

'Jog on, jog on': European Career Paths

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The essays collected in this volume explore various paths of European careers. Primarily, the careers are literary, but occasionally a non-literary path crosses over them; the terrain is traversed by men as well as by women, from classical antiquity through the Renaissance, principally in Italy, France, England, and Spain, in poetry and in drama, in prose fiction and in nonfiction. The key word here is 'explore,' for the ground is not merely vast and intricate; it remains largely under-explored. In fact, 'career criticism' has emerged almost exclusively in English Renaissance studies, and primarily in studies of Edmund Spenser, Renaissance England's first national poet. As Jerome S. Dees put it in 1997, 'Critical concern with Spenser's "career" has of late become a growth industry.'¹ Indeed, during the last few decades this industry has spawned no fewer than three books and over twenty essays, several of them seminal in the field.² The reason for such industrial growth in Spenser in particular is perhaps worth exploring in another place; here we need mainly to register the impetus for the present volume: Frederick de Armas and I hope that what has proved so fertile in Spenser studies might profitably take root in other fields. As the specialists from classics, medieval studies, women's studies, and Renaissance studies in Italy, France, and Spain assembled here know, they are breaking new ground with their essays. Joseph Farrell might well speak for many of them when saying that classicists have never even asked the question, 'What led Virgil and so many of his readers to find in the shape of his oeuvre the trajectory of a well-defined career?'

Previous criticism has not failed to discuss the 'careers' of Virgil and his European heirs, from Dante and Petrarch to Ronsard and Cervantes.

Effectively, most critical overviews of these and other authors can be construed as a version of 'career criticism,' while familiar professional topics in commentary on them – authorship and agency, influence and intertextuality, genre and gender, ideology and nationhood – either bear on career criticism or are its principal instruments. Accordingly, today we might be hard-pressed to pick up a piece of criticism and not find the word 'career' in it (including in studies of Shakespeare, who is popularly known not to have had a literary career).³ Yet if so much criticism bears on notions of 'career' – does in fact contribute to our understanding of a writer's career – how can it be that the topic is under-explored? The answer has to do with what 'career criticism' by definition is, has been, or has become. In turn, such criticism depends naturally on the notion of a literary career itself. While each essay in the volume responds individually to these questions, we might try to 'tie their intricate knot' here at the outset. As we shall see, the relation between the two supplies us with the fundamental axiom for the volume as a whole: career criticism is a relatively recent form of literary discourse that attempts to describe – and usually to argue the value of understanding – the idea of a literary career for a given writer or group of writers.

By 'literary career,' what do we mean? In trying to define this complex idea, we might not find it unwise to resort to what Walter Bagehot said of nation-building in 1887: 'We know what it is when you do not ask us, but we cannot very quickly explain or define it.'⁴ Alternatively, we might recall our axiom, hoping to proceed to a more satisfying answer by relying on the practice of the inventors of career criticism, each working in a different field, with different authors, and with different methodologies: Lawrence Lipking, a specialist in eighteenth-century English studies, who registers a comparatist grasp of the canonical literary tradition from Virgil and Dante, to Goethe and Keats, to Rilke and Mallarmé; and Richard Helgerson, a specialist in the English Renaissance, who is also a comparatist but who focuses on late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century English studies. In 1981, Lipking published *The Life of the Poet: Beginning and Ending Poetic Careers*, and then in 1983 Helgerson published *Self-Crowned Laureates: Spenser, Jonson, Milton, and the Literary System*. Working independently of each other, Lipking and Helgerson basically invented career criticism; they are its principal pioneers. For obvious reasons, however, Helgerson has been more influential in English Renaissance studies than has Lipking.⁵

In *The Life of the Poet*, Lipking observes that 'the life of the poet – the

shape of his life as a poet – has not been exhausted. Indeed, it has hardly been studied' (viii). Since 1981, things have changed some, but not much, especially outside Spenser studies. Specifically, Lipking declares that his book is 'about the life of the poet: poetic vocations, poetic careers, poetic destinies. It traces a number of great poets through the crucial moments of their development and tries to discern what problems and solutions they have in common. By listening carefully both to what poets say about their works and to what works say about themselves, it hopes to arrive at a clearer understanding of the way that a poem can constitute the experience of a life. And it also hopes to offer new ways of reading poems' (ix). Accordingly, Lipking structures his book around three points: 'the moment of initiation or breakthrough; the moment of summing up; and the moment of passage, when the legacy or soul of the poet's work is transmitted to the next generation' (ix). Lipking's key methodology is thus to read the poems of great poets, including Virgil, Dante, Jonson, Blake, Yeats, Goethe, Whitman, Auden, Mallarmé, Baudelaire, Keats, and Rilke, for evidence of their self-conscious sense of vocation or destiny, their idea of a literary career.

If Lipking seeks a great poet's process of *self-discovery*, Helgerson in *Self-Crowned Laureates* seeks the poet's process of *self-presentation*. As Helgerson himself puts the difference in a footnote: 'Lipking's book, which I saw only after mine was in the hands of its publisher, is concerned with many of the same issues (though not, for the most part, with the same texts) that interest me here. Lipking, too, writes of what he calls "great careers," careers of the laureate sort. But where I direct my attention to the outer workings of both careers and texts – that is, to the system of differences by which a poet might make his status known – Lipking directs his to the inner development of both. He emphasizes the individual poetic utterance, the *parole*; I emphasize the literary system, the *langue*. The books are thus complementary accounts of the same phenomenon' (153). Rather than reading poems per se, especially to discover the points at which poets inscribe one of the three phases of self-discovery, Helgerson examines three structural points in the poets' texts, especially those in which poets present themselves: 'I thus talk often of proems, prefaces, and prologues. Pressure falls too on endings and on intermediate passages of transition or challenge, when the role seems no longer to fit the world, and these will also demand attention' (13). That is, whereas Lipking looks at three phases of the poet's maturation over the course of his career, Helgerson looks at three corresponding points of self-presentation in the poet's works. Moreover,

whereas Lipking's study is diachronic and comparatist in scope and methodology, ranging from classical to modern, Helgerson's study is synchronic, looking at just the English Renaissance 'literary system' itself. To Lipking's three stages of inward initiation, summing up, and passage, Helgerson uses his methodology to introduce a three-part classification of English Renaissance poets, although his book focuses on the first: laureates, amateurs, and professionals. Laureates are the national writers, like Spenser, Jonson, and Milton (or Daniel, Drayton, and Chapman): those writers who present themselves as national leaders throughout their careers. The amateurs are the writers of pastime, like Sidney and Donne: those who write poetry as a toy in their youth and then 'repent' in their maturity, turning to other forms of national service, whether for church or state. The professionals are primarily the public playwrights, like Shakespeare or Middleton: those who write because they need to make a living.

What both studies share may help us begin to answer the second of our questions: What is career criticism? Helgerson and Lipking both produce a *holistic commentary* on an individual writer's work: a criticism that tries to come to terms with the total oeuvre of a writer, from beginning to end. This practice differs from most criticism on individual writers, which looks at a single work, a single genre, a single topic, theme, metaphor, myth, problem, representation, or whatever. Such holistic commentary also differs from other overview accounts by emphasizing the category of the *literary* (rather than, say, the biographical, which often includes the non-literary, such as a writer's interest in backgammon, her attendance at church, or his sexual experience). Initially, then, we can define career criticism as a form of commentary that looks holistically at the literary dimension of a writer's life, especially as that life is grounded in his or her works. Such commentary is not without its dangers, especially today, with our profession-wide commitment to dissident writers and our interest in critiquing especially those who are not; as Lipking candidly reveals: 'To view a poet's work as a whole is to commit an act of totalitarianism. The muse herself is democratic' (xii).

If for Lipking as for Helgerson the totalitarian (or at least totalizing) critic lies at the centre of career criticism, for both scholars the corresponding centre for the idea of a literary career is that of a totalizing authorial self-agency (one that did not suddenly appear in the seventeenth century but emerged in classical and medieval culture, as several essays in the volume verify).⁶ In Lipking's terms, 'poems (at least since

the time of Hesiod) have always confided something about the life of the poet: not necessarily his personality or even his individuality, but his sense of a vocation and a destiny ... [E]very major Western poet after Homer, I believe, has left some work that records the principles of his own poetic development' (viii). Thus, Lipking 'accepts the testimony of poems as decisive evidence about the way that poets conceive, or invent, their careers ... [T]he poet ... claim[s] to have achieved an identity, to have shaped his life into art' (x). Similarly, Helgerson writes that 'the something of great constancy at the center of the laureate's work is easily defined. It is the poet himself. His deliberately serious poetic is grounded on a serious, centered self' (40). Accordingly, Helgerson's book is 'about three poets whose ambition preceded and determined their work, three poets who strove to achieve a major literary career and said so ... [T]he ambition not only to write great poems but also to fill the role of the great poet – shaped everything these three men wrote ... As well as presenting poems, masques, plays, and pamphlets, they were always presenting themselves' (1–2). Unlike with the amateur or the professional writer, the laureate's national service depends, for Helgerson as for Lipking, upon the power of an inward core: 'The laureate mediates between the eternal realm of perfect form and the temporal realm of death and birth ... [S]uch a poet presents a self whose authority derives from inner and outer alignment with the unmoving axis of normative value. His laureate function requires that he speak from the center' (*Self-Crowned Laureates* 12).

By focusing on how great poets self-consciously shape their career, both Helgerson and Lipking turn naturally to Virgil, 'who supplied the pattern of a career to so many later poets' (Lipking xi). This Roman author, who necessarily plays a centralizing role in the present volume, transacts his famous progression from lower to higher forms of pastoral, georgic, and epic, and was understood to have done so by his own contemporaries. Indeed, many of the essays use the famous Virgilian triad – known during the Middle Ages as the *rota Vergiliana* or Wheel of Virgil – quite literally as a vehicle for tracking later poets, especially during the Renaissance (as William J. Kennedy does on Petrarch, Patrick Cheney on Spenser, Anne Lake Prescott on Du Bartas, or Frederick A. de Armas on Cervantes), while the first essay, by Farrell, traces the evolution of the Virgilian career idea from Greek and earlier Roman notions of the poet's life and canon. As Farrell and others show, the Virgilian career model supplies us with yet another feature for our definition of both the idea of a literary career and criticism on it: the

stable authorial centre emphasized by Lipking and Helgerson is also in motion, progressively maturing from lower to higher forms along a temporal life span. For many contributors here, a 'life' becomes a 'career' when a writer can be seen to plot his time on earth through a sequence of literary works that stage both his and the work's development. As Lipking remarks, a poet like Virgil, 'who lives with such responsibility has only one way to meet it: planning ahead. To husband destiny, finally, one must be able to think in terms of decades, perhaps generations ... The master plan, like scaffolding, holds everything in place' (79–80).

The origin of the English word 'career' emphasizes this particular feature of our definitions. As the *Oxford English Dictionary* reveals, the word occurs first in the sixteenth century; thus, it is a Renaissance coinage. But rather than referring to 'A person's course or progress through life' (which is an invention of the early nineteenth century (Def. 5), the word 'career' derives from the specific arena of the athletic event, in particular horse racing: 'The ground on which a race is run, a racecourse' (Def. 1). Accordingly, during the Renaissance the word can also mean the career 'Of a horse: A short gallop at full speed' (Def. 2); 'By extension: A running course' (Def. 3); and, figuratively, 'Rapid and continuous "course of action, uninterrupted procedure"' (Def. 4). The sixteenth-century definition of 'career' as athletic 'course,' however, derives from the Latin word *cursus*, the course of a chariot-race, which writers like Virgil and Ovid used repeatedly to represent their maturation as poets. Ovid, for instance, concludes the *Amores* by announcing his turn from elegy to tragedy: 'I am come to the last turning-post my elegies will graze.'⁷ With even more fanfare, Virgil opens Book III of the *Georgics* with his imagined triumphal entry into Rome to greet Caesar on his shrine: 'In his honour I, a victor resplendent in Tyrian purple, will drive a hundred four-horse chariots beside the stream.'⁸ As Leo Braudy writes in *The Frenzy of Renown: Fame and Its History*, 'Although the Latin *cursus* remains most obviously in the English *course*, it shares a more intriguing metaphorical relation with *career*: Both are words that first applied to horse races and later to the stages of professional development.'⁹

Braudy is referring to the *cursus honorum*, or the tripartite progression through the stages of a Roman political career, as practised most famously by Cicero and Julius Caesar. As Braudy also suggests, the political *cursus* was important to literary history because it supplied the progressive track for the literary career of Virgil, and because, in turn, a

few centuries later St Augustine relied on the literary *cursus* of Virgil and his Roman heirs to form the subsequent pattern of Christian development (61, 65–6, 80–9, 161–80). Quite remarkably, the 'career' of the writer, the sportsman, the politician, and the divine are all historically linked; such a link may help explain why writers often work from a single career idea that unfolds generic, amorous, political, and religious dimensions. The idea of a literary career, then, foregrounds the poet's public role in the multi-sphered life of the nation, especially its institutions of family, state, and church.

An originary case is Ovid, who genially permits us to look more concretely at what we might call a career document – a text or a passage in a text that represents an author self-consciously reflecting on the progressive idea of a literary career. As has long been recognized, such documents are historically important because they provide information on an author's own sense of his or her project – whether in the form of self-discovery or self-presentation or both. The Ovidian document is not arbitrary (Ovid himself would not allow that), for the passage from Book I, Elegy I.xv, of the *Amores* may well be the second oldest surviving representation of a literary career that is simultaneously a piece of career criticism:

Tityrus et segetes Aeneiaque arma legentur,
Roma triumphati dum caput orbis erit.

(Ovid, *Amores* I.xv.25–6)

Tityrus and the harvest, and the arms of Aeneas, will be read as long as
Rome shall be capital of the world she triumphs o'er.

In his own inaugural volume of poetry, Ovid delivers his great paean to poetic fame in part by inscribing the Virgilian career model, which he astutely unfolds in generic, political, erotic, and philosophical terms. First, Ovid represents the tripartite Virgilian progression from the *Eclogues* to the *Georgics* to the *Aeneid* in its proper order. Second, he dutifully situates the generic progression within a political context: the Empire of Augustan Rome. Third, he identifies the high imperialist *telos* of this model: *fama*. And fourth, he even sublimates an erotic, sexual, or gendered dimension to the program by presenting the idea of a male poet singing the praise of a female city. This representation thus identifies our four primary elements of the Virgilian career model – or more accurately, of Ovid's understanding of the Virgilian model: a progres-

sion of genres, a political context, a philosophical *telos*, and a gender dynamics. For Ovid, Virgil's model of pastoral, georgic, and epic serves the feminized Empire in order to secure her fame and that of her male poet.¹⁰ Yet Ovid would not be Ovid if he were as reverent toward his great precursor as this account makes it seem. In particular, his use of the conjunction *dum* (while) suggests slyly that he may be deauthorizing Virgil by subtly restricting and even playfully *ending* the temporal *telos* of Rome.¹¹

Ovid's distich does not merely afford a rare opportunity to witness one major poet representing – and even parodying – another major poet's career; it is itself fixed intertextually between other important career documents. Thereby, it forms a historical genealogy, consisting for our purposes here of one earlier document that Ovid is himself imitating, and two later ones that translate and then re-translate his original. The document Ovid imitates is the famous originary text not merely for European literary careers but also for European career criticism: the four-line verse prefacing early editions of the *Aeneid*:

Ille ego, qui quondam gracili modulatus avena
carmen, et egressus silvis vicina coegi
ut quamvis avido parerent arva colono,
Gratum opus agricolis; at nunc horrentia Martis.

I am he who once tuned my song on a slender reed, then, leaving the woodland, constrained the neighbouring fields to serve the husbandmen, however grasping – a work welcome to farmers: but now of Mars' bristling.

As Gian Biagio Conte notes, Ovid imitates these verses in the very opening lines of the *Amores* (I.i.1–4).¹² Many students of the Renaissance know that these verses were 'prefixed to the opening lines of Renaissance editions of Virgil's *Aeneid*,' as well as that Spenser famously imitates them in the Proem to Book I of *The Faerie Queene*.¹³ Yet, as Conte reminds us, the verses 'must have been published no later than the age of Tiberius' (A.D. 14–37), and Ovid's imitation of them reveals that by the time he wrote the prologue to the second edition of the *Amores* the verses 'must have ... [existed] in a contemporary edition of the *Aeneid*' (85, 87). The pseudo-Virgilian verses are the first evidence we possess of a Virgilian *cursus*. They are, in other words, the oldest evidence we possess of 'a Roman idea of a literary career,' and signifi-

cantly they appear to be a versified form of literary criticism itself. Ovid's ability both to represent and to parody this document suggests how well he himself understood and could command the Virgilian career idea.

Sixteen hundred years later, when Christopher Marlowe produces the first complete translation of the *Amores* in any European vernacular (probably about 1585), we can witness a curious yet important afterlife for Ovid's intertextual exchange with the Virgilian career model. For in his translation of Ovid Marlowe collapses the Virgilian triad into pastoral and epic, eliding the georgic; he scrambles the sacred generic order, putting epic before pastoral; he minimizes the high ring of poetic fame designed to valorize the poet of Empire; and perhaps not surprisingly, he neuters the principals, as if to deauthorize Virgil even more than Ovid dared to allow:

Aeneas' war, and Tityrus shall be read,
While Rome of all the conquered world is head.¹⁴

The motive driving Marlowe's (mis-)translation here may appear lost, but most likely he is trying to deauthorize the figure in his own literary system known by his contemporaries as England's Virgil: Edmund Spenser. Both Marlowe's elision and his implied disrespect are what Ben Jonson erases in his own translation (published alongside Marlowe's in the early editions of *Ovid's Elegies*), proving that the shortness of the English heroic couplet in comparison with the Latin elegiac couplet was no excuse for the erasure:

Tityrus, Tillage, Aeney shall be read,
Whilst Rome of all the conquered world is head.¹⁵

The historical career document genealogy here, which traces from Virgil's original three-part career, to the pseudo-Virgilian verses prefacing early editions of the *Aeneid*, to Ovid's imitation of these verses in the *Amores*, to Marlowe's translation of this imitation, and finally to Jonson's re-translation, provides another feature to the idea of a literary career and criticism on it – one indeed addressed by most essays in this volume: intertextuality. The particular intertextual succession here intimates how one writer's idea of a literary career often derives from the career idea of another, and specifically how the famed Virgilian Wheel is able to travel a considerable distance, both in mileage and in time, long after

the writer's own death. Among the essays, Robert R. Edwards especially charts this travelogue principle, speaking of a 'Theban Track,' with specific stops in Statius, Boccaccio, Chaucer, and Lydgate.

Indeed, most of the essays see the idea of a literary career and practise career criticism consistently in terms of a cohesive template, and here we can untie our knot concerning our twin questions: career criticism is a special branch of critical theory that attempts to delineate a writer's self-conscious inscription of a pattern of genres, which itself responds to the careers of other writers, in order to pursue literary, political, religious, and sometimes erotic goals. Authorship and agency, genre and genre patterning, imitation and intertextuality, politics and religion, sexuality and gender – all become part of a complex template for defining criticism on the idea of a literary career.

Yet career criticism need not restrict itself to this definition or template. It need not, for example, limit itself to its energizing core: an author's self-conscious patterning of genres over a temporal span to achieve a set of personal or professional goals. Take the case of the world's most famous author. Neither Lipking nor Helgerson has much to say about Shakespeare. Lipking restricts his discussion to Jonson's memorial poem on Shakespeare, while Helgerson remarks that Shakespeare is not a 'laureate' like Spenser (nor an 'amateur' like Sidney) but a 'professional' because he is a 'writer ... who made ... [his] living from the public theater' (*Self-Crowned Laureates* 4–5): 'For two decades in comedy, history, tragedy, and romance, Shakespeare explored the indirect ways by which his playful mimetic art touched on a grace beyond the reach of the professors of seriousness' (39). *Beyond the reach*. In fact, it is in the 'involvement of the poet as conscious prosecutor and unconscious defendant that such passages [as he has been looking at] differ from an otherwise similar episode in Shakespeare, the rejection of Falstaff. Shakespeare does not get rid of Falstaff; Hal does. Judgment comes from within the play as a function of Hal's kingly office, not from without as a function of Shakespeare's poetic one. Shakespeare is simply not there. The laureates are' (10). Helgerson is referring to the famous dictum that while colleagues such as Marlowe chronically insert themselves into their works, Shakespeare reticently does not. When critics do allow Shakespeare to enter the conversation on 'careers,' as Peter Thomson does, they examine only the material constraints of his 'professional career' in the theatre. On the one hand, it would be possible to find in the Shakespeare canon the kinds of career documents we have examined: the two Virgilian-based dedicatory epistles

to the earl of Southampton prefacing *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*, for instance, or even the pastoral Sonnet 102 and the epic Sonnet 106, or most substantially the recurrent metapoetry and metadrama throughout the plays.¹⁶ On the other hand, it could still prove profitable to examine Shakespeare's 'career' holistically without insisting on his intentionality in fashioning the kind of literary career ascribed to such national writers as Virgil and Spenser. Simply in terms of genre fertility, Shakespeare's canon is noteworthy for being among the most sustained combinations of dramatic and poetic forms on record: forty extant plays, spread across the forms of tragedy, comedy, history, and romance; and five substantial poems, spread across the forms of minor epic, sonnet sequence, medieval complaint, and philosophical hymn. Since the late nineteenth century, critics have been obsessed with tracking Shakespeare's 'development' in his canon, but almost exclusively the canon has been limited to the plays, neglecting the important contribution of the poems, and few would be willing, given Shakespeare's famous reticence to show himself in his works, to imagine the great bard riding one career car or another, whether Virgilian, Ovidian, or otherwise.

In fact, what seems *required* of Shakespeare's career – unlike, say, Spenser's – is precisely a methodology that fuses authorial intentionality with social construction. In *The Winter's Tale*, Shakespeare himself appears to stage an early modern version of this fusion in the figure of Autolycus. As a professional thief, Autolycus begins the play committed to his own will power, as he tries to rob the simple Bohemian shepherds of their money, as he himself confesses to the audience at the outset: 'My traffic is sheets ... With die and drab I purchas'd this caparison, and my revenue is the silly cheat.'¹⁷ Yet, as the strange and wondrous action of the play unfolds, Autolycus finds himself mysteriously swept along by events he no longer can control, until he is haplessly forced to admit, in a state not devoid of gleeful perplexity: 'I have done good ... against my will' (V.ii.124). Of self-conscious literary origin – 'litter'd under Mercury' (IV.iii.25) – this engaging trickster, who often quite literally steals the show in performance, looks conspicuously like a kind of parody of his witty creator. Specifically, both Shakespeare and Autolycus, during their respective careers of creation and crime, enact what is fundamentally a sixteenth-century form of authorship, not seen since the closing of the theatres in antiquity, and only then in intermittent form: the sustained combination of poetry and drama within a single career. Importantly for Shakespeare, this hybrid

practice traces to ancient Rome, and most importantly for this Ovidian poet par excellence, as for Marlowe and Jonson, to the great Naso, the author not merely of the *Metamorphoses* but also of the tragedy *Medea* (extant in two lines). As we will recall, the *Amores* ends with Ovid's career 'meta' from elegy to tragedy – a career route he traverses also in II.xviii and III.i.¹⁸ Just as Shakespeare himself wrote *Richard II* and *Venus and Adonis*, *Love's Labors Lost* and *The Rape of Lucrece*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Sonnets*, as Francis Meres so astutely observed in 1598 (qtd *Riverside Shakespeare* 1970), so Autolycus routinely sings erotic songs and acts out parts in dramas of his own devise. The first time we see this child of Mercury he is singing an erotic song, 'When daffadils begin to peer,' which he tells us 'Are summer songs for me and my aunts, / While we lie tumbling in the hay' (IV.iii.1–12). Immediately following, Autolycus tricks the Old Shepherd's son, the Clown, by playing the part of one who has been robbed by a 'servant of the Prince' (87) – a figure at court who has 'compass'd a motion of the Prodigal Son' (96–7) – staged a puppet show – and who has now taken Autolycus's clothes and dressed him in his own 'garments' (of course, this figure is Autolycus himself!). While Autolycus routinely combines such theatrical trickery with erotic singing, Shakespeare situates this Ovidian generic activity in a locale that is distinctly Virgilian: first, the pastoral landscape of Bohemia; and later, the courtly kingdom of Sicilia. Quite literally, the Ovidian Autolycus sings songs and puts on plays along the Virgilian path of pastoral and epic. He is at once an Ovidian poet-playwright and a Virgilian shepherd-courtier. Equally to the point here, he is a figure of both authorial agency and (not so much social construction as) cosmic construction, and we might profitably speculate that it is such a model for the writer, so clearly cast in response to such self-driven authors as the Virgilian Spenser and the Ovidian Marlowe, that innately appealed to Shakespeare.

While the essays in this volume tend not to track such a model of authorship and literary career, we could make other caveats as well. For instance, the volume does not narrate a formal or continuous history of literary careers from the Greeks through the Spanish Golden Age; such an enterprise is impossible, certainly here, but probably anywhere. Regrettably, we could not include many writers, topics, and works, including some major ones who played an important role in the story the volume tells. While we present one essay focusing on the careers of women writers (by Susanne Woods and Margaret P. Hannay, with Elaine Beilin and Anne Shaver), and three on the intersection of literary

and non-literary careers (by Mark Vessey, Anne J. Cruz, and Kathleen Bollard de Broce), we could have done more than we did in both categories. Finally, we could have explored the categories of sexual orientation and race: homoeroticism, for instance, or Jewishness, or blackness. As a consolation, we would recall that one of the primary goals of the volume is not to circumnavigate the career globe but simply to open it up for expansion.

The essays assembled here nonetheless gather together a general thesis: that the idea of a literary career evolves slowly yet significantly, that Virgil is central to it, and that the principle of periodization from classical, medieval, and Renaissance cultures helps to elucidate the details of that evolution. The essays that follow often correlate an author's sense of a career to the period of history in which he or she is writing. Consequently, we hope that the volume will facilitate an enriched understanding of the relations among an author, his or her works, and the period in which he or she lived.

Along our own exploratory route, we have also discovered a unifying thread: the idea of travel, the metaphor of journey, and in particular the writer in motion, whether jogging like Autolycus down 'the foot-path way' in search of song, dance, and purse; wandering like Don Quixote along the myriad roads of Spain in search of knightly adventure in honour of Dulcinea, the most beautiful woman in the world; or driving like Virgil in his splendid triumphal chariot down the imperial highway to Rome. The story the volume tells may begin in ancient Greece, but it moves quickly westward to Rome, from whence it spokes northward along diverse routes, especially those leading to Paris, Madrid, and London. In a sense, though, all roads do lead to Rome: they lead up to it; they lead out of it; they circle round it (like ring roads in rural England or beltways in metropolitan America); and occasionally they even lift divinely off in flight from it. The distance travelled, whether horizontal or vertical, turns out to take three interrelated forms: narrational, as when figures in a fiction set out on their own quests; self-representational, as when authors travel a certain career path; and finally periodic, as when critics track the evolution of historical eras in the wide gap of time.

Pursuing the centralizing metaphor of travel and trajectory, we divide the volume according to a general route of historical chronology, from antiquity and the early Christian era through the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. In the opening essay, 'Greek Lives and Roman Careers in the Classical *Vita* tradition,' Joseph Farrell traces the trajec-

tory from the Greek tradition of the author's life to the Roman idea of a literary career, which he finds consolidated in and around Virgil and his famous three-part generic progression. Greek poets, Farrell suggests, had lives, but Roman poets had careers. Looking at such Greek poets as Archilochus and Pindar, Theocritus and Callimachus, and such pre-Virgilian Roman poets as Livius Andronicus and Ennius, Lucilius, and Catullus, Farrell argues that 'the idea of a literary career took shape in Rome under the specific influence of the careerist ideology of the patron class,' with its progressive political paradigm, the *cursus honorum*.

The next three essays take us into the early Christian and medieval era. Mark Vessey, in 'From *Cursus* to *Ductus*: Figures of Writing in Western Late Antiquity (Augustine, Jerome, Cassiodorus, Bede),' divides his essay into two major parts. The first examines three 'themes in the experience and reflection of intellectuals – above all, Christian intellectuals – of the late Roman period': literary profession and spiritual progress; literary oeuvre and the idea of 'literature'; and literary authorship and figures of writing. Beginning from this 'groundplot,' Vessey proceeds to his second part, 'a detailed inquiry into the genesis of one of the most distinctive features of late ancient and medieval Christian ideology: the figure of the author as scribe.' He suggests that the 'fiction of authorship' that he has discerned 'stands at a significant distance from the visions of literary career entertained by Roman poets of the Augustan age and revived by their Renaissance imitators': 'Whereas the career model emphasizes hierarchies of genre and personal status, the scribal model abolishes both types of distinction in favour of manual fidelity to a "common text" inscribed at God's behest.' More specifically, Vessey suggests that for the 'professionally aspiring language of the *cursus*,' the scribal model 'substitutes a professedly humble habit of the *ductus*, the pen's obedience to a line already traced in the mind, if not on the page.' Acknowledging that the 'temporal processes of this substitution are difficult to reconstruct,' he nonetheless fixes its 'main coordinates' with 'reasonable accuracy': 'they lie, on the one hand, in the political and bureaucratic protocols of the late Roman Empire and its successor states, and, on the other, in the institutional imaginary of the biblical-ascetic Christianity that established itself in the West between the fourth and seventh centuries.' Next, Robert R. Edwards, in 'Medieval Literary Careers: The Theban Track,' suggests that if the Roman career idea was one of 'program,' the medieval idea was one of 'practice' – a dynamic movement through various genres rather than a teleological, hierarchical progression from

lower to higher forms. Edwards initially shows how Dante transposes the Virgilian triad to their respective topics and forms: ardour in love to lyric; control of the will to didactic lyric; and prowess in arms to epic. Then he locates the medieval idea in Marie de France, focusing on the author's 'succession' and 'textual genealogy': 'Writers have careers to the extent and in the way that they position themselves with respect to literary tradition.' Finally, Edwards focuses on a specific genealogy of four European writers from Rome, Italy, and England – Statius, Boccaccio, Chaucer, and Lydgate – who all organize their literary careers around a 'Theban track,' the story of the siege of Thebes and its 'emblematic tale of internecine rivalry': 'They thereby align complex authorial rivalry and intertextual poetics with a narrative topic that radically questions the heroic culture celebrated most clearly in the epic.' Lastly, James F. Burke, 'Authority and Influence – Vocation and Anxiety: The Sense of a Literary Career in the Sentimental Novel and *Celestina*,' focuses on a prose genre perfected by Fernando de Rojas's medieval masterpiece, in order to suggest what may have led to the development of 'an emerging sense of literary individuality, of the personal "literary career,"' in sixteenth-century Spain, especially Cervantes' Virgilian self-presentation. What Burke finds 'here at the outset of modern Hispanic prose can only be viewed as an "anxiety of influence" in a mode opposite to that described by Harold Bloom': 'Rojas does not completely resent the fact that he is forced to use traditional language, images, and themes ... Rather he is anxious in regard to asserting his independence.'

The remaining essays in the volume take us into the European Renaissance of Italy, Spain, France, and England. William J. Kennedy, in 'Visions of a Career: Petrarch and His Renaissance Commentators,' suggests that Petrarch's oscillation between poles of confident idealism and diffident contingency 'shapes the profile of his career for later commentaries in early printed editions of the *Rime sparse*, thereby consolidating a Petrarchan career paradigm throughout Europe until the seventeenth century. Looking at such idealizing career documents as the 'Letter to Posterity,' the 'Coronation Oration,' and the programmatic statements about poetry in Petrarch's Virgilian pastoral, the *Bucolicum carmen*, and his epic, the *Africa*, Kennedy shows how this founding father of the Renaissance could at times present himself as a Virgilian poet pursuing a confident and set career pattern. Looking at various collections of letters, however, Kennedy discovers a 'less predictable view': 'Here Petrarch represents the pattern as a progressive journey toward self-understanding on paths by no means obvious

or direct but rather oblique and only half-perceived.' Thus, such fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Petrarchan scholars as Antonia da Tempo, Alessandro Vellutello, Fausto da Longiano, Giovan Andrea Gusualdo, Bernardino Daniello, and Ludovico Castelvetro process these oscillations, revealing that Petrarch's career had come to figure many possibilities. Kathleen Bollard de Broce, in 'Judging a Literary Career: The Case of Antonio de Guevara (1480?-1545),' follows up on one of these possibilities – in fact, an important part of career criticism already introduced by Vessey: often a writer pursues a literary career while simultaneously pursuing a non-literary career. Taking this phenomenon as her principal topic, Bollard de Broce discusses the religious career ladder in the literary works and public career of Guevara. This public official, she observes, 'follows neither a Virgilian nor an Ovidian model,' alternatively selecting a 'genre patterning' of 'biographies, manuals for courtiers, devotional works, and collections of letters, and devotional works': 'Guevara drew his authority to address Charles V not from an established literary career, but from his various professional roles as preacher in the royal chapel, official chronicler, commissioner for the Inquisitor General, courtier, and bishop. Political, religious, and literary rhetoric inseparably create his career.' Anne J. Cruz, 'Arms versus Letters: The Poetics of War and the Career of the Poet in Early Modern Spain,' extends the principle relating literary to non-literary careers by looking into the poetics of war in the career of the early modern Spanish poet, including Garcilaso, Lope de Vega, and Cervantes. Cruz contributes to 'the diverse aspects of literary careers studied in this collection' by centring on 'the changes in the perception of both arms and letters as possible dual professions in the two centuries known as Spain's Golden Age,' as well as on the way in which 'those changes were themselves inscribed in – and as – literature.' Specifically, she shows that letters, represented by various literary genres, but above all in *Don Quixote*, 'have shifted and deviated as much from the lyrical poeticization of war as from its historicizing narrative.'

Anne Lake Prescott, in 'Divine Poetry as a Career Move: The Complexities and Consolations of Following David,' also expresses interest in the intersection of literary and non-literary careers. She argues that her genre, especially as represented in the psalm, can function as an 'alternative' to more traditional career patterns, especially the Virgilian. Focusing on the Renaissance representation of the divine singer David as a counter-career poet, 'whose taste in genres and topics shows no evolution' – that is, it is exempt of a 'rota Davidica' – Prescott suggests

that such French poets as Marot and Du Bartas and such English poets as George Wither 'show that leaving a secular career path could lead a poet through briars and rocks, along a highway to the palace, or to not much of anywhere.' Patrick Cheney, in "'Novells of his devise': Chaucerian and Virgilian Career Paths in Spenser's *Februarie Eclogue*,' picks up Prescott's track into England, but reroutes it in terms of Edwards's Chaucerian path and Farrell's Virgilian one. Specifically, he shows how Spenser in his 1579 pastoral poem surveys available career routes, especially the two dominant ones identified in the title, in order to show how the amateur English poets of the late sixteenth century failed to follow the ambitious patterns of these great twin national precursors, and then how Spenser himself cleared a path for his own Christianization of the Virgilian and Chaucerian models with his own program of pastoral, love lyric, epic, and hymn.

Frederick A. de Armas, 'Cervantes and the Virgilian Wheel: The Portrayal of a Literary Career,' follows one of Cheney's paths in order to emphasize the Virgilian. De Armas argues that Cervantes self-consciously shaped his writing career around the Virgilian model, especially its progression from pastoral to epic, but adapted from the poetic genre to one of prose fiction. Specifically, de Armas argues that Cervantes begins his career with the pastoral fiction *La Galatea*, continues with an apprenticeship in his epic novel, *Don Quixote*, and concludes with an epic novel, *Trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda*. But finally, de Armas adds, Cervantes overgoes Virgil by imagining for himself, late in his career, 'the second wheel to his chariot where he will again follow the Virgilian author and thus become twice greater than his model.' Then Álvaro Molina, in 'Epic Violence: Captives, *Moriscos*, and Empire in Cervantes,' takes us into the Virgilian epic genre opened up by de Armas in order to examine the 'rhetoric of violence' in the context of empire. Molina discovers 'a certain evolution in Cervantes' epic rhetoric of violence': 'Virgilian celebration appears unscathed in the surface early on,' represented in *La Numancia*; in certain parts of *Don Quixote* the 'historical narrative of power and military glory' continues; but elsewhere in the *Quixote* and in the *Persiles*, 'the seriousness and elevated tone of Virgil are abandoned in favour of some clear complications and humorous subversion of epic forms and ideology.' Thus, Molina joins de Armas and others in suggesting how Cervantes used the Virgilian career model as the foundation for his radical reconception of the Spanish author.

Closing the volume is 'Renaissance Englishwomen and the Literary Career.' Susanne Woods and Margaret P. Hannay, working with Elaine

Beilin and Anne Shaver, offer the observation that 'English Renaissance women writers were not Virgilians who styled their lives from low to high, Horatians who taught by delighting, self-crowned laureates who sought a formal place in "a system of authorial roles" which "emerg[ed] in late sixteenth-century England" (Helgerson, *Self-Crowned* 2).' Rather, they suggest, 'Women's voices and self-presentations were visible both in the more confined traditions of manuscript circulation and the increasing ubiquity of the printed book, the two systems by which "authors" were published, made public, in the early modern period.' Accordingly, they aim to 'outline some of the more common motives asserted by Renaissance Englishwomen, followed by a brief survey of four women writers who, in various terms and various stages of their writing lives, presented themselves as authors: Anne Dowriche (fl. 1589), Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke (1561–1621), Aemilia Lanyer (1569–1645), and Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle (1623–73).' Each of these writers, they suggest, 'has some claim to be a "first" in the history of women writers in English.'

While we hope that this chronological routing of the volume will help readers discern a narrative that is as diverse as it is continuous, we would note that some readers may wish to pursue their own reading path. For a quick primer in each of the three periods covered, readers might try the essays by Farrell, Edwards, and Cheney. For sorties into each of the four countries, they could try the essays by Kennedy, Cruz, Prescott, and Woods/Hannay/Beilin/Shaver. Some readers might be particularly interested in seeing how non-literary careers intersect with literary ones; here the essays by Vessey, Bollard de Broce, Cruz, and Prescott will be of special interest. If, however, readers wish to investigate careers within a single national boundary, they could try the essays on England by Edwards, Cheney, Prescott, and Woods/Hannay/Beilin/Shaver. Or on Spain by Burke, Bollard de Broce, Cruz, De Armas, and Molina. Other routes also suggest themselves – such as a Virgilian one, which would include the essays by Farrell, Edwards, Kennedy, Cheney, and de Armas. Some routes expressly *cross* the Virgilian path, in intriguing ways, such as the essays of Prescott and Woods/Hannay/Beilin/Shaver.

Whatever track readers follow, *European Literary Careers* admittedly covers a vast terrain in a short trip. The primary goal is to sketch a preliminary map of European career paths from antiquity and the early Christian era through the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Such a

map might prove timely, because the profession of literary studies appears to be moving out of its revisionist phase of criticism to one we might term post-revisionist. Nowhere is this more evident than in the conversation on the topic central to the present volume: authorship. For the revisionist phase, Michel Foucault had asked, 'What is an author?' while Roland Barthes found the resonant answer in 'the death of the author.' Marxist principles of social construction replaced traditional ones of intentionality. In the last few years, however, leading Renaissance critics, especially revisionist ones themselves, have been expressing discontent with the direction the field is taking, and strikingly it is over the body of the author that again the battle line is being drawn. Louis A. Montrose (92), for instance, sets what looks like a new course for a kind of linking criticism, one that connects traditional with revisionist notions of authorship and career, but along the way he strives to discover something new and uncharted:

Foucault's own anti-humanist project is to anatomize the subject's subjection to the disciplinary discourses of power. I find this aspect of Foucault's social vision – his apparent occlusion of a space for human agency – to be extreme. In other words, my intellectual response is that his argument is unconvincing, and my visceral response is that it is intolerable. However, in responding to Foucault's provocation, I do not seek to restore to the individual the illusory power of self-creation; nor do I wish to remystify the social production of the text, to reassert its status as an expression of the autonomous author's singular creative genius ... Any meaningful response to Foucault's provocative concept of the 'author function' will commence, not by rejecting it, but rather by expanding and refining it, by giving greater historical and cultural specificity and variability both to the notion of Author and to the possible functions it may serve.

Helgerson is himself even more succinct, when he says of Shakespeare: 'He helped make the world that made him.'¹⁹ For Helgerson as for Montrose (and for many others like Lipking), the author is neither dead nor simply a function of ideology; he or she is a mysterious creature we are still trying to discover.

As a new phase of linking or post-revisionist criticism gets underway during the new century, we hope that readers will find the myriad paths of *European Literary Careers* both a part of an inaugural enterprise and a trip worth taking for its own pleasure.

Notes

- 1 Dees 124, review of Cheney, *Spenser's Famous Flight*.
- 2 In addition to Cheney (note 1 above), the books include Bernard; and Rambuss, *Spenser's Secret Career*. Readers will also want to know about Oram, *Edmund Spenser*, which includes a chapter called 'Spenser's Career.' The seminal essays include Helgerson, 'The New Poet Presents Himself'; D.L. Miller; Loewenstein, 'Echo's Ring'; Alpers; Montrose; and Rambuss, 'Spenser's Lives, Spenser's Careers.'
- 3 Thus, C. Burrow can write without explanation that 'several of the Sonnets are very likely to have been composed at the start of *Shakespeare's career*, and the whole sequence should be thought of as something approaching *Shakespeare's life's work*' (17; emphasis added).
- 4 Quoted in Hobsbawm 1.
- 5 The chronology of this dual origin, however, is more complicated than it looks, since Helgerson published two essays that eventually formed part of *Self-Crowned Laureates* before Lipking's book appeared, while Lipking published one essay that formed part of *The Life of the Poet* before either of Helgerson's essays appeared. See Lipking, 'Blake's Initiation'; and Helgerson, 'The New Poet Presents Himself' and 'The Elizabethan Laureate.' Helgerson's work grows out of his earlier book, *The Elizabethan Prodigals*, and so he might join Lipking in saying, 'The idea of a book on poetic careers ... has been in [his] ... mind since [he] ... first began to think seriously about poetry.'
- 6 Just published on this topic is a collection of essays titled *Representations of the Self from the Renaissance to Romanticism*, edited by Coleman, Lewis, and Kowalik, which explores 'conceptions of the self as they emerge from the biographical and autobiographical writing of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe' (1). Concentrating on the *vita* tradition, the volume takes little if any interest in the allied career tradition. As we shall see, several contributors to the present collection intertwine life and career as part of a European history of the self and of authorship.
- 7 Ovid, *Amores* III.xv.2: 'raditur hic elegis ultima meta meis.' In *Ovid in Six Volumes*, trans. Showerman, vol. 1. All quotations from Ovid will be from this edition, unless otherwise indicated. On Ovid's use of the chariot as a trope for his poetry, see Kenney 206.
- 8 Virgil, *Georgics* III.17–18: 'illi victor ego et Tyrrio conspectus in ostro / centum quadriugos agitabo ad flumina currus.' In *Virgil*, trans. Fairclough, vol. 1. See also *Georgics* II.541–2. On Virgil's use of the chariot as a trope for his poetry, see Hardie 100–1.
- 9 Braudy 61n4.
- 10 I use this four-dimension career model throughout *Marlowe's Counterfeit Profession*; the book is the source of the information presented in slightly different form here.
- 11 See Braudy 136 on Ovid's view of Rome in the *Metamorphoses*. McKeown observes that Ovid here 'is echoing Verg. *Aen* 9.446ff.' (1: 45), where Virgil uses *dum* (IX.448). In *Elegy* II.xxxiv.61–84, Propertius inscribes the Virgilian *cursus*, but he puts the *Aeneid* first, the *Eclogues* second, and the *Georgics* third, and he does not place the triad in the context of either Rome or fame. D.W.T. Vessey thinks that Ovid may have Propertius, *Elegies* II. 34 in mind. We think Propertius wrote his poem around 26 or 25 B.C. Alan Cameron states that Ovid wrote 'the first book of the first edition of the *Amores* c. 25 B.C.' ('First Edition' 326); he remarks that 'there is no particular reason to suppose that the general character of the first edition was significantly different from the second' (325); and he thinks that 'I. 15 may well have been ... included ... in the first edition' (333).
- 12 Conte 85.
- 13 Hamilton, ed., *The Faerie Queene* 27. On the pseudo-Virgilian verses, see Austin.
- 14 Marlowe, *Ovid's Elegies* I.xv.25–6, in Christopher Marlowe, ed. Orgel.
- 15 Christopher Marlowe, ed. Orgel 136. Jonson joins Marlowe in minimizing Virgilian fame and in neutering the principals; this may be in keeping with his own critique of Spenser. Jonson includes his translation in *Poetaster* (I.i.43–84). On Jonson's detached attitude toward Virgil, see Helgerson, *Self-Crowned Laureates* 113–16; toward Ovid, see 111–12; toward Spenser, see 110–22. Marlowe may have 'ousted' georgic in keeping with Renaissance practice (A. Fowler 31) – as Spenser did in his own career – but his scrambling of the sacred Virgilian order looks suspicious, and appropriately Jonson restores it.
- 16 On Shakespeare's literary career, see the four essays by Cheney in the Works Cited list. The present discussion of Shakespeare is indebted to these essays, which form parts of a book-length study titled *Shakespeare's Poems and Plays: The Making of the National Poet-Playwright, 1593–1623*, forthcoming.
- 17 Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale* IV.iii.23–8, in *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. Evans, et al.
- 18 I lay out the details of this Ovid – the poet-playwright – in *Marlowe's Counterfeit Profession*.
- 19 Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood* 215.

European Literary Careers

The Author from Antiquity
to the Renaissance

Edited by Patrick Cheney and
Frederick A. de Armas

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