

## *Willobie his Avis* and *The Passionate Pilgrim* : Precedence, Parody, and Development.

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Commentators have long been foxed and fascinated by the peculiar relationship between canto xlvii of *Willobie his Avis* and poem no. xviii ("When as thine eye hath chose the dame") of *The Passionate Pilgrim*. Not only that but a tantalizing relationship with Shakespeare has been forged for each. The speaker of the *Willobie* poem is given the initials "W. S.", while *The Passionate Pilgrim* is a more or less pseudo-Shakespearean miscellany, authenticated in parts by some genuine pieces. That Shakespeare might have been the author of either of the poems is too improbable to warrant serious conjecture. However, I hope to show that the one poem develops in response to, and indeed somewhat parodies, the other; and in discussing the relationship between them it is relevant to assess the role of Shakespeare's *name*, if not his personal intervention, in the proceedings.

*Willobie his Avis* was published in 1594 shortly after Shakespeare's poem *The Rape of Lucrece* to which it carries a fulsome compliment.<sup>1</sup> The resemblance between canto xlvii of *Willobie* and "When as thine eye hath chose the dame" is well known and has in turn given rise to speculation on how or whether they may be connected. William Jaggard published *The Passionate Pilgrim* (a miscellany of twenty sonnets and lyrics) under Shakespeare's name, though as far as can be known without authority. Canto xlvii of *Willobie* bears the initials "W. S." W. S. figures in a dialogue with H. W. in this part of the poem and offers the latter advice on how to conduct matters with the virtuous and intractable heroine, Avis. The canto then is spoken by W. S. Since this figure has never emerged from

behind his initials, there is no saying who he might have been. Many have casually supposed that he is indeed Shakespeare, a tradition of identification which A. B. Grosart unquestioningly followed in his 1880 edition of *Willobie his Avis*a when he wrote, "I am inclined to conjecture that Shakespeare may have sent his friend H. W. this identical poem".<sup>2</sup> H. W. is of course the Henry Willobie who provides the Willobie of the title and whose full name recurs at several points. But who that Willobie may have been is equally open to conjecture.<sup>3</sup>

Before proceeding further along this line, it is worth pausing over the makeup of *Willobie* itself. The poem consists in the main of seventy-four cantos which take the form of arguments between the chaste and virtuous Avisi, a woman of modest social status (the wife of an inn-keeper, in fact) and various disreputable suitors who ply her with courtship both before and after her marriage. The husband never appears except in allusion. Her would-be seducers include, "Ruffians, Roysters, young Gentlemen, and lustie Captaines", including a "Cavaleiro" (Harrison, p. 56). This accent on the misdoings of lesser nobility emphasises the poem's championship of the class to which Avisi belongs: merchants of good yeoman stock who, like similar figures in the novels of Deloney, represent English values at their best. Avisi is assailed in turn by various unsavoury Continentals, a Frenchman, a German, and a "Hispano-Italiensis" Petrarchist figure called Henrico Willobego, who is of course none other than Henry Willobie himself, courting the lady in an absurd and affectedly poetic posture.<sup>4</sup> The author appears to have had in mind a version of the Lucrece story set in a familiar English social context in which chastity manages to prevail over sexual adventuring. The fact that her wooers tend to be richer and of a nobler, or at least more elevated class, than Avisi provides an instructive analogy with the Roman tale in which the son of a king undertakes to abuse one of his father's subjects. A patriotic note is further struck in that those of Avisi's wooers who ply their suit at any length in the poem are from beyond the British Isles and represent the hostility and distrust their

countries inspire at an economic and political level.

The stanza pattern differs from the rhyme royal of *The Rape of Lucrece*, being in sixains or six-line octosyllabics. This reduces the capacity for rhetoric and reflectiveness of the usual heroic pentameter line and issues in straightforward, vigorous metrical statements, of which the poem's opening stanza is as good an example as any :

Let martiall men, of Mars his praise,  
Sound warlike trumpe : let lust-led youth.  
Of wicked love, write wanton layes ;  
Let sheepeheards sing, their sheepecoates ruth :  
The wiser sort, confesse it plaine,  
That these have spent good time in vaine.

(Harrison, p. 21)

The poem stands in its forthright way as an emulation of *The Rape of Lucrece*, though set in a plainer English key which partially repudiates the other poem's grander stylistic excesses, while serving the reminder that if good sense prevails then the tragic denouement invariably associated with the urges of an irresistible passion need not follow.

Despite the play on names, it offers no invitation to seek further in the way of identification ; but the allegorical yearnings of scholars have taken no heed of that. Harrison himself was quite convinced that the poem was written in support of Sir Walter Raleigh, then under investigation on charges of atheism in the neighbourhood of Cerne Abbas, which the geographical details of the poem *more or less* reveal to be its supposed setting. To support Raleigh means to attack Raleigh's enemy Southampton and with him the patron-pleasing Shakespeare ; all this despite the compliment to Shakespeare's genius in the preliminary verses already referred to (see above). According to Harrison's conjecture H. W. ceases to be Willobie and reveals himself instead as Henry Wriothesley (the Earl of Southampton) and W. S. is naturally Shakespeare (Harrison, p. 214). These speculations of Harrison's which undermine the credibility of his otherwise fine edition have never taken hold and need not be dismantled

now.

A further attempt at allegorical interpretation was made by B. N. De Luna in a more recent edition of the poem: she argued that Avis, despite her clearly humble social standing which serves the poem with a necessary moral point, is no less a person than the Queen herself. The poem provides no internal evidence for such a reading: on the contrary everything supports the view that Avis is the wife of an inn-keeper, albeit a superior example of the breed. But De Luna, having fixed on Elizabeth has no difficulty in revealing the appropriate identities of her suitors, identifying them as Philip of Spain, the Duke of Alençon, Essex, and so on. Douglas Hamer, in a thorough and irrefutable review, exposes the edition's many errors and improbabilities.<sup>5</sup> One of these concerns the book's Latin description of her (added in the edition of 1596) as "conjux cauponis, filia pandochei" which translates straightforwardly as "the wife of an inn-keeper, the daughter of an inn-keeper". De Luna allegorically reconstrues this as "the wife of a shop-keeper [England], the daughter of a harlot [Anne Boleyn]".<sup>6</sup>

The composition of the *The Passionate Pilgrim*, on the other hand, may shed some light on the connection between W. S. and canto xlvii. When Jaggard put the miscellany together as Shakespeare's he was presumably anxious that it should appear genuine, or at least deceive its readership into believing in Shakespeare's authorship. Since he had little of Shakespeare's own work (five poems out of the twenty) this was far from easy. Jaggard's ploy seems to have been to include poems not by Shakespeare but on a theme popularly associated with him: hence the inclusion of several sonnets on the love of Venus for Adonis (Shakespeare's erotic narrative currently seeing its fifth printing in six years). There is no evidence that Shakespeare wrote any of these sonnets, and indeed the author of one of them (and perhaps others?) was subsequently identified as Bartholomew Griffin. But the connection was made. Jaggard, looking for other 'Shakespearean' specimens may have lighted on canto xlvii of *Willobie*,

which with its initials looked Shakespearean enough. In addition, the canto appears preceded by a prose description of the conversation between W. S. and H. W. which provides enough information for anybody determined to make the identification with Shakespeare :

H. W. being sodenly infected with the contagion of a fantastick fit... pyneth a while in secret grief, at length... bewrayeth the secrecy of his disease unto his familiar frend W. S. who not long before had tryed the curtesy of the like passion, and was now newly recovered of the like infection; yet finding his frend let blood in the same vaine, he took pleasure for a tyme to see him bleed, & in steed of stopping the issue, he enlargeth the wound, with the sharp rasor of a willing conceit, perswading him that he thought it a matter very easy to be compassed, & no doubt with payne, diligence & some cost in time to be obtayned. Thus this miserable comforter comforting his frend with an impossibilitie, eyther for that he now would secretly laugh at his frends folly, that had given occasion not long before unto others to laugh at his owne, or because he would see whether an other could play his part better then himselfe, & in vewing a far off the course of this loving Comedy, he determined to see whether it would sort to a happier end for this new actor, then it did for the old player.

(Harrison, pp. 115-16)

References to "Comedy" and to W. S. as an "old player" might, given Shakespeare's reputation as a dramatist (and erstwhile actor), forge a connection between him and H. W.'s dubious counsellor. In fact, the representation of love as a comedy or theatrical spectacle is as common to sonnet sequences as to the stage, witness Thomas Nashe's introduction to the unofficial publication of *Astrophel and Stella* of 1591 :

let not your surfeted sight, new come fro such puppet play, think scorne to turn aside into this Theater of pleasure, for here you shal find a paper stage streud with pearle, an artificial heav'n to overshadow the fair frame, & christal wals to encounter your curious eyes, whiles the tragicommedy of love is performed by starlight.<sup>7</sup>

But it would be enough for such as Jaggard, keen to give his miscellany as Shakespearean a character as possible to seize on the evidence and include in it a poem remarkably like if not derived from *Willobie* canto xlvii. There lies the question. Was the connection already in the minds of

readers, as seems quite possible? Did Jaggard insist on it by including "When as thine eye?" Furthermore, did he perhaps commission an approximate imitation of canto xlvii, close enough to identify its source and yet distinct enough not to risk seeming a mere copy? The question is further complicated by the existence in manuscript of two other versions of "When as thine eye". Do they precede the poem printed in *The Passionate Pilgrim* or do they derive from it? The answers to all such questions can probably never be found, but some ground may be gained by closely comparing the canto from *Willobie* with "When as thine eye".

I give both poems in sequence :

W. S.

Well, say no more : I know thy grief,  
And face from whence these flames aryse,  
It is not hard to fynd reliefe,  
If thou wilt follow good advyse:  
    She is no Saynt, She is no Nonne,                     5  
    I thinke in tyme she may be wonne.

*arsveteratoria*

At first repulse you must not faint,  
Nor flye the field though she deny  
You twise or thrise, yet manly bent,  
Againe you must, and still reply :                     10  
    When tyme permits you not to talke,  
    Then let your pen and fingers walke.

*Munera (crede mihi) placant  
hominesq: Deosq:*

Apply her still with dyvers things,  
(For giftes the wysest will deceave)  
Sometymes with gold, sometymes with ringes, 15  
No tyme nor fit occasion leave,  
    Though coy at first she seems and wielde,<sup>8</sup>  
    These toyes in tyme will make her yielde.

Looke what she likes ; that you must love,  
And what she hates, you must detest,                     20  
Where <sup>9</sup> good or bad, you must approve,  
The wordes and workes that please her best :  
    If she be godly, you must sweare,  
    That to offend you stand in feare.

|                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                          |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Wicked wiles to deceave<br>witles women | You must commend her loving face,<br>For women ioy in beauties praise,<br>You must admire her sober grace,<br>Her wisdom and her vertuous wayes,<br>Say, 'twas her wit and modest shoe, <sup>10</sup><br>That made you like and love her so. | 25<br><br><br><br><br>30 |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|

You must be secret, constant, free,  
Your silent sighes & trickling teares,  
Let her in secret often see,  
Then wring her hand, as one that feares  
To speake, then wish she were your wife, 35  
And last desire her save your life.

When she doth laugh, you must be glad,  
And watch occasions, tyme and place,  
When she doth frowne, you must be sad,  
Let sighes & sobbes request her grace : 40  
Sweare that your love is truly ment,  
So she in tyme must needes relent.  
*(Willobie his Avis, canto xlvii ;*  
*Harrison, pp. 121-23)*

When as thine eye hath chose the Dame,  
And stalde the deare that thou shouldst strike,  
Let reason rule things worthy blame,  
As wel as fancy (partyall might).  
Take counsell of some wiser head, 5  
Neither too young, nor yet unwed.

And when thou comest thy tale to tell,  
Smooth not thy tounge with filed talke,  
Least she some subtil practise smell,  
A Cripple soon can finde a halt, 10  
But plainely say thou lovst her well,  
And set her person forth to sale.

And to her wil frame al thy waies,  
Spare not to spend, and chiefly there,  
Where thy desert may merit praise 15  
By ringing in thy Ladies eare,  
The strongest castle, tower, and towne,

The golden bullet beats it downe.

Serve alwaies with assured trust,  
 And in thy sute be humble true, 20  
 Unlesse thy Lady prove uniust,  
 Prease never thou to chuse anew:  
 When time shal serve, be thou not slacke,  
 To profer though she put thee backe.

What though her frowning browes be bent, 25  
 Her cloudy lookes wil calme yer <sup>11</sup> night,  
 And then too late she wil repent,  
 That thus dissembled her delight.  
 And twice desire yer it be day,  
 That which with scorn she put away. 30

What though she strive to try her strength,  
 And ban and braule, and say the nay,  
 Her feeble force wil yeeld at length,  
 When craft hath taught her thus to say :  
 Had women been so strong as men, 35  
 In faith you had not had it then.

The wiles and guiles that women worke,  
 Dissembled with an outward shew ;  
 The trickes and toyes that in them lurke,  
 The cocke that treades them shall not know : 40  
 Have you not hearde it sayd full oft,  
 A woman's nay doth stand for nought.

Thinke Women still to strive with men,  
 To sinne and never for to saint,  
 There is no heaven (be holy then) 45  
 When time with age shall them attaint,  
 Were kisses all the ioyes in bed,  
 One Woman would an other wed.

But soft enough, too much I feare,  
 Lest that my mistresse heare my song, 50  
 She will not stick to rounde me on th'are,<sup>12</sup>  
 To teach my tounge to be so long:  
 Yet wil she blush, here it be sayd,  
 To heare her secrets so bewraide.<sup>13</sup>



Although it is hardly necessary to demonstrate the already well-known resemblances between the two poem, it is worth noting some common features. They are both advice-to-lovers poems. In each case a speaker of some assurance in matters of the heart encourages an ingenu to adopt various tactics which are bound eventually to succeed. Both speakers advise the novice to woo the lady with gifts and praise. Both tacticians advocate using the Petrarchan posture as a stratagem, i. e. asserting one's loyalty and trust, not as an example of selfless devotion, but in the expectation that unlike the typical Petrarchan lady whose constancy to the vow of chastity never wavers, the woman in question will sooner or later submit. The siege of love need not be endless; on the contrary a thorough preparation of the ground will force an inevitable capitulation. As we know from events in *Willobie his Avis*, these confident assurances of W. S. do H. W. no good at all; Avis is more than equal to his arguments in love and the final lesson is that of moral resolution which she teaches him. The situation envisaged by the speaker in "When as thine eye" is altogether different. The assumption that perseverance will succeed is never challenged in that poem, which, unlike the *Willobie* canto, does not appear to belong to a larger narrative framework. Furthermore, reinforcement of the speaker's views comes from his confident, and confidential, revelation about his own mistress, who is about to chastise him for giving away secrets concerning the true nature of women. Whereas chastity prevails over seduction in the larger perspective of *Willobie his Avis*, "When as thine eye" seems to laugh it mercilessly out of court. This difference raises the question whether the poem which found its way into *The Passionate Pilgrim*, assisted as already argued by the spurious if plausible evidence provided by the initials "W. S.", does not offer itself as a parody of the assumption underlying the *Willobie* canto. H. W.'s suit is doomed to failure as W. S. secretly seems to know (judging by the prose passage about the "old player")<sup>14</sup>, Avis's chastity emerging ultimately as triumphant. But whereas W. S. proceeds cautiously, outlining prospective satisfaction in



When time with age shall them attaint,  
Were kisses all the ioyes in bed,  
One woman would an other wed.<sup>15</sup>

(ll. 43-48)

Lines and phrases resemble the opening stanza of canto xlvii: "There is no heaven" (i. e. "there is nothing heavenly about them, women") accords with "She is no Saynt", etc., while "saint" occurs in both stanzas to a similar sceptical purpose. But canto xlvii fails or refuses to contemplate further erotic possibilities: "I thinke in tyme she may be wonne", the concluding line of st. 1, is merely echoed by the poem's last line, "So she in tyme must needes relent"; whereas "When as thine eye" moves swiftly into the bedroom, depicting love as a wrestling match and revealing feminine restraint to be nothing more than instinctual cunning. "At first Repulse", which in *Willobie* means "rebuff" becomes a literal and physical contest in the stanza which in the other poem begins, "What though she strive to try her strength" (l. 31), and so on.

I should like to suggest that the tone of the two poems, assuming that they are connected and not just accidentally similar, helps decide which is the original and which the imitation or parody. Canto xlvii looks like a poem uneasily trying to have it both ways: W. S. advocates a posture of Petrarchan or troubadour service which will earn the lover eventual gratification in a manner which Petrarchism normally denies. As long as he goes through the forms of devoted love, says the right things and plies her with enough gifts, everything should work to his advantage. The spuriousness of this position is doubtless intended by the poem since one sure way of vindicating Avis's chastity is to expose the insincerity of such lovers as H. W. as well as the speciousness of such advisers as W. S. However, "When as thine eye" neatly steps in to short-circuit such contrived demonstrations of female worthiness by announcing frankly that women are *exactly* as W. S. describes them, if not a good deal more so. I believe that the latter poem gains much of its momentum and exuberance by a carefree demolition of the positions held tenuously in balance in canto

xlvi. "When as thine eye" is subsequent because it is a parody of the other poem, written in cheerful reaction to its doubly preposterous premises: "doubly" both in that the stratagem advocated by W. S. puts H. W. in the ridiculous position of the yearning Petrarchist milksop, not unlike that of the hopelessly deluded Roderigo in *Othello*, and in that the ploy is unnecessary anyway, such chastity as Avis's being a mere Petrarchist invention.

For all its debunking of *Willobie his Avis*,<sup>16</sup> "When as thine eye" is in fact more complimentary to women than the poem it parodies. A more equal relationship, one that is perfectly honest in its own terms, is envisaged:

Serve always with assured trust,  
And in thy sute be humble true,  
Unlesse thy Lady prove uniust,  
Prease never thou to chuse anew. (ll. 19-24)

This evokes the other side of troubadour love in which a lover who has gained acceptance now acknowledges his own obligations to serve faithfully. The distinction lies between the commitment of faith rewarded (troubadourism à la Arnaut Daniel) and the blind service of a love without reward (troubadourism as modified by Petrarchism). In contrast to this W. S.'s advice is simply to apply the Petrarchist line in the hope that something materially satisfying might come of it.

The point at which the two poems most echo one another is in their respective third stanzas in which they each speak of the effectiveness of "gold":

Apply her still with dyvers things,  
C/For giftes the wysest will deceave)  
Sometymes with gold, sometymes with ringes,  
No tyme nor fit occasion leave,  
Though coy at first she seeme and wiede,  
These toyes in tyme will make her yelde.  
(canto xlvii, ll. 13-18)

And to her wil frame al thy waies,  
Spare not to spend, and chiefly there,  
Where thy desart may merit praise  
By ringing in thy Ladies eare,  
The strongest castle, tower and towne,  
The golden bullet beats it downe.  
(“When as thine eye”, ll. 13-18)

W. S. urges H. W. to ply the lady with gifts, discreetly of course, which “in tyme will make her yield”. Underscoring such advice is the reminder that she should be allowed to accept such “toyes” in seeming modesty and at a “fit occasion”, otherwise she will appear merely brazen and not “coy”. The “gold” and “rings” are clearly gifts of money and jewelry. Comparing the two stanzas we can see how the one adopts and stylistically modifies the terms of the other, and, interestingly, the *Willobie* stanza enables us to resolve an awkward reading in “When as thine eye”, over which the manuscripts are at variance. Let us take the comparison between the stanzas first.

The author of “When as thine eye” adopts the image of gold and rings and alters it subtly: the physical object “rings” modulates into the “ringing” of “praise”, while “gold” changes into the image of “golden bullet” which might be interpreted as smooth-tongued oratory. Might be, but not necessarily; since the phrase “Spare not to spend” reminds us of the strong likelihood of hard cash bolstering the fulsome compliments. What “When as thine eye” seems to do is to take over a straightforward and poetically unambitious idea from *Willobie*, that of buying favours, and give it a more subtle ambivalence: gifts of cash and trinkets make a lover’s praise more attractive. The connection between money and oratory is so much the more artfully rendered. Developments such as this from the one poem to the other convince me that “When as thine eye” was written in reaction to canto xlvii.

The stanza from “When as thine eye” is, as noted above, subject to slightly conflicting interpretations depending on what importance we allow

the manuscripts. The couplet ending the stanza prior to this one, "But plainly saye thou lovst her well, /And set her person forth to sale" (ll. 11-12) reads markedly differently in both manuscripts. For the sake of clarity I will give the relevant two stanzas in each version, the printed *Passionate Pilgrim* text and the composite manuscript reading:

And when thou comst thy tale to tell,  
Smooth not thy tounge with filed take,  
Least she some subtil practise smell,  
A Cripple soone can find a halt,  
But plainly saye thou lovst her well,  
And set her person forth to sale.

And to hir wil frame al thy waies,  
Spare not to spend, and chiefly there,  
Where thy desert may merit praise  
By ringing in thy Ladies eare,  
The strongest castle, tower and  
towne,  
The golden bullet beats it downe.  
(ll. 7-18)

And when y<sup>u</sup> comest thy tale to tell  
whet not thy tongue w<sup>th</sup> filed talke  
least she some subtle practice smell  
a cripple soone can spie a halt  
but plainely saye y<sup>u</sup> lovest her well:  
& set thy body forth to sell.

Unto her will frame all thy waies  
Spare not to spend & chiefly there  
where thy expence may sound thy praise  
& still be ringing in her eare  
y<sup>e</sup> strongest towres fort or towne,  
y<sup>e</sup> goulden bullet beateth downe.  
(ll. 7-18)<sup>17</sup>

The only serious difference between the manuscripts is that for "body" (l. 12) MS 1.112 reads "person", as in the printed text. But note that both manuscripts use the possessive adjective "thy" for this object as opposed to the printed text's "her". A recommendation of the lady's person (the

printed version) is set against promotion of one's own (person or body). The manuscript readings are closer to the terms of the *Willobie* poem, though that canto lacks an equivalent line for "And set her /thy person forth". It is logical that if the lover is equipping himself mainly with an argument based on cash (as he clearly is in the *Willobie* canto), then it is his own saleability that needs underlining. In so far as they do this, the manuscripts follow *Willobie*. But the *Passionate Pilgrim* text makes the important switch of person from him to her: it is the lady's person who should be "set forth to sale" (i. e. she is to be convinced of her value in the eyes of her lover). A further instructive difference is that the manuscripts read "expençe" (MS 1.112 "expences") in l. 15 whereas the printed text has "desart". The choice of "expençe" accords with the cash angle and makes it clear that the "sound" of praise is equivalent to the noise made by coins jingling - a crude enough point but consistent, I feel, with the *Willobie* canto's simple advice. By contrast, the printed version's reading "desart" sets up a nice equivocation between her praise and his, what is owed to *her* and what to *him*, which accords well with the poem's greater subtlety as well as its impression of a more reciprocal relationship between lover and lady. Whereas canto xlvii goes about its wooing in a slyly craven fashion, "When as thine eye" proposes a much more equal exchange between the wooer and his mistress. While the pretence of chastity is boisterously exposed as a sham, and the erotic instinct degraded to the level of farmyard "treading" (see l. 40), the loss of dignity is more than compensated for by the intimacy that follows the shedding of illusion. If canto xlvii speaks of resolution under fire in a conventional image of the lover braving the lady's disdain ("At first repulse you must not faint", etc.), "When as thine eye" recommends no less loyal a service - but to the lady herself rather than to the god of love:

Serve alwaies with assured trust,  
And in thy suit be humble true,  
Unlesse thy Lady prove uniuist,  
Prease never thou to chuse anew :

When time shal serve, be thou not slacke,  
To profer, though she put thee backe.  
(ll. 19-24)

These lines combine the notion of service in the field (the same military-erotic idea as that controlling the *Willobie* line quoted above) as well as faithfulness in requited love. Of the two kinds of service, sexual fidelity is likely to be more impressive to her than mere persistence. W. S.'s advice is full of rather unpleasant manoeuvres designed to deceive her into giving in. Only dissemble: "If she be godly, you must sweare, /That to offend you stand in feare" (ll. 23-24). Avis herself calls that sort of bluff, but being chaste, she can only refute it in conventional virtue's cheerfully hortatory, narrow and uncomplicated terms:

If honest love could breed content,  
And frame a liking to your will,  
I would not stick to give consent,  
To like you so, and love you still,  
But while lust leades your love awrie,  
Assure your selfe, I will denie.  
(Canto lxiv, Harrison, p. 150)

Through *not* complimenting the lady on her virtue, "When as thine eye" gives her marks for perceptiveness: none of these dissembler's tactics will work for the reason that she is too adept at guile herself to be taken in for a moment: "a Cripple soone can finde a halt".<sup>18</sup> This is a backhanded compliment but it helps ensure the poem's more realistic parameters. It also leads the lover to adopt the morally more acceptable posture of speaking plainly and without duplicity. For all its simplicity of expression, H. W.'s poem betrays his moral footwork quite painfully - an effect undoubtedly to be attributed to the author's intention but not something that makes for stylistic interest. In "When as thine eye" the notion of wooing strategies breaking down before a superior instinctual guile while the direct approach is rewarded has, by contrast, much to commend it despite the coarseness of its expression's proving too much for some readers.<sup>19</sup>



I have argued in the foregoing analysis that "When as thine eye" succeeds *Willobie his Avis* canto xlvii chronologically, just as the printings of the two texts follow each other at an interval of five years. I have tried to show that the later poem was written in direct response to the former and that it parodies its terms of "advice" as well as mocking its unreal assumptions about female chastity which are upheld generally in the poem by the figure of Avis. Although the parody has little patience with the ideal, it is a more intelligent and morally more attractive poem, and indeed more sympathetic in tone, despite some scurrilous counter-assertions concerning the sexual character of women. It stands in relation to *Willobie's* championship of ideal virtue rather as Shakespeare's sonnet 130 does to the Petrarchist tradition. However, this is not to claim it as Shakespeare's. As argued above (pp. 72-3), all that connects it for certain with Shakespeare is Jaggard's decision to include it in a group of poems he brought out under Shakespeare's name, and that decision in turn was doubtless influenced by contemporary speculation that "W. S." might indeed be Shakespeare. It is more likely indeed that Jaggard took advantage of the association, already forming in contemporaries' minds, rather than that he planted the idea himself.<sup>20</sup> The third stanza, in particular, of "When as thine eye" appears to be a modification of and ultimately a riposte to the woefully bland arguments of the *Willobie* canto.

In 1599 *Willobie his Avis* was "called in" by order of the Archbishop,<sup>21</sup> but unlike some other satirical, and in certain cases, pornographic works, it appears not to have been suppressed. Both Harrison (p. 186) and De Luna (p. 2) believe that political intrigue underlay the decision, but their assumptions are begged by the plausibility we allow their theories (see above pp. 71-2). There is possibly more substance in C. F. Tucker Brooke's view that the action resulted from the publication in 1596 of *Penelope's Complaint* by Peter Colse, which attacks *Willobie his Avis*.<sup>22</sup> The Bishops were nervous of literary quarrels, as witness their calling in of the respective publications of Harvey and Nashe. But it may

have been the subject and tone of *Willobie his Avis* that came up for inspection, rather than deeper, and frankly improbable, allegorical considerations. The tone is innocuous enough, though some stanzas might have given pause to anybody bent on a vigorous clean-up of literary expression:

Art thou preciser than a Queene:  
Queene Joane of Naples did not feare,  
To quite mens love, with love againe:  
And *Messalina*, 'tis no newes,  
Was dayly seene to haunt the stewes.  
(Harrison, p. 36)

But it is all the more likely that what prompted the action was the currency given to the poem as a result of the parody of canto xlvii, circulating in ever more scurrilous manuscript versions and finally achieving print in *The Passionate Pilgrim*.

- 1) See the verses "In praise of Willobie", etc. immediately preceding the main poem and which contain lines such as, "Yet Tarquyne", etc.; in *Willobie his Avis*, ed. G. B. Harrison, London, 1926, pp. 19-20.
- 2) See *Willobie his Avis*, ed. A. B. Grosart, 1880, p. xii.
- 3) See the DNB entry by Sir Sidney Lee who plausibly identifies a Henry Willoughby who matriculated at Oxford in 1591, aged sixteen. Whether this historical person is in fact the author of the poem to which he contributes his name is uncertain since no evidence of his being an author survives. The title-page of course bears no name of author. Another figure who plays a prominent role in the presentation of the poem is Hadrian Dorrell who announces himself as Willobie's friend. Grosart indeed (p. xii) thinks that Dorrell is the real author, hiding his artistry behind his description of his friend's vicissitudes. But since the historical Dorrell is even more obscure than Willoughby this speculation is practically worthless.
- 4) It is hard to share Harrison's conviction (p. 213) that Henrico Willobego cannot be Willobie on the grounds that H. W., his suit having failed, is as Willobie puts it, "Striken so dead, that hee hath not yet any farder assaid, nor I thinke ever will, and where [whether] he be alive or dead I know not, and therefore I leave him." It is a conventional Petrarchan touch for the lover to describe himself as more dead than alive and so beside himself as truly not to know his own condition. Evidently, "Willobego" is the identity Willobie assumes during his preposterous and misguided Italianate courtship of Avis - an identity he

discards in reverting to his simpler, English character at the end when he accepts the wisdom of Avis's chastening reproof.

- 5) See *RES* 22 (1971), 335-40.
- 6) See Hamer, pp. 336-37.
- 7) *The Works of Thomas Nashe*, ed. R. B. Mckerrow, 1957, III, 329.
- 8) wielde| wild.
- 9) Where| Whether.
- 10) shoe| show.
- 11) yer| ere.
- 12) are| ear.
- 13) I have used the version of the poem printed in *William Shakespeare. The Complete Works. Original-Spelling Edition*, ed. Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, 1986, pp. 885-86. As in the case of quotations from *Willobie his Avis* I have transposed "u" and "v" in accordance with modern usage.
- 14) See above, p. 4.
- 15) This stanza is in an unsatisfactory state in the Quarto version. Oxford's chosen emendation "be holy then", based on the manuscripts, is the one I prefer ; though the sense would be even clearer without the brackets, e. g. : "There is no heaven : be holy then, /When time", etc. I give the Q1 and manuscript versions below.
- 16) She is not really *his* Avis since of course he never possesses her ; she is rather, punningly, his "adviser", an ideal or honest broker as opposed to the dealer in false wisdom represented by W. S. In addition, her name puns in different ways : she signs herself in conclusion "Alway the Same" (Harrison, p. 170), suggesting that the Latin Avis is a contraction or portmanteau for the English motto. Hadrian Dorrell in the "Epistle to the Reader" (Harrison, p. 67) further comes up with the formula :
 

|        |       |            |         |         |
|--------|-------|------------|---------|---------|
| A.     | V.    | I.         | S.      | A.      |
| Amans. | Uxor. | Inviolata. | Semper. | Amanda. |

 Finally Harrison himself offers the view that the name puns on "Avis" (bird), and indeed finds one or two women so called in the Cerne Abbas register, without significantly advancing his allegorical claims (Harrison, pp. 197-98).
- 17) *William Shakespeare. A Textual Companion*, ed. Wells and Taylor, 1987, p. 456. Wells and Taylor print Folger MS 2071.7, now reclassified as MS V. a. 339 (the Folger cross-reference system allows the manuscript to be consulted using either reference), with slight emendations from Folger MS 1.112 (reclassified as MS V. a. 89).
- 18) i. e. something out of joint ; "halt" means a limping motion.
- 19) For example, the Arden editor F. T. Prince dismisses it as "ugly and stupid" (*William Shakespeare : The Poems*, ed. 1960, p. xxiii).
- 20) The existence of more than one manuscript version of "When as thine eye" argues that matters were beyond Jaggard's contriving. Although *The Passionate Pilgrim* seems to have been put together to meet "Shakespearean" expectations,

especially in its inclusion of the Venus-and-Adonis sonnets, it does not bear the mark of a very careful fabrication. Several of its poems are obviously filler pieces, patently without resemblance to anything of Shakespeare's style or themes, while certain items even then could be attributed to other authors.

21) Harrison, p. 185.

22) See "Willobie's Avisa" in *Essays on Shakespeare and other Elizabethans*, by C. F. Tucker Brooke, Yale, 1948, pp. 173-77.