

# Introduction to *La Diane*

by Nicolas de Montreux  
Richard Hillman

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# Introduction to *La Diane*, by Nicolas de Montreux

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*La Diane*, like all but one of the compositions of its remarkably prolific author – witness the roughly one hundred notices in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (hereafter BnF) – has received no edition or translation since the early seventeenth century. Critical attention, too, has been slight and sporadic. His only modern editor (of the tragedy *La Sophonisbe*) finds the neglect of Montreux hard to account for, given the diversity of his work and its significance for French literary history.<sup>1</sup> A brief introduction to an edition and translation is not the place to venture explanations for this neglect, which might have to do as much with Montreux's narrow provincial base and retrograde politics as with the aggressively ephemeral literary fashions of his time. (Through most of the 1590s he was the

<sup>1</sup> Donald Stone, Jr., ed., *La Sophonisbe*, by Nicolas de Montreux, Textes Littéraires Français, 233 (Geneva: Droz, 1976), pp. 4-5.

resident man-of-letters in Nantes of the Duke of Mercœur, Governor of Brittany, a die-hard Holy League hold-out against Henri IV.) What is certainly pertinent context, however, for the English-speaking readers for whom the translation has been prepared is Montreux's high profile in his own brief hey-day, which coincided with that of the late-Elizabethan and early Jacobean theatre.

Especially well known were Montreux's five volumes of *Bergeries*, pastoral explorations of amorous themes in a variety of prose and verse forms on the model, principally, of the *Diana* of Jorge de Montemayor, which enjoyed pan-European diffusion and popularity. (There were several editions of French translations, entitled *La Diane*, including one published in Tours in 1592.<sup>2</sup>) The *Bergeries* were published between 1592 and 1598: the fifth volume received an English translation in 1610 (without acknowledgement of its author, however);<sup>3</sup> all five volumes were translated into German, together with the plays appended to three of them, including *La Diane*.<sup>4</sup> Demonstrably, he had a name (although not necessarily his own, since he wrote under the anagrammatical *nom de plume* of Ollenix du Mont-Sacré) and a following as a dramatist, not just as a producer of pastoral romance, and I have proposed in several venues that at least his tragedies of *Isabelle* and *Cléopâtre*, as well as *La Diane*, have a special claim to the attention of Shakespeareans.<sup>5</sup> The claim of *La Diane*, in my view, centres on its intertextual relation to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1595–96).

2 Jorge de Montemayor, *La Diane de Georges de Montemaior divisée en trois parties, traduites d'espagnol en françois, reveüë et corrigée, etc.*, trans. Nicolas Collin and Gabriel Chappuys (Tours: Sébastien Moulin and Matthieu Guillemot, 1592).

3 [Nicolas de Montreux,] *Honours Academie. Or the famous pastorall, of the faire Shepheardesse, Iulietta... With divers comicall and tragickall histories, in prose and verse, of all sorts. Done into English by R[obert] T[ofte] Gentleman* (London: Thomas Creede, 1610); STC 18053.

4 See the Bibliography in Rose-Marie Daele, *Nicolas de Montreux, Ollenix du Mont-Sacré, Arbitrer of European Literary Voques of the Late Renaissance* (New York: Moretus Press, 1946). Daele's work is erratically documented and conjectural on many points, but it remains the most comprehensive study of the author. I have not yet been able to see the German volume in question. Especially illuminating on the political implications of Montreux's pastoral writing is Laurence Giavarini, "Écrire la vertu du chef ligueur. *Les Bergeries* de Julliette, Nicolas de Montreux et le duc de Mercœur (1585-1598)", in *Le Duc de Mercœur. Les armes et les lettres (1558-1602)*, ed. Emmanuel Buron and Bruno Méniel (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2009), pp. 219–36

5 See Richard Hillman, "L'héroïsme au féminin chez Shakespeare et Nicolas de Montreux", in *Shakespeare, les Français, les France*, ed. Ruth Morse, Cahiers Charles-V (Paris: Presses de l'Université Paris VII, 2009), pp. 67–93; *French Origins of English Tragedy* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), pp. 76–77; *French Reflections in the Shakespearean Tragic: Three Case Studies* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), pp. 97–105; and "A *Midsummer Night's Dream* and *La Diane* of Nicolas de Montreux", *Review of English Studies* 61, no. 248 (2010): 34–54.

The text of *La Diane* constitutes an annex to the third book of the *Bergeries*, published in 1594. A single extant copy of this duodecimo volume carries a Parisian imprint, as well as a dedication to the Duke of Mercœur, both on the title page and as prefatory matter, dated August 1593.<sup>6</sup> The other surviving copies were produced in Tours by Jamet Mettayer,<sup>7</sup> official printer to Henri IV, a king who would remain excluded from his capital until 22 March of that year by the troubles of the League. Obviously, Mettayer's government function did not inhibit him from issuing literary works emanating from the anti-royalist camp (including other productions of Montreux), and his non-political publications show a marked predilection for the pastoral mode, extending as they do to translations of Torquato Tasso's *Aminta* and Giovanni Battista Guarini's *Il Pastor Fido*. His edition of the third volume of *Bergeries*, however, is dedicated, not to Mercœur, but to the latter's political and military adversary, the Duke of Montpensier, Henri IV's Lieutenant-General for Normandy; the prefatory dedication, undated, is signed by Mettayer himself. Clearly, then, Jean-Paul Barbier-Mueller was correct (even without knowing of the Parisian edition) in supposing that the author would not have dedicated his work to Montpensier – a detail raising the possibility that Mettayer obtained his text by underhanded means;<sup>8</sup> nor, evidently, would Mettayer have maintained the Leaguer's dedication to Mercœur. Yet the simple explanation that he appropriated a text first printed in Paris while that city was still under League control is baffled by the presence in the Paris edition of the same royal *Privilège* in favour of Mettayer (dated 30 October 1593) that is found in the latter's own issue. The bibliographical puzzle is compounded by evidence that the Paris printing, like some copies of Mettayer's own, presents the text in a (slightly) corrected state.<sup>9</sup>

The *Privilège* specifies merely the *Bergeries*, while *La Diane* is introduced by a separate title page bearing the date of 1594 but not identifying the printer or place of publication. Despite the continuous pagination, this might suggest that the play

6 [Nicolas de Montreux], *Le Troisième livre des Bergeries de Juliette... Ensemble la Diane, Pastourelle ou Fable boscaigere. De l'invention d'Ollenix du Mont-sacré à son auguste mécène Monseigneur de [sic] Duc de Mercœur et de Pointeure, etc.* (Paris: Pierre Mesnier, 1594). This copy is held by the Médiathèque, Saumur; the catalogue date of 1593 is contradicted by the title page.

7 Eight copies of this edition apparently exist, including holdings of *La Diane* separate from the volume: seven in France (BnF, four copies; Bibliothèque Municipale de Versailles; Bibliothèque Municipale de Reims; Médiathèque du Grand Troyes) and one in Germany (Universitätsbibliothek Greifswald).

8 Jean-Paul Barbier-Mueller, *Ma Bibliothèque poétique. Quatrième partie Tome IV: contemporains et successeurs de Ronsard. De Marquets à Pasquier* (Geneva: Droz, 2005), pp. 285, n. 950, and 294.

9 See the edition, n. 8.

was first published independently. Certainly, Montreux's first pastoral drama, *Athlette*, was initially issued separately in 1585 but also appended (albeit in reset form) to a volume combining the first and second *Bergeries* in the same year, as well as to re-editions of the first volume in 1592 and 1593. Likewise, the tragedy *Cléopâtre* was apparently printed separately in 1592,<sup>10</sup> then reissued as an appendix to Montreux's 1595 pastoral romance, *Œuvre de la Chasteté*.<sup>11</sup> But for *La Diane*'s separate or pre-1594 publication there appears to be no evidence, despite the date of 1592 claimed for the play in the *Dictionnaire des lettres françaises*.<sup>12</sup>

Neither is there evidence of performance. Unquestionably, however, despite a predilection for protracted monologues even more pronounced than in such contemporaries (and models) as Robert Garnier, Montreux wrote with the stage in mind, at least in some cases. One of his pastorals, *Arimène*, was certainly given an elaborate staging at the ducal court in Nantes.<sup>13</sup> The evidence is strong, moreover, that other plays of his, perhaps including *La Diane*, were also staged there, and seemingly in Paris as well.<sup>14</sup> *La Diane* is not always clear about who is onstage when or where (in relation to other characters); there are no stage directions in the original, and the three acts, despite their varied action and shifts in locale, are not divided into scenes. Indeed, the action raises, without answering them, intriguing questions about the stage effects intended at several points. But that such effects were part of the imagi-

<sup>10</sup> According to the BnF notice. If this dating is accurate, it confirms other indications of pre-1595 publication and performance, but many details concerning the composition and staging of Montreux's plays remain uncertain. See Hillman, *French Reflections*, p. 142, n. 16. In addition to *La Diane*, the surviving dramatic compositions of Montreux comprise three tragedies (*Isabelle*, *Cléopâtre*, *Sophonisbe*), two pastorals (*Athlette* [pub. 1587], *Arimène, ou Berger desespere* [1596]), and one particularly strange hybrid, *Joseph le Chaste* (pub. 1601), a "comédie" which deals with a serious biblical subject yet contains a low-comic subplot including an onstage hanging. The Universal Short Title Catalogue, citing La Croix du Maine, references *Les bergeries de Juliette avec la comédie La Joyeuse* (Poitiers: [éditeur pas donné], 1581), of which there are no known surviving copies (<<http://ustc.ac.uk/index.php/record/94900>>; accessed 4 October 2014).

<sup>11</sup> Nicolas de Montreux [Ollenix du Mont-Sacré], *Œuvre de la Chasteté, qui se remarque par les diverses fortunes, adventures et fidelles amours de Criniton et Lydie. Livre premier, ensemble la tragédie de Cléopâtre, le tout de l'invention d'Ollenix du Mont-Sacré* (Paris: Guillaume Des Rues, 1595). On the possible independent publication of Montreux's "annexed" plays and the practice of detaching them from the volumes in question, see Barbier-Mueller, pp. 259–60, 333, n. 1068.

<sup>12</sup> *Dictionnaire des lettres françaises: Le XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, ed. Georges Grente, Michel Simonin, et al., new ed. (Paris: Fayard, 2001), s.v. "Montreux".

<sup>13</sup> See T. E. Lawrenson, "La mise en scène dans l'*Arimène* de Nicolas de Montreux", *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 18 (1956): 286–90.

<sup>14</sup> See Daele, pp. 230–31.

native conception seems beyond doubt. The long monologues regularly give way to strenuous, even urgent, exchanges leading to abrupt exits or preparing confrontations. And the confrontation at the heart of the main action is a spectacular one.

Diane, who has rejected her first love, Fauste, in favour of Nymphis (who loves Julie, who till the end rejects all love, thereby serving to maintain the *chaîne amoureuse* in a state of frustration and confusion), suddenly finds herself facing two identical versions of Nymphis. One has just astounded her by declaring his love: she first accuses him of mocking her, then, persuaded of his sincerity, exchanges marriage vows with him. At this moment, the other Nymphis appears, and the deception is exposed: the first (as the audience has known) was actually Fauste himself, transformed in appearance by the magical powers of the learned old man Elymant. The immediate effect on both Fauste and Diane is to make them seek death, he by hurling himself off a towering rock. But of course she finally, after a change of heart, arrives to save him in the nick of time: the ending is thus a literal cliff-hanger.

Elymant's magic – at once diabolic, terrifying and benevolent – seems to imply further stage effects. The cavern where Fauste and his loyal friend Frontin seek him out is alive with savage beasts and hissing snakes. He summons spirits of various kinds – literally elemental (from the air, the sea and the earth), as well as from hell – who inspire the two shepherds with abject fright. He gives the latter demonstrations of his powers, causing the rock-face to gush forth streams of wine and water, then drying them up. Such devices point to the sort of elaborate staging, involving special machinery, which we know was employed in the production of *Arimène*. All in all, it seems probable that Montreux had spectators, not just readers, in mind. This appears all the more evident by contrast with Montreux's earlier love-pastoral, *Athlette*, which relies more heavily on narration. Indeed, *La Diane*'s key visual effect is actually anticipated there discursively, when the disdainful shepherd Menalque tauntingly invites Delfe, the aging magician who loves him, to fulfil her passion by transforming a spirit into his shape.<sup>15</sup>

*Athlette*, in its subsequent editions, is described on the title page as having been composed “à l'imitation des Italiens”, and it would seem to be the learned and genteel dramatic mode of Torquato Tasso (in *Aminta*), Giovanni Battista Guarini (in *Il Pastor Fido*) that most fundamentally conditioned Montreux's approach. Indeed, Montreux's status as a transitional figure – an influential one – between these Italian

15 Nicolas de Montreux [Ollenix du Mont-Sacré], *Athlette pastovelle, ov Fable bocaqere* (Paris: G. Beys, 1587), fol. 14<sup>r</sup>.

precursors and subsequent French practitioners of pastoral is widely recognised by literary historians.<sup>16</sup> With *La Diane*, however, there is a significant swerve towards theatricality of a kind recalling, in some respects, the scenarios of *commedia dell'arte*, with their propensity for extravagant stage business, although there is no question of admitting the buffoonery or improvisation that were their stock-in-trade.

The *commedia dell'arte* was, in this period, thoroughly “naturalized in France”, as Katherine M. Lea puts it.<sup>17</sup> More to the point here, it existed in a dynamic of cross-fertilisation with the so-called *commedia erudita*, especially within the pastoral genre – a dynamic which sometimes produced full-blown printed plays.<sup>18</sup> One of these, *La Fiammela*, is a pastoral attributed to the *commedia dell'arte* performer Rossi (stage name Oratio) and published – suggestively – in Paris in 1584. Lea’s summary of the main plot (which was supplemented by a comic one) brings it quite close in outline to *La Diane*:

Fiammela, Montano, Ardelia and Titero make a circle of lovers who woo, refuse, and lament to each other, or to an Echo, or to the apparitions of Time, Patience, and Hope sent by the Magician to lead the shepherds to his cave, where, by changing their identities, they are able to deceive and win their nymphs.<sup>19</sup>

The exchange with an Echo (a device from Guarini) is adapted by Montreux for Hector.<sup>20</sup> A figure of liaison with the magician is also furnished in the person of Frontin, who might well be described as a spokesman, if not a stand-in, for time, patience and hope.

The all-but-indispensable magician was frequently the centre of spectacular stage-business in *commedia dell'arte* pastorals,<sup>21</sup> and it is tempting to suspect the genre’s influence of extending to a mask for Elymant’s costume, given the insistence on his grotesque appearance in Frontin’s protracted description.<sup>22</sup> A mask might

16 Apart from Stone (see above, n. 1), see Jules Marsan, *La pastorale dramatique en France à la fin du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle et au commencement du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (1905; fac. rpt. Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1969), pp. 189–90; Daele, p. 232; Charles Mazouer, *Le théâtre français de la Renaissance* (Paris: H. Champion, 2002), pp. 402–4; and Jean Balsamo, *Les rencontres des muses: italianisme et anti-italianisme dans les lettres françaises de la fin du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Bibliothèque Franco Simone, 19 (Geneva: Slatkine, 1992), p. 277.

17 Kathleen M. Lea, *Italian Popular Comedy: A Study in the Commedia dell'Arte, 1560–1620, with Special Reference to the English Stage*, 2 vols. (1934; rpt. New York: Russell and Russell, 1962), I: 229.

18 See Lea, I: 201–12.

19 Lea, I: 205.

20 See *La Diane*, II. 1570–93.

21 See Lea, I: 232–33.

22 See *La Diane*, II. 1159 ff.



well also have been employed for Fauste's identity change – a point to which I will return, since it has significant implications. Finally, the rustic old woman Arbuste (“bush”) has at least one foot of her strangely double character in the *commedia dell'arte*, given her resemblance to the masked “Ruffiana” figure,<sup>23</sup> with whom she is linked by her physical repulsiveness and attempted procuring (on behalf of Hector): both these features, the physical and the moral, become targets of Julie's indignant vituperation.<sup>24</sup>

To allow for the *commedia delle'arte* inflection of *La Diane* is to help account for its remoteness from the source its title might seem to be announcing – Montemayor's *Diana*, whose influence pervades the *Bergeries* themselves. Of course, there are common features with the play as well, given the shared stock of love-pastoral conventions, but Montreux's dramatic arrangement of the conventions does not evoke Montemayor in any sustained fashion. More to the point, the relentless seriousness about amorous behaviour and feelings characteristic of Montemayor is skewed by Montreux, despite the absence of the standard gambits of popular Italian drama, in comic directions.

This is perhaps the aspect of *La Diane* that is most elusive, and potentially most debatable, from a modern standpoint, given the predilection for emotional extravagance, transmitted through rhetorical ornamentation and repetition, that informs French humanist drama generally. But a good case can be made that Montreux punctures such extravagance deliberately, as when the exposure of Fauste's deception brings him to a pathetic suicidal moment, which the response of the equally suicidal Diane (induced to pledge her faith to a false Nymphis) instantly reduces to bathos:

*Fauste.*

.....

Adieu, my heart! I go to hurl myself  
From that fearful towering rocky shelf  
Into the sea, whose billows, gently turning,  
Will swallow my life with my ardent yearning.

*Diane.*

Die if you like – I don't care if you do.  
For the sad truth is: I want to die too! (ll. 3464-69)

23 See Lea, I: 15.

24 See *La Diane*, ll. 2662 ff.

This moment is recalled at the conclusion,<sup>25</sup> when Arbuste tries to convince Diane to save Fauste from suicide while there is still time – a sequence introducing protracted debate (interrupted by a return to the Julie-plot) while Fauste waits on the cliff for his fateful cue.

Diane’s very response to the false Nymphis’s declaration of love – a point I have treated as an intertextual “ungrammaticality” evoking Helena in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*<sup>26</sup> – makes for a surprise, to say the least: “Ah, O Nymphis, you’re merely mocking me! / You wrong again my loving constancy!” (ll. 3136-37). And there are conspicuous occasions when emotional tension meets with abrupt deflation in the form of contemptuous rejection – or even blank indifference. Thus Fauste’s plaintive supplication is merely ignored by Diane, who makes her own to Nymphis (ll. 579 ff.), who ignore hers to make his to Julie (ll. 631 ff.); the latter then brusquely dismisses him (“Get away, Nymphis, your rude arrogance is / More offensive by far than your advances” [ll. 687-88]), whereupon he does the same to Diane: “Oh get away, Diane, you crazy girl, / Whose speech sets my brain in an angry whirl” [ll. 707-8]). All in all, the *chaîne amoureuse* is managed with self-conscious and ostentatious irreverence verging on parody.

Indeed, even the resolution appears to display a major loose end not neatly tied up by the changes of heart and the magician’s conventional water of forgetfulness, which is applied to Hector to free him from passion for Julie. There is room here for interpretation in performance: Fauste might conceivably return to his original appearance for his final speech on the cliff. But there is nothing in the text to indicate the undoing of the magical transformation, the doffing of the mask. On the contrary, Diane, in debating with herself as to whether or not to rescue Fauste, arrives somewhat bizarrely at the realisation that she cannot doom someone assuming Nymphis’s shape, however falsely:

. . . Ah, in my heart  
Might deadly rancour bear so great a part  
That I, with cruel boldness, could efface  
Someone possessing my Nymphis’s face,  
Who so resembles him, the same eyes sharing,  
The same forehead and the same graceful bearing?  
O over-cruel, inhumane Diane! (ll. 4124-30)

25 See *La Diane*, ll. 4006 ff.

26 Hillman, “*A Midsummer Night’s Dream*”.

This is surely to problematise, to a point verging on ridicule, the accompanying idea of a return to her heart's first allegiance:

Where lives your faith, your past love, which began  
When for your Fauste you reckoned it as good,  
In the days before to this gloomy wood  
Nymphis had ever made his way, whose face  
Changed your faith, of your feelings left no trace? (ll. 4131-35)

In effect, the magical trick to gain Diane's love, which seems to have produced nothing but further confusion and antagonism, has proved efficacious after all. It is an effect anticipating that more subtly produced by Shakespeare in leaving Demetrius under the influence of fairy love-juice: the latter's announcement that his heart has "home return'd" (*MND*, III.ii.172)<sup>27</sup> to Helena, which she takes as mockery, runs straight through to his declaration to Theseus that he has finally "come to my natural taste" (IV.i.174), so that "all the faith, the virtue of my heart, / The object and the pleasure of mine eye / Is only Helena" (169-71). The climactic reconciliation scene is qualified not just by this evidence that, as Helena puts it, Demetrius is "Mine own, and not mine own" (192), but by the lingering impression recorded by Hermia that "every thing seems double" (190).

At the same time, even as the human control of emotions is mockingly exposed in both plays as precarious, subject to deformation, something serious emerges, again in both: the notion of aligning true loving with true seeing. It is typical of Montreux's double approach that he gives Arbuste a second nearly contrary role as the virtual extension of Elymant's benevolent impulses and wisdom, which are themselves directly expressed in his own persuading of Julie to yield to love as a literally universal principle. In deterring Diane from death and reconciling her to Fauste, Arbuste uses language that resonates with the presentation elsewhere of faithful conjugal love as a reflection of the divine force which renews the world and sets nature back in order. This is the ideal built into the play's ethic from the start, but it is at first thwarted by Cupid's arbitrary operations, which bear a decided resemblance to Puck's "knaveish" (*MND*, III.ii.440) interventions – maddening not just "females" (441) but males as well, and doing so by distorting and deceiving their sight, displacing their very sense of self into the shadowy borderland between waking and dream.

27 Quotations from Shakespeare's plays are taken from *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans, J. J. M. Tobin *et al.*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997).

Within that territory, the possibility of generic deviation remains in suspension. The counterpoint to the comic trajectory finally imposed by Elymant (as by Oberon), is the ever-present menace of love-tragedy – the near mutual slaughter of Hector and Nymphis (as of Lysander and Demetrius), the near suicides of Fauste and Diane. Such tragedy is inscribed in several classical forms, ironically, on the cup that Faustus will give Frontin for helping him, as he then supposes – and rightly in the long term – to succeed in his love-quest through trickery. They are all familiar models in the period, but they all happen to have preoccupied Shakespeare – Venus and Adonis, for one, but others which are either present within *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Dido and Aeneas, and especially Pyramus and Thisbe), or hovering in its dark aftermath (Hippolytus and Phedra). The last model obtrudes all the more insistently on *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by way of Oberon's benediction purporting to banish tragedy forever:

And the issue, there create,  
 Ever shall be fortunate.  
 So shall all the couples three  
 Ever true in loving be. (*MND*, V.i.405-8)

Montreux has likewise sufficiently evoked images of love gone wrong to sap the carrying power beyond the play-world of the corresponding blessing of Arbuste, which, moreover, contains a reminder of the ever-lurking dangers we have just witnessed:

Now go, then, O you venerable pair  
 Of handsome lovers; pleasure do not spare  
 In having your desire: live in bliss  
 In Hymen's – the father of joys – blithe service!  
 And never may fires of jealousy  
 Inflame your hearts or heat your fantasy,  
 But happily enrich your lives' full span  
 With fruit of those chaste loves which here began. (ll. 4482-89)

With regard to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, there is no point in repeating here the arguments I have ventured to put in circulation elsewhere. More broadly, however, it is worth bringing out the possible status of *La Diane* as a mediating intertext – one readily accessible in its day – between Shakespeare's theatre and the Italian traditions of both *commedia erudita* and *commedia dell'arte*. Montreux's is a text which, in its particular amalgam of plot elements, thematic preoccupations and tonal effects, on the one hand sets itself in an oblique relation to those traditions and, on the other, achieves

a synthesis quite distinctive within French pastoral drama as it was to develop. It is a synthesis that dovetails to a surprising degree – despite the obvious broad divergences – with Shakespearean dramatic practice.

The routes by which *commedia dell'arte* elements came to Shakespeare, as well as the extent of their influence, have long been subjects of debate. Their presence from the beginning to the end of his career has, however, been widely, if indistinctly, detected. Lea offers a lengthy analysis of *The Comedy of Errors* from this point of view, citing parallel elaborations of Plautus' *Menaechmi* by the Italian players.<sup>28</sup> These extend to the “closing scene of the family reunion which is almost *de rigueur* in the *Commedia dell'arte*”.<sup>29</sup> This is already to posit at least a double heritage, given Shakespeare's long-recognised grafting onto the *Menaechmi* plot of an episode borrowed from the story of Apollonius of Tyre: the miraculous reunion of husband and wife in the temple – of Diana, naturally – at Ephesus, no doubt as recounted in Book 8 of John Gower's *Confessio Amantis*. Given the uncertain dating of both *The Comedy of Errors* and the first edition of *La Diane*, it is conceivable that a familiarity with Montreux also inflected the Shakespearean scene – not by contributing a plot element but by colouring its representation. This sort of local dramatic influence within a framework adapted from another source – or sources, presuming that criticism has moved beyond the Myth of the Single Source – is highly characteristic, I would argue, of Shakespeare's eclectic and synthetic dramaturgy (or less exaltedly, if one prefers, *bricolage*).

The salient point of contact between *The Comedy of Errors* and Diane's reaction to the “twin” Nymphises is the suspicion of magic and the sense of the sight abused:

*Adriana.*

I see two husbands, or mine eyes deceive me.

*Duke.*

One of these men is genius to the other:

And so of these, which is the natural man,

And which the spirit? Who deciphers them? (*Err.*, V.i.332–35)

For her part, Diane wonders if she is “still enveloped in error's mist [d'erreur encor enuveloppee]” (l. 3238) – “erreur” being a pervasive and resonant term in Montreux's play. Accordingly, she says, “I must find out if my eye is deceived [Jl faut sçauoir si mon œil est deceu]” (l. 3272), and

28 Lea, II: 434–42.

29 Lea, II: 442.

. . . penetrate  
 The magic cause of my bewildered state  
 And know at a stroke, if ever I can,  
 Which one is Nymphis the natural man.  
 [. . . trame  
 La verité de ce magique charme,  
 Et que ie sçache à ce coup, si ie puis,  
 Lequel d'eux est le naturel Nymphis.] (ll. 3266-69).

These are, undeniably, obvious details to find exploited at similar moments of miraculous astonishment, but they happen to agree in transforming *commedia dell'arte* gambits so as to figure something mysterious and profound: the intrusion of the miraculous into *natural* human life. Such is equally, of course, the preoccupation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

As for the end of Shakespeare's career (roughly speaking), even more has been written about *The Tempest* in relation to *commedia dell'arte*, and even less conclusively. Certainly, Lea's extensive argument for his use of a comprehensive scenario model, acquired by some unknown means, brings out numerous points of contact. Some of these are more convincing than others.<sup>30</sup> Frank Kermode, moreover, questions the pertinence of the composite pastoral scenario proposed as a parallel by Lea, on the grounds that its typical features were predetermined by knowledge of Shakespeare's play.<sup>31</sup> In any case, parallels exist with many standard *commedia* elements, including the spirit-commanding magician – a figure who is hardly exclusive to the Italian theatre, however, but a recurrent presence in the pastoral romance tradition. Allowing for Shakespeare's possible knowledge of *La Diane* serves at least to fold Elymant into his repertoire of precedents for Prospero, and apart from the basic notion of elemental magic devoted to positive ends, even if sometimes employing evil spirits, there are some functional resemblances perhaps not so clearly anticipated elsewhere, at least in combination.

The most important of these is the magician's promotion of a harmony with universal resonance by aligning inner and outer natures along the axis of reciprocal love – between men and women, but also between brothers. He is a constitutor – and reconstitutor – of families, and families are the future. Elymant's management of the confrontation of Fauste-as-Nymphis and Diana should be seen in this light,

<sup>30</sup> Lea, II: 443-53.

<sup>31</sup> Lea, I: 201-3; Frank Kermode, ed., *The Tempest*, by William Shakespeare, 6th ed., The Arden Shakespeare (2nd ser.) (London: Methuen, 1958), pp. lxvi-lxix.

surely, rather than as mere specious trickery; the mutual pledging of troths that ensues confirms the parallel with the *coup de foudre* that Prospero engineers to bring Miranda and Ferdinand together:

*Miranda.*

My husband then?

*Ferdinand.*

Ay, with a heart as willing  
As bondage e'er of freedom. Here's my hand.

*Miranda.*

And mine, with my heart in't. (*Tmp.*, III.i.86-89)

Especially if Fauste retains his new appearance to the end of the play, both match-making projects conspicuously inscribe magical transformation within “reality” at large.

In dealing with Hector and Nymphis, moreover, Elymant proves, like Prospero, a reconciler of brothers and a promoter of future generation(s) as a means of renewing the larger universe. (Those brothers, not incidentally, are, if not literally shipwrecked, nevertheless outsiders in the pastoral world, and Hector's sea-journeys are insistently evoked.) In this beneficent cause, Elymant, too, checks bloodshed, prevents swords from being used for harm and, more profoundly, exposes the vanity of fighting over something beyond one's grasp – not a kingdom, in this case, but the unattainable Julie:

What point is there in such a jealous stew  
When the object doesn't belong to you?  
To give each other, in arrogant folly,  
Something well beyond your capacity? (ll. 3880-83)

The reconciliation is founded, it should be noted, not on the mere disclosure of the fraternal relation – in itself a simple plot element – but on moral and emotional grounds: the proofs of love that Hector has shown in searching for his lost brother throughout the universe and through infinite hardships. That is also, of course, the starting point of *The Comedy of Errors*. And so thorough has the reconciliation been that at this point Hector and Nymphis have fallen into what Elymant exposes as a ridiculous rivalry of self-sacrifice, each insistently offering the other his interest in Julie – another deviation of a serious moment in a comic direction.

This one has a closer parallel in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* – Valentine's offer of Silvia to Proteus (who has just shown himself prepared to rape her): “And that my love may appear plain and free, / All that was mine in Silvia I give thee” (*TGV*, V.iv.82-

83). There, too, the fallout, thanks to Julia's timely self-revelation, includes revealing the vanity of rivalry itself, which, even when it appears to be based on something, is always about nothing but itself. And so Proteus, like Demetrius and Fauste, is redeemed from his "error" (111) and induced to see the "face" (114) of his original beloved "with a constant eye" (115). Once more, shape-changing precipitates moral recognition: "It is the lesser blot, modesty finds, / For women to change their shapes than men their minds" (108-9). The outline of this reconciliation directly or indirectly derives, as has long been recognised, from the story of Felix and Felismena in Montemayor's *Diana* – an element not taken over in *La Diane*.<sup>32</sup> It comes complete with penitent recovery of lapsed faith and true sight.<sup>33</sup> But even a cursory comparison suffices to bring the depth and resonance which these commonplace motifs are endowed by Shakespeare into closer alignment with their treatment by Montreux.

To return to the key figure of the magician, it would be untenable, indeed counterproductive in my terms, to propose Elymant as a model for Prospero, much less as *the* model. Again, to hunt for sources for such elements, and especially to posit a unique one, appears to me essentially false to Shakespeare's method of adapting "raw" material of diverse kinds and origins. Extending the range of plausible intertexts is another matter, a means of illuminating the playwright's far-reaching intellectual and artistic engagements in relation to his compositional practices. And in this case, particularly suggested would be the recurrence in Shakespeare's imagination over a number of years of a collection of motifs, dramatic turns and artifices that just may have made a more lasting impression because he already took them – conceivably, in part, by way of *La Diane* – to add up to "something rich and strange" (*Tmp.*, I.ii.402).

32 See Jorge de Montemayor, *Diana: A Critical Edition of Yong's Translation of George of Montemayor's Diana and Gil Polo's Enamoured Diana*, ed. Judith M. Kennedy (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), pp. 238-42.

33 See Montemayor, pp. 240-41.