

CUPID RECALLED: *APOLOGIA* IN OVID'S POETRY FROM EXILE

by

NEIL ADAM BEERS

(Under the Direction of Mario Erasmo)

ABSTRACT

Tristia 2 is the prime example of Ovid's attempt, while in exile, to defend and reinterpret his erotic poetry in the form of an *apologia pro vita sua* to the emperor who banished him. In *Epistulae Ex Ponto* 3.3, Cupid reappears as a character in Ovid's poetry in order to corroborate the poet's defense given in *Tristia* 2. Cupid's epiphany in *Ex Ponto* 3.3 allows Ovid to reiterate his defense in novel fashion by recalling Cupid to vouch for Ovid's intention and effect in the work in which he figured so prominently. In both poems Ovid argues that his original intention was not to influence Roman *matronae*, and that there is *nullum crimen* in the *Ars*. This thesis discusses how Ovid's exile poetry, most notably *Tristia* 2 and *Ex Ponto* 3.3, defends and reinterprets his erotic poetry to repudiate its subversive content in order to effect his recall to Rome.

INDEX WORDS: Ovid, Cupid, *Ex Ponto* 3.3, *Tristia* 2, *Apologia*, Augustus, Roman poetry

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DEDICATION

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

After Ovid was relegated to Tomis on the Black Sea in 8 CE, he turned his attention to writing poetry that dramatized his miserable experiences in exile, and attempted to reinterpret his earlier poetry in order to effect a mitigation of his sentence by the emperor. Ovid also used his poetry from exile to enlist the aid of others to intercede with Augustus on his behalf, and thereby to secure a lighter sentence for himself (*Tr.* 1.1. 27-30).¹ *Tristia* 2 is the prime example of Ovid's attempt, while in exile, to defend and reinterpret his erotic poetry in the form of an *apologia pro vita sua* to the emperor who banished him.² Ovid concedes to Augustus that his relegation is deserved, but that since his poetry is defensible, the penalty does not fit the transgression. In light of the *apologia* he delivers, Ovid begs the emperor to relent in his anger, and to grant him a milder place of exile.

In *Epistulae Ex Ponto* 3.3, Ovid recalls a major character from the erotic works to corroborate the defense he gives throughout the poems from exile in general, and in *Tristia* 2 in particular. Cupid's epiphany in *Ex Ponto* 3.3 allows Ovid to retrace the relationship between himself and Cupid that he constructs in the erotic poems in order to pass the blame for his

¹The *Tristia* and *Epistulae Ex Ponto* are the same in this respect. Both works are composed of verse epistles addressed to various individuals, although the names of the specific addressees are suppressed throughout the *Tristia* (explanation given at *Pont.* 1.1.15-18, cf. *Tr.* 1.5.7-8), with the sole exception of the second book.

²Throughout this thesis, I use the term *apologia* to denote, in its literal sense, a defense. I call *Tristia* 2 "Ovid's *apologia* to Augustus" because the verse epistle clearly demonstrates that Ovid is providing his defense to Augustus for one of the *duo crimina* which he says harmed him (*carmen et error*: *Tr.* 207), and I call *Ex Ponto* 3.3 "Cupid's *apologia* of Ovid" since Cupid argues for Ovid's defense of the *carmen* (*Pont.* 3.3.67-70), and states that he wishes he could defend Ovid on the other charge as well (*defendere cetera*: 71).

relegation to Cupid, who is refashioned as the principal audience for Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*.

Ovid is therefore able to reiterate his defense in novel fashion by recalling Cupid to vouch for the poet's original intention when writing the poems in which Cupid figured so prominently. In both poems Ovid argues that his original intention was not to influence Roman *matronae*, and that there is *nullum crimen* in the *Ars*. This thesis discusses how Ovid's exile poetry, most notably *Tristia* 2 and *Ex Ponto* 3.3, defends and reinterprets his erotic poetry to repudiate its subversive content in order to effect his recall to Rome.

Chapter two discusses *Tristia* 2 in order to explore the causes that Ovid suggests for his exile, the methods by which he defends his poetry, and the *suasoria* that he uses to placate Augustus. Ovid ascribes his exile to two causes in *Tristia* 2, *carmen* and *error* (207), and only properly responds to one. Ovid refuses to discuss the *error* so that he does not reopen old wounds (209f.), but he often defends the *carmen*.³ Ovid concedes the *error* as grounds for his banishment, but he reinterprets and defends the *Ars Amatoria* in order to ask the emperor to allow him a less harsh place of exile. The main piece of "evidence" that Ovid presents to Augustus that the *Ars* is not subversive is the reproduction of a disclaimer taken from the *Ars* which prohibits the readership of Roman *matronae*, and therefore supposedly establishes its political conformity. Ovid points out that his poetry describes a fictional reality with fictional pupils and that it is not meant to influence real people, but that even the fictional characters nevertheless adhere to Augustan moral legislation. Ovid furthermore surveys other forms of Latin literature that parallel the subject material of his *Ars*, to argue that the poem has acceptable

³In *Tristia* 2 at: 7f., 211-276, 313-316, 539-546; cf. 1.1.65-69, *Pont.* 1.6.21f., 3.3.37-39.

literary precedents, and to raise the objection that out of all the poets who treated the subject of love, only his poems were taken out of their poetic context and used to indict the author (361-546).

These arguments meant to reinterpret Ovid's earlier poetry are interwoven with imperial panegyric with which Ovid tries to make the emperor more receptive to his plea of innocence. Ovid equates the emperor with Jupiter, and calls attention to his precedents for clemency in order to ask for the application of Augustan clemency to his situation. Ovid argues his case with panegyric and persuasion to appease the anger of a slighted deity so that he might be allowed a return. This discussion of *Tristia* 2 greatly informs a reading of *Ex Ponto* 3.3, which is the only other extended defense of Ovid's poetry of comparable length, by presenting the main points of defense reiterated by both Cupid and Ovid in the latter poem.

In chapter three I discuss how Ovid draws attention to the fictional reality that he creates for his erotic poetry in order to distance himself and his *mores* from his poems, and also to deny their negative influence on women in the real world. Chapter three thus evaluates the claims that Ovid makes to repudiate his poetry in *Tristia* 2 by looking directly at the erotic poems themselves. Although Ovid's poetry is provocative and has the appearance that it can be applicable in Augustan Rome as practical advice, Ovid undercuts the dramatic illusion of the fictional reality in two ways: by constructing Cupid's role as the antagonist that drives the poet to write what he does, and also by disrupting the narrative framework in order to proclaim that certain women who are accountable to Augustan moral legislation are prohibited from reading. Ovid can thus claim later that his narrative guidance demonstrates not only that he intended his work to be false, but also to be harmless. Ovid's careful fashioning of the roles for himself and Cupid as characters in his erotic poetry, and the changing relationship between them, illustrates

how Cupid emerges as an effective witness, advocate and scapegoat in Ovid's claims of innocence in *Ex Ponto* 3.3.

In chapter four I discuss Cupid's *apologia* of Ovid in *Ex Ponto* 3.3 in order to note the similarity to, and variation on, Ovid's *apologia* to Augustus in *Tristia* 2. In *Ex Ponto* 3.3, Ovid rewrites the reputation he gained from the erotic works not only by reiterating his denial that the *Ars* was intended as a manual for married women to subvert Augustus' moral legislation, but also by having a former pupil vindicate the teachings of the *praeceptor amoris*. The implication is that if Cupid was not corrupted by Ovid's *Ars*, then his other readers would not have been either. Ovid reviews the relationship between his *persona* and Cupid in the erotic works at length in *Ex Ponto* 3.3 to identify Cupid as the cause of his exile (22-48). He again mentions the disclaimer which he built into the *Ars*, and which he reproduces as evidence in *Tristia* 2, in order to argue that although he tried to establish the purity of his intention, in retrospect, his efforts seem pointless (49-58). Cupid responds to Ovid, telling his "fellow soldier" that he only learned lawful teachings from the *Ars*, and that the *culpa* which Ovid veiled under the guise of *error* harmed the poet more (67-76). Cupid, too, avoids discussion of the *error*, but after defending Ovid's *Ars*, he prophesies that Augustus' wrath will soften and that the emperor will give in to Ovid's prayers due to his joy over Tiberius' triumph over Germany. Ovid takes the occasion of Cupid's good news to call on Fabius Maximus, the addressee of the poem, to aid the suppliant poet's cause. Thus, this chapter shows how *Ex Ponto* 3.3 is a continuation both of Cupid's role as a character in Ovid's poetry and of Ovid's ongoing defense and reinterpretation of his earlier poetry to effect his recall from exile.

In both *Tristia* 2 and *Ex Ponto* 3.3, we get an account of Ovid's erotic poetry that is focalized through the creator's own lens. Ovid's main arguments repudiating his earlier poetry

do not change from the former poem to the latter, but the manner in which Ovid presents them differs significantly, and thus each poem needs to be treated in detail to bring out Ovid's innovative treatments of the theme of *apologia* in Ovid's poetry from exile.

CHAPTER 2

TRISTIA 2: OVID'S APOLOGIA TO AUGUSTUS

Tristia 2 was probably written in 8-9 BCE as Ovid was making his journey into exile, and was then sent to Rome after some revision, either with or shortly after the first book, in 9 BCE.⁴ The *Fasti* was just half complete when Ovid was sent into exile (*Tr.* 2.549-52), and although Ovid tells us that he burnt the *Metamorphoses* before he left Rome (*Tr.* 1.7.15-16), he says that copies were nevertheless in circulation at Rome (23f.).⁵ It is important to keep these details in mind when reading *Tristia* 2 since Ovid often refers Augustus to these works, as if the emperor had personal copies right in front of him, for proof of the poet's loyalty. In fact, much of *Tristia* 2, which is structured in the manner of a forensic speech, involves Ovid presenting "evidence" to Augustus. This tendency of the poem has recently led Hinds to remark that "it uses an ostensibly submissive appeal for imperial clemency as the point of departure for a sustained defense of the poet's career and artistic integrity."⁶ To bear out Hinds' remark, I analyze Ovid's "sustained

⁴See Stephen E. Hinds (2003), s.v. "Ovid" in *OCD*³, eds. Simon Hornblower and Anthony Spawforth, for a relative chronology. Hind's dating is in line with that of Arthur Leslie Wheeler, who, in his Loeb edition of Ovid's *Tristia* and *Ex Ponto* (1965), has a very accessible table and review of the internal evidence for dating Ovid's exile poetry (xxxiii-xxxix).

⁵*quae quoniam non sunt penitus sublata, sed extant
(pluribus exemplis scripta fuisse reor)*
(*Tr.* 1.7.23f.)

There is certainly some poetic adornment in this account, which recalls the fate of the *Aeneid* after Vergil's death, yet *Tristia* 1.7 is significant because it shows that the *Metamorphoses* was in circulation at Rome when Ovid left for exile. For the above, and all subsequent quotations from *Tristia* 2, I use the text of S. G. Owen (1915), *Tristia, Ibis, Ex Ponto, Halieutica, Fragmenta*, (Oxford), unless otherwise stated. Translations, when provided, will all be my own unless otherwise stated.

⁶Hinds (2003), s.v. "Ovid" in *OCD*³.

defense” as his *apologia pro vita sua*, which, working within the framework established by Ovid’s panegyric praise of Augustus, aims to placate the emperor and to vindicate the poet, in order for Ovid to secure a milder place of exile.

The formal structure of *Tristia* 2 is significant because it highlights Ovid’s aim of securing a milder exile through its repetition after each rhetorical section, and it indicates the formal nature of the *apologia*. Ovid uses panegyric to reconcile Augustus to himself and to have the emperor recall his own previous instances of clemency for application to the poet’s case. The panegyric involves not only references to praises of Augustus in the *Metamorphoses* and the *Fasti*, but also invoking the emperor under his various religious and imperial titles and equating him with Jupiter himself. After Ovid establishes himself in the role of a suppliant before the merciful deity Augustus, he launches into a thorough refutation of one of the two charges which he says destroyed him (*carmen et error*: *Tr.* 2.207). Ovid concedes the *error* charge, and therefore admits that he deserves to be exiled, but he grounds his request for a milder place of exile on the argument that accusations against the *carmen* are false, slanderous, and only brought to Augustus’ attention by an jealous detractor bearing ill-will toward the poet.

Since it would be counterproductive for the poet to question the emperor’s judgement, Ovid constructs an imagined *delator* to divert the blame from Augustus of misinterpreting the *Ars Amatoria* and taking it out of its literary context (77-80).⁷ Ovid argues against his accuser by presenting as evidence a disclaimer from the *Ars* expressly prohibiting married women from reading it (247-50). Ovid then anticipates and refutes a rejoinder when he argues that any work

⁷Ovid does not use the term *delator* in *Tristia* 2, but he does characterize the individual as an informer to Augustus. For the sake of utility and economy, I use the term *delator* not in its strict Tacitean sense with the implications of *maiestas*, but to refer to the imagined accuser of Ovid’s poetry who supposedly informed Augustus of subversive passages.

of literature can be said to promote adultery or vice given the *delator*'s reading of the *Ars* (253ff.). Ovid's repeated praises of Augustus form the framework within which he creates the trial that he did not get before he was sent into exile. In placating the emperor through panegyric, Ovid hopes that Augustus will be receptive to the evidence which he presents to vindicate his *mores* and his *carmina*.

Structural Overview: The Influence of Rhetoric on *Tristia* 2

Seneca the Elder informs us that Ovid knew well the elements of formal rhetoric, and that he preferred the exercise of *suasoria* to that of *controversia*.⁸ Ovid illustrates the elder Seneca's statement by combining his early training in rhetoric with his penchant for poetry in his *apologia* to Augustus in *Tristia* 2.⁹ The influence of rhetoric on *Tristia* 2 is manifest not only in the *suasoria* that Ovid uses to defend his poetry, but also in the methodology of its formal structure.¹⁰ In his commentary on *Tristia* 2, Owen divides the poem into two main parts according to its rhetorical structure:¹¹ 1-26 form the *exordium*, with the intended purpose to "conciliate the court," and 29-578, the *tractatio*, provides the "argumentative development of the case." The *tractatio* is further subdivided into the *probatio* (29-154), which gives "proof by

⁸Sen. Rhet. *Controv.* II. 12: *declamabat autem Naso raro controversias et non nisi ethicis. Libentius dicebat suasorias.* Cf. II. 8,9.

⁹T. F. Higham (1934), "Ovid: Some Aspects of His Character and Aims," *CR* 48, 112.

¹⁰For a thorough discussion of Ovidian rhetoric, see Higham (1958), "Ovid and Rhetoric," in *Ovidiana: Recherches sur Ovide*, ed. N. I. Herescu (Paris: Société d'Édition « Les Belles Lettres »), 32-48.

¹¹S. G. Owen (1924), *Tristium Liber Secundus*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1924), 48-49. Owen's schema is basically in-line with Quintilian's division of a forensic speech: *prooemium*, *narratio*, *probatio*, *refutatio*, *peroratio* (Quint. *Inst.* 3.9.1). See Owen (1924), 51f, for a discussion of Ovid's minor diversions from Quintilian's formulation as he sees it. I adopt Owen's schema in order to illustrate the repetition of Ovid's aim after each rhetorical section of *Tristia* 2.

evidence that the author deserves mercy,” along with its *epilogus* (155-206); and the *refutatio* (207-572), which denies the charge that Ovid’s *Ars Amatoria* is morally subversive, and its *epilogus* (573-578). The two main sections are connected by the *propositio* (27-28), which states Ovid’s aim of placating Augustus.

It is noticeable that after every section, Ovid states and reiterates his aim. He first mentions the aim of placating Augustus after the *exordium* at 27-28, and does so again in the *epilogi* to each section of the *tractatio* (155-206, 573-78). After the *propositio* (27-28), to each mention of his aim, Ovid also adds the request for a milder place of exile. The themes of placating the emperor and receiving a better place of exile link the various sections of the poem by means of a ring composition. In the *exordium* (1-26), Ovid seeks “to conciliate the court,” and then first states his aim. In the *probatio* (29-154), Ovid offers “proof by evidence that the author deserves mercy,” and then begs for it. In the *refutatio* (207-572), Ovid gives an elaborate defense of his *Ars Amatoria* and draws attention to his pro-Augustan texts. Finally, he restates his aim, again encompassing the themes of placating Augustus and securing a milder exile (573-78). The structure of the *apologia* thus highlights the purpose of *Tristia* 2 through the repetition of Ovid’s aim after each section, and calls for the fulfillment of the poet’s aim by Augustus. Ford suggests that “the formal structure indicates that this poem is meant to be taken as Ovid’s formal defense.”¹² Ovid certainly defends himself throughout his exilic work,¹³ but with the exception of *Ex Ponto* 3.3, discussed in the fourth chapter, Ovid nowhere presents such an elaborate defense of himself and his poetry as in *Tristia* 2. Thus, both the structure and the

¹²Bonnie Brier Ford (1977), *Tristia II: Ovid’s Opposition to Augustus* (Diss. Camden: Rutgers University Press), 6.

¹³*Tr.* 1.2.97-98, 3.2.5-6, 4.3.47, 5.13. 25-26, and *Pont.* 2.3. 91, 3.2. 22, for example.

length of the poem indicate that this poem is Ovid's formal *apologia* to Augustus. Since the structure of *Tristia* 2 has such important implications for its reception, I discuss *Tristia* 2 as linearly as possible, in the order of Ovid's presentation and argumentation; yet since the themes in each section often connect back and look forward to others, I group major themes from non-sequential verses for efficiency.

Appeasing the Anger of a Slighted Deity: Panegyric and Persuasion

Ovid begins *Tristia* 2 with two questions directed at the *libellus* he is currently engaged in writing, and he draws attention to the previous verses which landed him in exile:

Quid mihi vobiscum est, infelix cura, libelli,
ingenio perii qui miser ipse meo?
cur modo damnatas repeto, mea crimina, Musas?
an semel est poenam commeruisse parum?
(*Tr.* 2.1-4)

What unproductive concern do I have with you, little books,
I myself, wretched, who am destroyed by my own natural talent?
Why do I presently recall condemned Muses, my accused offenders?
isn't it sufficient to have merited the penalty once?

This introduction is quite surprising since the poem is not initially addressed to Augustus as one might expect, but to Ovid's *libelli*.¹⁴ Augustus, in fact, is not addressed in the *exordium* (1-26) at all, and the apparent discrepancy in addressees demonstrates that Ovid's *libelli*, not the mercy of Augustus, is first invoked as his savior.¹⁵

¹⁴Ford (1977), 12.

¹⁵Ford (1977), 12.

Ford argues that the poem is meant to annoy Augustus since poetry was a cause of Ovid's exile in the first place.¹⁶ Ovid tries to dispel this notion, however, when he states his intention to use his poetry to assuage Augustus' anger:

Musaque, quam movit, motam quoque leniet iram:
exorant magnos carmina saepe deos.
(Tr. 2.21f.)

And my Muse will also calm the provoked anger which it incited:
poetry often wins over the gods by entreaty.

Ovid cites two instances in which Augustus commissioned *carmina* to supplicate the gods (23-26), and hopes that by these examples he can placate Augustus with his *ingenium*:

his precor exemplis tua nunc, mitissime Caesar,
fiat ab ingenio mollior ira meo.
(Tr. 2.27-28)

By these examples I now beg, most merciful Caesar,
that your anger might be made milder by my *ingenium*.

The significance of *ingenium* in the second line of the poem is clearer in these verses. Each word in that verse refers to Ovid himself (*ingenio perii qui miser ipse meo*: 2), and highlights his role in *Tristia* 2 as the accused defendant. Addressing the poem first to his *libelli*, the products of his *ingenium*, and only later to Augustus shows that his *apologia* requires his *libelli* to placate Augustus. Ovid calls upon his *libelli* (= *ingenium*), therefore, to assuage the anger which it provoked (21). In the *probatio* (29-154) which follows, Ovid applies his *ingenium* to praising Augustan clemency and to showing why he deserves the emperor's mercy.

¹⁶Ford (1977), 12.

Ovid begins this section by conceding that Augustus' anger is just and that he merited it, but asserts that if he had not done wrong, Caesar, ironically, would not be able to demonstrate his mercy:

illa quidem iusta est, nec me meruisse negabo;
non adeo nostro fugit ab ore pudor.
sed nisi peccassem, quid tu concedere posses?
materiam veniae sors tibi nostra dedit.
(*Tr.* 2.29-32)

That certainly is just, nor do I deny that I deserved it;
insofar as my shame has not fled from my mouth.
But unless I did wrong, what could you have pardoned?
My lot gave you the material for your kindness.

Ovid nowhere argues that his exile was unjust, an argument that would not fit well within his supplicating *apologia*; what Ovid does, instead, is to grant Augustus the fact that he deserves banishment, but he tries to show why the penalty for his offence is excessive. It would be unwise to call the emperor's judgement into question, but through cunning *suasoria*, Ovid can refashion his transgression into an ironic benefit for Augustus.

In addition to conceding some wrong-doing, Ovid relies heavily on panegyric to placate the emperor. The primary means of the panegyric is to equate Augustus with Jupiter.¹⁷ Immediately following the verses just quoted, Ovid remarks that if Jupiter punished every mortal that did wrong (*peccant*), he would soon be weaponless (*inermis*: 33-34). Ovid states that after Jupiter has hurled his bolts in anger, he scatters the rain clouds and clears the sky (35-36). Ovid uses this description of Jupiter's restraint and forgiveness to beg Augustus to "clear the skies" for the exiled poet by using the same *mos* as the god with whom he shares a name:

¹⁷For a thorough discussion of Ovidian panegyric, see Scott (1930), "Emperor Worship in Ovid," *TAPA* 61: 43-69.

iure igitur genitorque deum rectorque vocatur,
iure capax mundus nil Iove maius habet.
tu quoque, cum patriae rector dicare paterque,
utere more dei nomen habentis idem.
(*Tr.* 2.37-40)

By right therefore is he called the sire and ruler of the gods,
by right the huge universe has nothing greater than Jupiter.
You also, since you are called ruler and father of the country,
use the custom of the god having the same name.

Ovid uses the similar appellations of Augustus and Jupiter to make two points in the passages discussed above: first, Jupiter does not punish every human offense so neither should Augustus; second, since Jupiter is called *genitor deum rectorque* and he eventually relents in casting his thunderbolts, Augustus, the *patriae rector paterque*, should follow the same *mos* and relent in his anger as well. Ovid forgoes arguing the first point since he concedes his exile, yet he cites examples which demonstrate that Augustus does, in fact, observe the same *mos* as Jupiter: no one has held the reins of power with as much restraint as Augustus (41-42), he has granted clemency to conquered enemies who would not have done the same if the situation had been reversed (43-44), and finally, people who conspired against Augustus, after their defeat, were allowed to dedicate gifts to the emperor as a gesture of reconciliation (45-50).¹⁸

Ovid brings the focus back to his own case by asserting that he is more deserving of clemency since he did not take up arms against the emperor (51-52).¹⁹ Ovid swears (*iuro*: 53) by Augustus, calling him a present and manifest god (*per te praesentem conspicuumque deum*: 54), that his *animus* has always favored the emperor and that his *mens* was always faithful to him (55-

¹⁸On Augustus' clemency, see *Tr.* 4.4.53f., 5.2.35f., 5.4.19-22; *Pont.* 1.2.121-26.

¹⁹See Peter Green (1982), "*Carmen et Error*: πρόσφασις and αἰτία in the Matter of Ovid's Exile," *Cl Ant* 1: 202-220 (esp. 213), however, for the conjecture that Ovid's exile must have been linked with the political turmoil between the Julians and Claudians to set up a successor to Augustus.

56). Ovid furthermore proclaims membership in a cult of (the living) Augustus and that he dedicated incense and added his prayers for Augustus to those from the rest of the public (57-60).²⁰ Ovid's pledges of loyalty are meant to demonstrate his fidelity to the *princeps*, and to bolster his claims that his literature is well-intentioned.²¹ Ovid's strategy seems to play upon current popular beliefs about the emperor's divinity hoping that it might save him from exile.²² Ovid's portrait of Augustus, the clement deity, is the counterpart to his own self-portrayal as the pitiful exile. This dichotomy between the *relegatus* and the *deus*, as well as Ovid's claim of membership in a cult of Augustus, clearly place Ovid in the role of a suppliant who is praying to his patron deity for assistance.

Ovid cites as evidence for his claim of loyalty the fact that he praises the *princeps* throughout his works. He first draws attention to the *Ars Amatoria*, which he calls *crimina nostra* (61), stating that Augustus' name can be found a thousand places therein (*mille locis plenos nominis esse tui*: 62). Short of containing praise of Augustus in one thousand places, the *Ars*, in fact, has only two, yet Ovid neglects to mention a specific instance.²³ Ford avers that Ovid withheld these examples since each ends up revealing a great place to pick up women, and

²⁰For the forms of worship attributed to Augustus in his lifetime according to Ovid, see Scott (1930): 63-64. For a discussion of the formal cult to the *numen* of Augustus established by Tiberius shortly before Augustus' death, see Fishwick (1970), "*Numina Augustorum*," *CQ* 20: 191-197.

²¹Fishwick (1991), "Ovid and *Divus* Augustus," *CPhil* 86: 36-41, argues that "poetry seems often to provide the clearest reflection of popular attitudes and practices, but that Ovid's discussion of the emperor's divinity amounts to a 'clear case of special pleading'" in order to explain Ovid's panegyric (36).

²²Fishwick (1991), 40-41.

²³Owen (1924) notes that "the references to Augustus in the *Ars Amatoria* are I.171-6 celebrating the *naumachia* which he exhibited in 2 B.C., and I.177-228 prophesying a triumph and victory over the Parthians for the expedition sent by Augustus to the East in 1 B.C. under his grandson the young C. Caesar" (133).

thus is not likely to please Augustus.²⁴ That notion is certainly reasonable, yet the untimely death of Gaius Caesar in 4 CE prevented the triumph which Ovid prophesies at *Ars* 1.177-228, so mentioning that instance of panegyric could cause Augustus painful memories and thereby hurt the poet's cause.²⁵ It becomes more advisable, therefore, for Ovid to draw attention to his *maius opus*, the *Metamorphoses*, where Augustus will find many praises of his name (*vestri praeconia nominis*: 65), as well as pledges of Ovid's fidelity (*animi pignora multa mei*: 66).

Ovid claims that nothing can increase Augustus' *gloria*, for the *fama* of Jupiter (i.e., Augustus) is substantial, but even Jupiter likes to read his name in poetry, so Augustus must also (67-76). The most significant reference to Augustus in the *Metamorphoses* comes in book 15 when Jupiter prophesies to Venus the greatness of Caesar's descendant, Augustus (807-842).²⁶ He foretells Augustus avenging the murder of Caesar, the battles of Mutina, Pharsalia, Philippi, the Sicilian naval battle against Sextus Pompeius, and the battle of Actium where the forces of Egypt were defeated. Despite the praise for these victories, Augustus would have needed to read

²⁴Ford (1977), 22.

²⁵Gareth D. Williams (1994), *Banished Voices* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press): 184.

²⁶In addition, Ovid first makes the comparison between the respective titles for Augustus and Jupiter in the *Metamorphoses* which is echoed at *Tr.* 2.37-40 and 181f., when he writes *pater est et rector uterque* (15.860). Ovid's comparison between the appellations of Augustus and of Jupiter in the *Metamorphoses* follows his comparison of the dwelling places for each: Jupiter controls the aetherial heights and the kingdom of the tri-fold universe (*mundus*); while his counterpart, Augustus, controls the Earth (*terra sub Augusto est*: 15.858-60). In book one, however, he introduces the identification of Augustus with Jupiter by their respective spheres of influence. The Milky Way (*via...lactea*) and the regal abode of the Thundering god (*Tonantis*) are likened to Augustus' home on the Palatine (1.168ff.). Augustus is only *compared* with Jupiter in the *Metamorphoses*, but the correlation of their powers is collapsed in one place in the *Fasti*, and throughout the *Tristia* and *Epistulae Ex Ponto*, so that Augustus is equated with Jupiter himself. In the *Fasti*, Ovid tells how Augustus received the name *pater patriae* from the senate (2.127-30), then restates, from the *Metamorphoses*, Augustus and Jupiter's respective jurisdiction over the geographical and extraterrestrial realms. He concludes, saying as that Augustus is the father of men, Jupiter is of the gods (*hoc tu per terras, quod in aethere Iuppiter alto, / nomen habes: hominum tu pater, ille deum*: 2.131-32). The single instance in the *Fasti* where Ovid uses the name "Jupiter" for Augustus is when he states that only Livia is worthy of the bed of great Jupiter (*sola toro magni digna reperta Iovis*: 1.650).

fifteen books of the *Metamorphoses* before finding such laudation.²⁷ Yet the presence of Augustus at the end of the poem, however, appears in an emphatic position. Since the *Metamorphoses* is a (near strictly) chronological survey of human history from Chaos to the deification of Julius Caesar and the prophesy of Augustus' fame, its construct is a teleological history of the world culminating in the rule of Augustus. If Augustus investigated the references to himself in the *Metamorphoses*, according to Ovid, he would notice the teleological nature of the work and take it as proof of the poet's loyalty.

Ovid continues his identification of Augustus with Jupiter by begging Augustus to put away his thunderbolts and to be mindful of his name:

parce, precor, fulmenque tuum, fera tela, reconde,
heu nimium misero cognita tela mihi!
parce, pater patriae, nec nominis inmemor huius
olim placandi spem mihi tolle tui.
(*Tr.* 2.179-82)

Be lenient, I beg, put away your fierce weapons and your thunderbolt,
alas, the weapons too well known to wretched me!
Be lenient, don't be forgetful of this name, *pater patriae*,
and take away my hope of placating you in the future.

The equation of Augustus with Jupiter is explicit here as each makes use of the thunderbolt,²⁸ and telling Augustus to be mindful of his name refreshes Ovid's argument that, as *pater patriae*, Augustus should be as forgiving as Jupiter (37-40). Ovid's frequent allusions to Augustus' reputation for clemency and restraint could be a potential embarrassment as long as the emperor

²⁷Ford (1977), argues this as evidence for the "anti-Augustanism" of the *Metamorphoses* (23). Cf. also Segal (1969), "Myth and Philosophy in the *Metamorphoses*: Ovid's Augustanism and the Augustan Conclusion to Book XV," *AJPhil* 90, 288-92. Ford and Ovid both base their claims on the supposition that Augustus had a copy of the *Metamorphoses* to consult.

²⁸This theme is a continuation of *Tr.* 1.1.69-82: Ovid compares the Palatine to Olympus because he often sees lightning bolts originate there and fears that they are marked for him.

remains unrelenting in his anger.²⁹ Williams argues that the tension between Augustus' public image as a champion of these qualities and Ovid's pleas, or challenges, that the emperor apply them to his case "empowers the *Tristia* and *Epistulae Ex Ponto* as a form of commentary on the 'real' nature and limitations of Augustan rule; every plea to the emperor is a test of his legend."³⁰ This tension is certainly present in *Tristia* 2, yet Wiedemann cautions that:

It would be rash to assume that every rhetorical comparison of the princeps to Jupiter is bound to be sarcastic in intention, meant as an attack on a claim to which the emperor's actual behaviour does not entitle him, rather than as a serious rhetorical adornment.³¹

Ovid's intention in *Tristia* 2 is to placate the anger of Augustus and a reasonable way to accomplish this is to praise Augustus' civic virtues. Ovid is challenging Augustus to live up to his name, but he is doing so in a covert manner by using panegyric to persuade Augustus that he should display his clemency to Ovid.³²

It becomes convenient for Ovid to base his panegyric on an identification of Augustus with Jupiter since he had already laid the groundwork for this with his comparisons in the *Metamorphoses* and the *Fasti*; nor was Ovid the first poet to make this identification. Horace, too, identifies Augustus with a god in a passage which Ovid's *per te praesentem conspicuumque deum* (*Tr.* 2.54) echoes:

²⁹Williams (2002), "Ovid's Exile Poetry: *Tristia*, *Epistulae Ex Ponto* and *Ibis*," in *Cambridge Companion to Ovid*, ed. Philip Hardie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 240.

³⁰Williams (2002), 240.

³¹Thomas Wiedemann (1975), "The Political Background to Ovid's *Tristia* 2." *CQ* 25, 268.

³²Harry B. Evans (1983), *Publica Carmina: Ovid's Books from Exile* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press), 10.

Caelo tonantem credidimus **Iovem**
regnare: **praesens divus** habebitur
Augustus adiectis Britannis
imperio gravibusque Persis.³³
(Hor. *Odes* 3.5. 1-4)

We believe that thundering Jupiter rules in the sky:
Augustus while living will be considered
divine, with the Britains and the dangerous
Parthians added to the empire.

It seems quite likely that Ovid simply followed in the poetic footsteps of Rome's other great poets in his association of Augustus with the divine. Vergil was calling Augustus *deus* already in 29 BCE when his *Georgics* was published, so for Ovid to call him *deus* after decades of Augustus' rule does not seem to be out of line.³⁴ Imperial panegyric in Ovid's time was not as developed as it became in Statius' *Silvae*, for example, but one can see the seeds of it in Ovid's panegyric. It seems that Ovid uses the "extravagant metaphor" that Augustus is a god in order to please the emperor and perhaps effect his return from exile.³⁵

³³Horace. *Opera*. H. W. Garrod, ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1901.

³⁴See Ver., *G.* 1.24-42. Horace's *Carmina* 1-3 were published six years after Vergil's *Georgics*, and both were published within the years immediately following the battle of Actium and the consolidation of Augustus' rule. It is reasonable to suppose that these poets, whether through hyperbole or genuine beliefs, were trying to stay in good stead with Augustus' new regime, and that they thought they could do so by hailing Augustus as a god and savior. It is also assumed that Tityrus refers to Octavius Caesar as the *deus* who preserved his land in the *Eclogues*, published around 39 BCE, but the identification is not explicit. Ovid seems to have a similar intention for his praise as Horace and Vergil did.

³⁵Fishwick (1991), 36. For a thorough discussion of Ovid's treatment of Augustus throughout the poet's poetry of exile, see Millar (1993), "Ovid and the Domus Augusti: Rome seen from Tomoi," *JRS* 83: 1-17. He sees these poems expressing not the voice of a subversive dissident, but of a faithful loyalist who was cast out by the regime. Millar is quick to point out that, in Ovid's poetry, one can find instances of an ambiguous attitude towards the regime, but that critical ingenuity can discover that in any text. Ovid does, at least, proclaim loyalty in the poem under consideration, and also demonstrates his own critical ingenuity by showing Augustus how one could (mis)interpret literature. Ovid argues that his *Ars Amatoria* was similarly misinterpreted, and presents to Augustus evidence that proves his loyalty.

Ovid says that a full return, in fact, is not his aim, but rather a more merciful exile:

non precor ut redeam, quamvis maiora petitis
credibile est magnos saepe dedisse deos:
mitius exilium si das propiusque roganti,
pars erit ex poena magna levata mea.
(Tr. 2.183-86)

I do not beg that I may return, although it is believable that
the great gods have often given much more than what was sought:
If you would give a milder and closer exile to the person asking,
a great part of my penalty will be removed.

Ovid qualifies this plea for a mitigated sentence, however, with the suggestion that the gods often give more than one seeks. Ovid's equation of Augustus with a god in the previous verses of *Tristia* 2 makes an implicit request to Augustus that he, too, should give the poet more than he asks. After Ovid's attempts to conciliate Augustus with supplicating flattery, and to show that his case deserves the application of Augustan clemency in reward for his loyalty, Ovid turns his *ingenium* to repudiating the charges against his *Ars Amatoria*.

Reinterpreting the *Ars*: Ovid's Literary Criticism and Response to Critics

Verse 207 begins the longest section of *Tristia* 2, the *refutatio* of the charges against the *Ars Amatoria*. Ovid says that two *crimina* have destroyed him, a *carmen* and an *error*. Ovid refuses to discuss the *error* so as not to open old wounds, but he mentions the *carmen* frequently.³⁶ In fact, the rest of Ovid's *apologia* is concerned with refuting the accusation that, on account of the *Ars Amatoria*, he is a *doctor adulterii* (212).³⁷

³⁶Tr. 2.7-8, 211-276, 313-360, 540-546, 3.5.49-52, 3.6.26-36; *Pont.* 1.6.21-26, 3.3.37-57, for instance.

³⁷Ovid thus claims that, through his poetry, he is implicated in encouraging people to break Augustus' moral legislation. The laws in question are the *lex Iulia de adulteriis coercendis* and the *lex de maritandis ordinibus* of 18 BCE. The former made adultery a severe crime (mainly for women) and also required that a husband divorce his

perdiderint cum me duo crimina, carmen et error,
 alterius facti culpa silenda mihi;
 nam non sum tanti, renovem ut tua vulnera, Caesar,
 quem nimio plus est indoluisse semel.
 altera pars superest, qua turpi carmine factus
 arguor obsceni doctor adulteri.
 (Tr. 2.207-12)

Although two charges have destroyed me, a *carmen* and an *error*,
 the latter mistake must not be mentioned by me;
 for I am not of such worth, that I may reopen your wounds, Caesar,
 whom it is too much to have harmed once.
 The other charge remains, that because of a shameful poem I wrote
 I am accused of being a teacher of obscene adultery.

The verses above have the effect of a *praeteritio* since Ovid mentions the *error* (207) and the necessity of keeping it a secret due to the harm that it caused Augustus (208-10), yet neglects to provide any details of its nature.³⁸ What Ovid provides, instead, is an elaborate *refutatio* of the charge that his *carmen* marks him as a *doctor adulterii*. Ovid's language, furthermore, calls into question the validity of the account, he is *accused* (*arguor*) of being subversive simply because his *persona* is constructed as the provocative *praeceptor amoris* in the *Ars* (*qua turpi carmine factus*).³⁹

wife if she was found unfaithful, and the latter provided inducements to marriage. McGinn (1998), *Prostitution, Sexuality and Law in Ancient Rome* (Oxford), offers the fullest discussion of the relevant laws. Wallace-Hadrill (1985), "Propaganda and Dissent? Augustan Moral Legislation and the Love-Poets," *Klio* 67: 180-84 discusses the law in relation to the poetry of Propertius and Ovid. Gibson (2003), *Ovid: Ars Amatoria Book 3*, pp. 25-37 focuses on Ovid alone. See Garnsey (1966), "The *Lex Iulia* and Appeal under the Empire," *JRS* 56: 167-189, for a discussion of the law during and after Augustus's rule.

³⁸Claassen (1999), *Displaced Persons* (Madison) thus argues that Ovid highlights the *error* through his silence (148). It is granted that Ovid does not need to mention the *error* in his poetry since the offense was certainly known to Augustus. His *praeteritiones*, moreover, may be intended to tantalize his readers, yet Ovid humbly claims that remorse prevents him from addressing the topic. For the broadest discussion of the nature of Ovid's *error*, including a list of all hypotheses up to his time, see Thibault (1964). Ford (1977) updates this list, while Green (1982), Wallace-Hadrill (1985), and Verdière (1992) provide the most recent conjectures.

³⁹Owen (1924) notes that Ovid's other uses of *factus* (210) have the sense of "converted into... so in the *Metamorphoses* of bodies transformed, as 2.485 '*facta quoque mansit in ursa*' (*ad loc.*)," see also *Pont.* 2.3.71 and 4.2.22. Ovid thus intends *turpi carmine factus* to refer to the role or *persona* that he adopts in the *Ars*.

The *praeteritio* of the *error* is nevertheless congruent with lines 29-32, discussed above, since Ovid does not deny that he merited exile; he concedes the *error* charge, yet he argues for a milder exile based on the evidence he gives to refute the *carmen* charge. Poetry, Ovid claims, is beneath the emperor's consideration to begin with, because Caesar has more important things to worry about (213-20). Augustus has the *opus* of running an empire on his shoulders, so why should he avert his *numen* to peruse the useless work of Ovid's leisure (221-24)?⁴⁰ Ovid illuminates this statement on the importance of Augustus' governance with a catalogue of his responsibilities abroad, including Pannonia, Illyricum, Raetia, Thrace, Armenia, Parthia and Germany (225-30).⁴¹ Williams notes that all but two of these regions were in active revolt against Rome at the time Ovid was writing.⁴² Indeed, Augustus should hardly take the time to be concerned with Ovid's poetry when there was such trouble at the empire's borders. One wonders whether Augustus would have considered Ovid's catalogue a panegyric of military achievement as does Owen, or as the "ironic playfulness" that Williams suggests.⁴³

In any case, Ovid says that if Augustus did have the time to read his work, he would have found *nullum crimen* in the *Ars*:

mirer in hoc igitur tantarum pondere rerum
te numquam nostros evoluisse iocos?
at si, quod mallet, vacuum tibi forte fuisset,
nullum legisses crimen in Arte mea.
(*Tr.* 2.237-40)

⁴⁰Williams (1994), notes that Horace introduces his second Epistle to Augustus with a similar statement on the importance of his responsibilities (180).

⁴¹Williams (1994): 180-186, analyzes the significance of the places mentioned in Ovid's catalogue.

⁴²Williams (1994), 184.

⁴³Owen (1924), 158. Williams (1994), 185.

In this matter therefore, should I wonder that with such responsibilities
you never unrolled my playful books?
But if, as I would've preferred, you did have the time,
You would have found no crime in my *Ars*.

Ovid claims to be so confident that there is *nullum crimen* in his *Ars* that he even wishes Augustus would have had time to read the poem in order to judge for himself. Ovid's assessment of the harmlessness of his poetry points back, and must be considered in relation to 77-80, where Ovid posits that someone misrepresented his poetry to Augustus.

a, ferus et nobis crudelior omnibus hostis,
delicias legit qui tibi cumque meas,
carmina ne nostris quae te venerantia libris
iudicio possint candidiore legi.
(*Tr.* 2.77-80).

Ah! The enemy, more cruel to me than all,
whoever read you my erotic work,
in order that the poems from my books which venerate you
couldn't be read with more lustrous judgement.

Since Augustus could not have read the *Ars* due to his many responsibilities, yet it remains one of the causes for which he was relegated (*carmen et error*), Ovid imagines that there must have been a *delator* who convinced Augustus that the poem was unlawful.⁴⁴ As a result, Augustus has become prejudiced against the *Fasti* and the *Metamorphoses*, and could not read the poems with a properly formed sense of judgement. Owen explains this well in his commentary:

This couplet [79f.] is subordinate to 77-8, and expresses the purpose of the enemy, who selected licentious passages of the *Ars Amatoria* to read to Augustus, that, his indignation having been excited, he might be prejudiced against the poet's work generally, and thus view with judgement already biased even the passages laudatory of himself in the *Ars Amatoria* (61-2) and the *Metamorphoses* (63 foll.).⁴⁵

⁴⁴See note 7 on my use of *delator*.

⁴⁵Owen (1924), on *possint... legi* (80).

Charging a *delator* with selective reading allows Ovid to argue against an immoral reading of the *Ars* without accusing Augustus himself of misinterpreting the work, which would not strengthen his case. This also allows Ovid to supplant the *Ars* with his *carmina venerantia* as claims of his loyalty to Augustus. Ovid is arguing that Augustus' interpretation of the *Ars* was framed by the person who read select passages to him, and he seeks to reclaim his text from the *ferus hostis* by presenting evidence to Augustus, who, with his lustrous judgement (*candidiore iudicio*: 80), can see for himself that there is *nullum crimen* in the *Ars*, and that his accuser therefore took the poem out of context when he incriminated it.

Ovid confesses that the *Ars* was neither a serious piece of work, nor was it worthy of Augustus' attention (241-42). Most importantly, he claims that it is not contrary to Augustus' moral legislation because it was not meant to instruct Roman brides (*non tamen idcirco legum contraria iussis / sunt ea Romanas erudiuntque nurus*: 243-44). As evidence, Ovid reproduces the disclaimer that he has at *Ars* 1.31-34, which claims to prohibit married women from reading the work:

neve, quibus scribam, possis dubitare, libellos,
quattuor hos versus e tribus unus habet:
'este procul, vittae tenues, insigne pudoris,
quaeque tegis medios institia longa pedes!
nil nisi legitimum concessaque furta canemus,
inque meo nullum carmine crimen erit.'
(*Tr.* 2.245-50)

Lest you would doubt the little books in which I wrote this,
one of the three has these four verses:
'Be far off from here, thin fillets, the mark of decency,
and you, long dress, which covers half of [a maiden's] feet!
We will sing nothing except legitimate and lawful deceptions,
and in my poem there will be no crime.'

It should be noted that Ovid does not reproduce exactly the corresponding verses from the *Ars*. In the *Ars*, Ovid has *nos Venerem tutam* instead of *nil nisi legitimum* that he writes here. Barchiesi supposes that the alteration to the text of the *Ars* implies that Augustus is not an attentive reader because Ovid is able to alter a verse unnoticed.⁴⁶ It is possible that Ovid did not remember the correct verse, but more likely the change is a stealthy way to strengthen Ovid's case as he presents it to Augustus, who presumably would not discover the emendation since the emperor, according to Ovid, never read the text in the first place (*Tr.* 2.237-40). It is to Ovid's benefit that he should rewrite the verse when presenting it in *Tristia* 2: first, because *nil nisi legitimum* is a stronger assertion of the poem's lawfulness than *nos Venerem tutam*; and second, Ovid later highlights Venus' adultery in the works of other authors (261ff., discussed below), and so would not want to imply that she and her adulterous influence have any role in the *Ars*.

Perhaps the most elaborate argument in the *refutatio* section (207-572) of Ovid's *apologia* is the discussion of Greek and Latin literature which could be (mis)read as corrupting influences in the same way as his *Ars*. Ovid begins by presenting a rejoinder that his imagined accuser could make in response to Ovid's proclamation of the restricted readership of the *Ars*:

‘at matrona potest alienis artibus uti,
quoque trahat, quamvis non doceatur, habet.’
(*Tr.* 2.253-54)

‘But a *matrona* is able to use the arts intended for another,
and she has the means to attract [lovers], although she is not taught.”

⁴⁶Alessandro Barchiesi (1993), ‘Insegnare ad Augusto: Orazio, Epistole 2.1 e Ovidio, *Tristia* II,” *Materiali e Discussioni per l’Analisi dei Testi Classici* 31, 166.

Evans sees the tone of Ovid's defense change after these verses, "his role is no longer that of suppliant but rather that of confident *praeceptor*."⁴⁷ I regard the change in Ovid's tone at this point as a rhetorical feature. Thus far, Ovid has been presenting his case to Augustus which requires that he maintain a supplicating demeanor. When Ovid moves to refute his accuser, however, his rhetoric can manifest itself more aggressively. Ovid's following arguments to demonstrate that the *Ars* was taken out of its literary context are properly in response to Ovid's imagined interlocutor, but the purpose is to reinterpret the *Ars* to Augustus so that he might be allowed a mitigated sentence.

Ovid maintains that if his accuser's rejoinder is correct, *matronae* should not read anything since any *carmen* could then be potentially corrupting for promoting adultery:

nil igitur matrona legat, quia carmine ab omni
ad delinquendum doctior esse potest.
quodcumque attigerit siqua est studiosa sinistri,
ad vitium mores instruet inde suos.
(*Tr.* 2.255-58)

A wife should therefore read nothing, because by any poem
she could become more schooled in delinquency.
Whatever she would touch, if any woman is fond of improper things,
will thenceforth prepare her character for vice.

Ovid bolsters his point by saying that one could take up Ennius' *Annales* and read how Ilia was made a parent by Mars (259-60). Even Lucretius' philosophical work begins by describing how *alma Venus* became *Aeneadum genetrix* (261-62).⁴⁸ Indeed, considering Venus simply as an adulterous breeder instead of the goddess whom Lucretius asks for divine assistance begs that

⁴⁷Evans (1983), 15.

⁴⁸Aeneas and his descendants, of course, are sprung from Anchises and Venus and not from Venus and her husband, Vulcan.

Ovid alter his disclaimer in the *Ars*. Ovid hopes to avoid the same “reading” that he applies to Lucretius by telling Augustus that he only writes of legitimate affairs (*nil nisi legitimum*), and not of the “safe Venery” (*Venerem tutam*) which invokes Venus’ special art and her illicit sexual relationships.

Ovid makes much of the reader’s role in assessing his poetry and poetry in general. He intends to show that any book could be corrupting to one susceptible to corruption, but argues that a book should not be condemned just for that reason (263-266). In the same way that nothing can be more useful than fire or medicine and herbs, and although swords or legal arguments are meant to protect, all these can be used equally to harm people (266-276).⁴⁹ If one reads Ovid’s *carmen* with an upright mind, therefore, one will find nothing harmful.

sic igitur carmen, recta mente legatur,
constabit nulli posse nocere meum.
(*Tr.* 2.275-76)

It is agreed, so it follows, that my poem,
if read with an upright mind, is able to harm nobody.

Ovid maintains that a perverse mind can corrupt anything, yet everything remains safe if kept within its proper place. Ovid argues that he tried to establish the proper place of his *Ars* on its first page since his disclaimer designated the poem for *meretrices solae*:

omnia perversas possunt corrumpere mentes:
stant tamen illa suis omnia tuta locis.

⁴⁹Williams (1994) remarks that the “functional ambivalence” of Ovid’s *exempla* in lines 265-74 can equally be applied to the references to Augustus in book fifteen of the *Metamorphoses*, where “in each case the reader / user is left to resolve for himself the ambivalence inherent in the poem / material” (168). As a result, if one reads the *Metamorphoses*, and has reverence for Augustus, he should only find it full of flattery. Gibson (1999) provides a similar assessment. He sees from Ovid’s *exempla* of fire, medicine, etc., that Ovid is trying to show that these things, as well as his poetry, have no intrinsic moral value, and that the issue is with the consequences and not the nature of reading (“Ovid on Reading: Reading Ovid. Reception in Ovid *Tristia* II,” *JRS* 89, 25). I discuss this point further in the body of the text.

et procul a scripta solis meretricibus Arte
summovet ingenuas pagina prima manus.
(*Tr.* 2.301-304)

Perverse minds are able to corrupt all things:
nevertheless, all those things remain safe in their own place.
And far from my *Ars*, which is written for prostitutes alone,
the first page drives noble women's hands.

In presenting these passages to Augustus, Ovid is subtly urging Augustus to read with a *recta mens*, to evaluate the poet's evidence, and to judge that there is, in fact, *nullum crimen* in the *Ars*.⁵⁰ Since Ovid claims to have written the *Ars* for prostitutes alone, he suggests that he should not be held accountable for his book falling into the wrong hands.

Next, Ovid goes on to defend his work by defending himself and his moral rectitude, which picks up his discussion of Augustus' previous approval of his character at 89-102. Ovid here asserts that his character is blameless and stands far apart from his poetry, which he claims is false anyway and therefore just pleasure reading; nevertheless, no husband questions the legitimacy of his paternity because of Ovid's *Musa iocosa*. This argument, like its earlier formulation just following the discussion of his *delator* (89-102), aims to refute the assassination of Ovid's character by critics, and to reconstruct Augustus' (previously favorable) opinion of Ovid.

sic ego delicias et mollia carmina feci,
strinxerit ut nomen fabula nulla meum. 350
nec quisquam est adeo media de plebe maritus,
ut dubius vitio sit pater ille meo.
crede mihi, distant mores a carmine nostro

⁵⁰Davis (1999), "Instructing the Emperor: Ovid, *Tristia* 2," *Latomus* 58: 785-798, argues that *Tristia* 2 is a didactic work that aims to educate Augustus on how to read his work with a "properly formed sense of judgement." See Casali (1997), "*Quaerenti Plura Legendum*: On the Necessity of 'Reading More' in Ovid's Exile Poetry," *Ramus* 26: 80-112, for a discussion of this principle as Ovid uses it throughout his exile poetry.

(vita verecunda est, Musa iocosa mea)
 magna pars mendax operum est et ficta meorum: 355
 plus sibi permisit compositore suo.
 nec liber indicium est animi, sed honesta voluntas:
 plurima mulcendis auribus apta feres.
 (Tr. 2.349-58)

So I made erotic verse and tender poems,
 and yet no scandal has sullied my name.
 Nor thus far is any married man out of the masses
 doubtful, because of my fault, that he is the father.
 Believe me, my character stands apart from my poetry
 (my life is modest, my Muse is playful).
 Even a great part of my works are false or made up:
 it has permitted itself more license than its own composer.
 Nor is a book an index of one's character, but honored pleasure:
 you will draw more things apt for pleasing the ears.

Ovid uses the argument that a book is not an index of one's character (*nec liber indicium est animi*),⁵¹ in the following verses when he surveys Greek and Latin literature that parallel the subject material of his *Ars*. He advances the position that one should not judge the character of the author by the nature of his work. Ovid argues that although he was not the only one who treated the subject of (illicit) love affairs, only he was punished for his poetry (361-546).

Some scholars see a paradox if we maintain the distinction between Ovid's *mores* and his *carmina* (353ff.). Gibson remarks that "Ovid argues that one cannot discern the *animus* of an author from his book. However, what Ovid is doing in *Tristia* 2 is precisely to give an *indiciu[m] animi*."⁵² Williams makes even more of this conflict between poet and poetic *persona*:

Ovid's defense leaves him with a new problem. He defends the *Ars* by appealing to the benefits of a reading which is alive to the disjunction between poet and

⁵¹This argument recalls Catullus' expression of the same point in *carmen* 16: *nam castum esse decet pium poetam / ipsum, versiculos nihil necesse est* (5-6).

⁵²Gibson (1999), 27.

poetic persona; but he invites us to believe that in lines 353-8 poet and poetic persona are as one. His defense can only stand if it is read with the kind of literary sophistication which that defense calls for to vindicate the *Ars*.⁵³

Ovid does draw a distinction between the poet and his poetic *persona* (*vita verecunda est, Musa iocosa mea*), but he does not collapse these at 353-58.⁵⁴ His point is twofold: the poet *and* his poetry (and hence, poetic *persona*) are blameless. A book is not always an *indiciu[m] animi* because the author can adopt a *persona*. Ovid argues that a perverse reading of the *Ars* should not reflect on the poet's righteous life since poetry has more licence than the poet, but a "correct reading," like the one he is presenting to Augustus, can reflect on the poet's life. Ovid maintains the distinction between poet and *persona*, but he wants it both ways: he wants a reader to read into the poet's intention by means of *candidius iudiciu[m]* (80) in order to determine whether the poet or the *persona* speaks, and then to judge the poem accordingly. The implication is that since Ovid allows his *persona* more licence than he allows himself, his role as the *praeceptor amoris* is neither sincere nor subversive. In representing himself to Augustus, however, Ovid uses the argument that his character stands apart from his poetry to show that although his *Musa iocosa* may be called into question (albeit unjustly), his upright character cannot.

Ovid argues against the objections to his own poetry, and notes the absurdity of being punished for his writing, by showing that his work has continuity with well-read Greek and Roman authors who had been able to write with impunity. Ovid also seeks to reclaim his text

⁵³Williams (1994), 171.

⁵⁴Although I must grant Williams the point that this distinction could undercut Ovid's praise of Augustus (1994; 170). If the poet's poetry or persona is no indication of the poet's character, then how much stock should we put into Ovid's panegyric of Augustus in the *Metamorphoses* or in his exile poetry? I think that if Ovid had anticipated this point, he would have replied that his praises of Augustus are genuine, and only his trials and tribulations as the *amator* and his claim to be a *praeceptor amoris* are poetic fictions.

from his accuser by showing Augustus that his poetry is no worse than any other piece of literature, and is equally susceptible to misinterpretation. This is the platform on which Ovid bases his claim for a mitigated sentence.

Ovid argues that he is not the only person to take part in the celebration of love, yet he is the only one who has paid the penalty for doing so:

denique compusui teneros non solus amores:
composito poenas solus amore dedi.
(*Tr.* 2.361-62)

In fact, I am not the only one to compose tender love stories:
though I alone paid the penalty for writing about love.

Ovid's discussion of the others who wrote *teneri amores* "offers a virtuoso reprise of the whole corpus of ancient literature, Greek and Roman, as one long celebration of *amor*."⁵⁵ Ovid asks what Sappho taught except to love (365-66). No one was harmed by Callimachus' *deliciae* (367-68), and the plots of Menander's plays are nothing without love (369-70). Even the canonical *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are not free from the theme of adulterous love (371-80). The former describes a war waged on account of adultery and the latter is filled with Odysseus' extramarital affairs and with Penelope under the constant temptation of infidelity. Tragedies, as well, always have love as their material (*haec quoque materiam semper amoris habet*: 362) and Ovid produces a long list of examples for our consideration (380-420).

Ovid does not have to rest his case on examples from foreign literature because Roman books have erotic playfulness as well (*neve peregrinis tantum defendar ab armis, / et Romanus habet multa iocosa liber*: 421-22). Ovid launches into a long list of Roman authors, politicians

⁵⁵Claassen (1999) *Displaced Persons* (Madison), 215.

and orators that wrote *deliciae* (423-444) before he gets to the elegists to whom he calls himself a successor (445-68); the list as a whole is intended to show the precedent Ovid had for his writings. Catullus himself, Ovid says, confessed his own adultery (*ipse suum fassus adulterium est*: 430). Gallus was exiled not for celebrating Lycoris in his verse, but for not being able to hold his tongue after drinking too much wine (445-46). Tibullus' poetry teaches women to speak with their fingers or a nod and to make a silent note on the table (453-54), and he offers furthermore the precepts by which married women are able to deceive their husbands (*multaque dat furti talis praecepta docetque / qua nuptae possint fallere ab arte viros*: 461f.).

The presence of *ab arte* (462) in the verses discussing Tibullus draws attention to Ovid's own *Ars*, wherein he teaches the same precepts (*ego sum praeceptor Amoris: Ars*. 1.17). One can find *praecepta* in the poetry of Propertius as well (465f.),⁵⁶ although, reiterating the point made at 361-62, Ovid sees no one from the many authors he surveyed who has been destroyed by his Muse:

denique nec video tot de scribentibus unum,
quem sua perdiderit Musa, repertus ego.
(*Tr.* 2.495-96)

In short I do not see one from all of those writers,
whom his own Muse destroyed, as I am found to be.

Ovid's point is a valid one. He places himself next in line as a successor to the elegists (467f., cf. *Tr.* 4.10.53-54), treating the same themes as they did, and yet only Ovid was banished. This does not have to be read as a retraction of 29-30, where Ovid states that his exile was merited. The

⁵⁶For a discussion of the *praecepta* in Propertius' *carmina*, see Wheeler (1910), "Propertius as Praeceptor Amoris," *CPhil* 5: 28-40.

error supplies the rationale for the exile, yet the extreme penalty is too excessive if the *carmen* charge had anything to do with it.

If poetry is not enough to make Ovid's point that anything could be considered a bad influence, he offers as further argument the corruption that can arise from other forms of literature. One form is the handbooks on dice games which were not considered respectable entertainment by Roman ancestors (471-72). Ovid also says that he always could have written for mime performances, which always have the *crimen amoris*, with impunity (497-98). Ovid turns these diversions back on Augustus by telling him to look at his own *ludi*, which he has often viewed, requested and paid for.⁵⁷ If it is right that mimes should imitate shameless things (*turpia*) and depict adultery on stage, the penalty should be less for his material (which is far less overt and presumably much more sophisticated).

inspice ludorum sumptus, Auguste, tuorum:
empta tibi magno talia multa leges.
haec tu spectasti spectandaque saepe dedisti
(maiestas adeo comis ubique tua est)
luminibus tuis, totus quibus utitur orbis,
scaenica vidisti lentus adulteria.
scribere si fas est imitantes turpia mimos,
materiae minor est debita poena meae.
(Tr. 2.509-16)

Look at the expense of your own entertainments, Augustus:
you will read of the many things purchased for you at a great price.
You have observed and have often given spectacles
(where your grandeur is truly tasteful).
With your own eyes, which the entire world uses,
indulgently, you have seen adultery on stage.
If it is right that mimes depict people imitating shameful things,
there should be less of a penalty given to my material.

⁵⁷See Tac., *Ann.* 1.54, for Augustus' connection to mime performances.

Surely if Augustus approves of what he sees on the Roman stage, he should find *nullum crimen* in Ovid's *Ars*. Ovid draws Augustus' attention to these examples not necessarily to criticize him, but to show him that the *Ars* is no worse than various other forms of entertainment. If Ovid can demonstrate that his poetry is no worse than anything else which may be found in Rome, he has a good claim to ask for a lighter sentence.

There is one final book that Ovid mentions to illustrate that all literature could possibly encourage adultery, the *Aeneid*. In the following verses that pun on the opening verse of the *Aeneid*, Ovid says that the most read book in the Vergilian corpus describes the arms, and the man, cast into Dido's bed:

et tamen ille tuae felix Aeneidos auctor
contulit in Tyrios arma virumque toros,
nec legitur pars ulla magis de corpore toto,
quam non legitimo foedere iunctus amor.
(Tr. 2.533-36)

And yet that lucky author of your *Aeneid*
directed the arms and the man into a Tyrian bed,
nor is any part more read from the whole book,
than when love is joined in an illegitimate union.

Ovid calls this Augustus' *Aeneid* (*tuae Aeneidos*) and draws a contrast between this work and his own poem with the phrase *non legitimo foedere*. Ovid argues that the *Ars* sings *nil nisi legitimum*, yet the *Aeneid* describes a *non legitimum foedus*. Thus even Augustus' national epic cannot claim to avert potentially adulterous readers and could more easily be misinterpreted due to the lack of a disclaimer such as Ovid's.

The role of the reader is a very important concept in *Tristia* 2. Davis remarks that Ovid's discussion of Greek and Latin literature, stretching back seven centuries from Ovid's own time,

shows the continuity between his works and the literary tradition to which they belong.⁵⁸ Ovid explicitly says this of himself when he remarks that he was a successor to the Latin Elegists (*his ego successi*: 467). After he had elaborated on, reworked, and exhausted all of the themes previously treated in elegy, Ovid set out to parody the *Georgics* by writing eroto-didactic poetry. Ovid claims that he was just continuing the work begun by others and that his poetry reflects a current literary trend. Davis suggests that Ovid's catalogue of ancient literature is meant to teach "the injustice of a prince who is incapable of reading with understanding."⁵⁹ Ford goes further, arguing that Ovid has "open attacks" on Augustus' "lack of literary taste,"⁶⁰ and concludes that the poem "was as much an offense as a defense, as much an attack as a shelter."⁶¹

Ovid is not as overt as Davis or Ford claim. With the imagined accuser taking the blame for the misinterpretation of the *Ars*, Ovid does not have to attack or criticize Augustus openly. In fact, I argue that the reason Ovid suggests that a *delator* misrepresented his poetry to the emperor is so that he can argue against the misinterpretation of his poetry without directly charging Augustus with the fault. Ovid is suggesting that the emperor has the proper sense of judgement that would not regard the *Odyssey* as a book of adultery or the *Aeneid* simply as a love affair between Aeneas and Dido. It seems that Ovid believes that he can reclaim his text from the *critics* if he gives Augustus the proper context in which to read the *Ars*. The elegiac tradition to which the *Ars* belongs dictates that its subject will be love; Ovid's wit and innovation allow it to

⁵⁸Davis (1999), 293.

⁵⁹Davis (1999), 295.

⁶⁰Ford (1977), 48.

⁶¹Ford (1977), 50.

be an innovation in didactic poetry, and yet the moral climate of the Augustan age necessitates Ovid's disclaimer.

After finishing his defense of the *Ars*, Ovid is concerned with reiterating his loyalty to Augustus and the empire by calling attention to the imperial themes of his more serious works: the *Fasti* and the *Metamorphoses*. Ovid describes these works as the grand sails to the ship of his poetic enterprise (547-48). If only Augustus would call back his *animus* from *ira* and have a little bit of the *Metamorphoses* read to him, the emperor would find not only that the work culminates in his prophesied apotheosis, but also that he is the inspiration for the poem:

atque utinam revoces animum paulisper ab ira,
et vacuo iubeas hinc tibi pauca legi,
pauca, quibus prima surgens ab origine mundi
in tua deduxi tempora, Caesar, opus:
aspicies, quantum dederis mihi pectoris ipse,
quoque favore animi teque tuosque canam.
(*Tr.* 2.557-562)

Would that you could recall your mind from anger a brief time,
and that you would order a few verses from there to be read to you at leisure,
a few verses, in which rising first from the beginning of time,
I brought the work into your own times, Caesar:
You will see, how much spirit you yourself gave me,
and with the goodwill of that spirit I will sing of both you and yours.

This section seeks to show Augustus that Ovid's Muse is no longer *iocosa*, but has been reformed. Augustus will have no further objections to Ovid's poetry because he has been treating imperial themes and will sing of Augustus and his descendants (*quoque favore animi teque tuosque canam*). When Ovid claims that the *Fasti* was written for Caesar (*tuo sub nomine*: 551), but that exile interrupted his sacred work--

idque tuo nuper scriptum sub nomine, Caesar,
et tibi sacratum sors mea rupit opus;
(*Tr.* 2.551f.)

And that poem was recently written under your name, Caesar,
but my lot destroyed the sacred work for you—

he is implicitly stating that his recall is required in order to finish the poem. The *Fasti* thus becomes an inducement for Augustus to allow Ovid's return.

Williams remarks that Ovid is confident that Augustus has "taken the *Ars* too seriously" and that he assumes Augustus will read *Tristia* 2 similarly. He further suggests that, if this is the case:

Ovid can exploit this Augustan reading by mischievously communicating to a sophisticated audience much more than the prima-facie sense of the words he uses, and can do so in the comforting knowledge that Augustus is unlikely to detect the implicit tone of imperial criticism and satire.⁶²

If Williams is correct in the assumption that Augustus relies on a serious, perhaps literal, reading of *Tristia* 2, Ovid should derive much benefit from his panegyric of Augustus and his references to the *Fasti* and the *Metamorphoses*. If Augustus reads *Tristia* 2 as Ovid suggests literature should be read, with a *recta mens*, then Augustus would take away only the idea that Ovid is a humble suppliant who will no longer write erotic poetry, but will be instead an imperial poet celebrating Augustus and his achievements in verse. It will then be left to those with *perversae mentes*, such as Ovid's accuser to find any sort of indecency in the poet's works.

Ovid ends *Tristia* 2 with a restatement of his aim. Again he mentions his hope of placating Augustus, invokes Augustus under panegyric titles, and restates his hope that he can find a safer and quieter place of exile:

⁶²Williams (1994), 201.

his, precor, atque aliis possint tua numina flecti,
o pater, o patriae cura salusque tuae!
non ut in Ausoniam redeam, nisi fortisan olim,
cum longo poenae tempore victus erit,
tutius exilium pauloque quietius oro,
ut par delicto sit mea poena suo.
(Tr. 2.573-78)

Together with these other works, I pray that your divine power can bend,
O father, O care and salvation of your own fatherland!
Not that I should return to Ausonia, except perhaps in the future,
when after a long time under penalty, it will be outlasted,
I beg a safer and a little quieter exile,
so the penalty might be suitable to the offence.

This explication of Ovid's aim reiterates several themes used throughout *Tristia* 2, and recalls similar passages which also occur at rhetorically significant positions. First, *his precor* (573) points back to the same phrase in the *propositio* (27-28), where Ovid prays that he might soften the *ira* of the emperor. In a similar fashion, Ovid here prays that the *numina* of Augustus are able to bend, and verse 574 picks up the panegyric language that Ovid uses to name Augustus a god and to identify him in particular with Jupiter. The statement *non ut in Ausoniam redeam* (575) echoes *non precor ut redeam* (183) from the first *epilogus* (155-206). There he asks for a banishment which is *mitius* and *propius* (185), here, in the concluding *epilogus*, he asks for one that is *tutius* and *quietius* (577).

The final line of the poem is perhaps the most terse explication of Ovid's aim, that the penalty fit his offence: *ut par delicto sit mea poena suo* (578). Ovid's concealment of the facts of the *error* is as much an attempt not to open Augustus' wound as it is a concession to Augustus that his decision was just (although Ovid may not have really thought so). It would be counter-productive for the poet simply to argue that Augustus was wrong, so he argues that Augustus

judged correctly as far as the *error* is concerned, but that the sentence was too harsh. The *suasoria* that Ovid uses to placate Augustus and to make him more receptive to the poet includes not only the panegyric praise of the *pater patriae*, but also this concession. Through repenting the *error*, and by repudiating the charges against the *Ars*, Ovid tries to persuade Augustus that he should be allowed a better place of exile, so that the penalty can fit the offence (*ut par delicto sit mea poena suo*: 578).

In *Ex Ponto* 3.3, Ovid continues the defense he began for himself in *Tristia* 2 by having Cupid “testify” on his behalf in what amounts to Cupid’s *apologia* of Ovid. Before he examines the “witness,” however, Ovid retraces the turbulent relationship between his *persona* and Cupid, thereby alluding to the *Amores*, *Ars Amatoria* and the *Remedia Amoris*. Cupid is the most prominent protagonist in these poems next to Ovid’s poetic *persona* himself, so the significance of Cupid’s *apologia* in *Ex Ponto* 3.3 cannot be fully appreciated unless it is read in light of the relationship between Cupid and Ovid’s *persona* as developed in the erotic works. Chapter three will trace this relationship between Ovid’s *persona* and Cupid in order to provide the context for my discussion of *Ex Ponto* 3.3 in chapter four. Ovid’s *persona* evolves from the *amator-poeta* in the *Amores*, to the *praeceptor amoris* in the *Ars Amatoria* and the *Remedia Amoris*. Cupid’s role simultaneously undergoes an inverse change in these poems as he goes from the triumphing love god in *Am.* 1.2, to the deity whose powers are usurped in the didactic elegies. Ovid’s role as the *praeceptor amoris* is what both he and Cupid defend in the exilic poems, so it will greatly inform my discussion of *Ex Ponto* 3.3 to turn first to the erotic poems in order to explicate what it was that Ovid had to defend against in *Tristia* 2 and *Ex Ponto* 3.3.

CHAPTER 3

REALISTIC FICTION: NARRATIVE GUIDANCE AND ROLE PLAYING IN THE EROTIC POEMS

One of Ovid's major arguments in *Tristia* 2 is that his poetry is unreal and fictitious and therefore does not represent his own morality (353-56). In addition to this assertion, Ovid goes to great lengths both to deny that the same poetry is subversive to Augustus' moral legislation, and to prove its lawfulness. It seems that Ovid wants it both ways when making these statements: he wants his readers to believe that his poetry is entirely made up, yet he defends the works as if they represent a true account of goings-on in Augustan Rome, and therefore need to comport with real-world morality. These seemingly contrary arguments, nevertheless, are not mutually exclusive. Ovid's erotic works are set in contemporary Rome and present the illusion that they describe either Ovid's love affair (the *Amores*), or instruct others in how to manage their own (*Ars Amatoria* and *Remedia Amoris*). Certain aspects of Ovid's poetry, however, clearly show that his poetry describes a fictional reality. Yet Ovid creates the fictional reality too convincingly, and inserts disclaimers into his poems to ward off married women in an effort to establish the political conformity of those poems. Ovid can thus claim, in retrospect, not only that his work is made up and false, but that even so, it nevertheless adheres to the limits prescribed by Augustus' moral legislation.

In both *Tristia* 2 and *Ex Ponto* 3.3, Ovid argues that any interpretation of his poetry which views it as corrupting or subversive is not in line with his intention. In *Ex Ponto* 3.3, moreover, Cupid is a “witness” to this point and “testifies” that there is *nullum crimen* in the *Ars* (67-70). The significance of Cupid’s *apologia* of Ovid, the subject of the next chapter, is that the poet’s entire erotic oeuvre is framed by dramatic interactions with Cupid, who is, in effect, recalled to Ovid’s exile poetry in order to defend the earlier works in which he played such a large role. This chapter discusses the roles that Cupid and Ovid play as characters in the poeticized version of the author’s own world created for the erotic poems, and the disclaimers which Ovid uses to guide his audience’s interpretation of that world and to defend against his critics.

Constructing the Role: *Cupido Triumphans* and Compelled Poetry

Throughout Ovid’s love poetry, the narrator maintains a poetic dialogue with Cupid that tracks the evolution of Ovid’s *persona* from *amator* to *praeceptor amoris*. The dialogue that takes place between the characters has the appearance of a struggle for control of the poet’s poetic genre, and therefore also the role that Ovid’s *persona* plays in the poems. Ovid’s poetic identity as an *amator-poeta*, in the *Amores*, is fashioned by Cupid who is imagined to have infected the poet with love and to have compelled his elegies. In the *Ars Amatoria* and *Remedia Amoris*, the *amator-poeta* reclaims his poetic identity by becoming the *praeceptor amoris* himself, thereby usurping Cupid’s power and role. Underpinning this struggle throughout is Ovid’s high literary self-consciousness, and his authorial self-fashioning. Although Ovid leads the reader to accept, and to an extent to participate in, the amorous world which he creates in the

erotic poems, the fictional *persona* that Ovid constructs and reworks throughout these poems undercuts the credibility of that world. Although the distinction between the credible but fictive *persona* or *carmina* on the one hand, and the real poet on the other, is not entirely clear in the erotic works, Ovid uses the distinction to deny his own culpability and that of his poetry.

Ovid begins the *Amores* with the fictional premise that he was preparing to write an epic, but Cupid came along and stole a foot from his hexameter:

Arma gravi numero violentaque bella parabam
edere, materia conveniente modis.
par erat inferior versus; risisse Cupido
dicitur atque unum surripuisse pedem.
(*Am.* 1.1.1-4)

Arms and violent wars in the weighty hexameter I was preparing to set forth,
with the material appropriate to the meter.
The lower verse was equal to the first; but Cupid laughed,
it is said, and snatched away one (metrical) foot.⁶³

A striking feature of this introduction, besides the fact that Ovid intends to write epic poetry, is his use of *dicitur* (4); this suggests that he is not entirely serious about the vivid narration or that somehow he was not present.⁶⁴ Ovid draws us into the narrative of Cupid meddling with the poet by stealing a foot from every other line of verse, while we may rationally question the poet's

⁶³The text I cite for Ovid's love poems is Kenney (1995) *Amores, Medicamina Faciei Femineae, Ars Amatoria, Remedia Amoris* (Oxford), unless otherwise stated.

⁶⁴John Barsby (1979), *Ovid's Amores Book I*, (Oxford), *ad loc.* Moles (1991), "The Dramatic Coherence of Ovid, *Amores* 1.1 and 1.2," *CQ* 41, calls *Amores* 1.1 a *legomenon* and connects Ovid to historiographers like Herodotus and Thucydides who present an "it is said" story in a manner that both distances themselves from the report and does not guarantee the veracity of the account (553). On the technique of "it is said" stories, see: Fehling (1989), *Herodotus and His 'Sources'* (translated by J. G. Howie, Leeds), pp. 157ff., and Westlake (1977), 'Legetai in Thucydides,' *Mnemnosyne* 30: 345-62.

half-hearted assertion (*dicitur*) that it took place at all.⁶⁵ In keeping with the narrative, however, Ovid tells Cupid that he cannot write elegy since his *materia* is not fitting- he does not have a male or female lover (19-20). The elegist is conventionally both the poet and the lover; since Ovid is not a lover, but a self-styled epic poet, he is telling Cupid that he cannot play the role of the elegiac lover. Ovid's point is a generic one,⁶⁶ and has the form of a mock *recusatio*.⁶⁷

Cupid refuses to allow Ovid to back out of this role, however, and gives him the *opus* of playing the *amator-poeta*.

lunavitque genu sinuosum fortiter arcum
 'quod'que 'canas, vates, accipe' dixit 'opus.'
 (*Am.* 1.1.23-24)

He bent the curved bow strongly on one knee
 and said, "accept the *opus*, bard, which you should sing."

⁶⁵Barbara Weiden Boyd (1997), *Ovid's Literary Loves: Influence and Innovation in the Amores* (Ann Arbor), suggests that Cupid's theft turns conventional metaphor into something more concrete, something tangible, and therefore reverses the illusion of sincerity so central to the amatory narratives of Propertius and Tibullus (153). For a full discussion, see: Boyd (1997), Morgan (1977), *Ovid's Art of Imitation: Propertius in the Amores* (Brill) and Kennedy (1993), *The Arts of Love : Five Studies in the Discourse of Roman Love Elegy* (Cambridge).

⁶⁶Ingo Gildenhard and Andrew Zissos (2000), "Inspirational Fictions: Autobiography and Generic Reflexivity in Ovid's Poems," *GR* 47, 71.

⁶⁷Boyd (1997), 148. A *recusatio* usually explains why a poet cannot write *epic* poetry. The precedent is usually traced back to Callimachus' *Aetia* and is present in each of the Augustan poets. It is notable that Ovid does not claim that writing epic is beyond his power as in traditional *recusationes*. Instead, Ovid maintains that he is an epic poet and is not up to writing elegy. He is, furthermore, quite boastful about his poetic ability with respect to epic, tragedy, and elegy (*Am.* 1.1. 17, 2.1. 11f., 2.18. 13f., 3.1. 29f). Leslie Cahoon (1985), "A Program for Betrayal: Ovidian *Nequitia* in *Amores* 1.1, 2.1, and 3.1," *Helios* 12, argues that other Augustan poets give serious reasons for not undertaking epic, but Ovid offers nothing more substantial than an "apparently *invented* Cupid" (30). The "apparently invented Cupid," however, demonstrates Ovid's wit and ingenuity in dealing with the issue of why he is not writing epic. His predecessors give reasons why they *cannot* write epic, but Ovid claims that he *is* an epic poet although Cupid will not let him write in that genre. Ovid makes the same statement that others did, that he is not going to write an epic, but he does not make the depreciating claim that he lacks the *ingenium* to write one.

This programmatic first poem paints Ovid as a poet in a world where an omnipotent Cupid can make him a lover instead of an epic poet, and this world forms the fictional framework around the drama in which Ovid's *persona* recounts his *amores*. Cupid links the forthcoming personal experience of the *amator* ('*accipe opus*') to the genre into which he forces the *poeta* ('*quod canas*') by means of an arrow.⁶⁸ After Ovid's amusing diversion into elegy, he not only speaks like an elegist (*Me miserum! certas habuit puer ille sagittas*: 25), but burns with the characteristic desire of a love poet (*uror, et in vacuo pectore regnat Amor*: 26).⁶⁹ This poem thus begins a dual narrative which Ovid maintains throughout the *Amores*: the one concerned with describing the poet's compositional process, and the other that traces the *amator*'s elegiac experience.⁷⁰ Although there is a tight interweaving between the poet and the lover, nevertheless the poetic narrative often out-voices the erotic narrative.

Ovid momentarily dispenses with the *persona* of the *amator* in 1.15, in order to produce an encomium of himself and his poetry. It begins as a response to *livor edax*, rejecting the suggestion that Ovid should live the life of a soldier or an advocate, since his poetry can bring him perennial fame (1-8). Ovid illustrates his literary aspiration by pointing out certain other

⁶⁸Gildenhard and Zissos (2000), 71-72. The humor in these verses lies in the fact that since Cupid steals a foot from the hexameter, Ovid voices his mock-*recusatio* in elegiac couplets. Ovid's *opus*, therefore, will be to fill his couplets with the traditional themes of Latin love-elegy instead of his complaints.

⁶⁹John T. Davis (1989), *Fictus Adulter: The Poet as Actor in the Amores* (Amsterdam), 65. On the common elegiac use of *me miserum*, *sagittae*, *urere*, *vacuus* and *regnum Amoris* in these verses, see Pichon (1902), *De Sermone Amatoria*, (Diss., Paris).

⁷⁰Noted recently and discussed fully by Boyd (1997), esp. chapters 4 and 5. She sees a tension between the narrator-poet and the lover and reads that tension as the dominant theme of the *Amores*. The two characters are never very distant from each other, yet the role of the lover begins to give way to the role of the poet by the third book. Boyd argues that Corinna's role and that of her lover greatly diminishes as the narrative develops, but that the poet remains ever present and carves out a poetic identity which serves as a precursor to the role of the *praeceptor amoris* taken up later.

poets who have obtained immortality through their poetry: Homer, Callimachus, Ennius, Lucretius, Vergil, Tibullus, Gallus, *et alii* (9-30). These same authors are also listed in *Tristia* 2 as forerunners to Ovid's erotic poetry (361-470). In both catalogues, we can notice Ovid's perception of his place in the poetic ranks, and his hopeful concern with the *opus* of writing elegy. This *opus* is what Ovid mentions in conclusion as the part of him that will outlive his corporeal self.⁷¹ Ovid's attitude toward the success of his poetry and his antagonism toward jealous detractors, personified as *livor edax*, reappears in a passage from the *Remedia Amoris* (361-96), discussed below. What is evident at this point, however, is that Ovid is a highly self-conscious poet concerned both with the fame that his poetry can bring, and with his audience's reception of his poems.

The opening poem of book 2 does not present the same separation of the poet from the *persona* as does 1.15. Ovid writes under the *persona* of the *amator* and continues the dramatic interactions with Cupid, yet he draws attention to the poet by self-referential remarks to his cognomen and his place of birth.

Hoc quoque composui Paelignis natus aquosis
 ille ego nequitiae Naso poeta meae;
 hoc quoque iussit Amor—procul hinc, procul este, severi:
 non estis teneris apta theatra modis.
 (*Am.* 2.1.1-4)

⁷¹ ergo etiam cum me supremus adederit ignis,
 vivam, parsque mei multa superstes erit.
 (*Am.* 1.15.41-42)

Compare the similar statement in the epilogue to the *Metamorphoses* which concludes with the word *vivam* (15.871-79).

This also I composed, born in watery Sulmosa,
I am Naso, that poet of my own shameless ways;
this book Cupid also commanded- go away, stay away weighty meters:
You, theater, are not fit for tender strains.

The first couplet puts a σφράγις on the book as Ovid claims authorship of the work (*composui*: 1), and he highlights that role by referring each word in verse two to himself. This opening seems to allow the authorial voice to break with the *persona* as in 1.15, yet Ovid quickly assimilates himself back into his fictional reality when he reintroduces Cupid as his Muse, as it were (*iussit Amor*: 3). In concluding the poem, Ovid indicates that Cupid not only orders elegies from the *amator-poeta*, but also dictates what he writes:

ad mea formosos vultus adhibete puellae
carmina, purpureus quae mihi dictat Amor
(*Am.* 2.1. 37-38)

Turn your beautiful faces toward my poems, ladies,
which rosy Amor dictates to me.⁷²

Ovid constructs this poetic fiction in order to humorously justify his choice of elegy over other poetic genres, as well as to subvert the epic tradition of invoking a *Musa* for poetic inspiration by adding Cupid as the tenth Muse, as it were. He undercuts his own authorial position by transferring the credit for composition to Cupid. The *amator-poeta*, in contrast to the poet proper, is only concerned with using his *carmina* to perpetuate his affair, not his *fama* (27-28).⁷³

The dichotomy between the authorial voices in these juxtaposed poems demonstrates the

⁷²Ovid alludes to these verses in *Ex Ponto* 3.3. In accusing Cupid of being the cause of his exile (23ff.), he notes that it was Cupid who dictated his youthful verses to him (*tu mihi dictasti iuvenalia carmina primus*: 29). A full discussion is provided in the next chapter.

⁷³Cahoon (1985), notes that Ovid brings out the difference between his own view of poetry and that of the *amator-poeta* in 1.15 and 2.1 (33).

independence of the poet from the *persona* that he adopts as a character in his works. This dichotomy between *persona* and *poeta* gives Ovid the “out” which he later exploits in exile when arguing that his poetry is all made up. He can therefore, in retrospect, recast his poetry as his bid for poetic immortality rather than as subversive or corrupting literature.

In 2.18, Ovid sets up a situation similar to that in 1.1, as he is again diverted from his *opus* by Cupid.⁷⁴

Risit Amor pallamque meam pictosque cothurnos
sceptraque privata tam cito sumpta manu.
hinc quoque me dominae numen deduxit iniquae,
deque cothurnato vate triumphat Amor
(*Am.* 2.18.15-18)

Cupid laughed at both my robe and painted buskins, also my scepter,
having been so quickly taken up in my unregal hand.
From this undertaking also the power of my unjust *domina* has led me,
and Amor triumphs over the buskin bard.

Ovid uses this poem to comment on his poetic skill once more (he is not only an epic poet, but also a tragedian), and also to claim Cupid’s meddling as justification for his elegiac production and mock *recusatio* of other genres. Thematically, 2.18 connects back to 1.1 and 2.1 where Cupid is also imagined to force the *opus* of being an *amator-poeta* upon Ovid. More poignantly, however, the triumphant Amor (18) recalls *Am.* 1.2 where the *amator* is pulled behind the chariot of the triumphing love-god.

The vignette of the triumphing Cupid is integral to the fictional world of the *Amores* because it is a symbolic representation of Ovid’s commitment to, and playfulness with, elegy.

⁷⁴Compare 2.18.17 with 2.1.11-20, where Ovid claims to be interrupted by Corinna in his attempts to write a *gigantomachy*.

McKeown suggests that the emperor must have taken offence at what he regarded as Ovid's trivializing allusions to Augustan propaganda in the context of the triumph.⁷⁵ While that assertion may be overconfident, McKeown nevertheless shows that one could read a political allusion into Ovid's poetry despite his efforts to distance himself from his *persona* and the fictional reality. It is also plausible that Ovid intended to parody the other elegists rather than to take a stab at Augustus.⁷⁶ The parodic aspect of *Amores* 1.2, at least, suggests that the triumphing Cupid is a burlesque treatment of Ovid's elegiac predecessors. The vignette as a whole inverts Propertius' triumph in the first poem of his third book, and 1.2.34 nearly exactly reproduces a line from Tibullus:

miles 'io' magna voce 'trumphe' canet.	Tib. 2.5.118
vulgus 'io' magna voce 'trumphe' canet.	<i>Am.</i> 1.2.34.

Ovid's *imitatio* of the Tibullan verse in light of Tibullus' serious treatments of the triumph mocks his poetry and his pretension in dealing with this Augustan symbol.⁷⁷

Propertius, like Ovid and in contrast to Tibullus, tends to show the contrast between the *res publica* and the *res privata* in his treatments of the triumph.⁷⁸ In 3.1, He envisions the

⁷⁵J. C. McKeown (1989), *Ovid: Amores Volume II: A Commentary on Book One*. (Leeds), 28.

⁷⁶Ovid expresses his devotion to the emperor at *Tr.* 2.53-76 in order to deny mockery of the *princeps*. The aim of Ovid's exile poetry, after all, is to effect his recall to Rome; Ovid thus seeks to minimize the subversive political allusions of his poetry in his poems from exile.

⁷⁷Tibullus comments seriously on Messalla's *triumphus* of 27 BCE for his success in Gaul in 1.7 and at 2.1.33. In 2.5, he envisions the same success for the man's son after his installation in the *quindecimviri sacris faciundis*.

⁷⁸Karl Galinsky (1965), "The Triumph Theme in the Augustan Elegy." *Wien. Stud.* 3, 80. This is shown most clearly in 2.7 where he rejoices at the repeal of a law against celibacy as he watches a triumphal procession with his mistress. Propertius is probably celebrating in that poem the failure of the *lex de maritandis ordinibus* (circa 28 BCE) which Suetonius mentions (*Div. Aug.* 34.1).

triumph of his *Musa* for following Callimachean aesthetic principles: he rides in a chariot surrounded by attending Cupids, and has a throng of writers following behind him in the chariot.⁷⁹

Ovid inverts Propertius' scene in *Amores* 1.2. Here Cupid is the *triumphator*, and Ovid is in the throng of captive lovers drawn behind Cupid's chariot:

inque dato curru, populo clamante triumphum,
stabis et adiunctas arte movebis aves.
ducentur capti iuvenes captaeque puellae:
haec tibi magnificus pompa triumphus erit.
ipse ego, praeda recens, factum modo vulnus habebo
et nova captiva vincula mente feram.
(*Am.* 1.2.25-30)

In the chariot you've been given, with the people shouting triumph,
you will stand, and you will move the adjoined birds with skill.
Captive young men and women will be led:
this parade will be a magnificent triumph for you.
I myself, recent booty, will have the wound just made
and I will bear my new chains with a captive mind.

This poem is more than just a mockery of Propertius, however.⁸⁰ Both poets use their triumph vignettes to represent the triumph of elegy,⁸¹ although Ovid reverses his model by representing Cupid triumphing instead of the elegiac *persona*. Ovid exploits the notion of the triumphing Cupid to define his own poetic role. So long as Cupid is the *triumphator*, Ovid is stuck playing

⁷⁹

quo me Fama levat terra sublimis, et a me
nata coronatis Musa triumphat equis,
et mecum in curru parvi vectantur Amores,
scriptorumque meas turba secuta rotas.
(*Prop.* 3.1.9-12)

⁸⁰See Moles (1991) for a discussion of the dramatic unity with which 1.2 compliments 1.1.

⁸¹John F. Miller (1995), "Reading Cupid's Triumph," *CJ* 90, 291.

the *amator-poeta* and writing elegiac poetry. This poem, then, advances both the narrative of the *amator* as the main character of the *Amores*, and the overarching narrative of Ovid's poetic dialogue with Cupid and his self-construction as a poet.

Ovid fully acclimates the triumph theme to elegy through his use of the *miles amoris* metaphor. Other elegists treat the similarity between the soldier and the lover, but not to the extent Ovid develops it in the *Amores*. He devotes an entire elegy, *militat omnis amans, et habet sua castra Cupido* (1.9.1), to elaborating the trope,⁸² and carries the metaphor throughout his works.⁸³ In the *Amores*, Ovid changes the motif of *miles amoris* into *miles Amoris*, by acting as Cupid's soldier in the *bella* of love. Ovid's relationship with Corinna is thus redefined as part of the *amator's* military service to Cupid. Ovid is just as concerned with describing the drama of his interactions with Cupid as with describing his affair with Corinna, if not more so.⁸⁴

Ovid completes the military metaphor in 3.15 when he tells Cupid and Venus to take their standards from his camp.⁸⁵ The credibility of Ovid's fictional reality is undercut, at least for the

⁸² Cupid's *castra* refers back to his *capti iuvenes captaeque puellae* in 1.2.27. See Elizabeth Thomas (1964), "Variations on a Military Theme in Ovid's *Amores*," *GR* 11, 158-59 for a full discussion of the military metaphors in 1.9.

⁸³ In 1.7, Ovid imagines people urging his triumph for his violence against Corinna. In 1.9, Ovid begs Cupid for leave of military service, but in 2.12, he demands triumphant laurels since he has landed Corinna in his lap (1-2). The didactic elegies are similarly replete with military metaphors, compare the introduction to each: *Ars* 1.1-24, 2.1-20, 3.1-6, and *Rem.* 1-40, for instance.

⁸⁴ Boyd (1997), suggests that Ovid is not interested in having us believe in Corinna or their relationship, but in persuading his readers of the centrality of the poet and his poetry to the narrative of the *Amores* (141). Ovid seems to demonstrate this point in the programmatic 3.1, where the personified *Elegia* and *Tragoedia* argue over the genre in which Ovid should write. Ovid convinces *Tragoedia* to allow him to finish the last book (67-70), and suggests that he has more important works in mind after the *Amores* (*grandius urget opus*: 70).

⁸⁵

culte puer puerique parens Amathusia culti.
aurea de campo vellite signa meo.
(*Am.* 3.15.15-16)

modern reader, by the extensive role that Cupid plays in the *Amores*, yet 3.15 produces a fitting conclusion to the thematic problem Ovid sets up in the first two poems of the *Amores*. He wrests his poetic *persona* from Cupid by breaking the love-god's power over the *amator*, and he regains control over his genre by retiring as Cupid's *miles Amoris*; he has carried out the *opus*. Ovid thus signals both the end of the *Amores* and of his amatory service to Cupid, the two concurrent narratives that he develops. Ovid the *amator* loses control over his relationship with Corinna and his voice begins to fade as that narrative develops, yet in the other narrative, Ovid the *poeta* maintains control over his elegiac work and, in the end, opts for another genre.⁸⁶ The next section describes how Ovid continues the dual narrative by transforming his fictional *persona* into the *praeceptor amoris* of the *Ars* and *Remedia Amoris*.

Reworking the Role: The *Praeceptor Amoris* and Poetry as Vengeance

The dynamic relationship in the *Amores* between the *amator* and Cupid is present also in the *Ars* and *Remedia Amoris*. Since Ovid breaks Cupid's control over his *persona* at the end of the *Amores*, however, the *persona* in the other love poems takes on a different role. The narrator of the *Ars* and the *Remedia Amoris* claims to be the *praeceptor amoris* (*Ars* 1.17, cf. *Rem.* 41-42, 71-72), and thus usurps the role played by Cupid in the *Amores* by instructing others how to love. The *Ars* and the *Remedia Amoris* have the characteristics of didactic poems, yet are written in

See below for a discussion of the reworking of the *militia* metaphor in the other love poems. Ovid also resumes the military metaphor in *Ex Ponto* 3.3 when Cupid returns to Ovid's poetry in order to defend his fellow soldier (*o castris miles amice meis*: 82). This scene is discussed fully in chapter 3.

⁸⁶Niklas Holzberg (2002), *Ovid: The Poet and his Works*, trans. G. M. Goshgarian (Ithaca), 46.

elegiac couplets instead of the traditional hexameters. This effect demonstrates Ovid's mixing of literary genres since the meter and subject matter are elegiac, yet the didactic genre traditionally relies on the hexameter.⁸⁷ Ovid exploits this seemingly incongruous blend by purporting to have systematized the art of loving; and drawing on his experience as *amator*, he offers his *praecepta* to others.⁸⁸ The didactic elegies form a sequel to the drama begun in the *Amores* and are set in the same fictional reality. Each of these poems begins by building on the power struggle between Cupid and Ovid, so we are immediately led to question the validity of the storyline and the content, as in the *Amores*. This has important implications for Ovid's *apologia* since, strictly speaking, the emperor could level the accusation of being an *obsceni doctor adulteri* (*Tr.* 2.212) only at the Ovid who assumes the fictional role of the *praeceptor Amoris*, not at the poet himself or poets in general.⁸⁹ The distinction apparently did not matter to Augustus, however, who relegated Ovid nevertheless. When Ovid claims, in his poetry from exile, that his work is false and describes a fictional reality that does not impinge on Augustan moral legislation, he is arguing not only that the *persona* he creates and assumes in the *Ars* is being misconstrued as the poet proper, but also that the *persona* is not subversive.

In the first thirty-four lines of the *Ars*, before he officially begins giving his *praecepta*, Ovid redefines his relationship with Cupid. Ovid makes his ascent from *amator* to *praeceptor*

⁸⁷Patricia Watson (2002), "Praeceptor Amoris: Ovid's Didactic Elegy," in *Brill's Companion to Ovid*, ed. Barbara Weiden Boyd (Leiden), 145. Theognis, a Megarian elegiac poet of the sixth century BCE, however, has several fragments addressed to Cynus which gives advice on how the boy should live his life. Theognis then, as well as Ovid, are poets who chose to write their didactic poetry in elegiacs rather than hexameters.

⁸⁸Compare, for instance, *Ars* 2.169 or 551-52 with *Am.* 1.7 or 2.5 for the *praeceptor* giving advice based on his own experience as *amator*. This tendency shows the continuity of Ovid's fictional role as a character in his poetry. In the *Amores*, Ovid supposedly gained sufficient experience in matters of love to instruct others in loving.

⁸⁹Holzberg (2002), 111.

amoris as he proclaims his new poetic role, that of instructor instead of the one instructed (*ego sum praeceptor amoris*: 17). The *praeceptor* establishes his poetic autonomy in this work by asserting that Cupid no longer provides his *materia*, for now experience is his Muse (*usus opus movet hoc*: 29).⁹⁰ Ovid uses the word *opus* to describe his *materia* as at *Am.* 1.1.24, but here *opus* refers to the *poeta* purportedly presenting a didactic treatise based on his own experience, rather than the *opus* of loving and composing which Cupid demands (cf. *Am.* 1.1 and 2.1). Basing the *Ars* on Ovid's *usus*, in effect, lends credence to the "reality" of the *Amores* since it affirms that the *amator* truly did what the poems describe. Ovid's *usus*, therefore, provides dramatic coherence to the *Ars* and the *Amores*, and it lends credibility to the fictional role that Ovid creates for himself as a character in those works.

The *praeceptor* legitimates his role by stating that Venus herself put the poet in charge of Cupid (*me Venus artificem tenero praecepit Amori*: 7). Ovid will no longer take orders from Cupid, but will instead guide the boy like the mythical helmsmen Tiphys and Automedon (8).⁹¹ The humorous notion of Venus enrolling Ovid as Cupid's tutor replaces the typical initiation scene of a didactic poet first described by Hesiod (*Theog.* 22-35).⁹² Ovid's claim that *usus movet opus hoc* (29) also undercuts the traditional epiphany of the didactic Muse because he does not need the Muses of Helicon, nor Apollo, since the experience which he acquired in Cupid's

⁹⁰Ovid makes this claim also at *Ars* 3.791.

⁹¹Robert M. Durling (1958), "Ovid as *Praeceptor Amoris*," *CJ* 53, argues that Ovid's boast of controlling Cupid, and hence his refusal of divine initiation, suggests the poet's technical control over his subject matter (159).

⁹²Gildenhard and Zissos (2000), 73. Hollis (1977), *Ars Amatoria Book 1* (Oxford), sees that *Ars* 1.7 may be influenced by a piece from the bucolic poet Bion (fr. 10 Gow, quoted in Hollis' appendix II). In Bion's poem, Aphrodite comes to the poet in a dream and asks him to teach her Eros music, the boy pays no attention and teaches the poet how to love instead.

service fulfills this function. Refusal of divine initiation, while allowing him to control Cupid thematically, makes Ovid less able to claim that it is all a poetic fiction. Since he purports to provide his own knowledge rather than relaying the divine word, Ovid is incriminated for providing possibly morally subversive *praecepta*, and for claiming that they belong to his realm of experience. It is to the believability of the didactic *persona* that Ovid responds in his poetry from exile.

Waging war against Cupid, to avenge the wounds that he received as *amator*, represents Ovid's technical control over his didactic poetry, something supposedly denied to him in the *Amores* (cf. 1.1, 1.2, 2.18). The military metaphor is thus recast as a civil war between Ovid and Cupid for the position of *praeceptor*, as it were.

et mihi cedit Amor, quamvis mea vulneret arcu
pectora, iactatas excutiatque faces.
quo me fixit Amor, quo me violentius ussit,
hoc melior facti vulneris ultor ero.
(*Ars* 1.21-24)

And Amor will yield to me, although with his bow he wounds
my breast, and he waves his shaken torches.
As much as Amor transfixed me, burned me violently,
by this much more I will be the avenger of the wounds made.

These verses pick up the military theme from the *Amores* and thrust it into a new poetic context. In the *Amores*, the *amator* was led in Cupid's triumph (1.2), and later became a *triumphator* in Cupid's image (1.7, 2.12). In the didactic poems, Ovid stylizes himself as an avenger of Cupid's domination and as the poet who broke from the ranks to usurp Cupid's role.

The *praeceptor* further advances his replacement of Cupid in the opening verses of *Ars* 2, as he leads his own *milites amoris* (*Ars* 1.35-36, cf. Cupid in 1.9) to triumph just as Cupid had previously led the *amator* (*Am.* 2.7, 2.12).⁹³ Ovid states that the goal of book 2 of the *Ars* is to teach how one can make love last after finding it (2.11-18, cf. 1.36f.); the details of the passage reflect his control over Cupid, the didactic genre, and the *Ars Amatoria*.

non satis est venisse tibi me vate puellam;
 arte mea capta est, arte tenenda mea est...
 magna paro, quas possit Amor remanere per artes,
 dicere, tam vasto pervagus orbe puer.
 (*Ars* 2.11-12, 17-18)

It is not enough that a girl has come to you with me as *vates*;
 she is captured by my *ars*, she must be kept by my *ars*...
 I prepare great things, to expound the *artes* through which Amor can remain,
 the boy that wanders over the vast Earth.

Durling argues that in prefacing the *Ars* with self-referential comments, Ovid “shifts the application of the art from the practical sphere to the poetic, where we admire the technical brilliance of the poet.”⁹⁴ He identifies what I find essential to Ovid’s later defense of the *Ars*: that Ovid does not encourage actual Romans to follow his precepts, but only fictional apprentices to the poet’s *ars*. Both Ovid’s anaphoric word choice (*arte...arte...artes*), which recalls the subject of the treatise (*artem... amandi: Ars* 1.1), and his conflict with Cupid frame the narrative within the fictional reality of Ovid’s poetic sphere.

⁹³

Dicite ‘io Paeon’ et ‘io’ bis dicite ‘Paeon’:
 decedit in casses praeda petita meos.
 laetus amans donat viridi mea carmina palma
 praelata Ascraeo Maeonioque seni
 (*Ars* 2.1-4)

⁹⁴ Durling (1958), 159.

Ovid sets his poems in what purports to be Augustan Rome, but his references to his *ars* show that his reality is but a pseudo-Rome, a place in which the *ars* of the poet makes the rules. Ovid is no more a *praeceptor Amoris* than Vergil is a *praeceptor arandi*, although both exploit the didactic genre in an entirely serious attempt to teach the *praecepta* appropriate to their subject matter. A reader that buys into the dramatic setting of the *Ars* could easily claim that Ovid is advocating conduct not permitted in Rome. Ovid requires that his readers suspend their disbelief of the fictional reality while reading the work in order to fully appreciate the poetry; yet, as is clear from his statements made in exile, he does not want them to think that he is encouraging the violation of real-world laws.

In the *Remedia Amoris*, the *praeceptor* maintains the framework which encompasses his fictional reality by explaining Cupid's reaction to the new *opus*.

Legerat huius Amor titulum nomenque libelli:
 'bella mihi, video, bella parantur' ait.
 (*Rem.*1-2)

Amor had read the title and name of this little book:
 saying, 'Wars, I see wars being prepared against me.'

Ovid reuses the military metaphor to point out Cupid's fear that his power will be usurped and that he will lose his power over lovers. Cupid's fear is justified since the *Remedia Amoris* is a reversal of the power structure set up in *Am.* 1.1 and 1.2, and a "systematic dismantling of [the] system" of the *Ars*.⁹⁵ The *praeceptor* is very submissive in his response, however, and asks not to be accused of this crime because he is still Cupid's faithful soldier. The *praeceptor* also

⁹⁵For the concept "systematic dismantling of a system," see Holzberg (2002): 107-111. Cf. also, Conte (1989) "Love without Elegy: The *Remedia Amoris* and the Logic of Genre." *Poetics Today* 10 (1989): 441-469.

makes it clear that he is still an *amator* (7-8), but that his experience brings about his new role (9-10).⁹⁶ Ovid also assures Cupid that his new Muse will not unravel his previous *opus* (the *Ars*), but his new *praecepta* additionally show one how to free oneself from the tyranny of a woman (13-16).⁹⁷

Ovid asks Cupid for lenience to complete this *opus*, and bases his request on their relationship in *militia amoris*:

‘parce tuum vatem sceleris damnare, Cupido,	3
tradita qui toties te duce signa tuli [...]	
saepe tepent alii iuvenes; ego semper amavi,	7
et si, quid faciam, nunc quoque, quaeris, amo.	
quin etiam docui qua possis arte parari,	
et, quod nunc ratio est, impetus ante fuit.	10
nec te, blande puer, nec nostras prodimus artes,	
nec nova praeteritum Musa retexit opus.	
si quis amat quod amare iuvat, feliciter ardens	
gaudeat, et vento naviget ille suo;	
at si quis male fert indignae regna puellae,	15
ne pereat, nostrae sentiat artis opem [...]	

(*Rem.* 3-4,7-16)

Cupid, refrain from accusing your *vates* of a crime,
 I who have carried your given standards many times with you as leader...
 often other youths lose their spark; I have always loved,
 and if you ask what I am doing, now also, I love.
 In fact I even taught by which art you can be prepared,
 and what was impulse before, now is well thought out.
 I neither betray you, sweet boy, nor our *artes*,

⁹⁶Harrison (2002), “Ovid and Genre: Evolutions of an Elegist,” in *Cambridge Companion to Ovid*. Phillip Hardie ed. (Cambridge), notes that Ovid is pointing not to his emotional biography here, but to his continuing commitment to elegy (89). Although it is self-consciously presented as his last work in love elegy, the *Remedia Amoris* has much authorial retrospection on Ovid’s previous elegiac oeuvre, including reversing the *praecepta* of the *Ars* and leveling out the relationship between Ovid and Cupid.

⁹⁷A. A. R. Henderson (1979), *Ovidi Nasonis: Remedia Amoris* (Edinburgh), notes that the *Remedia Amoris* does, in fact, thematically unravel the *Ars*; see pg. xvi for a chart which lists the reversals of the *praecepta* from the *Ars Amatoria*.

nor does my new Muse reverse the previously established *opus*.
If anyone is pleased to love what he loves, burning happily
let him rejoice, and may that one set sail with his own wind;
but if anyone bears badly the rule of an unworthy woman,
lest he perish, may he feel the aid of my art.

It seems that Ovid taught his pupils so well in the *Ars* that they must now seek his assistance to free themselves from love's domination. Ovid thus asserts mastery over every aspect of loving: he can not only teach one how to fall in love, but also how to fall out. Successfully arguing both sides of an issue is what the sophists purport to do, what every Roman orator is taught to do, and is precisely what Ovid does in his didactic elegies by demonstrating his absolute control over the subject matter.⁹⁸

The *praeceptor* convinces Cupid that he is still a faithful soldier and that the love-god does not have to fear for his powers; Cupid is moved by the *praeceptor*'s words and tells him *propositum perfice... opus* (40). Cupid's statement picks up both his use of *opus* in the *Amores* (1.1.24), and Ovid's in the *Ars* (1.29). This validates the role that Ovid carves out for himself in the *Ars* and the *Remedia Amoris* by making equal the relationship between himself and Cupid and settling the matter of Ovid's poetic *opus*.

Ovid uses his interactions with Cupid as a supplementary narrative to the one that his *persona* provides. The poetic dialogue between them, in fact, provides the impetus and the dramatic background to Ovid's role in his erotic poems: the *amator* writes elegies because Cupid makes him (*mihi dictat Amor: Am.* 2.1.38), the *praeceptor Amoris* writes the *Ars* to avenge his earlier poetic role as the compelled lover-poet (*vulnus ultor ero: Ars* 1.24), and Ovid reconciles

⁹⁸Durling (1958), 165.

with Cupid in the *Remedia Amoris* in order to get the god's approval for that work (*Rem.* 3ff.).⁹⁹

The dramatic illusion of the *persona*'s erotic narrative, however, is so convincing that it is not self-evident that what Ovid describes or advocates is false. Ovid claims, in his poetry from exile, that his poems are not meant to be subversive; yet they certainly are provocative and seem to mock the sexual standards that the laws enjoined.¹⁰⁰

Defending the Role: Ovidian Disclaimers and Response to Critics

Despite the playful tone and mock-seriousness of Ovid's eroto-didactic poems, the disclaimers which he inserts into each book of the *Ars*, and into the *Remedia Amoris*, demonstrate Ovid's recognition that his poetry could be interpreted in the opposite way: as a serious attempt to influence Roman *matronae* and thereby to subvert the emperor's social and moral legislation.¹⁰¹ Ovid breaks the dramatic illusion of his fictional reality by designating a specific audience for his didactic poems that is exempt from prosecution under Augustus' moral legislation. Ovid can thus claim, as he does in exile, that his poetry is not only false, but that even the fictional characters in his poetry follow the law.

⁹⁹Gildenhard and Zissos (2000), see that "as in the *Amores* and the *Ars Amatoria*, Ovid, through his dramatic interactions with Cupid, 'frames' the following exercise [the *Remedia Amoris*] in didactic poetry, clearly signalling his generic affiliations. Yet also reminding the reader both of his less than serious attitude towards his material and the artificiality of his didactic voice (74)." Although they refer specifically to the *Remedia Amoris*, I think that Gildenhard and Zissos' statement can equally apply to Ovid's other erotic poems as well. At the beginning of each of the works, Ovid presents the relationship between himself and Cupid as a frame for his narration. In each case, Ovid reminds the reader of his playful attitude with his own poetry, and the artificiality of his *persona* as a character therein.

¹⁰⁰Wallace-Hadrill (1985), 182.

¹⁰¹See n. 37 for a description of the relevant laws and bibliographical information.

In the first book of the *Ars*, just after he explains that experience is the basis of his knowledge as *praeceptor amoris* (*Ars* 1.29f.), Ovid produces a disclaimer that purports to prohibit married women from reading further:

este procul, vittae tenues, insigne pudoris,
quaeque tegis medios institia longa pedes:
nos Venerem tutam concessaque furta canemus
inque meo nullum carmine crimen erit.
(*Ars* 1.31-34)

Be far off from here, thin fillets, mark of decency,
and also you, long dress, that covers half of [a maiden's] feet!
We will sing nothing except safe Venery and lawful deceptions,
and in my poem there will be no crime.

Ovid reproduces this disclaimer in *Tristia* 2 with *nil nisi legitimum* in place of *nos Venerem tutam*, yet Ovid's point is still clear here; he asserts that women wearing the *instita* are not available lovers for his male pupils.¹⁰² He reiterates this point toward the end of the second book:

en iterum testor: nihil hic nisi lege remissum
luditur; in nostris instita nulla iocis
(*Ars* 2.599-600)

But again I swear: nothing here unless remitted by law
is mocked; there is no long dress in our jokes.

Ovid's use of *en iterum testor* recalls the previous disclaimer (1.31-34), and the rest of the line again attempts to define the legality of the relationships he encourages by his *Ars*. Since Ovid mocks/plays with (*luditur*) nothing that is not permitted by law, he is claiming not to encourage adultery with women who wear the *instita*. *Vittae* and *institae* were denied to non-married

¹⁰²See my discussion in chapter two on why Ovid changed the three words when he reproduced *Ars* 1.31-34 at *Tristia* 2.247-50.

women and *meretrices*, so Ovid is claiming that they are to be the female participants rather than married women.¹⁰³ Ovid also uses the words *luditur* and *iocis* to describe his poetry, thereby further highlighting the mock-serious tone of the *Ars*. By breaking the dramatic illusion to present this disclaimer, Ovid clearly shows an awareness of vulnerability for writing provocative poetry, and a concern with protecting himself from the charge that he is challenging the moral legislation.

The disclaimer in book three is conceptually similar to those just mentioned, yet differs because *Ars* 3 is written for women (1-4), thus the disclaimer must designate a specific group of women who can follow the narrator's *praecepta*. In doing so, the disclaimer explicitly acknowledges the laws which, Ovid maintains, he is not advocating that women break.

dum facit ingenium, petite hinc praecepta, puellae,
quas pudor et leges et sua iura sinunt.
(*Ars* 3.57-58)

While my natural talent creates, seek instructions here, ladies,
whom modesty, the laws and her own rights allow.

Which women Ovid could safely address is somewhat uncertain since the laws were obscure about who was exempt from them. McGinn states:

The *lex Iulia* created a broad category in order to indicate what women were liable for either offense. It did not, however, define this category explicitly or give any details that might suggest a definition. The evidence shows that the status of *mater familias* or

¹⁰³Poets often use *instita*, a band sewed on the lower edge of the *stolla*, to refer to the entire customary dress of a Roman *matrona*. See Wilson (1938), *The Clothing of the Ancient Romans* (Baltimore): 156, for sculpted figures dressed in *stolae*. She discusses the *vittae* of the *matrona* at 140-41. On the legal context of the dressing of a woman, see McGinn (1998): 153-68.

matrona was the sole positive criterion for establishing a woman's liability under the law.¹⁰⁴

Despite the narrow positive criterion of who could be punished under the law, McGinn argues that four types of concubines were not considered adulteresses under the *lex*: prostitutes and slaves assuredly, but probably also procuresses (*lenae*) and peregrines.¹⁰⁵ Since the moral character of those women is questionable, *mores* seem to be a factor in a woman's exemption from the *lex*.¹⁰⁶ *Pudor* (58) is a quality generally reserved for *matronae*, so Ovid's use of the word seems ironic. We can dispel the irony, however, by considering that Ovid is giving a negative definition in this context: non-*matronae* lack *pudor* and are therefore the women whom *pudor* would permit libertine love. Consequently, it then makes sense that the *leges* and *sua iura* allow sexual licence to women without *pudor* (prostitutes, slaves, *lenae* and peregrines for instance). It is to these non-*matronae* that Ovid claims to address his treatise. Since *matronae*, at least, would be prosecuted as adulteresses under the *lex*, Ovid seems to be hedging his bet by prohibiting them from reading. He singles out the one group that cannot participate in his fictional reality with impunity and purports to instruct any but that group.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴McGinn (1998), 147.

¹⁰⁵McGinn (1998), 201. Cf. McGinn (1991), "Concubinage and the *Lex Iulia* on Adultery," *TAPA* 121: 335-75.

¹⁰⁶McGinn (1998), 153ff., follows the jurists that he surveys in holding that there is more than one way to identify the *mater familias*: *boni mores* is a requirement, and the clothing of *matronae* is a distinctive marker, hence the significance of Ovid's usage of *vittae* and *instita*.

¹⁰⁷Gibson (2003) remarks that "Ovid slyly shifts the responsibility for constructing the legal boundaries for the *puellae* onto the reader in the context of juristic uncertainty about the extent of those boundaries" (31-32).

The next disclaimer in book three of the *Ars* makes clearer Ovid's intended audience.

This passage begins the section in which Ovid describes how a woman may evade her guardian (611-58):

qua vafer eludi possit ratione maritus
 quaque vigil custos, praeteriturus eram.
nupta virum timeat, rata sit custodia nuptae:
 hoc decet, hoc leges iusque pudorque iubent.
te quoque servari, modo quam vindicta redemit,
 quis ferat? ut fallas, ad mea sacra veni.
(*Ars* 3.611-16)

How a cunning husband can be deceived,
 how a vigilant guardian, I was about to pass by.
Let a married woman fear her husband, it is reasonable that she is guarded:
 this is proper, this is what the laws, justice and modesty demand.
That you also must be guarded, whom the ceremony just freed,
 who would say? Come to my sacred teachings, so that you may deceive.

Ovid claims that married women should be guarded, but that no one would make the same claim for a freedwoman. If McGinn is correct with respect to prostitutes, slaves, and the rest, Ovid is subversive of the law by advocating that women who might not be exempted from the law follow his precepts.¹⁰⁸ The *lex Iulia* appears to be so vague, however, that Ovid could plausibly deny the culpability of freed women (*quis ferat*: 3.616).

Ovid's disclaimers, moreover, can be read against a background of political discontent over Augustus' legislation.¹⁰⁹ The *lex* met fierce opposition from the *equites* at its introduction and the emperor was forced to compromise and allow amendments.¹¹⁰ By 9 CE, Augustus was

¹⁰⁸Gibson (2003), 335.

¹⁰⁹Wiedemann (1975), 265.

¹¹⁰Suet. *Div. Aug.* 34.1-2.

induced to allow a much weaker law backed by the *consules suffecti* M. Papius Mutilus and Q. Poppaeus Secundus to replace the *lex Iulia*.¹¹¹ Given the ambiguity over the interpretation of the original law and the legal wrangling to make the law acceptable to the *equites*, Ovid's disclaimers certainly seem, in Conte's words, "to delineate a restricted space, that of libertine love, from which respectable society is excluded."¹¹² Ovid's comments regarding *vittae*, *institae*, *pudor*, *iura* and *leges* highlight this point. He makes it clear that married women are not the objects of his teachings, and designating freed women, hardly respectable society, as his target audience was probably not that provocative.¹¹³

It does seem, however, that Ovid was criticized in his own day for the publication of the *Ars*, since in the *Remedia Amoris*, he provides a response to critics who had recently attacked his work (361-64). This refutation (*Rem.* 361-396) comes after Ovid announces that he will provide remedies for one on the brink of a sexual encounter (*medio veneris...in usu: Rem.* 357). He admits that *pudor* prevents him from explaining much of what follows, but bids the reader to imagine more than his words describe (*ingenio verbis concipe plura meis: 359-60*). Ovid seems to begin this reply in order to explain his apparent modesty (*pudor*):

nuper enim nostros quidam carpsere libellos,
quorum censura Musa proterva mea est.

¹¹¹Dio 56.10.1

¹¹²Conte (1994), *Latin Literature: A History*, trans. J. B. Solodow (Baltimore), 345. Compare also the social commentary provided by Propertius 2.7, discussed above n. 78.

¹¹³See Rawson (1974), "Roman Concubinage and Other *De Facto* Marriages," *TAPA* 104: 279-305 for an extensive study of the inscriptional evidence of Roman concubinage. Rawson's research indicates both that freed women and slaves were acceptable concubines and that these groups made up most of the *de facto* Roman marriages. McGinn (1991) argues that the purpose of the *lex Iulia* was the "repression of those forms of non-marital sexual relations considered unacceptable by Roman society, particularly adultery (340)." In light of the discontent surrounding the *lex*, relations with an unmarried freedwoman could hardly have been considered unacceptable.

dummodo sic placeam, dum toto canter in orbe,
qui volet, impugnet unus et alter opus.
(*Rem.* 361-64)

For recently certain individuals have slandered my books,
whose Muse they demand be judged scandalous.
As long as I am pleasing, as long as I am sung all throughout the world,
let one and then another assail me, whoever wishes to.

Ovid does go on to provide the discussion of sexual technique which he hesitates to relate at *Rem.* 397-440; but this passage, and those from the *Ars* dealing with sexual technique (2.703-32, 3.769-808), clearly show that Ovid is less concerned with writing a *Kama Sutra* than he is with explaining the courtship that leads up to the culmination.¹¹⁴ Ovid continues his reply to the unnamed accuser by explaining that the sexual material is included because of its generic appropriateness:¹¹⁵

at tu, quicumque es, quem nostra licentia laedit,
si sapis, ad numeros exige quidque suos.
(*Rem.* 371-72)

But you, whoever you are whom my licence harms,
if you are wise, judge each poem according to its meter.

Ovid's advice to judge a poem according to its meter comment on writing within a certain poetic genre: one should read the *Aeneid* based on its epic content; similarly, elegiac poetry should be judged based on its tradition as subjective, erotic poetry. The *Ars* and *Remedia Amoris*, albeit didactic poems, are written in elegiac couplets and therefore ought to discuss matters of love. In

¹¹⁴Watson (2002), 157.

¹¹⁵Cf. Ovid's similar statement of the generic appropriateness of his verse at *Tristia* 2.357-58: *nec liber indicium animi, sed honesta voluptas: / plurima mulcendis auribus apta feres.*

the wake Augustus' banishment of his daughter and granddaughter for adultery, Ovid's provocative *Ars* could not have been more ill-timed.¹¹⁶

In the remaining portion of Ovid's response, he continues to deny that his work is intended for *matronae*, and expresses his desire that poetry will bring him literary fame.

Thais in arte mea est: lascivia libera nostra est; 385
nil mihi cum vitta; Thais in arte mea est.
si mea materiae respondet Musa iocosae,
vicimus, et falsi criminis acta rea est.
rumpere, Livor edax: magnum iam nomen habemus;
maius erit, tantum, quo pede coepit, eat. 390
sed nimium properas: vivam modo, plura dolebis,
et capiunt anni carmina multa mei.
nam iuvat et studium famae mihi crevit honore;
principio clivi noster anhelat equus.
tantum se nobis elegi debere fatentur, 395
quantum Vergilio nobile debet epos.
(*Rem.* 385-396)

Thais is in my *Ars*, free is my naughtiness;
I have no business with fillets. Thais is in my *Ars*.
If my Muse answers to jocular material,
I win, and she is made the accused of a false crime.
Burst yourself, devouring envy: I now have a great name;
let it go by the foot on which it began, it will be greater.
But you hasten too fast: If I only live, you will grieve the more,
and my years take on many poems.
The desire for fame pleases me and it increases with honor;
my horse snorts on just the beginning incline.
Elegy admits to owe as much to me,
as martial poetry owes to Vergil.

¹¹⁶On the banishment of Julia the elder in 2 BCE, and of Julia the younger in 8 CE, see Suet., *Div. Aug.* 65. Ovid was relegated in the same year as the younger Julia was exiled, hence the conjecture made by many scholars that his *error* had something to do with her adultery, see specifically: Goold (1983), "The Cause of Ovid's Exile," *JCS* 8: 94-107, and Green (1982): 202-220. I do not intend to revive the debate, but if the *Ars* initially angered Augustus, it would serve as the perfect pretext for relegating a poet who is accused of encouraging adultery.

This passage brings together several of the themes addressed so far concerning Ovid's construction of the fictional reality of his erotic poems and his intended purpose for them. First, the reassertion that he has nothing to do with *vittae* (385-86) picks up his previous proclamations prohibiting married women from reading.¹¹⁷ Second, the repetition of *Thais in arte mea est* and the statement that his naughtiness is *libera* suggests that his poems are meant for the less reputable women, those whom the *leges* allowed the sexual freedom to be available sexual partners for men.¹¹⁸ Ovid's assertion attempts to reclassifies the *puellae* of *Ars* 3.57 as *meretrices* like Thais, women without *pudor* that can follow his *praecepta* with impunity. Ovid also tries to avoid any complaints that he may have raised by addressing *Ars* 3 to freed women (615-16), by reclassifying his audience as prostitutes. Perhaps by the time this poem was published, Ovid felt that he should be as cautious as possible and claim as his audience women that were clearly exempt from prosecution. Ovid makes this very claim at *Tristia* 2.303 (*solis meretricibus*), and again at *Ex Ponto* 3.3.49-58, where he also remarks on the apparent futility of his efforts to protect himself from criticism. It is clear that Ovid recognized that people had or could yet attack his poems, and that he wanted to stress as much as possible his political conformity and adherence to Augustan moral legislation.

¹¹⁷Compare *Ars* 1.31-32, 2.599-600. *Rem.* 385-386 also points forward to *Ex Ponto* 3.3.51-52 where Ovid readdresses this concern.

¹¹⁸Thais was a famous Athenian courtesan and possible concubine of Alexander *Magnus*. She is also a character-type in Terence's *Eunuchus*. See *OLD* s.v. Thais. Ovid's use of the name/character-type stresses that the intended audience for his poems is *meretrices*.

Ovid links the attacks on his poetry to his hope for poetic immortality (*vivam modo, plura dolebis*: 391).¹¹⁹ Ovid personifies his unnamed accuser (*at tu, quicumque es*: *Rem.* 371) as *livor edax* (389), and argues that this person is simply jealous of Ovid's great name and poetic fame (389-92).¹²⁰ His overarching pride as an elegiac poet is encapsulated in the boast that elegy owes as much to him as epic does to Vergil (395-96), yet he indicates that elegy is just his first poetic project (394).¹²¹ Ovid's fictional reality and the role of his *persona* therein are therefore vehicles for establishing his fame as a poet, not as an *obsceni doctor adulterii*.

For Ovid, there are two distinct realities involved: one for his poetry, and the other in which his audience lived. Although Ovid would like to keep these distinct, he knew that he could be considered subversive of the real-world laws. For this reason Ovid breaks the dramatic illusion of his fictional reality in order to state that even his poetic world does not disregard real-world laws. If he has no concern with trying to diffuse objections to his poetry, the disclaimers would be superfluous. Instead, Ovid attempts to defend his role as *ille ego nequitiae Naso poeta mea* (*Am.* 2.1.1-4) by stressing the topical nature of his poetry while disclaiming any wrongdoing. His poetry may be naughty, as Ovid himself acknowledges, but above all Ovid is a poet who takes pride in constructing an ingenious *persona* and a fictional reality in which that *persona* can operate.

¹¹⁹For *vivam* (391), cf. *Am.* 1.15.42 and *Met.* 15.879.

¹²⁰One should recall that in *Am.* 3.15, Ovid also responds to *livor edax* and defends his quest for *fama perennis* (1-8). Ovid launches an extended attack on the accuser whom he claims defamed his name and misinterpreted his poetry to Augustus at *Tr.* 2.77-88. One must wonder whether Ovid had the same person in mind each time he refers to this jealous accuser of his poetry (*Am.* 3.15.8, *Rem.* 389, *Tr.* 2.77-88), and if the same person may be the *quisquis is est* to whom the *Ibis* is addressed (*Ib.* 9).

¹²¹Ovid is probably referring here to his epic, the *Metamorphoses* which, as we see from the epilogue to that work, Ovid thought would define his poetic success (15.871-79).

The themes discussed in this chapter, the nature of Ovid's fictional elegiac and didactic roles, and his proclamations of political conformity, comprise Ovid's major arguments in his *apologia* to Augustus in *Tristia* 2. The following chapter further treats these topics in the context of Cupid's *apologia* of Ovid found in *Ex Ponto* 3.3, which is a continuation of both the defense that Ovid gives for himself in *Tristia* 2 (chapter two), and of the fictional reality from Ovid's erotic poems in which Cupid figures so prominently (chapter three).

CHAPTER 4

EX PONTO 3.3: CUPID'S APOLOGIA OF OVID

When Ovid published *Epistulae Ex Ponto* 1-3 he had been in Tomis for over four years and the irrevocable nature of his relegation must have begun to sink in.¹²² Ovid was nevertheless undeterred from trying to clear his name and from finding someone to advocate on his behalf to Augustus in those poems. Beginning in the erotic poems, culminating in *Tristia* 2 and continuing into the *Ex Ponto* poems, Ovid responds to critics of his work and attempts to reinterpret his poetry in its proper literary context. *Ex Ponto* 3.3 is the longest sustained defense of Ovid's poetry and plea for assistance after *Tristia* 2, and it echoes the earlier defense in many respects. In addition, because of Cupid's extensive role in the narrative framework of Ovid's love poems, his function in this poem is no less important. Ovid's repeated denial of the culpability of the *Ars* and his relentless pleas for mercy were bound to become monotonous as poetic themes; yet by recalling Cupid as a character in the exile poetry, Ovid reiterates his defense in a new guise by offering Cupid as a witness, as it were.¹²³ This chapter discusses how *Ex Ponto* 3.3 advances Ovid's ongoing defense and reinterpretation of his earlier poetry, explicated most fully in *Tristia*

¹²²*Ex Ponto* 1-3 was composed during 12-13 CE. The final book was written during the final years of the poet's life and probably published posthumously. See Hinds (2003), *OCD*³ s.v. "Ovid" for a relative chronology, and Wheeler (1965): xxxiii-xxxix for a presentation of the internal evidence for dating.

¹²³Kenney (1965), "The Poetry of Ovid's Exile," *PCPS* 11, 46-47.

2, and how it furthers Cupid's role as a character in Ovid's poetry in order to ask Fabius Maximus,¹²⁴ the addressee of the poem, to intercede on his behalf.

Ovid retraces the relationship between himself and Cupid in this poem (23-38) so that he can explain how Cupid is the cause of his exile (39-48). He then reiterates to Cupid his major argument from *Tristia* 2, that the disclaimers he placed in the didactic poems established his intention that only prostitutes would learn from his *praecepta* (49-52). Based on this "evidence" of his original intention, Ovid begs Cupid to bear witness that he never defiled wedlock, because he expressly prohibited married women from reading his work (53-58). Ovid finally appeals to Cupid in his position as kinsman to the emperor to carry out the purported aim of his exile poetry, to placate the anger of Augustus in order to win a milder place of exile (59-64).¹²⁵ In an echo of *Tristia* 2, Cupid responds with an *apologia* of Ovid that defends his role as *praeceptor* and the harmlessness of his *Ars*: he swears that there is *nullum crimen* in the *Ars* (67-70), and that an indefensible *error* harmed Ovid more (71-76). Cupid's theophany culminates in the prophecy of a triumph for the imperial family; the jubilation over which, Cupid says, provides Ovid with the best chance for his prayers to be answered (77-94). Ovid thereupon uses Cupid's speech to give a proper treatment of the triumph theme in order to stress the urgency of Fabius Maximus' intercession with the emperor (95-108).

¹²⁴Paullus Fabius Maximus, cos. 11BCE, was a friend of Augustus and Ovid's most influential friend. He is also addressed at *Pont.* 1.2 and 3.8. For further discussions of the *vita* of Fabius Maximus, see Evans (1983): 119-124, and Staffhorst (1965), *Epistulae Ex Ponto* III, 1-3 *Kommentar* (Diss. Würzburg): 112-113. Syme (1978) provides prosopographical information on the addressees of the *Ex Ponto* poems. Kenney (1965) sees intertextual references in *Ex Ponto* 3.3 to Horace's first poem in book four of the *Odes*, also addressed to Fabius Maximus (48).

¹²⁵This aim is expressed three times in *Tristia* 2: 27-28, 179-86 and 573-78.

Reproaching Cupid: Thematic Continuity, Repeated Denial, and Cupid as Witness

Ovid begins to describe the theophany of Amor in ekphrastic language (*nox erat*) which inscribes the dialogue with Cupid within his epistle to Fabius Maximus.¹²⁶ Cupid appears not as he is accustomed (*stabat Amor, vultu non quo prius esse solebat*: 13), but as *Tristis* Amor, with disheveled hair and matted wings (15-20), and stands in high contrast to the triumphant Cupid of *Amores* 1.2.¹²⁷ Ovid portrays Cupid as a humble reflection of his own abject self in exile,¹²⁸ and as another victim of Augustan repression,¹²⁹ yet Ovid immediately recognizes Amor despite his uncustomary appearance (*nunc simul agnovi, neque enim mihi notior alter*: 21). No one is more familiar (*notior*) to Ovid than Cupid because of the extensive relationship they share in the erotic poems, and that relationship provides the basis for Amor to come to Ovid's aid in exile (77-84). Ovid addresses Cupid in a manner uncustomary for a mortal speaking to a divine apparition and accuses him of malicious intent.

¹²⁶So Staffhorst (1965), ad loc. For *nox erat*, cf. *Fast.* 1.421, 2.792, 3.639, 6.673, *P.* 3.2.45 (*est locus*), *Verg. Aen.* 4.522f.: *nox erat et placidum carpebant fessa soporem / corpora per terras*, 8.26f., and *Hor. Epod.* 15.1: *nox erat et caelo fulgebant luna sereno*. Presenting the encounter with Cupid as an ekphrasis, an extended literary description whose vivid narration suggests the reality of the object under focus, recovers some of the dramatic illusion lost after Ovid's indecision about the nature of his vision, whether it was a true vision or just sleep (1-4). He later says that sleep has left him when he hears the sound of Cupid's wings (*somnus abijt*: 12), thereby adding to the credibility of the appearance and the vividness of the account.

¹²⁷Cupid appears quite similar, however, to his characterization in the elegy on the death of Tibullus (*Am.* 3.9.7-12). This time Amor is sad because Ovid has been exiled, but his appearance is as fitting because Ovid often describes his relegation as death. On death as a metaphor for exile, see *Tr.* 3.2.23, 3.3.73-76, 3.10.1-4, 5.5.48; *Pont.* 3.7.40. Cf. Claassen (1999), 238-41. Evans (1983) sees an even closer parallel between this theophany and Amor's appearance in *Rem.* 555-76 where Letheus Amor gives advice on how to forget about love.

¹²⁸Kenney (1965) argues that "the contrast between what he was when he wrote the *Ars* and the *Remedia* and what he is now is graphically conveyed in the symbol of the mourning god (47)."

¹²⁹Claassen (1986), *Poeta, Exsul, Vates: A Stylistic and Literary Analysis of Ovid's Tristia and Epistulae Ex Ponto* (Diss. Stellenbosch), 47.

'o puer, exilii decepto causa magistro,
 quem fuit utilius non docuisse mihi,
 huc quoque venisti, pax est ubi tempore nullo,
 et coit adstrictis barbarus Hister aquis?
 quae tibi causa viae, nisi uti mala nostra videres?
 quae sunt, si nescis, invidiosa tibi. [...]'¹³⁰
 (*Pont.* 3.3.23-28)

'O boy, cause of your deceived teacher's exile,
 whom it would have been more advantageous for me not to have taught,
 have you also come here, where peace exists at no time,
 and the barbarian Hister unites with narrow waterways?
 What is the reason for your visit, except so you could see my misfortunes?
 misfortunes which are, if you don't know, odious to you. [...]'

At Cupid and Ovid's last recorded meeting (*Rem.* 1-40), they laid down their arms and animosity toward one another, and in the end Cupid concedes that Ovid should write the remedies of love. Now Ovid thinks that Cupid is present to mock him for the role of *praeceptor Amoris* which he regards as the cause of his exile. Ovid makes it clearer later in his speech that he is recasting Cupid as his sole *discipulus*, though the verbal allusion in these verses also makes it apparent that in this poem he recants his role as *praeceptor amoris* to the wider Roman audience. Ovid alludes to his statement of purpose at the beginning of the *Ars* with *docuisse* (24):

Si quis in hoc **artem** populo non novit **amandi**,
 hoc legat et lecto carmine **doctus amet**.
 (*Ars* 1.1-2)

If anyone in this society does not know the *art of loving*,
 let him read this, and having learned from this choice poem, let him love.

¹³⁰The text that I cite for *Ex Ponto* 3.3 is S. G. Owen (1915), *Tristia, Ibis, Ex Ponto, Halieutica, Fragmenta*, (Oxford), unless otherwise stated.

Ovid refers to himself as *praeceptor Amoris* at *Ars* 1.17, and so conflates instruction in *amor* with the instruction of *Amor*. This linguistic ambiguity and conceptual conflation leads Ovid to remark that it would have been more advantageous “not to have taught Cupid,” which is the same as saying “not to have taught the art of love.”¹³¹

Ovid goes on to reevaluate Cupid’s role in his earlier poetry in order to explain how Cupid is his *causa exilii* (3.3.23), in a retrospective account of his amatory poetry.¹³²

‘[...] tu mihi dictasti iuvenalia carmina primus:
apposui senis te duce quinque pedes.
nec me Maeonio consurgere carmine nec me
dicere magnorum passus es acta ducum.
forsitan exiguas, aliquas tamen, arcus et ignes
ingenii vires comminuere mei. [...]’
(*Pont.* 3.3.29-34)

‘[...] You first dictated my youthful poems to me:
I placed five feet after six with you as my commander.
Nor did you allow me to rise up with a Maeonian poem
to tell the deeds of great generals.
Perhaps meager, but something nevertheless, was the strength
of my natural talent that your bow and flames crushed. [...]’

Ovid continues the fictional narrative framework that encompasses the narrative of his love affairs (*Amores*) by describing Cupid’s role in the production of that poetry. In *Amores* 1.1, Ovid explains that Cupid’s theft of every other foot from his hexameters causes him to abandon epic and the *acta ducum* for elegy. Cupid’s *arcus et ignes* (*Pont.* 3.3.33) are mentioned specifically in the first two poems of the *Amores* to explain the origin of Ovid’s elegiac passion,¹³³ and the

¹³¹This concept also echoes *Pont.* 1.4.41-42: *illum furtivae iuvare Cupidinis artes; / quas a me vellem non didicisset Amor*, on the same theme.

¹³²Nagle (1980), “The Poetics of Exile,” *Collection Latomus* 170 (Bruxelles), 124.

¹³³Recall, in particular, 1.1.23-26, which describes how Cupid’s *arcus* and *sagittae* cause him to *urere*.

notion of Cupid as *dux* (30) picks up the metaphor of his relationship with Corinna as military service under Cupid.¹³⁴ The most poignant reminiscence from these lines is Ovid's use of *dictasti* (29), which deliberately echoes *Am.* 2.1.37-38:

ad mea formosos vultus adhibete puellae
carmina, purpureus quae mihi **dictat** Amor.

Turn your beautiful faces toward my poems, ladies,
which rosy Amor dictates to me.

Ovid would have us believe, with his use of *dictare* in these two poems, that he is not responsible for the composition of the *Amores*. Ovid recasts Cupid's role from the *Amores* to redefine his own role as an elegiac lover-poet: he was not able to write otherwise because Cupid compelled his elegies.¹³⁵

In the poems from exile, Ovid highlights his relationship with Cupid in order to distance himself as a poet from the *persona* that he adopted in his erotic works and to transfer to Cupid the blame for the poetry that condemned him. This is shown most clearly in the following verses of *Ex Ponto* 3.3 in which Ovid discusses the *Ars Amatoria*:

'[...] namque ego dum canto tua regna tuaeque parentis,
in nullum mea mens grande vacavit opus.
nec satis hoc fuerat. stulto quoque carmine feci,
Artibus ut posses non rudis esse meis.
pro quibus exilium misero est mihi reddita merces.
id quoque in extremis et sine pace locis. [...]'
(*Pont.* 3.3.35-40)

¹³⁴The previous chapter discusses fully the implications of Ovid's use of military metaphor to the narrative framework of the *Amores*. The most significant exemplars of this concept are 1.2 (Cupid triumphs over Ovid), 1.9 (every lover is a soldier), 2.12 (Cupid triumphs over Corinna), and 3.15 (Ovid forsakes Cupid's standards to signal his later ascension to the didactic genre).

¹³⁵Claassen (1991), "Une Analyse Stylistique et Littéraire d'Ovide (*Epistulae Ex Ponto* 3.3): *Praeceptor amoris* ou *praeceptor Amoris*." *LEC* 59, 39.

‘[...] For while I celebrate your and your mother’s kingdom,
my mind was available for no lofty *opus*.
Nor had that been enough. I also brought it about that you became
experienced, by a foolish poem, by my *Ars*.
In exchange for which exile was the reward given to wretched me,
an exile in places remote and without peace. [...]’

In dwelling on the relationship between himself, the dejected epic poet, and Cupid, the poetic nemesis, Ovid downplays his role as *praeceptor amoris* and highlights his role as *praeceptor Amoris*. He also reclassifies the *Ars* as a poem that deals with teaching Cupid rather than teaching Romans, which obscures the charge that he is an *obsceni doctor adulterii* (*Tr.* 2.212) and stresses the argument from *Tristia* 2 that his poetry is made up and false (*magnaue pars mendax operum est et ficta meorum*: 355). The association between Cupid and Ovid, pupil and *praeceptor*, forms the fictional narrative framework of the *Ars* that Ovid wants to highlight over the narrative of teaching fictional Roman characters how to find a lover. Ovid moves Cupid’s role as his *discipulus* into the foreground in order to offer a rereading of the *Ars* as a dialogue between himself and Cupid alone, and he moves into the background the relationship between the *praeceptor* and his other readers, which include potentially adulterous Roman *matronae*.

After he reinterprets the audience for his *praecepta* to include Cupid alone, Ovid then argues that he is the only instructor ever harmed by his pupil.

‘[...] nomina neu referam longum collecta per aevum,
discipulo perii solus ab ipse meo.
dum damus arma tibi, dum te, lascive, docemus,
haec te discipulo dona magister habet. [...]’
(*Pont.* 3.3.45-48)

‘[...] Nor should I recount the names collected through the ages,
I myself alone was destroyed by my own student.

Since I give you arms, since I teach you, wanton boy,
your instructor gets these gifts from you the student. [...]

These verses reflect back on the *Ars* through a didactic vocabulary that highlights the teacher-student relationship: *discipulus*, *docemus*, *discipulus*, *magister*.¹³⁶ Ovid draws attention to his didactic role with this vocabulary, but only in relation to Cupid and not to the Roman public.

Cupid's exaggerated role in *Ex Ponto* 3.3 as the *causa exilii* allows Ovid to pass the blame from himself to Cupid in a verse that reworks the theme of Ovid's self-destruction as found in several other elegies:

discipulo perii solus ab ipse **meo** *Pont.* 3.3.46

ingenio perii qui miser ipse **meo** *Tr.* 2.2

ingenio perii Naso poeta **meo** *Tr.* 3.3.74

infelix **perii dotibus** ipse **meis** *Pont.* 2.7.48

Ovid's *ingenium* is the source of the poetic fiction that creates Cupid as a *discipulus* and which implicates Ovid in encouraging adultery, yet there is a vast conceptual difference in this instance because Ovid shifts the blame from his *ingenium* to his *discipulus*. Claassen states:

The exile's constant aim seems to be to repudiate his former carefree self, while holding on to the creativity of that self as the only thing that still gives him a sense of identity. The creator-poet has fused the disgraced lover-poet and his banned love-poetry into a text that is a living palinode of all that went before.¹³⁷

Ovid's use of *deceptus* (23) to describe himself at the beginning of his speech is central to Ovid's repudiation, as Claassen sees it, since it informs us of the reason for this palinode. He certainly

¹³⁶Claassen (1986), 49.

¹³⁷Claassen (1996), 122.

wants to recant any possible negative impression that he gave in the *Ars*, but he does so with the playfulness with which he wrote the *Ars* by creating a scenario in which he is punished for teaching Cupid and not for the poem's influence on real-world individuals. Ovid calls himself *deceptus* because he has been deceived or cheated since he has to accept the responsibility for the possible effect of his poetic text on its audience. After denying his responsibility, while at the same time arguing against the negative influence of the *Ars*, Ovid's passing of blame to Cupid makes a parody of *Tristia* 2 and Ovid's serious *apologia* to Augustus.¹³⁸ Ovid's formal *apologia* to Augustus would have to be regarded as sincere for it to be effective; but in the context of Ovid's epistle to Fabius Maximus, Ovid can make a humorous variation on the theme of his innocence by implicating Cupid. The dramatic illusion offered by Cupid's relationship with Ovid and his subsequent epiphany, nevertheless, makes Cupid a good witness to the fact that Ovid took preventative measures to establish the political conformity of his erotic work.

'[...] scis tamen, et liquido iuratus dicere possis,
 non me legitimos sollicitasse toros. 50
 scripsimus haec illis, quarum nec vitta pudicos
 continget crines nec stola longa pedes.
 dic, precor, ecquando didicisti fallere nuptas,
 et facere incertum per mea iussa genus?
 an sit ab his omnis rigide summota libellis, 55
 quam lex furtivos arcet habere viros?
 quid tamen hoc prodest, vetiti si lege severa
 credor adulterii composuisse notas? [...]'
 (*Pont.* 3.3.49-58)

¹³⁸Claassen (1991) does not mention *Tristia* 2 specifically, but states, "nous concluons donc à la parodie. Parodie des élégies d'Ovide, des apparitions et épiphanies des oeuvres d'autres poètes et d'autres genres, de la poésie didactique in général, de certains aspects de la rhétorique" (39).

'[...] Nevertheless you know, and could tell clearly under oath,
 that I did not disturb lawful marriage-beds.
 I wrote these poems for those women, who have neither headbands
 touching their chaste hair nor a long dress touching their feet.
 Speak, I beg you, have you ever learned to deceive married women,
 and to make one's lineage uncertain through my orders?
 But what if every woman was sternly turned away from my books,
 whom the law prevents from having secret lovers?
 What does this offer, if by a harsh prohibitive law
 I am believed to have composed instructions for adultery? [...]'

Ovid continues the didactic vocabulary with his usage of *scis* (49) and *didicisti* (53), and truly acts as the *praeceptor Amoris* by presenting to Cupid the disclaimers from the erotic poems as evidence upon which Cupid can swear to Ovid's inculpability (51-52).¹³⁹ Ovid breaks the dramatic illusion of his fictional reality and role as *praeceptor amoris* in the *Ars* and the *Remedia Amoris* in order to leave himself plausible denial by trying to mark out his audience as individuals to whom the laws allow a certain amount of sexual freedom.

The proclaimed lawfulness of his fictional pupils in the erotic poems (*nil nisi legitimum: Tr.* 2.249) is Ovid's main argument to Augustus in *Tristia* 2 that his poetry is not subversive. As Ovid's prayers for a milder place of exile have not been answered, however, he suggests that the disclaimers are pointless in light of a law which he describes as overly restrictive (*vetiti... lege severa: 57*). Since Ovid is relegated on the accusation that he encouraged adultery through his poetry and not on the basis of actual misdeeds, he wonders what use it is to have disclaimers in the first place (55-58). Ovid's suggestion that his renunciation is pointless seems to reflect the opinion of a poet who tried to protect his poetry from criticism to no avail. Since his efforts to

¹³⁹The disclaimers, found at *Ars* 1.31-34 (= *Trist.* 2.247-50); 2.599-600; 3.57-58, 3.611-16 and *Rem.* 385-88, are discussed fully in the previous chapter.

keep himself free from culpability failed, Ovid questions his methods but continues, retrospectively, to stress his original intention to stay within the boundaries set by the Augustan moral legislation. Ovid reveals his hopelessness that Augustus will yield; yet far from abandoning his cause, Ovid concludes his speech by asking Cupid, in his capacity as the emperor's relative, to carry on the mission of his poetry from exile: to placate the anger of Augustus so that Ovid could enjoy a milder place of exile (*effice, sit nobis non implacabilis ira, / meque loco plecti commodiore velit*: 63-64).

Cupid's *Apologia*: Defending the *Carmen*, Highlighting the *Error*, and Anticipating Recall

Ovid constructs the first half of *Ex Ponto* 3.3 as a continuation of the poetic dialogue between himself and Cupid in order to minimize the responsibility for the influence of his poetry. In reinterpreting the *Ars* as a poem primarily describing the struggle to reclaim his poetic identity, Ovid is able to pass the blame for his *carmen* to Cupid, and to reiterate the defense he argues to Augustus in *Tristia* 2. The second half continues to acknowledge his earlier poetry through a defense voiced by Cupid, a recognition that the mysterious *error* harmed him more than his poetry, and by giving another treatment of a military triumph. Tiberius' military success gives Ovid the opportunity to suggest the timeliness of Fabius Maximus' hoped-for assistance, and in doing so to deal seriously with Augustan propaganda.¹⁴⁰

As soon as Ovid finishes his reproach to Cupid and his call for the god's aid, Cupid immediately swears that the account Ovid has just given is correct:

¹⁴⁰Galinsky (1969) argues that, in the exile poetry, Ovid treats the triumph with complete seriousness (106).

per mea tela, faces, et per mea tela, sagittas,
per matrem iuro Caesareumque caput,
nil nisi concessum nos te didicisse magistro,
Artibus et nullum crimen inesse tuis.
(*Pont.* 3.3.67-70)

By my weapons, the torches, and by my weapons, the arrows,
by my mother and by the Caesarian head I swear:
that I have learned nothing from you my teacher except lawful things,
and that there is no crime in your *Ars*.

Cupid speaks in formulaic legal terms, swearing on his iconic weapons, his mother and even Caesar to vindicate Ovid's claims to the purity of his intention.¹⁴¹ The form of Cupid's oath echoes Ovid's declaration of loyalty to the *princeps* at *Tr.* 2.53-56 through the repetition of *per*,¹⁴² and the oath itself echoes the disclaimer from the *Ars* that Ovid reproduces (with slight modification) in *Tristia* 2 as evidence that he intends his poetry to comport with Augustan moral legislation:

nil nisi legitimum **concessa**que furta canemus,
inque meo **nullum** carmine **crimen** erit.
(*Tr.* 2.249-50)

I will celebrate nothing except what is lawful and permitted deceptions,
and in my poem there will be no crime.

Cupid is literally correct that there is *nullum crimen* in Ovid's *Ars*, in so far as those very words are written at 1.34 (*inque meo **nullum** crimine **carmen** erit*); yet Cupid is doing more than just making a pun, he is swearing that Ovid's original intention was not to be subversive. Ovid's intention when writing the *Ars*, and whether we should consider his disclaimers as serious or

¹⁴¹Claassen (1996) considers Cupid's speech as a parody of Roman legal rhetoric, and yet suitable for a divine epiphany (216).

¹⁴²See chapter one for the Latin and a relevant discussion.

facetious is unrecoverable, but it is clear that in retrospect Ovid strictly argues for the purity of his intention, and that he greatly desires his readers to believe his claim.

Cupid's defense of the *Ars* supports Ovid's repeated denials of its subversiveness, yet Cupid also states that some indefensible transgression harmed the poet more (71-76). Ovid makes the same claim in *Tristia* 2,¹⁴³ but neglects mentioning the *error* to Cupid in *Ex Ponto* 3.3. It seems that Ovid has been repudiating the *carmen* charge for so long that he has forgotten the *error* charge, yet Cupid highlights the severity of the *error* by spending more lines talking about it than he does on defending the *carmen*:

utque hoc, sic utinam defendere cetera possem!
scis aliud, quod te laeserit, esse, magis.
quicquid id est (neque enim debet dolor ipse referri,
nec potes a culpa dicere abesse tua)
tu licet erroris sub imagine crimen obumbres,
non gravior merito iudicis ira fuit.
(*Pont.* 3.3.71-76)

Would that I could thus defend the remainder as I can this!
You know there is another thing which harmed you more.
Whatever it is (for neither ought the pain itself be renewed,
nor are you able to say that you are free from your blame)
although you conceal the offence under the guise of an *error*,
the anger of the judge is not more severe than deserved.

Cupid introduces the concept of *error* by *praeteritio*, in a manner similar to that of Ovid in *Tristia* 2, by noting the severity of whatever the *error* was (*quicquid id est*: 73), yet states that the harm done by it is too great to mention details. Cupid does not give clues to the nature of the

¹⁴³For instance, *Tr.* 3.5.49-52 discussed below, and also 3.6.29-36 and *Pont.* 1.6.21-26.

error as Ovid does in *Tristia* 2,¹⁴⁴ yet he warns Ovid, nevertheless, that the poet cannot consider himself free from *culpa*. The poet has already, in fact, granted this point in several other poems from exile which Cupid's warning is meant to recall.

Ovid concedes his responsibility for the *error*, yet would like to establish that in and of itself it is not a criminal act but rather a *culpa*:

quicquid id est, ut non facinus, sic **culpa** vocanda est
(*Pont.* 1.6.25)

Whatever it is, since it is not a crime, it must thus be called a fault.

He mentions the indefensibility of the *culpa* in the following passage from the *Tristia*, and also gives a tantalizing suggestion that his mistake (*error*) has to do with seeing something.¹⁴⁵

inscia quod **crimen** uiderunt lumina, plector,
peccatumque oculos est habuisse meum.
Non equidem totam **possum defendere culpam**:
sed partem nostri **criminis error** habet.
(*Tr.* 3.5.49-52)

I am punished because my ignorant eyes saw a crime,
and my sin is to have had eyes.
Nor truly can I defend my entire mistake:
but an *error* constitutes part of my crime.

Ovid indicates elsewhere that his intention is to respond to the charge against his *carmen* alone in his exile poetry so that he might conceal the more damaging *error* charge:

Nec quicquam, quod lege vetor committere, **feci**:
est tamen his grauior noxa fatenda mihi.

¹⁴⁴Such as that it included seeing something (103f.), or that it was a personal offence to Augustus (209f.), for instance.

¹⁴⁵Ovid makes the same suggestion in *Tristia* 2 by comparing himself to Actaeon who saw Diana naked and was sorely punished for it (105-108).

Neue roges quae sit, **stultam** conscripsimus **Artem**.
innocuas nobis haec vetat esse manus.
Ecquid praeterea peccarim quaerere noli,
ut lateat sola **culpa** sub **Arte** mea.
quicquid id est, habuit moderatam **uindictis iram**,
qui nisi natalem nil mihi dempsit humum.
(*Pont.* 2.9.73-78)

Nor have I done anything which I am prohibited to do by law,
there is nevertheless a more severe crime than this that I must admit.
Lest you should ask what it is, I wrote the foolish *Ars*.
This prevents my hands from being clean.
Moreover, do not ask about my sin at all,
so that the fault may lie hidden beneath my *Ars*.
Whatever it is, it has only the moderate anger of the protector,
who took away nothing except my birth-land from me.

Ovid provokes speculation and intrigue through the repeated mention of the *error*, but aside from arguing that it is not criminally subversive, he wholly acknowledges his responsibility to Augustus in the matter. This is not only a symbolic gesture to yield to Augustus' judgement and to praise his clemency for only taking his native land, but also it fits better with Ovid's exilic *persona*, who finds poetic continuity in repudiating charges against his poetry, to address the only charge which he can persuasively refute. Ovid thus tries to placate Augustus by granting the *error* charge, but he asks for a milder place of exile based on a reinterpreted version of his poetry which he argues has been misunderstood.

Only after Cupid defends the *Ars* and highlights the *error* as the greater cause for Ovid's exile does he mention his real reason for appearing to Ovid: in order to assert that Augustus' anger will diminish and that he will be receptive to Ovid's prayers in the wake of Tiberius'

triumph over Germany (77-93).¹⁴⁶ Cupid begins describing the purpose of the theophany by resuming the military metaphor that characterizes the relationship between himself and Ovid in the erotic poems:

quae nunc cur iterum post saecula longa revisam,
tu facis, o castris miles amice meis.
pone metus igitur: mitescet Caesaris ira,
et veniet votis mollior hora tuis.
(*Pont.* 3.3.81-84)

The reason why I came back here after such a long time,
is you, o dear soldier from my own camp.
Consequently lay aside your fear: the anger of Caesar will diminish,
and a gentler time will come to your vows.

Cupid resumes the military metaphor that characterizes the relationship between himself and Ovid in the erotic poems by stating that the reason for his second coming to the Pontic region is concern for his fellow soldier (81-82).¹⁴⁷ Cupid literally answers the prayers that Ovid expresses throughout the poems from exile, and most notably in *Tristia* 2, when he prophesies that the anger of Augustus will diminish.¹⁴⁸ Ovid therefore has in Cupid a witness to swear on his behalf that he committed no wrongdoing (67-70), and also the uncle of the emperor who is privileged with the knowledge that the Augustus's anger will relent (83-84).

¹⁴⁶Celebrated on 16 January 13 CE.

¹⁴⁷There is a verbal echo of *Am.* 1.9.1-2 in these verses: *militat omnis amans, et habet sua castra Cupido; / Attice, crede mihi, militat omnis amans.* See the previous chapter for a discussion of the military metaphor in the love poems.

¹⁴⁸Ovid structures *Tristia* 2 in ring composition to highlight the fact that his goal is to mollify the anger of Augustus. He mentions this goal after each rhetorical division of the poem: 27-28, 155-206 and 573-78. See chapter two for a discussion of the structure of *Tristia* 2 and its relationship to expressing Ovid's aim of appeasing the emperor.

This change in Augustus is to take place immediately, as the joy over Tiberius' triumph makes him receptive to Ovid's pleas:

neve moram timeas, tempus, quod quaerimus, instat,
cunctaque laetitiae plena triumphus habet.
dum domus et nati, dum mater Livia gaudet,
dum gaudes, patriae magne ducisque pater,
dum sibi gratatur populus, totam per urbem
omnis odoratis ignibus ara calet,
dum faciles aditus praebet venerabile templum,
sperandum est nostras posse valere preces.
(*Pont.* 3.3.85-92)

Nor should you fear delay, the time which we seek is upon us,
and the triumph has everything full of happiness.
While the house and the children, while mother Livia rejoices,
while you rejoice, great father of the country and of the general,
while the people rejoice for themselves, through the entire world
every altar burns with fragrant fire,
while the venerable temple offers an easy approach,
there is hope that our prayers can fare well.

In these verses, Cupid's role as Ovid's witness yields to the role he claims for himself as an advisor to Ovid. Since he is still in Rome and intimately connected to the imperial household, Cupid knows the spirits of the imperial family and knows that now is the time for Ovid to have someone approach Augustus on Ovid's behalf. The anaphora of *dum* adds to the immediacy of the situation: while the family is rejoicing, while Augustus, the happy father of the triumphant general rejoices, while the venerable temple (= *domus Augusta*) is approachable due to the joyous atmosphere, now is the best time for Ovid to have a friend try to effect his recall.

As soon as Cupid finishes his speech the apparition disappears, and Ovid follows his advice by praising Fabius Maximus and calling for him to act on his suppliant's behalf. In the

midst of his praise, Ovid finds it convenient to draw a contrast between Fabius Maximus and what emerges throughout his poetry as his greatest detractor, jealousy.

livor, iners vitium, mores non exit in altos,
utque latens ima vipera serpit humo.
mens tua sublimis supra genus eminet ipsum,
grandius ingenio nec tibi nomen inest.
ergo alii noceant miseris optentque timeri,
tinctaque mordaci spicula felle gerant:
at tua supplicibus domus est adsueta iuvandis,
in quorum numero me, precor, esse velis.
(*Pont.* 3.3.101-108)

Jealousy, a stagnant vice, does not exist in a lofty character,
but hiding it moves like a snake in the grass.
Your eminent mind stands out amongst your family itself,
nor is your name greater than your natural talent.
Therefore let others harm the weak and choose to be feared,
and let them bear arrows tinged with biting venom:
but since your house is accustomed to helping suppliants,
may you wish, I beg, that I be counted among them.

Ovid's entreaty to Fabius Maximus finally reveals the full significance of Cupid's theophany.

Ovid not only breaks up the monotony of his repeated defenses and pleas for assistance by recalling Cupid for one last campaign, but he also indirectly uses Tiberius' triumph in order to stress the timeliness and urgency of any action on Fabius Maximus' part. In addition, Ovid gives a serious treatment to the triumph theme, which elsewhere he burlesques, in order to offer the possibility of noble poetry from his stylus.¹⁴⁹ Amor is no longer the *triumphator*, now it is

¹⁴⁹See also *Pont.* 2.1 for a second-hand account of Germanicus' triumph over the Dalmatians which was earned in 9 CE but postponed due to the defeat of Varus. Claassen (1986), however, thinks that the "grotesque" appearance of Cupid undercuts the seriousness regarding Tiberius' triumph (51-52). While she is correct to note that "civic loyalty is not normally expressed thus" (52). I think that Cupid's appearance is more a reflection of the poet's self-portrayal. Ovid's treatment of Tiberius' triumph is certainly more serious, and thus more "loyal" than Ovid's earlier discussions of the triumph.

Tiberius; a change that demonstrates the ‘rehabilitation’ of Ovid’s poetry, and lets Cupid play the role of the patron who calls on the poet for a celebratory poem.¹⁵⁰ In the following poem, *Ex Ponto* 3.4, Ovid recuses himself from celebrating this triumph in verse, and entrusts the task to Rufinus instead, since he is not an eye witness and because the event will not be in recent memory by the time his poem crosses the sea to Rome. In *Tristia* 2, Ovid draws attention to his lofty *Metamorphoses* and *Fasti* to argue that his poetry has reformed itself from the trifles of love poetry to civic works, but states that exile ruptured his *opus* (547-563). Ovid dangles both the completion of the *Fasti* and the composition of other forms of imperial poetry before Augustus and the Roman public. Good poetry is dependent upon Ovid’s return from exile, which, given the atmosphere in the imperial household, can be secured if Fabius Maximus will use his influence to aid his suppliant.

Ovid’s contrast between the *alii* whom *livor* infects (101f., 105f.), and the noble Fabius Maximus (99f., 103f., cf. 1f.) is also an important continuation of Ovid’s poetic program. Ovid refutes the exhortations of *livor* to abandon poetry in *Amores* 1.15, he personifies critics of his poetry as *Livor edax* in the *Remedia Amoris* (389-96), the imagined accuser whom Ovid claims misinterpreted his poems to Augustus is characterized as a jealous rival, and here Ovid notes the distinction between Fabius Maximus on high, and *livor* as a snake in the grass. Whatever harm done to Ovid by the *carmen* which he endlessly tries to refute, or by the *error* which he must

¹⁵⁰Claassen (1996), 216.

admit in order to justify the emperor's judgement in relegating him, Ovid seems to personify in *livor* as harm done by the slander of jealous rivals who could not endure the poet's fame.¹⁵¹

Ovid certainly is a provocative poet and even makes fun of Augustus at times, but it seems unlikely that he would write what he did if he thought that he would be exiled for it; his arguments in *Tristia* 2 and *Ex Ponto* 3.3 make it seem that relegation came as a complete shock. The *error*, although intriguing, is obscured by Ovid's passionate *apologiae*, and the political, legal and moral dimensions to his exile are buried under attacks on critics for disregarding the context of Ovid's poetry. If the *error* really is indefensible, as Ovid often claims, he is responding to the only thing that he can in his bid to get someone to intercede on his behalf with the emperor. He also makes a much stronger case for the misinterpretation of the *Ars* on account of the disclaimers which left him a platform from which he could plausibly deny subversive intent.

In *Ex Ponto* 3.3, Cupid becomes the vehicle for Ovid to carry out the defense and reinterpretation of his earlier poetry in which Cupid plays such a large role, and becomes the spokesman who exhorts Fabius Maximus to take up the poet's cause. *Ex Ponto* 3.3 makes it clear that Ovid does not lose sight of his goal of defending his *curriculum vitae* in effort to effect a mitigation of his sentence, but also that, despite his situation, he does not lose the sense of humor and poetic integrity which characterizes Ovidian poetics.

¹⁵¹Ovid furthermore reproaches *livor* in final poem of *Ex Ponto*, 4.16, and ends the collection on the offensive rather than the defensive. Claassen (1996) argues that Ovid personifies negative literary criticism in *livor*, but by extension, represents the embodied ruler for all time as the most severe censor who demands epic and does not appreciate love poetry (122).

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In his poetry from exile, Ovid makes it his primary concern to reinterpret the nature of the *Ars Amatoria* and to persuade others to be sympathetic to his situation in exile. Since the *error*, perhaps, demonstrated Ovid's disloyalty to Augustus, he has to acknowledge his regret for the offence in order to placate the emperor. The *error* may truly have been as indefensible as Ovid claims, but it is, at least, counterproductive for Ovid to dispute the specifics with the man whom he ultimately relies on for his recall. Ovid's concession, therefore, leaves as his only defense a repeated denial of the subversive influence of his *carmen*. This approach, however, enables Ovid to keep alive the memory of his early poetry and his claim for fame even as he repents having written the earlier works. This defense fits better with Ovid's protean *persona* since he can again cast himself in the starring role in his poetry in order to try to portray himself as a misunderstood poet more sympathetic to his audience. The disclaimers which Ovid builds into his didactic poetry leave him the "out" that he later exploits as evidence that he is not subversive or disloyal to the regime. Whether Ovid wrote them to express his true intention involves too much speculation, but, in retrospect, he can nevertheless make the claim that such is the case.

In *Tristia* 2, Ovid addresses the emperor directly and argues on his own behalf. He seeks to placate the emperor through panegyric praise, and by approaching Augustus as a suppliant, he becomes an embarrassing exception to Augustus' famed *clementia*. Ovid also presents the

Metamorphoses and the *Fasti* as evidence of his loyalty to Augustus and reformation into a proper Augustan poet. In distancing himself from his erotic poetry, Ovid offers to Augustus a taste of the poetry he could write if Augustus would relent in his anger and be merciful to the poet. Panegyric and persuasion are the methods by which Ovid attempts to assuage the emperor's anger so that he will be more receptive to the poet's reinterpretation of his poetry. Ovid argues his case to the emperor whom he fears has been misguided in his interpretation, and he tries to refashion Augustus' impression of the work by giving a rereading of the poem. Ovid's repudiation of the charges against his *Ars* revolves around the claims that he meant no harm by his poetry (*nullum crimen*), and that any misrepresentation of his alleged purity of intention is a fault of the reader alone. Ovid's reproduction of the disclaimer from the *Ars* prohibiting the readership of *matronae* is presented to Augustus as evidence of Ovid's efforts to proclaim that he does not encourage adultery. Defending the *Ars* in such a manner in *Tristia* 2 sets a precedent for his other defenses in his poetry from exile, and also gives the grounds on which he tries to enlist the aid of others to further his cause.

Ex Ponto 3.3 is a continuation of both Cupid's role as a character in Ovid's poetry, and of Ovid's repeated defenses in his poetry from exile. Ovid reiterates the same main points of defense in *Ex Ponto* 3.3 as in *Tristia* 2: that the *Ars* is not intended for *matronae* and that there is *nullum crimen* in the poem, but he additionally offers an *apologia* delivered by his pupil, Cupid, to corroborate his account and to assure that Augustus is now receptive to his pleas. Cupid thus becomes a vehicle for Ovid to present an interesting variation on his repeated defense, and to exhort Fabius Maximus indirectly to take immediate action on his behalf.

Ovid's defense of the role that he plays in his erotic poetry is meant to vindicate the poet in order to effect a better place of exile, but also to defend his work for posterity. Ovid's immediate goal was surely to be recalled from Tomis as quickly as possible-- hence *Tristia* 2 was written to Augustus immediately following his relegation, but also to avert his poetry from the stigma that it is corrupt. Ovid presents his fictional reality persuasively and convincingly, yet he argues from exile that the fictional reality is only a pretext for the poet to display his skill. Ovid's discussions of his quest for *fama* and reproaches against *livor* show that, from his early career, Ovid was concerned with his poetry's reception and his reputation. The disclaimers he inserts into the *Ars* and *Remedia Amoris* further demonstrate the authorial self-fashioning that Ovid relies on to shield himself and his poetry from blame.

Whatever part the *error* played, Ovid's repeated mentions of *livor* recall the efforts early in his career, and later in *Tristia* 2, to deal with literary critics who cast his poetry to the emperor in a negative light. Ovid sought *fama* for his poetry, but he earned a certain *infamia* for himself and his poetry on account of his relegation. Ovid's defenses as presented in the exile poetry, *Tristia* 2 and *Ex Ponto* 3.3 in particular, amount to a poet trying to respond to *livor* in order to reclaim his *fama* as the provocative but harmless creator of poetic worlds, so that the sympathy aroused in his friends might find a way to make Augustus relent.

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