Scenes of Instruction

in Renaissance Romance

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Let us now examine the following kind of language-game: when A gives an order B has to write down series of signs according to a certain formation rule.

The first of these series is meant to be that of the natural numbers in decimal notation.—How does he get to understand this notation?—First of all series of numbers will be written down for him and he will be required to copy them. . . . And here already there is a normal and an abnormal learner's reaction.—At first perhaps we guide his hand in writing out the series 0 to 9; but then the *possibility of getting him to understand* will depend on his going on to write it down independently . . . but not in the right order: he writes sometimes one sometimes another at random. And then communication stops at *that* point.—Or again, he makes "*mistakes*" in the order.—The difference between this and the first case will of course be one of frequency.—Or he makes a *systematic* mistake; for example, he copies every other number, or he copies the series 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, . . . like this: 1, 0, 3, 2, 5, 4, . . . Here we shall almost be tempted to say that he has understood *wrong*.

Notice, however, that there is no sharp distinction between a random mistake and a systematic one. That is, between what you are inclined to call "random" and what "systematic."

Perhaps it is possible to wean him from the systematic mistake (as from a bad habit). Or perhaps one accepts his way of copying and tries to teach him ours as an offshoot, a variant of his.—And here too our pupil's capacity to learn may come to an end.

LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN, *Philosophical Investigations* (§143)

Telling Learning

How do I know you understand? Well: I may be satisfied to hear you repeat my words back, just as I spoke them or in some more-or-less elegant variation. Or it may suffice merely that you profess agreement: "Yes, I understand!" But I might also press the matter, asking you questions: what follows? Can you give an example? What about this or that objection? I may, when I ask, be waiting on a particular response, or perhaps I will accept only answers that I could not have predicted. Sometimes it will not be words I am looking for at all; I will be most persuaded by a particular look in your eyes, or a timely nod, or an attitude of your body, relaxed and confident or stiffened with outrage. Perhaps nothing will count but your laughing or bursting into tears—*that* is when I know you *really* understand, no matter what you say. And perhaps I still won't be sure, not until I see what you *do* about it. And how long, in that case, will I have to wait? And how will I know when I have waited long enough? We sometimes imagine understanding as a singular experience, the dawning of an inner light that lets us see clearly what was once obscure. "Ah, *now* I understand." But the forms by which it is expressed and recognized are as various as its occasions. There are many understandings.

Of course, there are circumstances under which it is necessary to constrain this field of possibility, and chief among them—paradigmatic, in fact—is school. It won't do to allow students to demonstrate their command of Book II of the *Aeneid* merely by a well-timed tear for Hecuba. The scene of instruction that is the classroom is set up to specify more narrowly what counts as knowledge and what learning it looks like: it is the schoolmaster's job to prove that the students learn, and he has to prove it to several audiences, not only to himself and his charges but also to parents, neighbors, an interested state. The daily routines that provide the proof,

the classroom's exercises, must be constructed in such a way that both the matter to be learned and the condition of knowing it take specific, agreed-upon forms. Such exercises will need to have beginnings and endings, so it will be obvious where and when to look for learning, and they will need to provide criteria for success and failure, to tell whether it has actually happened or not.

Take, for example, an exercise described in the statutes of the Friar's School at Bangor in 1569, one that is as universal in English schools as it is rudimentary:

> The said Scholars shall daily use to commit to their memory and care without the book by the Schoolmaster's or Usher's appointment all petty sentences within their ordinary lectures which the Schoolmaster or Husher shall require and hear without the Book at the time appointed for the rendering of their said ordinary Lectures.[1]

The rules of this little game are simple and familiar: the students commit to memory maxims ("petty sentences") from texts read to them by the schoolmaster or his assistant, the usher, and at the appointed time (typically first thing in the morning) they render or recite those maxims back. The exercise begins with the master's solicitation—"*Da mihi sententia*"—and ends with the student's response. Success consists in accurate repetition, failure in anything short of it. The point of playing this game is to produce a representation of the schoolboy's knowledge, in the form of the sentence he repeats. How do I know the student knows that love conquers all? That he can conjugate *vinco*? That he respects my authority? Because he says, "*amor vincit omnia.*"[2] Saying those words, at least within the parameters of the game, is what it means to know, to have learned, to understand.

It will pay to pause and reflect—for if you are reading this book, chances are you are a teacher—on some of the pedagogical transactions that structure your own daily work. They are invariably built around and shaped by the need to produce some proof of their success, whether that proof is a repeated word or an expository essay. Much of the most important recent thinking about institutional education has been about *habitus*, the often unremarked forms of behavior, like raising your hand or queuing for lunch, by which students are made part of the school's society and of the

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1. T. W. Baldwin, *Small Latine*, 1:307.
2. Brinsley uses this sentence as an example for a series of exercises in *Ludus Literarius*, U4r–v.

society the school serves. About such routines there will be more to say. But my focus is on the behaviors and artifacts that are made to count *as representations*, that are taken for signs of learning and that give closure to particular instructional routines. When the question arises, what is learning? or even, what is knowledge? they are what we are apt to point to.

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In this introduction I will take circumscribed scenes like the repetition game above very seriously: they will be the building blocks of everything that follows. Such ordinary, daily routines are the origins of the techniques that school-trained readers bring to any text they take up in later life, and their authority extends well beyond the classroom. A routine like the game of repetition I have just described might be said to imply an account, at least a provisional account, of what knowledge is per se. If to know is to repeat, knowledge is the text held in memory, word for word. If that is what knowledge is, then knowing, understanding, must in turn be the kind of memory that can retain and reproduce such texts. Such a routine may entail no very specific picture of thinking, but it is amenable to such commonplace metaphors of mind as a wax tablet or a bottle for the wine of new knowledge. Out of a daily obligation, then, an exercise performed in the chill earliest hours of the school day in a long, drafty hall, it is possible to read an account both of knowledge and of knowing.

This last claim may seem exaggerated, but what follows is dedicated to showing the world-shaping power that such scenes of instruction possess, and just how wide are the consequences of recognizing English humanism as a culture of teaching. For the moment let me suggest why these matters might be so important to poets, and particularly to the sort of poets who tell stories. The first reason is simply that poets *were* teachers, or thought they had to be. Instruction was the better half, the justifying half, of what Sidney called his "unelected vocation."[3] This means that a poet had to decide, on some level, whether his work would "fashion a gentleman" (in Spenser's phrase) as he himself had been fashioned.[4] The second reason is that a poet who chose to write in the vein of romance took on the challenge of representing learning *within* his fiction, insofar as the stories he gave himself to work with were filled with hermits admonishing young men, allegorical houses of strict discipline, and other exhibits of instruction. Such a poet had to make learning visible, as the schoolmaster has to make

3. Sidney, *Miscellaneous Prose*, 73.
4. Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. Hamilton, 714.

it visible in the classroom. Could the conventions of school suffice? What would learning look like without them? Finally, these poets could expect that their fictions would be read according to the techniques taught in school, and their didactic ambitions understood in school terms. Should they write to accommodate those expectations? To be read as if in school? It is this complex predicament that I set out to describe: the poet-as-teacher in a culture of teaching, a culture that made him and that, in the cases I will study, he finds he cannot endorse.

For all these reasons, this introduction must begin in school—a common place, in fact, for the period's romances themselves to begin. And it will begin there with four premises: (1) that the scene of instruction is shaped by an epistemological problem, the question *how do I know you understand?*; (2) that particular pedagogical practices are constructed to answer that question by providing specific representations of what the student knows; (3) that those same practices, or exercises, simultaneously make larger representations of knowledge, knowing, learning, and thinking, representations that (as we will see) vary and need not be mutually consistent; and (4) that those exercises and the representations they make are foundational for (a) how poets understood their vocation and (b) how trained readers would approach their works. Much of this introduction will be devoted to a patient anatomy of these exercises, understood as modes both of teaching and of understanding (where the two will turn out—an important point, but one that will take some developing—to be difficult to separate). I will use them to construct a *poetics of pedagogy*, a repertory of representational conventions that both structure and constrain fictions that themselves profess to teach. The story I ultimately want to tell is about how the resources of a particular literary kind were exploited to critique those conventions, and to challenge how a period imagined the very nature of teaching and learning. Again and again one finds the oblong box of the Tudor classroom superimposed on the labyrinth of romance. The fit is never easy.

William Kempe's Schoolroom

I remarked that romances often start in school. Euphues sets out for Naples from the university at Athens, and Sidney's princes wash up in Arcadia after years of instruction in Thessaly. They and many heroes like them follow the career path marked out by the biblical parable of the prodigal son, a template for Elizabethan fiction well described by Richard Helgerson: stories

that start in rectitude and good learning, veer into romance wandering, and finally return to the safety of home.[5] That model will be important here for its implication of a sharp divide between phases of instruction and self-loss. I will ask, in due course: do characters learn anything from that middle phase of vagrancy, and do readers? Or does it function simply to burn away rebellious energies, leaving us with lessons that look at the end just as they were in the beginning? Does the *experience* of the middle—a term on which the next chapter will place special weight—make a difference? In order to address those questions of the middle, it will be necessary first to study the discipline instituted on either side. That will involve, as I have said, picking out particular school exercises and scrutinizing them for the shape they give to knowledge—assembling a poetics of pedagogy. In preparation I will sketch their context, the schoolboy career that Lyly would have known at St. Paul's, Sidney at Shrewsbury, Spenser at Merchant Taylors'.

William Kempe, schoolmaster at Plymouth for the last twenty years of the sixteenth century, will serve as guide. Kempe took his BA degree from Cambridge in 1581, and he returned the same year to his home town, where he taught until his death. In many ways he was typical of his profession: he likely presided over somewhere between fifty and eighty boys ages five to sixteen, the average for grammar schools in the period, and he had the daily help of an usher who worked primarily with the lower forms. His schoolroom at Plymouth was the chapel of an old almshouse, a room probably about twenty to thirty feet wide and sixty to eighty feet long, furnished with benches along two walls and a lectern in front. He was paid twenty pounds a year for his pains.[6] He was less typical in his relatively early embrace of the reforms of Petrus Ramus, and in order to give a fair picture of what the likes of Philip Sidney lived through as schoolboys, and lived to see as adults, I will sometimes compare his curriculum to the more Erasmian program of

5. Helgerson's *The Elizabethan Prodigals* describes not only how this narrative pattern structured many fictions of the period, but also how it provided their authors with a frame for their own dalliance with romance as a form. I will return to Helgerson's argument in chapter 2.

6. Kempe's biography is supplied in Robert David Pepper's dissertation, "*The Education of Children in Learning* (1588) by William Kempe of Plymouth: A Critical Edition," 23–108. We do not know the enrollments at the Plymouth school during Kempe's tenure, though we know that at the time of its founding in 1561 some thirty benches were installed: see Bracken, "The Plymouth Grammar School," 144. The dimensions given are a rough average for the period. The most prominent schools were generally larger: Merchant Taylors' had exceeded its statutory limit of 250 students by 1569, and Shrewsbury, with 360 in 1581, fit all its students in a schoolroom of twenty-one by seventy-eight feet. For these figures see Alexander, *The Growth of English Education, 1348–1648*, 198, and Draper, *Four Centuries of Merchant Taylors' School*; see also Brown, *Elizabethan Schooldays*, 8, 16.

the earlier century. But Kempe was unusual above all for setting down so much detailed information about his job. *The Education of Children in Learning*, which was printed in 1588, is the most detailed English pedagogical manual of its century.

An important problem is lodged right at the roots of his curriculum. He begins by describing what should happen in petty school, the scene of first formal instruction in reading and writing English, where he wants boys at the age of five (assuming that "naturall use" will have already given them a practical command of vernacular grammar).[7] The ladder of formal instruction begins with learning "to knowe the letters by their figures" and "to sound them aright by their proper names" (223), pointing to the letters in a primer or a hornbook—a kind of degree zero of pedagogy. Next comes making letters. Erasmus, in his *De Recta Pronuntiatione*, recommends teaching by *imitation*, having students trace them with the aid of translucent paper or ivory letter-forms.[8] Kempe's advice is subtly, vitally different. Speaking and writing, he claims, are parallel ways of rendering written signs ("with the mouth" and "with the hand"), and the letters themselves are "the artificiall *precepts* in this facultie" (223, italics mine). Letters are not objects of imitation to which the student conforms his hand and himself; they are already, even at the alphabetical bottom of the curriculum, rules for following.

Kempe's consciousness of this distinction between instruction by imitation and by precept—and his particular, tacitly polemical version of it—emerges when he takes a long view of his method:

> all knowledge is taught generally both by precepts of arte, and also by practise of the same precepts. They are practised partly by observing examples of them in other mens workes, and partly by making somewhat of our owne; and that first by imitation, and at length without imitation. (223)

Aristotle had bequeathed to the Renaissance the idea that "imitation is natural to man from childhood," the irreducible inclination to make yourself after what you see. Erasmus usually puts his thinking about education on the same foundation: "we observe even in the newly born a sort of innate, parrot-like desire, or rather delight, in copying and repeating [*aemulandi*

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7. Kempe, *The Education of Children in Learning*, in *Four Tudor Books on Education*, ed. Pepper, 223. Subsequent citations in this chapter will be given in parentheses in the text.

8. Erasmus, *De Recta Pronuntiatione*, in *Works*, 26:397–98. For more on techniques of teaching handwriting, especially as a disciplinary practice, see Goldberg, *Writing Matter: From the Hands of the English Renaissance*.

reddendique] what they have heard."[9] Learning begins with an instinct man shares with the apes and the parrots, an instinct sustained by a bodily, prerational pleasure. Kempe, by contrast, starts school with precepts. His idea of imitation teaches students to see through texts to the skeleton of principles by which they were constructed. This commitment is to method, to a rule-bound account of the mind's work in learning—from the inside out, one might say, rather than the outside in.

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That contest between imitation and precept plays out up and down the curriculum, and it is one thread to follow both through the forms and through the following chapters. The next step for Kempe's students was grammar school proper, divided into two phases that ordinary usage would call lower and upper grammar and that Kempe calls the second and third "degrees." Here the main business was learning Latin and its literature: the classical trivium, grammar in the lower school from ages seven to twelve, and rhetoric and logic in the upper school up to age sixteen (with a smattering of Greek and mathematics). We should picture the boys arranged by age in the benches along the long walls, Kempe up at his lectern and the usher moving among them, sometimes exercising the individual forms, sometimes the whole school. The youngest scholars, the seven-year-olds of the first form, begin with the so-called accidence from Lily's *Grammar*, written in the English they had learned to read in petty school. They were supposed to get "by hart the parts of speach with their properties . . . whereof [they] shall rehearse afterwards some part ordinarily every day, illustrating the same with examples of divers Nounes and Verbes" (226–27). This routine follows the rules of *repetition* above: the boys memorize the texts of grammar precepts, and recite them in response to the master's cues. The illustrations Kempe mentions could have been declensions or conjugations performed on the fly, or, more likely at this stage, the reproduction of memorized examples, of which Lily provides many. (From his description, there is no way to tell the difference.)

That first year is devoted largely to memorizing and repeating precepts: "tossing all the rules," as Roger Ascham, author of the influential *Schoolmaster* (1570), had said disparagingly.[10] The boys would likely have begun

9. Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1448b5; Erasmus, *De Recta Pronuntiatione*, in *Works*, 26:369–70. For another side of Erasmus, see his sententious *Institutio Principis Christiani*, discussed in chapter 3.

10. Ascham, *Schoolmaster*, 86. The influence of Ascham on Kempe is apparent in his "copied imitation," the use of specific models to guide composition. But he has little of Ascham's antipathy toward rules: his concern with method reflects the Ramist side of his inheritance.

mastering Saturday *catechisms* too, a common English school practice, though not one Kempe mentions. In the second form, at the age of eight, they begin "to practise the precepts of Grammar, in expounding and unfolding the works of Latin Authors" (227). This is the first entry into the classroom of Latin literature, primarily in the form of dialogues written for the purpose, and Kempe's expounding and unfolding inaugurate another durable routine:

> The Maister shall first reade sensibly a competent Lecture, then declare the argument and scope of the Author, afterward english it either word for word, or phrase for phrase. . . . Last of all teach . . . the divers sorts of the words, their properties and syntaxes of speach. And about three or foure houres after, the Schollar shall be diligently in every point examined, and tryed how he can referre the examples of his Lecture to the rules of Art. (227)

Declaring the argument and scope of the author means providing some framing information (historical, generic, philological) and perhaps offering a *sententia* or prudential maxim under which the sense of the whole might be gathered. This introduction is followed by what most educators called "construing," giving English equivalents of the words; then "parsing," explaining the syntax of each word by reference to Lily's rules. Three new operations have been added to mere repetition: *analysis*, breaking the text into its proper parts; *epitome*, summarizing its essence; and a sorting of cases according to their precepts that I will call *classification*. I understand because I can isolate its parts, because I know its motto or moral or essence, because I recognize its kind.

The second form also sees the first grammar *drills*, exercises in which the student performs systematic, formal manipulations of model sentences. Students take a short "lecture," *pater bonus diligit filium probum*, through a series of grammatical transformations: "Ma. a father. Sch. *pater*. M. fathers. S. *patres*. M. a good father. S. *pater bonus*. . . . M. good fathers love honest sonnes. S. *patres boni diligunt filios probos*" (228). Here the rules are different again: the boys prove their understanding not by repeating, nor by sorting elements, but by generating novel forms according to the precepts of grammar. (Modern linguists would call such precepts "productive rules."[11]) Again however it is worth noting that the master begins by "propound[ing] the like sentence with diversitie, first of Nombers, then of Genders" (227) and so on: there is room to wonder whether the boys were not actually

11. See for example Pinker, *Words and Rules*, 6.

making new forms but just repeating transformations he had already shown them.

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With the third form, Kempe's young scholars turn to their first exercises in *composition* and to imitation per se, the discipline of cultivating the graces of Roman (and particularly Ciceronian) style that the humanists called *imitatio*. Initially the task is close to *translation*: they take an epistle and "translat[e] . . . the same speach into another [of] like sentence, but altered with many varieties at once, and chiefly with the last varietie of the words" (229). A speech on ambition becomes a speech on avarice; structures of argument are conserved, while a commonplace book—stocked with "principall phrases" (229) from the boys' reading—supplies variety in local expression. The original is never out of sight. After some more practice the boys progress to an exercise "without imitation," taking the master's English translation of an unfamiliar piece of Cicero and rendering it in Latin. This time, Cicero's text is withheld, but only until they finish their own versions: each boy's translation is still ultimately set beside the Latin original, "wherewith he shall conferre his owne, and correct it" (230). Whatever is inchoate about imitation is rendered concrete in the last gesture. Conferring and correcting may well mean simply conforming the original to its model, making the whole thing a test first of memory, then of diligence in collation.

A brief contrast with the instructions that Erasmus gives in his influential *De Copia* will be particularly useful here. His account of the ideal of abundant, varied style does not depend on immediate models. Cicero is digested into students' commonplace books along with the rest of their reading, making examples of his phrasing available for copious treatment of set themes like "happiness does not consist in riches" or "one should or should not travel abroad."[12] Erasmus cares most of all, in *De Copia* at least, for variety, and understanding is represented by an act of amplification or dilation. (I understand it because I can make more of it.) Such exercises would naturally be more difficult to judge than what T. W. Baldwin calls Kempe's "copied imitation": they are not quite as clean in their proof. Kempe's version became more and more common in English schools during the late century.[13]

The fourth and fifth forms continue exercises in copied imitation with readings of increasing difficulty, including not only Cicero but also Terence

12. Erasmus, *Works*, 24:680.   13. T. W. Baldwin, *Small Latine*, 2:181.

and Ovid, and the sixth form begins "the third degree for Logike and Rhetorike" (232). (In most schools the boys would also begin formal *disputations*, though like catechisms Kempe does not mention them.) To the precepts of grammar are added the laws of two new arts. Logic is the first of them, and it begins with *inventio*, the technique of marshalling arguments and evidence, followed by *iudicium* (or *dispositio*), putting those elements into order. Kempe also introduces the rhetorical discipline of *elocutio*, which ornaments arguments with the tropes and figures, and the niceties of *pronuntiatio*, or delivery. (His division here between logic and rhetoric is the most direct reflection of his embrace of Ramus's reforms.[14]) This sequence comprises the elements, minus *memoria*, of the fivefold Ciceronian method for making an oration, the best-developed and most self-conscious pedagogical model of thinking. The new *artes* also continue to shape the way the boys read, "observ[ing] the examples of the hardest points in Grammar, of the arguments in Logike, of the tropes and figures in Rhetorike, referring every example to his proper rule, as before" (233). Any text they take up will now appear to them as a made thing of many parts, assembled in persuasive structures:

> he must observe in authors all the use of the Artes, as not only the words and phrases, not only the examples of the arguments; but also the axiome, wherein every argument is disposed; the syllogisme, whereby it is concluded; the method of the whole treatise, and the passages, whereby the parts are joyned together. (233)

The basic procedures of analysis and classification—breaking things down and identifying their kinds within the threefold framework of grammar, logic, and rhetoric—have been combined and elaborated, even as Kempe pays increasing attention to the large-scale schemes that reveal the "method" of the text as a whole.

Such attention to logical and rhetorical constructedness brings reading and writing ever closer together: what students are taught to see in a text is the way it was assembled, from parts that they can reuse.[15] Exercises in composition now demand that they specify "all the arte" of a model—parse

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14. Ramus sought to sharpen a blurred boundary between the two by assigning *inventio* and *dispositio* to logic, *eloquentia* and *pronuntiatio* to rhetoric; rhetoric was thereby effectively limited to the schemes and tropes. See Howell, *Logic and Rhetoric in England, 1500–1700*, esp. 146–72.

15. A point made by Terence Cave in *The Cornucopian Text*: "In imitation . . . the activities of reading and writing become virtually identified. A text is read in view of its transcription as

it, construe it, and type its rhetorical and logical structures—then assay a new topic while following the original "phrase for phrase, trope for trope, figure for figure, argument for argument, and so of the rest" (234). The latitude for variety steadily increases, permitting students to omit and add material and alter "the method, forme of syllogismes, axiomes, arguments, figures, tropes, phrases and words" (236). Mere repetition, so tenacious at earlier stages, is no longer an adequate move in the game. The variations may be more or less formulaic, but the boys must at the very least quarry their commonplace books. Finally the ladder is kicked away altogether: "let him assay otherwhiles, without an example of imitation, what he can do alone by his owne skill alreadie gotten by the precepts and the two former sorts of practise" (237). The scholar is still guided by the artificial precepts that he has so thoroughly studied, but there is no longer any Ciceronian model waiting on the other side. Kempe and Erasmus are closest at this final stage, and the schoolboy's words are closest to being action in the world—at least, rhetorical action.

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Such is the career of Kempe's schoolboys, roughly from the ages of five to sixteen. There is much more to say about the texture of daily life in the school, its mechanisms of discipline, the boys' own social arrangements. Some of that will be salient in later chapters. For the moment I am concerned specifically with what the boys did to texts to prove their understanding, the routines of *repetition*, *catechism*, *analysis*, *classification*, *epitome*, *drill*, *translation*, *disputation*, and *composition*. In pointing out these operations—the operations I will shortly treat as the elements of a poetics—I have also tried to anticipate some ambiguities in their definition. One source of such ambiguity is the stubborn undertow of mere repetition. The accounts Kempe gives of what his boys do may strike us as ambitious, like his permutational drills or his imitations of Cicero, but on the basis of his descriptions it is difficult to rule out completing the exercise simply by echoing the teacher or by reproducing the oration's text word for word. Such tacit substitution of repetition for more complex operations is a perdurable feature of schooling, and it leaves its traces in *The Education of Children in Learning*. It may afford the teacher flexibility to adjust the difficulty of the exercise to the ability of the student; more often, it simply redefines learning itself as a transparent and tractable exchange. No knowledge is easier

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part of another text; conversely, the writer as imitator concedes that he cannot entirely escape the constraints of what he has read" (35).

to prove. The forces that reduce learning to repetition on the scale of the exercise are kin to those that define education itself as a project of reproduction, making each student from the same mold.

The other ambiguity I want to emphasize—like the first, a functional ambiguity—is generated by the curious relation between imitation and precept.[16] *Imitatio* is the name for what the schoolboy does when he writes after an ancient text, and as I suggested above it invokes the undeliberate, habitual learning of the young child, the almost bodily having-into that Aristotle describes. Its poetic forms attract such metaphors as digestion or the bees making honey in the fastness of their hive. As a matter of its schoolroom practice, however, and particularly as Kempe defines it, *imitatio* is a method: a step-wise, rule-based project in which every stage ought to be present to the mind of the imitator, and demonstrable to his teacher.[17] Rules—at least as the humanist *artes* typically conceive them—are themselves texts, and following them is a conscious and deliberate business, a kind of reading-into-action. The distinction undergirds two very different ideas of what learning is like. Having drawn that distinction, however, it sometimes seems that classroom practice is devised principally to blur its boundaries. Is the Ciceronian text a whole to pattern yourself after? Or is it an example of principles you can in turn apply elsewhere? One way of understanding school *imitatio*—and it is a way particularly well suited to Kempe's curriculum—is as a method developed to regulate and even displace the instinct that it nonetheless claims as its mainspring.

What is learning, then? Is it the forming of habits by imitation? Is it learning the rules, and applying them; having your head full of their texts and reading them out into action? The schoolroom has no answers for these big questions, or at least, it never asks them. Instead it has its particular, practical routines. Learning is breaking something into its parts, or reducing it to its sententious essence. Or learning is just saying it back again. What I want to suggest is that the ambiguities both in the large definition of the project and the demands of its particular exercises are ways of *not seeing* what the whole enterprise can in practice come down to. (This argument ought to recall one made by Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine, when they claim that the techniques of humanist reading obscure

16. I borrow the phrase "functional ambiguity" from Annabel Patterson, who uses it, in *Censorship and Interpretation*, to describe strategies of evading censorship; I adapt it here to refer to a way of obscuring or not recognizing a practice that is at odds with the terms in which it is characteristically defended.

17. Thomas Greene discusses the tension between these ideas of imitation in *The Light in Troy*, 54–55.

the more challenging content of ancient texts—about which more below.) The poets I will consider in subsequent chapters are preoccupied by the misrecognitions entailed in received procedures of understanding. They attend to the costs of reading as you have been taught to read, and to what you will not recognize if you play it by the book. But it is worth observing— for the moment, without either sympathy or censure—that almost any school exercise could be interpreted as an instrument of not-knowing as surely as it is an instrument of proof. To specify the kind of response a student can give to a question or a text, to define a scene of instruction in order to provoke a particular representation of understanding, is to decline to recognize a whole range of other criteria, responses, symptoms, even persons. Without such constraints, our classrooms would be chaos. We properly spend considerable effort training students not to give the wrong *kind* of answer, and by our specificity—by the care with which we structure the scene of instruction and test what happens there—we exclude much of the idiosyncrasy, bathos, and extravagance of their responses. And indeed: who would want to know what our students *really* think?

A Poetics of Pedagogy

What licenses my reading humanist pedagogy as a poetics, admittedly a peculiar way to study the enterprise, is first of all the purposes of the chapters following: I want to judge its influence on works of literature, and I take that influence to be not least a matter of the representational conventions it offers to (or presses on) the poet-as-teacher. But equally important is the idea that scenes of instruction are built to produce representations, signs of having learned, of understanding, that allow us to move on to the next exercise, or to the next year, or to confer degrees. This poetics will be grounded in the categories of exercise I have derived from Kempe, but I will draw now from a wider variety of sixteenth- and sometimes seventeenth-century sources: the manuals of schoolmasters and of theorists like Erasmus, but also school statutes, textbooks, commonplace books, and references to school in other kinds of writing. What follows will be more about school than about literature, but the question of time—of narrative—will be more and more insistent, foreshadowing what I take to be romance's most important reproach to the training of its schooled audience.

It should be said, however, that the exercises I will discuss should not be thought of solely within a framework of representation. The schoolboy, after all, lives *inside* them, and the adult hardly escapes when he graduates.

Pedagogical routines establish deeply embedded habits of reading and understanding. The framework of habitus—what Pierre Bourdieu calls "the system of structured, structuring dispositions . . . which is constituted in practice"—is more directly answerable to such claims.[18] The techniques of instruction I will go on to describe are inseparable from postures and rhythms of the body, and from the larger, collective rhythms of the institutions where they are housed. If exercises have, as a rule, articulable rules, nonetheless the great majority of what a schoolboy does between dawn recitations and evening prayers is learned differently—more, one might say, by imitation. The mostly unarticulated habits of deference, civility, competition, even cleanliness that are manifested in ordinary behavior are arguably the most important and deepest-laid lessons. They are dispositions, or attitudes (of body and mind), that both reflect and propagate the institution that houses them. They are what prepare him to take his place in a society whose hierarchy is imitated in the classroom's local forms of order.[19]

Still, it will not serve my purposes to dissolve learning altogether into habitus, for as I have already suggested there are moments in the school day—structured by particular exercises—that all participants will point to in order to say, this boy understands, and this boy does not. It is to account for these, and for their reach into the rest of life, that I will elaborate a framework of representation. The best way to think about the relation between these two approaches, representation and habitus, is to recognize

18. Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, 52. His book attempts to supplant structuralist social analysis, and more generally the project of trying to understand social or psychological patterns by making models of them: "this hermeneutic philosophy . . . leads one to conceive action as something to be deciphered, when it leads one to say, for example, that a gesture or ritual act *expresses* something, rather than saying, quite simply, that it is 'sensible' (*sensé*) or, as in English, that it 'makes' sense" (36–37). He prefers a concept of practice that, he acknowledges, is "not easy to speak of . . . other than negatively" (80), but that is characterized by an acknowledgment of life in time, and a refusal to abstract rules for following from rules immanent in activity. This idea of practice is indebted to Wittgenstein's "form of life." I want not to reject the model-making of the structuralists—nor mimesis as a project of understanding more generally—from the vantage of habitus, but to think of the two as competing frameworks of interpretation that will be invoked at different times, for different motives, and with varying degrees of self-consciousness.

19. Although I have not introduced it explicitly here, in formulating this account of school exercises I have had in mind Wittgenstein's conception of a language game; my intermittent use of the word "game" is best glossed by his *Philosophical Investigations*. An exercise, like a language game, is often a kind of tendentious model of mental activity—but of course, where Wittgenstein's games are heuristic, exercises are instituted in practice and can constitute the self-understanding of the student. See e.g., §2 and §53–56.

that they come from distinct analytic vantage points, good for different problems at different times. (They are themselves not altogether unlike the paradigms of rule following and imitation.) Some of that doubleness of perspective is captured in "exercise" itself. "Exercise" is a word for structured preparation, a model of a desired, real-life capacity. But it also means to *do* something. The same is true for the word "practice," upon which Bourdieu depends so heavily: there is both practicing the violin, and practicing the law. So too with the Latin *exercitatio*, which is central to the ancient pedagogical vocabulary. Because I am moving toward an account of literary texts, I will favor the language of representation—perhaps I will be trapped in it the way my subjects are. The claims of habitus, however, will not fall away. They will return with particular authority near the end, in the guise of ordinariness.

There is something else at stake in the difference between these two perspectives. Let us say that habitus is an attempt to capture a form of life from the inside, or at least to avoid imputing to those who live it a systematic account of its governing principles. There is unavoidably a hint of projected innocence here. The participants do not know what they are doing, at least not the way that the detached observer can know; they do not need to know that way, because their knowing consists in the activity. Representation, by contrast, avowedly considers its objects *ab extra*, making pictures, models, systems in order to understand them. Even if you study yourself in these terms, you are trying to step back, out of your own shoes: the activity and the act of understanding it are alienated from each other. This alienation is a necessary condition of representation—which is nothing more or less than saying there is a sign and a signified, and that they are different orders of experience. One might think of the first condition (knowledge as practice) as capturing the experience of the tractable schoolboy, for whom the school routine is natural, a matter of habits. No question of the representativeness of his activities arises, because there is no active sense of an outside. At the other end of a spectrum we might imagine a mature, perhaps disillusioned adult, who stands outside—and more importantly, after—his schooling and regards it as a system of rules; he asks, what are these rules for, whom do they serve, what do they stand for?

School itself is constructed as a representation. It gives to the young an account of what the world is going to be like. There are people for whom that account serves all their lives: its forms are the natural forms of understanding, the way to think, the way to read. They will never think of it as a representation, because they will never ask, and will never feel the

need to ask, what is behind it. There are others who, for whatever reason, come to think of its picture of the world as a false one, and from this alienated retrospect ask of every task they undertook, *what did it mean? Whom was it for?* And then, there is the gray territory in-between, occupied by those who can articulate, endorse, or dispute what their education has given them, who have enough detachment for critique, but whose thinking and writing remain—on terms chosen or unchosen—structured by its forms. This middle ground is the awkward terrain of the rest of the book. If what comes next is a poetics, it is at the same time a set of habits, whose authority cannot be altogether a matter of choice for the men who learned by them to read and write.

<div align="center">

a→a

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We are obliged to start again with routines of *repetition*: exercises where the student is asked to give back what he has been given. Such repetition is arguably the essence of education, and arguably its opposite. Either way it has a uniquely powerful status as a trope of learning, what learning comes down to, or back to. (Though perhaps one should say it is an antitrope, the resistance to figuration.) Kempe's petty school instruction begins with routines in which students repeat letters and syllables that the master has said aloud. The same fundamental operation persists, working on more or less complicated matter, up and down the curriculum. Students memorize the rules in Lily word by word from the beginning of grammar school, and are often called upon to recite them, apropos of particular features of a text or for their own sake. The timetable at Eton in 1530 reserves the hour after noon on Friday for "renderyng of ruls lernyd the hole weke," even as late as the sixth form, when the rules would include principles of logic and rhetoric as well as grammar.[20] *Sententiae* are also common matter for memorization, and students memorized by heart longer passages from their lectures and from texts they were reading—the boys at Winchester were responsible for twelve lines of Ovid every week, which seems to be

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20. Leach, *Educational Charters and Documents 598 to 1909*, 451. Also from Eton, T. W. Baldwin cites a description of the daily routine: "In every of the said Forms the Rules shall be said in the Morning, and by and by more Rules given unto them." He quotes from Mulcaster's *Positions* to reinforce the point: "'The morening houres will best serve for the memorie & conceiving: the after noone for repetitions, & stuffe for memorie to worke on.' So the morning hours were to be used for getting, the afternoon for repeating and setting, this being the usual sixteenth-century routine" (*Small Latine*, 1:149).

on the low end.[21] They would "prove" their knowledge, in the idiom of the statutes, by reciting to the master or usher.

There are some important variations on these simple games: whether the students repeat immediately or from memory, what cues for repetition the master gives (the text itself, a command like "give the sentence," or, as in catechism, below, a scripted question). But the rudiments are the same. This is not imitation, if imitation implies (1) a difference and (2) that sense of habituation, approximation, bodily having-into, slower time. Nor is it rule-following, for there is no requirement that the student produce the precept governing the routine. Repetition is somehow below both of them. To each of the kinds of exercise I describe here I will want to put the questions, what picture of knowledge does it have to offer? What picture of learning, and of the student's mind? The answers in this case—as I have already suggested—are plain ones. Knowledge is a string of text; learning it is hearing or reading it; knowing it is repeating it; the mind is the place those words are stored, as a vessel holds liquid or a tablet receives words. One could say that repetition is a *sign* of understanding, but that would be according the practice a kind of epistemological curiosity with which it does not necessarily keep company. Better to say: repetition *is* understanding, one thing we can mean or demand when we ask, do you understand? Have you learned?

Nothing would dismay the humanist reformers more than this *reductio*. Erasmus's much-used manual for letter writing, *De Conscribendis Epistulis*, asks, "what is the point of repeating parrot-fashion [*psitaci more*] words that are not understood?"[22] A century later Brinsley insists, as part of a growing chorus of his contemporaries, "*Legere & non intelligere negligere est*": to read without understanding is neglect.[23] Such complaints are a *topos* of the

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21. T. W. Baldwin, *Small Latine*, 2:419. And from the statutes of the Bangor School, closely based on those at Bury St. Edmunds: "The said Scholars shall daily use to commit to their memory and care without the book by the Schoolmaster's or Usher's appointment all petty sentences within their ordinary lectures which the Schoolmaster or Husher may require and hear without the Book at the time appointed for the rendering of their said ordinary Lectures." Students also "shall learn perfectly by heart the articles of the Christian faith, The Lords prayer, the ten commandants [*sic*] . . . and the Schoolmaster with the Husher shall every Saturday in the afternoon make proof and instruct their Scholars for their perfectness therein" (*Small Latine*, 1:307, 309). David Riggs discusses these practices with an emphasis on how "drawn-out, compulsory routines of transcription and regurgitation dissolved the antithesis between physical and mental labour" (*The World of Christopher Marlowe*, 37–38).

22. Erasmus, *Works*, 25:194. The curriculum at Bury St. Edmunds seems to echo Erasmus: "Those who are being instructed in the first elements of grammar are not to utter words at random and without understanding like parrots" (T. W. Baldwin, *Small Latine*, 1:301).

23. Brinsley, *Ludus*, G1v.

literature, and I have already suggested in the preface that their increasing frequency and the specificity of the reformers' remedies—the efforts to find pedagogical techniques that guarantee *real* understanding—are a historical phenomenon, a late sixteenth-century second wave of humanist reform. In one way or another all the exercises I describe below are part of that phenomenon, efforts to address that anxiety. But repetition is tenacious, insidious, and in many cases perfectly useful. It is easiest of the kinds of learning to recognize; in its simple rigor it is always ready as a mode of proof and a mode of discipline. It subtends the idea of education as a project of mere reproduction: raising boys to be the same as their teachers, their fathers, and one another; to hold and to voice the same beliefs.[24]

The trouble between such an idea of learning and romance fiction is easy to anticipate. Unalloyed repetition is the enemy of narrative, narrative that can tell time only by producing difference: where the same thing happens again and again, there is no story. Mere repetition is likewise the enemy of figuration. If to know *is* to repeat, then, what can *The Faerie Queene* be but a long, corrosive forgetfulness?

"q→a"

The game of *catechism* is very close to mere repetition: it is based on a memorized script, which provides particular questions as cues for particular answers. The northern Reformation's zeal to promulgate points of doctrine to the ordinary worshipper accounted for its rapid spread. Its historians, however, argue for origins in medieval grammar teaching, and in the latter half of the sixteenth century religious catechisms were well installed in school.[25] There is an engraved image of a schoolroom—featuring

24. On the question of "education as reproduction," Margaret Ferguson takes a useful survey of the work of such theorists as Pierre Bourdieu, Jean-Claude Passeron, and Louis Althusser, as well as some dissenters, in "Teaching and/as Reproduction." This strain of educational thinking is grounded in Marxist theory, and the idea that education functions chiefly to reproduce existing class structures. See also Halpern, *The Poetics of Primitive Accumulation*, esp. chapters 1 and 2, where he discusses the relationship between ideological reproduction and stylistic reproduction.

25. Ian Green describes how the interrogatory catechism becomes the standard English form over the course of the sixteenth century in *The Christian's ABC*, 62; on Donatus's *Ars Grammatica* and other roots of the form, including Luther's catechism and humanist dialogue, see 16–18. On catechism in the Reformation generally see Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*, 153–73. On the role of religious catechism in schools see Watson, *The English Grammar Schools to 1660*, 69–85, which includes a digest of school statutes prescribing the practice, usually for Saturdays. See also Charlton, *Education in Renaissance England*, 98.

a boy, his head cocked deferentially, declaiming to the bearded master—on the frontispiece of Alexander Nowell's *Catechism*, which was decreed the national standard in 1571. The participants inside are identified as Master and Scholar:

MAISTER: Tell me my childe of what religion thou art.

SCHOLER: Of the same religion, whiche Christ our Saviour taught, whereof I am called, and doe trust, that in deede I am a Christian.

MA: What is Christian religion?

SCH: Christian religion is the true worshipping of God, and keeping of his commaundementes.[26]

Like all of the catechisms published for use in and out of school in the period, Nowell's follows this script form. The master's questions are memorized cues to particular memorized responses. The answers—to the chagrin of reformers—were often ponderous and intricate.[27] The exercise is more ritual, liturgical, antiphonal than the simplest forms of repetition ($a \rightarrow a$), but whether the matter is doctrine or grammar everything hangs on getting the words just right.

What kind of knowledge is this? The scholar's answers are repeated verbatim: one could again invoke many of the familiar metaphors of pedagogical reproduction to account for them, tablets and vessels and so on. The fact that they are cued by the master's questions, however, makes a difference, for it ties them to a particular two-part performance. You know the catechism in the saying of it; you prove your command—your knowledge of doctrine, and perhaps even your faith—by a specific performance. The lesson is identical with its test.[28] That identity has obvious practical advantages for the master: like the simplest repetition games, it provides a clear answer to that question, *how do I know you understand?* All the scholar has to do is hold up his part; his answers can be checked against the script. But for just this reason it is also a kind of knowing that seems particularly beholden to the circumstances of instruction—one that is rigidly shaped

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26. Nowell, *A Catechisme, or Institution of Christian Religion*, A2v.

27. See I. Green, *ABC*, 246. Brinsley's pedagogy of "short questions" (*Ludus*, G3r) is an address to this tendency.

28. See Strauss, *Luther's House*: "From the very outset it [catechism] prepared the learner for the examination that tested its results at the end of the learning process" (173). This identity of lesson and test is a particularly clear instance of the general problem of a lesson that is difficult to extract from the scene of instruction, and that, if cleaved to, may compel the student to impose the shape of that original classroom scene on the world beyond.

by the configuration of the classroom where it is learned. Dissatisfaction with the inflexibility of the form is increasingly evident among reformers in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, and there are various attempts to loosen it from rote recitation.[29] But as always, the reformers' zeal is best evidence of the tenacity of the practices they deplore.

Boys did sometimes catechize one another in schools, at least in grammar: it was possible, that is, for the scholar to play the master's part.[30] Still it remained the master's part, whoever played it, as Nowell's script would remind any reader. That stubborn difference between roles raises another peculiarity of knowing for two voices: which of them is yours? Can they both be owned? If only the answerer's, then to whom—when you are out there in the world—does the questioner's belong? Is the questioning voice to be understood as something like the prompting of circumstance, which the believer rejoins with professions of faith? Or does it remain the voice of a particular, honored authority, now implanted within you but no less alien? (Sidney has a canny phrase for this problem, the "inward father."[31]) These are questions again about how a particular kind of knowing, a schoolroom game of question and answer, allows us to know the world precisely by giving the world that schoolroom's shape. It is a problem Lyly and Sidney confront when they use the script of catechism to represent the business of inner deliberation.

$$a \ldots c \ldots e {\rightarrow} g$$

Grammar *drills* are another kind of understanding again. ("Drill" in this sense is a nineteenth-century coinage, gathering for my purposes a category of exercise the schoolmasters did not clearly distinguish.) They are the

29. In *The Christian's ABC* Green observes that there is "no shortage of evidence for the importance attached to constant repetition and simple memorization" (236), but that "By the turn of the sixteenth century and increasingly from the mid-seventeenth century . . . we find distinctions being drawn between, on the one hand, the mechanical parroting of words and, on the other, a real understanding of their meaning and commitment to their implementation" (232). Catechism became over time a more sophisticated practice as the interpolation of longer texts, use of both reading and hearing, and other devices came to modify the basic structure of question and answer: "By the late sixteenth or early seventeenth centuries, 'catechizing' was not a single operation but a whole range of overlapping and interlocking activities" (5).

30. See the Harrow statutes of 1580: "The Schoolmaster shall every day, for the space of an hour, hear either the third, fourth or fifth forms amongst themselves propound questions and answers one to another of cases, declinings, comparison of nouns, conjugations, tenses and modes of verbs" (Watson, *Grammar Schools*, 93–94).

31. Sidney, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia (The Old Arcadia)*, 292.

routines of declining and conjugating that were a staple of the schoolboy's work. We have seen Kempe's students ring changes on *pater bonus diligit filium probum*. At Rivington, "the Usher shall daily exercise [the students] with diversity of words in every comparison, declension, gender, tense, and conjugation"; at Bury St. Edmunds, students quiz each other "two and two . . . in the searching out the declinations of nouns with their due articles and Genders in the seeking and finding out of the conjugations with their preterits and supines."[32] Lily's *Grammar* makes ambitious suggestions about how these questions should be posed: "every waye forewarde, backwarde, by cases, by persones, that neyther case of noune, ne persone of verbe can be required, that he can not without stoppe or study telle."[33] Such rigor is systematic and permutational: like a musician practicing a difficult figure, first straight, then backward, then upside down, then transposed by thirds, by fourths, and so on. These exercises make for a kind of systematic mimesis of chance, forcing the student to adapt to new conditions, to keep making new forms. They are also displacements of chance, a way of domesticating it.

That power to imitate chance is important to all exercises, and it will be useful to keep such ambitions in mind, for of course nothing is more ambitious that way than romance. Their ingenuity—"forewarde, backwarde, by cases, by persones"—reflects a determination to outwit mere repetition. Drill would seem to be the purest case of rule-following in the Tudor schoolroom: the rules of grammar not merely as matter for memory, but as ways of making and acting. There is a parallel strain of skepticism, however, about precepts in the pedagogical literature, strongest in the earliest decades when Erasmus was most influential, but persistent into the next century. The founder of St. Paul's school, John Colet, concludes his *Aeditio* of 1509 by insisting that students "busily learn and read good Latin authors of chosen poets and orators, and note wisely how they wrote and spake, and study alway to follow them, desiring none other rules but their examples."[34] Erasmus promises that "aided by . . . rules you will notice much for

32. M. Kay, *The History of Rivington and Blackrod Grammar School*, 184–85; T. W. Baldwin, *Small Latine*, 1:308.

33. Lily, *Grammar*, A3r. See also Brinsley's *Ludus Literarius*: "aske the same questions backe againe, the last first. . . . Then aske the questions as it were backward thus" (H4v); "make them as perfect in their Genders forwards and backwards" (I1v).

34. He continues: "For in the beginning men spake not Latin because such rules were made, but contrariwise because men spake such Latin upon that followed the rules were made. That is to say, Latin speech was before the rules, not the rules before the Latin speech. Wherefore, well-beloved masters and teachers of grammar, after the parts of speech sufficiently known in your schools, read and expound plainly unto your scholars good authors, and show to them

yourself" but cautions not to "follow . . . slavishly." Even Ascham, always keen after a good precept, wants "a volume of examples, a page of rules."[35]

The reformers' main anxiety about rules is that they will be nothing more than matter for memorization, as of course they often were, and that if they are applied—whatever, exactly, that might mean—they will prove too rigid for the play of circumstance to which the orator must always hold himself accountable. The language of imitation serves as a way of easing these worries, even in cases where the activity of *imitatio* is most highly methodized. This recourse to instinct reflects how underdeveloped most humanist reflection on rule-following tends to be (a matter that will become particularly important in chapter 3).[36] One might discriminate among the kind of understanding that is proved by saying the rule, the kind of understanding proved by acting in accord with it, and (best of all) the kind of understanding proved by doing both. But the difference between the first two—saying the rule and following it—is surprisingly elusive, as though rule-following were understood merely as a kind of saying-into-action. Recent scholarship has emphasized that the modes of reading taught in the humanist classroom were pointedly directed toward praxis.[37] The corollary is that action was often understood on the model of speech, acting out as reading out, the recitation of a maxim in the language of the deed. On this straitened account of action Sidney in particular will brood.

art→a / r / t

The next three kinds of exercises—the next three ways of proving understanding—are aspects of that larger routine of "unfolding" a text that Kempe describes: presenting a lecture, declaring its "argument and scope," construing and parsing the grammar, observing rhetorical ornament and logical structure. The canonical account of this procedure is from Erasmus's *De Ratione Studii*, where his example is a comedy by Terence. Before beginning

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every word, and in every sentence what they shall note and observe, warning them busily to follow and to do like both in writing and in speaking, and be to them your own self also speaking with them the pure Latin very present, and leave the rules" (quoted in Hunter, *John Lyly*, 19–20).

35. Erasmus, *Works*, 24:670; Ascham, *Letters of Roger Ascham*, 270–711.

36. Judith Anderson's *Words that Matter* explores how the systematic grammar (especially syntax), and emphasis on the mind generally, in scholastic thought gives way to a concern with referentiality, the matter of words, among the humanists (esp. 7–42).

37. See esp. Grafton and Jardine, "'Studied for Action': How Gabriel Harvey Read His Livy." This idea will return in chapters 2 and 3.

to work on the language, he advises, inform your students about the life and characteristic style of the author, the laws of the genre, and explain "as clearly and concisely as possible the gist of the plot [*summam explicet argumenti*]."[38] The teacher should go on to point out unusual features of rhetoric and instances of imitation, before turning to philosophy in order to "bring out the moral implication of the poets' stories" and identify "patterns [*exempla*]" of conduct.[39] Whenever the school statutes and timetables refer to an author, it is a good bet that something like this routine was used to bring his language before the boys: Terence, Cicero, Virgil, Ovid, all entered the classroom by these stairs.

John Brinsley takes the time to explain each step. He uses the term *analysis* for the first half of a process he calls "*Analysis* and *Genesis*; that is . . . resolving and unmaking the Latine of the Author, and then making it againe just after the same manner, as it was unmade." Taken all together this operation is very close to what Ascham calls "double translation," but for the moment I want only to borrow his phrase "resolving and unmaking." "Unmaking" is the word Kempe uses for breaking down a word into syllables, in preparation for learning to write.[40] The "unmaking" of analysis can refer more broadly to reducing anything to its fundamental parts, particularly where the process is guided by the assumption that those parts were the units of its original making (or "genesis"). This is another powerful idea of what it is to understand something: bringing a complex structure to the point where there is nothing complex left, only simples, its building blocks. The humanist passion for grammatical and rhetorical disassembly has led critics like Mary Thomas Crane to conclude that schoolboys were "taught to view texts as containers of fragments that could be possessed by memorization and transcription in a notebook."[41] Success at this delimited

38. Erasmus, *Works*, 24:683. The *Collected Works*' translation of *argumentum* as "plot" risks anachronism, but gives some indication of how narrative might be assimilated to the nontime of argument.

39. Ibid., 24:682–83. Erasmus's instructions are worth comparing with the revealingly partial version given by Cardinal Wolsey in his 1529 statutes for the Ipswich Grammar School, which was reprinted in some editions of John Colet's *Grammar*. See also Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric*, 15–16.

40. Brinsley, *Ludus*, O4v; Kempe, *Education*, in *Four Tudor Books*, ed. Pepper, 223. The terms "analysis" and "genesis" suggest Ramist influence. See also Coote, *English Scholemaster*, C3r.

41. Crane, *Framing Authority*, 86. Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine's *From Humanism to the Humanities* is the most influential site for this argument; see for example their account of the pedagogy of Guarino Guarini in fifteenth-century Ferrara as "an overwhelming preoccupation with a profusion of tiny details. . . . When we try to imagine what it felt like to be trained in rhetoric by Guarino we are faced with this mass of disparate information hung on a frame of one or two key texts" (20). See also Kintgen, *Reading in Tudor England*, 43. Richard Halpern argues

game is a matter of showing you can cut out the right bits. Kempe—who repeatedly expresses his interest in mastering larger structures of argument too—would be dismayed at her conclusion, but Crane is right to diagnose a characteristic devolution of the humanist program, as well a prominent direction in its theory. Just as mere repetition can count as learning, so can mere analysis, a practice that will inevitably obscure wholes by a multiplication of bright parts.[42]

$$a \, / \, r \, / \, t \longrightarrow A \, B \, C \ldots Q \, R \, S \, T \, U \ldots$$

The idea that I can understand something simply by breaking it apart is stubbornly autonomous: that brute conviction underlies, for example, the dichotomizing of the Ramist program (as we will see in chapter 5). It is parodied at moments in Spenserian allegory. In schoolroom routines of "unfolding," however, analysis is usually linked to *classification*: I know *X* because I recognize it not only as a distinct part of the text, but as an instance of *Y*. Such recognitions are necessary for parsing, when students (as at Rivington) "give a reason why every word is put in such gender, number, person, case, tense, and conjugation."[43] Those "reasons" are precepts of grammar, and the words are sorted out among them—the precepts function as categories. The typing of rhetorical phenomena, identifying the schemes and tropes, is a similar business. The more highly developed schemes of classification are those associated with schoolroom practices of note taking and the commonplace book. Students often identified features of texts, particular tropes and schemes, by a system of marginal notations. They also kept separate commonplace books—sometimes only one, sometimes two or even three—for the storage and ready retrieval of fragments of their

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that humanist pedagogy "decomposed" texts "into harmless, inert atoms" (*Poetics*, 47). Peter Mack offers a qualification: "Thus although the general tendency of the commonplace method is to fragment a text into short reusable segments, it can also encourage readers to explore connections and contrasts of ideas within a text, to discover preoccupations and connections beyond the level of linear plot"; "In their commentaries schoolmasters gave considerable emphasis to the structure and narrative order of set texts" (*Elizabethan Rhetoric*, 44, 47).

42. Roger Ascham testifies both to humanist discomfort with this tendency and to its prevalence in a letter to the Strasbourg schoolmaster Johann Sturm, in which he discusses his ambition to write a book of examples as complement to *The Schoolmaster*: "I want something else [than books of rules], I require more. We need an artisan and an architect who knows how by an artful method to bring the parts together, to polish the rough spots, and to build up the entire structure" (*Letters*, 270).

43. Kay, *The History of Rivington and Blackrod Grammar School*, 185.

reading.[44] The matter they transcribed there could include *sententiae*, brief anecdotes, or *exempla*; choice rhetorical ornaments might be stored in another notebook, or interspersed. The schemes of classification varied, with the most typical being likely topics for debate, such as "courage" or "justice," arranged alphabetically.[45]

It is a confusing aspect of the theory of these books—not uncomplained-about by contemporaries—that both the categories and the matter that filled them could be called "commonplaces," or *topoi*, or *loci*.[46] A place, that is, could be put inside another place. What this ambiguity demonstrates is the extent to which any piece of text might itself be treated as a paradigm waiting for instances. "Fortitude" is a category; but so, once it has been transcribed under "Fortitude" in your commonplace book, is the maxim, "As Iron doth bruse all other mettalles: so fortitude doth overcome all kinde of daungers."[47] By virtue of having been picked out and recorded, those particular words can themselves now be recognized as a general case within which some aspect of our experience might fit—a place where that experience can be put.

Understanding, then, is a matter of making connections, subsuming instances under headings, putting things in the right place. You prove you know by the proper ordering of a commonplace book and the true classifying of a given case. Taken together the commonplaces make "a mode of apprehending the world," as Ann Moss puts it, a grid for experience with a place for every new thing: Erasmus can promise that if you "first provide yourself with a full list of subjects," you will be ready for anything.[48]

44. See Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric*, 44, for a concise account.

45. On schemes of classification in commonplace books see Moss, *Printed Commonplace-Books and the Structuring of Renaissance Thought*, esp. 192–95.

46. As Richard Sherry testifies: "the varietie of authors hath made the handlynge of them [commonplaces] sumwhat darke, because among them selves they can not wel agre, neyther of the names, neyther of the number, neyther of the order" (*A Treatise of Schemes and Tropes*, F4v). See also T. W. Baldwin, *Small Latine*, 1:126–27. Sister Joan Marie Lechner distinguishes between the 'analytic' and the 'subject' topic in *Renaissance Concepts of the Commonplaces*: "[The 'analytic' topic is] usually thought of as a concept which could be used in asking oneself questions about a subject and which would generate ideas concerning the subject: for example, such 'places' as definition, division, etymology and relation, when applied to a particular subject, would 'spin out' the full meaning of that subject. The 'subject' topic or heading, on the other hand, represented a heading more usable for organizing material gathered in a commonplace book, where one 'located' an argument named according to the subject matter of its contents, such as virtue, physics, peace, or ethics" (229–30).

47. Meres, *Palladis Tamia*, M2v.

48. Moss continues: "The commonplace-book is revealed as a mode of apprehending the world, and a mode which is beginning to stabilize into a mental set. The commonplace-headings themselves may be varied and they may be increased in number and range, but

That grid is also a powerful de facto model of the mind, a subdivided space within which useful knowledge can be stored by its kinds, a less vividly imagined but perhaps more deeply founded version of the memory palace.[49] This space is the most important contribution rhetorical pedagogy makes to the set of ways that the period pictures what thinking is like and where it happens. There will be more to say about its dimensions shortly; here what is most salient is that the attendant idea of memory is fundamentally synchronic. By organizing matter according to topic in space, the commonplaces displace not only other, chronologically based orders but also the sedimented and time-bound nature of untrained memory. The first page and the last page of a diary, or of the old *Arcadia*, plot points on an arc of time. What is to be found on the first and last pages of a commonplace book is a relatively arbitrary function of its indexing procedure. Like repetition and analysis, the classification of commonplaces takes the time out of the matter to which it is applied.

$$\boxed{A} \rightarrow a$$

One more operation native to the routine of unfolding: *epitome*, deriving from a text a shorter formulation that captures that text's meaning or essence. Ascham uses the word to mean "cutting away words and sentences" in making summaries, a practice he scorns as "a way of study belonging

the universe to which they refer is assumed to constitute an array of morally interrelated concepts, susceptible to an arrangement which supplies a rhetoric of argumentation geared to put the case for and against any proposition or course of action, to persuade and dissuade, to praise and blame" (*Printed Commonplace-Books*, 123). Erasmus's words are from *De Copia*, in *Works*, 24:635. He elaborates a few pages later: "So prepare for yourself a sufficient number of headings, and arrange them as you please, subdivide them into the appropriate sections, and under each section add your commonplaces and maxims; and then whatever you come across in any author, particularly if it is rather striking, you will be able to note down immediately in the proper place, be it an anecdote or a fable or an illustrative example or a strange incident or a maxim or a witty remark or a remark notable for some other quality or a proverb or a metaphor or a simile." His own example is "the heading 'Changeableness' or 'Irresolution'" (*Works*, 24:638, 642). Roger Ascham asserts that "books of commonplaces be very necessary to induce a man into an orderly general knowledge, how to refer orderly all that he readeth *ad certa rerum capita* and not wander in study" (*Schoolmaster*, 107). One hears in "wander" an echo of his complaint against romance, to which the *capita rerum* are an antidote.

49. See Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*: "This kind of reductionism, which pictured the mind as an efficient engine with discrete parts and a tidy division of mechanical operations, made matters considerably easer for pedagogues" (83). Jessica Wolfe discusses the analogy of mind and method to mechanism in her *Humanism, Machinery, and Renaissance Literature*, 26, 135ff. The analogy is not much found in the pedagogical literature itself.

rather to matter than to words, to memory than to utterance."[50] He is not the only schoolmaster to be skeptical of such exercises, but the deeper idea behind them—that understanding is an effect of condensation—is commonplace and powerful. It is a small step from excerpting *sententiae* from a text to taking them, by synecdoche, for its meaning. Brinsley calls such maxims the "summe" (as Erasmus calls them the *summa*), and such a sense of their importance would come naturally to students trained in the early forms on Aesop, where a sententious moral typically provides both narrative closure and an account of what the tale meant.[51] Likewise for students expected to elaborate arguments from the seed of a maxim. Once again there is a simple intuition at the root of these practices: to understand a big thing, a thing too big to think about all at once, take a small but representative piece of it, or make a small model of the whole; either way, something small enough to grasp, as though in the palm of your hand.[52] The resulting epitome, typically in the form of *sententia*, can be stored among the commonplaces. It is fit for memorizing. And again, when it derived from a text that is narrative in character, it takes the time out.

So, another three ideas of knowing: taking a text apart, classifying its pieces, making it small enough to hold all at once. They are interwoven in the practice of unfolding a text in the classroom. But their separability is important: each, in its own circumstances, generates a different answer to that question, *do you understand?*

$$a \rightarrow \alpha \; (\rightarrow a)$$

We come now to *translation*, a practice at the heart of the humanist classroom, and yet an abiding matter of uneasiness there. The late sixteenth century was a great age of translating in the larger culture: all kinds of books were being Englished at London's busy presses, from Elyot's Plutarch to courtesy books to the Italian tales against whose "subtle, cunning, new, and

50. Ascham, *Schoolmaster*, 109, 106. Howell, *Logic and Rhetoric*, quotes a testy Richard Montague on the subject: "The Abridgements that have beene made long since, and of late, are held to be one of the chiefe plagues of Learning, and learned men. It maketh men idle, and yet opiniative, and well conceited of themselves. He that can carry an Epitome in his pocket . . . imagineth mightily, that he knoweth much, and yet indeed is but a *ignaro*" (201). Mordechai Feingold discusses Ascham's epitomes in relation to Ramism in "English Ramism: A Reinterpretation," 160–64.

51. "Also cause them to make you a report of what the summe of the Epistle is . . . as was said of the Fables" (Brinsley, *Ludus*, Y4v).

52. On fables, as well as on *sententiae*, handbooks, and hands, see chapter 3.

diverse shifts" Roger Ascham railed.[53] The rhetoric of their prefaces almost universally advertises the profit and instruction got by the new ease of access. R. F. Jones surveys the propagandizing of this industry and concludes that the "process of education was thought to consist largely in putting into the vernacular any book whatsoever."[54] He touches on a deep idea, that translation may be *in itself* both a kind of teaching and a kind of learning. A kind of teaching, in that the translator accommodates something difficult and foreign to the powers of the reader, making it familiar, carrying it across a boundary from otherness to self. A kind of learning, because the *activity* of translating, on the student's part, might itself count as understanding. Translation is an obvious engine against the risks of mere repetition, proving that grasp of the matter is independent of a particular order of words. A student who carries the same *sententia*—here *sententia* in its most general sense of "meaning"—from Latin to Greek to Hebrew and round to Latin again, as Ascham dreamed that students would, must have a strong and flexible comprehension of the argument as well as the languages. To understand something, this game suggests, *is to know it in more than one way*; as Erasmus says, "to pour the same subject-matter from one form of poetic container into another."[55]

Translation of various kinds was ubiquitous in the Elizabethan classroom. There was the routine of construing, providing word-by-word equivalents as a first stage of reckoning with a new text (English in the earliest forms; later, Latin synonyms and paraphrase). "[F]or all your constructions in grammar schools be nothing else but translations," observes Ascham.[56]

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53. Ascham, *Schoolmaster*, 69.

54. Jones, *The Triumph of the English Language*, 40.

55. Erasmus, *Works*, 24:303. While anxiety about the divorce of *res* and *verba* is regularly expressed by humanist educators—most famously in Ascham's plea that "Ye know not what hurt ye do to learning that care not for words but for matter" (*Schoolmaster*, 115)—separating the two for the purposes of variation and copia is a notion that underwrites a wide range of school exercises. See also Vives: "Then let them change the words and keep the same idea" (*Vives: On Education*, 110). On problems of *res* and *verba* generally, see Terence Cave's reading of Erasmus in *The Cornucopian Text*, where he meditates on the precariousness of the project of distinguishing them: "*Res* and *verba* slide together to become 'word-things'; the notion of a single domain (language) having a double aspect replaces that of two distinct domains, language and thought" (21).

56. Ascham, *Schoolmaster*, 83. John Stockwood's *The Treatise of the Figures* (first printed 1609) gives a picture of what schoolroom construction was like: "*Figura* a figure *est* is *forma* a kind *dicendi* of speaking, *novata* made new *aliqua arte* with some art" (A4r). Lawrence D. Green notes that Stockwood was headmaster of the Tunbridge Grammar School in the 1580s, and that his textbook "is clearly the work of a teacher who has had hard experience in the classroom" ("*Grammatica Movet*: Renaissance Grammar Books and *Elocutio*," 111). See also Brinsley's examples of parsing in *Ludus*, O3r.

Exercises in more elaborate paraphrase and in "metaphrasis," turning passages from prose to verse and vice versa, were also widely used.[57] Such regimens are continuous with an Erasmian program of copious variation, recasting a single sentence 146 ways, and ultimately with the more sophisticated imitations I will treat under "composition" below.[58] Still, there was a strong suspicion of translation per se: Brinsley observes that "translations were generally in disgrace in Schooles."[59] Particularly for the stricter Ciceronians, translating could only carry students away from the best Latin into inferior style or, worse yet, out of Latin altogether into the vernacular. Such traffic might contaminate Cicero's idiom with the depredations of English word order; it was certainly of limited usefulness in teaching students to write and speak a new tongue to be forever returning to the old.

Roger Ascham is most closely identified with the humanists' characteristic solution: so-called double translation, which he describes with great care in the *Schoolmaster*.[60] This exercise begins with the usual routine of unfolding a Latin text, the master construing and parsing; "by and by" the scholar imitates him "that it may appear that the child doubteth in nothing that his master taught him before." Then master and scholar separate:

> the child must take a paper book and, sitting in some place where no man
> shall prompt him, by himself, let him translate into English his former lesson.
> Then, showing it to his master, let the master take from him his Latin book,

57. Erasmus in *De Copia*: "It will be of enormous value to take apart the fabric of poetry and reweave it in prose, and vice versa, to bind the freer language of prose under the rules of metre" (*Works*, 24:303). On versifying see Brinsley, *Ludus*, Bb3vff., and Riggs, *Christopher Marlowe*, 51–53.

58. We can see the overlap of the agendas of translation, permutational variation, and copia in exercises prescribed in Erasmus's *De Ratione Studii*, for example: "Sometimes they should express, again and again, the same proposition in different words and style. Sometimes they should vary the expression of the same proposition in Greek and Latin, in verse and prose. Sometimes they should express the same proposition in five or six kinds of metre. . . . Sometimes they should recast the same proposition in as many forms and figures as possible" (*Works*, 24:679).

59. Brinsley, *A Consolation for Our Grammar Schooles*, F3r. He elaborates on the same page: "First, that our usuall translations did direct the young Scholars uncertainly, and sometimes amisse, being oft rather to expresse the sense, then the words in anie right order of Grammar; and that the learners must go by memorie, and as it were by rote, more then by anie certaintie of Rule, unlesse they were of better judgement."

60. On the history of the practice see W. E. Miller, "Double Translation in English Humanist Education." Miller points out that there were earlier accounts of double translation in Vives, and that the practice can be traced to Cicero; he also cites a description of a very similar routine in the Rivington statutes of 1566 (169).

and, pausing an hour at the least, then let the child translate his own English into Latin again in another paper book.[61]

Variations on this sequence might include having the master make the English translation first, as Kempe does; in any case at the end of the exercise the master will be able to point to the Ciceronian original "wherewith he shall conferre . . . and correct" the translation.[62] As with Kempe, Ascham is vague on exactly what constitutes the final form of the exercise, "the like shape of eloquence."[63] Is it an idiomatic variation? A copy? Again, this seems to be a functional ambiguity. But Brinsley's account of *Analysis* and *Genesis*—"resolving and unmaking the Latine of the Author, and then making it againe just after the same manner"—is more specific. He wants to see "the very same latine of their Authors," coming back to the same words. The process is like retracing the steps of a journey, "for there is the same waie from Cambridge to London, which was from London to Cambridge."[64] Brinsley manages to combine the journey of translation with the safety of repetition. In canceling the difference between the exercise and the original by conferring and correcting, the scholar is returned to where he started: he is like a prodigal son, who has ventured out into the vernacular but is now come home safe to a London, or an ancient Rome, that has been waiting, unchanged and immemorial, for his return.

This tendency of double translation to resolve to repetition is yet another instance of an exercise that cancels time, not in this case by reducing a narrative text to an anarrative form, but by returning the student at the end of the process to the very text with which he began. Any time taken or lapsed could only be legible in a difference between the beginning and the end, and that difference is effaced by correction. There is, all the same, a stubborn middle to these exercises: an "hour at the least" between the first translation and the second for Ascham, and for Kempe, "three or foure houres."[65] The question of what this meantime is for—for remembering? for forgetting?—will recur as part of a general problem of the difference between teaching time and learning time.

$$a \rightarrow \boxed{A}$$

61. Ascham, *Schoolmaster*, 14–15.
62. Kempe, *Education*, in *Four Tudor Books of Education*, ed. Pepper, 230.
63. Ascham, *The Schoolmaster*, 87.   64. Brinsley, *Ludus*, P1r, O4v–P1r.
65. Kempe, *Education*, in *Four Tudor Books of Education*, ed. Pepper, 227.

The summit of these schoolroom exercises and the synthesis of the boys' training in grammar, logic, and rhetoric was *composition*: of themes, letters, sometimes verse, and ultimately orations. The oration in particular is closest to the action in the real world that supposedly waited outside, the persuasive authority of counselor or governor held up to the schoolboy as the reward for his diligence. Such forms are also closest to literary imitation: in the latest stages of his curriculum at Plymouth, Kempe goes so far as to propose that "imitation may bee exercised in verse likewise. . . . As we see Virgil to have imitated Homer in method."[66] This kind of composition offers the most resistance to pedagogical reductions. It is harder to fit the student oration to the simplest metaphors of mind—to read back from the finished product to anything like a slate, or a vessel of wine. The idiom of literary imitation, outside school, defers to this difficulty. Poesis is usually described not as method, but by metaphor, digestion or honey making or other concessions to the inner alchemy by which reading becomes writing. The belly and the hive are secret spaces, and if they have a method, we cannot see it at work.

But again it is characteristic of the humanist program to render visible what is hidden by such metaphors. That is what it means to make such a complex process as composition teachable. The five-stage Ciceronian program, which Kempe adapts for his upper degrees, is the answer, with its steps of *inventio*, or finding arguments; *dispositio*, ordering them; *eloquentia*, ornamenting them with the schemes and tropes; *memoria*, committing everything to memory; and *pronunciatio*, the graces of performance.[67] The process draws on all of the exercises that lead up to it, offering the student a procedure by which the memory-structure of the commonplaces may be put to work in argument. Of the five stages, *inventio* is generally considered the most important—so says Cicero—and it provides the larger culture with the most elaborated and specific pedagogical model of what it is like to understand, or just to think about any question at all. (The other stages seem to have much less of a hold on the poetic imagination; they are in any event much less directly associated with poetry as an art of inventiveness.) For these reasons, and because it is so often used to figure thinking in fiction, I will take *inventio* here as a synecdoche for the problem of method in composition generally.

66. Ibid., 236.

67. The earliest Latin treatment of the five stages is the *Ad C. Herennium Libri Quattuor De Arte Rhetorica*, usually known as the *Ad Herennium* and attributed in the Renaissance to Cicero; other sources included Cicero's *De Inventione*, *De Oratore*, and *De Partitione Oratoria*, and Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria*. See Howell, *Logic and Rhetoric*, 66–68.

The verb *invenire* means "to find," and this first step is the gathering of matter for making arguments. It begins with a question: in school, typically a set subject for a theme, something like "Ulysses should urge the Trojans to give back Helen rather than endure the war." The writers of the logic and rhetoric handbooks treat what happens next as a physical event in a mental space. "[Y]ee must drawe the wordes of your question through the places," says Ralph Lever, and Abraham Fraunce advises, "If we shall for exercise sake use to draw any one word through these generall places of invention, it will breede a great plentie and varietie of new argumentes."[68] The "places" to which both men refer are the commonplaces, here understood as a set of relational categories, or ways other matter might bear on the question at hand. (John Brinsley's simplified list in *Ludus Literarius* is pitched to the schoolroom: "Causes, Effects, Subjects, Adjuncts, Disagreeable things, Comparisons, Notations, Distributions, Definitions, Testimonies."[69]) The words of the question—words like "Helen" and "war"—are one by one drawn through those places as through a succession of rooms, where association, like a magnetism between proximate objects, finds out related arguments. Drawing "war" through the *topos* "cause," for example, might yield the argument, "As the wings of birds being clipt, in time do grow out againe: so warlike forces doe continually gather head, except thou often curbe them and keepe them under."[70]

Not only does this method offer a way to start to think about the question, but the darkness of the other mind, the student's mind, is lit up for the master (and for the student) to see. The process evidently relies on that mind being exceptionally well stocked with commonplaces. How did it work in practice? Aphthonius's widely used *Progymnasmata* contains exercises in such intermediate genres as fable and *chreia* (or anecdote-making), and Lorich's schoolroom edition models for students the process of drawing sample questions through the places *a causa*, *a contrario*, and so on.[71]

68. Lever, *The Arte of Reason, Rightly Termed, Witcraft*, P1v; Fraunce, *The Lawiers Logike*, 81v. See also T. W. Baldwin, *Small Latine*, 2:5, and for a useful general survey Langer, "Invention," in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: Volume 3, The Renaissance*, ed. Norton, 136–44.

69. Aristotle's predicaments were popular for this purpose, as was the set recommended by Aphthonius's *Progymnasmata*; see Moss, *Printed Commonplace-Books*, 192–95.

70. Meres, *Palladis Tamia. Wits Treasury*, Gg3v. Cicero defines an argument simply as a "plausible device to obtain belief [*probabile inventum ad faciendam fidem*]" (*Cicero*, ed. Loeb, 4:315). See also Lanham, *A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms*, 170.

71. See for example an exercise in *chreia* that starts from Genesis 50:1, Joseph weeping at the death of his father Jacob; drawing this verse through the place *a contrario* yields a meditation on false tears (Aphthonius, *Aphthonii Sophistae Progymnasmata*, D7v–D8r). See also Riggs, *Christopher Marlowe*, 52–54.

Brinsley advises that scholars closely follow these given examples to start: "These very Theames may be written on, first for incouragement; after, others of like matter to be imitated, according to the same places." His faith in the sufficiency of students' commonplace books for more adventurous composition is limited, and he advises that they rely on a wide range of printed compilations for the "choysest sayings."[72] Many of the books he recommends—like Wrednot's *Palladis Palatium Wisedoms Pallace* (1604)— are organized by topics like "Quietnesse" or "Resurrection." This means that students might simply draw the words of the question through the alphabetical index of such a book; it seems likely they often did, the more so as these collections proliferated.

The question is often asked about invention, and about the five-stage method generally: is it a way of considering an open question, or a technique for marshalling and organizing evidence to support a position determined in advance? One can find arguments for both, in the period and the present day.[73] The tendency of the second to disguise itself as the first is a particularly interesting problem, and one to which we will find Sidney attentive when he stages his forest disputations. We might also pose a parallel question: is *inventio* an artificial method, one thing the mind can do, or does it capture the nature of thinking itself? Here too there is some division. For many educators, invention's relation to thinking more generally is not of particular interest; it is a discipline, in every sense, and if students are doing it then at least their minds are not wandering. But others sound more like Joseph Hall, whose devotional handbook *The Art of Divine Meditation* (1609) Brinsley praises for its account of *inventio*: "I had rather to require only a deep and firme *Consideration* of the thing propounded . . . through all, or the principall of those places which natural reason doth afford us: wherein, let no man pleade ignorance, or feare difficulty: we are all thus farre borne Logicians."[74] That is to say that *inventio* is a true representation

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72. Brinsley, *Ludus*, Aa4v, Bb2v. Charles Hoole, writing well into the seventeenth century, seems even more uneasy about the students' ability to gather sufficient matter, and advises that they pool together what they invent (*A New Discovery of the Old Art of Teaching Schoole*, N3r). See Clark, *John Milton at St. Paul's School*, 218–19.

73. See Ullrich Langer, "Invention," in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, 136–37; Howell, *Logic and Rhetoric*, 68.

74. Hall, *The Art of Divine Meditation*, D5r–D6v. Hall's "*Consideration*" is a word particularly suited to *inventio*-as-thinking, assembling the constellation of related ideas. Hall believes in method, but does not fetishize it: "For as the minde, if it go loose and without rule, roves to no purpose; so if it bee too much fettered, with the gines [engines] of strict regularity moveth nothing at all" (D6r). See also Sidney's friend Abraham Fraunce in his *Lawiers Logike*: "I say, that mans soule hath in it a naturall power and abilitie, whereby it is apt to conceive any thing,

of the operation of the mind, a practice that can be refined by attention and study, but which admits of no alternative save "rov[ing] to no purpose."[75] What school has to teach, then, is what thinking really looks like, how it really works. If, as a poet, I mean to write a scene of deliberation, surely this is how I should conceive it.

Classroom composition remains more complicated than this sketch of invention can compass. It entails any number of other de facto measures of understanding (I understand *X* because I can make something useful out of it; I understand *Y* because I can persuade you that it is true; I understand *Z*—by way of Erasmus's *copia*—because I can dilate it, amplify it, constitute or reconstitute persuasive speech from an atom of argument; and so on). I have suggested that this very complexity—the practical difficulty of judging an oration, as opposed to a grammar exercise—motivates the explicitness of the method of *inventio* and its successor stages. Let us in any event say that as a young, well-educated man in Elizabethan England, you think this way, or think you think this way; when you look inside your own mind, you see what you were taught to see; when you make a mistake, you rebuke yourself for a lapse from this method. What would be the consequences? One, much commented on, is that you will tend to approach any problem as a debate on which you must take a side. This is a cliché of the rhetorical mind-set generally.[76] Another is that you will assume that matters are to be decided or contests won by appeal to a store of shared, often ancient wisdom. Finally, and most important to my argument, *there will be something fundamentally atemporal, anarrative, even ahistorical about the arguments you make*. Even when you draw the words of the question through the place *a causa* you are seeking after commonplaces rather than a narrative, and seeking in a space of memory that is not stratified or sedimented with time, but laid out in a topical field. The mind so represented it a timeless place.[77]

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if it bee directed, turned, applied, and bent thereunto. . . . But to him onely, as Tully sayth, will these generall predicamentes or Categories of argumentes become profitable indeede, which hath beene a travailed and a well experienced man in matters of importance" (81v). As Ann Moss remarks, this idea of methodical invention as the nature of thinking is characteristic of Agricola and Ramus: "Commonplaces are not only 'sedes argumentorum,' but 'sedes naturae.' The headings in the student's commonplace-book are a key to chapters in the book of nature itself" (*Printed Commonplace-Books*, 121).

75. Hall, *Art*, D6r.

76. On such mind-sets see Richard Lanham's introduction to *The Motives of Eloquence*, 1–35.

77. Timothy Hampton describes a version of this problem in his book on the rhetoric of exemplarity, *Writing from History*: he argues that "humanism is marked by an essential paradox" (16), on the one hand acutely sensitive to historical distance, on the other committed to a model of exemplary instruction that ignores that distance. Examples will be the subject of chapter 4;

a *vs.* b

The last routine in this taxonomy, the game that looks most like a traditional game, is *disputation*, where understanding equals winning—the schoolboy equivalent of trial by combat. Contests of one kind or another were a regular feature of school life from the earliest forms, and Erasmus praises the salutary effects of "mutual rivalry," or *aemulatio*.[78] The first exercises in this vein are often close to catechism: Edmund Coote's *English School-Maister* (1596) provides a script for a debate about spelling, and in a marginal note advises, "When your Scholers first learne this Chapter, let one read the questions, and another the answer. When your Scholers oppose one the other, let the answerer answer without booke."[79] Brinsley likewise suggests that students rehearse from memory the "disputations of grammar" from Stockwood's *Quaestiones* (1592).[80] As students progress, disputations become formal, competitive occasions, where success and failure dictate classroom standing, and even the order of seating.[81] These formal debates demand that scholars draw on the same technical powers of invention to fashion their arguments. For their pains, other prizes might be available too: at Sandwich the statutes provide for a once-yearly public "disputacions, upon questions provided by the Master," with the winner to receive a silver pen worth 2s. 6d.[82]

If understanding here looks like winning, there were also subtler ways in which this game might get inside the student's head. Like catechism, it presents thinking as an affair for two voices, and the literary representation of decision-making as an inner debate *in utramque partem* is a familiar

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here I am trying to understand how pedagogical practices contributed to this emptying of time from texts in the classroom.

78. Erasmus, *De Ratione Studii*, in *Works*, 24:682; see also *De Pueris*: "The motives of victory and competition are deeply embedded in our children, and the fear of disgrace and desire for praise are also deeply rooted, especially in children who have outstanding intellectual abilities and energetic personalities. The teacher should exploit these motives to advance their education. . . . In short, by alternating praise and blame, the instructor will awaken in his pupils a useful spirit of rivalry, to use Hesiod's expression" (*Works*, 26:340). Also *De Copia*, in *Works*, 24:303.

79. Coote, *The English Schoole-Maister*, E4v.

80. Brinsley, *Ludus*, Dd1v.

81. For a general discussion of English disputations see Watson, *English Grammar Schools*, 91–97. Sanction could be found in ancient sources, including Quintilian: "Having distributed the boys in classes, they made the order of speaking depend on ability, so that the place in which each of them declaimed was a consequence of the progress which they thought he had made. Judgements were made public" (*The Orator's Education*, 1:93).

82. Quoted in T. W. Baldwin, *Small Latine*, 2:378.

convention long before the Renaissance. The prominence of printed dia-
logues in the curriculum—Cicero's, Erasmus's, and a host of others written
specifically for the classroom—is another tributary of this practice.[83] In the
works I will consider here, the ruminative exchanges one finds in Erasmus's
Colloquia, which tend to feature an authoritative speaker and a neophyte,
are less common than a more competitive, forensic back-and-forth. For
the solitary thinker faced with a moral dilemma, as, for example, Lyly's
Euphues, making up his mind means importing the old classroom inter-
locutor and staging a debate. The habit is one more sign of the hero's
beholdenness to the particular space of his training, that resonant wooden
box that gets reconstructed in the strangest places.

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From this taxonomy of exercises—repetition, catechism, drill, analysis, epit-
ome, translation, composition, disputation—one might derive a set of even
more fundamental figures of understanding: *repetition*, for one (again not
properly a figure at all: it is the absence of trope, of turn), and then a set of
tropical or schematic defenses against it, *reversal* (or other formal, positional
variations), *translation*, *contraction*, *dilation*. Each is something fundamental
one might do with knowledge—knowledge however understood—to prove
a grasp of it. Having those tropes in mind will be useful when we get to the
romances, which experiment with them on the levels both of rhetoric and
of narrative. But by moving to such a schematic extreme, notwithstanding
my efforts to ground these concepts in daily exercises, a vast territory of
school life has already been excluded, including a wide variety of practices
that might bear on this question of what counts as having learned some-
thing. Take, for example, the classroom performance of drama. Putting
on plays was fairly common in the period, and Spenser's teacher, Richard
Mulcaster, was particularly known for the holiday and court productions
at Merchant Taylors'. Fluency of physical movement and dramatic affect
would have signaled to the audience something about which students got
it and which didn't, and some of the same criteria must have been applied
on an even more regular basis in the evaluation of *pronuntiatio*, the actual
declaiming of orations. A couple of steps deeper into the everyday brings
us to manners, a theme in many of the statutes.[84] There is also the matter of

83. On dialogues in English schoolrooms see T. W. Baldwin, *Small Latine*, 1:724–26. See
also Wilson, *Incomplete Fictions*.

84. At Westminster in 1560, for example, one of the prefects "carefully inspects each boy's
hands and face, to see if they have come with unwashed hands to school. . . . This order [*ordo*]
shall be kept every day" (Leach, *Charters*, 507–9). Early humanists, it should be said, had some

punishment. Even the most day-to-day routines, attendance, moving in an orderly way through the classroom, the school's habitus, are kinds of understanding.[85] (Certainly it is said of the student who keeps transgressing them, deliberately or accidentally, that he just doesn't understand—what to do, or that this is for his own good.) All of this is to say that my taxonomy is a long way from being an ethnography of the Elizabethan classroom.

Nor does it exhaust, or come close to exhausting, the frameworks within which the problem of learning presented itself to the Elizabethans. There were rival discourses in natural philosophy, theology (especially the question of conversion), medicine, and even magic for questions of what knowing is and how to recognize it when it happens. The vocabularies of rhetoric and pedagogy were by no means sealed off from these other frameworks by the classroom walls, and some of them will necessarily make appearances in the pages to follow.

But the reductiveness and relative independence of my scheme is still very much the point. For these reductions—like language games in their schematic simplicity—were enforced in practice. All sorts of disciplines and social spaces may aspire to give accounts of the self, from natural philosophy to common law.[86] Some have the worldly authority to impose them, and school is one of those. The interest of some scholars in establishing overarching historical paradigms of subjectivity—especially under the influence of Michel Foucault—can have the effect of distracting us from how the variety of local conceptions interact from case to case, even moment to moment.[87] Capturing that flux of admittedly partial, de facto selves, selves

work to do to elevate reading to the importance of manners, as Sir Thomas Elyot complains in his free translation of Plutarch: "Finally is it not a great foly and madnes that where we do accustome our chyldren to take meate with the ryght hande, and if they do put forthe the left hand, anone we correct them: and for to make them to here good and commodious lernynges, we make no provision nor be circumspecte therin?" (Elyot, *Education*, in *Four Tudor Books*, ed. Pepper, 17).

85. Bourdieu and Passeron's *Reproduction in Education, Society, and Culture* considers how much of school life is organized by instilling manners, routines, and other subcurricular school practices.

86. Elizabeth Fowler writes that "'Character' is the literary representation of person, and we should understand it as comparable to the representations of person in other spheres of cultural practice" (*Literary Character*, 28). I have not adopted her larger analytic framework here—an account of person modeled on genre theory—but I do want to think about school as one of those spheres, within which many different ideas of self are current.

87. Katherine Maus's *Inwardness and Theater in the English Renaissance* is a useful portal into questions of Renaissance subject formation, a debate I will not engage directly. I am interested in the variety of ad hoc subjectivities erected in particular scenes of instruction. Maus observes that "'Subjectivity' is often treated casually as a unified or coherent concept when, in fact, it is

as they are defined by particular social and especially pedagogical transactions, is what I hope to be able to do—it is, I believe, happening all the time in the fictions I will be most concerned with. We are always treating people *as if*, shifting the terms on which we acknowledge them, taking account of them in different lights according as they impress, seduce, frighten, hurt, or love us. We set terms for our interactions that admit, exclude, and sometimes durably shape aspects of our interlocutors. The scene of instruction has its own particular terms and urgencies for these dynamics. To be asked merely to repeat the master's words is different from being asked to imitate Cicero, or to dispute with a classmate; if, after having been licensed to declaim at the head of the class, you are constrained to a regime of catechism, you will feel it as a failure to acknowledge your powers, even an assault upon them. Teachers have the power to open and close parts of their students by how they teach—at least at the scene of instruction, and that is an important scene, and one that ramifies.

Telling Learning

I have managed to elaborate this taxonomy without commenting on the diagrams that divide it, an unsystematic mix of mock-algebra and pictograms that I have used to stand for the fundamental kinds of exercise. I intend them as an ad hoc heuristic, a way of capturing the elementary character of the ideas of understanding I take to underwrite the day-to-day practices of the schoolroom. Their reductions are at least analogies to the reductions inherent in the practices themselves. They also share a quality that I claim for most of those practices, in that, by their nature as diagrams, they *take the time out*, representing a time-bound routine or set of routines as an all-at-once picture. For, one way or another, these exercises are almost all pitched against time: repetition conforms the end to the beginning, as does most double translation; epitome, analysis, and classification are all time-independent ways of grasping a text; composition and debate rely for their matter on the synchronic inner landscape of the commonplaces. My diagrams are not themselves humanist artifacts (though there will be something to say about humanist diagram in chapter 5), but as a group they figure an important tendency in the practices they stand for.

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a loose and varied collection of assumptions, intuitions, and practices that do not all logically entail one another and need not appear together at the same cultural moment" (29). I want (a) to describe a set of those assumptions connected to the classroom, and (b) to talk about what happens when these parts are taken for the whole.

The idea of understanding as an abstraction from time is ancient and durable, written deeply enough into thinking in the West that it can be hard to recognize. It is intuitive: if we are in the middle of events, experiencing them as they sweep past or involve us, surely we cannot understand them. We must step outside, or stand above, or slow down, and develop some account—some representation—upon which we can reflect at our leisure. It must moreover be a representation that we could potentially carry away and apply to similar events at a different time and in a different place. To have that representation is to understand, in a way that subtends most of the other nonce-accounts of understanding I have offered. That representation might take the form of a law, a rule, a moral (in the sense of maxim), or a diagram, but in any case it lifts us gratefully out of both the time of events and the time of narrative. Following Jerome Bruner, we might call this kind of understanding *paradigmatic understanding*, which satisfies us by providing some kind of detemporalized paradigm—again, be it rule, moral, exemplar, picture—to which we can contract and compare the flux of experience. Such understanding "is based upon categorization or conceptualization," writes Bruner, "and the operations by which categories are established, instantiated, idealized, and related one to the other to form a system."[88] In one way or another most of the routines described above produce or traffic in such paradigms.

Because the agenda of this book is to think about how the lessons that the schoolroom teaches find their way into fiction, the most important questions in the chapters to follow will turn on the relation between the varieties of paradigmatic understanding that school cultivates and something we might call (again following Bruner) *narrative understanding*—a mode steeped in time and circumstance, and particularly native to romance.[89] The schoolroom's own distinctive relation to questions of time and story is important to framing this contrast, for what I am ultimately describing is a kind of competition between them over how to *tell learning*. This contest is not only a matter of how narrative fictions are treated when they are brought into the curriculum—we have seen the ways in which Virgil, for

88. Bruner, "Narrative and Paradigmatic Modes of Thought," 98. A parallel line of argument in a more explicitly literary-critical context is made by Karlheinz Stierle in his influential essay, "Story as Exemplum—Exemplum as Story: On the Pragmatics and Poetics of Narrative Texts." He distinguishes between "systematic texts" like maxims and proverbs, and narrative texts.

89. Bruner argues that narrative understanding "deals in human or human-like intention and action and the vicissitudes and consequences that mark their course. It is essentially temporal rather than [like paradigmatic understanding] timeless" ("Narrative and Paradigmatic," 98–99).

example, can be resolved into a collection of commonplaces. It is equally a question of how a classroom reckons time; whether what goes on there is thought of in narrative terms, as a story or set of stories; whether the curriculum itself might be thought of as a kind of story, and how, as a plan for the development of a young man, it might compare to other modes of telling growing up, such as, say, romance.

Central to this project is a distinction between two kinds of time, *teaching time* and *learning time*. The first is the time of instruction; the second is the time within which that instruction becomes useful, meaningful, understood. It will be immediately obvious how much more tractable the first is than the second. Teaching time is best exemplified by lecturing: putting a given matter into an order of words and speaking them out. Lectures may be reliably set to clock time, which governed—usually by way of the local church bell—the ordinary hours of the Tudor classroom, according to schedules that were widely shared among schools.[90] But lectures are also normally paced with at least some attention to the students' powers of receiving them, and it is a reformers' *topos* that teaching should not go too fast for learning. This is where the gamelike structure of exercises comes in, as a way of synchronizing teaching and learning. Exercises allow for proofs of understanding within a manageable compass; they are games you can play to their finish within an hour, a day, a year, and within a long room filled with eighty boys. What gets taught, and what counts as knowing it, will be profoundly shaped by the local conditions of this demand for proof. Schools are not a place for slow time; they are impatient to know what (or better, whether) their students know.

One could think of all of this apparatus, the whole structure of school, as a defense against an alternative conception or recognition of learning time, which treats it as something much less definite, much more contingent: the kind of learning that must wait for its proof, wait until that moment when it can be somehow unfolded in action, or for that belated, years-later epiphany, *ah, now I understand!* "Time will tell," we say, or *veritas filia temporis*. Such patience over an indefinite *meantime* allows lesson and proof to be profoundly disjunct, and the idea of proof itself becomes more dilated and obscure, perhaps closer to the romance ambition of Spenser's Redcrosse—"his hart did earne / To prove his puissance" (*FQ* 1.1.3)—than to the "probation days" at the Merchant Taylors' school.[91] (*Probare* means

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90. See, for example, the various timetables in the statutes collected by Leach in *Educational Charters*, esp. for Eton in 1530 (451) and Westminster in 1560 (507–17).

91. Probation days were an annual feature of the school year at Merchant Taylors' from its founding, including Mulcaster's tenure there; see Draper, *Four Centuries of Merchant Taylors'*

"to try" or "prove"). This kind of learning time is open to hazard and fortune, even defined by it. The schoolroom is built to shut it out.

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This is not to say that the long Tudor school day admits no time but teaching time. Every schoolmaster recognizes that the boys cannot be exercised all day, that there must be intervals of play. Brinsley considers daily breaks useful because "honest recreations" improve the boys' concentration at their proper tasks; they "gaine so much time every day, as is lost in those intermissions."[92] Such breaks are worthless or "lost" in themselves, but they are a necessary condition for the success of the lessons they interrupt, a kind of pastime or meantime. Learning as play is also an important humanist idea: Ascham is one of many who recommend folding *ludus* and *labor* together.[93] But the most revealing alliance of teaching time and meantime is one we have already glimpsed, those three or four hours Kempe allows to lapse between the two phases of double translation. What are those three or four hours *for*? For remembering in, perhaps, to test the memory across a blank interval. (The students were surely occupied with other tasks, but were not being taught the matter on which they would shortly be tested.) But is that time not equally for forgetting—that is, isn't it the point of this scheduled meantime that one *might* forget? How can it be justified except as a window of necessary risk, of chance? Such indeterminate middles acknowledge the vagaries of learning time within a regimen that otherwise tends to insist on its synchronization with teaching. They pay tacit tribute to the relation between proof and time itself, setting boundaries to that time but not attempting to define what will happen in it. There is an analogy to the plot of the prodigal son, where the teaching resides in the frame, but the

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School, 1561–1961, 248. The exercises administered on these days were eventually collected and published under the title *The schools-probation: or, Rules and orders for certain set-exercises to bee performed by the scholars on probation-daies* (1661).

92. Brinsley, *Ludus*, Qq2r.

93. Roger Ascham may disparage the "pastime and pleasure" of reading "certain books of chivalry" (romance is for him paradigmatic of lost time), but he elaborates a classical and Erasmian theme in arguing that learning itself can be a kind of play (*Schoolmaster*, 68; see also Quintilian, *Orator's Education*, 1:75, and in his *De Pueris* Erasmus writes, "If a gentle method of instruction is used, the process of education will resemble play more than work [*ludus videatur, non labor*]," *Works*, 26:324). Submerging the ends of exercise in the structure of game—substituting extrinsic purposes for intrinsic pleasures—allows him to blur the boundaries between the two. He recounts how Socrates spent his last days in the practice of metaphrasis, turning "prose into verse" as his "exercise and pastime . . . when he was in prison" (*Schoolmaster*, 98). Other writers, like Mulcaster in his *Positions*, praise the lessons to be had from a variety of physical exercises, from archery (one of Ascham's favorites) to vigorous laughter.

meaning of that teaching *might* be thought to depend, however obscurely, on the hazards of the middle.

Richard Mulcaster allows himself to ponder this problem in earnest. His treatment of time is one aspect of a general concern for the responsiveness of teaching to "circumstance." He insists, as many others do, that the readiness of students for school not be determined by mere calendar years: "ripenes in children, is not tyed to one time."[94] But he also allows himself to meditate on time in more fundamental ways. "Time of it selfe," he declares, "is the noblest circunstance wherwith we have to deale," the most important and demanding contingency—a challenge he conceives on the model of the orator's responsibility, a moral and political responsibility, to his occasion. The proper instruction at the proper moment "profiteth the *common weale* by perfiting all"; time demands the educator's respect as "the *prerogative* to thought: the *mother* to truth: the *tuchestone* to ripenesse: the *enemy* to errour: mans only stay, and helpe to advice."[95] Time is the medium of thinking; truth unfolds there and error is confuted. Again and again he insists that it is in time alone that we can know what we have learned, and *that* we have learned: "the time to prove well learned [is] long," and "proofe travell in time will perfourme."[96] At least at these moments Mulcaster entertains a different idea of proof than that of the set exercises given on probation day at his own school. He is Spenser's teacher, after all.

But one searches in vain for another Elizabethan educator who does more than recycle the *topoi* of pedagogical timeliness, and even Mulcaster's *Positions*—which he thought of as only a prologue to a full account of grammar teaching—never gets around to showing in any detail how this expansive sense of learning time might be written into the curriculum. The general claim I made in anatomizing the classroom's exercises stands: that they are constructed to impose atemporal conceptions on time-bound materials. If this is true, then, what does that mean for conceptions of *narrative*, for time as it is figured in the telling of a story? Granted, school characteristically rewrites stories in nonnarrative forms. But perhaps these exercises themselves, as events in time, have their own, so far unrecognized narratives—with their beginnings and endings, and the contingent middle before the scholar's answer? And what about the arc of the curriculum, from first beginnings in petty school to the heights of the sixth form? Are stories embedded in the structure of school?

94. Mulcaster, *Positions*, 31.
95. Ibid., 257.

96. Ibid., 144, 39.

I think not. I want to adopt a more demanding definition of narrative than the mere tripartite structure of beginning, middle, end—one better suited, in particular, to describing romance. Following Aristotle, let us say that narrative is a structured mimesis of life in time. (So far, of course, the same could be said of school.) Narrative is structured in the sense that it is the imitation of an action that is complete in itself, or at least carries expectations about closure and origin—the sense of an ending, as Frank Kermode would say, and the sense of a beginning, even if neither is realized.[97] But I want particularly to emphasize what Aristotle identifies as the change of fortune within those bounds, change that can take the form of a complex plot of *peripeteia* (a reversal of conditions) or *anagnoresis* (a reversal of knowledge, or recognition).[98] Romance multiplies reversals under the sign of error. Such transformations, and the sense of contingency they produce, are essential to narrative's mimesis of time, to the experience of fictional time. It is the feeling of doubt, expectancy, not-knowing, and other states of suspension—states that nonnarrative discourse is mostly concerned to exclude—that endows narrative with its capacity to express duration, and makes it host to the kind of long time, learning time, within which something we do not yet understand will prove out.

Such a definition might permit these school games to be seen as minimal narrative structures, framing as they do the indeterminacy of the student's performance. But even if we allow this, still they exert a palpable antinarrative pressure by telescoping the long time of learning to the short term of teaching. What about the bigger picture, the curriculum as narrative, the pattern of the grammar school student's progress through the forms? There is, to be sure, a necessary order to his career, a beginning and an ending and eight or so years in between. But what happens to the student over that time is typically imagined by educators in one of two ways. First, as the careful safeguarding of an original innocence, by protecting the student from bad influences and exposing him to good. This optimism is characteristic of Erasmus in most of his moods, and identified with humanism more generally, especially at its Italian origins. Second, and conversely, the project may be viewed as the constant correction of a childish nature congenitally disposed to stray, the formation of habits of rectitude by steady discipline. This is an older, one might say Augustinian strain, but both are legible, in different proportions, in most educators.[99] Neither story—if we can call

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97. Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1450b20ff; Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending*.
98. Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1452a20ff.
99. Gerald Strauss traces these two lines to Quintilian's optimism on the one hand, and Augustine's "extreme pessimism" on the other, while acknowledging that other readings of

them that, and I would suggest we should not—gives scope for reversal, for a kind of recognition that is specifically the transformation and overturning of a previous understanding. Neither one is a plot that makes the necessary space for error.[100] They are rather cycles of repetition that add up, year to year, to a set of good habits and capacities.

The point then of this meditation on classroom time is to describe how deeply what critics have identified as the antinarrative bias of humanism is inscribed in the order of school itself, in the way school taught students to understand the texts they read, even narrative texts, and in the implicit account the curriculum gave of what growing up was like.[101] There were, to be sure, differently shaped narratives of growing up available. Some of the allegorizations of the *Aeneid*, like Landino's, took Virgil to describe the hero's maturing into his responsibilities as a founder of nations, and then there were stories like *Daphnis and Chloe*, the Greek romances.[102] But from our modern vantage, in the long wake of the bildungsroman, it is important to recognize that for the sixteenth century, education—learning, over time, to be an adult—simply was not the sort of thing you typically told a story about, and even less was it conceived of as by its nature narrative. For Fielding's Tom Jones, growing up (to the extent that he does) cannot happen except by means of a narrative structure, with its reversals and recognitions; that is the natural shape of learning. His maturity is not a matter of rejecting experience but of being shaped by it. That was not at all obviously so for Pyrocles or Redcrosse Knight or even for Hamlet. The 1580s and 90s are an essential moment in the history of the bildungsroman, but a moment when its possibility is only struggling to be born, and mostly, tendentiously, failing.

Behind such failures, and we will see many of them, is the conflict between those two kinds of understanding: paradigmatic understanding, particularly as it is rooted in the forms taught in school, and narrative understanding. Paradigmatic understanding abstracts its object from time; it is the text as already read, understood according to its topoi, its laws. It is

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Augustine were available (*Luther's House*, 51). The more pessimistic side of Erasmus is on display in his *Institutio Principis Christiani*, about which more in chapter 3.

100. Ascham is interested in error as an element of learning, though only as an opportunity for correction: "For I know by good experience that a child shall take more profit of two faults gently warned of than of four things rightly hit" (*Schoolmaster*, 15).

101. Kinney discusses this antinarrative bias in the course of constructing an alternative in *Humanist Poetics*, 3–38. See also Helgerson, *Elizabethan Prodigals*, 1–19. C. S. Lewis argues that "the great literature of the fifteen-eighties and nineties was something which humanism . . . would have prevented if it could" (*English Literature in the Sixteenth Century*, 19).

102. On allegorizations of the *Aeneid* see D. C. Allen, *Mysteriously Meant*, 142–54.

powerful, useful, and deserves sympathetic recognition: we certainly could not ever live without it. But under the particular circumstances I am studying here, generic and historical, it becomes identified with an institution and a program of reading that writers have reason to resist. Narrative understanding refuses both paradigmatic abstractions and their institutional origins in favor of a kind of explanation that insists on time and circumstance. The difference between them is the difference between answering a question by stating a maxim and by telling a story. The insistent demand of works like *Arcadia* and *The Faerie Queene* for narrative understanding can be read in their sheer resistance to criticism, how, as critics reading one another's work, we can always go back to the narrative to point out some nuance of plot that casts doubt on our general claims. They are built specifically for this: they solicit and flatter trained reading, while at the same time satirizing it both within their stories and in their rhetoric and structure. On some deep level—perhaps it should be said, paradigmatically, for such is the fate of criticism—they are artifacts and prisoners of an unresolved opposition between story and school.

A Culture of Teaching

It remains to ask—why *this* generation of writers? Poets had been going to school for centuries. Why should these three men, students in the grammar schools of the 1560s and 70s, have been so haunted by the scene of their own instruction? One answer is that some version of this study might indeed be written about any age, and perhaps about any genre, too. Lyly, Sidney, Spenser, and their romances make up just one episode in that eternal struggle between art and education.[103] But there are reasons why it is a pivotal episode. The first of them, as I have already suggested, has to do with the new centrality of secular poetry to the curriculum. A poet coming of age in those first generations of institutionalized English humanism would have had to decide, willy-nilly, whether he wanted to be read as he had been trained to read. But there were also broader, political reasons why these young men might have looked at school differently than their predecessors had; why they might be more inclined to be suspicious of its role in a new social order, an order that was to balk, in different ways at different times, the ambitions of each of them. G. K. Hunter tells such a story about the youthful disillusion of John Lyly. As the grandson of the William Lily who wrote the nation's grammar book, John had more reasons

103. The last phrase is T. S. Eliot's, from his essay "Blake," in *The Sacred Wood*, 154.

than most to credit the dream that good Latinity was the road to political advancement. He came of age, however, at an awkward moment. "[T]he myth of state-service as the natural end of a training in the humanities" had become "so well established that the up-and-coming literati cannot escape from it," writes Hunter, even as the government was growing "sure enough of itself to dispense with their sometimes embarrassing services."[104] There were hardly places enough in the Tudor bureaucracy for all the new men trained up this way.[105] The young Lyly struggled to find his.

Variations on this story can be told of Philip Sidney, whose gifts of wit and learning were often more of an impediment to his advancement than a help, and of Edmund Spenser, who went from Merchant Taylors' to Cambridge to provincial Ireland, never lastingly to return.[106] Richard Helgerson's account of the proliferation of romances of the prodigal son—books by young men trying to call attention to their gifts by ingeniously squandering them—testifies to an anxiety that the ordinary paths to advancement were blocked. (Writers like Gascoigne, Greene, and Lodge fit Helgerson's pattern too, along with Lyly and Sidney.) The frustration of these generations must have been compounded by an awareness that the schools that had betrayed them were more than ever an instrument of the government they hoped to serve. Elizabeth's reign had seen an explosion in foundations, with 130 new grammar schools (for a total of about 360) and over £250,000 contributed to school endowments by 1603. These schools enrolled more and more sons of the better gentry and aristocracy, as part of a concerted strategy to get promising young men off horseback and onto benches.[107] As Helgerson puts it, "In no other period of English history has pedagogy been so directly the concern of government."[108] Not only did Elizabeth prescribe a grammar and a catechism, but also the Privy Council kept close watch on the substance of the curriculum. In 1582, for example, it troubled itself to issue an edict against the reading of Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*

104. Hunter, *John Lyly*, 15.

105. Still valuable on the predicament of the educated gentry is Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy*, esp. 183–232. See also his article "The Educational Revolution in England, 1560–1640," esp. 70–71. David Riggs treats the question in his biography of Christopher Marlowe, 61–62.

106. There is a useful summary of the debate about Spenser's advancement in Ireland in Richard Rambuss, "Spenser's Life and Career," in *The Cambridge Companion to Spenser*, ed. Hadfield, 30–31.

107. Alexander, *Growth of English Education*, 185. On the Tudor project of bringing the aristocrats into schools, see Stone, *Crisis*, 303–31; on that transition over a larger historical scale see Orme, *From Childhood to Chivalry*, esp. 217ff.

108. Helgerson, *Elizabethan Prodigals*, 29.

and *Tristia*, recommending Christopher Ocland's somewhat less humid *Anglorum Praelia* instead.[109]

Recent literary and historical scholarship has emphasized the ways in which humanist pedagogy—its practice, on the day-to-day level of exercises—was adapted to this consolidation of autocratic power. Even in those classrooms from which Ovid was exiled, the curriculum still prescribed texts of great moral and political complexity, Virgil and Cicero prominent among them. But Cicero's republicanism or the anti-imperial pathos of Dido were easy to evade, so the argument goes, under the intensely philological regime by which they were read. Among all the grammatical, logical, and rhetorical timber the plots of the old *silvae* are hard to see. As Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine put it, such study

> stamped the more prominent members of the new elite with an indelible cultural seal of superiority, it equipped lesser members with fluency and the learned habit of attention to textual detail and it offered everyone a model of true culture as something given, absolute, to be mastered, not questioned—and thus fostered in all its initiates a properly docile attitude towards authority.[110]

However they may have celebrated the public eloquence of the Roman forum, the schools were better set up to produce good bureaucrats, and in England they were producing more of them than the market could bear. The long shadows of Foucault and Fritz Caspari fall across such explanations.[111] I am persuaded by Rebecca Bushnell's caveat that "pedagogical

109. "in all the grammer and free schooles within their severall Dyoces the said bookes *de Anglorum proeliis* and peaceable governement of her Majestie maye be, in place of some of the heathen poetes nowe read among them, as *Ovide de arte amandi*, *de tristibus*, or suche lyke, may be receyved and publickly read and taught by schoolemasters unto their schollers in some one of their formes in the schooles fitte for that matter" (edict of the Privy Council, April 21, 1582; quoted in T. W. Baldwin, *Small Latine*, 1:112).

110. Grafton and Jardine, *From Humanism to the Humanities*, xiv.

111. Foucault's interest, especially in the middle of his career, in "disciplinary technologies" has particularly shaped the way literary scholars have interpreted humanism, and inspired the increasing scrutiny of particular classroom practices. See, for example, Halpern's *The Poetics of Primitive Accumulation* and Stewart's *Close Readers: Humanism and Sodomy*. Caspari's *Humanism and the Social Order in England* argues for the fundamental conservatism of humanism as a movement: "During the sixteenth century, English humanists evolved a social doctrine with which they tried to defend and improve the existing order of society. They used their knowledge of Plato and Aristotle, of Cicero and Quintilian, to justify the aristocratic structure of English society, the hierarchy of 'order and degree' in the state" (2). Rebecca Bushnell reviews this skeptical line in the introduction to *A Culture of Teaching*, "Humanism Reconsidered," 10–22.

texts oscillated between play and work, freedom and control, submission and mastery," and that for the schoolmasters this was a "*functional* ambivalence," expressing an unpredictable mix of impulses to individuation and conformity.[112] But what follows will show a bias toward the skeptical side of this debate, because I take it that it was in this direction that the former schoolboys I will study tend to err.

The challenge is to capture that double sense of debt and resentment that these poets, whose greatness depended so deeply on their education, felt toward their teachers and their teachers' legacy. On one side of a spectrum is the freedom of being at home in your own training: its rules seem natural, it fits the life you lead, and its prescribed ends align with your desires. On the other, the freedom of critique, of finding a vantage outside that training from which it is legible as a representation, and from which you can ask disinterestedly, representation *of what*? Once again, the middle is the territory of this book, where you feel somehow misled or betrayed, miseducated, and struggle for terms to think and write about that predicament that are not its own terms.

There is at least one more historical reason why that struggle might have been so acute for the generation of Sidney and Spenser. My own development of Bushnell's phrase "a culture of teaching" is intended to register the deep and distinctive sense in which humanism conceives of all knowledge pedagogically. This is starkly visible, for example, in the routines of catechism, where instruction and test are identical—to know the catechism, to know your faith, is to be able to recite your part in the script, to do exactly the thing you do in school. The same problem is writ large in Paul Oskar Kristeller's widely accepted claim that humanism is not so much a philosophy as an educational reform movement, a pedagogy, a method.[113] The imperatives of teaching exercise enormous authority over the shape of knowledge generally.

Something of what is at stake in saying that humanist knowledge is pedagogical knowledge may emerge from a modern parallel. Twenty-first-century science records and conveys knowledge in a variety of forms, from learned articles to searchable databases. A relatively small portion of its materials—considered just in terms of what gets printed and circulated—is

112. Bushnell, *Culture of Teaching*, 19.

113. "Renaissance humanism was not as such a philosophical tendency or system, but rather a cultural and educational program which emphasized and developed an important but limited area of studies" (Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought*, 10). On the reception of this claim see Nauert, "Renaissance Humanism: An Emergent Consensus and Its Critics."

prepared specifically in order to provide instruction, as opposed to information. It is a familiar lament among curricular reformers today that much science teaching is merely the delivery of facts, often in a form and sequence ill-adapted to the needs of students. Humanist scholars made similar complaints about the pedagogy of scholasticism. By contrast, they celebrated their own success in putting materials in the best order, making them swift and easy of apprehension. (The limit of that project may be the Ramist diagrams of the curricular *artes*, where the arts' native structure and the order of their proper instruction are indistinguishable. More on this in chapter 5.) This convergence of knowing and teaching is part of what Victoria Kahn refers to as the humanist "resistance to theory"—the preference for practical reason over speculative systems, where practice increasingly, as she describes, took the form of pedagogical method. (She too finds the culmination of the humanist culture of teaching in the thinking of Ramus, where "pedagogy . . . is not simply the means of instruction: it is the subject matter as well."[114])

Or another, still blunter way of putting it: for this generation, books were teachers, and to read was to be taught. With cheaper books and ever higher rates of literacy, a wide range of other readerly motives was sinking hardier roots into the culture, but—as the endless pedagogical rhetoric in the prefaces to the most pleasurable and trivial volumes testified—all acts of reading were still under the shadow of school and church. In a way quite foreign to us, any scene of reading was a scene of instruction.

This is to say that when a poet circa 1580 set about to write a poem to fashion a gentleman in true and noble discipline, his culture had an elaborate script for him, ideas about teaching and learning that were written more deeply into his training and intellectual culture than it is easy for us moderns to imagine. This script marked him; it also dictated the way his readers would understand what they read. The first of the poets in this study to wrestle with that challenge will be John Lyly. Since the argument that has gotten us this far is a complicated one, it will be worth briefly summarizing its premises one more time before turning to him:

1   At the heart of education is an epistemological problem, the teacher's question, *how do I know you understand?*

114. Kahn, "Humanism and the Resistance to Theory," 159. Ramus is simultaneously the "death of humanism" for Kahn, insofar as rhetoric is so profoundly subordinated to logic in his thought. See also her *Rhetoric, Prudence, and Skepticism*, esp. 135.

2   Pedagogical practices are constructed to answer that question by providing specific representations of what knowledge is and what it looks like to know it.

3   Such routines—the exercises that school students in the practices of trained reading—also make larger representations of knowledge, knowing, learning, and thinking, representations that define but also carry beyond the scene of instruction.

4   Such exercises, and the reading practices they cultivate, also represent the student as learner, and in so doing offer what amount to ad hoc theories of the self, which will shape the master's teaching and the student's self-understanding; these likewise define and also carry beyond the scene of instruction.

5   It is a common tendency of these exercises to render narrative or historical texts in anarrative forms: they share an idea of understanding as taking the time out.

6   They likewise offer an account of education itself as an a- or antinarrative process.

7   Romance, as the quintessentially narrative mode, offers itself as a way of thinking outside or against this kind of training: a way of testing given understandings and exploring alternatives by reinvesting them in time.

In his *De Ratione Studii*, Erasmus writes to an audience of teachers that the best way to know a subject is to teach it: "For there is no better means of grasping what you understand and what you do not. Sometimes new ideas occur to one in preparing a lesson [*commentanti disserentique*], and everything is more firmly fixed in the mind when teaching."[115] Any teacher can recall moments when an idea seemed to achieve a new depth, clarity, or connectedness under the pressure of explaining it; and conversely, moments when a student's question, or just the unexpected faltering of one's own confident stream of talk, exposed lapses of memory or reasoning. So much still seems natural to us today. But the idea that teaching is the *best* way of knowing—there is something about this that is both the glory and the curse of humanism. By teaching, and teaching well, I may just assure myself that you know what I want you to know; even that we know the same thing. I consolidate my confidence in a set of ideas about what knowledge is. But is it also only by teaching—teaching you? declaiming in the classroom of my own mind?—that I can ever be sure that I know myself?

115. Erasmus, *Works*, 24:672.