and attend, Chapman implies, in the same condition of mounting sexual expectations and the same state of synesthetic or sensory confusion that have characterized the audition of the eavesdropping reader throughout the poem. These listeners re-enact Marlowe's insinuation that one hearkens to a mythological love narrative in such a way that seeing and hearing—and voyeuristic and eavesdropping acts and intentions—fuse and coalesce. They represent his suggestion that the very act of listening to a narrative of love may surrender one to effects which silence, enervate, and render unsound. Reverent before and curious about the promised emanations from Teras' reputedly "charm'd lips" (V. 75), the Sestians confront the reader with a composite image of those who would hear a Siren-song of love even in tales rife with tragedy and "grave succeeding consequence" (V. 76).

When the reader hears that all the Sestians' senses climb into their ears, he may delight that his textual compeers, individuals who comprise another youthful fraternity of literary connoisseurs, hearken to the mythological love narrative with an excitement which seems as much sexual as aesthetic. But the reader must pay for this particular pleasure of recognition. The critical position which he must assume in order to bring the Sestian audience's sensuous predilections to the fore is a position which advances his own predilections. The reader winds up tracking himself as he tracks the other listeners who seize the occasion of a poetic interlude as an opportunity for the covert satisfaction of mounting sexual expectations:

> Then all were silent; everyone so hears,
> As all their senses climb'd into their ears;
> And first this amorous tale that fitted well
> Fair Hero and the nuptials she did tell. (V. 87-90)

Because this tracking requires the reader to struggle at reading between the lines, it would seem to lead him surreptitiously, step

by step, to a sense that it is the workings of his own rude fancy which cause poetry constantly to collapse into pornography. In any case, the reader is left either to condone or to condemn the auditory process which seems to convert "important sense" and "sentencing" into trifles of sensuality.

Confronted with this critical dilemma, the reader stands at a crossroad as Chapman moves the poem towards its conclusion. But his interpretive options with respect to the tale of Hymen and Eucharis are identical to the options which he has alternately exercised and ignored with respect to the tale of Hero and Leander. In the exemplary love story, as in the libertine, the reader is free to hear and be attentive to what he will. The opportunities for perverse hearing are as omnipresent in the story which Teras relays in order to inculcate the Sestians with the ideas governing marriage as they are in the tale which delineates Hero's and Leander's ignorance of such ideas. When the reader hears that Hymen's "love durst feed / On naught but sight and hearing, nor could breed / Hope for requital, the grand prize" (V. 125-27), he may hearken to a reference to the banquet of bestiality, hear talk of copulation in the verb "to breed," and even double back to the previous Marlovian conflation of the prize of love with the "inestimable gem" of a woman's maidenhead. He may understand that Hymen's wish for "virtue to make his own desires implanted" (V. 136) is less a wish for moral strength with which to forebear the social and psychological trials of courtship than a wish for the physical wherewithal with which he, like Leander, may enter, plant, and harvest well the symbolic garden within the body of the beloved.

It is at the climax of Eucharis' encounter with Love that the reader's hearing becomes most pornographic. Love, the reader is told, enters Eucharis, according to proper Neoplatonic doctrine, at the eye:

> He enter'd at the eye, his sacred storm
> Rose from the hand, Love's sweetest instrument;
> It stirr'd her blood's sea so, that high it went,
> And beat in bashful waves 'gainst the white shore
> Of her divided cheeks. . . . (V. 228-32)

Nearly forgetting that he is an attendant to a metaphoric description of Love's genesis, the reader is seduced into diverting his thoughts from Eucharis' visual reception of the form of Love to

Eucharis' sexual reception of "Love's sweetest instrument." The agitation of Eucharis' blood and its intense, rhythmic beating against the "white shore of her divided cheeks" sound less like a description of a chaste and bashful blush than a description of the internal sexual response. The sexual nature of the reader's audition converts the locus of narrative metaphoric identity from the eye and face to the female pudendum.

Such mishearing is, of course, as flagrant as it is delicious, and Chapman determinedly forces the reader to confront the manner in which he has contorted Teras' words. At the conclusion of the description of Eucharis' "blush," Chapman directly addresses the reader by means of the editorial "we," and draws an analogy between the events in Teras' tale and the events in his own inherited story:

> And as we find
> In fainting ebbs, the flowing Zephyr hurls
> The green-hair'd Hellespont, broke in silver curls
> 'Gainst Hero's tower, but in his blast's retreat,
> The waves obeying him, they after beat,
> Leaving the chalky shore a great way pale,
> Then moist it freshly with another gale:
> So ebb'd and flow'd the blood in Eucharis' face.
> (V. 234-41)

By means of the address and reference, Chapman stops the reader in his tracks and confronts him with the embarrassing reality that he has been hearing and interpreting Eucharis' situation as if it were Hero's. By means of the concluding line, Chapman makes the nature of the reader's mishearing even more painful and obvious.

So chastened, the reader is perhaps better prepared to appropriate the terms of the love narrative in a manner which confirms traditional precepts of spiritual excellence as well as personal ideas of sexual pleasure. He is ready, for instance, to celebrate something in addition to a prophesied sexual entry in Teras' description of the "brib'd, but incorrupted garrison" (V. 253) which resounds with strains of "Io Hymen" and in which Love grows "wanton with ease of his free reign" (V. 256). Therein, he hears of and delights in not only Love's domination of Eucharis' sexuality but also Love's cultivation of her mind.

Because Chapman counsels the reader that an important alternative exists to the eavesdropper's tendency to seek satisfaction in the

forced revelation of secrets, and because he presents him with a group of listeners whose joyful attentiveness to Eucharis' sexual cries make them want to protect rather than betray the act which lies behind such noises, the reader leaves Teras' narration with a heightened understanding of the possibilities of love-concerned audition. At the opening of the sixth and final sestiad of Chapman's completion, he holds two opposing models in the back of his mind. One model is positive and informing. It is based upon his observation that the maids who overhear Eucharis' bridal cries appreciate these cries in such a manner that they gain a sympathetic understanding or "true feeling of her harmless pains" (V. 401) rather than a salacious idea about sexual consummation. The other model, negative and deforming, derives from Teras' explanation of the fate of another individual who would generate an immodest narrative from the words which would celebrate the form of love. Because the ideas of amorous narration inflame Adolesche, causing the force of her desires to displace the virtue of her reason, she stands in close relation to the eavesdropping reader. Her love of rhetorical play and exercise and the joy she takes in plying her wit and in telling all the news coincide with identical interests on the part of the young men who admired and experimented with the rhetorical excesses of the epyllia. Even more specifically, Adolesche responds to the idea of talking in much the same manner that Chapman has suggested the eavesdropping listener responds to the idea of hearing:

> This wit went warm
> To Adolesche's brain, a nymph born high,
> Made all of voice and fire, that upwards fly:
> Her heart and all her forces' nether train
> Climb'd to her tongue, and thither fell her brain,
> Since it could go no higher, and it must go;
> All powers she had, even her tongue, did so.
> In spirit and quickness she much joy did take,
> And lov'd her tongue, only for quickness sake.
> (V. 286-94)

Adolesche, of course, in the end turns into a parrot. Robbed of human form and denied the free exercise of speech, she becomes a grotesque caricature of the human type she has been all along—the listener whose only response to love's communication is the manic repetition of strident sounds and dirty words. For the reader, the

moralitas is clear. But old habits die hard. The reader continues to listen to the poem in the mode of desire. He persists in straining after delicious sense and in hearing echoes of those fleeting moments of sexual joy which, together with Marlowe and with Hero and Leander, he created in the first installment of the poem. Like the lovers, he would prefer not to get on with things. He would prefer not to confront the fatal violence of the noise—the bleating of flocks, the blows of broadaxes, the outpourings of floods—which spills into the last act of the drama, effacing human sounds and rational articulation. He would prefer to remember and re-experience the sexual sounds and innuendoes he enjoyed in the beginning.

When the reader hears that Leander leaps back into the waves of the Hellespont, he rapidly conflates Chapman's text with Marlowe's in precisely this mode of diversionary recall:

> Off went his silken robe, and in he leapt,
> Whom the kind waves so licorously clept,
> Thick'ning for haste one in another so,
> To kiss his skin, that he might almost go
> To Hero's tow'r, had that kind minute lasted.
> (V. 173-77)

Doubling back to the occasion of Leander's first love-inspired leap into the Hellespont—and even to the occasion of his diving after the silver body of a Siren-like Hero—the reader is sure that he listens to talk of sexual delight. He discerns a sexual meaning not only in the overt imagery of the hasty kissing, but also in the references to Hero's tower, an entity which he is by now long accustomed to read as the holy temple of maidenhead, and to "that kind minute" (VI. 177), a minute which he suspects may be modified as much by the impulses of sexuality as by those of benevolence.[14] Lasciviously, he hears that Leander responds to the orgasmic activity of the sea in such a manner that the lover himself nearly experiences an orgasm.

The reader plunges into the delights of sexual innuendo in blank denial of the way the poem approaches tragedy. As he courts the possibility of drowning in the delicious reverberations of specific words and Leander courts that of drowning in what he once celebrated as Love's glorious seas, the events and terms of the erotic narrative shift. The tumultuous state of sexual ecstasy gives way to the tumultuous state of an entire world turned upside down

in spite of Love's bidding. We discover, as the poet had earlier warned, that "as we grow hapless, Violence subtle grows, / Dumb, deaf, blind, and comes when no man knows" (IV. 349-50). The very sounds to which the eavesdropping reader has all along wished to be privy—the secret prerogatives of foreplay and the barely articulated strains of sexual response—suddenly crack and resound throughout the very fabric of the physical universe until he is nearly deafened by them. Neptune's waves groan as they break near Leander. Leander shrieks and screams to Neptune and Venus. Neptune, thwarted in his attempt to counsel or succor Leander through words or replies, resorts to a kind of outsized shadowplay or pantomine amidst the violence of sound.

Significantly, the details which encourage the reader to hear this passage in his old familiar mode of desire—the suggestive rising of Neptune, his striking of the waves, his grief and rage which echo against the Neptune-Leander courtship in Marlowe's second sestiad —simultaneously encourage him to attend to the passage more critically. In context of the universal violence and the fatal conclusion which the reader knows is imminent, the echoing details direct attention to the insidious manner in which the chain of events initiated by love has diverted, quelled, and finally strangled the prerogatives of articulate speech and clear communication. The frantic dumbshow of Neptune's passionate fear emerges as the final manifestation of the lovers' tendency to parle by touch and pantomine. The manner in which his vocal lamentations threaten literally to erase "his love life's fort" (VI. 231) presents a fatal counterpoint to Leander's initial efforts to destroy the castle of Hero's virtue through excessive rhetoric and complaint. The reader's critical audition begins to focus on how difficult and dangerous it is to qualify love's articulation as both listener and speaker.

In his final attentions to the lovers, Chapman sues the eavesdropper to break his silence, asks him to come out into the open and to sing the lament which Hero's strangled store of sorrows cannot speak:

> She saw him, and the sight was much much more
> Than might have serv'd to kill her: should her store
> Of giant sorrows speak? Burst, die, bleed,
> And leave poor plaints to us that shall succeed.
> (VI. 268-71)

So addressed, the reader stands invited to participate in the creation of meaning in such a way that he hearkens to the possibility of a transformed covenant between the poet and himself. Long ago, at the outset of the doubled poem, the reader learned as eavesdropper how one may efficiently decode idioms developed to answer the mysterious needs of courtship and seduction. Now, at its conclusion, he learns that "true honour" (VI. 292) may spring from the reconstructive experience enacted in his own doubled responses to and hearing of the poem.

Chapman's conclusion, of course, drives home the fact that the completed edition of *Hero and Leander* is composed of two poems, not one. The manner in which Chapman finally sues the reader to respond to the narrative of love postulates a solution to the erratic-erotic experience of Marlowe's Ovidian beginning and the problems unleashed by a devolving grammar of amatory mythology. Though Chapman's installment charts the response of a reader-rewriter who must express and even exhaust the obsessive motives of the poem and poet before him, it also charts the response of a reader who can reconcile the exercise of desire and the contemplation of love. In this double movement, Chapman enacts and extends the Marlovian implication that the possibilities for rhetorical and aural seduction must coexist with, and even predicate, the possibilities for civil wit and reformation in the reading experience of the poem.

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NOTES

1 Clark Hulse writes in *Metamorphic Verse: The Elizabethan Minor Epic* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1981) that the authors of the epyllia investigated and defined the moral relationship between themselves and their coterie, humanist audience as a rhetorical relationship, that is, as a dimension of a poet's "address to an auditor" (p. 37). Hulse does not specifically address the Renaissance reader as an eavesdropper, but he does argue that the modern reader interested in understanding this crucial rhetorical relationship between the Renaissance poet and the members of his contemporary audience must consider the temporal quality of the poetry, its existence in time "as an utterance (a parole in the current vocabulary) spoken by someone to someone else" (p. 90). All citations of Marlowe's poem and Chapman's continuation are from Millar Maclure's edition of *Hero and Leander*, in Christopher Marlowe, *The Poems* (London: Methuen, 1968) and are given parenthetically in the text. My references to *Hero and Leander*, unless specified otherwise, as the doubled poem identify the 1598 edition which published Marlowe's poem with Chapman's completion.

2 See Bahiyvih Nakhjavani, "The Voyeur in the Epyllia of the 1590s: 'Rage of Lust by Gazing Qualified,'" Diss. Univ. of Massachusetts 1978, p. 2.

[3] "To enchant," in the proper sense of its derivation from the Latin *incantare*, "to sing," means to lay under a spell, to bewitch through song, charm, or incantation, or to charm, delight, or enrapture. See *OED*, entries 1, 2, and 3 under "enchant" and entries 1 and 2 under "enchantment."

[4] Abraham Fraunce writes that the Sirens "signifie the cosning tricks of counterfeit strumpets, the undoubted shipwrack of all affectionat yonkers." See *The Third Part of the Countesse of Pembrokes Yuychurch. Entitled Amintas Dale. Wherein are the most conceited tales of the Pagan Gods in English Hexameters together with their auncient descriptions and Philosophical explications* (London: Thomas Woodcocke, 1592), p. 23. For an extended discussion of the Sirens' classical, medieval, and Renaissance identification with deceit and harlotry, see Don Cameron Allen, *Mysteriously Meant: The Rediscovery of Pagan Symbolism and Allegorical Interpretation in the Renaissance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1970), pp. 91, 93, 95, 97 *et passim*.

[5] See entries 1, 2, and 2.b under "inveigle," *OED*.

[6] On such characteristics of the young men in Marlowe's audience, one might consult Clifford Leech, "Marlowe's Humor," in *Essays on Shakespeare and Elizabethan Drama in Honor of Hardin Craig*, ed. Richard Holsey (Columbia: Univ. of Missouri Press, 1962), p. 79.

[7] Gerald Snare discusses the concept of such a counter-Plato in relation to the figure of the voyeuristic poet in Chapman's *Banquet of Sense*. See "Chapman's Ovid," *Studies in Philology*, 75 (1978), 430-50.

[8] See *The Schoole of Abuse, Conteining a Plesaunt Inuective against Poets, Pipers, Plaiers, Iesters, and such like Caterpillers of a Commonwealth* (London: Thomas Woodcocke, 1579), pp. 19-20.

[9] Maureen Quilligan, *The Language of Allegory: Defining the Genre* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1979), p. 199.

[10] On the sexual meaning of the verb "to come," see Norman D. Hinton, "More Puns in Chaucer," *AN&Q*, 2 (1964), 115-16.

[11] Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Hill & Wang, 1975), pp. 34-35.

[12] See entries 1, 2, 2.b, and 4 under "ravish," *OED*.

[13] See entries 2.c, 3, and 3.b under "ravish," *OED*.

[14] *The Middle English Dictionary*, ed. Sherman M. Kuhn and John Reidy (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1968), V, 502, defines "kind" as a semantic equivalent for sex, sexual function, the sexual organs or testicles, and, finally, sperm: see entries 14a, b, c, and d under "kind(e)."