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Alison Jane Dibble

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M.A. by Research

PASTORAL ELEMENTS AND IMAGERY  
IN  
OVID'S *METAMORPHOSES*:  
'THE TRANSFORMATION AND TRANSMUTATION  
OF THE  
ARCADIAN DREAM'

ALISON JANE DIBBLE



20 APR 2005

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ALISON J. DIBBLE

'They, looking back, all the eastern side beheld  
Of Paradise, so late their happy seat,  
Waved over by that flaming brand, the gate  
With dreadful faces thronged and fiery arms:  
Some natural tears they dropped, but wiped them soon;  
The world was all before them, where to choose  
Their place of rest, and Providence their guide;  
They, hand in hand, with wandering steps and slow,  
Through Eden took their solitary way.

[John Milton, *Paradise Lost* Book XII, lines 641-9]

Is not love a divinity, because it is immortal? Did I not  
appear sanctified, even to myself, because this love had for its temple  
my heart? I have gazed on you as you slept, melted even to tears, as the  
idea filled my mind, that all I possessed lay cradled in those idolized,  
but mortal lineaments before me. Yet, even then, I have checked  
thick-coming fears with one thought; I would not fear death, for  
the emotions that linked us must be immortal.

[Mary Shelley, *The Last Man*, 109]

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## PREFACE

Unless otherwise stated, all English translations of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* are from the following texts:

Hill, D. E. (trans.), *Ovid Metamorphoses I-IV* (Aris & Phillips: Warminster, 1985)

Hill, D. E. (trans.), *Ovid Metamorphoses V-VIII* (Aris & Phillips: Warminster, 1997)

Hill, D. E. (trans.), *Ovid Metamorphoses IX-XII* (Aris & Phillips: Warminster, 1999)

Hill, D. E. (trans.), *Ovid Metamorphoses XIII-XV and Indexes I-XV* (Aris & Phillips: Warminster, 2000)

## INTRODUCTION

### 1. General Introduction

We all have a unique picture of landscape that we carry with us on our own personal viewing-screen in our heads. This intimate singular view is skewed through the lenses of literary conventions and artistic schools when we read any poet's narrative images of landscape, from Theocritus to Housman, Hughes, and Heaney. The rural environment alters and even transmutes as a consequence of human exploitation and then guilty attempts at reparation through the ages, as our species stumbles from need (or greed), to a sensibility of our negative impact that has implications of environmental catastrophe.

If one accepts that the concept of the archetypal 'bucolic' landscape is only a convention, then it is possible to situate 'pastoral' poetry *anywhere* and *anywhen*. The difficulty with that hypothesis, however, is that the landscape of any literary work becomes a mere backdrop. An unfortunate image is conjured up of an inexpertly painted canvas of a faintly rustic scene of trees at an earnest but dishevelled amateur pantomime.

Of course the tradition of the bucolic paradigm effortlessly places the readers where the pastoral poet wants them to be. In just the same way this conventional use of the poetic countryside environment saves a wasted effort on the writer's part, as Shakespeare knew well. When Viola enquires of the Captain and sailors at Act 1.2 in *Twelfth Night*, 'What country friends is this?', and the Captain replies, 'This is Illyria, lady.', the audience knows that there has been a dramatic shift of location in every sense. Similarly, when Theocritus paints the picture in the opening lines of *Idyll I* (where we are presented with water trickling down rocks, a pine tree standing by a spring, tamarisks growing on a gently sloping mound, a Priapic figure, oaks, elms, and a seat), the stage is set for (possibly) the first, and arguably the most *bucolic* of poems. The readers know exactly where they are, and as this style of poetry becomes a recognisable convention they will anticipate the enjoyable and entertaining banter between two herdsmen that is to take place in this location.

This formula is more than successfully used by Virgil in his *Eclogues*. The pitfall, however, of overdependence on such a stylistic element is that it becomes

hackneyed. Cartoonists often use the visual prompt of drawing a sandbank surrounded by water with a solitary palm-tree to depict a deserted island. This visual shorthand is not suitable for pastoral poetry, in that the appearance of one tree does not make a poem *pastoral*. It could be argued that if one strictly applies the Theocritean or even Virgilian template of the bucolic location to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, then there are possibly very few genuinely pastoral passages in the fifteen books. The most obvious examples are Mercury's aetiological tale of the discovery of music in the story of Pan and Syrinx (1.689-712), and the fable of the musical contest between Marsyas and Apollo (4.382-400). The frankly gruesome legend of the satyr is a perfect example of the pastoral convention, not least in its patent recollection of both Theocritus's *Idyll*.I and Virgil's *Ecl*.X.<sup>1</sup> However, the fate of Marsyas is very different from that of Corydon or his fellow herdsmen.

There are of course many strands of recognisably pastoral elements in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the most common being the poet's depictions of the locations of the myths and legends he retells. It is in this work that Ovid displays his quixotic eclecticism of style and content, combined with a genius at manipulating this material to such an extent that he transmutes myth itself. The reader of the *Metamorphoses* is given an opportunity to engage in the world of fable as never before. Solodow states:

He transposes it to the most familiar terms by removing that which is distant, divine, or supernatural and making the stories purely human and contemporary instead. His mythological world is very matter-of-fact. He turns mythology away from its concentration on the general and generic, toward the illumination of unique moments in the life of the individual.<sup>2</sup>

One could go further and argue that though this domain of Ovid's is indeed 'matter-of-fact' it is never ordinary. The poet's gift is to take the reader into the story by the means of creating a landscape that is at once a combination of a recognisable setting and a location where one can imagine the implausible or even the strange taking place. It is my argument that Ovid achieves the same adroitness at metamorphosing

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<sup>1</sup> Kenney, E. J., *Ovid's Metamorphoses* (OUP: Oxford, 1998), 411. See also Hill, D.E.: *Ovid Metamorphoses V-VII* (Aris and Phillips: Warminster, 1992), 183, on the common motif of pastoral lament.

<sup>2</sup> Solodow, J. B., *The World of Ovid's Metamorphoses* (The University of North Carolina Press: London, 1988), 75.

the landscapes of the fables he retells, while at the same time creating powerful and vivid images of the settings.

There are at least four distinct and identifiable landscapes in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*: the wilderness; the bucolic world of nymphs, satyrs, and various deities; the rustic cultivated garden; and finally the urban. The three distinctly rural landscapes are of interest here. The first is the true wilderness, which provides Ovid with an opportunity for the enjoyable frisson in the midnight world at Lycaon's disturbing transformation (1.230-43), and amusement at the mock-heroics of Meleager and his companions on the disastrous boar-hunt (8.260-444).

The second location is the most mythological world of fantasy which moves us away from reality (and perhaps, too, the furthest from regular pastoral). This is the landscape where anything is possible: where satyrs are flayed alive (6.386-91); nymphs are changed into plants (1.548-56 and 10.488-94); a youth and an elderly devoted couple into trees (10.141-2 and 8.712-19); boys into spring-flowers (2.509-10, 10.209-16, and 10.731-9); nymphs into bears and cows (2.476-85 and 1.610-11); lovers into lions (10.698-704); women into birds (5.671-8); a hunter into a stag (3.193-8); farmers into frogs (6.374-81) and where a deity rapes and abducts another (5.395-404).

The third and last landscape of interest here is a single location in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the rustic cultivated garden of Pomona (14.622-771). It is in this setting that Ovid presents us with the most secure and comfortable environment and coincidentally subverts his more familiar tragic, comic or even bizarre story closures with a genuinely unsentimental happy-ending.

The rustic landscape of the *Metamorphoses* is transmuted by the author, in order to provide the ideal environment for the incidents that take place, and the atmosphere he wishes to create in the retelling of those events. If one were to compare the effect of the imagery Ovid depicts with that of landscape painters one would agree with Segal, 'His landscapes, then, are impressionistic rather than realistic.'<sup>3</sup> Looking closely at Ovid's scenery one could argue that his vistas are more Turner than Constable, with the dark, brooding menace of Caspar David Friedrich, and at moments the clarifying, almost photographic, glimpses of Andrew Wyeth.

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<sup>3</sup> Segal, C. P., *Landscape in Ovid's Metamorphoses: A Study in the Transformations* (Franz Steiner Verlag GMBH: Wiesbaden, 1964), 6.

This study is an attempt to show Ovid's achievement in taking the simple scene of the bucolic song contest and transforming it into the landscape of the dark pastoral that is so familiar to the Romantic tradition, and on into the safe secure world of the *locus amoenus* in miniature - the country-garden. The countryside traditionally provides the *locus amoenus*, the key feature of which is the opportunity for escape from the vicissitudes of every-day life, as Tibullus understood very well in his *Elegy* I.1. In his discussion *Pastoral*, Marinelli explains it thus:

Pastoral's concern with time is what, first and foremost, renders it universal, for it is one of the most deeply rooted instincts of mankind to claim that the world is too much with us and to find an escape from the overwhelming present in a sanctified past or in some indistinct and redeeming future. Those are the only two possible escapes, other than a hedonistic glorification of the present moment itself; the looking backward to the past in the Arcadian vision. Pastoral begins with Theocritus remembering his Sicilian boyhood from the perspective of the over-ripe court of Alexandria in the first half of the third century.<sup>4</sup>

So it would appear that even Theocritus mediates his bucolic art through the lens of nostalgia and of course part of the bitter-sweet enjoyment of the wistful longing for the half-remembered childhood days is the escapism such reminiscing provides.

The focus of this survey will investigate the effectiveness of the methods Ovid employs to create atmospheric environments that ideally suit the more dark, sinister, and possibly disturbing elements in the myths and legends in the *Metamorphoses*. It is my argument that it is in this way that Ovid brilliantly subverts the essential features of the *loci amoeni* he presents - refuge, sanctuary, and escape - in many of the stories he retells. And it is this undermining of the archetypal pastoral conventions of tranquillity and safety that acts as the agent of transmutation of the landscapes Ovid illustrates throughout his poem, as the destinies of Marsyas, Narcissus, Actaeon, Daphne, Persephone, Arethusa, and numerous others reveal.

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<sup>4</sup> Marinelli, P. V., *Pastoral* (Methuen & Co. Ltd.: London, 1971), 9.

## 2. Some definitions of terms

As the title of this thesis makes clear, the terms 'pastoral', 'bucolic', 'arcadia' or 'arcadian', 'pastoral poetry', 'pastoral genre', *locus amoenus* and *loci amoeni* are used as *general* terms. The emphasis of this thesis concentrates on *elements* and *imagery* that are *recognisably* pastoral and bucolic with pastoral identifiers within the depicted landscapes e.g. rurality, tranquillity, beautiful or attractive appearance etc. The subtitle is a deliberate pointer towards the *imaginary* pastoral landscapes that enamoured and continue to delight the readers of Virgil's *Eclogues* and similar Latin poetry such as Tibullus's *Elegy* 1.1 and Horace's *Odes* I and IV in particular.

At the outset it must be emphasised that the central theme of this thesis is not an attempt to redefine pastoral terms. Throughout this thesis, such terms as 'pastoral', 'bucolic', 'arcadia' and *locus amoenus* will be used. The difficulties in using these terms unambiguously is exacerbated by the vast canon of scholarship on definitions of these terms, where it would appear that no two scholars agree on clear, precise or concise clarifications.

It has been increasingly frustrating to note how scholars of Latin poetry shy away from giving definitions of the 'pastoral'; as Patterson states in the introduction to her book: 'Nor will this book launch another attempt to define the nature of pastoral – a cause lost as early as the sixteenth century, when the genre began to manifest the tendency of most strong literary forms to propagate by miscegenation, and a cause reduced to total confusion by modern criticism's search for "versions of pastoral" in the most unlikely places.'<sup>5</sup>

The 'pastoral elements and imagery' in this thesis are *not* what Alpers refers to as 'ungoverned inclusiveness'.<sup>6</sup> They are as specific and identifiable as 'pastoral' in the imaginary, idyllic sense. Alpers too, though, evinces difficulties in finding precise and scholarly elucidation of the formal appellation 'pastoral':

Pastoral is a familiar topic in the academic study of literature. It seems an accessible concept, and most critics and readers have a fairly clear idea of what they mean by it. Yet there is no principled account of it on which most people agree, and it sometimes seems as if there are as many versions of pastoral as there critics and scholars who write about it. Apart from the happy

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<sup>5</sup> Patterson, A. M., *Pastoral and Ideology: Virgil to Valéry* (University of California: Berkeley, 1987), 7.

<sup>6</sup> Alpers, P., *What is Pastoral?* (University of Chicago Press: London, 1996), ix.

confusion of definitions, it is clear to no-one, experts or novices, what works count as pastoral or – perhaps a form of the same question – whether pastoral is a historically delimited or permanent literary type.<sup>7</sup>

So Alpers is no *real* help either, and the elusive nature of reaching an absolute definition of ‘pastoral’ is worsened when one investigates further. In the hope of discovering a more helpful passage than those above, one returns to the scholarship concerning possibly the first legatee of the Theocritean pastoral heritage, Virgil. Lee’s introduction to the Penguin edition of *The Eclogues* should be most useful here. This statement would appear to be most practical: ‘In Virgil’s hands the *Idyll* turned into something rather different from its Theocritean prototype, both in content and form.’<sup>8</sup> Yet, as Lee continues, we return the quagmire of confusion as, apparently, even Virgil is not strictly ‘bucolic’, ‘arcadian’ or ‘pastoral’ when compared with his model the *Idylls* of Theocritus. In his contextual explanations of each *Eclogue*, Lee states thus:

It is, however, a commonly held belief that Virgil’s *Eclogues* are set in Arcadia, ‘the poet’s golden land, where imagination found a refuge from the harsh prosaic life of the present’ (to quote Conington, p. 2), but like some other commonly held beliefs this turns out on investigation to be untrue.... In fact, the only *Eclogue* explicitly set in Arcadia is X, the last one.

But this conclusion, it will be argued, is all too literal-minded: Virgil’s Arcadia must be understood in Conington’s sense, metaphorically, as an imaginary world far removed from the trials and accidents of real life. But is that true?<sup>9</sup>

And so Lee’s discussion continues throughout his introduction in much the same vein. If one accepts Lee’s arguments that Virgil adapted the Theocritean pastoral convention to suit his artistic and intellectual needs in writing his *Eclogues*, then this is most helpful. It is part of one’s argument that Ovid has employed a similar technique to Virgil’s, and in fact has taken this much further in his *Metamorphoses*.

Another useful text in this regard is Hunter’s introduction to Verity’s translation of the *Idylls* of Theocritus.<sup>10</sup> Here Hunter explains that Theocritus had precedents for his ‘bucolic’ poetry in the Sicilian poets, Athenaeus and Epicharmus. He also explains that the ‘Doric colouring’ of the colony’s writers connected them

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<sup>7</sup> Alpers 1996, 8.

<sup>8</sup> Virgil, *The Eclogues* trans. Lee, G. (Penguin: Harmondsworth: 1984), 17.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>10</sup> Theocritus, *Idylls* trans. Verity, A., introduction and explanatory notes, Hunter, R. (OUP: Oxford, 2002). See Introduction 3: ‘Bucolic Poetry’, xiii-xviii.

with 'the traditions of western Greece'.<sup>11</sup> The tradition of bucolic poetry could be set, he argues, as early as the beginnings of the fourth century B. C. with the work of Philoxenus in his poem *Cyclops or Galatea*, which is probably the inspiration for Theocritus's *Idyll* 11. In his introduction, Hunter provides a useful argument in support of the use of pastoral terms in this thesis:

As for the descriptions of the countryside themselves, it is important that such poetic descriptions are, to some extent, inevitably repetitive – particularly in a hot climate such as that of Greece, where the presence of water and shade is always likely to be important, and where, moreover, a detailed particularity in the landscape is only rarely the focus of poetic interest; thus the description of a 'real' landscape, i.e. one with which the poet and/or the audience is familiar and to which geographically specific names may be attached, may be barely distinguishable from an 'imaginary' landscape, which in any case will be built by the imagination from both visual and intellectual experience. So too, the use of or allusion to the landscape descriptions of Homer are as common in 'real' as in 'imaginary' settings; ancient poets habitually see through the lenses of prior texts.<sup>12</sup>

Though Hunter's comments apply specifically to Theocritus and his 'bucolic' *Idylls*, this statement could be applied with equal veracity to the depictions of the countryside in its various forms in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

It could be argued that the appeal of the pastoral settings in the poetic genre of the 'pastoral' is a mere indulgence in nostalgia, a view which is discussed by Cairns in his book on Tibullus.<sup>13</sup> The world of the pastoral could tip over into a description of the frivolous; however, Elder argues that some of the visual aspects of the depictions of the countryside by any pastoral poet must be recognisable. As Elder explains:

The pastoral is a most difficult genre: the dangers of inanity or silliness lie all about the pastoral poet. He must extract from our world, from the real world, what measure of goodness and innocence we have, and compound his bucolic world out of these qualities of purity. His bucolic world, then, will be Utopian, but all the same it must have the features of reality. We must be able, by suspension or what you will, to give credence to it. The countryside and its shepherds must be painted in strong clear lines. They must seem real, if only for a moment.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, xiii-xiv.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, xv.

<sup>13</sup> Cairns, F., *Tibullus: A Hellenistic Poet at Rome* (CUP: Cambridge, 1979).

<sup>14</sup> Elder, J. P., 'Tibullus: Tersus Atque Elegans' in Sullivan, J. P. (ed.), *Critical Essays on Roman Literature: Elegy and Lyric* (Routledge & Kegan Paul: London, 1962), 79.

Elder goes on to discuss the 'moral quality' of pastoral poetry. This is a very nineteenth-century idea of art redolent of Ruskin, that art is a force for moral good. Some critics may see this idea as very outmoded, but Elder's arguments are authoritative and convincing. It certainly raises the status of pastoral poetry. So an interest in the pastoral becomes elevated from an insouciant indulgence in nostalgia to a genuine desire to seek perfection.

There is, however, a considerable body of work where scholars have attempted to identify real landscapes depicted in Latin poetry. Gilbert Highet's book, *Poets in a Landscape*, is a typical example. This somewhat dated but readable book discusses the landscapes known to Catullus, Virgil, Propertius, Horace, Tibullus, Ovid and Juvenal. In his chapter on Virgil he makes this pertinent point:

But a poet is not a photographer. A photographer immortalises what is apt to be transient and to disappear. A poet can create ideal scenery, with a few essential details. He seldom cares to do more. In fact, he gives us, expressed in words the same delightful memory that we ourselves have of a landscape which has struck as beautiful, a valley or a coast where we have been happy.

In the first of his poems called *Bucolics*, or *Shepherd Poems*, Virgil paints a little landscape in the manner of Corot. Distant though it is, vague though it is, we can yet love it as the ideal summer scene in a country which is not too hot: where there are no palm trees and scorpions, no dry river-beds and starving wells, no blinding deathly sun at noon-day, but a genial summer, almost too warm and yet luxuriously lazy. The painting, however, is not merely a genre picture. There is a story (however disguised) behind it.<sup>15</sup>

This statement of Highet's encapsulates perfectly how the memory of a Latin poet informs the imaginary landscape of his literary works.

Regardless of whether Ovid's scenery is real, his description of landscapes within the stories of his *Metamorphoses* is so vivid that they facilitate the imaginations of audience and reader.<sup>16</sup> Lee supports this standpoint:

In Ovid, sensuous imagination and accurate observation give his poetry a clarity and definition of outline that contrast sharply with the vaguer and more evocative manner of Virgil. The pictorial detail in Ovid sometimes recalls the wall paintings in Roman villas, known to us from those that have been

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<sup>15</sup> Highet, G., *Poets in a Landscape* (Prion: London, 1999), 60.

<sup>16</sup> For a discussion on the comparisons between Ovid's depiction of warfare in Tomis in *P.* 1.8 (poem to Severus) and arguably the 'nostalgic pastoral' of his homeland, see Williams, G. D., *Banished Voices: Readings in Ovid's Exile Poetry* (CUP: Cambridge, 1994), 26-34.

preserved in Pompeii. Ovid grew up among such works of art and they must have influenced his imagination strongly. Conversely, painters in later ages were enthralled by Ovid's exuberant fancy and drew inspiration for mythological pictures from the pages of his *Metamorphoses*.<sup>17</sup>

When explaining a typical stylistic technique of Ovid's such as the poet's use of the term *locus*, Stephen Hinds elaborates:

The word *locus*, then, is the unstated common factor as opening and close combine to make a composite pun, unmistakable in its double impact, on the standard formula for marking the boundaries of a set-piece description in narrative. The word-play is no idle one. It reveals Ovid in a typical attitude, not only painting a scene but watching himself paint it. At Met. 8.624 he writes *haud procul hinc stagnum est...*, and a pool appears. Here at Met. 5.385 he writes *haud procul Hennaeis lacus est...*, and, while the pool appears just as clearly, there is also visible a poet writing about a pool, drawing attention by means of a nice pun to the fact that his description is constructed according to a well-established literary formula.<sup>18</sup>

It is important to emphasise Hinds's remarks here on Ovid's 'painting a scene'. It is exactly that *ability* and the *vivacity* of Ovid's portrayals of the countryside in his *Metamorphoses* that underpins the central arguments of this thesis. Ovid's achievement is to take the convention and use it uniquely to enhance the juxtaposition of his 'idyllic', 'pastoral', 'bucolic' and even 'arcadian' landscapes and violent events that take place in these settings within many of these stories. As Hinds makes clear, the pool is a quintessential part of the bucolic landscape. (Ovid vividly describes pools in the stories of Meleager and the Calydonian Boar Hunt (8.260-444), and in the Tales of the Muses (5.250-678).)<sup>19</sup> E. J. Kenney supports the view that this is exactly what Ovid so effectively achieves throughout his *Metamorphoses*. In his introduction to Melville's translation of this work, Kenney fully accepts that some of Ovid's landscapes are recognizably idyllic: 'In this dangerous and uncertain world a happy

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<sup>17</sup> P. OVIDI NASONIS METAMORPHOSEON Liber 1, Lee, A. G. (ed.) (CUP: Cambridge, 1979), 24-5. Cf. Galinsky, K., *Augustan Culture* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1996), 192-7 for a detailed discussion on the comparisons between Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Augustan wall paintings.

<sup>18</sup> Hinds, S., *The Metamorphoses of Persephone: Ovid and the self-conscious Muse* (CUP: Cambridge, 1987), 38.

<sup>19</sup> See Williams 1994, 46-8 for a comparison of the setting of *Met* 5 and the landscape of Sicily as depicted in *P* 2.10:21-4 describing a visit by Ovid and Macer.

ending is the exception (iv.575n.). Repeatedly the emphasis is on deception and violence; the reader soon comes to realize that the description of an idyllic landscape is a prelude to rape or bloodshed (iii.407n., etc). Nothing is ever quite what it seems; nobody's identity is ever wholly secure.<sup>20</sup> It is the identity of these particular *loci amoeni* that one has attempted to discover in this thesis.

The attractiveness and evocative nature of the pastoral genre is explained by Segal thus:

Part of the delight that pastoral gives is its evocation of the entirety of its tradition in a kind of timeless present. This may be a result of pastoral's tendency to exclude the temporal dimension or its late development as a highly conventional self-conscious literary form. Its conventional nature also allows it to absorb a wide range of previous literary works and blurs the distinction between creation and imitation. As a form of original creation, pastoral underlines the fact that all literature exists with reference to other works of literature and not as unmediated representation of "reality". For the same reasons pastoral particularly needs to be placed in its poetic tradition. Indeed it demands that the reader locate it at once within that tradition.<sup>21</sup>

Even though Segal's erudite discussions on ancient pastoral in this book concentrate on the works of Theocritus and Virgil, they have proved most apposite in interpreting the conundrums that pervade any attempt to provide convincing definitions of 'pastoral poetry'.

In his discussion on water as 'narrative pattern', Segal also discusses the *locus amoenus*:

This ambiguity of water parallels the ambiguity of the *locus amoenus* which adorns and refreshes. Such *loci* are frequently the haunt of deities who may be either friendly or destructive both by turns. In Theocritus' fourth Epigram water has an important place in a *locus amoenus* which shelters a potent image of Priapus...

Here too Theocritus is drawing upon very ancient strata in Greek culture. A beautiful setting with paradoxically dangerous overtones goes back to the very beginnings of Greek literature.<sup>22</sup>

Ovid's *Metamorphoses* functions very much in this vein. Segal argues that Ovid is in fact a Hellenistic legatee in his depictions of such settings:

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<sup>20</sup> Melville, A. D. (trans.), *Ovid's Metamorphoses* with introduction by Kenney, E. J. (OUP: Oxford, 1998), xviii.

<sup>21</sup> Segal, C. P., *Poetry and Myth in Ancient Pastoral* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1981), 3-4.

<sup>22</sup> Segal 1981, 49; cf. n.11, 49.

The intrusion of supernatural powers permits the display of recondite mythological lore. The sudden turns thereby given to the action encourage the development of shock-effects and pathos within a restricted compass. The Hellenistic poet who most keenly perceived and exploited the possibilities of combining elegant surface description and mysterious divine forces was a Roman: Ovid.<sup>23</sup>

This is an extremely pertinent and succinct definition of ‘pastoral poetry’ that one can apply to this thesis.

Finally Segal argues very persuasively that studying the Greek and Latin classical texts is most beneficial to modern students of pastoral poetry. The sentiments expressed so eloquently here explain most pithily how study of the classical poets provides a staple foundation for any exploration of the genre of the ‘pastoral’ in any age:

Despite multiple permutations and variations, pastoral poetry has proven remarkably durable and consistent in its long journey from Ancient Greece and Rome to the culture of modern Europe and America. The bucolic poetry of Tasso, Milton, or even Mallarmé is far closer to its classical models than is, say, Shakespearean tragedy to Sophocles or the nineteenth-century novel to Apuleius or Heliodorus. In pastoral, perhaps more than any other literary genre, the modern reader is impelled back to ancient originals and is immeasurably helped by comparison with the ancient writers.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 50; cf. n.12, 50.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

PASTORAL ELEMENTS AND IMAGERY IN OVID'S  
*METAMORPHOSES*: 'THE TRANSFORMATION AND  
TRANSMUTATION OF THE ARCADIAN DREAM.'

ALISON J. DIBBLE

CHAPTER I: THE RURAL LANDSCAPE AND THE DARK  
PASTORAL.

(I) The Landscape of the Wilderness.

territus ipse fugit, nactusque silentia ruris  
exululat frustra que loqui conatur; ab ipso  
colligit os rabiem, solitaque cupidine caedis  
uertitur in pecudes et nunc quoque sanguine gaudet.  
in uillos abeunt uestes, in crura lacerti;  
fit lupus et ueteris seruat uestigia formae;  
canities eadem est, eadem uiolentia uultus,  
idem oculi lucent, eadem feritatis imago est. (*Met*: 1.232-9)

He himself fled terrified, and when he had gained the silence of the countryside,  
he howled out and tried in vain to speak; his mouth  
gathered savagery from the man himself and, with lust for his accustomed  
slaughter,

he turned against his flocks and rejoiced still in blood.  
His clothes changed to fur, and his arms to legs;  
he became a wolf but keeps traces of his old appearance;  
his grey head is the same, the same the violence of his face,  
the same eyes that gleam, there is the same wild look.

Lycaon provides the very first individual metamorphosis in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.  
Ovid takes us from the macrocosmic events of creation (*Met*: 1.5-75), to the  
microcosmic transformation of a single being (1.232-9). This transmutation serves a  
number of functions, the most obvious of which is an aetiological story that explains  
Jupiter's vengeful flood (1.253-312), that brings about the fourth anthropogeny  
(1.313-415). Another function is unsettling and lies with the nature of the transmuted  
creature itself - the wolf. This first single metamorphosis results in the most archetypal



beast of the wilderness, the wolf, and certainly for populations of the northern hemisphere this predator is mankind's most feared embodiment of the primeval and preternatural world, with all its sinister concomitants. This element would appear the most fearful, the most primitive, uncultivated, uncontrolled, and unpredictable icon of the environment, as the name wilderness itself implies.<sup>1</sup>

In the same way the wolf represents the bestial in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. This most feared and feral of all beasts is the archetypal enemy of the herdsmen, the most bucolic figures of the pastoral world. From the moment the impious monarch Lycaon is transmogrified into a wolf and banished into the wilderness this environment becomes a place of extreme danger for all mankind. Yet this is an animal that also leaves its natural habitat and encroaches on the managed countryside of the pastoral world. As the representative of the untamed scenery, the wolf, by appearing so early in Ovid's poem, exists as a permanent underlying threat to the cosy, tranquil, perfect world of the most pastoral scenes. And as the following examples will attempt to reveal, Lycaon's behaviour is not so very different from that of the sexual predators who inhabit the more pastoral landscapes (from Apollo to Pluto/Dis, who brook no refusal or obstacle from the objects of their passions).

Lycaon attempts to escape the ruin of his house, but in the place of refuge - the traditional *loci amoeni* of the rural landscape - he cannot evade divine retribution for impiety. The Lycaon myth encapsulates and interconnects with many of the recurring themes in the *Metamorphoses*: the monstrous and grotesque transformation of mortals into non-human; the aetiology of events and natural phenomena; the clarification of the character that the process of metamorphosis reveals; creatures trapped between worlds; and the subversion of literary genres and narrative conventions.

Implicit in Ovid's version of the Lycaon episode is the ever-present threat of the reversal of civilization just as the once powerful monarch living with (one assumes) all the trappings of an ordered cultivated existence, is brought down and transmuted into a slaving beast. If the ever-vigilant herdsmen fail in their duties this same wolf will destroy their charges and thus their livelihoods along with their bucolic existence. If Pomona's horticultural skills fail, her rustic beautifully managed garden will revert to scrubland and eventually to wilderness. And, worst of all for the Romans, if the

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 1 'Audience Perception and Reception in Rome'.

once invincible legions fail to hold back the barbarian hordes, as they did in the forests of the Teutoburg, then all of Roman civilization will unravel - a truth not lost on the modern reader, with the hindsight of history between us and the Romans.<sup>2</sup> So just beyond the bucolic landscape lurks the brooding menace that cannot be ignored, which is so vividly represented by Lycaon's grotesque metamorphosis. Implicit in these topics are a subset of ideas: vicarious enjoyment at the suffering of others; fear of human reversion; enlightenment and the civilizing influence of the new Roman imperialism; urban fear of the wilderness and the bestial; and the undermining of the pastoral idyll. Ovid's subversion of the traditional elements and imagery of the pastoral genre results in a transformation into dark-pastoral in numerous episodes throughout the poem.

### **(ii) The Dangers of Misreading the Signs of the Landscape.**

Ovid subverts the characteristics of the pastoral idyll from the outset and reminds his audience and readers that the bucolic potential of the landscape is always endangered by the savagery of the bestial. Parry makes an important statement on Nature that is valid here:

Nature, so often viewed as the archetypal pattern of human existence, suggests in its cycles both the allurements of wilderness and its dangers. Her more tranquil aspect is, perhaps, more the stuff of traditional pastoral, though even here sadness and ultimate death have their place.<sup>3</sup>

Even the gods are vulnerable to the ferocity of feral creatures. Venus, the goddess of love, avoids the most hazardous animals:

... a fortibus abstinet apris  
raptosque lupos armatosque unguibus ursos  
uitat et armenti saturatos caede leones. (*Met.* 10.539-41)

...she stayed away from strong boars  
and avoided ravaging wolves and bears armed with claws  
and lions dripping from the slaughter of the herd.

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 1.

<sup>3</sup> Parry, H., *Ovid's Metamorphoses: Violence in a Pastoral Landscape*, TAPA 95 (1964), 282.

Adonis is warned by Venus not to risk encountering wild beasts. The irony here is that, though Venus is divine, she herself is terrified of such creatures. Despite her transcendent powers she is powerless in the face of Adonis's death too. So even within the supposed sanctuary of the pastoral setting the gods are impotent against the Fates, as Apollo discovers when he accidentally kills his lover Hyacinthus (Met: 10.162-219). The sublimity of the *locus amoenus* and even the *locus consecratus* is vulnerable to contamination as many stories in Ovid's versions of the myths in his *Metamorphoses* reveal. The most aggressive and violent retributions of the gods occur in such tales as that of Lycaon (1.163-243), Callisto (2.401-535), Herse and Aglauros (2.711-832), Actaeon (3.131-252), Marsyas (6.382-401), and Atalanta and Hippomenes (10.560-707). If even the indigenous population of the countryside, the nymphs and satyrs, and those most at home there, the hunters - Actaeon, Adonis, and Meleager and his companions - are not safe, then one can only imagine how vulnerable the sophisticated urban audience and readers of Ovid's poetry would be. The warning signs are there, not just for the impious, but also for the unsuspecting urbanite, on the risks of venturing into unknown territory. We are witnessing the power of the untamed landscape, where Ovid takes us outside the boundaries of the strictly bucolic. However, in their passionate pursuit of hunting the young hunters overestimate their capacity in achieving success safely. This also adds a welcome and enjoyable *frisson* to the reading of this ingenious retelling of well-known myths and fables. (One is reminded of the admonition to ancient seafarers on medieval maps on the vast uncharted expanses of the oceans 'Here be Dragons!').

As Lycaon seeks the refuge of the countryside (1.232), it is there that Jupiter transmutes him into a wolf and through this metamorphosis he becomes the eternal pariah of civilized life. Callisto the nymph also becomes an outcast - though from no deliberate fault of her own - shunned and rejected by Diana and forcibly ejected from the *locus amoenus* and the *locus consecratus* of the goddess's sacred grove when her pregnancy is discovered:

'I procul hinc,' dixit, 'nec sacros pollue fontes,'  
Cynthia deque suo iussit secedere coetu. (2.464-5)

Cynthia said to her, 'Go far from here, do not pollute  
my sacred streams,' and she ordered her to leave her company.

No longer under the protection of her divine patroness she becomes exposed to the vengeance of Juno, who transforms her into a bear - the animal antithesis of Callisto's beauty, which had fatally attracted Juno's divine consort to her. The wilderness not only betrayed Lycaon and Callisto, it also became their natural environment once they were transformed into wild animals. Although the environment of the remote wilderness does not qualify as bucolic by any consideration, its existence on the periphery of the pastoral serves as an unsettling juxtaposition to the more managed countryside. The fact that the feral beasts can intrude into the pastoral environment at any time undermines the assumed tranquillity and sanctuary of idyllic scenery.

The danger of becoming inured to one's surroundings is dramatically shown in the story-within-a-story of Atalanta and Hippomenes (Met:10.560-707). Venus, - who suffers from that divine characteristic of being quick to take offence - punishes Hippomenes for neglecting to thank her suitably for the goddess's help in winning Atalanta. Lust, which Venus has unnaturally enflamed in the lovers, has blinded them to their surroundings. This leads to their unwitting desecration of an ancient rustic shrine for which she punishes them by transforming them into lions. Ovid, who is particularly talented at writing vivid descriptions of landscape, makes it clear to the reader that the protagonists are in a *locus consecratus*, and these particular lovers should have recognised the signs and modified their behaviour to that which reflects the pious:

luminis exigui fuerat prope templa recessus,  
speluncae similis, natiuo pumice tectus,  
religione sacer prisca, quo multa sacerdos  
lignea contulerat ueterum simulacra deorum;  
hunc init et uetito temerat sacraria probro.  
sacra retorserunt oculos,... (10.691-6)

Near to the temple was a dimly lit secluded place,  
like a cave, covered by native pumice stone,  
and sanctified by ancient religion, where the priest had brought  
many wooden images of the old gods;  
he went inside and defiled the shrine with forbidden debauchery.  
The sacred images averted their eyes,...

The corrupting influence of love is of course a common theme in the bucolic world, as can be seen by two episodes that Ovid depicts in recognisably pastoral settings. Pluto/Dis (5.379-84), is literally stricken with passion when struck by cupid's arrow and subsequently rapes and abducts Persephone/Proserpine, which has appalling consequences for the world, as the young goddess's divine mother, Demeter, neglects her care for the fertility of the crops in her manic search for her child. Polyphemus the Cyclops (13.755-65) becomes so obsessed by his love for Galatea the nymph that he neglects his duties as herdsman and farmer. On numerous occasions throughout the poem Ovid presents us with passion resulting in extreme personal disfunction in characters as diverse as Pluto/Dis, Polyphemus, and Myrrha (10.298-502). The archaic wooden effigies of the ancient gods turning away in disgust is a nice touch and emphasises the appalling nature of Hippomenes's and Atalanta's act of desecration. Ovid continues with the transformation of the unlucky lovers and states that becoming lions is a worse punishment than that of death, which was first considered by Cybele, Mother of the gods, to whom the shrine is dedicated:

turritaque Mater  
an Stygia sontes dubitavit mergeret unda;  
poena levis visa est. (10.696-8)

... and the turret-crowned Mother  
hesitated whether to plunge the guilty ones in the Stygian  
waters;  
the punishment seemed light.

In his notes on this part of the text Kenney states: 'it is better to be a dead human being than a live lion (in the service of the Mother of the Gods). A considered judgement, irony, or simple nonchalance on the part of the poet?'.<sup>4</sup> Considering that lions were yoked to Cybele's chariot, and, though working for a goddess, were not free autonomous beings as they had been in their previous lives, their new existence was not to be envied. The detailed descriptions of the grotesque alterations that the characters undergo (in their transformations) make quite clear how Ovid felt at the thought of humans being turned into feral brutes.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Kenney, E. J. (ed.), *Ovid: Metamorphoses* (OUP: Oxford, 1998) 436.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Ch.II *The Transformation of Beings into the Landscape*, (i) Intro. for an extensive list of examples of metamorphosis as an agent of punishment, reward, or escape.

The hunter Actaeon is another victim of the consequences of not reading the signs of the countryside. For some recondite reasons this young hunter accidentally stumbles on Diana's sacred grove - having been driven there by the Fates - and commits the apparently unforgivable act of seeing the goddess bathing naked. The poet Ted Hughes, in his version of a selection of episodes inspired by Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, places this gloss on the legend of Actaeon:

Destiny, not guilt, was enough  
For Actaeon. It is no crime  
To lose your way in a dark wood.

...

In the fastness of Gargaphie, when Actaeon,  
Making a beeline home from the hunt  
Stumbled on this gorge. Surprised to find it,

He pushed into it, apprehensive, but  
Steered by a pitiless fate - whose nudgings he felt  
Only as surges of curiosity.<sup>6</sup>

Bearing in mind that the punishment of Actaeon seems totally out of proportion with the young hunter's transgression (when one considers that it occurred by accident), one is in sympathy with Hughes's rendering of this episode, as it seems to emphasise the importance of Actaeon's own personality (i.e. a healthy young man with a passion for hunting with the concomitant disregard of the dangers inherent in such pursuits). In this way he is as much a victim of his own character as is Adonis, and even Myrrha.

Again we are reminded that this *locus amoenus* is also a *locus consecratus* as, if read in sequence in the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid has already made us familiar with the beautiful sequestered landscapes<sup>7</sup> that Diana chooses to enjoy with her coterie of nymphs in Callisto's story, where she knows she will not be seen by outsiders:

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<sup>6</sup> Hughes, T.: *Tales from Ovid* (Faber and Faber Ltd.: London, 1997), 105 and 107.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. 2.405-416: Jupiter's chosen domain for his special care; 3.407-412: the pool that captivates Narcissus (in every sense); 5.263-268: the home of the Muses on Helicon that impresses Minerva, when on a visit; 5.385-394: Proserpine's home, where she lives a perfect existence; 5.585-596: the discovery by Arethusa of what she believes is the best place for to bathe; 5.313-381: Latona's resting place where she is taunted by the Lycian Farmers; 8.334-337: the lair of the boar that Meleager and his companions hunt; 10.86-105: the grove of Orpheus, that he landscapes with his music; 10.503-559: the shady glade where Venus indulges herself with her lover Adonis; 13.808-839: the home of

his quoque laudatis, 'procul est,' ait, 'arbiter omnis:  
nuda superfusus tinguamus corpora lymphis.' (2.458-9)

These too she praised and, 'Every onlooker,' she said, 'is far away:  
let's bathe and dip our naked bodies in the water.'

In the story of Actaeon, Diana's sacred grove possesses all the familiar picturesque qualities of the bucolic landscape combined with a sacred place:

uallis erat piceis et acuta densa cupressu,  
nomine Gargaphie, succinctae sacra Dianae,  
cuius in extremo est antrum nemorale recessu  
arte laboratum nulla; simulauerat artem  
ingenio natura suo, nam pumice uiuo  
et leuibus tofis natiuum duxerat arcum.  
fons sonat a dextra tenui perlucidus unda,  
margine gramineo patulos incinctus hiatus. (3.155-62)

There was a valley thick with spruce and tapering cypress trees,  
called Gargaphie and sacred to girt-up Diana,  
and there was, in its furthest recess, a woodland cave  
constructed by no art but by nature, in her genius,  
imitating art; for she had shaped a natural  
arch out of light tufa and the nature pumice stone.  
To the right, there was the sound of a limpid spring and a narrow  
stream  
with its spreading pool surrounded by a grassy bank.

Actaeon's violent death is made all the more distressing and repulsive by the cause of his demise being set in such lovely surroundings. It would seem, though, that line 3.143 undermines the obvious beauty of the setting: 'mons erat infectus uariarum caede ferarum.' However, the description of the landscape at lines 3.155-162 makes clear that, despite the blood-letting of previous hunting exploits at this location, the landscape itself remains beautiful. (On a visit to the National Park site of the Battle of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, USA, one was impressed by the beauty of the landscape around the town. This is all the more remarkable at the area in the vicinity of 'Little Round Top' where the savagery of the battle was at its most fierce. Photographs and eye-witness accounts of what happened at 'Devil's Den' and 'Bloody Creek' seem

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the Cyclops Polyphemus, that he so eloquently describes in his haunting love-ballad to Galatea; 14.622-633: the garden of Pomona - the ultimate gardener.



The idea of Dis being afraid is a paradoxical inversion, for as God of the underworld, he is the deity that frightens us most. Of course, this episode is a simple narrative device to bring Pluto into contact with Proserpine. The reference to his dreadful kingdom highlights the intense contrast with the exquisite surroundings of Proserpine near Henna, at the lake of Pergus, that provides the classic pastoral scene where she innocently gathers flowers:

silua coronat aquas cingens latus omne suisque  
frondibus ut uelo Phoebos summouet ictus.  
frigora dant rami, varios humus umida flores;  
perpetuum uer est. quo dum Proserpina luco  
ludit et aut violas aut candida lilia carpit,  
dumque puellari studio calathosque sinumque  
implet et aequales certat superare legendo, (5.388-94)

a wood crowns the waters, ringing them on every side,  
and with its  
leaves like an awning keeps out Phoebus' blows.  
The branches give coolness and the damp earth a variety  
of flowers;  
there is perpetual spring. While Proserpina played in this  
grove gathering either violets or white lilies  
and was filling up her baskets and her lap with girlish  
enthusiasm striving to outdo her companions in collecting them,

The flowers seem symbolic of her maidenhood and youthful purity, and prefigure the future loss of her virginity. The comparison of her former self with that of Pluto/Dis's consort and new deity of Hades is made all the more poignant by the lack of flowers there, where the cold, darkness, and presence of death, prohibits the growth of beautiful plant life.<sup>9</sup> The purity of the scene is enhanced by the child-like behaviour of the goddess and her play-mates. The brutal act that follows is made all the more ugly and poignant by the delightfulness of the setting and Proserpine's blissful existence there. The rapidity of the ravishment of both girl and the scene - tantamount to desecration - emphasises the frailty of the concept of the *locus amoenus*, 'paene simul uisa est dilectaque raptaque Diti / (usque adeo est properatus amor).' (Met: 5.395-6). 'In many of these tales the violation of the virginity of the main character is paralleled

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. below for the discussion on the role of flowers in pastoral poetry and this poem at Ch.II: *The Transformation of Beings into the Landscape*, (v) 'The Aetiology of Spring-Flowers'

by a metaphorical violation of a virginal quality in the landscape from apparent purity and peace to the opposite.<sup>10</sup> Indeed Segal's comment is re-emphasised by the inability of Proserpine's friends to help her together with the absence of her guardian - her mother the goddess Demeter/Ceres - and the loss of her flowers, so symbolic of her chastity and frailty:

dea territa maesto  
et matrem et comites, sed matrem saepius, ore  
clamat et, ut summa uestem lanariat ab ora,  
collecti flores tunicis cecidere remissis.  
(tantaque simplicitas puerilibus adfuit annis,  
haec quoque uirgineum mouit iactura dolorem.) (5.396-401)

The terrified goddess cried out  
in mournful tone both to her mother and to her companions,  
but more often  
to our mother, and when she had torn her clothing down from  
its upper hem,  
the flowers she had gathered fell from her loosened tunic,  
(And so great was the innocence of her girlish years  
that this loss too moved the virgin's grief.)

Hill, in his notes on this section, states, 'For the speed, cf. Jupiter's rape of Io (1.600-601): here it is all the more stark after the lingering description of nature. Otis (53f.) draws attention to the ways Ovid undercuts the epic pretensions of this passage.'<sup>11</sup>

Segal compares the attack on Proserpine with that of Pluto on the *locus consecratus* of the lake of Cyane:

The lake,... is another symbol of the goddess' virginity. The sexual theme becomes more explicit in the story of Cyane which reflects directly upon that of Proserpina. Pluto, in carrying off the maiden goddess, plunges into Cyane's sacred waters (cf. *gurgite sacro*, 5.469). The "inconsiderable wound" which he inflicts on the lake and its inhabitant is also a sexual wound which symbolically parallels the rape itself...<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Segal, Charles Paul, *Landscape in Ovid's Metamorphoses (Hermes)* (Franz Steiner Verlag GMBH: Wiesbaden, 1969), 39.

<sup>11</sup> Hill 1997, 157.

Cyane is so consumed by grief that she lacks the capacity to be comforted and literally dissolves into her own tearful grief. There follows a detailed description of Cyane's liquefaction:

at Cyane, raptamque deam contemptaque fontis  
iura sui maerens, inconsolabile uulnus  
mente gerit tacita lacrimisque absumitur omnis  
et, quarum fuerat magnum modo numen, in illas  
extenuatur aquas. (5.425-9)

But Cyane grieving for the ravished goddess and the mocking of her own spring's rights, sustained an inconsolable wound silently in her mind and was all consumed in tears and was reduced into the waters of which she had been just now the great divinity.

The divine status of these two female deities fails to protect them from the sexual predation of the male god, and as the brother of Jupiter, Pluto seems to share at least one characteristic of his divine sibling in his dealings with women. And though it could be argued that Jupiter often suffers the indignity of the scolding from his eternally jealous harridan of a spouse, Juno, it hardly compares with the suffering of the likes of Callisto, etc. However, such passages as the fable of Io are highly enjoyable for their comic elements.<sup>13</sup> Through an act of ravishment, Dis/Pluto has also perpetrated acts of desecration against Proserpine and Cyane. Despite this, as one of the three most powerful male deities, his malefaction remains unpunished; it is the minor goddesses, along with mere mortals, who are doomed to suffer in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

In his discussion of the Acis and Galatea story, Segal makes this pertinent point: 'When the metamorphosis itself is in terms of water, the sexual connotations and the ambiguity are especially marked.'<sup>14</sup> Segal re-emphasises this theme in his discussion of the story of Cyane:

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<sup>12</sup> Segal 1969, 54.

<sup>13</sup> For a discussion of the story of Io see below Ch. II section (v) 'The Anthropomorphizing of Animals'.

<sup>14</sup> Segal 1969, 30.

The sheltered lake, on the other hand, is another symbol of the goddess' virginity. The sexual theme becomes more explicit in the story of Cyane which reflects directly upon that of Proserpina. Pluto, in carrying off the maiden goddess, plunges into Cyane's sacred waters (cf. *gurgite sacro*, 5.469). The "inconsolable wound" which he inflicts on the lake and its inhabitant is also a sexual wound which parallels the rape....<sup>15</sup>

The *zona* of Proserpina is displayed by Cyane, whose grief and subsequent transformation has literally dissolved her capacity for speech. Segal's basic premise on the 'ambiguity of setting' and the sexual parallels with Proserpine and Cyane is convincing. He continues the argument: 'It is appropriately in these waters, then, that the *zona* of Proserpina is found floating. Cyane cannot speak...but she still gives to Ceres this clear indication of the truth.'<sup>16</sup> By robbing Cyane of the power of speech, the visual nature of her revelation of Proserpine's fate to her mother makes it all the more pitiful and engages the reader's sympathy with more intensity:

ea ni mutata fuisset,  
 omnia narrasset; sed et os et lingua uolenti  
 dicere non aderant, nec qua loqueretur habebat.  
 signa tamen manifesta dedit notamque parenti  
 illo forte loco delapsam in gurgite sacro  
 Persephones zonam summis ostendit in undis.  
 quam simul agnouit, tamquam tum denique raptam  
 scisset... (5.465-72)

If she had not been changed,  
 she would have told everything; but, though she wished to talk,  
 her mouth and her tongue were not there, she did not have the  
 means to speak.  
 And yet she gave clear signs; so well known to her mother,  
 there had chanced to slip off at that place in her sacred flood  
 Persephone's girdle, and she displayed it on the surface of her  
 waters.  
 As soon as she had recognized it, as if then, at last she  
 knew she had been  
 ravished,....

Cyane's anguish at her loss of speech compares with that of Io (1.637-80) – notwithstanding the comic element where the transformed girl's sounds as a heifer terrify herself – but is made all the worse by her (Io's) inability to communicate her fate to her human family. The *locus consecratus* of Cyane's lake is synonymous with

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<sup>15</sup> Segal 1969, 54.

her own being, and the pollution of her waters is signified by the girdle of the desecrated Proserpine. The belt, symbolic of her chastity, seen floating on the lake, is emblematic of the destructive constitution of the divine, whose pursuit of personal gratification results in violence in many of the stories of the *Metamorphoses*. Although the stream or spring, which is often sacred, is the more familiar archetypal feature of the pastoral landscape, the lake becomes a quintessential feature of the *locus amoenus* in Ovid's poem - as is the concept of sanctuary. In Calliope's tale of Persephone/Proserpina and Demeter/Ceres, the pastoral idyll is completely subverted, as these characters, who are most at home in this landscape, are most in danger there.

The first song of the Muse retold to Minerva includes the poignant tale of Cyane within the well-known myth of the rape and abduction of Persephone. The Muse, Calliope, continues with the tale of Arethusa, whose fate mirrors those of the previous unfortunates. Arethusa is yet another beautiful young female endangered by a divine sexual predator. Transformed, she provides an aetiological recital for the natural phenomenon of an underground river, which in turn gives a narrative opportunity for Ceres' discovery of her daughter's incarceration by Pluto in the Underworld. Although Arethusa's destiny is rather different from that of Cyane or Persephone/Proserpine, in that her transformation provides an escape from damage or even ruin, she does in fact suffer permanent change into a subterranean river. This Arethusa is here introduced as 'Alpheias' (5.487), which is, according to Hill, a term unique to Ovid. This title connects her with the river god Alpheus with whom she is inextricably linked in every sense. Ovid here shows his economy of style and from the first mention of Arethusa she is associated with the minor divinity, whose sexual predation leads to her metamorphosis into the sacred spring in the harbour at Syracuse. It was believed in ancient times that the spring mysteriously linked subterraneously with the Arcadian river Alpheus, and the belief was that an object thrown into the stream would reappear in the spring.

The intertwining of the violation of the daughter of Ceres and the desecration of the land is made by Arethusa herself, who also emphasises the innocence of both victims, as she chides Ceres:

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

“tum caput Eleis Alpheias extulit undis  
rorantesque comas a fronte remouit ad aures  
atque ait: ‘o toto quaesitae uirginis orbe  
et frugum genetrix, immensos siste labores,  
neue tibi fidae uiolenta irascere terrae:  
terra nihil meruit patuitque inuita rapinae. (5.487-92)

Then Alpheias lifted her head from the Elean waters  
and pushed back her dripping hair from her brow to her ear  
and said, ‘Oh mother of a maiden sought in all the world  
and of the grain crops, stop your immeasurable labours,  
do not be violent and angry with your faithful land;  
the land has not deserved it at all, it opened for the rape unwillingly.

One cannot ignore the use of the title *uirginis* (489). By using this word Ovid has emphasised the loss that is central to the whole legend. Though it is accepted convention that the term virgin - here translated as ‘maiden’ by Hill – indicates unmarried young woman or girl,<sup>17</sup> the sexual tone of the last line quoted here (see above 492) makes the term at this point in the legend notable and emphasises the poignancy of Arethusa’s appeal; moreover, it accentuates the destructive power of the acts of violation that, all at once, desecrates and destroys. Despite this, Persephone/Proserpine’s destiny does not achieve closure here. Though his behaviour is reprehensible, Dis does not abandon the goddess he has defiled (unlike Jupiter, whose serial vulpine acts are usually followed by his immediate and callous desertion of his female conquests - witness Callisto in particular). Persephone/Proserpine can reassume her old role as daughter, playmate, mother’s companion, and goddess of spring, for half of the year under the gift of Jupiter in answer to Demeter’s demands (5.564-7); for the rest of the year she is now queen of a whole realm and consort of a powerful god. Divine justice in the ruling of Jupiter brings partial happiness to Demeter, her daughter, and Pluto/Dis. This may appear to be a bearable compromise for the younger goddess; however, her part-time existence in the Underworld seems extremely unpleasant, especially when compared with her previous perfect innocent life with her companions. One is left with the striking image of Persephone/Proserpine as an almost Roman matronly figure seated alongside her divine husband in this doom-

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<sup>17</sup> Hill 1997, 28 and 29.

laden domain (5.506-80), where, according to Arethusa, in her new identity as an underground river, she (Arethusa) witnessess Persephone/Proserpine's despair.

It is in this state that Arethusa risks what she most fears, a forceful union with Alpheus. Even if one allows for the romantic gloss evident in Shelley's poem *Arethusa*, one cannot mistake the sexual overtones of the potential fluidic co-mingling of the divine waters of both Arethusa and Alpheus, and of the perpetual pursuit and escape from the third stanza on:

III.

'Oh, save me! Oh, guide me!  
And bid the deep hide me,  
For he grasps me now by the hair!  
The loud ocean heard,  
To its blue depths stirred,  
And divided at her prayer;  
And under the water  
The Earth's white daughter  
Fled like a sunny beam;  
Behind her descended  
Her billows, unblended  
With brackish Dorian stream: -  
Like a gloomy stain  
On the emerald main  
Alpheus rushed behind, -  
As an eagle pursuing  
A dove to its ruin  
Down the streams of the cloudy wind.

IV.

Under the bowers  
Where the Ocean Powers  
Sit their pearlèd thrones;  
Through the coral woods  
Of the weltering floods,  
Over the heaps of unvalued stones;  
Through the dim beams  
Which amid the streams  
Weave a network of coloured light;  
And under the caves,  
Where the shadowy waves  
Are as green as the forest's night: -  
Outspeeding the shark,  
And the sword-fish dark,  
Under the Ocean's foam,  
And up through the rifts  
Of the mountain clifts  
They passed to their Dorian home.

V.

And now from their fountains  
In Enna's mountains,  
Down one vale where the morning basks,  
Like friends once parted  
Grown single-hearted,  
They ply their watery tasks.  
At sunrise they leap  
From their cradles steep  
In the cave of the shelving hill;  
At noontide they flow  
Through the woods below  
And the meadows of asphodel;  
And at night they sleep  
In the rocking deep

Beneath the Ortygian shore; -  
Like spirits that lie  
In the azure sky  
When they love but live no more.<sup>18</sup>

In stanza III Shelley uses a similar simile to Ovid's to emphasise the raptorial instincts of Alpheus's intentions (Met:5.604-606). The setting for this nymph's affliction is paradigmatical and again the notion of sanctuary is subverted.<sup>19</sup> The stillness emphasised by Ovid adds to the surmised tranquillity of the setting:

lassa reuertebat (memini) Stymphalide silua;  
aestus erat magnumque labor geminauerat aestum.  
inuenio sine uertice aquas, sine murmure euntes,  
perspicuas ad humum, per quas numerabilis alte  
calculus omnis erat, quas tu uix ire putares.  
cana salicta dabant nutritaque populus unda  
sponte sua natas ripis decliuibus umbras. (5.585-91)

I was returning (I remember) tired from the Stymphalian wood;  
it was hot and my exertions had doubled that great heat.  
I found some waters flowing without an eddy, without a murmur,  
clear to the bottom; you could count deep through them  
every pebble and you would hardly think that they were flowing.  
White willows and a poplar tree fed by the waters gave  
natural shade to the sloping banks.

As has been shown, the combination of a peaceful atmosphere and the presence of water is an essential element of the *locus amoenus*. Water and its voluptuous properties are emphasised by Segal in his book:

The innocent play of Arethusa in a sheltered place is also closely parallel with that of Proserpina by the lake of Enna at the beginning of this portion of the book ( 385ff. ).<sup>20</sup> This similarity is only part of a general parallelism between the two episodes. As Proserpina's flowers are soon to reveal associations with their familiar sexual symbolism, so the still water of Arethusa's sheltered place becomes unambiguously sexual and violent.

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<sup>18</sup> Shelley, P. B., *Poems* (selected by Isabel Quigley) (Penguin: Harmondsworth, 1986), 211-212.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Met:5.273-277, Minerva and the Muses on Helicon; Met:3.407-412, Narcissus's resting place and Met:5.385-394, the home of Proserpine and her companions.

<sup>20</sup> Ovid uses the device of exhausted hunters needing rest and refreshment in the *loci amoeni* in a number of stories: cf. 3.155-164, Diana's grotto where Actaeon has sought recuperation and 3.407-412, where Narcissus chooses to rest from hunting stags.



if ever she hears wolves howling around the high pens,  
or a hare's when he is hiding in a thornbush, sees the hostile  
mouths of the dogs and dares not make a move with his body?  
But he did not go away (for he did not see any  
footprints further on); he watched both the cloud and the place.

Alpheus is a cunning predator who uses a hunter's tracking skills in an attempt to capture the nymph. By contrast, Arethusa likens herself to the lamb or the hare who is stalked with a ruthless determination by Alpheus (likened here to a dog on the scent). These colourful hunting tropes would appeal to those of Ovid's audiences and readers who enjoyed the pastoral pursuit of hunting - certainly more enjoyable than the fates of Actaeon, Adonis and the companions of Meleager. In contradistinction, the divine intervention of Diana rescues Arethusa from violation. Through the act of metamorphosis, Proserpine and Arethusa achieve a kind of escape and share a subterranean fate in their new identities. Moreover, though their unaccustomed conditions do not compare with the appalling fates of Marsyas and Actaeon, and the tragic and pathetic loss of Narcissus, Hyacinthus, Adonis, and Cyparissus, neither Proserpine nor Arethusa can ever return to the contented life they had before.

Arethusa escaped her fate through metamorphosis but the nymph Callisto (2.401-535) is not so fortunate. Her transformation follows her rape and impregnation by Jupiter, and as an act of revenge Juno transmutes her into a bear, the added irony being that the hideous creature is the complete antithesis to the beauty that brought about her demise. Only later, when the life of Callisto is threatened, does he change her into a constellation along with their son (creating Ursa Major and Minor), and as with Daphne (1.548-56), Persephone/Proserpine, and Arethusa, metamorphosis acts as an agent of compensation and escape. Callisto's metamorphosis is grotesque (just as was Lycaon's), though her punishment seems undeserved; however, bearing in mind the tradition that Lycaon was Callisto's father, it seems that the inheritance of shame was inevitable.

The parallels between Callisto, Proserpine, and Arethusa are obvious. The moral here appears to be that young beautiful women, whether divine or not, are always at risk from attack by sexual predators. In their natural environment they seem as vulnerable to the effects of the animal instincts of their attackers as a stranger would be in that environment, e.g. Actaeon, Meleager and his companions etc. If taken in

sequence Callisto (2.401-535) is one of the first female victims of divine rape. She then suffers an apparently unjust fate at the hands of her rapist's divine spouse - the permanently jealous Juno - the least compatible partner for the serial philanderer Jupiter. The compensation for all this misery is the transformation of the nymph and her natural son into constellations; these remain as permanent reminders to all - mortal and immortal - of their special relationship with Jupiter, the father and king of the gods. There are two lines in this story that give a prompt to the audience and reader that a major catalytic event is to occur and raises their presentiment:

ulterius medio spatium sol altus habebat,  
cum subit illa nemus, quod nulla ceciderat aetas. (2.417-8)

The sun on high was holding a place just past the midpoint  
as she entered a copse which no generation had cut down.

Here we see two extremely important constituents of the dark-pastoral elements of the *Metamorphoses* - the time of the day or the night, and the remoteness and wilderness of the location.<sup>22</sup> The time period acts as a convention within the narrative; the height of the sun, particularly at noontide, increases the need for the protagonists to seek rest from the heat. This is combined with isolated uncultivated and sparsely inhabited places that provide the settings for many of the stories, and so the anticipation for the prospect of an exciting and unusual event is raised. Those two lines (2.417-18), encapsulate this combined practice of these two ideas, and their use so early in the sequence of fifteen books sets the tone for all the similar stories that follow. In the same way that film scores create the needed response in the viewer, Ovid uses these gestures of time and physical isolation within a bucolic landscape to give the desired emotional cues to his audience and readers. As Hill states: 'That devotees of Artemis

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<sup>22</sup> For times of day and night: cf. 1.219, twilight - when Jupiter first visits the palace of King Lycaon; 1.224ff, when Jupiter condemns Lycaon and metamorphoses him into a wolf; 3.144-145, midday when Actaeon rests from hunting; 10.126, Cyparissus kills a sacred stag; 10.446-451, a detailed description of the dead of night when Myrrha commits her incestuous crime and 10.477, Myrrha flees at 'dark night'.

For wilderness and remoteness: cf. 1.474-80, where Daphne retreats into the woods; 3.155-64, Diana's grotto; 3.400, where Echo hides; 5.263-68, home of the Muses on Helicon; 5.585, the Stymphalian wood where Arethusa hunted; 6.392-95, implication of wilderness and mountainous remote lands in the semi-divine beings who mourn for Marsyas; 8.329-30, ancient woodland where Meleager and his companions; 10.86ff. the hill of Orpheus with the presence of wild beasts and birds (144), implies remoteness; 10.535ff. where Venus hunts with Adonis; 10.686-95, the secluded wood

(Diana) frequent a virginal, uncut, countryside is a notion at least as old as Euripides *Hipp.* 73ff.’<sup>23</sup> So the traditional setting for the legends concerning all the nymphs was a long-established one.

That many of the protagonists in the myths chosen for retelling by Ovid are hunters is not lost on the reader. It would have appealed to the young Romans hearing or reading the *Metamorphoses*, as hunting was the ideal bucolic pursuit for sophisticated urbanites while recuperating from the vicissitudes of city life on their country estates. In her extensive note on line 415, Moore-Blunt explains, ‘*miles erat Phoebes*: *Miles* is applied to women only by Ovid : *Her.* VI.54; XI.48. For military terms in hunting, cf. *Hor.* *Epist.* I.2.67; *venaticus.../...militat in silvis catulus;...*’<sup>24</sup> However, Hill remarks, ‘soldier : the commonplace that the lover is engaged in a sort of warfare ( see *Am.* I.9.1. for a striking example ) is here applied to a devotee of Diana, Venus’ rival’.<sup>25</sup> The convention of the lover as an embattled warrior fighting for the love and recognition of the beloved is a well-known trope of the love elegy.

Ovid’s skilful blending of all these conventions puts his audience and readers at their ease as they will presume to expect what happens next. However, Ovid’s technique in retelling the familiar story of Callisto is hardly formulaic, and various incidents in his version pique the readers’ interest. The audience knows she is pregnant and that in this condition she would no longer be welcome as part of the virgin goddess Diana’s coterie. It is this secret , when discovered, that leads to her exile, and the fact that Callisto is a victim of rape by Diana’s divine father is no mitigation. The most ironical element in this story is Jupiter’s seduction attempt on Callisto which involves deception (he disguises himself as her divine mentor, Diana, his own twin-daughter). Callisto is not only lulled into a false sense of security by her familiar surroundings, but by her failure to realise until too late that her seducer is not her beloved patron:

protinus induitur faciem cultumque Dianae  
atque ait, ‘o comitum, virgo, pars una mearum,  
in quibus es uenata iugis ? ‘ de caespite virgo

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where Atalanta and Hippomenes desecrate an ancient shrine; 11.19ff. where Orpheus is killed; 11.44-49, where the wilderness and wild beasts mourn Orpheus and 13.778-88, Polyphemus’s promontory.

<sup>23</sup> Hill 1985, 204.

<sup>24</sup> Moore-Blunt, J. J., *A Commentary on Ovid* (J. C. Gieben: Uithoorn, 1977), 92.

<sup>25</sup> Hill 1985, 204.

se leuat et, 'salue numen, me iudice,' dixit,  
'audiat ipse licet, maius Iove.' ridet et audit  
et sibi praeferrere se gaudet et oscula iungit  
nec moderata satis nec sic a virgine danda.  
qua uenata foret silua narrare parantem  
impedit amplexu, nec se sine crimine prodit. (2.425-33)

He at once put on Diana's face and her dress  
and said, 'Oh maiden, one from my band of companions,  
which slopes have you been hunting on?' The maiden raised herself  
from the turf and said, 'Welcome, oh divinity, greater, if I am  
the judge, than Jupiter, though he himself hears me.' He laughed as he heard  
her  
and rejoiced that he was preferred to himself, and exchanged kisses,  
not particularly restrained ones, and not the sort to be given by a maiden.

She was preparing to tell what wood she had been hunting in,  
when he stopped her with his embrace and, not without a guilty act, gave  
himself away.

The conceit of line 430 is particularly amusing, and compares with Vertumnus's  
attempts at seducing Pomona, when disguised as a crone (14.658-9). Again, however,  
Ovid immediately changes the tone as Jupiter's apparent playfulness turns to violence  
and the total vulnerability of Callisto is underlined by the narrator's aside in a futile  
appeal to Juno:

illa quidem contra, quantum modo femina posset  
(aspiceres utinam, Saturnia; mitior esses),  
illa quidem pugnat; sed quem superare puella,  
quisque Iouem poterat? Superum petit aethera uictor  
Iuppiter;... (2.434-8)

She, indeed, as much, at least, as a woman could  
(if only you had seen, Saturnia; you would have been more lenient),  
she indeed fought back; but who could a girl overcome,  
or who could overcome Jove? Victorious Jupiter sought the ether  
up on high;...

As the omnipotent rapist, with a cowardly disregard for the consequences of his  
predatory behaviour, Jupiter's treatment of Callisto ironically mirrors that of his  
dealings with Latona/Leto - the mother of his divine twin offspring, Diana and Apollo.  
Callisto's fate is exacerbated by incurring Juno's jealousy, as did Latona before her.

Latona is cursed into permanent exile by Juno as is explained in the tale of the Lycian Peasant Farmers (4.313-81). Diana, Latona's daughter evicts Callisto from the *locus amoemus* she had shared with her when the nymph's secret pregnancy was revealed. In her exile Callisto becomes even more vulnerable and suffers the ultimate indignity of metamorphosis into a grotesque bear. Again the impossibility of escape from the divine predator is emphasised in lines 434-37, where the futility of being a female who is predated on by a powerful male is all too clear.

Daphne would appear to be more successful at avoiding her fate when pursued by Apollo as her transformation preserves her chastity. In the story of Apollo and Daphne as told by Ovid in *Met.* 1.462-567, it is difficult to determine who is more of a victim, the god or the nymph. According to accepted tradition Eros/Cupid was one of the primeval deities who emerged from the Void (Chaos), along with Erebus, Gaia, Tartarus and Nyx – all rather disturbingly dark. Eros/Cupid, according Hesiod's *Theogony*, was one of the primeval deities:

First came the Chasm; and then the broad-breasted Earth, secure seat forever of all immortals who occupy the peak of snowy Olympus; the misty Tartara in a remote recess of the broad-pathed earth; and Eros, the most handsome among the immortal gods, dissolver of flesh, who overcomes the reason and purpose in the breasts of all gods and men.<sup>26</sup>

(Hesiod: *Theogony* 116-123)

This god is a disquietingly sinister version and not the more familiar image of the cute, 'chubby', childlike god. As one of this illustrious group, Cupid, the god of love, was empowered to use his divine gifts against mortals and immortals. In incurring this god's wrath through a specious archery contest Apollo opposed Cupid at his peril:

filius huic Veneris, 'figat tuus omnia, Phoebе,  
te meus arcus,' ait, 'quantoque animalia cedunt  
cuncta deo, tanta minor est tua gloria nostra.' (1.463-5)

The son of Venus said to him, 'Let your bow, Phoebus, pierce all,  
mine shall pierce you; and, by how much all creatures  
yield to god, by so much is your glory less than mine.'

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<sup>26</sup> West, M. L. (trans), *Hesiod: Theogony and Works and Days* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1988), 6.

At an early point in the sequence of books of the *Metamorphoses* Ovid reiterates the power of love - whether for good or evil. This particular act of Cupid's prefigures his attack on Dis/Pluto in Calliope's tale of the 'The Rape of Proserpine' :

... dixit Venus : ille pharetram  
soluit et arbitrio matris de mille sagittis  
unam seposuit, sed qua nec acutior ulla  
nec minus incerta est nec quae magis audiat arcus,  
oppositoque genu curauit flexile cornum  
inque cor hamata percussit harundine Ditem. (5.379-84)

...Venus had spoken; he undid  
his quiver and, as his mother wanted, from his thousand arrows  
picked out one; but there was no other that was sharper  
or less untrue or that would respond better to the bow;  
putting the supple horn to his knee he bent it  
and struck Dis to the heart with a barbed shaft.

These two passages with the events that ensue show the darker side of love and here Ovid again subverts the typical bucolic idyll, where the pastoral love elegy is undermined by unrestrained passion. Hill feels that here Cupid is not a dark threat of the ancient Greek tradition:

Cupid : Greek Eros, sexual love. Not, however, the great cosmic force of early Greek speculation (Hesiod, *Theogony* 120 etc.), the driving force of the world's creation; but the sportive and mischievous boy of poetry and art from classical times to the present day. ...<sup>27</sup>

Hill's statement here is supported by an earlier assertion: 'The mood now changes from an apparent seriousness to an overt lightness, from an almost philosophical analysis of the origin of the world and its moral weaknesses to a cheerful romp through Greek mythology.'<sup>28</sup> However, this argument is challenged by the fact that the effects of Cupid's punishment of Apollo result in the assault on Daphne and her subsequent transformation (where she remains the beloved of the god whose advances she rejected). Although one could agree with Hill that Cupid is not dark, Ovid presents us

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<sup>27</sup> Hill 1985, 184.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 182.

with an amoral character. Apollo is still unpleasant in this story, and his actions do have unfortunate consequences. So again the lack of autonomy of the beautiful female is reiterated. The predacious element of Apollo's pursuit of Daphne is reinforced here with another employment of Ovid's hunting metaphors:

ut canis in uacuo leporem cum Gallicus arvo  
uidit, et hic praedam pedibus petit, ille salutem;  
alter inhaesuro similis iam iamque tenere  
sperat ex extento stringit uestigia rostro,  
alter in ambiguo est an sit comprehensus et ipsis  
morsibus eripitur tangentiaque ora relinquit;  
sic deus et uirgo est; hic spe celer, illa timore.  
qui tamen insequitur, pennis adiutus Amoris  
ocior est requiemque negat tergoque fugacis  
imminet et crinem sparsum ceruicibus adflat. (1.533-42)

As when a Gallic hound has seen in an empty field  
a hare; one uses his feet for finding prey, the other for finding safety;  
one as if just about to get a grip expects to hold on  
right now and grazes his quarry's heels with muzzle at full stretch;  
the other is in full doubt as to whether he has been caught; from the very  
jaws he is snatched and escapes the touch of the mouth;  
thus were the god and the virgin; he swift from hope, and she from fear.  
But the hunter, helped by the wings of Love,  
was quicker and gave her no rest and leant over the fugitive's  
back and breathed on her hair as it flowed from her neck.

Though the convention in the Latin love-elegy of the lover in the role of the noble hunter in an amorous chase is well-known (and taken up in its finest style in the English Renaissance sonnet form), the predatory nature of Apollo's pursuit of Daphne is clear. Daphne is no coquette who may eventually give in to Apollo's desires. Despite playing 'hard to get', she seems genuinely terror-struck by the relentless and overwhelming libido of the sun god's passion. The erotic quality of lines 540-42, is heightened by her fear and the next two lines raise the anticipation of the reader that Daphne will be taken: 'uiribus absumptis expalluit illa citaeque / uicta labore fugae spectans Peneidas undas,'. Daphne's plea to the aquatic deity, who is her father, prefigures the notion in future stories that all nymphs, who possess an exquisite beauty of course, are made most vulnerable to assault because of that attribute: "fer, pater," inquit, "opem, si flumina numen habetis; / qua nimium placui, mutando perde figuram." So even though the story is familiar, Ovid's use of hunting metaphors

suspends the belief of the reader that the ending may change for just long enough to increase the enjoyment.<sup>29</sup>

#### **(iv) Insanity and Suffering.**

Polyphemus, the Cyclops, could be described as a musician of sorts, albeit a strange one. Ovid inverts the concept of the traditional bucolic shepherd's song and also the convention of the love-elegy in the fable of Galatea and Polyphemus (13.738-897). Ovid's treatment of the story is very different from that of Theocritus. As Tissol states:

The first part of Galatea's story, which turns out to have replaced Theocritus's opening address to Nicias, develops from the situation as Theocritus portrays it, but Ovid now invites us to view it from a comically enlarged perspective. Galatea, of course, has nothing to say in Theocritus, whose entire focus is on Polyphemus, his character, problems, and solution. She does, of course, react to him by fleeing: but even that fact we must infer from his pleadings. Ovid has us look at the situation from Galateas's point of view: she narrates the whole story, including Polyphemus's song. What is the experience of an amorous Cyclops? Such a question has no place in Theocritus 11, but Ovid introduces it at the beginning.<sup>30</sup>

Yet again we are treated to an unwanted amorous encounter told from the perspective of the female, which helps to emphasise the darker elements of passion in the pastoral setting.<sup>31</sup> Whilst the hyperbolic grotesqueries of this monstrous pastoral lover seem absurdly comic, and one accepts that love or passion is a sentiment that contains little that is rational, Polyphemus's treatment of Acis exhibits psychopathic violence in the extreme. It is easy to conceive that this Cyclops is the very same monster who consumes the unfortunate companions of Ulysses. The story, as told by Ovid, can be divided into a number of sections: the preamble and explanation of Galatea's tale to Scylla (738-749); Galatea explains how she loved Acis but was loved by the repellent and cruel Polyphemus (750-769); Galatea's retelling of the prophecy concerning the blinding of the Cyclops by Odysseus (770-777); the description of Polyphemus's promontory home and how he sits and sings of his love to his beloved (778-788); and Polyphemus's song to Galatea (789-869). Then, within this song there is his praise of

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<sup>29</sup> Daphne, the nymph, does in fact avoid capture, but at considerable cost.

<sup>30</sup> Tissol 1997, 113.

her beauty (789-797); his reproach of her coldness towards him (798-807); a detailed description of his personal wealth (808-839); details of what he has to offer her materially and his personal beauty! (840-853); Polyphemus boasts of his divine parentage and he rejects the power of Jupiter (854-858); his song ends with the threat that, bemoaning her choice of lover, he will dismember him (859-866). At this point the atmosphere of the story changes, and it now takes on an unpleasant tone. The tale continues with the metaphor of fire for love used in this story (867-881); Polyphemus sees them together, Galatea escapes and Acis calls for help (870-881); the Cyclops pursues Acis as relentlessly as he pursues Galatea's love (881-884) and the story ends with Acis being posthumously granted the divine powers of his grandfather - the river Symaethus - in order to transform himself into the eponymous river Acis (885-897).

What becomes clear, is that the story gradually becomes darker and darker, bringing the reader full-circle to Galatea's misery and loss at the beginning of this story. One is left with the impression that Ovid is gradually revealing the true nature of the Cyclops. These revelations of the protagonists' real underlying personalities is a recurring theme throughout the *Metamorphoses*.<sup>32</sup> Polyphemus's rage simmers to boiling point until in a fulminating outburst he crushes Acis - hardly an act with which to endear him to Galatea. Despite the apparent gentility of his song, Galatea's fear and escape is a recognition of his true nature. Before she relates his song to Scylla, Galatea describes how she first hears Polyphemus's unsettling song:

... latitans ego rupe meique  
Acidis in gremio residens procul auribus hausit  
talia dicta meis auditaque mente notavi: (13.786-8)

... I, hiding in a crag, and sitting  
on my Acis' lap, picked up from afar words such as these  
with my ears and, when I heard them marked them in my mind:

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<sup>31</sup> Cf. Arethusa, Met:5.572-642. and within that story of Cyane, whose fate compares with that of Arethusa and Persephone. See above pp.9-19.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Ch:II(iii) 'Metamorphosis as Clarification'. Cf. Theoc. *Idyll XI*, that tells of the madness of the love of Polyphemus for Galatea. See also below Ch:II (v) 'Aetiology of Spring Flowers', for discussion on love and madness.

In his notes for lines 789-807, Simmons remarks, 'The song of the giant is marred by the tasteless accumulation of the images in these lines, which contrast unfavourably with the opening lines in Theocritus (11.19-24).'<sup>33</sup> Hill goes further:

This list of flattering and unflattering comparisons is a startling reworking and development of Theocritus' treatment (11.19-21), Gow's translation:  
*O white Galatea, why dost thou repulse thy lover - whiter than curd  
to look on,  
softer than the lamb, more skittish than the calf, sleeker than the  
unripe grape...*<sup>34</sup>

The seemingly psychotic mood-swings of Polyphemus become evident as his song deteriorates to mere rantings towards the end. Between lines 789-807 praise of Galatea vacillates from adulation to extreme insult:

“candidior folio niuei, Galatea, ligustri,  
floridor pratis, longa procerior alno,  
spendidior uitro, tenero lasciuior haedo,  
leuior adsiduo detritis aequore conchis,  
...  
saeuior indomitis eadem Galatea iuencis,  
durior annosa quercu, fallacior undis,  
...  
asperior tribulis, feta truculentior ursa,  
surdior aequoribus, calcato immitior hydro,  
(13.789-92 & 798-9 & 803-4)

“Whiter, Galatea, than the petal of the snowy privet,  
more blooming than the meadows, taller than the lofty alder,  
more dazzling than glass, more skittish than a tender kid,  
smoother than shells worn down by the constant sea,  
...  
but the same Galatea is more savage than untamed bullock,  
harder than an oak of many years, more treacherous than the  
waves,  
...  
more prickly than caltrop, more aggressive than a she-bear  
with her cub,  
deafier than the sea, more pitiless than a trodden snake,

<sup>33</sup> Simmons, Charles, *The Metamorphoses of Ovid, Books XIII and XIV* (Macmillan and Co.: London, 1887), 161.

<sup>34</sup> Hill 2000, 165.

The pulverisation of her true love by this monster confirms her worst fears of the Cyclops's bestial nature and innate cruelty. The warped, grotesque and overblown elements of his song and style of presentation are a complete inversion of the light-pastoral songs of the shepherds and goatherds of Vergil in his *Eclogues*. If one compares the hopelessness of Corydon's passion for Alexis in *Ecl.II*, in particular, the love-lorn Polyphemus appears to be even more of a parody of the pastoral convention :

...This most uncouth swain is hero in an entertaining travesty of the pastoral. He combs his locks with a rake and performs a serenade to his Galatea on a Pan's pipe of a hundred reeds, a veritable church-organ; the serenade is arranged elaborately into strophes and anti-strophes and is set to loud music with ponderous rhymes and grating dissonance.<sup>35</sup>

Polyphemus descends inexorably into the bestial creature capable of immense cruelty. Here is the monster of the Odysseus legend whose physical needs must be immediately gratified at any cost and whose propensity to violence lies just under the surface and will erupt at any time. Segal's take on Ovid's version is interesting :

In the Galatea story [the] tension between opposing elements is stronger still, [when compared with the story of Glaucus and Scylla], for the Cyclops' brute savagery infects both the pastoral and marine settings. ...He destroys the happy innocence, the *Veneris concordia* (13.875), of Acis and Galatea... . Hence from an amusing country bumpkin he becomes suddenly the monster whom Achaemenides and Ulysses have barely escaped (cf. 14.167-220, especially 14.192, 212). Here too he is again *ferus* (13.873), as he was in 780. We may see this change most clearly, however, in the lines near the end of the long speech which began with the amusing hyperboles of 789ff., *candidior folio nivei, Galatea, ligustri, / floridior pratis*, etc. Against this charming beginning come lines like  
*viscera viva traham divisaque membra per agros*  
*perque tuas spargam - sic se tibi misceat ! - undas.*  
 (865-66)<sup>36</sup>

The parallels between Arethusa, Cyane and Persephone have already been examined<sup>37</sup> and the connection with Galatea is clear. Again, we are presented with a young woman whose natural beauty places her at extreme risk of unwarrantable and

<sup>35</sup> Rand, E. K., *Ovid and His Influence* (Longmans, Green & Co.: New York, 1928), 65.

<sup>36</sup> Segal 1969, 60.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Chap. I (iii) 'Violations'.

unpalatable attentions of powerful males. The erotic power of liquefaction<sup>38</sup> conjoined with violence is shown in the lines 13.865-6.

So Acis's shattered remains are to be scattered over land and sea (the natural element of Polyphemus) versus water (the natural element of Galatea). Hill comments on 866 thus, '*let him join himself : se misceat* ; a punning allusion both to the ordinary use of the verb 'to mix', 'to mingle' (OLD s.v. 4a) and to the sexual sense (OLD s.v. 4c). The same pun occurs at 5.638.'<sup>39</sup> As well as the sexual tone, there is the allusion to pollution. Segal strongly picks up on that point :

This echo of XIII ... confirms the mixture which Ovid has effected in the Galatea episode between the monstrous and pastoral-erotic sides of the Cyclops. Lines 865-66 also hark back to the theme of the infecting of clear waters with violence. Line 866 gives us the image of a bloody corpse being dragged through clear water and befouling it. These gruesome details replace the sexual connotations of "mingling" (*sic se tibi misceat*, 866), which we have already observed in the Alpheus - Arethusa episode (see 5.638). Love is replaced by death. Unlike the Arethusa... [story] however, it is not the violation of virginal innocence which this staining of clear water symbolizes; here, it is rather a peaceful and idealized love, briefly but effectively conveyed in the scene of 13.786-87, that is marred by unreasoning passion and brutality.<sup>40</sup>

Ovid takes the Polyphemus character one step further than his predecessors, Homer, Theocritus and Vergil. Here we see the ultimate pastoral lover, the archetypal shepherd enlarged to his most grotesque potential. In Ovid's version in his *Metamorphoses*, we return to the vicious primal creature who inhabits Homer's pastoral world. On this occasion, however, he is outwitted by the power of love rather than the native cunning of Odysseus. It is Galatea's ability to quicken the latent powers in Acis which enables him to transform himself into her own element, water. The added irony here is that Polyphemus's threat in line 866 becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. In his discussion on the complexities of examining the genres used by Ovid in this work,

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<sup>38</sup> For detailed analysis of sexual connotations of water refer to Segal 1969, 22-33.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 168.

<sup>40</sup> Segal 1969, 60.

Solodow<sup>41</sup> makes the following comments on the poet's use of pastoral conventions in *Metamorphoses*:

...More extensive and more impressive for its pastoral quality is the plaint which Polyphemus makes to Galatea (13.789-869). Polyphemus of course is the one-eyed giant who traditionally (since the *Odyssey*) had appeared in poetry as a kind of monstrous shepherd. In portraying him as a love-sick swain Ovid is following the lead not so much of Virgil as his master Theocritus, who established the pastoral genre. Elements found in the eleventh idyll of Theocritus, where Polyphemus sings of his love for Galatea, Ovid takes up and reemploys, exaggerating them greatly. ... Ovid amplifies the Cyclop's description of his own wealth. In Greek he had claimed to pasture a thousand sheep, in Latin after remarking that his sheep abound in vale, glade, and cave, he adds wittily :

nec, si forte roges, possim tibi dicere quot sint.  
pauperis est numerare pecus!

(823-24)

Should you ask, I couldn't tell you how many  
there are. Only the poor man counts his flock !

With these exaggerations and other references Ovid both re-creates and plays with pastoral.<sup>42</sup>

The stories of suffering females add many dark passages to tales with a pastoral setting. The fate of these women and girls is a permanent transformation especially as Daphne, Callisto, Arethusa and Cyane are themselves permanently changed. For Galatea, as with Persephone, the change is the ruin of their daily lives and the destruction of their happiness. Finally, the scene of Galatea with her lover Acis (13.786-7) is prefigured by that of Venus with her Adonis, especially as they both have bitterly unhappy endings for the leading ladies, divine or semi-divine:

datque torum caespes; libet hac requiescere tecum"  
(et requieuit) "humo" pressitque et gramen et ipsum.  
inque sinu iuuenis posita ceruice reclinis  
sic ait ac mediis interserit oscula uerbis: (10.556-9)

and the turf will give us a couch; I want to lie down with you at this"  
(and she did lie down) "spot", and she pressed against the grass and him.

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<sup>41</sup> Cf. Tissol 1997, 113-119, with note 52, 119, for an excellent detailed discussion and analysis of the comparisons between the character of the Cyclops Polyphemus in works of Homer and Theocritus.

<sup>42</sup> Solodow, Joseph, B. *The World of Ovid's Metamorphoses* (The University of Carolina Press: London, 1988), 22.

And, putting her neck on the young man's lap, she lay back  
and spoke thus, interlacing kisses in the midst of her words:

As with Galatea and her Acis, this perfect pastoral interlude for Venus and her lover  
will be all too brief.

**(v) Day and Night in the *locus amoenus*.**

The inversion of the traditionally bucolic pastoral-idyll that transforms the  
tranquillity and exquisite beauty of the setting is a technique that Ovid employs in  
numerous stories. As Segal reiterates, Ovid's practice of inverting the conventions is  
utilized in the diverse stories of Daphne and Orpheus:

In some places Ovid seems in fact to be especially conscious of reversing  
the conventional bucolic associates of peaceful *umbra*. In the first erotic  
tale of the poem, the story of Daphne which creates the pattern followed  
so often in later episodes, Cupid inspires the hopeless passion by shooting  
from "Parnassus' shady summit" (*umbrosa Parnasi ... arce*, I.467). ... In  
Book X Orpheus' song draws the trees, which supply the *umbra* otherwise  
lacking (10.86-90). Yet this long description of Orpheus' power to bring  
sheltering *umbra* by means of song enframes (see 10.143) a love-tale in  
which *umbra* is the setting for violent and tragic death (see 10.126ff. and  
also 10.111).<sup>43</sup>

The effect of this produces an unsettling atmosphere, redolent of menace that is the  
essential feature of the dark pastoral. A crucial feature of the secluded landscape is the  
shade that offers not only shelter from excoriating heat but also camouflage. It is the  
heat that drives Narcissus to seek the shade and water to slake his thirst and to  
recuperate:

gramen erat circa, quod proximus umor alebat,  
siluaque sole locum passura tepescere nullo.  
hic puer, et studio uenandi lassus et aestu,  
procubuit faciemque loci fontemque secutus; (3.411-14)

There was grass around it, nurtured by nearby water,  
and a wood that let no sunshine in to overheat the place.  
Here the boy, tired from keen hunting and the heat,

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<sup>43</sup> Segal 1969, 79-80.

had lain down, drawn there by the spring and by the beauty of the place.

Hill makes a very pertinent comment on line 412 :

**overheat** : *tepscere*; the English language developed in a climate that knows little of excessive heat; accordingly, its weather words for warmth tend to have favourable connotations, and those for cold unfavourable ones. Though *tepscere* is far from being an extreme word for heat, it is clear from the context that here it is referring to as unwelcome degree of warmth. Conversely, while *gelidus* can indicate

an unwelcome degree of chill (as at 2.171), it can also indicate a pleasant release from heat (as at 1.689 or 490).<sup>44</sup>

It is true, that those of us born and acclimatized to chillier temperatures ( global warming notwithstanding ), often underestimate the debilitating effects of extreme heat, especially at noon-tide. Segal compares Virgil's use of shade in his *Georgics* and Ovid's in the *Metamorphoses*:

A characteristic mark of the sheltered quality of pastoral settings is shade, *umbra*. Virgil uses shade as one of his pastoral symbols for peace, leisure, the ideal qualities of the special, enclosed realm which he seeks to create as a foil to and escape from the ravaged world of historical reality. This shade, then, is usually welcome and restorative. Shaded places can invite the weary shepherd or the wanderer without suggesting danger. Even the more practical and down-to-earth atmosphere of the *Georgics* advice about real sheep can evoke a shaded landscape which is mysterious, unreal, sacred – and yet totally free of the sinister qualities and lurking violence in similar places in Ovid. *Georgics* 3.327-38 is perhaps the most striking example of the peace, shelter, and stillness which such settings may carry with them: .... In Ovid, on the other hand, the tired traveler or hunter who seeks rest or refreshment in such places does so at his peril, as we have seen in tales like those of Callisto, ... Narcissus, Arethusa, etc.<sup>45</sup>

This then is the quintessence of the dark pastoral of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, where the shade, which is one of the most essential elements of the *locus amoenus* – increases the sense of a brooding and menacing atmosphere Ovid creates in so many of his stories. After the ekphrasis of lines 86-8 of Book 10, Orpheus creates his own shade:

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<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 227.

<sup>45</sup> Segal 1969, 78-9.

collis erat collemque super planissima campi  
area, quam uiridem faciebant graminis herbae.  
umbra loco deerat; qua postquam parte resedit  
dis genitus uates et fila sonantia mouit  
umbra loco uenit.... (10.86-90)

There was a hill, and at the top of the hill a most level  
plane which was made green by blades of grass.  
Shade was missing from the place; but, after the god-born bard  
sat down there and moved his sounding strings,  
shade came to the place...

Anderson's series of notes on the Orpheus legend – as told by Ovid in Books 10 and  
11 – make interesting reading:

*umbra*: to complete the pastoral landscape, trees and shade, are necessary.  
Ovid plays with the situation in the correspondences of 88 and 90, exploiting  
the well-known details of Orpheus' power over nature, so that not  
only animals, but even trees supposedly attend him.<sup>46</sup>

The catalogue of trees follows giving an opportunity to tell the aetiological tale  
of Cyparissus, and as Anderson points out the noonday motif is linked with the height  
of summer, symbolised by the constellation of the Crab:

aestus erat mediusque dies, solisque uapore  
concaua litorei feruebant bracchia Cancri;  
fessus in herbosa posuit sua corpora terra  
ceruus et arborea frigus ducebat ab umbra. (10.126-9)

It was hot, and the middle of the day, and the curved arms  
of shore-dwelling *Cancer* were boiling from the warmth of the sun;  
weary, the stag lay his body on the on the grassy  
earth and was drawing in the cool from the shade of the trees.

The heat of the noon-day sun is exacerbated by the fact that this tale occurs at high  
summer and the shade here is sought by the stag who becomes the casualty in this  
story. As the creature has found the shade needed for recuperation that so many  
hunters have sought, the reader already knows its fate, which has been told in stories  
from Daphne to Atalanta and Hippomenes in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Anderson again:

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<sup>46</sup> Anderson 1972, 483.

126-29 Ovid now sketches a familiar scene: the heat of noonday requiring the central character to take refuge from the sun, reclining in the shade of a tree. This apparently restful scene then suddenly becomes the setting for violent passion. Cf. the stories of Callisto (2.417ff.). Narcissus (3.407ff.). Arethusa (5.586ff.), ... Ovid summarizes the description of the heat in 127 with a Golden Line and a reference to the Crab, the sign of the Zodiac which the sun passes through at the beginning of summer. He speaks of the Crab as if it were indeed a live creature on the seashore. The hyperbaton between *fessus* and *cervus* promotes the surprise Ovid produces; for nowhere else does he use this noonday motif to focus on an animal, and the way he has told the story, we might well expect the emphasis to fall on *puer* Cyparissus. The deer is the “victim” in this sequence.<sup>47</sup>

The fact that this particular deer has special qualities may entitle it to this treatment.

There is also a mystical element to both the passages quoted (10.86-90 and 10.126-9) that reflects a particular atmosphere which certain times of day seem to have.

Sweltering heat at high noon in hot climates appears to evoke a stillness, particularly as such torridity encourages all sentient creatures to avoid its unpleasant effects and seek respite. This inertia also provides a momentary hiatus in the story, heightening the anticipatory impression on the reader. The other-worldly moods created by Ovid in both these stories ensue from the intricate combination of the preternatural qualities of both Orpheus and the stag, the midday torpidity, and the adept use of the constellation that is still synonymous with the peak of summer in the northern hemisphere. Ovid’s use of astrological signs emphasises the heat of high summer which Hill discusses:

**127 shore-dwelling Cancer** : *litorei...Cancri*, literally ‘Crab’; Ovid delights in playing with the names of the signs of the zodiac by alluding to their literal meanings; ... . Cancer was the sign through which the sun was passing in antiquity ( and still does to this day in the minds of newspaper astologers ) from late June till late July.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Anderson 1972, 485.

<sup>48</sup> Hill 1999, 171.

One of the key factors in the dark pastoral of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is the time of the day as the temporal setting of the stories. Noon provides the heat necessary for the protagonists to search for refuge in a shady *locus amoenus*; this leads to their downfall in all the stories discussed thus far. Furthermore, the complete contrast of noon – i.e. midnight – has always had sinister connotations for readers which is encapsulated by the story of the first single transmutation in the *Metamorphoses* in the legend of Lycaon. He becomes the menacing creature of the nocturnal world, the wolf. It is night when Jupiter transforms the impious king, forever fixing the transformed creature as a feral monster of the dark (1.224).

The dead of night is the time when the latent primal fears of mankind surface, and, as the story of Myrrha shows (10.298-502), it is also the time when mortals are most vulnerable to their own personal weaknesses. There is a morbid fascination for Myrrha's inexorable slide into self-destruction inherent in the tale, as her soliloquy indicates at 10.319-355. Unfortunately for Myrrha, as with so many of Ovid's protagonists, she fails the test, and in this predicament she succumbs to her baser and unnatural instincts.<sup>49</sup> The Fates enigmatically curse the young hunter Actaeon, (3.176), and Myrrha suffers a similar destiny when inexplicably one of the Fates curses the young woman with her perverse infatuation (10.313-4). To insomniacs everywhere, the loneliness of night, when all others appear to be sleeping contentedly, is the worst time to be making decisions that, in the full light of day, would seem ridiculous (and in Myrrha's case appalling). One is reminded of the disassociation of Narcissus from the enormity of his passion in his lonely vigil at the waterside, but Myrrha has an ally, her nurse, who against her better judgement helps the girl commit incest with her father. However, before the age-old taboo can be broken, Myrrha vacillates between reason and the insanity towards which her obsession is drawing her:

noctis erat medium, curasque et corpora somnus  
soluerat; at uirgo Cinyreia peruigil igni  
carpitur indomito furiosaque uota retractat.  
et modo desperat, modo uult temptare, pudetque  
et cupit, et quid agat non inuenit; utque securi  
saucia trabs ingens, ubi plaga nouissima restat,  
quo cadat in dubio est omnique a parte timetur,

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<sup>49</sup> Cf. Lycaon - 1.163-243; Aglauros - 2.711-832; Narcissus - 3.339-510 and Atalanta and Hippomenes - 10.560-707, in particular.

sic animus uario labefactus uulnere nutat  
huc leuis atque illuc momentaque sumit utroque. (10.368-76)

It was in the middle of the night, sleep had relaxed cares  
and bodies; but the unsleeping Cinyreian maiden was consumed  
by an uncontrollable fire and was recollecting her mad hopes.  
And now she was despairing, now wanting to try, she is both ashamed  
and she desires, and is at a loss to know what she should do; and as a huge  
tree-trunk, injured by an axe, when only the last blow remains,  
is in doubt which way to fall and is feared on every side,  
so her mind, weakened by a variety of wounds, wavered  
easily this way and that, and started movements in both directions.

Myrrha's irresolute behaviour is intensified by the darkness of the night, when the natural thing to do is to sleep, but she is an unnatural creature and sleep eludes her. It is at this point in his story, in using a powerful simile, that Ovid conveys the pivotal moment of Myrrha's decision as her fate hangs in the balance. Anderson explains the use of the simile thus:

371-76 Ovid conveys Myrrha's veering passions by the anaphora with *modo* in 371, the rapid flow of dactyls in 372, and finally by simile of 372-74. ... Ironically, Myrrha will soon be transformed into a tree. ... *in dubio est* 374: this phrase, like *timetur*, elaborates the scene by introducing the woodsman who fears the fall of the tree to which he is about to give the finishing stroke. Similarly the narrator suggests the ominous results of Myrrha's "fall"; but we may also interpret the simile as suggesting the *two* conflicting aspects of Myrrha herself and the doubt and anxiety to be hers as she contemplates her own fall. Ovid picks up the terms of the simile in *labefactus vulnere* and *nutat*, metaphors appropriate to the tree. *levis* 376: uncertainly. *utroque*: i.e., both *huc* and *illuc* as it wavers back and forth.<sup>50</sup>

There is a portentous quality surrounding the timing of the act of incest and the superstitious among the readers would recognise the symbolism of this passage. Myrrha shares Actaeon's failure to recognise the warning signs that would appear so obvious to the audience:

tempus erat quo cuncta silent, interque Triones  
flexerat obliquo Plaustrum temone Bootes;

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<sup>50</sup> Anderson 1972, 508.

ad facinus uenit illa suum. fugit aurea caelo  
 luna, tegunt nigrae latitantia sidera nubes.  
 nox caret igne suo; ...  
 ter pedis offensi signo est reuocata, ter omen  
 funereus bubo letali carmine fecit;  
 it tamen, et tenebrae minuunt noxque atra pudorem,  
 nutricisque manum laeua tenet, altera motu  
 caecum iter explorat. (10.446-50 & 452-6)

“It was the time when all things are at rest, and between the Bears  
 Bootes had turned his wain with down-pointing pole. She came to her  
 guilty deed. The golden moon fled from the sky; the stars hid themselves  
 behind black clouds; night was without her usual fires. ... Thrice was  
 Myrrha stopped by the omen of the stumbling foot; thrice did the funereal  
 screech-owl warn her by his uncanny cry: still on she went, her shame  
 lessened by the black shadows of the night. With her left hand she holds  
 fast to her nurse, and with the other she gropes her way through the dark.<sup>51</sup>

Miller’s translation may seem rather quaint, but it does bring out the rather  
 melodramatic tone of this passage. This is a potently evocative scene where Ovid piles  
 on warning after warning, yet the young woman is still determined to destroy herself.  
 Again Ovid uses constellations to intensify the surreal quality of this passage - where  
 time seems to stand still, and the reader witnesses this girl’s demise. The sinking stars  
 emphasise her slide into the darkest side of her personality:

446-7 Bootes ... Wain ... yoke-beam ... between the Oxen: *interque*  
*Triones ... Plaustrum ... temone ... Bootes* ; an elaborate circumlocution  
 for midnight. The references are to those constellations that are highest  
 in the sky at midnight from the point of view of those living in the  
 Northern hemisphere. At midnight they ‘turn’ from rising to sinking.<sup>52</sup>

Natural phenomena reflect the depths of her depravity and the reader is left in no doubt  
 that the taboo of incest will be broken:

<sup>51</sup> Miller, Frank Justus, *Ovid Metamorphoses Books IX-XV* (Harvard University Press: London, 1999),  
 95 and 97.

<sup>52</sup> Hill 1999, 178. See the remainder of this note for lines 446-7 for details on Aratus, and information  
 on etymologies of constellations.

446-47 The time for the black deed, which Ovid conveys by a periphrasis involving the turning of the Wagon by Bootes from the zenith of the heavens, is midnight. 448-51 Ovid briefly refers to the approach of Myrrha, then shifts our attention back toward the midnight sky, where the cosmic horror is indicated. The moon, a symbol of chastity, “flees”; the stars “hide”; and so night lacks its customary fiery light.<sup>53</sup>

Every aspect of Myrrha’s story is bleak - even her beautiful son Adonis is doomed, having inherited his mother’s propensity for dangerous living. There is no happy ending here, unless one enjoys the somewhat delayed revenge of Adonis’s death that causes Venus -an unpleasant vengeful deity - such anguish. Even the sanctuary that the heavily pregnant Myrrha seeks is not a true refuge, as in desperation at having found her moral corruption unbearable, she begs for punishment . This is where she is transformed and achieves a kind of redemption in the process. One of the most disturbing aspects of this episode is her continuing obvious distress even after her metamorphosis. The bitter tears she sheds become the exotic substance, the gum resin used in ancient medicine and still used as incense in religious ritual. The supreme irony is that the tears of the tainted then transformed being should become an essential ingredient in an act of sanctity and purification. That Myrrha retains a sensibility of her despairing humanity adds to the sinister atmosphere of this tale:

quae quamquam amisit ueteres cum corpore sensus  
flet tamen, et tepidae manant ex arbore guttae.  
est honor et lacrimis, stillataque robore murra,  
nomen erile tenet nulloque tacebitur aevo. (10.499-502)

And although she had lost her former senses with her body,  
yet she weeps, and warm drops flow from the tree.  
There is honour even for her tears, and myrrh dripping from the tree  
keeps its mistress’s name and will not go unmentioned in any age.

It hardly seems any sort of compensation to be honoured eternally for perpetual misery, unless of course one accepts the redemptive quality of her physical transformation.

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<sup>53</sup> Anderson 1972, 513.

(vi) Conclusion

In many of the scenes of beautiful landscapes in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* he seems determined to create an antithetical impression, especially when compared with the more traditionally bucolic scenes presented by Theocritus. Indeed, it is in Theoc. *Idyll VII*, that the luscious fecundity of the scene (with all its conventions of shading trees and splashing water) makes a perfect exemplar of the *locus amoenus*. As every example hitherto indicates, the *loci amoeni* of Ovid's pastoral landscapes are no mere backdrops to the acts of violence that make up the pivotal scenes in many of the fables he retells. The traditional elements that combine to make the perfect settings are also 'honey-traps' that lure, enamour and make the protagonists vulnerable to their fates. Violence is as natural as it is inevitable in the wild. By definition - it could be argued - wilderness is any landscape that appears to be the complete reversal of what one expects from an urban setting. The rustic simplicity of the environment of the herdsmen of Theocritus, and the *locus amoenus* of Virgil's *Eclogues*, is here in the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid transformed from these seemingly safe and secure landscapes that are so envied by the sophisticated Roman urbanite,<sup>54</sup> to something that is at times to be feared and treated with a healthy respect by those same cosmopolitans. In the largely protected hedonistic and somewhat complacent atmosphere of post-war Augustan Rome, it is easy to forget the insentient cruelties of nature (the gladiatorial arena notwithstanding). The tragic fates of many of the legendary protagonists seem at odds with scenes of beauty and supposed tranquility; however, the landscape of the remote countryside, while not strictly pastoral, is the domain of the primitive and the bestial predators that pose a continual threat to the traditionally bucolic environment.<sup>55</sup> Indeed, it is a conceit of the conventional herdsman as lover to liken his passion to that of a rapacious beast:

torva leaena lupum sequitur, lupus ipse capellam,  
florentem cytisum sequitur lasciva capella,  
te Corydon, o Alexi: trahit sua quemque voluptas.  
(Virgil, *Eclogue II*.63-65)

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<sup>54</sup> Cf. Tibullus *Elegy I.1*, in particular.

<sup>55</sup> See Introduction for definitions of pastoral terms.

The grim lioness follows the wolf, the wolf himself the goat, the  
wanton goat the flowering clover, and Corydon follows you, Alexis.  
Each is led by his liking.<sup>56</sup>

It was equally a Hellenistic practice to represent the object of passionate obsessive love who rejects the lover's attentions as hard-hearted and cruel as the feral creatures of the wild woods, as Theocritus's *Idyll XXIII* shows. Yet though the herdsmen in the portrayals are archetypes and the scenes depicted by these poets equally conventional, the danger presented to the herdsmen was real, particularly in the remote rural environments that bordered on the wilderness.

Ovid subverts this evidently comfortable, congenial, and untroubled world, where the predators are no more than the clever metaphors for passion. The protagonists of the *Metamorphoses* take the reader into unsafe and disturbing realms. They are driven there by natural and unnatural passions: some seek the pleasure of hunting like Actaeon, Meleager and his companions, Cyparissus, and Narcissus; some seek refuge like Daphne, Callisto, Io, Myrrha or Latona. The divide here manifestly runs along the lines of gender; however, the males are as much at risk as the females, as has been discussed.

The key phrase that alerts us is often a conventional ekphrasis or formal description. A fine example of this can be seen in the story of Callisto: '*cum subit illa nemus, quod nulla ceciderat aetas*' (2.418). Here the archetypal scenery of Diana's attendants - the virginal untouched landscape - mirrors the chastity of the deity and her companions. This compares with the setting of the boar hunt of Meleager and his companions: '*silua frequens trabibus, quam nulla ceciderat aetas,*' (8.329).<sup>57</sup> The typical ekphrasis at I.568-73, in the tale of Io, though technically describing a remote wild landscape, characteristically fits the pastoral genre in its formula:

est nemus Haemoniae, praerupta quod undique claudit  
silua; uocant Tempe. ... (1.568-9)

There is a copse in Haemonia, shut in by a steep wood  
on every side; they call it Tempe. ...

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<sup>56</sup> Fairclough, H. R., *Virgil Eclogues. Georgics. Aeneid I-VI* (Harvard University Press: London 1999), 34.

<sup>57</sup> Hill 1985, 204, and 1997, 229.

Hill's extensive note on this section explains that the name of this vale became a metonym for beautiful valleys in poetry:

**569 Tempe:** this valley was regarded in antiquity as the supreme example of natural beauty, to such an extent that the word *Tempe* came to refer to any beautiful valley (e.g. Virg. *Georg.* 2.469, Hor. *Od.* 3.1.24 and indeed Ovid himself at *Fast.* 4.477 and *Am.* 1.1.15).<sup>58</sup>

This is an aspect of Ovid's brilliance, the ability to move the reader backwards and forwards from one landscape to another, sometimes gradually but more often than not abruptly, as he does at V.385-94, with the rape and abduction of Persephone/Proserpine.

The tragic fates of many of the legendary protagonists seem at odds with scenes of beauty and supposed tranquillity, but this is the domain of the primitive and bestial where anything is possible. Many of these fables serve as a warning to the ostensibly civilized, who would encroach unprepared on the territory of the uncivilised. The dark-pastoral aspects of the *Metamorphoses* emphasise the duality of the countryside - its appeal as opposed to its inherent threats. Parry sums up this effect in his essay 'Ovid's *Metamorphoses*: Violence in a Pastoral Landscape' thus:

Nature, so often viewed as the archetypal pattern of human existence, suggests in its cycles both the allurements of wilderness and its dangers. Her more tranquil aspect is, perhaps, more the traditional pastoral, though even here sadness and ultimate death have their place. Her catastrophic side is that which looms largest in Ovid's landscapes and forms the ideal stage for violent love and death. In such landscapes violence and lust oscillate in a vicious cycle of venatic and sexual energy.<sup>59</sup>

In the world of the dark-pastoral, as defined by Ovid, the latent inherent dangers in the natural world are foregrounded. These hazards are made palpable in the visceral vividness that the poet employs to maximum effect. Yet, one of the most disconcerting elements of nature in the *Metamorphoses* is that the cycle of violence is inexorable and that nature itself is neutral and does not possess a singular sentience. To quote Robert

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 187.

G. Ingersoll, the American nineteenth-century humanist, who captures this completely:  
'In nature there are neither rewards nor punishments - there are consequences'.

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<sup>59</sup> Parry, Hugh, *TAPA*, 95, (1964), 282.

## CHAPTER II: THE TRANSFORMATION OF BEINGS INTO THE LANDSCAPE:

### The Aetiology of Natural Phenomena.

#### (i) Introduction.

Ovid's stories in the *Metamorphoses* describe the transformation of beings into *flora* and *fauna* of the countryside. In some of these tales mortals and semi-divine creatures are subsumed into the landscape itself as topographical features. The causes for the mutations vary; there are victims, there are transgressors - who are both witting and unwitting. There are those who desire punishment and those whose change comes as a reward for piety. The victims are the innocents, changed for a multiplicity of reasons, such as the crew of Ulysses into swine (14.242-311); Picus into a woodpecker (14.313-434); Callisto into a bear (2.401-535); Daphne into a plant (1.462-567); Hyacinthus into a flower (10.162-219); Arethusa (5.572-642) and Acis (13.738-897) both become rivers.

The transgressors are those whose unnatural or impious behaviour results in their altered states such as: Lycaon into a wolf (1.163-243); the Lycian Peasant Farmers into frogs (6.313-81); Narcissus into a flower and Echo into the natural phenomenon of reflected sound-waves (3.339-510); Battus into stone (2.676-710); Hippomenes and Atalanta into lions (10.560-707); Arachne into a spider (6.1-145) and Actaeon into a stag (3.131-252). This young hunter's apparent impiety appears to be accidental, possibly making him a victim rather than a felon. Myrrha and Cyparissus differ from the others, in that they long for punishment and repent and regret their wrong-doing. Myrrha becomes a plant (10.298-502), and Cyparissus a tree (10.86-142), and they share the fate of metamorphosis as punishment for their transgressions, though in Cyparissus's case the punitive transmutation seems as unfair as it does for Actaeon.

The pious and gentle elderly couple, Philemon and Baucis, are changed into trees that stand as eternal sentinels to a shrine as a reward for fidelity. In Book 5, the tales told through the songs of the Muses depict numerous changes, all of which

portray humans and minor deities changed into natural phenomena: Cyane into a pool or spring (5.425-437); a mocking boy into a lizard (5.453-461); Ascaphalus into an owl (5.543-550); Arethusa, a river (5.632-636); Lyncus into a lynx (5.657-660); and the Pierides into birds (5.671-678). Cyane and Arethusa are victims but the boy, Ascaphalus, Lyncus and the Pierides are guilty of impiety.<sup>1</sup>

## (ii) The Catasterisation of Callisto

Callisto, the nymph who was highest in favour amongst Diana's companions, is particularly fascinating as she is transformed twice: initially as a bear (2.476-485), by Juno, and then as a constellation (2.505-7), by Jupiter. The king of the gods is unable to undo the harmful change enacted by his perennially jealous spouse. So, in order to prevent Callisto's death as a bear at the hands of her unknowing son Arcas, he transforms them both into the most universally famous constellations of Ursa Major and Ursa Minor. This change has another effect, according to Brooks Otis:

The near-tragedy of death at the hands of her ignorant son is thus in full keeping with the whole episode. The catasterism saves the situation, but it is a 'near-miss', so to speak, that sets the right mood for the vengeance stories to come and most of all for the *Actaeon*.<sup>2</sup>

This 'near-miss' has the added effect of heightening the tension in these stories, which is always problematic in the retelling of well known fables. These are ancient tales that Ovid retells in a refreshing way.

Juno's intervention does not end with Jupiter's rescue of Callisto and her child, however, and Juno's small-minded revenge against Callisto and her bastard son, Arcas, at the close of this story is typical of the vindictive harridan portrayed by Ovid. This is hardly an elevating image of the queen of the Olympians but it is consistent with the splenetic and all too human gods and goddesses in Homer's *Iliad*. Hera/Juno is portrayed as an angry bitter woman in possibly the earliest written account of this

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<sup>1</sup> The fate of the female victims who are subsumed into the landscape, e.g. Cyane and Arethusa, are discussed above in Chap. I (iii) 'Violations'.

<sup>2</sup> Otis, B., *Ovid as an Epic Poet* (CUP: Cambridge, 1966), 359.

deity, which occurs in the *Iliad*: 'But teeming with treachery noble Hera set her trap'<sup>3</sup> (*Iliad*: 19.123). Later in Homer's tale, her desire for petty revenge together with her incapacity for leniency and her propensity for holding grievances in perpetuity is shown at *Iliad*: 24:28-36. Despite the pleas of the other Olympians she joins with Poseidon and Athena and objects to Hector's mutilated corpse being rescued from the degradation meted on it by the enraged Achilles:

They kept on urging the sharp-eyed giant-killer Hermes  
to go and steal the body, a plan that pleased them all,  
but not Hera, Poseidon or the girl with blazing eyes.  
They clung to their deathless hate of sacred Troy.<sup>4</sup>  
(*Iliad*: 24:28-31)

The cause of Hera's and Athena's enmity is well-known and shows an all too human feminine weakness, as William Congreve wrote in his play *The Mourning Bride*: 'Heav'n has no rage, like a love to hatred turned,/ Nor Hell a fury, like a woman scorn'd' (I.i). That a disguised shepherd boy should choose Aphrodite/Venus, over Hera/ Juno, in a vapid and vainglorious beauty contest! Apollo's response to those divine enemies of Paris could well mirror our own:

Lord Apollo rose and addressed the immortal powers:  
"Hard-hearted you are, you gods, you live for cruelty!  
... murderous Achilles - you gods, you *choose* to help Achilles.  
That man without a shred of decency in his heart ...<sup>5</sup>  
(*Iliad*.24:38-9 & 46-7)

The pattern for these avenging deities set so much earlier by Homer is the one that Ovid chooses for both these goddesses, and especially for his Juno in the fable of Callisto. It is consistent with her character throughout the *Metamorphoses*, and here she cannot resist one last act against her rival.

The stereotypical 'green-eyed monster' wife, that Ovid presents as Juno, adds a great deal of humour to many of the stories, where her husband pursues attractive females. Juno's waspish plea is to her foster parents, Tethys and Ocean, to help her wreak her last and everlasting retaliation against her rival:

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<sup>3</sup> Fagles, R. (trans.), *Homer: The Iliad* (The Softback Preview, London, 1997), 491.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, 589.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, 589.

at uos si laesae tangit contemptus alumnae,  
gurgite caeruleo septem prohibete Triones  
sideraque in caelo stupri mercede recepta  
pellite, ne puro tinguatur in aequore paelex.' (2.527-30)

But, if you are touched by the insult to your wronged foster-child,  
bar the Seven Oxen from your aquamarine flood  
and drive off stars that have been taken into heaven as a reward  
for shamelessness, so that the wench can never bathe in your pure waters.<sup>7</sup>

This aetiological explanation for the permanent ascendancy of these constellations is colourful, amusing, and effective. One of the first fixed grouping of stars to be identified, the Great Bear, was used as part of an exquisite decoration for the marvellous shield of Achilles. It is Homer who retells the unique characteristics of this heavenly body, as part of his description of the shield decoration:

and there the constellations, all that crown the heavens,  
the Pleiades and the Hyades, Orion in all his power too  
and the Great Bear that mankind also calls the Wagon:  
she wheels on her axis always fixed, watching the Hunter.<sup>6</sup>  
(*Iliad*: 18.567-570)

To a modern reader the forbidding of the setting of these stars does not seem like much of a punishment; however, there was an ancient Greek belief in the restorative powers of the Ocean - the freshwater river Oceanos that circled the earth. The aetiological legend, though, aptly explains what *appears* to occur through observation:

Dawn, sun, moon and stars were thought to rise from Ocean in the east, cross the sky in an arc and set in the west; then presumably they went round the disc northwards to rise again. Some basic astronomy was shown incidentally in the narratives: Arcturus, Orion, morning and evening star, the Hyades and Pleiades were recognised, and also the Great Bear, which turns round on itself, and is the only constellation not to set in the west in the waters of Ocean.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Fagles 1997, 483.

<sup>7</sup> Wright, M. R., *Cosmology in Antiquity* (Routledge: London, 1996), 17. See also Hill's note for Met:II.172, for the story *Phaethon*, Hill, D. E., *Ovid Metamorphoses I-IV* (Aris & Phillips: Warminster, 1985), 199.

The irony of this vindictive act of Juno's is that her victory is as shallow as it is spiteful. Callisto and her son - who though born human shares her identity as a bear in the constellations - stay eternally in the night sky and as such are unique in the northern hemisphere.

The importance of constellations in indicating seasons and times of the day has already been discussed.<sup>8</sup> The predictability of the apparent movements of the stars makes them an obvious *aide memoire*, for those whose outdoor work is cyclical. The Boeotian writer Hesiod (c.700 B.C.) writing in his *Works and Days*, provides a source of practical wisdom for the farmer. Wright comments on Hesiod's work:

... and in this [*Works and Days*] the times of year for the different agricultural tasks are marked by solstices and star risings which had once had mythical connotations. Events in the sky - winds, weather changes, the dawn, the shapes of constellations - show traces of these anthropomorphic narratives, although they are often little more than time formulae in the absence of any other means of marking a calendar. ... the constellations mentioned in Homer - the Pleiades, Hyades and Orion - mark the onset of winter. The farmer finds his work tied to the earth, yet dependent on the movement of distant constellations.<sup>9</sup>

The interdependency of people working on and in the landscape on natural phenomena, and the need for an understanding of the workings of nature is a practical and a romantic one. Those of us with a rudimentary understanding of astronomy and physics continue to enjoy the aetiological fables of a bygone era which contain catasterisation. For us, who were fortunate enough to be raised in the deep countryside of rural Britain, we can remember clear night skies. (Such awe-inspiring beauty has now been stolen by the sprawl of urban blight brings with the sickly glow of streetlighting.) It is an added irony that there are now fewer and fewer places where one can view the night sky unimpeded, and that increasingly few of us have seen the Milky-Way or the multiplicity of stars that make up the constellations, with the naked eye. The majority of the populations of Hesiod's Greece and even of Ovid's Italy

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<sup>8</sup> See above Chap. I(v) 'Day and Night in the *Locus Amoenus*'.

<sup>9</sup> Wright 1996, 17-18.

would have been regular witnesses to the movements of the constellations, as the rural populations outweighed the urban. One cannot imagine that the rudimentary illuminations of Ovid's Rome penetrated the night sky very far into the surrounding countryside in the way that even the smallest town's streetlighting does in today's First World. So while the actual reality of the descriptions of the night sky in ancient literature may be lost on most modern readers, the hauntingly evocative beauty of these references remains. It would appear that Ovid also uses the constellations as exotic metaphors that not only fix the events in the stories in the times of year, day, and night, but also evoke mystical and other-worldly effects in the narrative. This effect has the added result of piquing the interest of the reader in well-known legends.

### **(iii) Metamorphosis as Clarification**

The story of the Lycian Peasant Farmers is ostensibly a religious aetiological tale with an internal narrator explaining the siting and dedication of a rustic altar to the goddess Latona. The peasants are natural inhabitants of the bucolic idyllic landscape and through their delinquent behaviour become subsumed into it. As with Lycaon, the transmuted frogs mimic the personal characteristics of the yokels: 'the character remains the same, and even determines the physical appearance. The same is true of the Lycian Peasants. They vent their spitefulness on Latona; they insult, scream at her, threaten her, and clamor loudly in a quarrelsome voice (6.317ff.). She changes them into frogs.'<sup>10</sup> (Those of us fortunate enough to have wild-life ponds in our gardens may be surprised that frogs are known for being the noisiest of creatures, but, during the breeding season in warmer, more southern latitudes, the sound is cacophonous.)

At 6.316-27, Ovid uses the ancient device of telling a story that could be *proved*, the evidence being that the real place exists. While buying cattle the 'narrator' is shown an altar and enquires as to its provenance, and is told the story he retells here to his fellow witnessess of Niobe's destruction, apparently at the hands of the divinities Apollo and Artemis. Niobe's crime is arrogance; however, the farmers are not just impertinent but boorish too. Ovid explains at 6.313-6, that this tale is an example of divine retribution. Latona too is a victim of a vengeful deity - typically Juno is the instigator of her suffering. Pregnant with Jupiter's twins, the fleeing Latona discovers

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<sup>10</sup> Galinsky 1975, 46.

that no part of the world will provide her with refuge, for fear of incurring the legendary vengeful wrath of the divine spouse. She is forced to wander the earth:

...cui maxima quondam  
exiguam sedem pariturae terra negavit.  
nec caelo nec humo nec aquis dea uestra recepta est;  
exsul erat mundi, ... (6.186-9)

... when all the great earth  
once refused a tiny lodging for her to give birth.  
Your goddess was accepted neither by sky nor earth nor waters;  
she was an exile from the world ...

It is not surprising, therefore, when she discovers the lake in a valley, that it appears as a refuge for her. The site shares the characteristics of the familiar *locus amoenus*:

forte lacum mediocris aquae prospexit in imis  
uallibus; agrestes illic fruticosa legebant  
uimina cum iuncis gratamque paludibus uluam. (6.343-5)

By chance she saw before her a lake of moderate size at the bottom of the valley; the country people were gathering bushy osiers there and rushes and the sedge that favours marshes.

As such this *locus amoenus* hardly compares with the paradigmatically exquisite beauty of the eternal spring of the Golden Age (1.107-12), or the *locus consecratus* of Diana (3.155-162); however, it does possess all the elements discussed earlier. Latona's eloquent pleas and her insistence on everyone's right to water, citing the 'common right', '*usus communis aquarum est.*' (349), fails to move these churls. Being an immortal, the goddess understands the nature of eternity, and that is the most unsettling aspect of their punishment, that these transgressors will live forever in this tainted water: 'aeternum stagno' dixit 'uiuatis in isto.' (369), 'May you live for eternity,' she said, 'in that pond.'<sup>11</sup> In his note on his translation of 369, Hill explains what he tries to depict:

**369** Fränkel (215n.42) : 'In the story of the Lycian peasants, the thirsty Latona asks them to let her drink from the pond, and adds: "you will have given me life in the water" (6.357). The phrasing strikes us as strange ... : when the peasants

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<sup>11</sup> Hill 1997, 53.

refused, Latona gave them life in the water (369).” As my translation shows, Ovid actually goes from *aqua* [water] to *stagno* [pond], but the point seems valid.<sup>12</sup>

Anderson too picks up on the point that the peasants seem to ‘live’ in the pond: ‘As Ovid moves the focus from one part of the pool to another (371-4), he emphasizes the fact that the rustics are living (*vivatis* 369) there. They seem to have abandoned their tasks of collecting reeds and osiers.’<sup>13</sup> Latona’s punishment then is more than fitting.

Unbeknown to the Lycians, the frail, helpless, pregnant young woman they terrorise is a goddess, who, though powerless to change her present exile, still possesses the power to exact revenge on her tormentors. This she does most satisfyingly, transmuting them into creatures who will live part of their new lives in the very water they attempted to prevent her drinking:

nec satis est; ipsos etiam pedibusque manuque  
turbauere lacus imoque e gurgite mollem  
huc illuc limum saltu mouere maligno. (6.363-5)

And that was not enough; they even disturbed the lake itself with their hands and feet and by spiteful jumping moved the soft silt up from the bottom of the flood.

The most enjoyable aspect of this metamorphosis is the perfect and most befitting punishment for these delinquents, one which precisely echoes every detail of their misconduct:

eueniunt optata deae; iuuat esse sub undis  
et modo tota caua submergere membra palude,  
nunc proferre caput, summo modo gurgite nare,  
saepe super ripam stagni consistere, saepe  
in gelidos resilire lacus; sed nunc quoque turpes  
litibus exercent linguas pulsoque pudore,  
quamuis sint sub aqua, sub aqua maledicere temptant. (6.370-6)

It turned out as the goddess had prayed; it delighted them to be beneath  
the waves  
and sometimes to submerge their whole bodies under the deep marsh  
and now to hold their head out, and sometimes to swim on the top of  
the flood,

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<sup>12</sup> Hill 1997, 183.

<sup>13</sup> Anderson 1972, 200.

often to stay on the pond's bank, often  
to leap back into the cool lake; but even now they exercised  
their foul tongues in disputation and, with shame dismissed,  
although they were under water, under water they tried to speak ill.

The lines that follow and end this story (374-81), graphically describe the transformation that occurs while the loutish farmers jump in and out of the lake - an activity they will repeat for eternity as frogs.

Many of the characters who are transformed are obviously victims such as Picus, Arethusa, Io, Callisto, and Acis; and it is not always clear that some of the changed are truly delinquent as their punishment seems inappropriately harsh, such as Actaeon, Arachne, and even Echo. To some extent Myrrha is a victim in that her unnatural passion for her father is kindled by a petulant Venus whom Myrrha refuses to worship. Alternatively Lycaon's behaviour places him beyond the boundaries of common decency as does the conduct of the Lycian Peasant Farmers, though they do not go as far as to break a long-held taboo. Their treatment of an apparently vulnerable pregnant woman is despicable by anyone's standards and their metamorphosis clarifies their all too evident character flaws. Their punishment for their callousness is well deserved:

The men have acted like brutes; they become such. They have shown a perverse delight in wallowing in water and mud; that is now their eternal fate. There is full justice in this transformation and the usual continuity with the human person that Ovid regularly specifies.<sup>14</sup>

Anderson goes on to elaborate on the closing passage of the story, that Ovid, 'makes it evident, by his ordering of details, that there is an intimate causal relation between the rude voices of the men and the frogs, between the very desire to utter *convicia* and the deformation of the human mouth into the gross wide amphibian jaws.'<sup>15</sup> Indeed the word used here is *rictus* (378), used on a number of occasions, as Hill comments on line 741 of Book 1 in the story of Io: '*the gape of her mouth: rictus*, very much an

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<sup>14</sup> Anderson 1972, 200.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, 200-1.

animal word in the *Metamorphoses*; compare 2.481; 3.74; 674; 4.97 etc.<sup>16</sup>. This emphasises the grotesquesness of the transformation.

#### (iv) The Anthropomorphizing of Animals.

One of the most disquieting features of the stories of Io, Callisto, and Actaeon, is the retention of their sensibility of their human identities *after* they are transmogrified. For Io, her reflected appearance as a heifer and the animal sounds she makes terrify her:

illa etiam supplex Argo cum bracchia uellet  
tendere, non habuit quae bracchia tenderet Argo;  
conatoque queri mugitus edidit ore,  
pertimuitque sonos propriaque exterrita uoce est.  
uenit et ad ripas, ubi ludere saepe solebat,  
Inachidas: rictus nouaque ut conspexit in unda  
cornua, pertimuit seque externata refugit. (1.635-41)

When she strove to stretch out suppliant arms to Argus, she had no arms to stretch; and when she attempted to voice her complaints, she only mooed. She would start with fear at the sound, and was filled with terror at her own voice. She came also to the bank of her father's stream, where she used to play; but when she saw, reflected in the water, her gaping jaws and sprouting horns, she fled in very terror of herself.<sup>17</sup>

Miller's translation brings out the *pathos* of Io's misfortune, rather than the comic. And when the heifer Io attempts to communicate with her father at 646-50, the attributing of human characteristics to animals is very evident. Though one accepts that this scene is somewhat farcical, Io's remnant humanity forces her to make pathetic attempts to tell of her punishment. She paws the ground, 'littera pro uerbis, quam pes in puluere duxit,' (649), and this is interpreted in a totally anthropomorphic way, as the recognition of the father Inachus shows (651-5). Io also retains her beauty, as she is transformed into a beautiful little cow (610-4). One cannot help but find it extremely amusing that Jupiter would transform his beloved Io into a little cow, bearing in mind how slighted wives invariably view their adulterous husbands' mistresses! However, as if to add insult to injury Io is not just a heifer but a pretty one too (610-4). When the

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<sup>16</sup> Hill 1985, 193.

change is reversed (738-43), it is described in detail and of course her beauty remains. The prettiness of the heifer Io makes it so much easier to anthropomorphize this creature than the hideously transformed Callisto. It is tempting to attribute this dissimilitude to the difference in the identities of the agents of change - the vindictive Juno transforms Callisto and Jupiter transmutes Io.

What Io shares with Callisto and Actaeon is the cause of their suffering - the vengeance of two infuriated goddesses - Juno and Diana. Callisto and Io, having already been victims of Jupiter's rapacious appetites, then suffer at the hands of his divine spouse Juno. Actaeon becomes the hunted prey of his own hounds when he incurs the extreme displeasure of Diana. The peculiar nature of their transformation that leaves their human sentience intact adds to the perversity and intensity of the deities' vengeance. In his discussion of the powers of the divine, and Ovid's depictions of them, Otis argues:

Ovid does not deny that some men are foolish, wicked or deserving of punishment: he does not deny that the powers in fictitious or actual control of men are just and merciful. Whether it is Diana's severe virginity, Juno's sexual jealousy ... the motive is not worthy of its divine origin. The first section had shown us gods whose divine majesty could not contain their very human feelings. We have now seen gods whose human feelings frightfully abused their divine power. ... What repels Ovid is the mercilessness of absolute power. When the gods are only hypocritical, they are comic. When they are also cruel, they are actually revolting.<sup>18</sup>

Otis's schema divides Ovid's *Metamorphoses* into sections: the first that he mentions above covers Books 1 and 2, and the second, Books 3-6.400. In Section II, he argues that two 'Vengeance Episodes' bracket two 'Amatory Frames'.<sup>19</sup> The sheer pettiness that these goddesses have revealed in their vindictiveness, is made all the worse by the incomplete change in the three victims; this puts one in mind of a dysfunctional child pulling the wings off flying insects while leaving them alive. As Otis makes clear, they go beyond righteous indignation or even justice and this infects their dignity as immortals, which is cleverly emphasised by the unnerving quality of Ovid's depictions

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<sup>17</sup> Miller 1999, 47.

<sup>18</sup> Otis 1966, 145.

<sup>19</sup> Otis 1966, 84-5.

of these unfinished changes in these three fables. If one accepts Otis's argument here, it is the gratuitous property of divine revenge that is at fault, not Ovid's vivid depiction of the grotesqueness of it. After all, the deities are the agents of such cruelties and Ovid is only retelling the fabled events; nevertheless, but for the poet's powerful narrative, we would not be so revolted by the revenges of Juno and Diana.

For the changed Callisto there is the added burden of being an alien being in the worlds of both humans and wildlife. As a bear she would terrify or be hunted by her erstwhile companions, and as a newly transformed creature the instincts and habitats of the bestial terrify *her*. Callisto's human persona remains and torments her in her new form:

mens antiqua manet (facta quoque mansit in ursa),  
...  
a quotiens, sola non ausa quiescere silua,  
ante domum quondamque suis errauit in agris!  
a quotiens per saxa canum latratibus acta est  
uenatrixque metu uenantum territa fugit!  
saepe feris latuit uisis, oblita quid esset;  
ursaque conspectos in montibus horruit ursos,  
pertimuitque lupos, quamuis pater esset in illis. (2.485 & 489-95)

Her original mind remained (and has remained too in what has become a bear)

...  
Oh, how often she did not dare to rest in the lonely wood  
but wandered in front of her former home and its fields!  
Oh, how often was she driven through the rocks by the baying of dogs,  
and, though a huntress, fled terrified in fear of the huntsmen!  
Often, on seeing wild beasts, she hid, forgetting what she was;  
and, though a she-bear, she shuddered when she noticed he-bears on the  
mountains,  
and she feared the wolves, although her father was among them.

The multiplicity of parallels with the fate of Actaeon are obvious. She shares the unfortunate destiny of Actaeon in becoming the hunted instead of the hunter, and line 492 prefigures her possible demise at the hands of her unknowing son Arcas when he is hunting (496-504). There is also the unsettling reminder of her father Lycaon's fate (495) which foregrounds her present condition as a wild beast. By prompting about her parentage, Ovid also highlights the injustice of Callisto's fate which is extremely unfair, as her 'crime' was to suffer rape whilst her father's act broke the strongest of taboos.

Apparently Arcas is about fifteen years old, which implies that Callisto has suffered all that time. There is an interesting example of anthropomorphization of the bear at this point:

... quae restitit Arcade uiso  
et cognoscenti similis fuit. ille refugit  
immosque oculos in se sine fine tenentem  
nescius extimuit propiusque accedere auenti  
uulnifico fuerat fixurus pectora telo. (2.500-4)

... she stood still on seeing Arcas,  
like someone who knew him. He fled back  
and in his ignorance was terrified of her as she ceaselessly held her unmoving  
eyes upon him, and, as she became eager to approach more closely,  
he got set to pierce her breast with a wound-inducing weapon.

What could be instinctive behaviour in the bear on contact with humans is construed in this story as the transmogrified Callisto recognising her son. However, there is no explanation as to how she does this, but it emphasises the all too human Callisto trapped inside the physiognomy of a hideous bear whose outward appearance terrifies Arcas. Unlike Io, Callisto's bear is a repulsive reversal of the beautiful nymph who attracted Jupiter. This is the deliberate cruelty of the vindictive Juno; it is the bear's behaviour here that is anthropomorphized.

Diana's revenge against Actaeon is similar to Juno's act against Callisto but the outcome is very different. Uncharacteristically Juno relents and Io's transformation is reversed, but Callisto is rescued by Jupiter's timely intervention when he catasterises the bear and her son. Actaeon is not so lucky and what Otis describes as the 'revolting' behaviour of the gods is shown by Ovid when Diana revels in Actaeon's violent death:

undique circumstant mersisque in corpore rostris  
dilacerant falsi dominum sub imagine cerui,  
nec nisi finita per plurima uulnera uita  
ira pharetratae fertur satiata Dianae. (3.249-52)

they surrounded him on every side, their muzzles buried in his body,  
and they tore their master apart in his false guise as a stag,  
and it is said that not until his life was ended by so very many  
wounds was the anger of Diana of the quiver satisfied.

There are multiple ironies in this story, not least the fact that, as the goddess of hunting, it is most fitting that Diana has the power to transmute the hunter Actaeon

into a beast of prey. That Actaeon commits the unwitting act of sacrilege - for which he is so brutally punished - while out hunting, and that the instrument of vengeance for the goddess is the young hunter's own hounds piles on the irony. The most perturbing and obnoxious aspect of this story is the anthropomorphizing of the stag Actaeon, who keeps possession of his human identity in his memory after Diana changes him. It is almost as if he witnesses his own death remotely, yet the physical and psychological agony is very real. Actaeon's torment draws the reader in and makes the young hunter's suffering seem highly authentic, thus heightening the engagement of the reader. Even Actaeon's posture, when attacked, mirrors that of a suffering, perhaps even repentant, prostrate man, and emphasizes his vulnerability:

et genibus pronis supplex similisque roganti  
circumfert tacitos tamquam sua bracchia uultus. (3.240-1)

and, supplicating down upon his knees, like a man at prayer,  
he cast his silent face around as if it were his arms.

The stag's pleas for mercy are ignored, and it is yet another irony that it is Actaeon's former companions who encourage the young hunter's own hounds to continue to attack him, held at bay. Ovid adds an interesting touch here that builds on the loneliness and the inevitability of Actaeon's fate, when he describes Actaeon's companions calling for him, unaware that he is there amongst them but transformed. The poet even comments that the stag turns at the call of his name (243-5). Like Io before him, Actaeon sees his new form reflected back at himself in water, having been surprised at his own speed of movement (199-200). The most disturbing element again, is the retention of his mind:

ingemuit: uox illa fuit, lacrimaeque per ora  
non sua fluxerunt; mens tantum pristina mansit. (3.202-3)

he gave a groan: that was his speech, and his tears flowed down  
cheeks that were not his own; only his mind remained in its original state.

The reader, having witnessed Diana's response to the pregnant Callisto (2.461-5), cannot be surprised by Diana's reaction to Actaeon's witnessing of her bathing. As Otis reiterates:

This is, of course, the same Diana who was so shocked at the pregnancy of poor Callisto. Indeed Ovid has subtly prepared us for this by the earlier episode. Thus the misadventure of Callisto (when she in her ursine disguise was almost killed by her huntsman son) is repeated, on a much more pathetic level, in the death of Actaeon. The essence of his tragedy is that he combines an animal form with a human mind (*mens tantum pristina mansit*, line 203).<sup>20</sup>

Anderson goes much further in the argument in his introduction to his commentary on Books 6-10, when he stresses that these tales do not really indicate the anthropomorphizing of animals. He argues that outward appearance should not obfuscate the true identity of the sentience within. Anderson continues by stressing that humans who imagine themselves transformed into other lifeforms while in dream-like or hallucinatory states represent our psychological frustration at others' failure to recognise the 'real' us. He discusses this theory in relation to the stories of Io, Callisto, and Actaeon after their change thus:

After such a change Ovid exploits the opportunity provided him by old mythical beliefs, that a human sensitivity resides in the animal, but his interest differs from that of the primitive mythmakers. He studies the anguish of this essential humanity (of Actaeon, Io, Callisto) as it struggles to cope with its ungainly, alien, bestial form. Thus he alters the original emphasis of the myth, no longer describing an animal with slight human tendencies, but rather a human being inside an animal form, a human being who accidentally seems to be an animal.<sup>21</sup>

Anderson goes on to compare Kafka and Ovid, and then closes his argument. 'In both Ovid and Kafka the poignance of the human condition emerges most forcefully in the fact that one's closest relatives and friends fail to recognize the human being inside the beast.'<sup>22</sup> While Anderson's argument is convincing, he underestimates the human desire to anthropomorphize beasts, as this helps us to relate to animals with which we

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<sup>20</sup> Otis 1966, 135.

<sup>21</sup> Anderson 1972, 8.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

have regular contact. (As those who were raised in agricultural communities know, the one thing you do not do is give human names to the juvenile offspring of animals raised for slaughter.) The propensity to *humanise* animals could be considered a basic fundamental human weakness, and, however appealing, it undermines a true understanding of bestial nature.

**(v) The Aetiology of Spring Flowers.**

There is habitual inclination for healthy young men to seek pursuits that involve a high risk of danger, such as sport and hunting. So there seems to be an inevitability about the destinies of such youths as Actaeon, Adonis, Hyacinthus, Cyparissus, and even Narcissus. Each of these boys holds a passion for hunting, and it is through this pastime that they die - directly for Actaeon and Adonis but indirectly for Hyacinthus and Narcissus. The only character here to be rescued, like Myrrha, Daphne and Arachne, by the act of metamorphosis is Cyparissus. The aetiological stories of Adonis and Hyacinthus depict the metamorphosis of their blood into spring-flowers after their violent deaths, as testimonials of their beauty, the brevity of their lives, and the love they shared with two deities. The powerful imagery of love connected with death is picked up on by Segal:

In the tales of Hyacinthus and Adonis the flower helps to adumbrate the close and complex association of love and death which informs both myths. ... And in association of love and death, the identification of the wound and the delicate beauty of the new flower, is continued in the description of the flower itself, ...<sup>23</sup>

The aetiological story of Cyparissus (10.86-142), who becomes the sentinel tree that witnesses the grieving of all bereaved mourners, sets the tone for the grief motif that runs through the songs of Orpheus in Book 10. Adonis and Hyacinthus are not so fortunate and their *post mortem* transformations into spring-flowers are created both as a consolation and as a testimonial. The tragedy for Adonis and Hyacinthus is that although being loved by deities - Venus and Apollo respectively - their deaths can

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<sup>23</sup> Segal 1969, 35.

neither be prevented nor undone. The added irony for Hyacinthus is that the instrument of his death is the discus flung by his lover Apollo (10.182-6), who cannot heal the boy despite being the god of medicine (10.187-9). Both immortals and mortals alike are bound by the 'law of fate',<sup>24</sup> as Apollo acknowledges at 202-4:

atque utinam pro te uitam tecumque liceret  
reddere! quod quoniam fatali lege tenemur,  
semper eris mecum memorique haerebis in ore. (10.202-4)

And would that I were allowed to give up my life for you  
or with you! But since we are bound by the law of fate  
you will always be with me and you will stay on my mindful lips.

This prefigures Venus's grief over the mortal wounding of Adonis (10.715-6), when she too is unable to go against the fates (724).

There is, however, some comfort for the bereaved gods, which in Venus's case is tinged by a small act of defiance on her part:

questaque cum fatis "at non tamen omnia uestri  
iuris erunt" dixit; "luctus monumenta manebunt  
semper, Adoni, mei, repetitaque mortis imago  
annua plangoris peraget simulamina nostri." (10.724-7)

And when she had complained to the fates, "But not all things will be subject to you," she said; "there will always remain, Adonis, a memorial to my grief, and a repeated portrayal of your death will bring an annual imitation of my grieving."

Here she grants her dead lover a posthumous immortality. She achieves this when she transforms Adonis's blood into the perennial spring-flower that appears to remind us of his beauty and her loss. The beauty and fragility of the anemone is the perfect poignant reminder:

'... nec plena longior hora  
facta mora est, cum flos de sanguine concolor ortus,  
qualem, quae lento celant sub cortice granum,  
punica ferre solent. breuis est tamen usus in illo;  
namque male haerentem et nimia leuitate caducum  
excutiunt idem, qui praestant nomina, uenti.' (10.734-9)

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<sup>24</sup>Hill 1999, 53.

‘... and there was a delay of not more than a full hour, when a flower, the colour of blood, rose from it like the one which is borne by pomegranates, which hide their seeds under their tough rind. But its stay is brief; for it scarcely clings on and, from its excessive lightness it is likely to fall, and the same winds that shake it down also provide it with its name.’

And Apollo’s requiem for Hyacinthus and his consolation mirrors that of Venus:

flos oritur formamque capit quam lilia, si non  
 purpureus color his, argenteus esset in illis.  
 non satis hoc Phoebo est (is enim fuit auctor honoris),  
 ipse suos gemitus foliis inscribit et AI AI  
 flos habet inscriptum funestaque littera ducta est. (10.212-6)

a flower arose and took the form that lilies take, except that in these there is a purple colour, but a silver one in those; This was not enough for Phoebus (for he was the author of the honour);

he himself wrote his groans on the petals and AI AI was written on the flower and the symbol of woe was drawn.

The connexion between the name of the flower, its fragility, and the wind appears to be an original idea of Ovid’s: ‘anemone’, ‘wind-flower’, from Greek *anemos*; the etymology is unattested before Ovid’.<sup>25</sup> Anderson’s note goes into more detail:

*male harentem*: i.e., *florem*. In the final line Ovid indicates the name of the flower: it is an anemone, connected with the Greek word for wind, *anemos*. According to Pliny the name arises from the fact that the flower opens only when the wind blows. Ovid, however, prefers to link the winds with the dropping of the flower, because that provides a connection with the short-lived Adonis.<sup>26</sup>

There is a delightful little book that makes a welcome addition to the reference books that make essential reading for any keen gardener: *Gardener’s Latin: a Lexicon*, by Bill Neal (sadly published posthumously). Neal’s margin notes on plant-lore and the connexions with literature make interesting reading. His comments on the *anemone* and *narcissus* are pertinent here: ‘Turner wrote in his *Herbal*: “Anemone has the name

<sup>25</sup> Kenney 1986, 436. See also Hill’s note for line 739: Hill 1999, 184.

because the floure never openeth it selfe, but when the wynde bloweth.” Red *Anemones* were thought to take their color from Adonis’s blood, white ones from Aphrodite’s tears.<sup>27</sup> This ancient folk-lore that reflects the aetiological association with the apparent characteristics of this plant is clear; it is also interesting to see that this belief has been long lasting.

Both Adonis and Hyacinthus suffer similarly; they die violently, slowly, and shed much blood, which provides the substance for their exotic memorials. The pathetic description of Hyacinthus’s drawn out suffering reflects the drooping heads of spring-flowers, such as hyacinths, narcissus, and the anemone. As is well-known wild-flowers once picked droop very quickly, which makes them a perfect metaphor for the untimely deaths of these boys:

ut, si quis uiolas rigoque papauera in horto  
 liliaque infringat fuluis horrentia linguis,  
 marcida demittant subito caput illa grauatum  
 nec se sustineant spectentque cacumine terram,  
 sic uultus moriens iacet, et defecta uigore  
 ipsa sibi est oneri ceruix umeroque recumbit. (10.190-5)

Just as when in a watered garden, if someone breaks off violets or poppies or lilies, bristling with their yellow stamens, fainting they suddenly droop their withered heads and can no longer stand erect, but gaze, with tops bowed low, upon the earth: so the dying face lies prone, the neck, its strength all gone, cannot sustain its own weight and falls back upon the shoulders.<sup>28</sup>

Ovid borrows this heart-rending depiction from Virgil:

**190-5** The passage is based on Virgil’s simile for the death of Euryalus, one of the most poignant moments in the *Aeneid* (9.434-7, West’s translation; Latin words also in the Ovidian passage are added in parentheses):

... *his neck (ceruix) grew limp (conlapsa 187) and the head drooped (recumbit) on his shoulders (umeros), like a scarlet flower languishing and dying (moriens) when its stem has been cut by the plough, or like poppies (papauera) bowing (demisere) their heads (caput) when the rain burdens (grauantur)*

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<sup>26</sup> Anderson 1972, 535.

<sup>27</sup> Neal, B., *Gardener’s Latin: a Lexicon* (Robert Hale: London, 1995), 8.

<sup>28</sup> Miller 1999, 77 and 79.

*them and their necks grow weary.*<sup>29</sup>

Hill goes on to point out in his equally detailed note for 5.605-6,<sup>30</sup> that Ovid has a fondness for using similes that he has gleaned from Homer and Virgil.

It could be claimed that flowers are an intrusion into the bucolic landscape as they bring in love-elements, as the examples of the aetiological stories of spring-flowers in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* evidently show. Tibullus is one of the finest proponents of this style and it is in his *Elegy: 1.1* that he sets his love-elegy in a pastoral landscape. In this work Tibullus informs us of his plans to enjoy homely amatory pursuits with his mistress Delia in his own rural idyll. The flowers that appear here, however, are not depicted growing in the landscape but have been picked for garlands (*Tib: 1.1.12*). The gathering of flowers - possibly for garlands - seems to be a favourite occupation of nymphs.

Certainly for Polyphemus, who is smitten by love-at-first-sight when he sees the nymph Galatea gathering flowers with his mother, love is an intrusion. His contented existence as the archetypal shepherd and goatherd is permanently disrupted by his unrequited passion for the nymph. The young herdsmen Damoetus and Daphnis sing of Galatea and Polyphemus in Theocritus's *Idyll VI*, and indeed in *Idyll XI* Theocritus 'sings' to his friend Nicias of the Cyclops and his passion for Galatea in an attempt to explain that only poetry is a *cure* for love. It could be argued, in fact, that Theocritus is humorously suggesting that love is an illness, and this reminds us of Polyphemus's insane jealous rage that causes him to kill Acis (Galatea's lover) in Ovid's version. (And so love *may* possibly be the cause of the decidedly unhinged behaviour of the Cyclops of Homer's *Odyssey* when he consumes Odysseus's companions, which is wittily hinted at by Theocritus but not by Ovid.<sup>31</sup>) If one accepts that love is an infection caused by an outside agent such as Eros / Love, or Venus, over whom the protagonists - human and divine - have no control, then love or passion is an unwelcome intruder into the quintessential bucolic landscape.<sup>32</sup> A.W.Bulloch in

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<sup>29</sup> Hill 1999, 173.

<sup>30</sup> Hill 1997, 163. This particular simile of hunted prey and pursued female (Arethusa) is discussed above in Chap. I(iii) 'Violations'.

<sup>31</sup> Theoc.11 certainly refers forward to the arrival of Odysseus.

<sup>32</sup> There are numerous examples of passion being used as a weapon of 'infection' leading to tragedy in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*; note in particular Pluto's passion for Persephone/Proserpine in Book 5.

his essay on Theocritus reminds us that: ‘the achievement for which Theocritus is justly famous is, of course, that he introduced the genre of pastoral to the European tradition, and Theocritus’ sense of atmosphere and his ability to convey scene and setting with extraordinary concision are especially evident in the pastoral poems.’<sup>33</sup> Theocritus describes in *Id. XI*, how Polyphemus fell in love with Galatea as Gow’s translation shows: ‘I fell in love with thee, maiden, when first thou camest with my mother to gather hyacinth flowers on the hill and I showed the way.’<sup>34</sup> It would appear then from its earliest beginnings that love and passion have been associated with spring-flowers in bucolic poetry. Virgil certainly picks up on this idea in his versions of the pastoral genre the *Eclogues*. In *Ecl. II* Corydon the shepherd loves the boy Alexis and sings at lines 45-9 that the nymphs can be seen picking flowers for him:

huc ades, o formose puer: tibi lilia plenis  
 ecce ferunt Nymphae calathis; tibi candida Nais,  
 pallentes uiolas et summa papauera carpens  
 narcissum et florem iungit bene olentis anethi;  
 tum, casia atque aliis intexens suauibus herbis,  
 mollia luteola pingit vaccinia caltha. (*Ecl. II. 45-50*)

“Come hither, lovely boy! See, for you the Nymphs bring lilies in heaped-up baskets; for you the fair Naiad, plucking pale violets and poppy heads, blends narcissus and sweet-scented fennel flower; then, twining them with cassia and other sweet herbs, sets off the delicate hyacinth with the golden marigold.”<sup>35</sup>

The most fragrant and beautiful flowers together with herbs and blueberries are to be given to Alexis as a gift of love. In *Ecl. VI*, the white-bovine lover of Pasiphae is depicted resting on a bed of hyacinths (*Ecl. VI. 53-4*). Spring-flowers are again associated with Galatea in *Ecl. IX*, at lines 39-43. In the same *Ecl. IX*, though, the dark-pastoral intrudes when Lycidas sings of the consequences of ‘losing’ Menalca:

Heu, cadit in quemquam tantum scelus? heu, tua nobis  
 paene simul tecum solacia rapta, Menalca?  
 quis caneret Nymphas? quis humum florentibus herbis  
 spargeret aut viridi fontis induceret umbra? (*Ecl. IX. 17-20*)

<sup>33</sup> Easterling, P. E. and Kenney, E. J. (eds.), *The Cambridge history of Classical Literature* (CUP: Cambridge, 1993), Vol. 1, 33.

<sup>34</sup> Gow, A. S. F., *Theocritus Vol. I* (CUP: Cambridge, 1965), 87 and 89.

<sup>35</sup> Fairclough, H. R., *Virgil Eclogues. Georgics. Aeneid I-VI* (Harvard University Press: London, 1999), 34 and 35.

Alas! can any man be guilty of such a crime? Alas! was the solace of your songs, Menalcas, almost torn from us, along with yourself? Who would sing the Nymphs? Who would strew the turf with flowery herbage, or curtain the springs with green shade?<sup>36</sup>

Worse would follow after the death of Daphnis - even the deities Pales and Apollo would abandon the countryside:

postquam te Fata tulerunt  
ipsa Pales agros atque ipse reliquit Apollo,  
grandia saepe quibus mandauimus hordea sulcis,  
infelix lolium et steriles nascuntur auenae;  
pro molli uiola, pro purpureo narcisso  
carduus et spinis surgit paliurus acutis. (Ecl:V.34-9)

Since the Fates bore you off, even Pales has left our fields, and even Apollo. Often in the furrows, to which we entrusted the big barley grains, luckless darnel springs up and barren oat straws. Instead of the soft violet, instead of the gleaming narcissus, the thistle rises up and the sharp-spiked thorn.<sup>37</sup>

The most disturbing image, however, is depicted in *Ecl.* III, when Damoetas warns children to be vigilant even when indulging in seemingly safe pastimes:

Qui legitis flores et humi nascentia fraga,  
frigidus, o pueri, fugite hinc, latet anguis in herba. (Ecl.III.92-3)

You lads who cull flowers and strawberries that grow so low, begone from here; a chill snake lurks in the grass.<sup>38</sup>

Virgil has clearly taken Theocritus's most bucolic poems in the extant collection of the *Idylls*, and developed them further. As Rieu says in his Introduction: 'Virgil did present the Greek idyl to the Latin world: he was the Roman Theocritus.'<sup>39</sup> The appeal of Theocritus's work is explained by Guy Lee in his introduction to his translation of

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 85.

<sup>37</sup> Fairclough 1999, 56 and 57.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>39</sup> Rieu, E.V.: *Virgil the Pastoral Poems (The Eclogues)* (Penguin: Harmondsworth, 1961), 13.

Virgil's *Eclogues*. Lee explains that the central qualities of Theocritus's poetry are 'learned, allusive, and *cantabile*'.<sup>40</sup> Lee continues:

These qualities must have appealed to, indeed enthralled, the young Virgil when he first met the work of Theocritus more than two hundred years later, for he decided to attempt the naturalization of the Theocritan pastoral in Latin, and in the process (which is likely to have been lengthy, as the *Eclogues* were not completed until he was over thirty) he too learnt to be learned, allusive and *cantabile*.<sup>41</sup>

Virgil could be described as the Theocritus of Rome and in the Fairclough edition of Virgil's *Eclogues* the introduction makes clear that:

The *Eclogues* are arranged, not in order of composition, but with antiphonal pastorals alternating with non-dramatic compositions, the whole reflecting the overriding influence of Theocritus.... Considering the fundamental differences between Greek and Latin, it is nothing short of miraculous that Virgil's hexameters trip off the tongue as lightly as those of Theocritus.<sup>42</sup>

The Greek legacy to the Latin literary tradition is well known as Melville explains in his translator's note: 'Indeed without this Greek literature (and in particular that of the third-century Alexandrians, Theocritus, Callimachus and many others) there would have been no *Metamorphoses*.'<sup>43</sup> Ovid becomes part of this literary legacy as Kenney explains: 'The most characteristic and successful technique applied by Ovid to his sources is that of combination.'<sup>44</sup> Kenney explains further:

An example of this combinatory technique at its happiest is seen in the story of Acis and Galatea, in which Homer, Theocritus, and Virgil (himself dependent on Theocritus) are brilliantly intertwined to produce a wholly original serio-comic *tour-de-force* without parallel in ancient literature.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Lee, G., *Virgil: The Eclogues* (Penguin Books: Marmondsworth, 1984), 15.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.* 15.

<sup>42</sup> Fairclough, H. R., *Virgil - Eclogues. Georgics. Aeneid 1-6*, rev. Goold, G. P. (Harvard University Press: London, 1999), 2.

<sup>43</sup> Melville, A. D., *Ovid Metamorphoses* (OUP: Oxford, 1998), xxxi. See also Myers, K. S., *Ovid's Causes: Cosmology and Aetiology in the Metamorphoses* (University of Michigan Press: Michigan, 1997), 5, for a discussion of the connections between Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Hellenistic poetry.

<sup>44</sup> Kenney, E. J., *Ovid Metamorphoses* (OUP: Oxford, 1998), xxiii.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, xxiv. See also xxiv for n15.

The Narcissus story (3.339-510) presents us with an aberrant passion. Combined with a perfect setting providing an aetiological tale of a spring-flower, it appears to mimic the pathetic young man it memorialises. The death of Narcissus seems gentle and almost benign when compared with the deaths of Hyacinthus and Adonis, but it is long and lingering. The similes that Ovid uses to describe Narcissus's dissolution through self-obsession and self-love are powerful and evocative:

... sed ut intabescere flauae  
 igne leui cerae matutinaeque pruinae  
 sole tepente solent, sic attenuatus amore  
 liquitur et tecto paulatim carpitur igne; (3.487-90)

... but as the yellow wax melts before a gentle heat, as hoar  
 frost melts before the warm morning sun, so does he, wasted  
 with love, pine away, and is slowly consumed by its hidden fire.<sup>46</sup>

Ovid here describes Narcissus's death in detail as he does the deaths of Hyacinthus and Adonis, but where this story differs is the surprising lack of a description of the actual transformation of mortal remains into a spring-flower. When the Naiads and Dryads prepare the funeral pyre for their beloved boy they find only a flower that will bear his name for eternity:

iamque rogam quassasque faces feretrumque parabant:  
 nusquam corpus erat; croceum pro corpore florem  
 inueniunt foliis medium cingentibus albis. (2.509-10)

They were now preparing a pyre, torches to shake and a bier:  
 but the body was nowhere; instead of the body they found a flower  
 with white petals surrounding its yellow centre.

In his commentary on this story in a version of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* published in Antwerp in 1618 Pontanus (Spanmuller), makes this interesting observation on line 509:

[509] 'Croceum pro corpore florem...'  
 There is a lot about this flower in Carolus Paschalius, *Coronae* I,ix.  
 There is also a nicely turned, well-expressed epigram on the subject

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<sup>46</sup> Miller 1999, 159.

of this flower, which refers very adroitly to the reason for the metamorphosis that gave it birth. The author had happened to see such a flower leaning out from a bank over some water, and he makes this an occasion for this exercise in wit:

Hic est ille, suis nimium qui credidit undis  
Narcissus, vero dignus amore puer.  
Cernis ab irriguo repentem gramine ripam [ripae?],  
Ut per quas peritit crescere possit aquas.<sup>47</sup>

Pontanus is correct when he comments that this epigram is witty; however, it is most apt when applied to the way the growing habit of this spring-bulb copies the behaviour of Narcissus the youth.

By the time he was sixteen - neither boy nor man - Narcissus was so beautiful he was desired by men and girls but remained unmoved by all. His spurned lovers seek revenge and their agent Rhamnusia / Nemesis brings about his death through self-obsession. The *locus amoenus* he rests in provides the ideal setting (like a venus fly-trap plant) for his demise.<sup>48</sup> From 3.427-93, Narcissus indulges in a soliloquy and throughout becomes increasingly and dangerously self-absorbed, entering an almost fugue-like state. The authorial voice of the narrator, Ovid, intervenes at 427-40, but is ignored. The unsettling effect of the curse is that the longer and more intensely he gazes at his reflection the more he is drawn into love with himself, deeper and deeper as if he is drowning.

The true pathos lies in the fact that death teaches him nothing, as even in Hades he takes an opportunity to gaze at himself in the Styx (504-5). As Hill comments: 'A striking example of a victim who learns nothing'.<sup>49</sup> Unlike protagonist victims such as Marsyas (6.382-401), death is not a release for this absurd creature. The etymology of his name also contains a characteristic of Narcissus's behaviour after the curse takes effect: 'via Latin from Greek *narkissos*, perhaps from *narke* numbness because of narcotic properties attributed to species of the plant.'<sup>50</sup> The bulb, now grown for its ornamental use and its distinct corona and perianth segments (petals), together with its

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<sup>47</sup> Moss 1998, 206.

<sup>48</sup> See above for discussion on dangers underlying seemingly safe locations, Ch:II.(iii) 'Violations'.

<sup>49</sup> Hill 1985, 229.

<sup>50</sup> Hanks, P. (ed.), *Collins Dictionary of the English Language* (William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd.: London, 1986), 1022.

powerful fragrance, is an apt annual reminder of the beautiful young man it memorialises.

After discussing the loss of innocence and its connexions with his 'flower-motif' in the Persephone / Proserpine fable,<sup>51</sup> Segal continues this idea when discussing the Narcissus story. Segal emphasises a characteristic of the flower that he believes mirrors Narcissus's psychological state:

The obdurate Narcissus, for example, after the attempts of Echo, is transformed into a flower with leaves that close in on itself: *foliis medium cingentibus albis* (3.510). The detail underlines both the ambiguous irony of Narcissus' "innocence" and the self-enclosed character of his surrender to love.<sup>52</sup>

As discussed in the chapter on the 'Dark Pastoral', it would seem that appearances can be deceptive, and that the *loci amoeni* sought by these young men in which to enjoy their pursuits, led to their endangerment. In these three aetiological stories, however, their deaths lead to transformations that transform the landscape itself, with the introduction of new species of flora.

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<sup>51</sup> See above Ch:I (iii) 'Violations'.

<sup>52</sup> Segal 1969, 34-5.

### CHAPTER III: THE CULTIVATED RUSTIC LANDSCAPE OF POMONA AND VERTUMNUS.

The rustic Italian deities Pomona and Vertumnus have a distinctive place in this discussion, as their story provides the setting of the third landscape - the cultivated countryside. This is the 'new pastoral' setting with only a nod in the direction of the traditional 'bucolic' landscape. This legend also has the distinction of sharing the motif of the 'new' tradition of Rome in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, coming as it does within the closing 'cosmogonic' section of the series of fables.

The Lycaon myth is juxtaposed between the opening cosmogonic 'creation' strand and the first series of amatory adventures. At this point the subject matter shifts from the macrocosmic events of world 'history', from the emergence out of the initial chaos, and focuses our attention on the microcosmic adventures of the individual protagonists - whether mortal or immortal.

At Book 14.581-608, 'The Apotheosis of Aeneas', Ovid moves from the land of folk-tale, magic, mystery, and paradoxography, inexorably towards that paradigm of the urban landscape - Rome.<sup>1</sup> The fable of Pomona and Vertumnus provides the setting of a 'buffer-zone' between the strictly rural, even wild landscapes and the landscape of the city. Through his somewhat eclectic techniques, Ovid employs a strategy that succeeds in subverting the traditional genres of poetry (and literary language generally) - epic, lyric, elegiac, tragedy, and comedy etc.<sup>2</sup> Ovid has moved the traditionally idyllic scenery backwards and forwards from remote and unsettling settings (as has already been discussed), to the more recognisably conventional bucolic topography, where even Corydon, Daphnis and other swains would not appear out of place, to the garden of Pomona and Vertumnus, where the environment is most effectively tamed and controlled.

This story is firmly located in a cultivated and managed countryside, which provides the *locus amoenus* for the Goddess Pomona. From the start of this tale Ovid

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<sup>1</sup> Wilkinson, L.P.: *Ovid Recalled* (CUP: Cambridge, 1955), 220, where Wilkinson argues that Ovid seems to 'rush' towards the end.

makes it evident that this place has been artfully created by this gifted deity, who although a Hamadryad,<sup>3</sup> has chosen this life-style and this location:

... non siluas illa nec amnes,  
rus amat et ramos felicia poma ferentes.  
nec iaculo grauis est, sed adunca dextera falce,  
qua modo luxuriam premit et spatiantia passim  
bracchia compescit, fisso modo cortice uirgam  
inserit et sucos alieno praestat alumno. (14.626-31)

... It was not woods or streams she  
loved, but the countryside and branches bearing glad fruits  
And her right hand was burdened not by a javelin but by a pruning hook  
with which sometimes she curbed luxuriance and trimmed back the limbs  
that spread everywhere, and sometimes, after splitting the bark, she inserted  
a graft and provided sap for the foreign nursling.

Hill's translation here emphasises two important factors: first, Pomona, though a nymph, rejects the warrior-like mode of the huntress; and second, it also prefigures the image of Vertumnus attempting to seduce her in lines 641-650 where he is disguised as an experienced horticulturist. The description of Pomona's grafting skills is so accurate that it would seem more than plausible that Ovid consulted handbooks of the period. (Indeed, Virgil in his *Georgics* 2.22-34 vividly portrays the arts of the skilled orchard horticulturist.)

So this unique creature becomes synonymous with her home and her skill, and thus the etymology of her name is made clear through these associations. Hill comments in his note for line 626: '**her name**: Ovid derives her name from *pomum* 'fruit (tree)'. The supporting word-play is necessarily slightly altered in the English: *Pomona ... fetus ... Pomona ... pomaria* becomes 'Pomona ... fruit ... fruits ... orchard'.<sup>4</sup> As a wood-nymph her skills at managing fruit trees is hardly surprising, but that she rejects the traditional pastime of hunting shared by her 'sisters', sets her apart

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<sup>2</sup> For a detailed analysis of the achievements of Ovid in interweaving a multiplicity of genres in the *Metamorphoses* see Solodow, J. B., *The World of Ovid's Metamorphoses* (University of North Carolina Press: London, 1988), Chap.I: 'Structures', 9-36.

<sup>3</sup> See Myers, K. S. *Ovid's Causes: Cosmology and Aetiology in the Metamorphoses* (University of Michigan Press: Ann Arbor 1997), 115-6, for the discussion of Hamadryads, their literary genealogy and G. Davis's comparisons between Pomona, Daphne and Syrinx.

<sup>4</sup> Hill 2000, 193.

from nymphs such as Daphne. Myers draws to our attention the obvious comparisons between the tales of Apollo and Daphne, and Vertumnus and Pomona:

The story of Pomona and Vertumnus is the last of the many amatory episodes of the *Metamorphoses*. ... the tale invites comparison with the episode of Daphne and Apollo in Book I, which first introduced erotic and Alexandrian themes into the poem after the initial cosmogony. The story of Vertumnus and Pomona not only inverts the amatory norms established by the first love story but contains a number of parallels and echoes of this story that suggest it performs a similarly programmatic function in highlighting themes that are important in the remainder of the poem: Italian and Roman religious and topographical *aetia*.<sup>5</sup>

Thus this legend is 'placed' firmly in the Roman historical strand, coming as it does between the catalogue of the early Alban kings and the later ones who precede the Founding of Rome (as Otis makes evident in his plan, in his discussion that precedes his 'Julio-Augustan Finale' thesis).<sup>6</sup>

Yet the depiction of the rustic cultivated *locus amoenus* that is presented here (Book 14.622-771) by Ovid, shares a long-held tradition from Homer onwards as the vivid description of the orchards and garden of King Alcinous shows:

Outside the courtyard, fronting the high gates, a magnificent orchard stretches four acres deep with a strong fence running round it side-to-side. Here luxuriant trees are always in their prime, pomegranates and pears, and apples glowing red, succulent figs and olives swelling sleek and dark.<sup>7</sup> (*Odyssey*, Book 7.129-34)

Virgil too sings the praises of a simple rustic but well-managed garden in his presentation of the ideal conditions for apiarists:

qua niger umectat flauentia culta Galaesus,  
Corycium uidisse senem, cui pauca relict  
iugera ruris erant, nec fertilis illa iuencis  
nec pecori opportuna seges nec commoda Baccho:  
hic rarum tamen in dumis olus albaque circum  
lilia verbenasque premens uescumque papauer

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<sup>5</sup> Myers 1997, 113-4.

<sup>6</sup> Otis, B., *Otis as an Epic Poet* (CUP: Cambridge, 1966), 293.

<sup>7</sup> Fagles, R. (trans.), *Homer: The Iliad* (The Softback Preview: New York (1997), 183.

regum aequabat opes animis, seraque revertens  
nocte domum dapibus mensas onerabat inemptis.

(Virgil: *Georgics*: IV.126-33)

where dark Galaesus waters the yellowing corn, I saw an old Corycian, who occupied a few acres of unclaimed land, not enough for ploughing, nor fit for pasturage, nor suited to the vine. Even so, planting cabbages here and there among the brambles, and white lilies and vervain and fine-seeded poppies, in happiness he equalled the wealth of kings, and returning home late at night he used to load his table with an unbought banquet.<sup>8</sup>

There is a connexion with Virgil's *Eclogues*, and a reminiscence here of the bucolic perfection depicted in the *Idylls* of Theocritus, where an essential ingredient of the tranquil landscape is the humming of contented bees, that provide the relaxing dream-like quality to the atmosphere. The simplicity of the setting described above by Virgil also reminds one of possibly the most Hellenistic story in the *Metamorphoses*, Philemon and Baucis (8.611-724), where the elderly pious couple provide a homely, simple, and wholesome 'banquet' unknowingly for the deities Jupiter and Mercury. This aetiological story explains the appearance and location of the arboreal sentinels of a beautiful shrine which has as its central characters the two most contented people in the *Metamorphoses*. Their home is their *locus amoenus*, a place of rustic simplicity and enviable domestic contentment. At 8.637-77, Ovid gives a detailed description of the elderly couple's humble domesticity, when they give their divine guests the best of all they have. Philemon and Baucis's generous and genuine hospitality and evident piety is rewarded when their home is transformed into an exquisite temple, and they themselves are granted their wish to remain together for eternity when Jupiter transmutes them into trees that guard the new shrine. And of course their desires are perfectly in keeping with their humble state and attitude. This rare 'happy-ending' prefigures that of the Pomona and Vertumnus fable at 14.765-771.

Pomona's garden is evidently fertile and beautifully kept which is shown by the praise of her skills by the narrator at 14.623-33, and by Vertumnus at 14.687-91 - when he claims that he is only after her and not her desirable property! The provisions provided by Philemon and Baucis (8.664-67), even the fresh herbs used to clean the

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<sup>8</sup> Fairclough, H. R. (trans.), *Virgil Eclogues. Georgics. Aeneid I-VI*. (Harvard University Press: London, 1999), 126-33.

rough hewn table, were rustic but honourable. The connexions with the noble but supposedly more simple past for the Roman readers are clear in both these stories as the settings show. Indeed in the notes on the Philemon and Baucis legend for his translation, Hill makes this observation for line 632: 'hut: *casa*, a very evocative term for Romans since it was always used of Romulus's hut, preserved on the Palatine in Ovid's day.'<sup>9</sup> In her historical study of Roman gardens Farrar observes:

In the early days, before and during the Early Republic era, the traditional home was a farm or rustic villa, and society was largely based on a peasant economy where the population needed to be self-sufficient on a small holding. Therefore the whole family would have been involved in the practice of *agri* - and *horti* - culture, with much of the produce coming from the *hortus*, the humble kitchen garden. However, during the Late Republic, Rome became increasingly affluent and property owners in many regions were able to possess or hire servants / slaves to perform various tasks on their estates, including staff specially trained to work in garden areas.<sup>10</sup>

We, together with the Roman Augustan reader, are taken back to simpler and by implication purer times by the two stories of Philemon and Baucis, and Vertumnus and Pomona.

Philemon and Baucis are presented as 'an ideal couple' working easily and harmoniously in domestic bliss, as their readiness and ability to provide perfect hospitality for their auspicious guests reveal. (Incidentally, this also gives the gods an opportunity to behave in a rarely noble fashion, when they show their genuine recognition and appreciation of the couple's hospitality.) At first sight Pomona and Vertumnus are equally well-suited, especially as their powers as gods complement each other. They are both fair in appearance - implied by Pomona's status as a Hamadryad. Vertumnus's physical beauty is confirmed at the close of the story, when he discards his disguise as an old crone (14.766-9).

However, it is not clear that Pomona will recognise what is obvious both to the reader and Vertumnus himself. Vertumnus boasts of his ability to be whatever she wants him to be, as the following lines show:

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<sup>9</sup> Hill 2000, 235.

<sup>10</sup> Farrar, L.: *Ancient Roman Gardens* (Sutton Publishing: Stroud, 2000), 160.

adde quod est iuuenis, quod naturale decoris  
munus habet formasque apte fingetur in omnes  
et, quod erit iussus, iubeas licet omnia, fiet. (14.684-6)

And what is more, he is a young man, he has the gift  
of natural grace, and will be fashioned into every suitable shape,  
and what he is ordered, whatever you may order, he will become it.

Vertumnus, using intelligence, guile and his personal genius as a human chameleon, sees Pomona's rejection of all suitors including himself as a challenge. At 641-50 Ovid presents us with the god in the parts of the archetypal peasant farmers, in one rustic role after another:

... sed enim superabat amando  
hos quoque Vertumnus, neque erat felicior illis.  
o quotiens habitu duri messoris aristas  
corbe tulit uerique fuit messoris imago!  
tempora saepe gerens faeno religata recenti  
desectum poterat gramen uersasse uideri;  
saepe manu stimulos rigida portabat, ut illum  
iurares (iurasses Hill) fessos modo disiunxisse iuuenos;  
falce data frondator erat uitisque putator;  
induerat scalas, lecturum poma putares. (14.641-50)

... But Vertumnus outdid  
even these in loving, but he was no more fortunate than they were.  
Oh, how often, in the dress of a hardy reaper, did he bring  
ears of corn in a basket, and was the image of a true reaper !  
Often, wearing his temples bound with fresh hay,  
he could seem to have been turning cut grass;  
often, he carried goads in his rugged hand so that you would swear  
that he had just unyoked his tired bullocks;  
given a knife, he was a lopper and pruner of the vine;  
he had carried ladders in, you would think he was about to pick the fruits.

Hill's translation in particular emphasises the play-acting of Vertumnus's rather idiosyncratic courting of Pomona. Each part that Vertumnus expertly represents is skilfully supported by the correct costumes and he even carries the perfect props. These are clearly depicted with his role-play of rustic character after character; each a clever vignette of the typical farm hand he emulates. Though the performance is exceptional there is a sense that he is playing at being a skilled rustic swain, rather like

Apollo at the opening of the story of Mercury and Battus (2.676-710), when the god indulges himself when disguised as a shepherd, while in love with the youth Hymenaeus (2.680-3). This amusing short story concerning Mercury's talent at cattle stealing also shows that Apollo is indeed only acting the part of a love-lorn herdsman - the archetypal bucolic character - when the herd he is supposed to be tending wanders off (2.686-7). Bearing in mind we and Pomona have only Vertumnus's claims of an ideal rustic as evidence, and that his real talent lies in masquerading, it is tempting to assume that Vertumnus may not be more successful than Mercury. The image of the tragi-comic deity as a failed herdsman, that Mercury presents in Book 2, is a delightful little parody of the traditional love-sick swain of the bucolic idylls. But Mercury is no Corydon. His melancholy condition is a temporary set-back unlike that of the mortals he emulates, who have limited lives and suffer genuine pain. Therefore, Mercury is an excellent example of the herdsman *manqué*; his inability, in actuality, to carry out the tasks of genuine animal husbandry could lead the reader to believe, likewise, that Vertumnus has no real experience as a true rustic.

If, however, one may be reading too much into the affectation of Vertumnus's attempts at the seduction of Pomona, and he is in fact a practised horticulturist, then he is the paradigm of suitors for the Hamadryad. In the role of the perfect farmer, Vertumnus is indeed the complete antithesis of the Lycian Peasant Farmers (6.313-81). In two lines Ovid tells us that the ardent god attempts a number of other and equally unsuccessful disguises (651-2), then he finally comes to the personality who will give Ovid the opportunity to tell another chinese-box style narrative, when Vertumnus transforms himself into an ancient crone. As this venerable antique, 'he' cautions the reluctant Pomona against continuing to reject love or even passion. The cautionary tale of Iphis and Anaxarete (14.698-764), presents Ovid with another opportunity to utilise the genre of erotic elegy - as Solodow explains:

The lesser, or lighter, genres are also represented. Among the many passages dealing with love a certain number unmistakably call to mind Roman erotic elegy because of the situation and the language. Apollo pursuing Daphne closely resembles the lover familiar to us from the elegiacs of Propertius, Tibullus and of course, Ovid himself. Though the god pleads his case movingly, he is spurned by the maiden. ... The story of Iphis and Anaxarete is drawn from the same world (14.698 -

761). Nearly the whole of this tale of unrequited love consists of a *paraclausithyron*, the set piece of elegy in which the lover camps outside the door of his hard mistress, entreating, in vain, to be admitted.<sup>11</sup>

Yet this ploy fails to move Pomona, and the fate of Anaxarete - ossified by her intransigence and glacial rejection of Iphis - implies that Pomona could suffer an equally unpleasant destiny if she continues to reject Vertumnus. This provides a change in atmosphere from the yeoman parodies of Vertumnus's earlier play-acting to a more unsettling one of impending doom for yet another pursued female.

The creatures that so disturb Pomona at the outset of this episode cause her to lock herself away from the outside world:

uim tamen agrestum metuens pomaria claudit  
intus et accessus prohibet refugitque uiriles (14.635-6)

But, fearing the violence of the rustics, she shut her orchard from within and prevented and avoided men's approaches.

When Vertumnus intrudes on her self-imposed seclusion at 641-2, he too brings with him the threat of the outsiders. The persistent underlying violence in all the stories discussed thus far is alluded to at 770, when Vertumnus, if refused again, will use force against her.<sup>12</sup>

uimque parat, sed ui non est opus, inque figura  
capta dei nympe est et mutua uulnera sensit.

He was preparing to use violence, but there was no need for violence,  
and the nymph  
was captivated by the beauty of the god and felt wounds in her turn.

Yet in the same line she has apparently succumbed to his obvious charms after he has reverted to his own normal appearance, and one wonders why he went to such efforts

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<sup>11</sup> Solodow 1988, 21; see also Note 25, 235, for comparative examples in Propertius, Tibullus and for Horace's *Ars Poetica*; and for the terms used by the elegiac lover.

<sup>12</sup> For male deities prepared to use violence against females see above Ch.I (iii) 'Violations'.

to seduce her when disguised; however, as Vertumnus's particular talent lies in perfect imitation, it is consistent with his character, and indeed his name, that Pomona should witness his genius. The happy ending then, unlike that of Philemon and Baucis, is not always obvious in presentation. Like other nymphs, Pomona has no desire for romantic love and occupies herself with her horticultural activities. It is an added irony that in his earliest roles Vertumnus chooses to imitate the life-style of the rustic yokels she despises at 635-6. The sudden change-of-heart saves Pomona from the unpleasant destinies of other nymphs in the amatory episodes in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

The tale of Atalanta and Hippomenes (10.560-707), used by Venus as a warning narrative, fails to affect the natural instincts of her lover Adonis. The outcome of this failure leads to tragedy for them both. The intention of Vertumnus in telling of the fate of Anaxarete to Pomona, is identical to that of Venus - to bring about a change of mind and heart in the listener, and that too fails for Venus. However, in the case of Vertumnus, the failure is circumvented by the surprise - if somewhat unlikely - ending when Pomona's long-held reserves are broken down by Vertumnus's natural beauty (765-71). Myers makes an interesting point here:

The earlier hints of Pomona's difference from other determined virgins in the final love story of the poem is ended on this theme of mutual attraction. Vertumnus, the god whose name is a sort of etymological play on the subject of the poem as a whole, only wins his love when he casts off his disguises and stands as himself.<sup>13</sup>

Indeed Kenney's note on this story explains the etymology of these names and Ovid's originality in his depiction and combination:

These were nature deities of growth and fertility, Pomona associated with garden fruit (*poma*: 14.626-7), Vertumnus with the changing seasons (*uerto* 'turn', 'change'). As elsewhere, it seems to have been Ovid who first brought them together. ... Ovid's treatment of Vertumnus is clearly indebted to that of Propertius (*iv.2 passim*).<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Myers 1997, 124-5.

<sup>14</sup> Kenney 1998, 457-8. For a detailed discussion of the etymology of Vertumnus, with the god himself as narrator and explainer in Propertius: 4.2, see Barchiesi, A: *The Poet and the Prince: Ovid and Augustan Discourse* (University of California Press: London, 1997), 186-8.

The etymologies of their names exactly reflects their talents and virtues, which also incidentally complement each other exactly - yet another reason for their compatibility and a perfect example of Ovid's gift of story-telling.

Here then in the garden of Pomona, Ovid provides the most Romanised countryside landscape. It is clear, when we arrive at the story of Pomona and Vertumnus, that the legends set in the rural scenery in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* are directed ever closer to the urban landscape, as we move towards the close of the poem.<sup>15</sup> There is a gradual but perceptible move away from the barbaric, bestial, and uncontrolled landscape of the wilderness, inhabited by disturbing feral beings. It is the remote and totally uncivilized world of the uncultivated – the ideal environment for the transmuted creatures – that instils mortal fear in the sophisticated urban dwellers, such as Lycaon (2.163-239), Callisto (2.401-535), and Lyncus (5.650-61). Only the most intrepid of mortals venture there and all too often pay dearly for their *hubris*, especially Meleager and his companion hunters (8.260-444).

The next setting is that of the archetypal 'bucolic' environment peopled with exotic semi-divine and divine creatures. It is here that one finds the whole panoply of the woodland from satyrs such as Marsyas (6.382-401), to nymphs such as Daphne (1.462-567), and Callisto, together with those deities whose special attributes involve traditional rural pursuits such as Phoebus/Apollo and Artemis/Diana.

Finally, the *hortus cultus* of Pomona brings us to a landscape with which we feel more comfortable and familiar. Pomona's garden possesses those qualities with which the Roman and modern reader can identify - the controlled cultivated countryside. By placing this amatory episode within a garden, Ovid also makes the setting perform the function of emphasising Pomona's purity while accepting the existence of the (possibly) threatening outside world. Segal makes this important observation:

This unity of landscape and theme applies to yet another tale within XIV, namely that of Pomona and Vertumnus. Here it seems that

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<sup>15</sup> For an interesting argument concerning Ovid as a 'gardener' and the importance of the poetic associations of *horti* to Ovid, see Williams, G. D., *Banished Voices: Readings in Ovid's Exile Poetry* (CUP: Cambridge, 1994), 26-8.

violence, for once, will be thwarted. Pomona's *amor* and *cupido* are not for men, but for gardens and orchards... . The landscape, correspondingly, reflects Pomona's chastity, however, which acknowledges the sensuous world, but would cultivate and refine its more impetuous, elemental qualities. ... The enclosed garden (cf. 635-36), in which she lives is not only the liberal protection of her mode of life. It is also an old and familiar symbol of virginity. In penetrating this enclosed garden (*cultosque intravit in hortos*, 656), albeit in the innocuous form of an old woman, Vertumnus performs a symbolic action which in itself foreshadows the end of the tale.<sup>16</sup>

Despite the latent possibility of aggression suggested at line 770, and emphasised by Segal's gloss on Vertumnus's role as suitor in this story, this god is in fact very different from Apollo, Jupiter or Pluto /Dis,<sup>17</sup> and by anyone's standards would appear to be a most suitable and deserving inamorato for Pomona. The potency of his divine attribute of transmuting, changing, and turning, is the perfect complement to Pomona's horticultural skills. These two rustic Italian gods are thoroughly Romanised by the close of this episode, and Ovid juxtaposed this fable in an ideal position, both as light relief from the 'historical' ending of the *Metamorphoses*, but also as a confirmation of the more elevated Roman and Augustan life-style values.<sup>18</sup> And as Otis emphasises, the most important and relevant attribute of Pomona is her power to control, and even rebuff, elemental forces of nature.

The quintessential qualities of the *hortus conclusus* are all there contained in lines 623-36 of Book 14 - the enclosed walled orchard and garden, that is obviously managed by a devoted and highly skilled horticulturalist. Hers is a garden that does not belong to the nobility of Rome, or the landed gentry of the Italian countryside. This is the quaint rustic garden of Rome's past, that it would seem displays a Hellenistic, even Augustan tradition of simplicity and manual labour. Ovid presents us here with an archetypal Roman heroine, possessing as she does beauty, charm, talent, and a capacity for wholesome domestic values. By making Vertumnus her ideal companion, Ovid Romanises the story still further, as he supplies the essential ingredient for both the

<sup>16</sup> Segal, C. P., *Landscape in Ovid's Metamorphoses* (Franz Steiner Verlag GMBH: Wiesbaden, 1969), 68-9.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. See above for detailed discussion of aggressive divine sexual predators, Chap. I(iii) 'Violations'.

<sup>18</sup> See Otis 1966, 294-5, for discussion of position of Pomona and Vertumnus story, and its importance in the final sequence of Roman 'historical' fables.

keen gardeners and the Romans - regulation and order, as Vertumnus is the god of the changing seasons as well.

The primitive forces of nature are best symbolised by those archetypal creatures represented as a threat here:

quid non et Satyri, saltatibus apta iuuentus,  
fecere et pinu praecincti cornua Panes  
Silenusque suis semper iuuenilior annis,  
quique deus fures uel falce uel inguine terret,  
ut poterentur ea ? ... (14.637-41)

What did the Satyrs, young and good at dancing,  
not do, or the Pans, their horns decked out with pine,  
or Silenus, always younger than his years,  
or the god who terrifies thieves either with his knife or his with phallus,  
that they might win her? ...

Despite the implied threat to the security of Pomona's *locus amoenus*, and to her own personal chastity, Hill's translation brings out the humour of her would-be paramours' antics. These beings would be very familiar to the Roman reader in the form of garden statues. The *Hermae* of Pans and Satyrs developed from ancient stone pillars that date from as early as the sixth century B.C. in Greece, and such statues consist of a rectilinear column of stone with a stylised head of the god Hermes on top and an erect phallus emerging from the front of the pillar. The statue was placed at crossroads as an object of veneration and protection for travellers.<sup>19</sup> Later the heads of Pan, Heracles, and Dionysus were also mounted on these columns, replaced in the Roman period by portrait busts. There are, in fact, examples of herms together with other specimens of the typical garden statuary at the House of the Golden Cupids at Pompeii, where an attempt at reconstruction has been made.<sup>20</sup> The character of Silenus (the elderly servant of Bacchus) is often depicted in statuary and there is a fine example of a Silenus-style fountain outlet in the garden at the House of the Small Fountain in Pompeii.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Boardman, J, Griffin, J. & Murray, O., *Oxford History of the Classical World* (OUP: Oxford, 1990), 271.

<sup>20</sup> Farrar, L: *Ancient Roman Gardens*, Sutton Publishing, Stroud (1998), 99. See also Farrar's Chapter 6: 'Garden Sculpture, 97-129, for detailed background discussion of Roman garden sculpture.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, Colour Plate 9.

Perhaps the most amusing reference here is to Priapus (640-64), who was a familiar figure to Romans - especially to farm-workers. No doubt the land-owning Roman nobility and country gentry would have witnessed the practical and amusing use their staff had for this figure, that of scarecrow! Tibullus speaks of such a use in his *Elegy* 1.1, when he sings the typically Hellenistic praise of country-life:

pomosisque ruber custos ponatur in hortis  
terreat ut saeua falce Priapus aues (Tib.I.I.17-8)

I'd place a red Priapus to stand sentry in the orchard  
and scare away the birds with his reaping-hook.<sup>22</sup>

As with Hill's translation of 14.637-41, Lee's translation brings out the amusing tenor of Tibullus's lines here, and Putnam draws attention to the ironic and humorous use of the image of the deity as a humble scarecrow.<sup>23</sup> However, country-folk have always been practical and, whilst this image may have been amusing to the sophisticated Roman audience, one could easily imagine the rustic labourer 'hedging his bets' by using his statue of Priapus both as an esoteric protector of his crops against imagined supernatural enemies and as a practical defence, literally scaring away depredating vermin. One can certainly imagine the extremely able practitioner, Pomona, doing such a thing to save her produce, especially when one has seen the lengths to which she is prepared to go to protect herself and her garden.

The added irony is that in the real civilized world of Rome and the Empire, the gods Pomona and Vertumnus become subsumed into the identities of Venus and Priapus respectively. As statues 'Flora and Pomona appear to merge into the Venus figure, and are therefore under-represented in gardens.'<sup>24</sup> Farrar explains that Vertumnus became subsumed into Priapus:

Priapus also appears to have taken over the role of the Roman god Vertumnus who was associated with the care of the orchard and fruit. The appearance of Priapus was sometimes made fun of by Latin authors for he was usually personified by a crudely made ithyphallic wooden statue, with a herm-like shaft.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Lee, G. (trans): *Tibullus: Elegies* (Francis Cairns (Publications) Ltd: Leeds, 1990), 3.

<sup>23</sup> Putnam, M. C. J., *Tibullus: A Commentary*, (Oklahoma, 1973), 53.

<sup>24</sup> Farrar 1998, 105.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, 110.

The two excerpts, Ovid's and Tibullus's, are evidently humorous in their depictions of Priapic figures and their associations with gardens. But Farrar comments that sacro-idyllic frescoes depicting the countryside rarely show such a figure in a kitchen garden or orchard. However, she goes on to state:

One notable exception is found in an old drawing of a miniature fresco, which places him in the middle of a small enclosed *hortus*. His statue, however, is shown larger than normal and what we are really seeing is his actual personification rather than depiction of his statue. He guards the *hortus* but he also appears to fill the role of a work supervisor.<sup>26</sup>

So even Priapus is now seen by the Romans of the early Empire as being a charmed creature with the gift of 'sympathetic magic'<sup>27</sup> who no longer possesses the power to do harm.

All good gardeners - professional and devoted amateurs alike - would agree that the most important factor that ensures success is *control*. The expert Hugh Johnson advises:

The essence is control. Without constant watchful care a garden - any garden - rapidly returns to the state of the country round it. The more fertile and productive your garden is, the more precarious its position. Leave the lawn unmown, the beds unweeded for one summer and it will take a year, perhaps more, of hard work to restore it. Nor is it just a matter of unchecked growth. Even a minimal, super-simple garden, a Japanese courtyard of sand and rocks, has its pattern blurred by heavy rain, its emphasis altered by fallen leaves.<sup>28</sup>

Those of us who share Pomona's passion for horticulture and who possess 'green-fingers' know Johnson's statement to be true, and that there is no such thing as a low maintenance garden. Expert cultivation as expressed in the story of Pomona and Vertumnus requires a great deal of management. This fable provides the perfect metaphor for the civilizing power of the Roman Empire. As the above quotation

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<sup>26</sup> Farrar 1998, 110.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

indicates, gardening is a constant struggle against reversion to the uncultivated. By implication Ovid's myth of the horticultural gods is a perfect paradigm of this statement, and the steady march to the panegyric episode at the close (15.852-79), and to the author of the stable, civilized Rome shows the evolution of human society from its primitive beginnings in Book I to its ultimate achievement at the end of Book 15. Galinsky links Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Augustus's manifesto, the *Res Gestae*, and the *princeps'* attempts to restore the ancient *mores* of Rome:

Although the much discussed Augustan "program" was a product of many minds, it was single-mindedly intent on reviving the old *mores*. "By new laws," Augustus emphatically says in R G 8.5, "passed on my proposal (*me auctore*), I brought back into use many exemplary practices of our ancestors which were disappearing in our time, and in many ways I myself transmitted exemplary practices to posterity for their imitation." Even Ovid, whose attitude to the old *mores* was mixed at best, would agree: "By his own own example [i.e., Augustus] will govern the *mores*" (*exemploque suo mores reget*) a knowledgeable Jupiter prophesies in the *Metamorphoses* (15.834).<sup>29</sup>

Although the political elements of the *Metamorphoses* are outside the remit of this discussion, the placing of the Vertumnus and Pomona story cannot be ignored. This fable appears between the tale of the kings of Alba Longa (14.609-21) and the legend of Romulus (14.772-851). If one accepts the quasi-historical nature of these two episodes, the implication is that the Pomona and Vertumnus fable, while being an amusing tale, also evidently espouses the quality of Augustan *mores*. Apart from the Pythagorean philosophy (15.75-478), from the end of the last line of the tale of these rustic Italian gods (14.771), the stories are ostensibly Roman. The amatory story of Pomona and Vertumnus could be described as the final 'fairy-story' told by Ovid in this poem.

The appeal of the perfection of the settled, cultivated country life, with its promise of healthy self-sufficiency and personal happiness that Ovid presents to us in

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<sup>28</sup> Johnson, H., *The Principles of Gardening: The Classic Guide to the Gardener's Art* (Mitchell Beazely: London, 1988), 8.

<sup>29</sup> Galinsky, Karl, *Augustan Culture: An Interpretive Introduction* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1996), 63-4.

the rather benign legend of these two gardening deities, is as obvious to the modern reader as it would have been to the Roman. There is a paradigmatical shift in the closing mythical episodes (as opposed to the 'historical' episodes) in the atmosphere of the landscapes that Ovid presents to us. The transforming, controlling, and civilizing powers of Pomona and Vertumnus are clearly shown in their tale. The *success* of civilization leads to increasing expansion of the urban into the rural environment and, by extension, the cultivated rural into the landscape of the wilderness. The world of Pomona and Vertumnus, and by implication the life-style of the Roman agricultural worker, could not be more different from that experienced by mankind in the Golden Age:

ipsa quoque immunis rastroque intacta nec ullis  
 saucia uomeribus per se dabat omnia tellus;  
 contentique cibus nullo cogente creatis  
 arbuteos fetus montanaque fraga legebant  
 cornaque et in duris haerentia mora rubetis  
 et quae deciderant patula Iouis arbore glandes. (1.101-6)

The earth too, unworked and untouched by the hoe,  
 and uninjured by any ploughs, gave everything of its own accord,  
 and, content with foods produced by no one's labour,  
 men gathered arbutus fruits and mountain strawberries,  
 cornels and blackberries that cling to the tough brambles,  
 and acorns which had fallen from the spreading tree of Jove.

In every sense the transcendence of the human condition in the Golden Age could not be futher in time, distance, sentiment or experience from that of Pomona and Vertumnus. However, if one accepts the impossibility of recapturing such an existence on this mortal plane, the life experienced by Vertumnus and Pomona can be appreciated as desirable. And if, as Augustus intended, the Augustan Age was the new 'Golden Age', then it was also achievable.<sup>30</sup>

Natural disasters notwithstanding, the rural landscapes possess few dangers for modern man. The mythical protagonists of the Ovidian world are traduced by the civilized world. This process had been in operation for some historical time due to the advancement of acculturation by the urban world of Rome; it was also a process

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<sup>30</sup> For a brief but illuminating comment on the Augustan Age and the Golden Age, see Galinsky, 1985, 90-1.

mirrored in the course of the fifteen books of the *Metamorphoses*. The present-day, urbane, sophisticated urbanite may well respond positively to the notion that mankind has overcome the preternatural world, and no longer experiences superstition and the visceral fear of the primitive. The beasts of the wild are increasingly reduced to breeding programmes in secure safari-parks the world over. The monstrous and bizarre creatures become the melodramatic fodder for the cinematic genre of the horror 'B' movie. And the mythic semi-divine beings of the traditional 'bucolic' landscape are banished with the faeries to the bottom of the garden.

## EPILOGUE

The accomplishments of the great poets are often measured by their artistic legacies. There is an astonishing number of paintings that recreate the vivid portrayals of the fables in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. The Renaissance artists such as Titian, Rubens, Botticelli, Raphael, and later painters, especially Poussin, Preller, and David, displayed their artistic genius when inspired by the Ovidian versions of the Greek and Roman myths. When these works are examined it would appear that they employ Ovid's technique in using landscape to provide the most effective and evocative atmosphere for the stories.

Perhaps the most palpable legacy is the influence of Ovid's 'countryside' on the English landscapers of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. The authors of the ancient classical world appear to have provided a poetic blue-print for these landscape artists to follow. Joseph Addison (1672-1719) promoted the skill, and 'The sublime or Homeric, and the magical or Ovidian garden are obviously Addison's preferred styles, because they mirror as well as elicit imagination.'<sup>1</sup> Addison explains the effect that the best examples of the landscaper's skills should induce in the imaginations of those who view them when he wrote in *The Spectator* (No.417, 28 June 1712):

OVID, in his *Metamorphoses*, has shewn us how the Imagination may be affected by what is Strange. He describes a Miracle in every Story, and always gives us the Sight of some new Creature at the end of it. His Art consists chiefly in well-timing his Description, before the first Shape is quite worn off, and the new one perfectly finish'd so that he every where entertains us with something we saw before, and shews Monster after Monster, to the end of the *Metamorphoses*...<sup>2</sup>

The countryside in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is inseparable from the events in these myths and legends, to the extent that the protagonists are subsumed into the landscape

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<sup>1</sup> Dixon-Hunt, J. and Willis, P., *The Genius of Place: The English Landscape Garden 1620-1820* (MIT Press: London, 1988), 139.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, 144-5.

itself. The atmosphere established by the surroundings of the characters works on the imagination of the reader in much the same fashion as the film-score for the movie-goer. Ovid's landscapes are to the stories what the finest and most evocative movie-scores are to modern films, in that the music is as intrinsic to the tone of the cinematic art as is the poet's created environment to the atmosphere of the story-telling. Indeed, the landscapes Ovid creates and presents to us in his *Metamorphoses* seem to possess a character of their own, that stands alongside that of the more human protagonists. His genius, to make his environments seem almost sentient, compares with that of Dickens, especially in his depiction of the cities and rural sceneries alike, such as one finds in *Nicholas Nickleby*, *Oliver Twist*, and *A Tale of Two Cities*. If, as Galinsky<sup>3</sup> and Hughes<sup>4</sup> maintain, passionate love is the central theme of the *Metamorphoses* and the main interest of Ovid (and not the acts of transmutation), then what better settings could he have created for his retelling of these fables? The love that Ovid portrays in his stories may be natural or unnatural, deeply affectionate or violent, but it is always passionate, and the landscapes of the *Metamorphoses* perfectly reflect the stories of love and passion retold there.

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<sup>3</sup> Galinsky, G. K., *Ovid's Metamorphoses: An Introduction to Basic Aspects* (Basil Blackwell: Oxford, 1975), 43.

<sup>4</sup> Hughes, T., *Tales from Ovid: Twenty-Four Passages from the Metamorphoses* (Faber & Faber Ltd: London, 1997), ix.

## APPENDIX I

### AUDIENCE PERCEPTION AND RECEPTION IN ROME

In A. D. 9 the invincible Roman legions suffered possibly their worst defeat, one which was to haunt the Roman psyche in much the same way as the Vietnam War affects to this day the citizens of the U.S.A. When a legion was destroyed, the designated number of that legion was never used again; so when the three Augustan legions, XVII, XVIII and XIX, were annihilated at Teutoburgerwald in A. D. 9, they were never replaced. Schama encapsulates the continued resonance and trauma of the event for the Romans:

The armies of the Caesars may have fought the battles but it was the prose of Tacitus that ordained the conflict, for generations to come, on and on: wood against marble; iron against gold; fur against silk; brutal seriousness against elegant irony; bloody-minded tribalism against legalistic universalism.<sup>1</sup>

Thus the barbarian triumphed, and however temporary that victory was to be, it remained as a salutary reminder of the frailty of Roman civilisation.

A. D. 2 is the supposed date for the commencement of the writing of the *Metamorphoses*, and thus it predates the events (of the *clades Variana*) in A. D. 9 in the dense Teutoburgian forest.<sup>2</sup> There is no evidence, thus far, that these events (which so affected the Roman Empire and Augustus personally) actually influenced Ovid in his completion and revision of the *Metamorphoses* - which *may* have taken place after A. D. 9. The psychological impact on the elderly Augustus, on hearing of the devastating defeat,

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<sup>1</sup> Schama, S., *Landscape and Memory* (Fontana Press: London, 1996), 87.

<sup>2</sup> Howatson, M. C. (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Classical Literature* (OUP: Oxford, 1997), 357.

however, is well known. During Augustus's reign, this territory was never to be dominated or controlled from Rome:

Had Augustus so decided, the lost ground presumably could have been recovered, but he was old and shaken: he would cry out to the spirit of the man whom he himself had appointed, 'Quinctili Vare, legiones redde', and he wore deep mourning on each anniversary of the *clades Variana*. The loss involved a serious diminution of the narrow margin of military man-power, and the standing army was reduced from twenty-eight to twenty-five legions; the moral effects might be more widespread. What policy Augustus would have adapted, if he had enjoyed the prospect of a long life before him, cannot be known, but in the circumstances he appears to have abandoned all thought of any frontier beyond the Rhine.<sup>3</sup>

Roman expansion under the almighty Augustus, who gave the Empire the much vaunted *Pax Romana*, had been given more than a bloody nose by Arminius, the chief of the Cherusci. The fact that Arminius had held the most Romanized traits of Roman citizenship, had served as a Roman auxiliary, and had achieved the rank of equestrian, made his betrayal all the more profound. In his administration and taxation of Teutoburg, a putative province, Varus's incompetent handling of what appeared to be 'friendly natives', created a volatile situation. Apparently it took very little, from the perspective of Rome, for the Romanised Arminius to revert to the treacherous barbarian, one who, besides uniting the Germanic tribes and amassing a 'barbarian hord', succeeded in eradicating three whole Roman legions and their families. This was a world-shattering event, a *Wendepunkt*, indeed *the* turning-point of European history, that led to parallel and distinctive developments of a *Germanic* culture and a *Latin* culture. (This, it could be argued, continued to have political ramifications that, given the veneration of Arminius in nineteenth-century Germany, pointed to the rise of German nationalism and the two world wars of the twentieth century).

The enormity of the event, and its contemporaneous effect on Roman attitudes to their 'barbarian' neighbours (both within and without the Roman Empire's boundaries), must have been very disturbing. One cannot, therefore, exclude the negative attitudes of the Roman readers of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* to the threats of the wilderness alluded to in this work.

Allegedly Ovid suffered *relegatio* in A. D. 8, and not the more severe punishment of *exsilium*. There is a scholarly debate and continuing controversy over Ovid's actual 'physical' exile. In his explanation of his use of the term 'unreality' in the title of his first chapter 'The 'Unreality' of Ovid's Exile Poetry', Williams makes this compelling point:

My use of the word 'unreality' in the title of this chapter is intended to imply something other than the recently revived view that Ovid never in fact set foot in Tomis. Various scholars have argued for this possibility, making capital out of obvious rhetorical exaggerations in the exile poetry and the absence of any reference to Ovid's relegation in such historians as Tacitus, Suetonius or Cassius Dio, all of whom might have been expected to mention it. But to sound a note of caution over these recent claims is not necessarily to accept Ovid's relegation as a historical fact which lacks supporting evidence.<sup>4</sup>

Even so, under sentence of *relegatio*, his property and civic rights at Rome were retained by Ovid, but his works were banned from public libraries. There appears to be no evidence

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<sup>3</sup> Scullard, H. H., *From the Gracchi to Nero: A History of Rome from 133 B.C. to A.D. 68* (Routledge: London, 1989), 258.

<sup>4</sup> Williams, G. D., *Banished Voices: Readings in Ovid's Exile Poetry* (CUP: Cambridge, 1994), 3. See also nn. 1 and 2 (page 3). For a more detailed and very informative discussion on the 'unreality' of Ovid's 'exile', see Chapter One of Williams 1994, 3-49. See also Classon, Jo-Marie, *Ovid's Poetic Pontus: Papers of the Leeds International Latin Seminar* Vol. 6 (1990), 65-94 (continuing the *Papers of the Liverpool Latin Seminar*, 1979-85) (Francis Cairns: Leeds, 1990) *ARCA* 29, for a discussion on the 'literary purpose' of the 'ancient consolatory tradition' in Ovid's 'exile' poetry. For general discussions on Ovid's 'exile' poetry cf. Betty, B. R., *The Poetics of Exile: Propaganda and Polemic in the Tristia and epistulae ex Ponto of Ovid* (Bruxelles, 1980) (coll. Latomus 170), Evans, H., *Publica Carmina. Ovid's Books from Exile*. (Lincoln-London, 1983), Block, E., 'Poetics in Exile. An Analysis of Epist. Ex Ponto 3,9', *Classical Antiquity* i (1982), Thomsen-Davisson, H., 'Magna tibi imposta est nostris persona libelli. Playwright and Actor in Ex Ponto 3,1', *Classical Journal* lxxix (1983-4) and 'Duritia and Creativity in Exile, Epist. Ex Ponto 4,10', *Classical Antiquity* i (1982), and Fairweather, J., 'Ovid's Autobiographical Poem, Tr. 4,10', *Classical Quarterly* xxxvii (1987).

that his writings were confiscated from private ownership, that copying his work was proscribed, or that any of his works were destroyed by the authorities in A. D. 8. If this had been the case, it is unlikely that his work, and more specifically the *Metamorphoses*, would have survived. Literary work, such as Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, was disseminated in Augustan times somewhat differently from the mass publication of printed works that successful modern poets enjoy. There was a commonality of understanding within the elite in Rome, as they were educated in a similar way. Indeed, 'the Greco-Roman elite, wherever they lived within the Roman Empire, considered that through education they were linked with one another in a universal brotherhood. In the Greek world, and to some extent in the Latin west too, this was called *paideia*.'<sup>5</sup> Through his background as a knight with patronage from the wealthy and influential Messalla, Ovid was ostensibly part of the elite for whom he wrote. This group also provided certain functions as well as patronage as Otto Steen Due explains:

Moreover, unlike many modern poets Latin poets did not address their poems directly to the anonymous public. The process of publication had an intermediate stage, where the poet read his poem or the finished parts of it to a selected audience representing the qualified public. Often, his friends or members of his *circle littéraire* were being directly involved in the making of the poem by their criticisms, directions, or suggestions in much the same way as Atticus is often consulted by Cicero about literary problems. The implication of this intimate interplay between poet and the first readers - or rather listeners - is that their tasks and their literary background must have been to some degree the same. So it seems reasonable to suppose that although Ovid, *qua* poet of the *Metamorphoses*, was an atypical reader of that poem, his reading and background in general was typical of his readers too - except, perhaps, for the quantity.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Huskinson, J. (ed.), *Experiencing Rome. Culture, Identity and Power in the Roman Empire* (Routledge in association with the Open University: London, 2000), 48.

Evidently then, Ovid knew his audience and the subjects that they would most appreciate and enjoy. His was an erudite, 'learned', well educated, elite audience who well understood the *topos* of the threat the primeval, preternatural landscape, with its archetypal bestial inhabitants, presented to any idyllic, civilised landscape.

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<sup>6</sup> Steen Due, O., *Changing Forms. Studies in the Metamorphoses of Ovid* (Gyldendal: Copenhagen, 1974), 15-16.

## APPENDIX II

### THE WOLF AND THE LITERARY TRADITION

Wolves feature as a well known literary *topos* of evil personified, and the precedents in the literary tradition for Ovid are evident and typical. The wolf is often presented as a predator that is either sexual or bestial or both, and as a metaphor for the human behaviour that manifests these reprehensible traits. Ovid's depiction of Lycaon as the archetypal feral monster follows this long tradition. From Homer to Ovid classical literature has many examples of the wolf as the slaving creature possessing uncontrollable appetites. The rare exception would appear to be the aetiological tale of the 'she-wolf' in the story of Romulus and Remus where this creature represents the miraculous. Lycaon is the perfect example of every repulsive aspect of the human and the animal. It could also be argued that Lycaon the king is in fact transmuted into the most fitting creature and that he becomes the quintessence of himself as the wolf. The wolf was used as a metaphor for aggressive, brutal, fighting warriors from the earliest writing traditions in Western literature. This metaphor was used most effectively by Homer:

The pressure held their heads on a line, and  
they whirled and fought like  
wolves, and Hate, the Lady of Sorrow, was  
gladdened to watch them.<sup>1</sup>  
(*Iliad* Homer. 11.72-3)

Homer also used this metaphor even more vividly and evocatively earlier in the poem:

So the spirit left him and over his body was fought out  
weary work by Trojans and Achaians, who like wolves

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<sup>1</sup> Lattimore, R. (trans.), *The Iliad of Homer* (University of Chicago Press: Chicago & London, 1974), 236.

sprang upon one another, with man against man in the onfall.<sup>2</sup>  
(*Iliad* Homer. 4.470-72)

Indeed, the images and metaphors of the wolf projected in Homer's *Iliad* effectively established a tradition of wolf-like behaviour in literature, a tradition which Ovid (perhaps consciously) continued in his depiction of Lycaon.

There is a strong tradition in folklore of the powerful effects of wolves on humans and, surprisingly, of the effect humans sometimes have on wolves as alluded to by Horace (see below). In his *Idyll* 14, Theocritus presents a comic conversation between Aeschinas and Thyonichus at lines 23-24 where a young woman appears lost for words: 'Then someone joked, 'Have you been struck dumb? / Seen a wolf?''<sup>3</sup> As Hunter points out in his notes for *Idyll* 14, 'seen a wolf,': there was a popular belief that if a wolf saw someone before itself being seen, that person was struck dumb.'<sup>4</sup> Horace alludes to a very different idea. In his *Ode* 22 of Book 1, Horace persuades us that an innocent blameless life will protect you from all harm. He claims to be immune from danger at lines 9-11:

For once, wandering in the Sabine woods,  
singing of my Lalage, carefree and unarmed  
I strayed beyond my usual bounds - and a wolf  
fled from me!<sup>5</sup>  
(Hor. *Odes* 1.22.9-11)

There is also the tradition of music having a magical effect on wild beasts. At *Odes* 1,17 he describes to his dedicatee, Tyndaris, music's supernatural ability to charm snakes and even wolves away from the kids he keeps at the idyllic balmy spot he portrays in this poem:

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 125.

<sup>3</sup> Verity & Hunter, *Theocritus: Idylls* (OUP: Oxford, 2002), 42.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

Nor do the kids fear the green snakes

or even wolves sacred to Mars,  
whenever, O Tyndaris, the sweet-sounding flute  
echoes through the valley of Ustica  
sloping down the smooth rocks.<sup>6</sup>

(Hor. *Odes* 1.17.8-12)

In his entry for February 3rd, Ovid in the *Fasti* explains the significance for the Romans of the constellation of the Dolphin on this date. This constellation recalls the gifted Arion whose singing soothed the sea and wildlife alike: 'His voice often stopped a wolf in its tracks and the lamb / would stop fleeing from that ravening wolf.'<sup>7</sup> (Ov. *Fasti* 2.85-6) This would appear to go against all the accepted traditions of the wolf as the archetypal menace of all mankind. Wolves would have been a familiar sight to those who farmed and hunted on the periphery of civilization as Nisbet and Hubbard comment in their notes for *Ode* 22:

lupus: wolves were common in ancient Italy (J. Aymard, *Essai sur less chasses romaines*, 1951, pp. 9ff.), and played a big part in folklore (Bömer on Ov. *fast.* 4.766, G. Binder, *Die Assetzung des Königskindes Kyros und Romulus*, Meisenheim, 1964, pp. 78ff.). For Sabine wolves cf. 1.17.9. Fraenkel quotes two modern pieces of evidence: in October 1950 a soldier was killed by a wolf in the Abruzzi, and in February 1956 a postman was devoured by wolves near Mandela, only a few miles from Horace's estate.<sup>8</sup>

This last piece of information encourages our worst fears of the wolf as mankind's most mortal, natural enemy. Negative attitudes towards the wolf are reinforced by memories of childhood fairy tales and nursery rhymes 'Little Red Riding Hood', 'The Three Little Pigs' and the famous Russian tale set to music by Serge Prokofiev, *Peter and the Wolf*. Modern zoologists, with conservationist agendas, unsurprisingly wish to rehabilitate the wolf in the

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<sup>5</sup> Sidney, A., *Horace: Odes* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1999), 34.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>7</sup> Nagel, B. R., *Ovid's Fasti: Roman Holidays* (Indiana University Press: Bloomington, 1995), 59.

midst of modern mankind. If one wishes to assess the modern readers' possible reaction to the portrayal of Lycanthropy in Book 1 of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, this attitude must be taken into consideration. What is impressive is the fact that the wolf, as the *archetypal* representative creature of the *true wilderness*, has come to embody the 'war' between the needs of human civilization and wilderness conservation. There is further evidence that, in modern times, wolves, in desperation, will venture out of the wilderness as, 'During especially hard winters in Europe, wolves shift to the agricultural land at lower elevations and sometimes even venture into such cities as Rome (Pulliainen, 1967a).'<sup>9</sup> So, regardless of how urbane and rational we like to think we are, such experiences in living memory reinforce deep-seated, lingering, preternatural fears.

These long-held beliefs make a useful tool for authors who use the recognisable *topos* of the wolf to add a *frisson* to their work. By the time of the Augustan writers, the wolf was almost always depicted as a relentless predator of whom mankind should naturally be afraid. When a girl or woman tried to escape a sexually predatory male, the metaphor of a deer or a ewe fleeing a wolf was often used. Ancient negative attitudes to the wolf reinforce comparisons with the overwhelming desires of lovers for the objects of their affections. This example, from Plato's *Phaedrus*, is typical: 'Just as the wolf loves the lamb, so the lover adores his beloved,' (Plato *Phaedrus* 241D).<sup>10</sup> In *Idyll* 10, Theocritus presents two harvesters, Milon and Bucaeus, in conversation. Bucaeus pursues a lovely girl in much the same way that wolves chase goats, which is both natural and

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<sup>8</sup> Nisbet, R. G. M. & Hubbard, M., *A Commentary on Horace: Odes, Book 1* (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1970), 268.

<sup>9</sup> Mech, L. D., *The Wolf: The Ecology and Behavior of an Endangered Species* (The Natural History Press: New York, 1970), 162-3.

<sup>10</sup> Fowler, H. N., *Plato* (Heinemann: London, 1914), 457.

inexorable: ‘Goats yearn for clover, the wolf pursues the goat. / Cranes follow the plough, and I am mad for you,’<sup>11</sup> (Theoc. *Idyll* 10.30-31). Polyphemus, the Cyclops, pursues the sea-nymph Galatea, and he sings in a futile attempt to woo her in *Idyll* 11: ‘Why do you leave me just as sweet sleep lets me go, / Flying like a ewe at the sight of a grey wolf?’<sup>12</sup> (Theoc. *Idyll* 11.23-4). According to Hunter, in his notes for this *Idyll*, ‘This poem was famous in antiquity and is the primary model for Virgil’s *Second Eclogue*.’<sup>13</sup> As such, it would have been well known to Ovid also. The metaphor is used with stylistic brilliance by Ovid himself in his *Fasti* for his entry on 24 February, which celebrates the end of a corrupt monarchy. Here the imagery of the wolf, as sexual predator, is very graphic in the rape of Lucretia by the son of the infamous king, Tarquinius Superbus, which brings about the Roman Republic: ‘She trembled like a lamb caught away from the fold, / lying beneath a predatory wolf,’ (Ov. *Fasti*: 2.799-800).<sup>14</sup>

The imagery of the wolf is typically unpleasant in the *Idylls* of Theocritus, but there is also some dry humour in the examples selected here. In *Idyll* 3, a goatherd-lover indulges in the hyperbole of forlorn love – as yet unrequited – for Amaryllis. This provides a typical example of wolves ‘dining’ on humans: ‘I’ll sing no more but lie here where I’ve fallen, and wolves / Will eat me up,’ (Theoc: *Idyll* 3.54-5).<sup>15</sup> And in a conversation in *Idyll* 4, between the two herdsmen, Battus and Corydon, Battus remarks: ‘I wonder why Milon didn’t invite rabid wolves in, if / that’s his idea,’ (Theoc: *Idyll* 4.11-12).<sup>16</sup> This rather offhand, sarcastic remark makes it clear that wolves, especially rabid ones, are,

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<sup>11</sup> Verity and Hunter 2002, 30.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

<sup>14</sup> Nagel 1995, 78.

<sup>15</sup> Verity & Hunter 2002, 14.

unsurprisingly, extremely unwelcome guests. In *Idyll 5*, the untrustworthy nature of wolves is alluded to. Comatas, the goatherd, berates Lacon, the shepherd, for his ingratitude to him: 'Rear dogs or wolf-cubs, and they'll grow up to eat you,' (Theoc: *Idyll. 5:39*).<sup>17</sup> Apparently Lacon was taught to sing by Comatas and now uses this skill against his former mentor, betraying a pattern of behaviour that mimics the untrainable wolf-cub and the treacherous adult it grows up to become.

The most significant and familiar connexion between wolves and Rome (and by extension the Empire) is the founding legend of the miraculous twins, Romulus and Remus. Most interestingly, this aetiological foundation story for Rome is omitted from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Perhaps, since it must have been so well known to his audience, Ovid may have considered it a distraction from this Roman 'history'. It is more likely that Ovid's intention in the *Metamorphoses* was to emphasise the importance of the demi-god founders, Aeneas and Romulus. As the famous precedents of Augustus (in his role as the natural legitimate inheritor of the 'noble' legacies of these heroic figures), they reinforced the political experiment that the Augustan *principate* represents.<sup>18</sup> The *princeps* endeavoured to achieve his long-term goal of stability in Rome, and the burgeoning empire, after the schisms of the Civil War. Augustus had hoped to realise this by bringing back the traditional merits of Roman society: *virtus; clementia; justitia; pietas*. The link

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>18</sup> See Galinsky's Introduction 'The Augustan Revolution' in *Augustan Culture: An Interpretive Introduction* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1996), 3-9.

with the 'noble' past was essential.<sup>19</sup> Art, architecture and literature of the Augustan period reinforced and illustrated these values. The *Clupeus Virtutis*,<sup>20</sup> the *Ara Pacis Augustae* and the Forum of Augustus are the finest and most typical exemplars of the four key 'Augustan' characteristics. The *Ara Pacis Augustae* is arguably the ultimate sculptural monument to Augustus, especially as it represented how Augustus saw himself and how he wanted Rome and the known world to see him.

The emblematic military and numismatic evidence of the wolf, and its importance to the Romans, is worth noting. Under the Marian reforms of the Roman army, during his second consulship (104 B.C.), the legions received new cohesive identities represented by each having a single standard. But it is the *emblems* of the legions that are of interest here.

Parker supports von Domaszewski's view that Pliny's evidence is clear:

von Domaszewski holds that prior to the reforms of Marius each legion had five legionary standards. This he argues from a statement of Pliny: 'erat et antea prima cum quattuor aliis: lupi, minotauri, equi, aprique singulos ordines anteibant'. These are identified as follows: Jupiter is the eagle, Mars the wolf, Quirinus the boar, and these are the three original *numina* of Rome.<sup>21</sup>

Here the importance of the wolf's identity as being synonymous with that of the god Mars is very evident, and perhaps links to his divine connections with Romulus and Remus.

By the time of Augustus, the signs of the Zodiac that had particular significance to the founder of the legions became the traditional legionary emblems. The standard of III

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<sup>19</sup> Galinsky, K., *Augustan Culture: An Interpretive Introduction* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1996), 80-81.

<sup>20</sup> See Chapter III 'Ideas, Ideals and Values' in Galinsky, K., *Augustan Culture: An Interpretive Introduction* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1996), 81-90, for a discussion on the *Clupeus Virtutis*.

<sup>21</sup> Parker, H. M. D., *The Roman Legions* (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1928), 37-8.

*Gallica*, for example, displayed the bull, as that is the sign of the Zodiac for 17 April to 18 May which was sacred to Venus, the divine progenitor of the Julian *gens*.<sup>22</sup> However, there appears to be only one legion that displayed the ‘she-wolf’ with Romulus and Remus. The legion was raised by M. Aurelius, the II *Italica*. Parker argues, however, that, as the legion possessed the honorary title *Pia* before being officially named *Italica*, it existed before 169 A.D.<sup>23</sup> So it would appear that this important symbol of the aetiological myth for the founding of Rome was in actuality extremely rare as a military emblem.

The numismatic evidence is clearly emblematic in its representation of Augustan ideals. The importance of the symbol of the ‘she-wolf’ suckling Romulus and Remus is clearer and less ambiguous than the military emblems. Wiseman asks ‘What were the public symbols of national identity?’ which he answers with useful examples.<sup>24</sup> The first issue silver didrachm coin with the emphatic legend *ROMANO* (c. 269-266 B.C.) clearly depicts the infant twins being nurtured by the ‘she-wolf’.

In his book *Remus A Roman Myth*, in which Wiseman attempts to redress the neglect of the less famous twin of Romulus, the author makes this obvious statement:

With the possible exception of the Trojan Horse, there is no scene in the whole iconography of classical myth more recognisable than that of the she-wolf and the twins. And though few people today would be able to name even one of the Greek warriors hidden in the Horse, the she-wolf scene can still be relied on to evoke the formula ‘Romulus ‘n’ Remus’.<sup>25</sup>

The provenance of this foundation myth is both confusing and complicated, and this thesis makes no attempt at revisiting this field. Most importantly though, the myth of the feral

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<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 262.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 115; see also Parker’s footnote on 116.

<sup>24</sup> Wiseman, *Remus A Roman Myth* (CUP: Cambridge, 1995), 156.



female wolf miraculously rescuing and nurturing the abandoned semi-divine twins, Romulus and Remus, was extremely significant to Romans of any era. As stated earlier, Ovid chose not to include this tale in his *Metamorphoses*. He did, however, include it in the sections concerning February and March in his *Fasti* as part of his sequence on the life of Romulus. It could be argued that, after the politically motivated religious revival, associated with the Augustan reforms, this story became even more imperative to the Romans. Augustus directed post-Civil War Roman society to reflect upon their supposedly more 'noble' past in order to emphasize the re-establishing of ancient and acceptable Roman *mores*. The topography of the City of Rome itself positively reinforced this message. Wiseman reiterates the inextricable link between the most renowned founding legend of Rome and that city's three major landmarks:

...they were twins, and they were suckled by a she-wolf. Those are the basic data of the Remus and Romulus story; unlike all other elements, they are immutable. They correspond to three topographical items. The slope of the Palatine where the vessel grounded and tipped the twins out was called Cermalus or Germalus, from *germani* 'brothers'; there was a fig-tree there called *Ficus Ruminalis*, from *rumis* or *ruma* 'teat'; and the particular place on the slope where the miracle happened was called Lupercal, from *lupa*, 'she-wolf'.<sup>26</sup>

This thesis attempts to show that, as we move closer to Rome in the *Metamorphoses*, the landscape depicted by Ovid becomes inevitably more civilised. The wolf, the bestial and the barbarian, are not welcome. The cultivated, domesticated countryside is a far from suitable habitat for such creatures: 'Only where man practises intensive agriculture and herding can he replace the wolf, and even then only by changing nature itself.'<sup>27</sup> Though this last comment is a modern one concerning conservation, the sentiments expressed

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., xiii.

<sup>26</sup> Wiseman 1995, 77.

<sup>27</sup> Hall & Sharp (eds.), *Wolf and Man* (Academic Press: London, 1978), xiii.

would have been, one imagines, well understood by the Romans. Modern conservationists are well aware that reintroducing the wolf into natural habitats will preserve the powerful wilderness element of the environment since the wolf is ‘inseparably related to the wilderness’.<sup>28</sup> The quintessentially feral nature of wolves makes them synonymous with the uncultivated wilderness of their natural habitats. As such, they define wilderness as *the* habitat which most biologically suits the wolf’s temperament. The wolf as an animal species therefore most clearly embodies the dilemma of the needs of civilised mankind (whether Roman or modern), in *opposition* to the survival of the wilderness landscape which is the true *antithesis* of the urban and the urbane.

For the purposes of this thesis it is worth discussing and comparing Livy’s (I.4ff.) version with Ovid’s (*Fasti*: 2.381-422). Livy’s retelling of this celebrated founding fable is an ‘historical’ account told in a rather matter-of-fact explanatory style. Ovid’s, conversely, is poetical and aetiological in a similar entertaining style to that of his *Metamorphoses*. This is hardly surprising as the *Fasti* and the *Metamorphoses* may have been composed concurrently. As Nagel points out in her introduction to her translation: ‘While working on the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid was also composing the *Fasti*, a poetic version of the Roman calendar treating religious festivals, historical anniversaries, astronomical lore, and the like. This antiquarian almanac forms an interesting complement to the *Metamorphoses*.’<sup>29</sup> Livy’s account implies that the legend was highly suspect and, even by the time of his writing, was considered a mere myth:

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<sup>28</sup> Mech., L. D., *The Wolf: The Ecology and Behavior of an Endangered Species* (The Natural History Press: New York, 1970), xv.

<sup>29</sup> Nagel 1995, 2.

...a she-wolf, coming down from the neighbouring hills to quench her thirst, heard the children crying and made her way to where they were. She offered them her teats to suck and treated them with such gentleness that Faustulus, the king's herdsman, found her licking them with her tongue. Faustulus took them to his hut and gave them to his wife Larentia to nurse. Some think that the origin of this fable was the fact that Larentia was a common whore and was called Wolf by the shepherds.<sup>30</sup>

As has already been stated, the legend of the semi-divine twins and the 'she-wolf' is possibly the most well known city-foundation myth in Western Civilization. It is fascinating, but not surprising, that the more rational and rather 'red top' version of the abandoned children's rescue is unfamiliar.<sup>31</sup> It is also interesting to note that the alternative version provided by Livy mirrors the equally familiar rescue of Moses in the bullrushes in the Bible in some respects. However, it is the preternatural event of a wolf suckling and nurturing *human* infants that is important here.

The tenor of Ovid's version in his *Fasti* is very different from Livy's. Ovid's incredulity, and ours by default, emphasizes the miraculous aspect of this event:

Driven toward a shadowy forest, gradually the ark  
sank in the mud as the river receded.  
There was a tree; bits of it remain, and today's  
Rumal fig used to be the Romulan fig.  
A she-wolf newly whelped came to the outcast twins – a miracle!  
Who'd believe the beast didn't harm the boys!  
Didn't harm them! She even helped. A she-wolf fostered  
those whom kin had tried to kill.  
She stood and wagged her tail at her delicate charges,  
and licked their bodies into shape with her tongue.  
You'd have known they were sons of Mars, fearlessly pulling from her teats,  
fed with milk not intended for them.  
The wolf gave her lupine name to the place, which gives the Luperci theirs.  
The nurse got a handsome reward for her milk.  
(Ov. *Fasti*: 2.409-422)<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Livy, *The Early History of Rome* trans. de Sélincourt, A. (Penguin: Harmondsworth, 1971), 38.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Wiseman 1995, 160-168 for alternative versions of Rome's foundation myths.

<sup>32</sup> Nagel 1995, 68.

Ovid's entry for 15 February, with its explanation for the Festival of the Luperci and its concomitant rituals, reminds us that this miracle occurs as a consequence of the divine intervention of the infants' natural father, the god Mars. Incidentally, the wolf's 'noble' rescue of the twins is rewarded with the gift of immortal fame, and she becomes synonymous with the city. This wolf nurtures Romulus and Remus in much the same way as the City of Rome perpetually nurtured the Republic and then the Empire.

Somewhat inexplicably however, Mars chooses to abandon the inferior twin, Remus, when, as a foolhardy youth, he is murdered. Remus's bloodstained ghost appears after his funeral rites to his foster parents and speaks to them of his sad fate: 'Oh where is my father Mars? If you told the truth, he provided / a wild creature's teats when we were exposed. / One whom a she-wolf rescued has been destroyed by a citizen's / impetuous hand. How much gentler she was!' (Ov. *Fasti* 5.465-8)<sup>33</sup> In this aetiological story of the nighttime Lemuria Festival for 9 May, the she-wolf's benign behaviour is alluded to in sharp contrast to the brutality of the babies' maternal great uncle and the brutal killing of Remus at the hands of the vicious Celer. How ironic then that the archetypal menace, the wolf, should behave in a more 'civilized' and 'noble' fashion than the humans who should have protected and respected the twins.

The duality of these representations of the wolf in Classical culture presents us with a dichotomy of the 'she-wolf' versus the rabid beast represented by Ovid in the *Metamorphoses* by the figure of Lycaon. On the one hand we are presented with the apparently atypical behaviour of the 'she-wolf', behaving like a civilized, domesticated Roman nurse in a manner which would be an anathema to her species and totally contra-

instinctive to a wild beast. And, on the other hand, we are presented time and again throughout Classical poetry with the unnerving imagery of the wolf as the archetype of all that is uncivilized, untamable and bestial. These are two immensely powerful images of the same creature that are quintessentially Roman and at odds with one another at the same time. This encapsulates the dichotomy of Roman culture itself, one which embraced the highest values of art, literature and architecture (with recognisably civilized living standards), while at the same time indulging in violent spectacles at the Circus Maximus and the Colosseum, as well as brutally oppressing and subjugating other cultures. One image of the wolf is iconographical and the other is stereotypical.

An important strand in the first chapter of this thesis is the dichotomy of civilized man versus the implicit threats of the wilderness. In the wild landscape as depicted by Ovid in his *Metamorphoses*, Lycaon (transformed) is the perfect example of the ultimate predator that threatens cultivated mankind. The dangers of such creatures are often alluded to in traditional 'pastoral' poetry as the wolf is the arch enemy of all pastoralists. As the reader moves through Ovid's *Metamorphoses* towards the triumphal Augustan Rome – the apogee of the civilized world – the landscape becomes increasingly subdued until mankind achieves total control in his creation of the finest city on earth, in the Roman world view.

But when we return to Ovid's portrayal of Lycaon, we are presented with a powerful image of a king and a wolf. This is the figure of the wolf that reinforces our worst prejudices of this predator. Lycaon, as the ruthless king, the human monster capable of the worst crimes of impiety and cannibalism, deserves his punishment. As the

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 143.

transformed wolf – possibly the first literary example of lycanthropy – he suffers permanent exile from the most cultivated society of his royal court. Lycaon becomes the *canis lupus* that still haunts our nightmares.

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