Tragic Desire: Phaedra and Her Heirs in Ovid

by

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Abstract

In this thesis, I explore the construction of female erotic desire in Ovid’s work as it is represented in the form of mythical heroines. Phaedra-like figures appear in Ovid’s poetry as dangerous spectres of wildly inappropriate and therefore destructive, bestial, or incestuous sexuality. I consider in particular the catalogue of Phaedra-like figures in Ars Amatoria 1.283-340, Phaedra in Heroides 4, Byblis in Metamorphoses 9.439-665, and Iphis in Metamorphoses 9.666-797. Their tales act as a threat of punishment for any inappropriate desire. They represent for the normative sexual subject a sexual desire which has been excluded, and what could happen, what the normative subject could become, were he or she to transgress taboos and laws governing sexual relations. I apply the idea of the abject, as it has been formulated by Julia Kristeva and Judith Butler, in order to elucidate Ovid’s process of constructing such a subject in his poetry. I also consider Butler’s theories of the performativity of sex, gender, and kinship roles in relation to the continued maintenance of the normative and abject subject positions his poetry creates. The intersection of “performance” and performativity is crucial to the representation of the heroines as paradigms of female desire. Ovid’s engagement with his literary predecessors in the genre of tragedy, in particular Euripides’ and Sophocles’ tragedies featuring Phaedra, highlights the idea of dramatically “performing” a role, e.g., the role of incestuous step-mother. Such a spotlight on “performance” in all of these literary representations reveals the performativity of
culturally defined gender and kinship roles. Ovid’s ludic representations, or “citations,” of Phaedra, I argue, both reinvest cultural stereotypes of women’s sexuality through their repetition and introduce new possibilities of feminine subjectivity and sexuality through the variations in each iteration.
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Chapter 1 Introduction

at tanti tibi sit non indulgere theatris,
dum bene de uacuo pectore cedat amor.
enruant animos citharae lotosque lyraeque
et uox et numeris brachia mota suis.
illic adsidue facti saltantur amantes;
†quid caueas† actor, qua iuuat arte, nocet.

(Ovid, Rem. Am. 751-56)

Supremo die identidem exquirens, an iam de se tumultus foris esset, petito speculo
capillum sibi comi ac malas labantes corrigi praecedit, et admissos amicos percontatus,
equid iis videretur mi[n]imum\(^1\) vitae commode transegisse, adicet et clausulam:
Ἐπεὶ δὲ πάνυ κα<λ>ώς πέπαισται, δότε κρότον
καὶ πάντες ἡμᾶς μετὰ χαρὰς προπέμψατε.

(Suet., Aug. 99.1)\(^2\)

In my thesis, I explore the construction of female erotic desire in Ovid’s work. Because
the theme of erotic desire is so ubiquitous in Ovid’s poetry, much of which was generically
amatory, I have focused my attention on one type of character, the “Phaedra-like” figure. Such
women appear in Ovid’s poetry as dangerous spectres of wildly inappropriate and therefore
destructive, bestial, or incestuous sexuality. Their tales legitimate a threat of punishment for any
inappropriate desire. They represent for the normative sexual subject a sexual desire which has
been excluded, and document what could happen, what the normative subject could become,
were he or she to transgress taboos and laws governing sexual relations.

My definition of “Phaedra-like” figures includes those mythological heroines whose
stories in Ovid’s corpus engage most closely with the plot and themes of Phaedra’s myth as it
was represented in Classical Greek tragedy. Her story was told in three Attic Greek tragic plays.

\(^1\) The second hand in MS P and Philippus Beroaldus has corrected minimum to mimum, which makes better sense in
the context. Regardless of whether we accept mimum or minimum, the metaphor of dramatic play-acting is made
clear by both πέπαισται and κρότον.

\(^2\) See Beacham (1999: 151), Boyle (160) and Myerowitz (187) for a discussion of this passage.
All three plays follow the tradition that Phaedra, wife of Theseus, falls in love with her step-son, Hippolytus. Theseus, influenced by Phaedra’s false charges against Hippolytus, exiles and curses his son, who is killed by Neptune’s bull, sent from the sea in response to Theseus’ curse. The three plays differ primarily in their representations of Phaedra. Webster conjectures that Phaedra was first the subject of Euripides’ Hippolytus (HI), followed by Sophocles’ Phaedra, and then a second Hippolytus (HII) by Euripides, which seems to have been a response to the scandal caused by his first play and the subsequent treatment by Sophocles. Unfortunately, the first two plays are only fragmentary.

In Aristophanes’ Frogs (1043), Aeschylus states that he never made Phaedras or Stheneboias into prostitutes (πόρνας). This reference is believed to be to HI, in which Phaedra’s representation was by all accounts more aggressive and threatening. She probably approached Hippolytus herself. HI was sometimes referred to as Hippolytus Kalyptomenos because the character covered himself in shame at her proposal. She also makes her charges against Hippolytus to Theseus in person. Sophocles’ portrayal did not elicit the same shocked reaction from the Athenian audience. Although we have less evidence for this play, we can assume that this fact is due to a milder Phaedra. While it is not clear whether Theseus is absent for the first part of the action in HI, in Phaedra he has left Athens some time ago to accompany Pirithous to Hades and assist with his rape of Persephone. As Phaedra believed him dead, her

3 Barrett (6-10) conjectures that Phaedra’s part in the Hippolytus legend goes back to the 6th century BCE when Theseus was adopted as an Athenian hero. She is mentioned in Hom. Ody. 11.321-25 in connection with Procris, Ariadne, and Theseus. Barrett suspects this passage to be an Attic insertion also dated to the 6th century.

4 Webster, 75-76.

5 For a discussion of all three plays, see Barrett (10-15), Snell (23-69), and Webster (64-76; further references, 64, n. 43); see Herter for the mythological tradition and its Greek and Roman reception.

6 ἀλλ’ οὐ μᾶ Εἰδ’ οὐ Φαίδρας ἐποίουν πόρνας οὐδὲ Σθενεβοίας.
desire was not adulterous. Euripides’ second *Hippolytus* offers a much recuperated Phaedra.

The action takes place in Troezen while Theseus is away consulting an oracle. The plot begins with Aphrodite announcing that Phaedra’s desire is part of the goddess’s revenge upon Hippolytus. Her nurse approaches Hippolytus without Phaedra’s consent. Phaedra has chosen to die rather than act on her desire, for the sake of her family’s reputation and her sons’ future. Her accusation is delivered in the form of a letter, after her suicide, and it is motivated by a concern for her children and their reputation.

Most obviously in the Ovidian Phaedra’s epistle (*Her.* 4), our heroine-writer makes reference to a number of traceable moments in Euripides’ extant play, and perhaps moments from Euripides’ *H I* and Sophocles’ *Phaedra*, which we do not recognize. Larmour has argued that the stories of Scylla, Byblis, and Myrrha—found in *Metamorphoses* 8, 9, and 10 respectively—incorporate those elements of Euripides’ *H II* which the Hippolytus/Virbius episode (15.479-621) does not. “Caunus plays the part of Hippolytus,” by reacting to Byblis’ incestuous desire. Although in Ovid’s tale, the nurse is replaced by a letter, Caunus’ response (*Met.* 9.574-79) resembles that of Euripides’ extant Hippolytus (*H II*, 602-67) in its sudden and violent fury. Caunus’ flight also recalls Hippolytus’ exile in *H II* and perhaps his voluntary flight

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7 For a careful comparison of *Her.* 4 to the extant Euripidean play as well as to the fragments and evidence for the two lost plays of Euripides and Sophocles, see, e.g., Casali (1995: passim) and Jacobson (142-45).
8 Larmour, 137-41. “[T]he “pudor-amor” conflict, the nurse’s disastrous attempts to help and the overwhelming power of the pathological libido—are incorporated, again through a sort of contaminatio, into other episodes: the Myrrha, Byblis and Scylla” (137).
9 Larmour, 137. Curley (n.d.), 447-48. Curley notes that Minos and king Cinyras also fill this role to a certain degree, pointing to Minos’ astonished reaction (*turbatus*, 8.96) to Scylla’s gift of her father’s lock and king Cinyras’ reaction upon discovering Myrrha’s identity (10.474-75), both of which resemble Caunus’ reaction to Byblis’ letter (*attonitus*, 9.574).
in Sophocles’ *Phaedra*. Other elements of the plot, such as Phaedra’s initial desire to die and the sophistic nurse who intervenes and mediates, show up in Myrrha’s tale.

My understanding of these heroines as a group is informed a great deal by Curley’s formulation of the “Phaedra Complex” in his PhD dissertation and forthcoming monograph on tragedy in Ovid. Employing Conte’s concept of “code modeling,” Curley argues that, in the Ovidian corpus, Phaedra becomes a paradigm for the struggle between modesty and desire. He includes Scylla (*Met.* 8), Byblis (*Met.* 9), Myrrha (*Met.* 10), and Phaedra (*Her.* 4) among the Ovidian narratives which follow this code, which Curley has labeled “tragic” because of the generic provenance of their characters. When I use the term “tragic” in the following chapters, I refer specifically to the tragic genre. So as not to create confusion, I do not use “tragic” at any point in its vernacular sense, i.e., mournful, pathetic, or disastrous. While it may seem strange to call Byblis, for instance, “tragic,” when scholars do not have any evidence that she was represented by a tragedy, my use of the term to describe her and the other female desiring subjects who make up the Phaedra-like figures under consideration in this project is meant to

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10 Barrett, 13.
11 Myrrha decides to hang herself because she is unable to suppress her incestuous desire (*Met.* 10.378-79). Her nurse discovers her and begs to let her intervene (382-430), offering at one point spells and herbal remedies (*carmine sanet et herbis/...magico lustrabere ritu, 397-98*). It is the nurse who approaches Cinyras and arranges for the meeting. Phaedra in *HII* eventually hangs herself after writing her letter of accusation against Hippolytus (800-2), but at the beginning of the play, Phaedra has resolved to die (400-401). Her nurse intervenes (284-310, 433-81), offering spells and enchanting words as a cure (*ἐπαρδαὶ...λόγοι θελκτήριοι/...φάρµακον νόσου, *HII, 478-79*), and approaches Hippolytus in an attempt to seduce him on Phaedra’s behalf (565-615). See Larmour, 138; Anderson, 501, ad 371-76, 377-79, and passim ad 298-502.
12 See Curley (n.d., 24-33) for a full explanation of code-modeling and his application of Conte’s concept. Curley (31-32) identifies the following parameters of the tragic code: 1) devices, actions, and attitudes of tragic characters, 2) the format of tragedy including metrical echoes of tragedy’s speech and song alternations, the idea of onstage and offstage, and first-person perspective, and 3) “conventional story patterns” of tragedy.
14 Curley (n.d.: 2, 34 n.4) also limits his use of “tragic” to its generic sense.
draw attention to the way Ovid or his narrator has constructed their stories in ways that engage with the tragic genre.

In addition to the plot correspondences between *Heroides* 4 and the episodes of the *Metamorphoses* which Curley and Larmour identify, Curley also identifies several themes which these Phaedra-like characters share and derive from the Phaedra of Greek tragedy. In each tale, shame in some way obstructs or has obstructed the heroine’s desire. The heroines are all voyeurs in some respect. Each heroine demonstrates a moral relativism which is inherited from the nurse of *HII*. Curley points to a Roman wall painting, showing Minos and Scylla, accompanied by a nurse, to demonstrate how these traditions were assimilated in artistic representations outside of Ovid. Elsewhere Curley remarks how the transgression of the incest taboo is reflected by spatial transgressions in all of these Ovidian episodes. In *HII* we see the same kind of physical/social parallel. Phaedra’s movement outside results in the revelation of her desire which introduces incest into the plot through the dialogue. Moreover, the spatial transgression, a woman leaving the house, effects a gender reversal which Ovid’s Phaedra-like figures also effect. For example, the Euripidean Phaedra’s masculine act of speaking outside results in Hippolytus’ feminine act of speaking inside and being silent in the public discourse of

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15 Ibid., 426-28.
16 Ibid., 428-32.
17 Ibid., 432-38.
19 Curley (n.d.), 455-67: “[T]he heroines embody their concerns about spatial and social proximity from their discourses, such that performing an incestuous act means crossing personal as well as physical thresholds” (455).
the agón with Theseus. In the case of Byblis, the movement of her letter, identified by Curley as a spatial transgression, makes Byblis a masculine lover, Caunus a feminine beloved.

The code-modeling which Curley identifies in these episodes is a generic paradigm, not a series of specific allusions (although we will see that allusions are in some cases very pointedly made to Euripides’ HII, suggesting in turn the possibility that Ovid made unrecognizable allusions to HI and Sophocles’ Phaedra). Like Curley, I am less interested in making a line by line comparison or in establishing Euripides or Sophocles as the primary sources for the Ovidian representations I consider in the following chapters. Rather, taking Ovid’s own cues, which he gives us through direct allusions to Euripides and Sophocles, general thematic correspondences, and lexical and rhetorical strategies which evoke the tragic stage, I consider how the echoes of the Greek tragic Phaedra guide and inform the interpretation of these mythological figures in Ovid. More specifically, I consider how the paradigmatic meaning of Phaedra, as it was established in Greek tragic representations, constructs a certain kind of desire for Ovid’s audience. The different narrative and generic contexts in which we find Ovid’s Phaedra-like figures reveal different modes of construction of female desire, and, in turn, facilitate our own deconstruction of this desire.

Heroines from Attic Greek tragedy are great for thinking with. Attic Greek tragedy offers an example of a male-authored literature which represents strong, outspoken women who stand in stark contrast to the ideal normative behavior for women in the historical and cultural

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20 Goff (1990), 2, 10, 16 and passim. See also Zeitlin (219-84, esp. 233-35) for gender reversal in HII.
21 Curley (n.d.), 488.
22 Ibid., 27-28: “Ovid’s Phaedra recuperates the antithesis back to Euripides and the HS in her epistle. Yet each successive appearance of the formula in the Metamorphoses seems to me to dilute its allusive specificity and to engage the tragic in a more general sense.”
context in which these representations were produced, something Ovid’s poetry frequently
does. I have chosen to focus my attention on Phaedra because her story revolves around a
desire which is inappropriate in its aggressive and incestuous nature (for her step-son
Hippolytus), and because her story appears multiple times in various incarnations in Ovid’s
work. Furthermore, spectacle in general, but drama in particular, was an important means of
self-definition and identification in ancient Rome. As we will see, Attic Greek tragedy, mediated
by Roman dramatic and literary genres, is both a means and metaphor for this process in Ovid’s
poetry. The epigraphs quoted at the beginning of this chapter demonstrate different Roman
relationships to dramatic performance. On the one hand, as the quote from the Remedia
Amoris instructs, the actor offers models for behaviors. The roles played by the actor suggested
to the individual spectator appropriate and inappropriate objects for their desire (quid caueas,
actor, quam iuuet, arte docet, Rem. 756). On the other hand, a Roman also imagines himself as
an actor of his own life, playing his “parts” in society or politics, as Suetonius’ reported last
words of Augustus make explicit. More will be said on this topic below.

For now, let us consider what kind of model Phaedra offered to the spectator and what it
might have meant to “play the part” of Phaedra. We will start with her representations on the
Greek tragic stage, which made up an influential “source” for later representations of Phaedra-
like figures. Critical readings of Euripides’ extant Hippolytus, have identified in this play a
central concern with both women’s speech—motivated by her transgressive or aggressive

\[23\] See, e.g., Easterling, Foley (1981, 1982, 2001: 1-5 and passim), Hall, McClure, and Zeitlin. Zeitlin has famously
argued: “The theater uses the feminine for the purposes of imagining a fuller model for the masculine self, and
“playing the other” opens that self to those often banned emotions of fear and pity” (363).
\[24\] While both Ovid’s poem and the last words of Augustus from Suetonius’ life refer to pantomime, not tragedy,
they nevertheless speak to ways a Roman thinks about the theater in general, including tragedy.
desire—and its effect on the family. In connection with this theme are the repeated figures of concealment and revelation, both linguistic and physical, and the opposition of appearance and reality. As noted above, HI is often referred to as Kalyptemenos to describe Hippolytus, who covers himself in shame over Phaedra’s expression of her desire. Shame or αἰδώς governs normative social behavior—i.e., chastity for married women whose husbands are away from home—and ensures, through appropriate social behavior, a good reputation for the individual and the family to which they belong. The Greek “shame culture” was concerned with the judgment of others. In his 1993 study of this emotion, Cairns defines αἰδώς as “an inhibitory emotion based on sensitivity to and protectiveness of one’s self-image.” In HI Phaedra attempts to preserve her reputation by not speaking of her non-normative desire, but once it is spoken by her nurse, by Phaedra, and by Hippolytus, she must continue speaking in order to preserve her family’s reputation which is threatened by any future speaking about her desire (i.e., gossip; 419-25; 715-21).


26 Presumably these themes were present in the earlier plays (cf., e.g., νόν δ’ εὑρόσεις στόματι τάλαθετα/ κλέπτουσιν, ὄδει μὴ δοκεῖν ἄγαν δοκεῖν; Eur., HI fr. 439, 3-4 Kannicht; εὐγγυστε κανάςις εἶχεν σιγᾶσαι τὸ γάρ/ γυναίξιν αἰδεύρον εὖ γυναῖκα δὲι επόνειν, Soph., Phai., fr. 679 Radt).

27 See Cairns, Konstan (91-110) and Scheff for Classical conceptions of the emotion of αἰδώς. See e.g., Cairns and Halleran (44-45) for a summary (with further references) of the construction of this emotion in HI.

28 Cairns, 2.

29 ἐπεὶ μ’ ἔρως ἔτρωσεν, ἐσκόπουν ὡς καὶ ἵπποι καὶ ἱλιακὰς θάλασσας/ καὶ κρύπτειν νόσον (392-94). Cf. also Phaedra’s reaction after she expresses a desire for hunting (239-49: αἰδοῦσθαι γὰρ τὰ λελεγμένα μοι. κρύπτε, 244-45).

30 Goff (1990) argues “[s]eclusion was an integral part of the representation of women” (4). It spatially differentiated the sexes and determined the reputation of the women and by extension her family (4). A reputation well protected by silence and seclusion ensured the free speech of male citizen offspring. “Eukleia, parrhesia and the paternal house are thus three properties that Phaidra can transmit but cannot herself possess” (23). A woman outside signaled a problem inside (6). McClure (112-57) correlates this tension with the rhetoric of the law courts. Phaedra and her nurse, she argues, behave like sophists. Their “deceptive persuasion” ruins the reputation of the men in the family. Female speech is not contained in the Hippolytus, but constantly threatens to disrupt masculine discourse and acts like the effect of gossip on courts in Athens. Women’s speech is sanctioned by the inclusion of the maiden’s ritual song which reinforces gender roles through the cautionary tale of Phaedra. “The negative
Ferrari’s study of images of women in Greek vase painting explores the iconography of the mantle as a visual representation of αἰδως, figuring the emotion as a defense against public censure or restraint from behavior which would result in censure.31 She points to the tale of Gyges in Herodotus’ *Histories* (1.8.3) as an example of a literary expression of this metaphor. In this passage, Candaules encourages Gyges to look upon Candaules’ wife naked, to which Gyges replies: “Together with her dress, a woman also sheds her aidos.”32 Understanding αἰδως as a “mantle,” we may better interpret the many figures of covering and uncovering, binding and loosening, and moving in and out of the house. These images repeat and emphasize the mutually defining but opposing themes of silence, governed by αἰδως, and revelation, which threatens reputation and exposes Phaedra to criticism.33 It also creates a tension between appearance and reality, reflecting Athenian perceptions of women as naturally deceptive34 which Phaedra herself version of fame conferred upon Phaedra for her eros suggests that the only public song that can be awarded to women is the one that denounces them” (156). McClure (131-32 and passim), furthermore, notes that all writing in the play, itself a form of communication, is associated with marginal figures, including women. Phaedra’s slanderous written testimony, which condemns Hippolytus, lacks the immediacy and truthfulness of an eye-witness testimony, privileged and associated with free, citizen men in Athenian law courts. See Bassi (42-98, esp. 55-70) for the privileging of direct speech and face to face communication over mediated communications such as writing. Her deceptive letter also reflects the deceptive nature of women in general. See Hunter (96-119) for gossip as a form of social control in fifth and fourth century BCE Athens.

31 Ferrari, 54-56, 72-86.
32 ἄμα δὲ κιθῶνι ἐκδυομένῳ συνεκδύεται καὶ τὴν αἰδώς γυνῆ. Translation Ferrari’s (79). See also Konstan (103 and 301 n. 42) for shame and its conceptual association with nakedness before the gaze of others.
33 See, e.g., Goff (1990) and Zeitlin (219-84) on this theme in *HII*.
34 Zeitlin argues that Greek society disguises female sexuality (238-41). Women assume the appearance of chaste wife/asexual mother, while hiding the sexuality which makes both of these roles possible. Ormand (1999), taking this a step further, argues that there was an “inability to imagine a female erotic subjectivity” and ties this to its threat to homosocial exchange (27).
reinforces in her own speech both in her condemnation of adulterous women who pretend to be upright (407-18) and in her continual concern over not seeming to be acting shamefully.35

Phaedra’s refusal to speak of her desire in order to preserve her reputation for chastity is indistinguishable from her refusal to act on her desire, i.e., not to be chaste. Silence, therefore, is closely linked in HII to chastity and is opposed to sexuality, specifically adultery. Phaedra’s sexual desire is represented as posing a threat to the family in HII by the characters and by the trajectory of the narrative. Lévi-Strauss’s theory of symbolic kinship systems and the exchange of women which instantiates and perpetuates them can help clarify the intersection of female desire, women’s speech, and their threat to the structure of kinship in Euripides’ Hippolytus.36

In Lévi-Straussian terms, gift exchange, in particular the exchange of women in marriage (necessitated by the incest taboo, or other similar social taboos), effects some form of relationship between the exchangers (an alliance or a rivalry) over the exchanged object. In male-dominated societies such as ancient Greece and Rome,37 where the exchangers are exclusively men, Woman becomes the “gift” exchanged in marriage.

35 E.g., ἐμοὶ γὰρ εἶπη μὴ τε λανθάνειν καλὰ/ μὴ τε αἰσχρὰ δρώσῃ μάρτυρας πολλοὺς ἔχειν (Eur., HII 403-4; cf. 419-20, 719-21). Gill argues that the main players in the plot are all behaving in accordance with different definitions of σωφρόσυνη. For Hippolytus, this virtue is connected with φύσις, it is his “nature,” while Phaedra is aware of a conflict between the appearance of virtue and her true nature.

36 Rabinowitz (1987), e.g., offers a reading of HII using Levi-Straussian kinship and exchange theory. See Wohl (2005: 153) for a brief outline of recent scholarship on kinship and exchange theory and Greek tragedy.

37 Lévi-Strauss’s formula relies on exogamous exchanges necessitated by the incest taboo. Exogamy was practised in 5C Athens and Rome during the Republic and principate. In some instances, however, endogamy was practised in order to preserve the natal bloodline or to ensure inheritance through the natal household. Consider the ἐπικλήρος in 5C Athens, who, when no male heir remained in her natal house could be compelled to marry her nearest male relative beginning with her father’s side, leaving behind a legitimate husband if she had one (See Ormand (1999: 17-18) on the ἐπικλήρος, 72-78 on Electra as an ἐπικλήρος, 90-98 on Antigone as an ἐπικλήρος, 167-68 n. 43 for further references on the topic of the ἐπικλήρος; Seaford (1990: 164-65) for explicit examples of endogamy in Attic tragedy). Likewise, according to Treggiari, in Republican Rome, an endogamous marriage was preferred in order to prevent a rich woman’s money from leaving a family or to prevent a poor woman’s vulnerability from attracting a bad match for a family, “a misalliance” (109-10); see also Corbier on endogamy in Roman aristocratic families to strengthen weakening kinship bonds with allies (179-81, and passim) and as a
Such a system necessitates and naturalizes gender difference. The homosocial relationships which are established form not only kinship structures through affinity between families, but also build social hierarchies and political alliances. Woman’s passive, object status is crucial for sustaining this system. As Gayle Rubin points out, “[i]t would be in the interests of the smooth and continuous operation of such a system if the woman in question did not have too many ideas about whom she might want to sleep with. From the standpoint of the system, the preferred female sexuality would be one which responded to the desire of others, rather than one which actively desired and sought a response [my emphasis].”  Phaedra’s extramarital desire threatens to dissolve and reconfigure the current kinship relations between Theseus and Hippolytus (father and son) and Hippolytus and Theseus’ legitimate heirs, the sons of Phaedra. Phaedra’s speech in Hippolytus constitutes her desire. Its confession sets in motion the speeches and speech acts which temporarily usurp Theseus’ power over his family. These relations are repaired after Phaedra’s suicide. Furthermore, if the system of exchange acts like a language (as Lévi-Strauss maintained), Phaedra’s desire and the speech it motivates amounts to an attempt to enter into the dialogue, to “speak.” In this equation, women’s speech becomes synonymous

“dynastic strategy” in imperial families (182). In either case of endogamy, the woman remains a passive object as she is in exogamous exchanges; although she is not exchanged outside the kin group, the decision of her marriage lies solely with the male members of her natal family and the decision is made exclusively in support of their interests.

38 Rubin, 182.
39 Lévi-Strauss likens the exchange of women to language. Both systems allow for communication between two parties (492-97): “The respective attitudes of two individuals in communication acquire a meaning of which they would otherwise be devoid. Henceforth, acts and thoughts become mutually solidary” (496).
40 Lévi-Strauss does in fact acknowledge that woman “is still a person, and since insofar as she is defined as a sign she must be recognized as a generator of signs,” but fails to take this insight beyond imagining the resulting tension in mystified and romantic terms: “[E]ach woman preserves a particular value arising from her talent, before and after marriage, for taking her part in a duet…This explains why the relations between the sexes have preserved that affective richness, ardent and mystery which doubtless originally permeated the entire universe of human
with taking a masculine, active position, i.e., the role of the exchanger. *HII* demonstrates that even with the best intentions, active female desire is always dangerous to masculine kinship systems and the societies they sustain. As I will discuss in more detail in the following chapter, such male controlled kinship systems were at work in Rome during Ovid’s time. Although there is the semblance of offering women some say over their marriage partners, marriage unions were ultimately forged by, and in the interests of, male family members and women’s sexuality was restricted to their marriage partners.\(^{41}\)

Roman representations of Phaedra-like figures were mediated by psychological portraits of maidens in love in Hellenistic poetry.\(^ {42}\) Generic contamination is common in Hellenistic poetry, which blurred the boundaries between mimesis and diagesis and appropriated elements from Attic tragedy such as direct speech and common plot devices.\(^ {43}\) Although she is no longer an adulteress but a traitor to her father,\(^ {44}\) the Hellenistic literary representations of this type of maiden foreground their subjectivity in a way that recalls the soliloquies of tragic heroines faced communications” (496). Rubin’s response to this passage is, not surprisingly, outrage: “Why is he not, at this point, denouncing what kinship systems do to women, instead of presenting one of the greatest rip-offs of all time as the root of romance (201)?”

\(^{41}\) See, e.g., Treggiari and McGinn for marriage customs and adultery laws in Rome. See also n. 37 above on endogamy and Roman marriage.

\(^{42}\) See Fantuzzi and Hunter (444-85) for an overview of Hellenistic influences on Roman poetry.

\(^{43}\) See Fantuzzi and Hunter (26-37) for a discussion of the practice of generic contamination in Hellenistic poetry, including elements of mimetic verse in other genres and the possible recitation of such poetry. They point to, e.g., *Idyll* 22, which incorporates stichomythic dialogue into an epic narrative (33, 195-96, 208-15). There were Hellenistic tragedies being written and produced, alongside continued productions of the Attic tragedies during this time, but very little evidence survives (Fantuzzi and Hunter, 404-43).

\(^{44}\) This mythological paradigm is sometimes referred to as the “Tarpeia-type.” For a discussion, see Krappe; Dumézil; Devoto; Bremmer and Horsfall.
with a seemingly impossible choice. In Apollonius’ Hellenistic epic *Argonautica*, for example, we meet a desiring maiden in Medea, a heroine whose Euripidean heritage is noteworthy for her paradigmatic status as an avenging wife. Apollonius’ Medea, like Phaedra, is represented as struggling between the proper performance of kinship roles and sexual desire. The Hellenistic poet Moschus offers an indirect engagement with this *topos* in his epyllion, *Europa*. While Europa is not characteristically depicted as actively desiring, Moschus’ erotically charged description of the maiden’s encounter with Zeus in the form of a bull suggests a less than innocent interest on the part of Europa and her companions. Krevans considers Europa’s dream in Moschus (2.1-17) in its capacity as a “seduction-dream.” “Although the dream frightens Europa (2.20), it is described as a “sweet” dream (2.1), and she openly acknowledges her desire for the foreigner after she awakens (2.25).” In addition, A. S. Hollis suggests a few possible Hellenistic depictions of Myrrha, including a treatment in Nicander’s *Heteroeumena* and Parthenius of Nicaea.

The Roman neoteric poets, drawing inspiration from their Hellenistic predecessors, focus on the figure of the desiring maiden in a new Hellenistic form, the so-called epyllion. Parthenius, for example, included Byblis (11) and Scylla (15) in his prose work

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45 See Fantuzzi and Hunter (215-24) for a discussion of this pattern in Moschus’ *Europa*, with a comparison to Homer’s *Nausicaa* (*Ody.* 6) and Apollonius’ Medea (*Argonautica* 3).

46 Krevans, 263-64.

47 Krevans, 264. Moschus, *Europa* (88-117): πάσησθι δ’ ἕρως γένετ’ ἐγγίζῃς ἰκέσθαιν ψαυσαι θ’ ἰμερτοῖο βοῦς, 90-91. For a Roman analog, Ennius seems to attribute a similar desire to his *Ilia*, as Keith (2000: 106-7) and Connors (passim) have argued, which itself appears to have, in addition to its epic model (Homer’s *Odyssey* 11.235-59), a tragic model in Sophocles’ *Tyro*. Tyro is another example of an actively desiring woman. See Connors (102) for references and further details on Ennius’ influences; see Krevans (passim) and Skutsch (ad loc.) for a discussion of tragic aspects of Ilià’s dream. Krevans compares Ilià’s dream in Ennius to Europa’s dream in Moschus (2.1-17).

48 Hollis (2007: 30-32) posits these depictions as models for the Latin poet Cinna’s *Zmyrna*; Scylla was also a subject of Hellenistic poetry: Callimachus, Pfeiffer fr. 113 (*Ciris*?); Parthenius (*Met.*, Martini fr. 20; see Putnam (96, ad 63-64) for a list and references).

49 See, e.g., Lightfoot (67-68) and Lyne (1978:173-74) for an explanation and bibliography on the epyllion.
Ἑρωτικὰ παθήματα, which was famously dedicated to Gallus as material for his own poetry,⁵⁰ and he also treated Scylla and Byblis in his verse *Metamorphoses*.⁵¹ Parthenius is said to have been brought to Rome as a prisoner of war in the early- to mid-1st century BCE by Cinna’s family,⁵² and Cinna’s poem, *Zmyrna*, is likely influenced by Parthenius and his work.⁵³ Parthenius was also tutor to Vergil,⁵⁴ who portrays Pasiphae as a desiring maiden in *Eclogue 6*.⁵⁵

While Phaedra-like figures in Ovid are often mediated by a Hellenistic model, Ovid always engages with multiple sources and genres, and, as we will see, plays with his Roman audience’s familiarity with the Phaedra of the Greek tragic stage. These figures join the very literal idea of performance, through their inheritance of a dramatic tradition, with the performance of gender roles. Butler’s formulation of both gender and sex as performative is thus very helpful for understanding how Ovid’s text, as a literary representation of the Augustan sex/gender system, constructs and constitutes through its construction, gendered sexual subjects and their relations within normative Augustan kinship systems. Butler theorizes the “assumption” of gender, sex, and kinship roles as an identification.⁵⁶ This identification is performative in as much as it is constituted through behavior and significations (e.g., by a Roman

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⁵⁰ Fantuzzi and Hunter, 465. See Fantuzzi and Hunter (465-66) and Lightfoot (1-96, esp. 50-96) for Parthenius’ arrival in Rome and influence on the Roman poets.
⁵¹ Fr. 24 from his *Metamorphoses* tells the story of Scylla (Lightfoot, 164-67); Fr. 33, of uncertain location, but quoted by Parthenius in *Ἑρωτ. παθ. 11*, Byblis (Lightfoot, 187-91).
⁵² See Lightfoot (11-12) for some conjectures on the date. He was captured during the Mithidatic wars. Nicaea fell in 73 BCE. Lightfoot conjectures that Parthenius may have lived on the family estate in northern Italy before his arrival in the city.
⁵³ For Parthenius’ influence on Cinna, with particular attention to his *Zmyrna*, and further references, see, e.g., Courtney (212-14), Hollis (2007: 30-32), Lightfoot (11-12, 50-51, 67).
⁵⁴ Lightfoot, 14-16.
⁵⁵ *Ecl. 6.* 45-60. This passage is discussed in detail in the next chapter.
⁵⁶ See Butler (1993: 12-16) for a clear but concise summary of her theory of the “assumption” of sexual identity and her debt to Lacan. See also Butler (2006: 183-193) for an earlier formulation of gender identification and performativity.
matrona) which act as a “citation” of the symbolic position with which the individual identifies. One is a matrona because one dresses (by wearing the stola) and behaves in a way which is recognizable to Roman society as a matrona.

An individual’s identification, therefore, relies on the consistent “performance” of matrona, a symbolic position in as much as it is an ideality. There is no metaphysical matrona which one is mimicking, but the repeated performance creates the fiction of an inner essence—a Roman woman’s behavior and dress reflect her inner matrona—as well as the fiction of an ahistorical gendered identity of matrona, which in reality is historically and culturally contingent (i.e., the duties, behavior, even, perhaps, political influence and social roles of a matrona in the 2nd century BCE, differed from a matrona at the beginning of the 1st century CE, despite Augustan rhetoric to the contrary). Such an “assumption” of gendered roles is necessarily exclusionary. To be a matrona, one cannot be a virgo or a meretrix.

Failure to perform one’s gendered role properly, failure to exclude successfully certain aspects from one’s identification as a sexual subject, leads, according to Butler, to punishment in the form of madness or an inhuman state. This is particularly true in the case of kinship roles,

57 Butler borrows the idea of the “citation” from Derrida in order to expand Lacan’s idea of the “assumption” of sex. She argues that an individual’s assumption of “sex” must be understood as constrained by ideology already at work in the historical and cultural context into which an individual is born. Derridean citationality introduces the idea of the iterability and performativity of an individual’s assumption of a a “sex” which is “always derivative” (13), i.e., a choice of sexual identity already authorized and acknowledged as a legitimate sexual identity. Butler 1993:12-16, 93-119, 244-46 n. 7-8; 2006: 185.

58 Butler (2006: 185): “[A]cts, gestures, and desire produce the effect of an internal core or substance, but produce this on the surface of the body, through the play of signifying absences that suggest, but never reveal, the organizing principle of identity as a cause. Such acts, gestures, enactments, generally construed, are performative in the sense that the essence or identity that they otherwise purport to express are fabrications manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means.”

59 According to Butler (1993) “the symbolic ought to be rethought as a series of normativizing injunctions that secure the borders of sex through the threat of psychosis, abjection, psychic unlivability.” A successful “citation” of a normative sex, gender, and/or kinship role “establishes an originary complicity with power in the formation of the
where gendered roles are defined by their sexual relations to other members of the family, relations which are governed by the incest taboo. “Discrete genders are part of what “humanizes” individuals within contemporary culture; indeed, we regularly punish those who fail to do their gender right.” While Butler theorizes gendered positions in twentieth century western cultures, punitive consequences for failing to “do gender right” are also evident in ancient Greek and Roman mythology. The mythological tradition of Phaedra and her heirs found in Greek and Roman literature and drama narrates the cautionary tales of “doing gender wrong.” Each woman’s tragic “role” acts as a paradigm for sexual subjects who have not performed their gender properly, whose desire, because it is active, manifest and ultimately disruptive to kinship systems of exchange, must be punished by being excluded from normative “feminine” sexual roles and even normative “human” sexuality. She becomes a “threatening spectre” among literary models of femininity.

Butler’s formulation of performativity would make a great deal of sense to ancient Romans, for whom spectacle and performance were central to establishing and maintaining

“...[this] locate[s] agency as a reiterative or rearticulatory practice, immanent to power, and not a relation of external opposition to power” (15).

60 Thus Butler (2000: 18) explains: “In other words, a mother is someone with whom a son and daughter do not have sexual relations, and a father is someone with whom a son and daughter do not have sexual relations, a mother is someone who only has sexual relations with the father, etc. These relations of prohibition are thus encoded in the “positions” that each of these family members occupy. To be in such a position is thus to be in such a crossed sexual relation, at least according to the symbolic or normative conception of what that “position” is.”

61 Butler (2006), 190.

62 Butler (1993) theorizes that the exclusionary process which constitutes a normative sexual subject creates its opposite, a subject constituted by the characteristics which are refused or “repudiated,” which holds a “status for the subject as a threatening spectre” (3).
ideological identities: political, social, and gendered. Roman Republican and Imperial culture was highly theatrical, a characteristic which Anthony Boyle traces back to the sixth century BCE Etruscans, and which can be seen in two very important cultural institutions, the funeral and the triumph. “The theatrics of Rome’s social institutions and their political force were certainly well established before the city’s first attested drama was produced. Spectacle was always already both the display and the agent of power”. Spectacle constructed the Roman elite self. The spectacle of the triumphal general was a transparent and transcendent performance of Roman military might and expansion as embodied by the elite general at the center of the show. Similarly, during a funeral, a Roman would gaze upon images (imagines) of his ancestors—the funeral masks—as if upon a mirror. In addition to offering an opportunity for self-identification, the imaginates functioned as models for emulation, motivating later generations to live up to or surpass the accomplishments of their ancestors. Sexuality and gender were also defined by performativity. Current scholarship on sexuality in the ancient world has identified the importance of the gendered positions of active and passive not only in the discourse of sexual acts, but also in the metaphorical use of sex as a means of expressing broader power relations.

The sexual performances of masculine penetrating and feminine submissive subjects anticipate

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63 See, e.g., Bartsch, Beacham (1999: 35-44 and passim), Boyle (3-7), Dupont, and Flower (1995a and b, 1999) on institutional and social performance, including drama, in ancient Rome. See Wiseman (75-120) for the promotion of the gentes with spectacles, including the Roman dramatic genre of the fabula praetexta. Fredrick (in Hallett and Skinner: 189-90) argues that the categories of actor and Senator had become indistinguishable in the Principate, rendering “Republican institutions…a palpable fiction” (189), for the two social categories once deprived one and entitled the other to authority.
64 Boyle, 7.
65 See Beard for a recent discussion of the Roman Triumph.
66 See Flower (1999: passim) on Roman funerals, and (1999: 12-15) on the emotion of shame and the function of the imaginates as a judging audience of younger members of a family.
67 See, e.g., Parker (in Hallett and Skinner: 47-65); Hallett (1989); Halperin, Winkler, and Zeitlin; Pintabone; Richlin (1992); and Skinner (1991, 1993). As Oliensis (in Hallett and Skinner: 154-55) has articulated the formula: “sexual intercourse is an enactment and reflection of social hierarchy, and conversely, social subordination always implies the possibility of sexual submission” (154).
Butler’s theories of sex/gender roles as requiring continual repetition in order to sustain a fiction of a “natural” subject, for Roman gender roles were unstable and constantly under threat. Should a Roman man be put in any submissive position, he would be effeminized.

Dramatic performance in Rome, as noted at the beginning of this chapter, also offers an important opportunity for self-definition and identification. In addition to “native” Italian and Etruscan spectacles, tragedy as a genre and a spectacle was an important institution imported into Roman Italy from Greece. Learned Romans, moreover, would be familiar with the Attic Greek tragedies and these plays informed Rome’s own tragic tradition. The story of Roman tragedy’s inception highlights its close ties to Attic Greek tragedy. Livius Andronicus, a man from Tarentum, identified as *semigraecus* by Suetonius (Gram. 1.2), is said to have staged the first tragedy in Rome in 240 BCE. His surviving fragments, furthermore, indicate a close adaptation, if not translation, of Attic tragedies. We do not have any extant fragments of a Roman *Phaedra* or *Hippolytus*; however, such an absence of the myth in Roman tragedy does not preclude access to and knowledge of the Greek plays.

Greek plays were being performed in Southern Italy before Livius Andronicus’ Roman production. A *Phaedra* or *Hippolytus* may have been among them, but, as Beacham contends: “[i]t is most unlikely that Rome of the mid-fourth century was in any position either

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68 For an overview of Roman tragedy and its history, see, e.g., Beacham (1991: 117-26), Beare, Boyle (esp. 3-23), Currie, Fantham (2005), Manuwald (2010: 1-41), Paratore (2005), Schiesaro (2005), and Tarrant (1978). For tragedy in the late Republic and imperial period, see, e.g., Beacham (1999) and Slater. For material evidence of the Roman theater, see, e.g., Borriello, et al. and Savarese.

69 Cicero *(Brut.* 72) calls it a *fabula*. See Boyle (28, 246 n. 7, 8) for evidence supporting *fabula* to mean “tragedy,” and further ancient sources.

70 See Boyle (27-36) for a biography and summary his work.

71 See Currie (2704 and passim) for influence of Attic tragedians (especially Euripides) on Roman Republican tragedians. See also Fantham (2005: 116-17 and passim) and Schiesaro (2005: 269-71 and passim).
geographically or culturally to benefit directly from such a sophisticated theatrical culture.\(^72\)

Ennius’ *Phoenix*, Accius’ *Athamas* and Minos or Minotaurus may have offered female characters whose aggressive or inappropriate sexual desire resembled Phaedra’s. Seneca returns Phaedra to the tragic stage in his eponymous play. Among the *fabula praetextae*, plays which were tragic in form, but in content drew from Roman mythology and history (in contrast to the tragedies based on Greek tragedies, the *fabulae crepidatae*), one can imagine a *Tarpeia* which drew inspiration from Euripides’ Phaedra.\(^73\) The comic dramas of Republican Rome seem to have represented Phaedra-like figures on the stage.\(^74\) Jerome, writing at the end of the fourth and beginning of the fifth century CE, identifies the *noverca saevissima* as an important theme for comedies and Mimes (*Omnes comoediae et mimographi et communes loci in novercam saevissimam declamabunt*, *Ep*. 54.15.4).\(^75\) The Mime, *Belonistria*, written by Laberius in the first half of the first century BCE, features a step-mother in love with her stepson.\(^76\) Watson also notes Pomponius’ Atellan Farce, *Praeco Posterior*, incorporates a variant of the amorous stepmother, where the stepson is in love with his stepmother.\(^77\)

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\(^72\) Beacham (1991), 7.

\(^73\) Gnaeus Naevius, the next Roman tragedian after Livius Andronicus, was credited with the creation of the *fabula praetexta*. It is noteworthy that Naevius, the creator of the Roman tragedy, was an Italian and a Roman citizen (in contrast to the Greek Livius Andronicus). No complete *fabulae praetextae* survive. The fragments and titles, however, give us a sense of their subject matter (e.g., Naevius’ *Romulus*, Ennius’ *Ambracia*). See Manuwald (2010: 34-37) for a convenient list of playwrights and plays. See Beacham (1991: 24-26), Boyle (12-13, 49-51 and passim), Flowers (1995b), Kragelund, Manuwald (2001), and Wiseman for the *fabulae praetextae* in general. See Farrell (2009: 377) and Kragelund (19-20) for arguments that Ovid incorporated material from *fabulae praetextae* in the *Fasti*.

\(^74\) See, e.g., Csapo and Slater (370-72) for a summary of the mime as a dramatic genre and (373-78) for primary sources describing mime.

\(^75\) Watson, 131. See, e.g., Beare (141-50) and Boyle (14-15) on Mime (*mimus*).

\(^76\) Jerome, *Ep*. 54.15.4; Beare, 148; Watson, 133.

\(^77\) Beare, 137; Watson, 133. See, e.g., Beare (129-40) and Boyle (12) on the Atellan farce.
Artistic representations of Phaedra indicate that Romans were at least familiar with her myth, if not her tragedies. For example, in the Pompeian House of Jason, Phaedra is the subject of a wall panel along with Medea and Paris and Helen, and Müller has argued that the Aldobrandini Wedding, a third-style wall painting from Augustan Rome, represents the story of Phaedra. As de Bellefonds notes (LIMC, s.v. Phaedra, I, 359), however, some representations of Phaedra in distress seem to look back directly to Euripides’ extant Hippolytus. Ovid, at least, knew (one of) Euripides’ Hippolytus, for this play is the first listed in a catalogue of tragedies which offer materiam...amoris (Tristia 2.382; numquid in Hippolyto, nisi caecae flamma novercae, 283).

Knowledge of Roman tragedies, particularly arias, constituted ‘cultural capital,’ taught in schools. Like other forms of spectacle, tragic performances offered a space for political and cultural negotiation. Their characters offered positive and negative exemplars to the Roman audience. Tragedies were performed at festivals, funerals and triumphs. Private citizens funded...
the plays in order to gain political popularity with the Roman people and promote themselves or their family. Pompey, for example, produced a number of spectacles in celebration of the opening of his theater in 55 BCE. They included two extravagantly staged Roman tragedies: Accius’ *Clytaemnestra* and Naevius’ (?) *Equos Troianus*. In *Clytaemnestra*, Agamemnon’s stage entrance as a triumphant hero of the Trojan War, was intended to recall Pompey’s own triumphal parade of 61 BCE, aligning him with the great hero Agamemnon. Moreover, *Equos Troianus* included 3000 bronze bowls, which were Pompey’s own captured treasure from his campaigns. Of course, the actors and audience members had a say in what ideological message a play might send. Pompey himself fell victim to the actor Diphilus’ pointed delivery of lines from Accius’ *Brutus* at the *Ludi Apollinares* (59 BCE). Cicero describes the event to Atticus in a letter dated July, 59 BCE (*Ad Att. 2.19.3*).
In the homes of the aristocrats, wall paintings and other art featuring iconography from the theatre and or depicting famous characters, often in crucial scenes of tragic plays could be found, offering yet another avenue for exposure to tragedy.

New professional tragedians were few in the Augustan era. One famous tragedian from this period is L. Varius Rufus, whom Augustus commissioned to write a *Thyestes* for his triple triumph in 29 BCE. Tragic composition by amateurs became popular among the upper classes. Julius Caesar, Augustus, and Caesar’s assassin, Cassius of Parma, were among those who tried their hand at tragedy. In the Claudian and Neronian eras, P. Pomponius Secundus and L. Annaeus Seneca were producing plays. Seneca is the only playwright since the Republican period for whom we have a substantial body of tragic work, though whether his plays were performed in the theater is much debated.

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88 See Boyle (149, 261 n. 24), Borriello, et al. (53-58 and passim), Ling (159-62), and Savarese for the Roman theater as a subject of paintings and art in Rome.
89 See Boyle (144) for a list of attested playwrights from the late Republic and Augustan eras.
90 Ibid., 160-62; see also Beacham (1999: 138), Courtney (271) and Hollis (2007: 275-80). The same Varius was a close friend to Vergil and edited the *Aeneid* after Vergil’s death. For biographical information on Varius and fragments of his works, including his fragmentary poetry, see Courtney (271-75) and Hollis (2007: 253-81).
91 Boyle, 143-44.
92 Augustus is said to have forbidden the publication of Caesar’s play, *Oedipus* (Suet. *Iul.* 56.7).
93 He composed an *Ajax*, which he is reported to have destroyed, and, when asked by friends whatever happened to his “Ajax,” to have commented that “his Ajax fell on a sponge” (*quaerentibus amicis, quidnam Aiax ageret, respondit Aiacem suum in spongiam incubuisse*, Suet. *Aug.* 85.2).
94 He composed an *Orestes*, a *Thyestes*, and perhaps, not surprisingly, a *Brutus* (Boyle, 143, 158). Horace mentions his poetry at *Ep.* 1.4.3: *scribere quod Cassi Parmensis opuscula vincat* (Dilke, ad loc.; Wilkins, ad loc.).
95 Boyle, 184-87.
96 See, e.g., Boyle (189-218), Littlewood, Schiesaro (2003, 2005: 277-82), and Segal (1986) for Seneca’s work and career, and Boyle (192) and Schiesaro (2005: 278-79) for the debate over the performance context of Seneca’s tragedies.
Despite the apparent lack of a robust poetic industry, the tragic performance was still a place for political and cultural negotiation, as Augustus’ staging of Varius’ *Thyestes* at his triple triumph in 29 BCE demonstrates. Augustus expected the audience to interpret Atreus, the tragic figure, as a *topos* of tyranny. The production, Boyle argues, was intended to “subsume this potentially most damning critique of tyranny within a triumph to glorify himself and thereby appropriate its ideology, making of the play a negative paradigm which his own hegemony disavowed.” In this scenario Augustus becomes the savior of the republic (from Antony the tyrant). His success attests to the power of the shared language of tragic *topoi*. But Boyle also points out that this was a “calculated risk” since the meaning of signs in a system is never totalizing and is open to negotiation. The audience could have interpreted the play from another perspective, identifying Augustus with the tyrant, Atreus, and Antony with his victim, Thyestes.

Tragedy’s popularity also continued unabated, despite a dearth of new playwrights. There were frequent revivals of Republican plays, especially of Accius’ plays. Of his dated revivals, Boyle lists *Eurysaces and Brutus* (57 BCE), *Clytaemnestra* (55 BCE), *Astyanax* (54 BCE), and *Tereus* (44 BCE). Horace’s letter to Augustus claims that Pacuvius and Accius (56), along with the other famous Republican poets, remain popular (*Ep.* 2.1.50-62). Rome memorizes the old writers (*hos ediscit*, 60) and still watches their plays (*hos arto stipata theatro/"

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97 In a study of Republican dramatists’ influence on Ovid’s poetry, Currie cites Suet. *Iul.* 84.2, where a verse from Pacuvius’ *Armorum Iudicorum* was said to have been sung at Caesar’s funeral. “[T]here is evidence that they [Republican tragedies] provided a kind of iconography by which people could interpret and sum up contemporary political affairs at Rome” (2702).
98 See Boyle (160-62) and Leigh for a treatment of this performance. See, e.g., Boyle (160-76) and Beacham (1991: 149-51, 1999: 92-154) on the political importance of drama to Augustus.
99 Boyle, 162.
100 See Beacham (1999: 135-36), Boyle (145), Currie (2702 and passim) for revivals of older tragedies in the late Republic. Boyle (260 n. 7) gives a list of dated revivals of Ennius, Pacuvius, and Accius along with other attested revivals and bibliography.
Horace’s letter was probably written in or near 12 BCE;\(^{101}\) by the era of the principate, however, tragedy seems to have been superseded to some degree by the pantomime.\(^{102}\) The freedmen of Augustus and Maecenas, Pylades and Bathyllus, are credited with introducing the pantomime to Rome, the tragic and comic respectively, in 22 BCE.\(^{103}\) This was a more stylized performance with a single actor, which, nevertheless, incorporated arias and material from tragedy.\(^{104}\) Lucian advises the dancer of pantomime: οὐδὲν τῶν ὑπὸ τοῦ Ὀμήρου καὶ Ἡσιόδου καὶ τῶν ἀρίστων ποιητῶν καὶ μᾶλλον τῆς τραγῳδίας λεγομένων ἁγνοῆσει (de Saltatione, 61). He provides a list of popular pantomime subjects (37-61) which every good dancer should know, among which is given τὸ Ἰππολύτου πάθος (40), τὴν Φαίδραν (49). Three permanent theaters were built in the second half of the first century BCE: the Theater of Pompey,\(^{105}\) the Theater of Marcellus, and the Theater of Balbus.\(^{106}\) Before 55 BCE, the senate blocked any attempt to build a permanent theater in Rome, although there were permanent stone theaters in other parts of Italy before this time.\(^{107}\) The Theater of Balbus was built and dedicated in 13 BCE by Cornelius Balbus, a man who acted on behalf of Julius Caesar against Pompey. Balbus was also known to have produced a praetexta, Iter, in 43 BCE at Gades. The play, which he may have written himself, described Balbus’ “journey” to bribe

\(^{101}\) Rudd, 1-2.

\(^{102}\) See Beacham (1991: 140-49; 1999: 140-47), Boyle (171-72), Garelli, Hall and Wyles, and Lada-Richards on the Roman pantomime.

\(^{103}\) Beacham (1999), 142-43; Boyle, 171-72.

\(^{104}\) See Currie (2703 n. 4) for evidence and further references regarding the staging of Vergil (Eclogues) and Ovid (Amores and Heroides) to music. Currie cites Ovid at Tr. 5.7.25-27 and 2.519-20 (et mea sunt populo saltata poemata saepe,/ saepe oculus etiam detinuere tuos).

\(^{105}\) Discussed above. See n. 85 for bibliography.

\(^{106}\) For the theater of Marcellus, see, e.g., Aug., Res Gestae, 20-21; Boyle (163-64); Beacham (1999: 120-23). For the theater of Balbus, see, e.g., Boyle (143-44), Beacham (1999: 119-20).

Lentulus from Pompey’s side. 108 The Theater of Marcellus was begun by Julius Caesar and finished and dedicated in 11 BCE by Augustus to Marcus Marcellus, Augustus’ own son-in-law, nephew, and heir apparent at his death in 23 BCE. Although probably dedicated later than Balbus’ theater, construction began before Balbus’ and the building was in use before 13 BCE. This building project also included a renovation of the Theater of Pompey. Both theaters were located near the Theater of Pompey in what would become Rome’s first theater district, just west of the Capitoline on the Tiber.

Given the importance of the theatre in Roman culture and politics, it is not surprising that Ovid should incorporate the tragic genre in various ways in his own work. What is more remarkable is his own foray into the tragic genre with a Medea, of which we have only two extant lines. One, attributed to Medea, is preserved by Seneca Rhetor in his third Suasoria: feror huc illuc, ut plena deo (Sen. Suas. 3.7). The other, also attributed to the character, Medea, is preserved by Quintilian: servare potui: perdere an possim rogas? (Inst. Orat. 8.5.6). Ancient critics laud Medea as an example of what Ovid could do when he reigned in his characteristic licentia carminum (Contr. 2.2.12). Quintilian comments Ovidi Medea uidetur mihi ostendere quantum ille uir praestare potuerit, si ingenio suo imperare quam indulgere maluisset (Inst. Orat., 10.1.98), and Tacitus compares it to Varius’ Thyestes: (nec ullus Asinii aut Messalae liber tam inlustris est quam Medea Ovidii aut Varti Thyestes (Dial. 12.6).109 The Medea was written early in Ovid’s literary career, probably during or near the time he was writing the Heroides, and

108 See Cic. Fam. 10.32.2; Att. 8.11.5.
109 For scholarly conjectures about the content, success, and performance history of Ovid’s play as well as the author’s failure to continue in the genre despite critical approval of his play, see, e.g., Arcellaschi (231-312), Currie (2702-2704), Jacobson (109), Knox (1986), Larmour, Nikolaides, Tenney Frank (562-64), and Wilkinson (115-16, 149).
between the first and second edition of the *Amores*. Nikolaidis provides a thorough, if not entirely objective, review of the evidence, ancient criticism, and modern scholarship on Ovid’s lost play.

There has been a great deal of scholarly attention paid to the dialectic of epic and elegy in Ovid. This is no surprise as elegy is the genre most represented in his corpus, and elegy programmatically defines itself as epic’s antithesis. The majority of Ovid’s corpus is written in elegiac meter. His elegiac poems include the erotic *Amores*; the erotodidactic *Ars Amatoria*, *Remedia Amoris*, and *Medicamina*; the epistolary *Heroides*; the calendar *Fasti*; and the exilic *Ibis*, *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto*. A famous and influential interpretation of the epic and elegiac genres in Ovid is Heinze’s 1919 monograph. He compares the treatment of the Persephone myth as it is represented in the elegiac *Fasti* and the epic *Metamorphoses* and concludes that the respective treatments are generically appropriate in theme and language.

Hinds (1987) has since returned to this comparison, noting that both poems incorporate elements from epic, elegy and other genres. Hinds argues that Ovid’s poetry intentionally crosses the boundaries differentiating genres and signals these crossings while betraying anxieties over the

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110 See Currie (2703), Jacobson (312-13), Nikolaidis (184) on the dating.
111 At Am. 2.18.13-14, Ovid may be referring to his Medea: *sceptra tamen sumpsi curaque Tragoedia nostra/ creuit, et huic opera quamlibet aptus eram*. Some scholars point to Ovid’s claim at *Tr.* 5.7.27 (*nil equidem feci…theatris*) as proof that Medea was a “closet play,” never intended for the stage (Nikolaidis, 384, n.12); however, Currie (2702-3), among others, argues that such a line could also refer to the reworking of Ovid’s poetry for the stage without his approval and/or participation. Other comments on his relationship to and (possible authorship of) tragedy in his own work, see Am. 1.15.41-42, 3.1.29-30, 3.1.17-18; *Tr.* 2.553-54. For Ovid’s comments on the genre in general, see Am. 1.15.15, 19-20, 3.1; *Ars Am.* 3.409-10; *Rem. Am.* 3.75-76; *Tr.* 2.381-420.
112 For the dialectic between elegy and epic in Ovid, see, e.g., R. Heinze, Hinds (1987; 1992; in Depew and Obbink: 221-36), Keith (2002), Farrell (2009: 270-80) and Otis (1-44 and passim).
113 See, e.g., Sullivan.
114 Farrell (2009: 370) calculates that 65% of Ovid’s extant poetry is in elegiac couplets, the hexameter poem *Metamorphoses* making up the remainder. He notes, however, that Ovid’s lost *Aratea* was likely composed in hexameter, while his *Medea* would have been composed in tragic meters.
generic contamination. Hence, Ovid’s epic poem, *Metamorphoses*, has been called by Farrell “a masterpiece of generic transformation.”

Defying generic expectation, however, relies on the existence of rules and codes and draws attention to them in the process of their transgression. That generic codes are not the product of modern criticism is attested by, for example, Horace’s comments about genre in *Ars Poetica* (73-85), where the poet offers themes and meters appropriate to each genre.

   res gestae regumque ducumque et tristia bella
   quo scribi possent numero, monstravit Homerus.
   versibus impariter iunctis querimonia primum,
   post etiam inclusa est voti sententia compos;
   quis tamen exiguos elegos emiserit auctor,
   grammatici certant et adhuc sub iudice lis est.
   Archilochum proprio rabies armavit iambo;
   hunc socci cepere pedem grandesque cothurni,
   alternis aptum sermonibus et popularis
   vincentem strepitus et natum rebus agendis.
   Musa dedit fidibus divos puerosque deorum
   et pugilem victorem et equum certamine primum
   et iuvenum curas et libera vina referre.

Horace contends that hexameter is suitable for kings and wars, elegiac couplets for lament and slight elegies (*exigui elegi, 77*), rage for iambics which are used by comedy and tragedy, lyric for gods, their children, athletic victories, and love sickness. Ovid gives a similar description of generic norms in *Remedia Amoris* (372-86).

   si sapis, ad numeros exige quidque suos.
   forta Maeonio gaudent pede bella referri:

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116 Farrell (2009), 376.

117 Farrell (2009), 378.
deliciis illic quis locus esse potest?
grande sonant tragici: tragicos decet ira cothurnos;
usibus e mediis soccus habendus erit.
liber in aduersos hostes stringatur iambus,
seu celer, extremum seu trahat ille pedem.
blanda pharetratos Elegia cantet Amores
et leuis arbitrio ludat amica suo.

Callimachi numeris non est dicendus Achilles,
Cydippe non est oris, Homere, tui.
quis feret Andromaches peragentem Thaida partes?
peccet, in Andromache Thaida quisquis agat.

Thais in arte mea est: lasciuia libera nostra est;
il mihi cum uitta; Thais in arte mea est.

The poet-praeceptor is responding to criticisms of his Ars Amatoria and cites generic expectations as a defense for the content of his verse. He enjoins ad numerous exige quidque suos (372): war for hexameter; anger for tragedy; everyday life for comedy; insults for iambics; and love for elegy.

The passage seems, of course, suspicious. One cannot help but imagine that Ovid anticipates his audience’s laughter over such strict rules in the context of a didactic poem written in elegiac couplets; regardless, these programmatic rules and expectations accord with Horace’s earlier list. Ovid’s generic play relies on a familiarity with such traditional definitions of literary genres. Conte describes a generic code as a model in relation to which poets can define their own poetry. Reference to the ‘norm’ of a generic discourse “delimits the common space within which new poetry can both emulate tradition and speak with a fresh voice.”¹¹⁸ Conte sees genres as “definable precisely in their mutual relationship” and as “a horizon of historically formalized (and historically variable) literary expectations.”¹¹⁹ Codes would be recognizable to an ancient

¹¹⁸ Conte (1986), 81.
¹¹⁹ Ibid., 93.
audience, suggesting that the audience would recognize generic elements out of place, i.e., in the wrong generic context. Therefore, Ovid’s crossing of genres in his epic poem—incorporating elegiac themes and language—could be identified by an ancient reader or auditor of his work.

While Roman erotic elegy programmatically defines itself against epic, Ovid gives us a variation on the recusatio tradition at the opening of the last book of Amores. In Amores 3.1, the personified Elegy and Tragedy compete for Ovid’s poetic attention. The poem begins with the narrator strolling through an ancient, uncut forest: stat uetus et multos incaedua silua per annos;/ credibile est illi numen inesse loco, 3.1.1-2. Hinds has noted that the word silva was used metaphorically in Roman literature (following the figurative use of the Greek hule, “matter’, ‘mass of material’, ‘raw material’”) to mean rhetorical or poetic material. Hinds points to Cicero’s use of the term in this sense at Orat. 12: omnis enim ubertas et quasi silva dicendi ducta ab illis est. So Virgil’s antiquam silvam at the funeral of Misenus (Aen. 6.179-82) can be (and has been) read as a reference to the ancient materia from which he draws as well as an allusion to Ennius (Ann. 175-9 Sk.) and Homer (Il. 23.114-20). The poet-narrator is, in a

120 For readings of this poem, see, e.g., Berman, 14-22; Boyd (1997), 195-202; Bretzigheimer, 61-76; Davis, 108-113; De Caro, 140-42; Keith (1994), 27-40; Schrijvers, 405-24; Otis (1938), 201-2, and Wyke (2002[1989]), 115-54. Keith (1994), Perkins, 313-33; and Wyke (2002[1989]) also employ the personified Elegy as an interpretive tool for understanding the metapoetic function of the elegiac puella in Roman erotic elegy. 3.1 is commonly cited by those who wish to reconstruct Ovid’s shortlived (?) career as a tragic poet; T. Heinze, 223; Hollis (1977), McKeown (Vol. I), 86-89; and McKeown (Vol. III), 394.
121 See also Bright, 24-29, 39-40; A. Hardie; and Newlands (2002), 36-37.
122 Hinds (1998), 12-14. See OLD, silva, 5b, “the raw material of a literary work; (pl., as the title of collections of occasional poems)”; Ernout and Meillet, s.v. “silva” identifies the Latin word as a synonym for the Greek hule, meaning material. Maltby, s.v. “silva” cites Sex. Pompeius Festus 290, a fourth century CE source, who derives silva directly from hulē. Isidorus 17.6.5 (fifth/sixth century), however, derives the Latin from the Greek zulon “wood”. See also Gel., pr.6.; Quint., Inst. 10.3.17; Stat., Silv., 3.pr., 4.pr.; Tert., de Anim., 2.6. See Keith (2008: 125) and Petrain for the play of hule as materia in Prop. 1.20, where Propertius exploits the etymology of Hylas in his advice to Gallus regarding the safekeeping of his amores. Hinds, following Richard Thomas, also considers Vergil’s antiquam silvam, which “imply that the woods could be numinous,” from the perspective of the common conception of archaic literature as sacred (14; citing Quint. Inst. Orat. 10.1.88: Ennium sicut sacros utustate lucos
sense, browsing for a genre: *hic ego dum spatio tectus nemoralibus umbris. quaeret opus*, 3.1.5-6. He is then confronted by Elegy and Tragedy, appropriately costumed, and advertising their distinct generic codes: *uenit odoratos Elegia nexa capillos. et, puto, pes illi longior alter erat. uenit et ingenti uiolenta Tragoedia passu: fronte comae torua, nulla iacebat humi*, 3.1.9-12. In the end the poet-narrator asks Tragedy to be patient while he finishes his *breue* elegiac *opus* (68). Tragedy relents but her *grandius opus* (70) pursues him.

Despite the dialectic of elegy and tragedy constructed so explicitly by the poet himself, the function of tragedy in Ovid’s extant work has only recently begun to receive due consideration. Most attention has been paid to the use of Greek and Roman tragedy in the *Metamorphoses* and *Heroides*; scholars have identified Greek and Roman tragedies as source texts for these poems, and have traced allusions and intertexts. It is widely agreed that Ovid was familiar with, and probably had access to the very texts of Attic Greek tragedies. Some recent scholarship considers how Ovid “stages” episodes in his *Metamorphoses* or the epistolary monologue in *Heroides* through consideration of dramatic elements, e.g., creating a sense of spectacle with a setting which resembles a stage or an introduction which recalls a stage entrance or tragic rhesus, including (in the case of the *Metamorphoses*), direct speech which mimics

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*adoremus* and Hor. *Epist.* 2.1.54: *adeo sanctum est vetus omne poema*). In 3.1.2, our poet-narrator comments that his forest could very well be sacred: *credibile est illi numen inesse loco.*


125 See Farrell (2009: 376-77) for a summary and bibliography on tragic influence in Ovid’s poetry.
Thus far there has been only one monograph treatment of this topic by Curley. The book (forthcoming), an updated version of his 1999 dissertation, focuses primarily on the effects of generic translation.

Although generic play is always salient to an understanding of Ovid’s work, for this project I will focus on Ovid’s poems as cultural artifacts. I will argue that his representation of Phaedra-like figures, by means of their engagement with famous tragic paradigms, functions to construct female desire as a *monstrum* which does not qualify to be counted as a human experience of desire. The theme of desire in Ovid is certainly not a new subject of study. Nevertheless, the tragic paradigm of Phaedra is especially interesting for understanding desire in the historic context of Augustan Rome and its Republican inheritance. She gives us a fresh perspective on the issues at stake in Ovid’s representation of desiring women, for she unites the themes of sex, gender and performance with power and persuasion, elements which are mutually implicated in Roman cultural constructions of sexual subjects.

In the next chapter, “Signs of Desire,” I consider the semiotic value of Phaedra and her heirs in the symbolic economy as it is articulated in Ovid’s *Ars Amatoria*. The women’s wild and destructive natures define their opposite, the civilized and controlled masculine subject, who is the intended pupil of Ovid’s erotodidactic poem. The narrative voice, instructing his readers

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128 E.g., Otis’ formulation of the “Pathos of Love” (166-277), which he locates in *Met. 6.401-11*, remains an important interpretation of desire in Ovid. Otis argues that the sad or disastrous erotic tales which make up the majority of books 7-10 (Tereus, Procrone, and Scylla), and which end with the finale of Myrrha’s incestuous desire, are “corrected” by the uplifting tale of Halcyone’s true love for Ceyx in book 11. Otis dismisses the interpretive influence of the stories of Procris and Cephalus and Iphis as unrelated “theodices that hardly impinged on the real world of love and passion” (229). For summaries of scholarship on Ovid and desire and recent bibliographies, see Sharrock (in Hardie, 2002: 106-7, 178-79).
on the art of love, ostensibly offers these examples as proof that women are happy and eager to be caught in the “net” of a man’s seduction. The effect, however, of Ovid’s use of familiar tragic and Hellenistic desiring women as examples is a “lesson” in the naturally violent and inhuman sexuality of women and the need to control this desire.

Chapter three, “Phaedra’s Claim,” is concerned with the effect of a female narrating voice on this semiotics of desire. In *Heroides* 4, Phaedra seems to be in control of her own story, presenting her experience of desire. Her ventriloquized voice, however, is represented as using the same discourse of desire and the same mythological symbolism employed by the narrator of the *Ars Amatoria* which defined her love for Hippolytus as wild and destructive. In her own letter, she attempts to use this language in a new way in order to seduce Hippolytus. Instead, Ovid’s representation creates the illusion that Phaedra is complicit in repudiating herself and her desire.

The following chapter, “Inscribing Desire,” explores Ovid’s narration of the writing process in book 9 of his epic, *Metamorphoses*. Byblis’ story can be read as an epic narrative of the writing instance of *Heroides* 4—presenting the before and after, which the reader of Phaedra’s epistle is left to conjure on their own. The dramatization of this process allows the reader to “see” how the success of a writer’s text depends on her audience. The anxiety of sending her letter represents the author’s anxiety over controlling the meaning of her poetry. Once sent, the text requires a reader who will correctly interpret its meaning. Without such a reader, a text, like Byblis herself, whose name plays with words referring to writing and writing surfaces, is rendered mute.

Chapter five, “Playing the Part,” follows Ovid’s narrative of Byblis to the end of book 9, which takes us to the miraculous tale of Iphis. Where Byblis’ story describes a failed attempt to
describe and find acceptance for her desire, Iphis’ story presents a successful experience of love.
The maiden Iphis convincingly performs the role “boy,” a role chosen by her mother and
necessitated by her father’s command that only a boy child be allowed to live. Unlike the
heroines considered in earlier chapters, who try to reinterpret their mythological and cultural
“roles,” Iphis’ “boy,” although performed by a girl, conforms to gender and kinship norms. Also
in contrast to the desires of Phaedra and her heirs, which are in conflict with, and therefore pose
a threat to, the patriarchal kinship system, Iphis’ desire is pious, for it corresponds to the wishes
of her father, and is aligned with the patriarchal law governing the family. While her desire for
and impending wedding to another maiden is complicated by her biological sex, this is resolved
by her eventual transformation into a biological boy, which appears to be the result of her true
“masculine” nature; however, her complete passivity and apathy to which part she plays in the
binary of masculine/feminine unsettles the corresponding categories of active/passive.

In each of these chapters the intersection of “performance” and performativity is crucial
to the construction of the heroines as paradigms of female desire. The literary “assumption” of
woman or girl, torn between her erotic desire and normative gender and kinship roles, acts as a
“citation” of a very specific identity, that of the Phaedra of Attic tragedy. Ovid’s engagement
with his literary predecessors in the genre of tragedy highlights the idea of dramatically
“performing” a role such as that of incestuous step-mother. His engagement also draws attention
to the performance of gender and kinship roles as a performativity, an identity which must be
repeated, though each of its “citations” are made under different circumstances (each individual
production of the play) and by different subjects (each individual actor playing Phaedra).
Phaedra’s tragic tradition, moreover, revised and rethought by multiple playwrights (Euripides
and Sophocles) and in multiple narratives (Euripides’ two plays of the same name) demonstrates
that the “citationality” of gender and kinship roles opens up the ideal definition of the “role” to transformation.

In the final and concluding chapter I consider how Ovid’s representations of Phaedra-like figures are creative products, and meditations on gender, genre, and power in Augustan Rome. His gendered discourses repeatedly reproduce in their deep structure gender hierarchies which justify the subordination of female bodies in the Roman world. Ovid’s play with the Augustan discourses of desire and femininity in these passages paradoxically reinvests cultural norms with authority through their very repetition.

Additionally I look at Ovid’s own, albeit hesitant, alignment with these marginal feminine voices, investigating the power of poetry to create meaning as his heroines are represented trying to manipulate the symbolic economy of myth and redefine their semantic value despite their substantial literary tradition. Phaedra’s tragic heritage provides a precedent for a poet’s ability to redefine the paradigmatic value of a mythological character. Barrett notes that Euripides’ two *Hippolytus* plays are unusual among Attic tragic playwrights.¹²⁹ “[H]e produced so radical and so successful a recasting of his original treatment that with it…he won one of the only four first prizes that he achieved throughout his career.”¹³⁰ How radically distinct each of her tragic representations were is not clear from the extant evidence, but we may nevertheless surmise that each iteration of Phaedra by Euripides and Sophocles, like Butlerian citations, gradually modified her symbolic value. So too, we can imagine Ovid’s further

¹²⁹ Aristophanes also revised a play, *Clouds*, after a poor reception at the City Dionysia in 424/3 BCE, although it is unclear whether the revised version was produced or merely circulated as a text (Dover, lxxxi). The extant *Clouds*, like Euripides’ *HII*, reflects the revised play. See Dover (lxxx-xcviii) for a discussion of the evidence.

¹³⁰ Barrett, 13.
iterations of her character under different names in his own work as attempts to innovate in this
tradition by redefining Phaedra’s symbolic value. His temporary alignment with female writing
subjects does not, however, represent the male poet’s identification with an abject feminine
position. Her poetic failure, punishment, and repudiation are constructed as the result of her
“nature” as Woman, and are generically marked as “tragic.” His masculine poetic voice, by
contrast, aligns itself with a controlled, rational, and authoritative *ars*, whose gendered and
generic position is given a free reign to oscillate and play with poetic possibilities.

Finally, I consider how, regardless of poetic intention, Ovid’s repetition with difference
throughout his corpus destabilizes normative sex/gender positions as they are defined in
opposition to the monstrous Phaedra-like figures, by offering her opposite, Iphis, who is
paradoxically similar. Iphis’ tale appears to be a foil to figures like Phaedra and Byblis, but her
narrative reveals striking similarities, and her happy ending narrowly misses a disastrous
outcome; for, without divine intervention, Iphis would be revealed as a pretender to masculine
subjectivity, a “role” to which Phaedra-like desire has driven other maidens in Ovid’s
*Metamorphoses* with destructive results. If there can be a Phaedra who lurks behind Iphis’
otherwise normative construction, Ovid’s text suggests that there can be an Iphis behind the
Phaedra-like figures.
Chapter 2 Signs of Desire

In book one of the *Ars Amatoria* (283-340), Ovid’s poet-praeceptor offers his reader-pupil a list of mythological women: Byblis, Myrrha, Pasiphae, Aerope, Scylla, Clytemnestra, Medea, Phthia, Phaedra, and Phineus’s wife. The examples of women who were (in)famously in love is meant to serve as proof, he tells his reader-pupil, that *cunctas/ posse capi: capies* (269-70). Their success as *exempla* relies on the audience’s shared knowledge of their myths from which, the author can assume, a common logical association will be drawn. This list serves as a convenient beginning to our exploration of Phaedra-like figures in Ovid’s texts, for it helps us identify the mythological women who function as paradigms for female desiring subjects in Ovid’s poetry, and it demonstrates the discourse which constructs these figures (at least at this point in his career). The common logical association among the paradigms, however, is also defined by the narrative and generic context of the catalogue, the relation of the mythological figures to that frame, and the relation of the examples to the narrator and his audience (both internal and external). Although our poet-praeceptor has told us the purpose of his list—to assure the “hunting” lover of a catch because the prey wants to be caught (*haec quoque, quam poteris credere nolle, volet*, 274)—, a careful reading of this passage and its narrative frame will demonstrate that, for a literary pupil with knowledge of earlier, more elaborated treatments of these myths, their function as *exempla* exceeds the intent of our teacher and his lesson. Instead, the mythological desiring women in Ovid’s *Ars* construct normative desiring subjects both through their function as cautionary tales and through their alterity—subjects whose desires define, through their opposition, desires that are considered normative in the Augustan world.

By the Augustan era, women were perhaps in a stronger position to express an opinion about their lives and spouses than Greek women several centuries before, when many of these
figures were made famous in Hellenistic and Classical Greek poetry and drama;\textsuperscript{1} nevertheless, the earlier gendered power structures obtained. A Roman woman’s father determined her identity in the family (she was named after her father) and her father ultimately decided whom she would marry.\textsuperscript{2} The discourse of marriage reflects the passive position of the women, who were “led into, held in, or given in” marriage (\textit{in matrimonium ducere/ in matrimonio habere/ in matrimonium dare/ collocare}).\textsuperscript{3} Marriage continued to effect important familial and social relationships between men, creating \textit{affinitates} between families.\textsuperscript{4} Thus, in his \textit{Life of Atticus}, Nepos reports that Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa chose an \textit{affinitas} with Atticus (\textit{potissimum eius deligeret affinitatem}), a man of equestrian rank, through a marriage with his daughter, although his own status and his friendship with Caesar gave him pick of brides from the best families.\textsuperscript{5} The language makes clear that the relationship with Atticus (not his daughter) was the goal of the union.

Women whose adultery threatened the family economically, i.e., through a potential extra-marital pregnancy which disrupted inheritance rights, or socially, i.e., by dissolving the alliance between two families, were punished in kind by the \textit{lex Julia de adulteriis coercendis}, passed probably around 18 BCE.\textsuperscript{6} Adulteresses lost inheritance rights and were no longer

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\begin{enumerate}
\item See, e.g., Blundell (130-49), Patterson (in Pomeroy 1991: 48-72), and Pomeroy (1995[1975]: 62-65) for ancient Greek marriage customs and the exchange of women.
\item See Treggiari (3-36) for a detailed discussion of marriage customs in Rome.
\item \textit{OLD, matrimonium}, 1.a-d; see Treggiari (5) for a discussion of this discourse.
\item Treggiari (107-110) describes the relationship of \textit{affinitas} created by marriages.
\item \textit{His igitur rebus effectit ut M. Vipsanius Agrippa, intima familiaritate coniunctus adolescenti Caesari, cum propter suam gratiam et Caesaris potentiam nullius condicionis non haberet potestatem, potissimum eius deligeret affinitatem praeoptaretque equitis Romani filiam generosarum nuptiis, Atticus 12.1.}
\item McGinn, 70; Treggiari, 277.
\end{enumerate}
marriageable under the terms of the *lex Julia,* but took on the status of “prostitute” under the law. Their bodies were also dressed for the part. They were no longer allowed to wear the *stola,* the traditional dress of a *matrona.* Instead, they were made to wear the toga, the costume of a man and of a prostitute. No longer recognized as *matronae,* their bodies were outwardly marked and defined by their transgressive sexuality. The corporeal signification of the toga for the adulteress and the prostitute, a man’s costume, supports the argument that active sexuality is gendered masculine in Roman discourses of desire; hence, women who made their own decisions about their sexual partners were behaving like men and were not recognizable as women. Furthermore, men were expected under the law to police the sexuality of their wives. If a husband did not take actions after discovering his wife’s transgressions, he was considered a pimp under the *lex Julia.* Our reading will reveal that the punishments for sexual indiscretion meted out to the heroines, which are carefully catalogued in the *praecceptor*’s list, reflect these social and legal realities of Ovid’s time.

The list of desiring women found in *Ars Amatoria* participates in what Charles Segal has identified as a semiotics of myth by presenting them as “a coded system of virtually interchangeable symbols,” or paradigms. Their paradigmatic relationship, which is

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7 McGinn, 92-93, 143, 156-71.
8 See McGinn (140-215) for a careful analysis of the *lex Julia de adulteriis coercendis* and its social and economic implications: “The “new” hierarchy of status for women was thus sealed through the manipulation of symbols, as unmistakable badges of honor and shame. The assignation of *stola* to one group and *toga* to the other (to take prostitutes and adulteresses together) separated the good from the bad by making a crude distinction that admitted no ambiguity, no degrees of difference, and no possibility of redemption” (209). See Edmondson (in Edmondson and Keith, 21-46, esp. 37-38) on the importance of the *toga* and *stola* as a sort of costume in a “stagecraft” (*tragoedia*; citing Polybius, 6.53-54, 56.9), defining the Roman community of men and women.
9 McGinn, 171-94.
10 Segal (1986: 57) commenting on categories of characters found in myth, notes that “any one of these figures may serve as a paradigm for another. We are dealing here with a coded system of virtually interchangeable symbols.”
emphasized by the structure of a poetic catalogue, reveals what characteristics are shared among
the individual exemplars of this category and, thereby, what characteristics define their
paradigmatic relation. Segal applies semiotic theory to myth and its representations in Attic
tragedy. He argues for a “megatext” of myth at work in ancient literature, one which shows a
“conscious awareness of sign systems” indicating “an advanced, if not explicit, semiotic
consciousness,”¹¹ in which Greek tragedy participates and which the genre exploits.¹² Segal
defines this “megatext” as “the totality of themes or songs that the poets of an oral culture would
have had available in their repertoires...[and]...the network of more or less subconscious patterns,
or deep structures, or undisplaced forms, which tales of a given type share with one another.”¹³
In other words, the total system of myth acts like a language in the ancient world, and, in this
language, mythological characters act like words. A mythological figure like Medea, for
example, represents more than just the specific character Medea. She may also represent the
concept of “revenge,” or stand for a woman who kills her children. Moreover, the symbolic
meanings created in myth sometimes reaffirm social expectations and cultural norms—like
warnings about taboos (e.g., Oedipus and incest) or examples of virtuous behavior (Penelope and
the ideal wife).¹⁴

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¹¹ Segal (1986), 51.
¹² Ibid., 63-74.
¹³ Ibid., 52.
¹⁴ Ibid., 49.

His understanding of myth as a semiotic system derives from other theorists, including and especially Barthes
(Mythologies, 1972) and Lévi-Strauss.
Because this language is unconscious, but shared, authors like Ovid can assume that his audience can “read” the megatext.\textsuperscript{15} We can see how this language of tragedy is “spoken” in tragedy itself when characters use other tragic characters as examples of certain behaviors. In the \textit{Hippolytus}, for example, the nurse and the chorus offer to Phaedra, as models for self-forgiveness, Zeus and Dawn (451-57)\textsuperscript{16} and Iole and Semele (545-64),\textsuperscript{17} and thereby identify mythological examples which are paradigms in a given category. The nurse suggests to Phaedra divine examples, who carried on after shameful love affairs, in order to dissuade her from her plans of suicide. Likewise, the chorus demonstrates their sympathy and understanding for Phaedra’s plight by offering examples from the category “victims of Venus.” The persuasiveness of their examples relies on the familiarity of the internal audience (Phaedra) and the external audience with these myths. Without a shared knowledge of the megatext of myth, naming these figures would be meaningless to both.

As we see from the Euripidean examples, paradigmatic relationships may be long-established.\textsuperscript{18} Ovid’s audience likely could generate a list of paradigms of female desire on their own. Propertius, whose collection of elegies was published perhaps 20 years before the first two

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Ibid., 58.
\item δειο μεν οὖν γραφάς τε τῶν παλαιτέρων/ ἔχουσιν αὐτοὶ τ᾽ εἰκὸν ἐν μούσαις ἀεὶ/ ίεσιει μὲν Ζεύς ὡς ποτ᾽ ἔρασθη γάμου/ Σεμέλης, ίεσιει δ᾽ ὡς ἀνήσπασέν ποτὲ/ ἐκ καλλιφνηθής Κέφαλον ἐχ θεοὺς Ἑως/ ἔρωτος οὐκεί/ ἄλλ᾽ ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ ναύσικος κούφεν θεοῖς (Eur., III, 451-57).
\item ταν μὲν Οἰχαλία/ πῶλον ἄζυγα λέκτρων/ ἀνανδρὸν τὸ πρὶν καὶ ἄνωφοι, οῖκων/ ζεύξας ἀπ᾽ Ἐυρυτίων/ δρομάδα ναθ ὡς το βάκ/ ἅπαντι καὶ ὑμήτεροι/ φονίβωσεις ἀλκυμάνοις τόκωι Κύπρεις ἐξεδωκέν/ ὡς τλάμων ὑμεναίων/ ὡς Θῆβαις ἱεροῖς/ στομά Βηρᾶς/ κατηύνας ἀκρόμον ἐν ἄλλοις ἀπ᾽ αὐτοῖς (Eur., III, 545-64).
\item Segal (1986: 53, 57), citing earlier research (53, n. 13), traces literary paradigmatic analogies to Homer, which he conjectures predates the poet: “Homer is probably developing a systematic coherence already present in the mythic material.”
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
books of Ovid’s Ars,\textsuperscript{19} constructs a very similar list of desiring women as proof to his beloved, Cynthia, that women’s sexual appetite (\textit{libido}) is out of control.\textsuperscript{20} The list is given as a counter-charge to her reproach of his own sexual appetite.

\textit{Obicitur totiens a te mihi \textit{nostra} libido;}
\textit{crede mihi, \textit{uobis} imperat ista magis}
\textit{uos, ubi contempti rupistis frena pudoris,}
\textit{nescitis captae mentis habere modum.}
\textit{flamm\textae per incensas citius sedetur aristas,}
\textit{fluminaque ad fontis sint reditura caput}
et placidum Syrtes portum et bona litora nautis
\textit{praebat hospitio saea Malea suo,}
\textit{quam possit \textit{uestros} quisquam reprehendere cursus}
et rabidae stimulos frangere nequitiae.
\textit{testis, Cretaei fastus quae passa iuuenici}
\textit{ind uit abiegnae cornua falsa bou<s>;}\textit{testis}
\textit{Thessalico flagrans Salmonis Enipeo,}
\textit{quae uoluit liquido tota subire deo.}
\textit{crimen et illa fuit, patria succensa senecta}
arboris in frondis condita \textit{Myrrha} nouae.
\textit{nam quid \textit{Medeae} referam, quo tempore matris}
\textit{iram natorium caede piauit amor?}
\textit{quidue \textit{Clytaemnestrae,} propter quam tota Mycenis}
\textit{infamis stupro stat Pelopea domus?}
tuque o Minoa uenumdata, \textit{Scylla,} figura
\textit{tondere[n]s} purpurea regna paterna coma.
hanc igitur dotem urgo desponderat hosti!
Nise, tuas portas fraude reclusit amor.
at uos, innuptae, felicius urite taedas:
\textit{pendet Cretaea tracta puella rate.}
\textit{non tamen immerito! Minos sedet arbiter Orci:}
\textit{victor erat quamuis, aequus in hoste fuit.}
\textit{(Prop. 3.19.1-28)}

What Cynthia’s original complaint was, we are not told. The \textit{amator}’s complaint, however, is specific: “that \textit{libido} of yours has more control over you (all).” Although the use of plural

\textsuperscript{19} I am following the dating of Goold (2), Keith (2009b), McKeown (77), and Hollis (1977: xiii): Propertius, book III, 23/22 BCE; Ovid, \textit{Ars} I, II, sometime between 20-2 BCE, but closer to 2.

\textsuperscript{20} Compare Propertius’ list (\textit{Pasiphae, Tyro, Myrrha, Medea, Clytemnestra,} and \textit{Scylla} in that order; 3.19.11-28) to Ovid’s (\textit{Byblis, Myrrha, Pasiphae, Aerope, Scylla, Clytemnestra, Medea, Phthia, Phaedra, and Phineus’s wife; Ars} 1.283-340).
pronouns in the couplets which introduce the list (nostra, 1; uobis, 2; uos, 3; uestros, 9) could be poetic plurals denoting the amator and Cynthia, the list of women to which “you all” are compared, makes it clear that he is addressing Cynthia as a member of a group which includes the mythological figures which follow. Such a paradigmatic relation sets up an opposition between the libido of “us” men and “you” women. These opposing categories are established in the first couplet where “I” and “we” command the hexameter line and “you all” the pentameter. The legal terminology which begins the list (testis, 11,13; crimen, 15) places us in a courtroom with the amator as advocate for the prosecution and Minos in his capacity as arbiter passing judgment, not just on Scylla, but on all of the paradigms which the list constructs, including Cynthia. The repetitive patterns of vocabulary (testis... testis, 11, 13; nam quid...quidue, 17, 19) and narrative organization (the first 5 examples are allotted one couplet each) reinforce their paradigmatic status and emphasize the interchangeability of each example.

The amator’s list, he claims, serves as evidence that women are governed more (than men) by their sexual appetite. Pasiphae (11-12) is driven to bestiality in order to satisfy her lust. Tyro (13-14) is driven to suicide, for she drowns herself in her attempt to have sex with a river.21 Myrrha’s (15-16) fire (succensa, 15) must be extinguished by the suffocating leaves of her new form. It is with Myrrha’s example that we begin to see a tension between the presentation of the examples and the amator’s stated intent in presenting them, and a move away from his notional audience, Cynthia. Myrrha’s desire is a crime (crimen, 15). Desire does not drive her to commit a crime as it does in the first two examples. Furthermore, the adjective patrius (15) draws

21 The verb subire vividly describes the simultaneous sexual act and extinguishing of the flame of her sexual desire. See OLD, subeo, 1c., “to sink beneath the surface (of),” and Adams (190-91) for subeo and other –eo compounds meaning “to enter sexually.” Richardson (ad loc.) notes the potential for this double-entendre, but seems hesitant to suggest any intention on Propertius’ part.
attention to the specific nature of Myrrha’s *crimen*, incestuous desire. The *senecta*, however, suggests Cinyras is vulnerable, a helpless (or more helpless), and hence *passive*, victim of his daughter’s *active* sexual aggression. Medea’s anger (17-18) is appeased by *amor*, implying that *ira*, not *amor*, demanded this particular offering. Clytemnestra’s (19-20) adultery destroys a family, but, again, there is no sense that she was compelled to commit adultery by a *libido* which governed (*imperare*) her. Propertius moves from the examples of female victims controlled by desire to women whose desire is a symptom of their naturally destructive character.

Scylla (21-28) steals her father’s lock and assumes his traditional role as father by giving herself in marriage to Minos (23). Her action is never explicitly attributed to an irresistible desire, although the image of love opening the gates of Megara (*portas...reclusit amor*, 24) hints at its control. Instead, her behavior exposes her as a pretender to masculine power. Scylla is described as a merchant selling (*uenumdata*, 21) her father’s power, his kingdom (*regna paterna*, 22), symbolized by the scarlet lock (*purpurea...coma*, 22) which surrounds it in the pentameter line. The power must be stolen from her father by a violent and violating act (*tonde[n]s*, 22) because it is not hers to give. The attempted sale exposes her inability to accomplish what in normal circumstances would be an exchange—a wife and her *dos*, an alliance between two men. Scylla lacks even the understanding to mimic convincingly the role of “exchanger,” choosing, as the *amator* notes, not an ally as recipient and beneficiary of her gift, but an enemy (*hosti*, 23). Like Medea, Scylla’s *amor* (*Minonis*?), not her *amor patris*, i.e., *pietas*, gives Minos access to Nisus’ city, through deceit and crime (*fraude*, 23 24). Her condemnation as criminal is confirmed

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22 The suggestion is certainly not taken up by Ovid in his treatment of Myrrha’s myth at *Met.* 10.32-518.
by the decision of Minos as a judge (*arbiter Orci*, 27), both deserving (*non immerito*, 27) and fair (*aequus*, 28).

Moreover, the *amator*’s direct address to Scylla (21) and “you unmarried girls” (*uos, innuptae*, 25) betray that Cynthia is not his only audience. He is also interpellating the Scyllas and the would-be Scyllas (*innuptae*) in the audience. The fact which he claims to be demonstrating with his examples, that women’s desire controls them, to the *puella* with whom he is apparently arguing, has changed. *Ista libido* is destructive, and therefore poses a threat to important social structures like families, which a woman is not able to repair or replace. On the surface, such a lesson excuses the *amator*’s sexual indiscretions by comparison; but the catalogue draws attention to shared aspects of these myths which justify the control of female desire by men. The two male voices which frame the list (the advocate-*amator* and the mythological figure of Minos *arbiter*) mimic this male control of female bodies, while aligning this control with law, reason, justice (*aequus*, 28), and victory (*uictor*, 28).

A fresco from the Villa di Numazia Procula at Tor Marancio in Rome, which dates to a little over a century after Ovid’s death,24 depicts several of these women, whom Gratia Berger-Doer identifies as “mythischen Verbrecherinnen aus Liebe,”25 along with names identifying them. Myrrha (right) and Phaedra (left) hold the center of the panel, surrounded by Canace, Pasiphae, and Scylla.26 Each woman is poised to act on her desire: Pasiphae stands by the bull, Scylla is on the wall of Megara holding her father’s lock, Canace holds a sword, Myrrha runs (from her father?). This series of painted figures functions like a list of examples, inviting the

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24 The villa was built c. 127 CE. See Borda, 283.
25 *LIMC*, *s.v.*, Myrrha (1).
26 Ibid., *s.v.*, Kanake (3) and Myrrha (1). See Borda (283-84) for a fuller description of the fresco.
reader to associate the myths in a category by means of a common theme. The grouping attests to the long-lived, strong association these mythological characters held as paradigms in the Roman mind, dating back, at least, to Propertius. The grouping may also speak to the influence of the poetic depictions, especially Ovid’s *Ars Amatoria, Heroides* and *Metamorphoses*, for each of these characters is memorably “painted” by the poet in these poems.

When Ovid’s poet-*praecceptor* calls upon these familiar paradigms of desiring women, he maintains the list is meant to bolster the confidence of his reader-pupil of a future erotic conquest. In his semiotic analysis of Greek tragedy, Segal notes that “[a]ny individual mythic figure can function as the starting point for a whole nexus of logical relations and subtle modulations between paradigms.” I suggest this is true for Roman poetry as well, where narrative structure, “author,” and “audience” all work to define or destabilize the meaning of a paradigmatic group. When Propertius speaks the language of myth in 3.19, for example, the shifting emphasis of the presentation from crimes motivated by passion to simply crimes against the family, as well as the shifting audience, from Cynthia to unmarried girls, shows how our examples too shift relations and meaning. Myrrha, Medea, Clytemnestra, and Scylla are presented as criminals who happen to be in love, and the list thereby takes on the characteristic of a lesson on the behavior of a proper woman in several stages of her life (*virgo, matrona, mater*). Such a lesson would, one assumes, have little relevance to Cynthia. While the status of

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27 See Fredrick (1995: 274-75 and passim) for the associations suggested by painting groups (with erotic content, in particular) and other artwork in the Roman house.

28 *LIMC* (s.v., Skylla II, 4) suggests a Hellentistic origin for the group. The similarity between Propertius’ and Ovid’s literary list of paradigms may also be due to the *topos* of a common rhetorical education (see, e.g., Bonner and Morgan) and/or by their common genre and shared history of recitation (Ovid tells us at *Tr.* 4.10.45-46 that Propertius would often share his poetry “by right of the fellowship which joined them: *saepe suos solitus recitare Propertius ignes,/ iure sodalicii, quo mihi iunctus erat*). 

29 Segal (1986), 58.
the elegiac puella is ambiguous, were she a virgo, matrona, or mater, the elegiac universe and the amator’s position relies on her active sexuality, a Scyllan sexuality contrary to the normative non-sexuality of a Roman maiden or matron.30

With this in mind, let us turn to Ovid’s poem. If we look at the frame which introduces Ovid’s catalogue, and the short summaries which accompany each entry in this catalogue, the teacher’s lesson looks much darker. The language of the framing passages makes explicit that the reader qua student is meant to interpret each of the examples set before him as the other.

praem menti ueniat fiducia, cunctas posse capi: capies, tu modo tende plagas.
ue eiuelucres tacede, aestate cicadae,
Maenalius lepor det sua terga canis, 
* femina quam iuueni blande temptata repugnet; 
haec quoque, quam poteris credere nolle, uolet. utque iviro furtiva Venus, sic grata puellae;
uir male dissimulat, teclius illa cupit.
conueniat maribus ne quam nos ante rogemus,
femina iam partes uicta rogantis aget.31
mollibus in pratis admugit femina tauro,
femina corniped semper adhinnit equo. 
parcior in nobis nec tam furiosa libido;
legitimum finem flamma uirilis habet.

... 
omnia feminea sunt ista libidine mota;
acrior est nostra plusque furoris habet.

Ergo age, ne dubita cunctas sperare puellas: 
uix erit e multis, quae neget, una, tibi.

(Ars Am. 1.269-282, 341-44)

The exclusivity of the didactic “we” (nos, 277; in nobis, 281; nostra, 342) creates a closed circle which includes the poet-praeceptor and the student in a unified category. This category is

30 While James argues that the puellae were meretrices, many scholars conclude that the status of the puellae is both impossible to determine and indeterminate in the poems, i.e., her status oscillates. See, e.g., Wyke (1989: 34-35) for this interpretation and bibliography. See James (6-7) for a summary of this debate and further references. See James (21-25, 35-68, and passim) for her proposed “type” of Roman woman the puella reflects.

31 MSS. R, Y, P, and the second hand of MS. H read agat. MS. O alone reads cogat. MS. A and all other mss. read aget. See Kenney (246-47) for arguments in support of reading aget.
identified as male by the direct address in line 267: *quiquis ubique, uiri, dociles aduertite mentes*.

The category “Man” (*uir*) is opposed to the excluded *femina* who is the object of study. This opposition is reflected in the grammar and syntax of the frame. Consider, for example, the first couplet introducing the passage: *cunctas/ posse capi: capies* (269-70). Women, the subject of the indirect statement, *posse capi*, is juxtaposed to men, the subject of the verb, *capi*es. Lines 275-76 create a loose chiastic structure: *uiro* mirrors *puellae* (275), and *uir* mirrors *illa* (276).

The hexameter line sets up a correspondence between men and women (*utque…sic*), only to differentiate men and women in the pentameter (*male dissimulat, tectius…cupit*). Furthermore, Ovid uses a series of comparatives (*tectius*, 276; *parci*, 281; *acrior…nostra plusque*, 342), reinforcing the difference between the two categories.

The *us* : them dichotomy is further reinforced by examples from the animal world which frame the assuring statements that women will be caught because they actively desire, although they appear otherwise. In fact, the natural behavior of animals (birds, cicadas, hunting dogs) is more likely to be reversed (271-73) than a *femina* will refuse her suitor (*repugnet*, 273). If men don’t ask them first (*ante rogemus*, 277) women will act the part of the suitor (278). Lines 279-80 offer examples from nature of female animals (cow, mare) who “play the parts of the suitors” (*partes…rogantis aget*, 278). Significantly, both of these animal exemplars are called *femina* (279, 280). In ancient literature the woman : nature metonymy is common,32 as is the rhetorical strategy of drawing examples from nature,33 but the specific context—the comparison of

32 For a detailed discussion and literature review of relevant scholarship on gender and the nature/culture dichotomy, particularly for its application to tragedy, see Foley (1981), 140-48.

33 In Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, Myrrha draws examples from the animal world in order to justify her incestuous desire for her father: *coeuntque animalia nullo/ cetera dilectu, nec habetur turpe iuuencae/ ferre patrem tergo; fit equo sua filia coniunx;/ quasque creavit init pecudes caper, ipsaque, cuius/ semine concepta est, ex illo concipit ales*, 10.324-28. Ovid’s animal examples recall Vergil’s *Georgics* 3.242-83, in which Vergil compares the desire of
aggressive female sexuality to natural animal behavior and the repetition of the word *femina* in three successive lines, even in the same metrical position (278, 280)—aligns women’s sexuality with animal sexuality. Such a strategy further differentiates men from women, but more importantly excludes the other, female sexuality, from human sexuality, relegating it to the lower order of beast.

The binary categories of active and passive are established by the grammar and syntax of the poet-*praecceptor*’s frame. Traditionally these binary categories are aligned with gender categories, active/male : passive/female, as we see expressed in the second couplet of this passage: *cunctas/ posse capi: capies, tu modo tende plagas*, 269-70. The desired women can be captured (*capi*), a passive role as hunted prey described grammatically by a passive verb. Juxtaposed (very literally) to the objects of the hunt is the active hunter (our male student, *tu*): *capi: capies*. He is the subject of not just one, but two active verbs in line 270 (*capies, tende*). The active role is often constructed in such a way as to naturalize and necessitate its complementary opposite, the passive role. Here is no exception; however, the gender alignment of each category is soon reversed—the female is the active desirer, which aligns the male with the passive position—and it is this reversal which is aligned with natural animal behavior (271-73, cited above) and opposed to *human* behavior.

animals to humans. Vergil’s comparison stresses a universal experience of love across categories of man and beast, male and female: *omne adeo genus in terris hominumque ferarumque/ … in furiis ignemque ruunt: amor omnibus idem*, 3.242-44. Vergil makes an exception, however, of female horses: *scilicet ante omnis furor est insignis equarum*, 266. *Hippomanes* (“horse madness”), Vergil tells us, is collected during their passionate frenzy and is used fittingly by *malae…nouercae* in their spells (280-83; see Mynors (ad loc.) for references to the desire of mares back to Aristotle). See Leach for a full discussion of Ovid’s use of natural phenomena in the *Ars*, including animal imagery in his construction of female desire as well as a comparison of *Ars* to Vergil’s *Georgics* (149-54). See also Myerowitz (116-19, and 213 n.28) in reference to this particular catalogue.
Also set in opposition are the natures of masculine and feminine desires. Women are like men in that they enjoy *furta* (275), but they are different in their experience of desire. They are better at disguising it (276). Their desire (*libido*) is less sparing (*parcior*, 281), is fiercer (*acrior*, 342) and has more madness (*furiosa*, 281; *plus furoris*, 342).\(^{34}\) The comparatives articulate the presence of excess.\(^{35}\) The “more than” masculine desire of women is constructed in such a way so as to define female desire as what male desire is not and vice versa. What the pupil learns is that “we” men are more sincere in our love (in comparison to the dissimulation of women), more in control, less fierce and less insane. The final line in the last couplet (282) before we move into the list defines male desire definitively: *legitimum finem flamma uirilis habet*. A man’s love “burns,” so to speak, it is a flame (*flamma*) but it burns within legitimate or legal boundaries.

The idea of the “abject” subject, as defined by Kristeva and Butler, is a useful lens through which to look at Ovid’s representations of these paradigms. If we use “the abject” to think about this passage, we can see what kind of ideological work this catalogue is doing.

Kristeva theorizes the abject as that part of the self or of a society which must be rejected and is then refused to be acknowledged as part of the self/society. Instead the abject is established as an other in order to create the fictional individual or society which is desired or aspired to—an

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\(^{34}\) I would suggest that in line 331, the participle *furata* which modifies *filia* hints at but suppresses the Megarian Scylla’s desire for Minos through its acoustic similarity to *furere*.

\(^{35}\) See Leach for the representation of women’s desire as excessive in the *Ars*. Ancient and modern critics frequently fault Ovid’s excessive poetic style and the presence of excess in his representation of female desire could also be attributed to this characteristic. Quintilian claims Ovid was *nimium amator ingenii sui* (*Inst. Orat.*, 10.1.88). Seneca Rhetor says of Ovid’s work, *poterat videri…solutum carmen* (*Contr.*, 2.2.8) (cf. Sen. Rh., *Contr*. 2.2.8-12 and Quint., *Inst. Orat.*, 10.1.98). See Gibson (in Gibson, Green, and Sharrock: 122) and Janan (1991: 241-42 n. 11) for Ovid’s reputation of rhetorical excess with further references.
ideal self or state. “It is thus not lack of cleanliness or health that causes abjection but what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules.” The abject sexuality constructed by the poet-praeceptor’s frame is one which an individual cannot control, which does not have a legitimate boundary, but which instead controls the individual. Such desires are associated exclusively with women in this passage, implying that men do not experience such desire because their sexuality is under control.

Judith Butler expands Kristeva’s definition in her formulation of the abject: “The abject designates here precisely those “unlivable” and “uninhabitable” zones of social life”, excluded from subjecthood but necessary to delimit “the domain of the subject.” “[I]t [the abject] will constitute that site of dreaded identification against which—and by virtue of which—the domain of the subject will circumscribe its own claim to autonomy and to life.” With this definition in mind, it is possible to understand the abject female desire described by the poet-praeceptor as both a cautionary tale—a warning for the Augustan subject of how not to act—, and the definition of what male desire is not.

The frame, therefore, constructs a male desire which is by contrast human, in control, and civilized. The poet-praeceptor then offers a list of mythological women who ostensibly give faith to his promise, by further defining the nature of female desire. The reader-pupil is meant to take heart by comparing the pretty girl with whom he wants to flirt to Medea. This, in itself, is disconcerting and suspicious advice, even if one is thinking of Apollonius’ lovesick Medea. The frame again directs the student toward a reading which in many ways is at odds with the

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36 See Kristeva (1982: 1-31 and passim) for her formulation of “abject.”
37 Kristeva (1982), 4. Kristeva cites, as examples of forms of abjection, “defilement, food, taboo and sin” (68).
38 Butler (1993), 3. See also Butler (1993: 3-16, 93-119) for further explanation of her understanding of “abject.”
purported precepts of the teacher. The poet-praeceptor confidently states that *ne quam nos ante rogemus,/ femina iam partes uicta rogantis aget* (277-78). The phrase *partes...agere* is used to describe acting a role onstage, and Ovid’s use of this dramatic language here suggests an engagement with tragedy and its themes. This semantic context acts as a cue for the reader who will be more sensitive to representations of any of these heroines which may have been or were currently found on the tragic stage. While the first two *exempla*, Byblis and Myrrha, were not, so far as we know, subjects of tragedies, the remaining eight examples were. Such a reminder complicates the meaning of the poet-praeceptor’s list by introducing to the mind of his audience the complex and manifold representations of each heroine offered by both Greek and Roman tragedians. The catalogue which follows can be understood as a list of the ‘roles’ available to women. They, i.e., women, are the same as the paradigms. It is significant that the couplet which

39 *OLD*, *agere*, 25.  
40 Ovid’s own tragedy, *Medea*, may have been finished by the time of the *Ars*. See McKeown (I, 77, 87).  
41 Pasiphae: Euripides’ *Cretans*; Aerope: Euripides, *Cretan Women*, according to the scholion on Aristophanes’ *Frogs* (Σ Batr. 849), and perhaps Sophocles’ *Atreus*. See Owen (ad. *Tristia* ii, 391) for a complete list of evidence of tragedies on the subject, including Eur., *Cretan Women* and Webster (37-39) for a summary of evidence on the subject matter of *Cretan Women*. Scylla: according to Ovid himself, the subject of a play by an unknown tragedian (cf. *Tristia* ii. 393-4: *inpia nec tragicos tetingisset Scylla coturnos,/ ni patrium crinem desecuisset amor*; Hollis (1977), ad 331-32; Owen on *Tristia* ii.393); Clytemnestra appeared in plays by all three of the major tragedians—Aeschylus, *Oresteia*; Sophocles, *Electra*; Euripides, *Electra*; Phthia: Euripides, *Phoenix* and Ennius’ *Phoenix* (cf. Webster, 84-85); Phaedra: the subject of two plays by Euripides (*Hippolytus I* and II), and one by Sophocles (*Phaedra*); and Phineus’s wife was perhaps the subject of Aeschylus, *Phineus*, Sophocles, *Tympanistae*, and *Phineus A* and *B*.  
42 These “tragic” representations would have been very familiar to Ovid’s audience. Medea, for example, was the famous subject of Euripides’ *Medea*. She was also the subject of tragedies by Ennius (*Medea Exul*; Boyle, 71-78; Jocelyn, ad loc.), Pacuvius (*Medus*; Boyle 92, 94), Accius (*Medea or Argonautae*; 115-17), and Ovid himself (Boyle, 167-68). These tragedies, moreover, informed the construction of Ariadne in Cat. 64, and Dido in Verg., *Aen*. While we do not know if Ovid’s tragedy was ever staged, the Republican plays continued to be produced (Boyle 71, 108). Representations of the tragic Medea could be found in private homes (e.g., Medea and her children found in the House of Jason at Pompeii; see *LIMC*, s.v., Medea) and in public spaces (the Temple of Venus Genetrix in Caesar’s Forum contained Timomachus’ painting of Medea; Boyle, 149; Gutzwiller). Ling (134-35) reports that six Campanian “Medea” paintings represented her contemplating infanticide (not pining away for Jason), as did Timomachus’ painting. She was also used as an example by Roman orators, most notably Cicero (Jocelyn, 52-53). See also Hinds (1993), Fantham (2005: 119-20), and Newlands (1997) on Medea in Roman tragedy.
ends the list blames “female passion” (*feminea libidine*, 341), not tragic or mythological passion, for the dénouement of each example listed above.

The list is made up of several very brief examples ranging from 1-4 lines. These examples frame an extended Pasiphae narrative. Byblis (283-84) and Myrrha (285-88), the examples preceding the Pasiphae passage, share a similar structure with some variation.

**Byblida** quid referam, uetito *quae fratris amore*
arsit et est *laqueo* fortiter *ulta nefas*?

**Myrrha patrem**, sed non *qua filia debet*, *amauit*,
et nunc *obducto cortice presa latet*;
illius lacrimis, *quas arbore fundit odora,*
*unguimur*, et *domiae nomina gutta tenet.*

* (Ars Amat. 1.283-88)

The first hexameter of each example begins with the proper name, contains the name of the family member with whom their relationship is distorted, and ends with *amor/amare*, the aspect of the relationship which is in crisis. In both cases, the kinship role (brother and father) is positioned next to the noun or pronoun which identifies the girl, emphasizing by proximity a close relationship which has become too close. Enclosed by the proper names and names of family position are words indicating both the existence of rules (the incest taboo) and their transgression (*uetito*, 283; *non...filia debet*, 285).

The remaining lines of each example indicate the punishment for this transgression. Byblis becomes an avenger (*ulta*) of her own crime; the punishment she exacts is suicide (*laqueo*). Her suicide, accomplished in a feminine manner (hanging), returns her to a normative status; however, her status as criminal and avenger—a combination of opposing

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44 Loraux (1987: 7-30) argues the most dishonorable suicide, and the one associated with women, particularly in tragedy, was hanging.
roles—reflects her incestuous position. Incest forces Myrrha and her father to inhabit two separate kinship relationships at once (daughter to father as well as wife to husband), a paradoxical state akin to law breaker and law enforcer (est ... ulta nefas, 284). Myrrha’s crime is now hidden and constrained: nunc obducto cortice pressa latet, 286. The additional couplet indicates that her name (her identity as a human who once lived) and her sorrow (represented by her tears, lacrimis, 287) now belong to the sap of a tree. Both women are removed from the human realm as punishment.

Closing the frame of the lengthy Pasiphae passage (38 lines) are several more brief exempla: Aerope, Scylla, Clytemnestra, Medea, Phthia, Phaedra, and a tragic heroine whose name is lost.

Cressa

Thyesteo si se abstinuisset amore
(et quantum est uno posse carere uiro?),
non medium rupisset iter curruque retorto
Auroram uersis Phoebus adisset equis.

filia purpureos Niso furata capillos
pube premit rabidos inguinibusque canes.
qui Martem terra, Neptunum effugit in undis,
conjugis Atrides uictima dira fuit.
cui non defleta est Ephyraeae flamma Creusae
et nece natorum sanguinolenta parens?
fleuit Amyntorides per inania lumina Phoenix;
Hippolytum rabidi diripuistis equi.
quid fodiis immeritis, Phineu, sua lumina natis?
poea reuersura est in caput ista tuum.
omnia feminea sunt ista libidine mota;
acrior est nostra plusque furoris habet.

(Ars Am. 1.327-42)

Again, in these brief examples, our poet-praeceptor foregrounds family relationships. This focus highlights the failure of each woman to perform properly her kinship role of wife, daughter, or mother. Aerope’s desire (327-30) is described elliptically as a contrafactual statement.

Normative desire, i.e. natural (allowing the sun to takes its normal course, 329-330), by contrast, is figured as a restraint (se abstinuisset, 327), and a denial (uno posse carere uiro, 328). She is
named only by her nationality (*Cressa*, 327) and role as adulteress with Thyestes (*Thyesteo*, 327). This sort of elusive mythological and learned reference is a Hellenistic feature characteristic of the Roman elegists, but it also suggests, whether intentionally or not, that Aerope’s recognition relies on these two defining positions with which Aerope is in conflict.

Following Aerope is a hybrid Scylla (331-32), combining both the daughter of Nisus and the biform monster. Vergil has already made this same “mistake” in *Ecl.* 6.74-77 and Ovid is perhaps imitating Vergil here as he imitates his Pasiphae passage from the same poem (*Ecl.* 6.45-60, discussed below). Sergio Casali has noted that Ovid pointedly “corrects” Vergil in his *Metamorphoses*: “Ovid…puts himself in the role of Vergil’s interpreter, an interpreter especially interested in playing the part of “pedantic critic’.”46 Here perhaps Vergil’s “mistake” well suits Ovid’s context. If we assume that Ovid intentionally combined the two mythological characters or is following Vergil, the monster of 332 could be read as another example of active female desire, whose abject ‘natural’ form is expressed as unnatural. There is no metamorphosis. The Scylla of line 331 is already the monster of 332. The failure to perform her kinship role properly, due to her active desire, is given prominence by placing *filia* in the first position, in close proximity to the name of her father, but separated by the very thing whose theft ultimately disrupts her performance of daughter, the *purpureos…capillos*, 331. The manifestation of her unnaturalness is fittingly located around her genitals (*pube inguinibusque*, 332).

45 *Ecl.*6.74-76: *quid loquar aut Scyllam Nisi, quam fama secuta est/ candida succinctam latrantibus inguina monstris/ Dulichias uexasse rates et gurgite in alto;* Ovid repeats this “mistake” on several occasions, as does Propertius (4.4.39-40; but not 3.19.21-28). For a full list of hybrid Scyllas and references, see Hinds (1993: 15, n. 14). In his discussion of the instance at *Her.* 12.123-24, Hinds (15) argues the Scylla mistake is an example of intentional, learned play.

46 Casali (2007), 207. In this article, Casali is looking specifically at Ovid’s correction of *Aen.* 3 in *Met.* 13, but offers a full list of references for the scholarly discussion of Ovid’s critique of Vergil (181, n. 1).
Clytemnestra (333-334) is also only named through her kinship role (coniugis Atrides, 334), and is, moreover, denied a subject position (Agamemnon holds this place). Likewise, Medea’s (335-336) name is suppressed—she is known only by her murder of Creusa (flamma Creusae, 335)\(^{47}\) and by her role as parens (336), which is delayed until the last position, qualified by the destruction she has wrought. Line 337 describes the victim of Phthia, her son-in-law. Both the father (Amyntor) and the son (Phoenix) are named in the single line. The disastrous outcome resulting directly from Phthia’s active desire (inania lumina, 337) stands in for her.\(^{48}\) Phaedra (338) too is displaced by the result of her desire while Hippolytus’ name takes first position. The list finishes with a story (339-40) nearly identical to Phthia’s (337),\(^{49}\) whose result—the blinding of a son by a father, Phineus—replaces the name of the woman. Phineus is addressed by the poet- praeceptor, in the vocative case, and holds a central position in the first line (339).

The structure of the list gradually increases its psychological proximity to the reader-pupil. The names of the heroines gradually disappear and they are identified only by their crime or their punishment.\(^{50}\) The list begins with five tales that focus on the consequences for the desiring woman (283-332), but the focus shifts with Clytemnestra to the consequences for the male victims of her desire (333-40). The last three examples describe the mutilation of young men (337-40), close in age and lineage to Ovid’s ideal readers. All of this amounts to an implicit

\(^{47}\) It seems not even Creusa can escape the discourse of female desire, for her death by fire, flamma, recalls the use of flamma to describe masculine desire in line 282. In addition, the adjective Ephyraea used to describe Creusa occurs only once before in Latin literature, so far as we know, in Prop. 2.6.1 (non ita complebant Ephyraeae Laidos aedis) to modify the name of a Greek prostitute from Corinth in a poem averring that Cynthia is more promiscuous than infamous prostitutes.  

\(^{48}\) See Hollis (1977: ad loc.) for a summary of the story and Webster (84-85) for a summary of Euripides’ play, Phoenix.  

\(^{49}\) See Hollis (1977: ad loc.) for references.  

\(^{50}\) Cf. Prop. 3.19.11-22, where only the names of the first two examples, Pasiphae and Tyro, are suppressed.
lesson for the reader-pupil—a woman who does not contain, repress, and dissimulate her
“naturally” intemperate desire, will visit destruction upon the male members of her family and
will be punished. The direct address to Hippolytus’ horses (*diripuistis equi*, 338) and Phineus
(*fodis...Phineu*, 339), like the *amator*’s direct address to Scylla and *innuptae* in Prop. 3.19 (21,
25), draws attention to the male reader-pupil’s own risk in the face of female desire and his own
responsibility for resisting and repressing this female desire. Even in the shortest examples, we
get a sense of what is at stake—the dissolution of normative kinship relations and normative
gendered positions of active and passive, the same tensions which were explored in Greek
tragedies such as *Agamemnon* and *Hippolytus*.51

Before we consider the central heroine in the catalogue, Pasiphae, let us look briefly at an
earlier treatment of this myth by Vergil in *Eclogue* 6,52 for Vergil’s treatment of Pasiphae
informs Ovid’s own in book 1 of the *Ars*. By comparing the two treatments we can see how
Ovid’s poem both employs the same figures Vergil uses to characterize Pasiphae’s love and

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51 While it is hard to tell from the extant fragments, Pasiphae’s speech in *Cretans* suggests that she is either
responding to specific accusations of this kind or she is anticipating these charges. She denies any voluntary, and
therefore active, desire, placing the blame upon the gods (*ἐκ θεοί*, Kannicht fr. 472e.9), exonerating her from
actively playing the part of her own exchanger by choosing (another) man for a husband (*οὐ μὴν δέμας γ’ εὐ[...ca. 8
ll. νήμφιον]/τοιώνδε λέκτρω[ν οὐνεκ’ εἰε] παδοστιβῇ/ρινόν καθικε [ca. 15 ll.] ταν’ αλλ’ ουδὲ παίδων’ [ca. 9 ll.]/πόσιν/θέσθατι.,
Kannicht fr.472e.16-20). Of note is that her argument relies on what is likely
(*ἐχει γὰρ οὐδὲν εἰκός*, Kannicht fr. 472e.11)—in other words, what is within the bounds of intelligible and
reasonable human behavior. In addition, she argues that she would be an adulteress (*μάχ[λο]ς*) if she threw her
body at a *man* (*μὲν αὐνόρι*; *ἐθε[ν]*) *γὰρ* ει μὲν αὐνόρι προβαλον δέμας/ τοιμὸν, λαβραίαν ἐμπολωμένη
Κύπριν/ ὀρθῶς ἐν ἐνδι μάχ[λο]ς αὐς’ ἑφαινὼμην.,
Kannicht fr. 472e.6-8. The implication is that, because her
lover is not a man but a bull, the current situation (νῦν δ’, 9) is not recognizable as adultery. Ovid’s *praecceptor*
expresses a similar sentiment: *siue uirum mauis fallere, falle uiro*, *Ars Am.* 1.310. The *praecceptor*, perhaps echoing
Pasiphae herself, urges like for like trade, with a play on the meanings of *uir*. In both of these passages, adultery
with a *man* is recognizable and nameable (*μάχ[λο]ς*, *fallere*), although punishable. The madness, which in
Euripides can only be explained as divinely inspired (*ἐκ θεοῦ γὰρ προεβδολῆς*, Kannicht fr. 472e.9), is, in Ovid,
proof and punishment of Pasiphae’s abject position.

52 Coleman (15-16) dates Vergil’s *Eclogues* to the years 42-38 BCE, and *Ecl.* 6 at c. 38.
subtly changes the tone of these figures. Vergil’s Pasiphae is part of Silenus’ song—a collection of Hellenistic subjects.\(^{53}\)

\[
\text{et fortunatam, si numquam armenta fuissent,}
\]
\[
\text{Pasiphaen niuei solatur amore iuuenci.}
\]
\[
a, uirgo infelix, quae te dementia cepit!
\]
\[
\text{Proetides implerunt falsis mugitibus agros,
}
\[
\text{at non tam turpis pecudum tamen ulla secuta}
\]
\[
\text{concubitus, quamuis collo timuisset aratrum}
\]
\[
et saepe in leui quaesisset cornua fronte.
\]
\[
a! uirgo infelix, tu nunc in montibus erras:
\]
\[
\text{ille latus niueum molli fultus hyacintho}
\]
\[
ilice sub nigra pallentis ruminat herbas
\]
\[
aut aliquam in magno sequitur grege. ‘claudite, Nymphae,
\]
\[
\text{Dictaeae Nymphae, nemorum iam claudite saltus,
}
\[
\text{si qua forte ferant oculis sese obuia nostris}
\]
\[
errabunda bouis uestigia; forsitan illum
\]
\[
aut herba captum uiridi aut armenta secutum
\]
\[
perducant aliquae stabula ad Gortynia uaccae.’
\]
\[
(Vergil, Ecl. 6.45-60)
\]

Hollis and Armstrong regard Vergil’s Pasiphae as a gentler mythological portrait than that of Ovid.\(^{54}\) Her monstrous desire appears to be muted by the literary traditions with which Vergil engages, providing generic and allusive associations which allow a certain amount of sympathy to build and which construct a slightly more complex subject. Nevertheless, I would argue that Vergil’s depiction constructs Pasiphae’s desire as dangerous to herself because it is a madness. It is important to note that the internal narrator is engaged in storytelling, not teaching through examples; therefore, his portrayal is individuated and not part of a larger strategy of constructing female desiring subjects.

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\(^{53}\) The subjects of Silenus’ song are traditional Alexandrian material beginning with an Epicurean cosmogony. See Armstrong (170-77) for a detailed discussion of this passage, and references on the catalogue itself (170, n. 3): “The list of mythological subjects in Silenus’ song, framed by these passages with their strong Callimachean associations, thus appears to be something of a catalogue of poetic themes suitable for a Roman poet concerned to emphasize his Alexandrian affiliations” (170). See Page (ad loc.) for a discussion of the Lucretian influences on the cosmogony.

\(^{54}\) Hollis (1977), ad 289-326; Armstrong, 169-77: “Her [Pasiphae’s] bestial love is…made a source for…a fragile, intimate sympathy” (175).
The full story of Pasiphae’s desire is told only through the deferral of a contrafactual statement: *et fortunatam, si numquam armenta fuissent,/ Pasiphaen niuei solatur amore iuuenci*, 45-46; and a negative comparison with the myth of the Proetids: *Proetides implerunt falsis mugitibus agros,/ at non tam turpis pecudum tamen ulla secuta/ concubitus*, 48-50. Her husband Minos is never mentioned in this passage, nor is the end of her story told. Silenus is said to “console” (*solatur*, 46) Pasiphae. What does this mean? Page tells us that this means Silenus “describes how Pasiphae consoled herself [“with the love for a snowy bull”], the singer being said actually to do that which he describes as done.” This does not seem like much of a consolation, rather like a reason for consolation. Regardless, the force of *consolatur* is to make Pasiphae the object of sympathy for herself, for the internal narrator, and, implicitly, for the internal and external audience. Vergil’s Silenus leaves off the tale with the still unrequited love of Pasiphae. She is still lovesick and pitiable. The story itself is set in a pastoral landscape and told by a pastoral narrator, Silenus. This literary context suggests an association between Pasiphae and a wandering *amator*. Armstrong has mapped out the instances of pastoral elements in the passage, drawing special attention to resemblance with Corydon of *Eclogue* 2 and Gallus of *Eclogue* 6. In addition, as Armstrong has also noted, engagement with neoteric poetry, specifically the Hellenistic neoteric epyllion of Calvus, *Io*, suggests a Pasiphae who is a

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55 Page’s translation (ad loc.).
56 Page (ad loc.) cites as support for this reading *circumdat* (62) and *erigit* (63) in the same poem; See also Armstrong (175-76 and 176, n. 18) for further discussion of the possible grammatical construction of this phrase.
57 Armstrong, 174-77.
58 See also Hubbard (61-62) for a similar argument.
sympathetic victim of divine intervention through the association with Calvus’ innocent maiden, Io.\textsuperscript{59}

Vergil only borrows half of a line from Calvus. The remainder of the line makes clear that Pasiphae may be pitiable, \textit{infelix}, but she is also crazy: \textit{a, uirgo infelix, quae te dementia cepit}, 47. We are told that she is even crazier than the Proetids, who were driven mad and thought they were cows.\textsuperscript{60} Although they believed themselves to have become cows, even \textit{they} did not pursue a bull. In fact, the Proetids, according to Silenus, were none too happy about their hallucinated form. They feared that they would be used as cows by being put under the yoke (50) and were frightened by their (imagined) horns (51). Pasiphae, although not under the influence of divine madness, is, in contrast, so far gone (\textit{tam turpis}, 49) as to want to mate with a bull. Calvus’ apostrophe is borrowed a second time in line 52. Filling out this line is another indicator of Pasiphae’s madness. She is said to wander: \textit{a! uirgo infelix, tu nunc in montibus erras}, 52. As noted above, her wandering is like the wandering of a pastoral lover, but it can also be the metaphorical wandering of reason,\textsuperscript{61} the wandering of those driven mad,\textsuperscript{62} or more

\textsuperscript{59} Armstrong, 170-73. The first half of Calvus’ line \textit{a virgo infelix, herbis pasceris amaris} (Courtney, fr. 9) appears twice in \textit{Eclogue} 6: \textit{a, uirgo infelix, quae te dementia cepit}, 47; \textit{a! uirgo infelix, tu nunc in montibus erras}, 52. Ovid picks up the second hemistitch of this line and returns it to a description of Io in his \textit{Met.}: \textit{frondibus arbores et amara pascitur herba}, 1.632. Armstrong (173) also notes echoes of Catulus 64 in this passage, comparing \textit{errabunda bovis vestigia} (\textit{Ecl.} 6.58) to \textit{errabunda regens tenui uestigia filo} (Cat. 64.113). See Höschele for a detailed discussion of Calvus’ epyllion (passim) and a comparison to Vergil’s \textit{Ecl.} 6 (12-16).

\textsuperscript{60} Page (ad loc.) reports the version of the myth in which the daughters of Proetus were punished for insolence. Among other variants, the Proetids were punished by Hera for sexual deviance or had offended Dionysus (cf. Armstrong 82-83, n. 26 for summary and references). Both of these variants attest to a connection in the Greek imagination between desire, madness, and Bacchic frenzy. See below for further discussion of this connection.

\textsuperscript{61} O.L.D., \textit{errare} (5), “to think or act in error, be mistaken or deluded, blunder.”

\textsuperscript{62} Such as the Proetids described above, or Io and Callisto, hounded by Juno (told in Ovid’s \textit{Met.} 1.568-746, 2.410-530 respectively).
significantly the wandering of those in a Bacchic frenzy, which, for the Augustan poets, seems to be the state of a woman in love—a concept I will discuss in more detail below. Despite her madness, the Vergilian Pasiphae’s desire does not stray too far from normative female desire. She is still represented as relatively passive. She asks for divine help (55-56). She waits, in case by chance (forte, 57; forsitan, 58) her beloved should come to her (57-60).

Ovid’s treatment of Pasiphae, in addition to reworking Vergil’s Pasiphae in Eclogue 6, may look back to Euripides’ Pasiphae in his tragedy, Cretans, which told the story of Minos’ discovery of the birth of the Minotaur, and also looks forward to the Heroides and the extended treatments of desiring women in the Metamorphoses. In relation to the two-dimensional mythological characters framing it, the Pasiphae episode at first appears to bring to life a literary character. Upon closer inspection, however, we find that Pasiphae’s presentation is hardly complex. Pasiphae is three-dimensional, but just barely. Unlike the desiring women of the Heroides and Metamorphoses, who speak in their own voice about their own experience of desire at length, Pasiphae is given only a few words of her own (314-16, 322) and only to express jealousy of her rivals. Although it is obscured by the farcical depiction, like the examples of female desire which surround her, she is ultimately a symbol, albeit elaborately drawn, representing the danger women pose to themselves and their family when they actively pursue their love interest.

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63 In Met. 9, Byblis, after being compared to a maenad (9.641-43), is said to wander: quibus illa relictis/ Caras et armiferos Lelegas Lyciamque pererrat, 9.644-45).
64 At Geo. 3.269-79, Vergil describes the hippocmanes, mares driven wild by love, as racing over a mountainous terrain (superant montis, 270; stant rupibus altis, 273; saxa per et scopulos et depressas convallis/ diffugiunt, 277). See also n. 33 (above) for discussion and bibliography on this passage.
65 See Hollis (1977: ad 289-326) for references; see Webster (87-92) and Collard and Cropp (516-19) for evidence and a summary of the play.
The details of Pasiphae’s erotic pursuit demonstrate in detail the poet-praeceptor’s key messages which he lays out in the framing passage. The poet-praeceptor told his reader-pupils that men’s desire was not so full of madness (*nec tam furiosa libido*, 281). The comparison to women’s desire in particular is made clear by the structure which sets women in opposition to men throughout the frame. He will later reiterate this message at the end of the passage, when he says more explicitly that the feminine libido has more madness than ours (*nostra plusque furoris habet*, 342). If we look at the Pasiphae description, we see that, although the narrator does not call her mad, like Vergil’s Pasiphae, she is depicted as acting mad, a fact which the absurd scene mirrors and augments; for the poet-praeceptor has constructed a comic amalgam—a tragic wife in a bucolic setting behaving like an elegiac *puella*, an elegiac *amator*, and a tragic avenging woman all at once.66 When considered in comparison to Vergil’s recent treatment, her madness becomes even more striking.67 Ovid depicts Pasiphae as actively pursuing her beloved bull. Vergil’s Pasiphae asks for divine help (*Ecl*. 6.55-60) while Ovid’s concocts false religious rites in order to kill off the competition (*commenta sacra*, 319).68 Vergil’s Pasiphae hopes her bull will wander to her (*Ecl*. 6.58-60), Ovid’s follows hers across the fields (301, 311-12) and puts on a cow suit to lure him to her (*uacca acerna*, 325).

66 See Armstrong (178-86) for a detailed description and list of literary models in this passage: “The relationship of the text of *Ars Amatoria* 1.289-326 to its sources and influences is one of very Ovidian excess: no model is allowed to stand unchallenged” (185).
67 See, e.g., Armstrong, who argues that Ovid’s treatment of Pasiphae lacks the subtlety and sympathy of Vergil’s: “What he [Ovid] is doing is, it would appear, new. Rather than take up Vergil’s challenge to treat Pasiphae with sympathy, he seems to reject that whole side of the neoteric project and views her instead with the scathing, all too observant eye of the social critic” (180-81). Hollis offers a similar, and stronger, opinion, calling Ovid’s presentation “broad farce” and “black humour” (1977: ad 289-326).
68 Pasiphae’s absurd but violent acts of “revenge” also dramatize the poet-praeceptor’s statement that women’s desire is less sparing (*parcior*, 281) and fiercer (*acrior*, 342) than men’s.
Vergil’s Pasiphae wanders through the mountains (6.52), reflecting, I argued earlier, the wandering of her senses and equating her with both the masculine pastoral lover and the wandering of the followers of Dionysus. Ovid too depicts his Pasiphae leaving the marriage chamber and being carried into the wilderness (in nemus et saltus thalamo regina relicto/ fertur, ut Aonio concita Baccha deo, Ars Am. 311-12). The mountains are the requisite space—on the margins of culture—for bacchantes to whom the poet-praeceptor compares Pasiphae in the pentameter. Desiring women are often characterized by furens in Ovid,69 as they are in the frame, or they are associated with the worship of Dionysus, as Pasiphae has been. In fact, similes likening any woman acting passionately or irrationally to bacchantes are numerous.70 The mythological worship of Dionysus by bacchantes is characterized by its frenzy, an ecstasy,71 and the similes figure the experience of passionate or irrational women as an ekstasis,72 from the verb ἐξιστημι, meaning literally “to stand outside,” though it can also be used to describe losing

69 In the Met., Medea’s struggle over her passion is described as a struggle between ratio and furor (7.10); Scylla is called furibunda (8.107); Byblis calls love furor (9.512, 541, 602), and the narrator refers to her love as a furor (9.583) and her as furibunda (9.637); Myrrha is also called furibunda (10.410).
70 Vergil likens the lovesick Dido to a bacchant (bacchatur, Aen 4.300-3); In the Met., Byblis is compared to a maenad (utque tuo motae, proles Semeleia, thyrso/ Ismariae celebrant repetita triennia Bacchae,/ Byblida non aliter..., 9.641-43). This connection between the bacchant and the sexually transgressive woman can be traced back to Greek representations. On this topic in Greek myth and literature, Seaford (1990) argues exposure to the wild was part of the initiation process which resulted in a son’s return to natal household and a daughter’s transfer to a husband’s (161). “Maenadism represents in an extreme form of the loss of control by the male of the female, and was indeed imagined as involving the danger of illicit sex” [emphasis added] (163). Seaford offers tragic examples of out-of-control women associated with Bacchic worship (1990: 163-64); see also Armstrong (97-98), Janan (2001: 76-78), Miller (1995), and Warden (181-82) for an analysis of this topic and a comprehensive list of comparanda from Greek and Latin literature.
71 See Otto (92-119) for a discussion of Greek and Roman artistic and literary representations of maenadic frenzy.
72 See LS, ἐκστασις, 3. “entrancement, astonishment;” 4.a. “trance; ecstasy;” 4.b., “drunken excitement.” In her reading of the Procrne/Philomela myth in Ovid’s Met., Marder uses the idea of ecstasy in its literal meaning to describe the women’s inability to articulate their violation. The only language available to Philomela to communicate Tereus’ crime, Marder argues, is the law of the father (159-60; nomen patris, Met. 6.555). The rape of Philomela and Procrne’s reading of her “disarticulated” experience creates an “ecstasis” (159-60, 162): “they speak to each other through a discourse of rage. The language of rage is a language without a tongue…To speak in rage is to be “beside oneself”—it is to abandon the possibility that one’s speech coincides with the place of one’s experience” (162).
one’s senses.\textsuperscript{73} Such a state implies feeling or acting not like oneself, certainly a description of
the mythological women and men when they celebrate orgia of Dionysus, and, perhaps the
women and men who participated in the real celebrations in ancient Greece. His worship was
also closely associated with drunkenness and sexual promiscuity in both Greece and Rome.\textsuperscript{74} In
addition, the presence of Dionysiac elements in Roman poetry hints at tragic contaminatio.\textsuperscript{75}
Mention of Dionysus alerts the reader-pupil not only to the ecstatic nature of the women’s desire,
but also reminds him again of the context in which this destructive desire became canonical, at
the tragic competitions of the City Dionysia in Athens.\textsuperscript{76} As noted earlier, eight of the ten
heroines featured in this list were depicted on the Attic stage. Pasiphae herself was the subject of
Euripides’ (now fragmentary) Cretans. While worshippers of Bacchus in real life returned to
their normative social roles, the tragic bacchantes inflicted damage upon their kin, ravaged
homes, and in particular destroyed the men in those homes.\textsuperscript{77}

\textsuperscript{73} LSJ, δέξισθμι, A., 2.; B., 3.
\textsuperscript{74} Cf., e.g., Euripides, Bacchae, where Pentheus charges the maenads with drunkenness and “slinking off separately
to lonely corners to serve the beds of men” (ἀλλην δ’ ἄλλος εἰς ἑρημίαν/ πτώσσουσαν εὐνάις ἄρεήνων
ὑπηρετεῖν), 222-223), or the Roman charges in the Bacchanalia, which included stupra permiscua ingenuorum
feminarumque: Livy 39:8: additae uoluptates religioni uini et epularum, quo plurium animi inlicerentur. cum uinum
animos <... >, et nox et mixti feminis mares, aetatis teneae maioribus, discrimen omne pudoris extinxissent,
corruptelae primum omnis generis fieri coeptae, cum ad id quisque, quo natura prornioris libidinis esset paratam
uoluptatem haberet. nec unum genus noxae, stupra promiscua ingenuorum feminarumque erant, sed falsi testes
falsa signa testamentaqa et indicia ex eadem officina exibant.
\textsuperscript{75} See Conte (1986: 159-84), Hardie (passim), and Panoussi on tragic contamination in Vergil’s Aeneid; Curley
(2002: 258-69) in Ovid.
\textsuperscript{76} Froma Zeitlin argues that the feminine aspects of Dionysus reflected and associated the god with the intrinsically
feminine genre of tragedy (passim): “There is nothing new in stressing the associations of Dionysus and the
feminine for the Greek theater. After all, madness, the irrational, and the emotional aspects of life are associated in
the culture more with women than with men” (343-44).
\textsuperscript{77} See Seaford (2006: 26-38) for an interesting discussion of the (mythical) kin-killing violence of the thiasos and
its potential for community building. Seaford argues that the dissolution of boundaries the individual participants
experience and metaphorical violence done to the private family creates a strong cohesion in the community which
is then harnessed through state-controlled festivals: “The centrifugal tendency of maenadism is incorporated into the
polis and, by becoming a temporary and merely symbolic reversal of the structure of the polis, may even reinforce
its coherence” (36). Moreover, as the group most closely associated with the private sphere, the house, women
For the Romans, moreover, the threat posed by worshippers of Bacchus had a historic context. Early in the second century BCE the worship of Dionysus in Rome fell under the suspicion of the Senate. Of particular concern were the Greek origins of the cult and the unsupervised gatherings of people where gender and class distinctions were blurred. As Seaford puts it: “The intensity of the cult, together with the secret initiation and oath of loyalty to which its members were subjected, may have been—or seemed to be—a focus of identity that transcended, and so threatened, loyalty to, the existing structures of the Roman order.” A senatus consultum was passed in 186 BCE restricting assemblies, but individual worship was allowed to continue. As a result of the suppression and its legacy, Roman literary references to bacchantes resonate particularly strongly with the context of social disorder. Still a generic marker, the bacchantes also and especially represented the wild, often violent, extra-legal frenzy of a foreign religion, the ecstasy of the other. In the Aeneid, for instance, bacchic frenzy is inspired not by Bacchus, but by a fury, Allecto, or is simulated in order to work against male figure prominently in myths of resistance to Dionysus and are the best representatives for the ritual dissolution of the private sphere in the actual performance of his rites (34).

78 Livy (39.8-19) provides a description of the suppression and the events leading up to the senatorial decree; for the inscription preserving the senatus consultum see CIL 1.196; ILS 18. See Seaford (2006: 58-61) for a discussion of the social and political significance of the suppression.

79 Seaford (2006), 60-61. See also Takács (2000) for a discussion of the suppression and the mechanisms of the religious and ideological control used by the Roman elite. While Takács argues that the worship of Bacchus was merely an excuse for exercising such control and curtailing Hellenistic influence, Livy's account (39.8-19), probably published during Ovid’s early writing career, provides a different perspective. Anxiety over gender reversal and sexual deviance is evident in Livy's narrative of the event: “In Livy's narrative, the cult of Bacchus represents disorder and madness while the state represented by the (all male) Senate stands for order and sanity” (310), attesting to the reception of the event at the dawn of the Augustan era. For the dating of Livy’s Ab Urbe Condita, see Ogilvie (1-2), Syme (1959), and Walsh (1-19).

80 The suppression included over 6000 executions. See Livy 39.17-19 for the sentencing and punishment of the conspirators named. See Bauman (35-37), who argues that the Senate’s suppression was “anti-feminist” and motivated by a fear of a primarily female cult plotting against the state. Most interesting is his discussion of the uses of coniuratio by Cato (De Coniuratio; Livy 34.2.3) and Terence (Hec. 198; Hyginus Fab. 15:507) in reference to this and other women’s “movements” (36). See also Gruen, 34-78.
order and undermine homosocial alliances. Velleius Paterculus (2.82.4) tells us that in 34 BCE, Antony presented himself as the New Dionysus in his triumph over the Armenians in Alexandria. Antony’s performance, Miller argues, “was precisely the kind of “eastern excess” that allowed Augustus to portray himself as the defender of traditional Roman order against the dangers of an orientalizing and effeminate tyranny.”

In short, women who behave like bacchantes are both mad and like women in tragedy. Also like the bacchantes of tragedy, Pasiphae can no longer discern oppositional categories. She cannot tell the difference between human and animal. The absurdity is comical, but one need only recall Agave, well-known from Euripides’ *Bacchae*, to be reminded of how destructive this breakdown can be in its tragic form. Punished for her family’s refusal to acknowledge Dionysus as a god, Agave and her sisters are driven into a Bacchic frenzy, and in their ecstasy mistake a man for a beast. She parades her son’s head through town, believing it to be the trophy of a lion kill. Like Agave, the Ovidian Pasiphae is unable to distinguish man from beast or woman from woman.

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81 Deiphobus describes Helen simulating Bacchic worship while aiding the Greeks hiding in the Trojan horse (illa chorum simulans euhantis orgia circum/ ducebat Phrygias; flammam media ipsa tenebat/ ingentem et summa Danaos ex arce uocabat, 6.517-519). Amata, inspired (inspirans, 7.351) by a snake from Allecto’s hair, feigns Bacchic worship for the sake of hiding Lavinia and preventing her marriage to Aeneas, a marriage/contract struck between the Trojan leader and her husband, Evander (quin etiam in siluas simulato numine Bacchi/ maius adorta nefas maioremque orsa furorem/ euolat et natam frondosis montibus abdit,/ quo thalamum eripiat Teucris taedasque moretur, 7.385-88; the description of the feigned rites continue through line 405). Allecto finds Amata already distressed over the marriage, a distress qualified as womanly (quam super aduentu Teucrum Turnique hymenaeis/ feminea ardentem curaeque iraeque coquebant, 7.344-45). In addition to the fire imagery, which we have seen in the elegiac descriptions of desire, Amata’s resulting furor (sine more furit lymphata per urbem, 7.377) is inspired explicitly to disrupt the household: quo furibunda domum monstrro permisceat omnem, 7.348. Keith (2000: 65-100) argues that Roman epic, beginning with Vergil’s *Aeneid*, transfers “the violent summons of war from male to female characters” (73) through such figures as Juno, Allecto, Dido, and Amata: "The male conquest of the militant female in the *Aeneid* reflects a potent enabling fiction of the early Augustan regime, in which Roman Order is re-established externally through the defeat of Cleopatra and internally through the re-domestication of Roman women" (81).

82 Miller (2004), 167. See Miller (2004: 166-67) for a detailed discussion of intertextual relations between Antony, *Amor*, and Bacchus in Roman elegy (*Am*. 1.2.43-48, 51-52, and Prop. 2.16.41-42). Ovid’s comparison of triumphing *Amor* to Bacchus in 1.2.47-48 (talis erat domita Bacchus Gangetide terra:/ tu gravis alitibus, tigribus ille fuit), moreover, points to an interesting gender difference in Bacchic similes. *Amor*, a male figure, is likened to the god, Bacchus, who dominates (*domita...terra*), while women are likened to the worshippers of Bacchus, reflecting a normative gender hierarchy.
cow. But, unlike Agave’s madness, Pasiphae’s is not the result of Dionysus’ power. While love is often personified as a divinity, in the form of Cupid, Venus, or the abstract deified Amor, this episode makes no reference to divine influence. Her madness and her desire are all her own.

She describes the bull as if he were a man, calling him domino...meo (314), ipsum (315), and again meo (322). The poet-praeceptor urges Pasiphae to make a distinction: siue uirum mauis fallere, falle uiro, 310. The line relies on the multiply signifying word vir, meaning both “man” and “husband,” further emphasizing the exclusive nature of the role of husband—one must be a man to be a vir. Pasiphae herself wishes to sprout horns: quam cuperes fronti cornua nata tuae (308), echoing Vergil’s Eclogue 6.51 (quoted above), where Pasiphae is compared to the daughters of Proetus, who think they are cows and fear that there are horns on their brow (in leui quaesisset cornua fronte, Ecl. 6.51). Vergil sets the example of the Proetids as a measure of Pasiphae’s madness. The maidens were not so mad as to pursue a sexual union with a bull (48-50), as Vergil’s Pasiphae is represented as doing. The intertextual dialogue between Ovid’s Ars 1 and Vergil’s Eclogue 6 suggests that Ovid’s Pasiphae is the maddest of them all, for Vergil’s Pasiphae did not go so far as to wish for horns. Ovid’s Pasiphae treats the female cows as if they were humans, and behaves vindictively and jealously as if they were paelices (320, 321). Here the voice of the poet-praeceptor and the interior thoughts of Pasiphae seem to fuse. For it is the poet-praeceptor who refers to the uaccae as paelices, not Pasiphae herself, suggesting that perhaps this confusion is less of a concern—that the categories of woman

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83 In contrast to Pasiphae’s speech in the Cretans (Kannicht fr. 472e, quoted above, n. 51) where Pasiphae points to the ridiculousness of this possibility as proof of her innocence.

84 See OLD, vir, 1., “an adult male;” 2a., “a husband;” see also Davis (1999: 445-46), Hollis (1977: ad loc.), Miller (2004), and Williams (528-29, 539, 542) for the ambiguity of this term, particularly in elegy.
and cow are not necessarily opposed, iterating the alignment of women with animals that the
animal comparanda in the frame articulates (271-73, 278-80).

Another aspect of Pasiphae’s madness is her inability to recognize who she is—both her
human form and her status as human wife and queen. As noted above, Pasiphae is unable to
recognize her bucolic setting and she behaves like an elegiac puella.85 The poet-praeceptor
draws attention to this aspect of her madness when he addresses Pasiphae:

ille tuus nullas sentit adulter opes.
quid tibi cum speculo montana armenta petenti?
quid totiens positas fingis inepta comas?
crede tamen speculo, quod te negat esse iuuenca:
(Ars Am., 1.304-7)

She is unable to “see” herself, despite the mirror in her hand—a common “tragic” failure—, nor does she realize that the bull is unable to be affected by (sentit, 304)87 her careful cultus.
This lack of self-knowledge is further emphasized by the irony later in the passage. Pasiphae
calls a cow rival stulta: nec dubito quin se stulta decere putet, 316. Of course, the fool is not the
cow, who does not think herself pretty, but the speaker, who treats the cow as a human paelex
and who already has been called inepta (306) by the poet-praeceptor.

Although our poet-praeceptor does not call Pasiphae a virgo, as Vergil’s Silenus does
(Ecl. 6.47, 52), nor does he draw implicit connections to mythological virgines through literary

85 See Armstrong, 182-84.
86 Oedipus famously embodied the tragic lack of self-knowledge and his anagnorisis (“recognition”) articulates an
important part of the resolution of the tragic plot (cf. Aristotle, Poetics, 11.1452a-b); Pasiphae’s daughter Phaedra
compares time to a mirror in Euripides’ Hippolytus, 428-30: κακους δε θυτηων εξηφην, όταν τυχην/ προθειν κατοπτρων ως
tα παρθενων νεα / χρονος παρ’ οις μηνην’ οθθηην εγω. Goff (1990: 23-24) argues
that this passage is a case of misidentification, that it reveals her subjectivity caught between anticipation of her
transgression and a nostalgia for her lost innocence.
87 OLD, sentire, 5., “to be affected by, feel the influence of.”
allusion, he represents a Pasiphae who longs to be a virgo, drawing upon the mythological exempla of the victimized maidens Europa and Io (et modo se Europen fieri, modo postulat Io,/ altera quod bos est, altera uecta boue, Ars Am. 1.323-24) because one is a cow and the other rode a cow. This self-association is another example of her madness. Pasiphae the mythological character is a desiring wife pursuing the object of her desire, but she wants to be a mythological, victimized maiden who is pursued as an object of desire.

Also like the other examples of desiring women in the poet-praeceptor’s list, Pasiphae is represented as behaving in a way which is normal for neither her social role as wife/queen nor her gender role as woman, and her story describes in more detail the threat this poses to men in her family. We are told that the concern (cura, 301), which she should have for her husband, does not delay her from running off to the herd: it comes armentis, nec ituram cura moratur/ coniugis, et Minos a boue uictus erat (301-2). The structure of the couplet reinforces the displacement of her cura which shares the hexameter line with armentis instead of appearing in its proper place with her husband, Minos, on the following line. In line 302, both his familial role (husband) and proper name are given and fill the first hemistich of the pentameter, drawing our attention to him. The second hemistich describes the outcome of her displaced cura as Minos, her human husband, is made the vanquished enemy of a cow: Minos a boue uictus erat. The outcome overturns the proper hierarchy of man : beast. Furthermore, by leaving the marriage chamber (thalamo regina relecto, 311), which is a symbol of the relationship to her

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88 One could argue that the similarity between the descriptions of the bulls in Ars (candidus, armenti gloria, taurus erat, signatus temui media inter cornua nigro;/ una fuit labes, cetera lactis erant, 1.290-92) and Moschus, Europa (τού δή τοι τὸ μὲν ἄλλο δέμας ξανθόχροον ἐσκε, κύκλος δ’ αργύριος μέσσας μάρμαρος μετωπα, δ’ ὑπογλαύσσεσκε καὶ ἱμερὸν ἀπράτεσσεν, 84-86) accomplishes something similar to Vergil’s intertext with Calvus; however, Moschus has uncharacteristically eroticized Europa’s gaze in this passage. By drawing a comparison between the objects of the two women’s desire at the beginning of the passage, Ovid increases our focus on Pasiphae’s desire without introducing a sympathetic resonance through the figure of Europa, who is commonly depicted as a victim.
husband and the household which he controls, Pasiphae steps over the threshold of normative family roles. This movement spatially signifies her transgression and her movement towards a position outside of society and the traditional rules which govern its members. Pasiphae’s desire is no longer part of civilization, but is located in the wilderness.

In the frame the poet-praeceptor compares women with cows, claiming that, like cows, a woman will eventually pursue a man: *femina iam partes uicta rogantis aget:/ mollibus in pratis admugit femina tauro* (278-79). In the Pasiphae passage, the poet-praeceptor tells the story of a woman who literally equates women with cows, a woman who wants to be a cow, and a woman who equates a bull with a man. If Pasiphae is the *femina* of 279, into what position does this shift the male reader-pupil? Pasiphae must perform the role of a beast to satisfy her inhuman (i.e., abnormal) desire. Active female desire, for which Pasiphae is an *exemplum*, makes men into beasts as well. Because it reverses a fundamental Roman gender binary—active/masculine: passive/feminine—active female desire is also associated with and represented as reversing other fundamental categories such as family roles (through incest and adultery) and the hierarchy of man and beast.

The poet-praeceptor admonishes us: “all these things were motivated by female desire” (*omnia feminea sunt ista libidine mota*, 341)—ergo all female desire is like Pasiphae’s. Ovid’s text is doing double duty in this passage. Speaking explicitly to the normative male audience, whom he addresses, he also speaks indirectly to an invisible and unaddressed audience of women. As an abject desire, that of the active desiring woman delineates normative desire by representing what normative desire is not. Her desire defines the border beyond which the desire of men or women ceases to be counted as socially and culturally acceptable and begins to resemble the desire of the non-human. Her wild, irrational love circumscribes the lawful, finite
legitimus finis, 282), and moderate (parcior, 281) desire of Roman men, which, although still a flame (flamma uirilis, 282) is contained. Normative female desire is described only as the antithesis of male desire (through the use of negatives and comparatives as we see in line 281, parcior in nobis nec tam furiosa libido), but it is apparent, in its normative form, only as a non-desire, one so successfully dissimulated it is not apparent (quam poteris credere nolle, 274; uir male dissimulat, tectius illa cupid, 276). In relation to normative female desire, therefore, active desire like Phaedra’s represents the opposite of “feminine” desire by merely existing, marking the limit beyond which a normative woman’s desire ceases to count as “feminine” and begins to resemble “masculine” desire. These two categories are themselves in many ways opposed (active : passive) but they are linked in their relational status as normative roles within the discursive economy of Ovid’s ideal readers. These borders of normative and abject desire are policed by the threat of punishment. For the desiring female subject, the punishment is abjection and madness, for the desiring man, the punishment is a feminized position which is out of control. For the man who fails to control active female desire, the punishment is destruction. All of these punishments are demonstrated by the examples offered by the poet-praeceptor of the Ars.89

Normative male desire is constructed as “naturally” controlled and moderate, because the system requires his desire to be controlled and trained on certain appropriate bodies according to the incest taboo in Lévi-Straussian terms, but more specifically according to sexual-social taboos.

89 According to Butler (1993: 15), “the symbolic ought to be rethought as a series of normativizing injunctions that secure the borders of sex through the threat of psychosis, abjection, psychic unlivability…”
and legal constraints being put into play in Augustan Rome, which we described above. While a man had more sexual freedom in terms of sexual partners, there were still male and female bodies which were denied to him. After the passage of the *lex Julia*, these bodies became restricted by law. Augustan discourses of desire, therefore, defined a masculine desire which could, by its very nature, conform to the legal restrictions imposed on the Roman man’s sexual appetites, while defining men who did not conform to sexual customs and legislation as unmanly or effeminate.

Normative female desire, in contrast, is constructed as “naturally” uncontrollable—full of fury; but, because the system demands that she remain an object, a “gift,” in order to function as the conduit for creating alliances between men, her desire must constantly be dissimulated. This fiction of woman’s lack of desire helps to maintain the fiction of her body as object and alleviate anxieties about a disruption to this system. Moreover, for a Roman *matrona*, her sexual partner was restricted to her husband. Active extramarital sexuality was forbidden and severely punished by the *lex Julia*. The language of the theater found in the frame (*partes…rogantis aget*, 278) and throughout the passage seems to suggest that the active role of asker and the passive role of asked is a performance which is in no way “natural” to a gender, but instead a fiction

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90 See, e.g., Gleason (xx-xxvi, 62-67, and passim), and Skinner (1993: 111-115) on self-control as a defining feature of masculinity, which must be constantly maintained in order to avoid slipping into a feminine position: “Ancient masculinity is thus intrinsically unstable and always at risk, but never so much as in the presence of the sexually experienced female, whose erotic energies are presumed to be boundless and whose erotic demands are correspondingly insatiable” (Skinner 1993: 111).

91 See also Leach and Myerowitz (109-10) on women constructed as raw material requiring male *cultus* in the *Ars*. “Just as the artisan or farmer imposes his skills upon the objects of his trade, so does the lover impose his craft upon the unruly race of women, whose natures must be forced into conformity with an orderly system of love” (Leach, 149).
sustained by both participants. The antithetical syntax of line 276, however, indicates an advantage on the part of the women: “a man fakes it badly, she desires more covertly.” The binary categories of active and passive desire may be cultural constructs aligned arbitrarily with genders, but “she” is better at putting on the “costume.” Woman naturally hides her desire.

The stereotype of Woman as master dissimulator, hiding her true (destructive) nature, can be traced back to Pandora and is frequently figured in the representation of tragic heroines on the Attic stage. But line 278 indicates that Woman is still ultimately passive even while acting the active role: _femina iam partes uicta rogantis aget_ (“Woman, because she has been conquered, will play the part of the asker”). Her performance is constrained by the victorious (and uncontrollable) power of desire, which overrides her otherwise natural ability to control appearances. This is an important lesson for Ovid’s female (and male) audience, for it constructs women as naturally good liars and dissimulators, but potentially unable to control their desire, which is also naturalized as wild. It is, therefore, _natural_—read “womanly”—for women to fear their desire and hide what desire(s) they may feel. For Ovid, the unrestrained, irrational, and inhuman desire of women poses no threat as long as it is concealed; however, constructing women as master dissimulators implies that the madness is already lurking beneath the surface and so necessarily is always threatening expression. A woman taking the active role in the

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92 Butler theorizes that sex, gender, and kinship roles are constituted through behavior and significations and we can see this in Augustan Rome, e.g., in the wearing of the _stola_ by a Roman _matrona_, a performance of a gender and kinship role discussed in more detail in chapter 1. See Butler (1993: 12-16; 2006: 183-193) for her formulation of gender identification and performativity.

93 See Bassi (passim, especially 99-143), Wohl (1998: 43-44), Zeitlin (341-74). Bassi argues that disguise is gendered feminine in Greek literature and drama: “The deceptive adornments of the female, guileful speech, and the potential for putting masculine power at risk constitute what might be called the _Pandora paradigm_ [emphasis added], according to which these attributes naturalize the female’s affinity for visual and verbal deception from the point of view of male auditors and spectators” (130). Likewise Zeitlin: “Woman is perennially under suspicion as the one who acts a part—that of the virtuous wife—but hides other thoughts and feelings, dangerous to men, within her heart and within the house” (362).
theater of erotics, as the poet-\textit{praecceptor}’s examples make clear, can only result in the dissipation of the boundaries, a release of the \textit{flamma} so well-contained by the \textit{libido uirilis}.

Through a careful analysis of Ovid’s use of mythological paradigms of the desiring female subject in his \textit{Ars Amatoria}, we have seen how the “signs of desire” are “spoken” like a language. In terms of a semiotics of desire, each of the women in Ovid’s list of desiring female subjects acts like a synonym for the others. They all signify the abject desiring subject. By representing what is extreme, for example Pasiphae’s madness which outdoes that of Vergil’s Pasiphae, Ovid, through his reiteration, pushes female desire even further beyond the bounds of normativity, making Vergil’s already disturbing portrayal seem sympathetic in comparison. It may seem strange to argue that such a flippant and amusing poem, which appears to encourage its readers to ignore or even blatantly violate contemporary customs and laws governing appropriate sexual conduct, and is widely considered responsible for Ovid’s exile for this very reason,\textsuperscript{94} in fact repeats and reinvests these very laws and taboos with authority.\textsuperscript{95}

On the surface, the poet-\textit{praecceptor} of \textit{Ars Amatoria} gives to young men and women who legally are in a position to fool around (e.g., \textit{meretrices}) lessons of seduction, which presume a certain degree of emotional distance and require a great deal of manipulation and deceit. Of course, one cannot help who reads the poem, Ovid later claims in his own defense:

\textsuperscript{94} See Gibson (2003:32-35, 2007:2-3) on the subversive message of the \textit{Ars}. See also Bauman (121-24), Hollis (1977: xiii-xvii) Myerowitz (18-20, 191 n.5) for textual references from Ovid’s exile poetry identifying the \textit{Ars} as the \textit{carmen} (\textit{Tr.} 2.207) and further references. See Gibson (2003: 36-37) on reasons that \textit{Ars} was not responsible for his exile and further references. See Feeney and Newlands (1995: 9-10, 57, 175-76) on the changing political climate for freedom of speech under Augustus and bibliography. They argue that Augustus became less tolerant toward subversive poetic messages later in his reign, especially after the exile of his daughter Julia (2 CE; see n. 98 below for more details and bibliography on her exile).

\textsuperscript{95} Miller (2004: 160-83) has recently argued that Ovid’s parody of Augustan discourse, while relying on the assumed hegemony of such discourse, unintentionally exposes its contradictions and limits.
et procul a scripta solis meretricibus Arte
summovet ingenuas pagina prima manus.
quaecumque erupit, qua non sinit ire sacerdos,
protinus huic dempti criminis ipsa rea est.
(Tristia 2.303-306)

In addition, although the poet-*praeeptor* repeatedly excludes proper girls and married women,\(^96\) like Propertius’ narrator in 3.19, he frequently slips up and betrays an expectation that he is speaking to an audience other than that he purports to address.\(^97\) The poet-*praeeptor* is, in fact, teaching these dishonorable lessons about and to the good *virgines* and *matronae* of Rome’s best families. Augustus’ own daughter was perhaps one of them.\(^98\)

Ovid, however, has demonstrated through the figure of the poet-*praeeptor* who teaches an unintentional message because he is not able to control the polysemic signs of desire, that he

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\(^{96}\) E.g., *este procul, uittae tenues, insigne pudoris/* quaeque tegis medios instita longa pedes:/ nos Venerem tutam concessaque furtam canemus/ inque meo nullum carmine crimen erit,1.31-34; see also 2.599-600, 3.57-58, 3.483-84, 3.613-14. See Gibson (2003: 25-27).

\(^{97}\) E.g., the mention of *uir* (3.602) suggests a broader audience. While the *uir* could refer to the client/companion of a courtesan, *uir* could also refer to “husbands.” See n. 30 (above) for bibliography on the debate over the status of the elegiac *puellae* and n. 84 (also above) on the multiple meanings of *vir*. See also 3.611-58. Gibson (2003: 27-32) argues that the ambiguous status of the women whom the *praeeptor* addresses in book 3 reflects the confusion over which women were exempted from prosecution under the *lex Julia de adulteriis coercendis*, a law, which he argues along with McGinn (194-202), likely radically curtailed the sexual freedom of Roman men.

\(^{98}\) Augustus’ daughter Julia was charged with adultery and exiled in 2 BCE, first to Pandateria, then to Rhegium. We are told by the ancient sources both that her father publicly denounced her behavior and the Roman people called for her pardon. This is an interesting tension and hints that Augustus’ reaction and Julia’s punishment were perhaps unjustified, that she was used as an example of his obedience to the laws he placed upon his subjects, and/or that Augustus’ moral reforms did not reflect general attitudes and *mores* among the Roman people. Bauman (117-18), while arguing that Julia’s exile was motivated by many factors, all reducible to her involvement in the *grex Juliae*, a group who desecrated the rostra and crowned the statue of Marsyas in the forum as protest against Augustus’ moral reforms and following the conferring of the title *pater patriae*, notes the group’s self-alignment with the Bacchanalia. For *Marsyas caussidicus* was the alternative divine advocate to Augustus’ Apollo, as Bacchus is the alternative divine ephebe to Apollo. Moreover, Dio (55.13.1) tells us that the following year, Romans, calling for her return, restaged the protest of the Bacchanals (Livy 39.13.12), by throwing torches into the Tiber. For ancient accounts, see, e.g., Suet. *Aug.* 65.1-4, Vell. Pat. 2.100.3, Dio. 55.10.12-16. Julia the younger, Augustus’ granddaughter, was also exiled on similar charges in 8 CE, the same year as Ovid. Her house was burnt and her daughter was disowned by the family. For modern sources on both Julias and further references, see, e.g., Bauman (105-21), Fantham (2006), and Richlin (1992: 67-70 and passim).
too cannot master his own discourse. What is perhaps intended to be comic—the sign which is meant to read “go” really says “stop”—through its very parody of Augustan discourses of gender and sexuality, reinvests such ideologies with authority. The poem, by engaging the discourses of desire of its day, the discourses which inform and are informed by the very laws and customs the poem appears to undermine, repeats and reinscribes these ideologies in its deep structures.

The poet-praeceptor and the author who writes him are warning their readers from the very behavior Augustan law punishes. In order for a masculine subject to escape a feminized, abject position, he must constantly be vigilant both of his own sexuality, lest it take control of him, and of the sexuality of the female body, lest he lose control and suffer the consequences of her hidden but always present abject sexual desire.

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99 Myerowitz (37) also notes how Ovid constructs the praeceptor as an imperfect artist: “[t]he praeceptor’s admission of past failure, his occasional dismay at the task of ordering his vast and complex subject matter, his frequent self-confessed loss of control make the reader conscious of the praeceptor’s own struggles with ars and his occasional lack of it;” but she argues that the narrator’s lack of control foregrounds Ovid “absolute technical control over his poem.”

100 Gibson (2003: 32-35, 2006, 2007: 112-14), citing 3.305: sed sit, ut in multis, modus hic quoque, argues that the Ars teaches “an ethic of the middle way” (2007: 3). He maintains this ethics of moderation not only reflects the generic middle position of the Ars, situated between elegy and epic, but is also anti-Augustan, or at least subversive, in that it leads to a confusion of the sexual categories the lex Julia de adulteriis coercendis sought to clearly define. “Rather, through corresponding to no known stereotype, it blurs the boundaries of these two traditional worlds in a uniquely potent manner…the citizen body at large will no longer be able to distinguish between meretrix and matrona as easily as the Julian law intended” (34-35).
Chapter 3 Phaedra’s Claim

In the *Heroides*, examples of mythological women, who were mere signs in the *Ars Amatoria*, become subjects. While for many of the writers of the single epistles (1-15), their ultimate aim may be to re-establish their former passive position as object of the addressees’ desire, as Lindheim argues,¹ their epistolary composition is the literary equivalent of an active pursuit of a love interest. They are given a voice with which to articulate the emotions they are experiencing at length. When they write and speak they demonstrate their familiarity with the discourse which has constructed them in earlier literary accounts and in which they perform a semiotic function as exemplary paradigms. *Heroides* 4 is written by Phaedra to Hippolytus and here we are given the opportunity of hearing her own account of her passion. Phaedra’s letter engages Augustan discourses of desire, familiar from Ovid’s erotodidactic poetry, in which she acts as a negative example. Phaedra attempts to use this language to describe her feelings in a new and non-threatening way, but her attempts are unsuccessful because she employs a discourse whose limits make the full expression of her desire impossible.

Of course, Ovid is holding her pen. This is an example of what Elizabeth Harvey has called “transvestite ventriloquism,” i.e., a male author writing in the guise of a woman.² She argues, furthermore, that transvestite ventriloquism has a “double-voice,” the “interaction” between the constructed female voice and the male author speaking through that voice. Harvey’s

¹ Lindheim (passim) argues that the female writers of the *Heroides* construct themselves in order to sustain or renew their status as the addressee’s object of desire. Using Lacan’s formulation of feminine and masculine desire, Lindheim demonstrates how certain female writers of the *Heroides* 1-15 write themselves as narcissistic fantasies for their beloveds or as helpless, passive women (13-77) or in relation to their beloved’s new object of desire (78-135), offering the fiction of a unified and essential “Woman” through this repetition of sameness.

² Harvey’s formulation assumes that a man writing as a woman will always be different from a woman writing as a woman. Harvey advocates “a tactical essentialism, the belief that even while we recognize the constructed nature of gender, we can still adhere to a conviction that women and men (and their respective voices) are not politically interchangeable” (13).
critical analysis of the “double-voice” of transvestite ventriloquism focuses on “the gap between the male voice and the female voice it takes on” as a site for revealing gender construction: “In male appropriations of feminine voices we can see what is most desired and most feared about women and why male authors might have wished to occupy that cultural space, however contingently and provisionally.” Phaedra’s attempt to articulate her desire for Hippolytus in conventional elegiac discourse ultimately emphasizes the marginal position of that desire through its failure. Ovid’s voice betrays an anxiety over the uncontrollability and destructive potential of female desire, while simultaneously revealing the limits of the elegiac genre. When I talk about Phaedra’s poetic project in *Heroides* 4, I do so with the understanding that she is merely Ovid’s construction of a female writing subject.

My title acknowledges the impact of Butler’s *Antigone’s Claim* on feminist thinking. Antigone, Butler suggests, can offer an example of a re-articulation of kinship norms, “an allegory for the crisis of kinship” for the modern world whose kinship roles are shifting. Families characterized by “traditional” heterosexual mother-father caregivers of biological children are being replaced by families such as single-parent, grandmother-mother, sibling, and same-sex caregivers of children who may or may not be the biological children of their wards. Antigone is a woman whose incestuous birth allows her (and the other members of her family) to

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3 Harvey, 32; see also Lindheim (passim, especially 136-76) and Kennedy (in Hardie [2002]: 226-31) specifically for the double-voice in Ovid’s *Heroides*.

4 Conte (1994: 35-66) argues elegy is the most reductive genre because it re-interprets all discourse to suit an all-encompassing erotic ideology: “The elegiac poet’s constitutional suffering, in short, is the response of a consciousness that discovers the cost of not yielding to a codified fusion of signifiers and signifieds or to the difficulties encountered by anyone unwilling to give up the whole preexisting semantic universe when he generates new discourses in the culture’s language” [emphasis added] (42). In her discussion of the *Fasti*, Newlands (1995: 108-9, 140-45) has noted a similar “failure” of elegy to accommodate grander, Augustan material into its code in the tale of Vesta and Priapus: “Vesta’s associations with chastity and with the virtue of the Augustan household offer a formidable challenge to Ovid’s elegiac powers, and his response to this challenge reveals a widening gap between elegy and its new subject” (145).

5 Butler (2000), 24.
hold multiple kinship positions: “Antigone is one for whom symbolic positions have become incoherent, confounding as she does brother and father, emerging as she does not as a mother but—as one etymology suggests—‘in the place of mother’.”⁶ While Butler’s argument suffers greatly from her failure to take into account the Greek custom of the *epikleros* and a woman’s duties to her natal house,⁷ her arguments are salient to Phaedra’s poetic project in *Heroides* 4. Although Butler argues that Antigone has recourse only to the hegemonic discourse of Creon in order to make her case,⁸ her conclusions suggest an optimistic, open reading of Phaedra’s narrative. “One can certainly concede that desire is radically conditioned without claiming that it is radically determined…[T]he norm has a temporality that opens it to a subversion from within and to a future that cannot be fully anticipated.”⁹

I will by no means argue that Ovid has inadvertently recommended the incestuous love of a daughter for a father, a sister for a brother, a step-mother for a step-son in his representation of Phaedra, but rather that he has given Phaedra an opportunity to express, in “her own voice,”¹⁰ a female desire which exceeds the bounds of normative desire. Her desire is transgressive not only because of the identity of her beloved, a transgression of the fundamental social taboo of incest, but also, and especially, because she takes an active role in pursuing the object of her desire. As we observed in the last chapter, such an active position in the system of exchange is traditionally

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⁷ See Ormand (1999) on the legal position of the *ἐπικλήρος* (17-18) and his interpretation of Antigone acting in this capacity on behalf of her natal *οἶκος* (90-98), and for further references on the topic of the *ἐπικλήρος* (167-68 n. 43).
⁸ Butler (2000) notes Antigone’s words are articulated in the language of the state: “What this suggests is that she cannot make her claim outside the language of the state, but neither can the claim she wants to make be fully assimilated by the state” (28).
¹⁰ The authenticity of the female voice in *Heroides* is much contested. Many follow Harvey’s conclusions regarding “transvestite ventriloquism,” described above. See, e.g., Gordon (in Hallett and Skinner, 1997: 274-91) and Lindheim. Fulkerson rejects the notion that the gendered voice is anything but a construction (5).
gendered masculine. In addition, her pursuit of an extramarital affair locates her outside of the legally sanctioned behavior for a *matrona*. The Augustan adultery law, the *lex Julia adulteriis coercendis*, described in detail in the last chapter, inscribes women like Phaedra with the sartorial marker of a man and a prostitute, the toga. Phaedra’s letter attempts to assume an active position, while not forfeiting her femininity. Phaedra tortures language and the discourse of kinship in order to find an intelligible social position in the discursive economy, but because she writes in a cultural discourse which demands dichotomous categories of exchange—active/male, passive/female—her self-presentation, in the end, reflects these traditional categories.

Barchiesi (1993) and Kennedy have observed that the *Heroides*’ engagement with their “source text(s)” creates a tension between the letter writers’ hopes and expectations for their future and the predetermined literary outcome of their stories. As noted in the first chapter, Phaedra was the subject of three Attic Greek tragic plays: Euripides’ *Hippolytus (HI)*, Sophocles’ *Phaedra*, and a second, more modest, *Hippolytus (HII)* by Euripides. At issue in Euripides’ extant *Hippolytus (II)* is the discourse of shame in relation to kinship structures—specifically the shame required to preserve reputation for the sake of the family Phaedra has with Theseus, and especially to preserve their sons’ future status as Athenian citizens. Phaedra’s desire to keep silent is directly related to the παρρησία (“freedom of speech”) of the men in her family.

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11 Barchiesi (1993) points out that in works such as Apollonius’ *Argo* and Ovid’s *Her.*, the allusion looks forward temporally from the point of view of a younger hero/heroine whose future has already been written by other writers (334). This presents the opportunity for dramatic irony, while a shared knowledge of the predetermined outcome creates “a sort of complicity between [the author and the reader] against the characters,” (334) and “forces the reader to enter into discussion with the text he is reading” (335); cf. Kennedy (in Hardie [2002]), 224-5.

12 See chapter 1 for a full discussion and further references about these plays.

13 Phaedra announces to the chorus and her nurse that her suicide is meant to preserve her reputation which would allow her male marital kin to live in Athens as free men enjoying freedom of speech:

ως μητὸς ἀνδρα τοῦ εἵμων αἰτχινας αἱώνας μη παιδας οὐς έτικτων άλλη έλευθερου παρρησια
Should Phaedra speak about her incestuous desire, she would invite gossip, damaging the public image of her male kin. When the nurse does admit such desire, it is, of necessity, a speech act, although we do not overhear this part of her conversation with Hippolytus. Speaking incest lays bare its potential along with the contingency of the incest taboo which governs the family unit. Butler suggests “the symbolic ought to be rethought as a series of normativizing injunctions that secure the borders of sex through the threat of psychosis, abjection, psychic unlivability.” In the previous chapter we saw how female desire was constructed as a furor, an ecstasis, and bestial through the paradigmatic examples taken from mythology, and in particular, from tragedy. These were cautionary examples and their repudiation from what was recognizable as normal desire functions as an implicit threat of punishment for women who desire actively and men who fail to control such desire.

A similar threat is present in Euripides’ Hippolytus (II). Here Ερως is constructed as madness both by Euripides (through Phaedra’s actions) and by Phaedra herself.

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\[\text{θέλλοντες οἰκοῖν πόλιν/κλείνων Αθηνῶν, μητρὸς οὐνεκ' εὐκλεεῖς, 420-23.}\] See Goff (1990: passim) and McClure (112-57), and chapter 1 on the connection of silence, speech, and reputation in HII.

14 Rubin, summarizing Lévi-Strauss, comments “the incest taboo should best be understood as a mechanism to ensure that such exchanges [of women] take place between families and between groups…the incest taboo imposes the social aim of exogamy and alliance upon the biological events of sex and procreation” (173; Lévi-Strauss, 51, 480-85).

15 Butler (1993), 15.

16 The chorus reports a rumor that Phaedra is staying inside, in a sick bed, is refusing food, and is suicidal (131-40). After she is brought outside, she expresses a wish to go to the mountains and join the hunt (208-38). The nurse reacts to her speech by calling it “words born on madness” (μανίαις ἐποχοῦ...λόγον, 214) and says she is “wandering from reason” (παρακόπτει φρένας, 238). Artemis later refers to Phaedra’s behavior as “a gadfly” (οἰκτρόν, 1300), which can have the metaphorical meaning of “madness” (LSJ, II).
Throughout HII, Phaedra continues to identify with her socially mandated kinship roles of (step-)mother and wife. Her self-identification is the source of her misery. She is painfully aware that her desire for Hippolytus makes her a poor performer of these familial roles and her sickness, which the chorus (Hipp. 121-75) and the nurse (176-85) describe early in the play, is a symptom of her transgression. She is not being a good mother and wife. \( \text{ἲρως} \), however, does not drive her to seek ways to renegotiate her kinship roles or claim new ones which will allow the fulfillment of her desire with impunity; in fact, she explicitly condemns women who dissimulate transgressive behavior.\(^{18}\)

We may be seeing in the extant Phaedra’s violent rejection of female dissimulation, and her self-destructive adherence to traditional roles, a direct response to (or correction of) Euripides’ earlier HI, which depicted a Phaedra who approached Hippolytus herself and made her accusations against him to Theseus in person, committing suicide only after Hippolytus is killed. It is this first play (and/or Sophocles’ Phaedra) which seems to be the primary “source text” for Heroides 4.\(^{19}\) But the epistles in the collection often engage multiple “source texts” and have a dialectic relationship with the literary tradition as a whole.\(^{20}\) In addition, Heroides 4 contains multiple echoes of HIII, whether because HIII preserved certain elements from the earlier

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\(^{17}\) Phaedra suddenly stops raving about the mountains as if she has come out of a trance or a dream and asks what she has done (239), stating clearly that she “was mad” (ἐμάνην, 241).

\(^{18}\) \( \text{μισῶ δὲ καὶ τὰς κλώρωνας μὲν ἐν λόγοις/λάθρα δὲ τόλμας οὐ καλὰς κεκτηµένας.} \text{Eur. HIII, 413-14.}\)

\(^{19}\) See Jacobson (142-45) for specific correspondences with Sophocles’ Phaedra and Euripides’ first Hippolytus. According to Jacobson, Her. 4 must follow HI (like the Met., and Seneca’s Phaedra): “The fact that in all Ovid’s poetry Phaedra is condemned outright, never extenuated, suits best the first Phaedra Euripides portrayed” (144). See also Davis (1995).

\(^{20}\) Barchiesi (1993) argues allusions point not only to single models but to participation in a broader literary tradition. Pointing to Heroides 12 (Medea’s letter) as well as the Aeneid’s Dido, Barchiesi suggests “Augustan poets are particularly interested in this potential because they write in a tradition which has rich articulations and separate canons” (352). \textit{Pace} Rosati, who traces Euripidean influences as they are filtered through elegiac mediating texts and codes; see also Hinds (1993) on Met. 12. In addition, Fulkerson and Hinds (1993) demonstrate an \textit{intratextuality} between the epistles themselves. See also Kauffman, 42-43.
plays or because the Ovidian Phaedra is an amalgam of all of her tragic instantiations. In either case, looking back to the extant Euripidean Phaedra is fruitful for understanding her self-presentation in the Ovidian epistle in terms of its relation to her literary tradition.

Unlike the other female writers in Ovid’s single epistles (1-15) who are writing to former lovers who have abandoned them (Phyllis, 2; Oenone, 5; Hypsipyle, 6; Dido, 7; Ariadne, 10; Medea, 12; Sappho, 15) or who are prevented from returning to them because of an obstacle (Penelope, 1; Briseis, 3; Hermione, 8; Deianira, 9; Canace, 11; Laodamia, 13; Hypermnestra, 14), Phaedra is not an abandoned woman. Instead, she is attempting to initiate a sexual relationship. Her active attempts at seduction are directly linked to her mobility. We are told that she fell in love with Hippolytus after seeing him (miror, 80; ora...versa...habet, 82; nostra iuvat lumina, 84) at a festival (Tempore quo nobis inita est Cerealis Eleusin, Gnosia me vellem detinuisset humus, 67-68), but by her own admission, this was not the first time he had pleased her sight: tunc mihi praecipue, (nec non tamen ante placebas:/ Acer in extremis ossibus haesit amor, 69-70. This is an element of the plot of both Hippolytus plays by Euripides, and perhaps of Sophocles’ Phaedra. The Ovidian Phaedra, however, significantly expands what is only a

21 Jacobson catalogues intertexts between Ovid’s depictions of Phaedra, Euripides’ HI, HII, and Sophocles’ Phaedra (142-45), where he finds a number correspondences with HII along with HI: “Ovid, we must apparently conclude, knew and was using both of Euripides’ plays (and possibly, Sophocles’ too)” (145). See also Casali (1995: passim) for allusions and intertexts with HII.

22 One could imagine that the Ovidian Phaedra (from HI) has seen the second play and is trying to present herself and the circumstances accordingly in her letter.

23 Fulkerson (122-142) argues that Phaedra represents herself as an abandoned woman, following the model of Ariadne and points out that Phaedra will in fact be twice abandoned later in her story—first by Hippolytus and then by Theseus (134-35).

24 See also Davis (1995: 43); Jacobson (150-51), who notes the uniqueness of Phaedra’s letter in the collection and describes it as a suasoria; and Rosati (1984: 114).

25 In the extant play (HII 2, 24-28), set in Troezen, Aphrodite tells the audience of Hippolytus’ earlier journey to Athens for the Eleusinian Mysteries where Phaedra saw him (ιδούις, 27) and fell in love (καρδίαν κατέχετο ήρωτι δεινώ, 27–8). The setting for Euripides’ first Hippolytus appears to be this very visit
brief etiology of her desire in the tragic version, lingering in her epistle over memories of her nascent love. She thus invites her reader(s) to join her in gazing upon Hippolytus. This is perhaps intended to be a flattering experience for her addressee, but the effect is unsettling, like looking over the shoulder of a peeping-Tom (or -Phaedra), as she gazes through the bedroom window from the bushes in the back yard. The effect of Ovid’s ventriloquism can be traced while watching Phaedra watch Hippolytus.

In one respect, her voyeurism (re)constructs the audience of tragedy. Instead of looking at Phaedra’s suffering body, however, the “audience” is looking at Hippolytus’ vigorous body. If women were allowed to attend tragic performances in ancient Greece, a question for which no answer yet commands scholarly consensus, Phaedra’s gaze suggests an example of a male fantasy of how women watched tragedy. Women were certainly in attendance at Roman tragedies. Ovid’s representation of her gaze upon Hippolytus’ body mimics the male gaze in its eroticization of his movements; however, her scopic pleasure is not the result of his corporeal suffering, but his demonstration of healthy strength. We should not assume that this.

to Athens (Webster, 65). Sophocles’ Phaedra is also likely set in Athens (Barrett, 12). Hippolytus explicitly denies having gazed upon anything sexual, which is both a characteristic and cause of his ‘maidendy’ innocence (1004-6). See Goff (20) for Phaedra’s desiring gaze upon Hippolytus and (20-26) for the function of the gaze in general in HII. For an excellent summary of the debate on both sides, see Goldhill, Gould, and Henderson.

26 Although Suetonius tells us that the lex Iulia theatralis designated seating by gender, with women in the back, “high up and furthest from the stage, where they would not distract the men” (Boyle, 164). With the elite men in the front rows, it is clear what audience was intended and who was the (potential, hidden) spectacle; Beacham (1991), 123-26 for a full discussion of the seating arrangements and the accommodation of this legislation by the design of the theater of Marcellus. 27 See e.g., Rabinowitz (in Richlin [1991], 36-52; 1993) on the eroticized suffering female body in Attic Greek tragedy. Bronfen (x-xv, and passim) theorizes that artistic representations of women’s deaths act as a fetish, allowing the viewer to deny their own mortality by gazing at the mortality of the other. The death of the other lets one “experience death by proxy. In the aesthetic enactment, we have a situation impossible in life, namely that we die with another and return to the living. Even as we are forced to acknowledge the ubiquitous presence of death in life, our belief in our own immortality is confirmed. There is death, but it is not my own.” (x)
change is an effect of the generic move from tragedy to elegy, since elegy is full of suffering male bodies. The ego of Ovid’s *Amores* declares that loving for so long has emaciated his body: *longus amor tales corpus tenuavit in usus, Am.* 1.6.5. More likely, Phaedra’s gaze represents Ovid’s narcissistic male construction of female scopic pleasure from looking at an ideal, uncompromised male body which asserts its ability to dominate even while being the passive, looked-at object.

Hippolytus’ position as object of Phaedra’s gaze is emphasized by her vivid language, which paints him with vibrant colors (*candida*, 71; *Flava verecundus tinxerat ora rubor*, 72) and descriptive details (e.g., *praecincti flore capilli*, 71; *positique sine arte capilli*, 77; *levis…pulvis in ore*, 78; *flexos…in orbe pedes*, 80). Phaedra’s gaze has a scopophilic nature. “Fetishistic scopophilia...builds up the physical beauty of the object, transforming it into something satisfying in itself.” In her celebrated analysis of cinema, Mulvey argues that the erotic pleasure of looking at another person as object is traditionally a male gaze. This holds true as well for the ancient world. Phaedra’s masculine gaze travels over each part of Hippolytus’ body: his clothing (*vestis*, 71), the flowers in his disheveled hair (*praecincti flore capilli*, 71; *positique sine arte capilli*, 77), his blushing dusty face (*Flava verecundus tinxerat ora rubor*, 72; *positique sine arte capilli*, 77), his blushing dusty face (*Flava verecundus tinxerat ora rubor*, 72;

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29 Cf. Prop. 1.5.21-22: *nec iam pallorem totien mirabere nostrum, aut cur sim toto corpore nullus ego.*

30 Mulvey, 22.

31 Mulvey, 19-21: “In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its fantasy onto the female figure, which is styled accordingly” (19).

32 Thus Segal (1994: 258-262) employs Mulvey’s concepts of the scopophilic and sadistic gaze in a reading of the Tereus/Philomela episode in Ovid’s *Met*. Salzman-Mitchell applies Mulvey’s theories to the gaze in the *Met* as a whole, in which she identifies ‘Women’s intrusive gazes.’ She includes Salmacis among these female gazing figures. Salmacis, like Phaedra, is represented as taking pleasure in looking at her male object of desire (*simulatque gradu discedere uerso,/ tum quoque respiciens…tum uero placuit, nudaque cupidine formae/ Salmacis exarsit; flagrant quoque lumina nymphae*, 4.338-39, 346-47). See chapter 5 for a discussion of Salmacis as Phaedra-like. Fredrick (1995) uses Mulvey’s theories of fetishistic scopophilia and sadistic voyeurism in order to understand the politics of the gaze upon artistic representations in the Roman house. See Fredrick (2002) for a collection of essays exploring the gaze in Roman culture and literature. See Goff (20-26) for the gendered dynamics of the gaze in *HII*. 
levis egregio pulvis in ore, 78), and his strong arms (valido...lacerto, 81; ferox...lacertus, 82).\textsuperscript{33} Phaedra’s description is sexually suggestive. She uses the adjective rigidus twice to describe Hippolytus (73, 74) and says that his rigor becomes him (77). Such language accentuates the lascivious nature of her gaze, while reaffirming the male body’s potential for sexual domination.\textsuperscript{34} Phaedra’s lingering and aggressively sexual gaze may recall Euripides’ first Hippolytus, called Hippolytus Kalyptomenos for the young man’s attempts to veil himself from such a gaze.\textsuperscript{35}

Phaedra’s amorous gaze, which is facilitated by her movement to the festival at Eleusis, is the cause of her desire: nostra iuvat lumina, quidquid agis (84).\textsuperscript{36} Love is often described as an outside force entering through the eyes in antiquity.\textsuperscript{37} Propertius instructs Cynthia: si nescis, oculi sunt in amore duces, 2.15.12.\textsuperscript{38} In Euripides’ Hippolytus (II), Aphrodite tells us that “after she saw him, Phaedra’s heart was filled with a terrible desire.”\textsuperscript{39} So too, in Heroides 4, Phaedra

\textsuperscript{33} See Davis (45) and Spentzou (91-93) for a discussion of Phaedra’s masculine gaze in Her. 4, and Gordon (in Hallett and Skinner, 1997: 282) for a comparison of Phaedra’s gaze to Sappho’s in Her. 15; See Richlin (1991: 161-72) for a discussion of the voyeuristic gaze in Ovid’s narratives of rape; Keith (in Hardie, Barchiesi and Hinds, 214–39; 2009a) considers the importance of the gaze (and its control) to the construction of the masculine hero in Roman epic in connection with Ovid’s Met.

\textsuperscript{34} See Adams (46, 59, 103) on the use of rigidus and rigor to describe a male erection.

\textsuperscript{35} Webster (65, 67) tells us that the play was given this name because Hippolytus covered his head from shame and may have left the stage when Phaedra approached him.

\textsuperscript{36} In the extant Euripidean tragedy, Phaedra is the subject of the gaze and of the grammar (δαµαρ/ιδους Φαιδρα...κατεχετο, 26-27) and Hippolytus is the object (νιν, 24), but Hippolytus is the mobile actor (ελθοντα...ακ δομων, 24), not Phaedra, who is presumably still living in Athens. Moreover, Aphrodite explicity claims responsibility for the resulting desire (τοις έμοις βουλεύμασιν,28).

\textsuperscript{37} Goff, 20.

\textsuperscript{38} Propertius’ precepts and mythological examples are meant to persuade Cynthia to disrobe (2.15.11-24). The passage ends with the exhortation “let us sate our eyes with love” (oculos satiemus amore, 23). Should Cynthia refuse to disrobe (quod si pertendens animo vestita cubaris, 17), Propertius threatens to rip her clothing off (scissa ueste, 18) and beat her (meas experiere manus, 18; ostendes matri brachia laesa tuae, 20), forcibly claiming his right to look at her body and her obligation to subject herself to his erotic gaze, while revealing the intersection of the gaze with violence.

\textsuperscript{39} HII, 24, 27-28: έλθοντα γαρ νιν...ιδους Φαιδρα καρδιαν κατεχετο, ι κρωσι δεινωι.
says that Hippolytus pleases her eyes (*nostra...lumina*, 84). Ovid himself, in his *Remedia Amores*, warns his pupil that love is contagious through the gaze: *dum spectant laesos oculi, laeduntur et ipsi,/ multaque corporibus transitione nocent*, 615-16. Phaedra’s grammar places her eyes in the object position, with Hippolytus’ activity (*quidquid agis*) as subject. As we will see, one way Phaedra tries to maintain a feminine position is by attempting to construct Hippolytus as a masculine subject. This could perhaps be read as another example of this project—Phaedra is being pleased by what Hippolytus does, implicating him in a pseudo-sexual act. If so, Ovid’s ventriloquizing poetics again betray Phaedra, for *quidquid agis* gives little agency to Hippolytus. Instead her words imprison him. Phaedra will be given pleasure by Hippolytus *no matter what he does*. He, in turn, is powerless to stop it from happening.

Phaedra’s presence and participation in the rites of Demeter are not unusual in themselves. An Athenian woman’s attendance at the festival at Eleusis would have been well within the bounds of normative behavior. Participation in religious ritual was one of the important exceptions to what seems to be otherwise restricted movement for women in Athens; however, participation in a religious ritual also offered the secluded maiden or married woman to the desirous gaze of the men in attendance.41 Lysias 1 describes an affair initiated by a man after

40 Blok suggests a “coordinated choreography” for men’s and women’s movement outside the house, in which she treats the subject of women’s participation in religious ceremonies. See also Blundell and Williamson, *Goff* (2004), Kaltzas and Shapiro, and Parca and Tzanetou for recent analyses of women and ritual.

41 *Goff* (2004), 20.
seeing a married woman at a funeral\(^{42}\) and religious festivals are frequently the context for the introduction of the desiring male gaze in literature as well.\(^{43}\)

Ovid’s tale of Mercury and Herse in *Metamorphoses* 2 (708-34) offers a very good example of this kind of narrative. Mercury sees Herse as she participates in the procession of the Panatheneia, carrying the mysteries (*pura sacra, 713*) along with the other maidens according to ritual (*castae de more puellae, 711*). His vantage point, surveying the ground from the sky (*despectabat humum, 710*), marks him as a privileged spectator. Mercury’s gaze is predatory. He circles Herse like a kite who has spotted the entrails of a victim on a sacrificial altar, but must wait because the priests remain (*ut uolucris uisis rapidissima miluus extis,/ dum timet et densi circumstant sacra ministri,/ flectitur in gyrum, 2.716-18*). His constant circling enacts a hunt (*in orbem curuat, 715; flectitur in gyrum, 718; circumuolat, 719; inclinat cursus...circinat, 721; uertit, 730*), which, along with the adjective *auidus*, used in successive lines to describe first the kite, then the god (719, 720), augments the anticipation of a kill.

Phaedra’s narrative reverses the common plot of a man seeing a woman at a festival and appropriates the voyeuristic gaze for her description of Hippolytus.\(^{44}\) Moreover, Phaedra’s description of Hippolytus initially employs imagery customarily used to describe maidens.

*Candida vestis erat, praecincti flore capilli,*

*Flava verecundus tinxerat ora rubor,*

*Quemque vocant aliae vultum rigidumque trucemque,*

*Pro rigido Phaedra iudice fortis erat.*

*Sint procul a nobis iuvenes ut femina compti:*

*Fine coli modico forma virilis amat.*

\(^{42}\) Lysias 1.7-8: ἑπειδὴ δὲ μοι ἡ μέμητε ἐπελεύθησαι, ἥπαντος τῶν κακῶν αποθανοῦσα αὐτία μοι γεγένται—ἐπ’ ἑκφορὰν γὰρ αὐτῇ ἀκολουθήσασα η ὑµὴ γυνὴ ὑπὸ τοῦτον τοῦ ανθρώπου οὐφείσα, ἔρινω διαφθείρεται.

\(^{43}\) See Pierce for a discussion of the common plot device of rape at a religious festival in New Comedy.

\(^{44}\) See also Curley (n.d.: 428-32) on the voyeuristic gaze of Phaedra, Scylla, Byblis, and Myrrha.
Te tuus iste rigor positique sine arte capilli
Et levis egregio pulvis in ore decet.
Sive ferocis equi luctantia colla recurvas,
Exiguo flexos miror in orbe pedes;
Seu lentum valido torques hastile lacerto,
Ora ferox in se versa lacertus habet;
Sive tenes lato venabula cornea ferro—

(Her. 4.71-83)

Both candida and flore (71) engage metaphors of virginity—candidus (“gleaming white”), the figure of the “unstained” maiden; flore (“flower”), the figure of the “unplucked” virgin—while the flore, because it must have been plucked in order to adorn his hair, and the rubor of his blush, which is contrasted to the whiteness of his clothing, evoke the loss a maiden’s virginity. Ovid is perhaps having fun with Hippolytus’ own self-description in Euripides’ HII where he assures Theseus he has “the soul of a maiden” (παρθένον ψυχήν ἔχων, 1006). Hippolytus “the maiden” is further reinforced by the suggestion of the common figure of the hunt in myths of erotic pursuit. Phaedra’s watching, like Mercury’s, is the look of a stalking predator. The linguistic echoes remind us of Phaedra’s own admission that she wants to go hunting (37-46).46

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45 In the Homeric Hymn to Demeter, Persephone is taken by Hades while picking flowers with her peers. When she plucks the narcissus flower, grown by Gaia (8-9) “as a trick” (δόλον καλύκαξιοί κούρη, 8; Allen. 1912. Homer: Opera. Oxford), she unwittingly initiates her own rape and loss of virginity. So too in Ovid’s Met. 5, where the flowers falling from the folds of her torn garment symbolize her loss of virginity (398-99). In a similar scene in Met. 2, Europa picks flowers which she uses to adorn the white bull, Zeus (mox adit et flores ad candida porrigit ora, 861). See Curley (n.d.: 430-32, 484 n. 45) and Larmour (140) on the sexual implication of the color combination in this passage, the Philomela episode (6.577-78), and the Scylla episode (8.33-36) with further references. The tale of Philomela in Met. 6 offers the image of red on white as a figure for rape and loss of virginity (utque columba suo madefactis sanguine plumis, 529; see Richlin (1991: 163)), while her purple letters on a white fabric represent the rape itself (stamina barbarica suspendit callida tela/ purpureaque notas filis intexuit albis,/ indicium sceleris, 576-78; see Marder (161), Segal (1994: 266)). Pyramus and Thisbe’s story in Met. 4 ends with a similar image of white and red, when the blood of Pyramus turns the white mulberry tree red (125-27), suggesting the loss of sexual innocence.

46 Her admission alludes to the ravings of the Euripidean Phaedra (HII, 215-22), but is likely also intertextually engaging Gallus, as other contemporary poets, e.g., Vergil (Ecl. 10.59) and Propertius (2.19.17), may have already done. See Fabre-Serris (157-59) and Rosati (128-30) for further discussion. Phaedra’s self-construction as sharing traits with Hippolytus supports Lindheim’s reading of the heroines’ exploitation of “the narcissistic tendencies of masculine desire—the attraction of a partner who functions to reflect the hero’s power back to him” (114). In the context of the epistle, such a confession to Hippolytus can also be interpreted as part of her strategy for fostering a sense of equality between the two. Jacobson (149-150) notes a similarity between Phaedra’s description of
In nemus ire libet pressisque in retia cervis
   Hortari celeris per iuga summa canes,
Aut tremulum excusso  iaculum vibrare lacerto,
   Aut in graminea ponere corpus humo.
Saepe iuvat versare leves in pulvere currus
   Torquentem frenis ora fugacis equi;
... Et levis egregio pulvis in ore decet.
Sive ferocis equi luctantia colla recurvas,
   Exiguo flexos miror in orbe pedes;
Seu lentum valido torques hostile lacerto,
   Ora ferox in se versa lacertus habet,
Sive tenes lato venabula cornea ferro.
   (Her. 4.41-46, 78-83)

Phaedra describes herself and Hippolytus throwing a javelin (cf. 43 to 81), and turning the faces of horses (Phaedra on a chariot, Hippolytus riding the horse; cf. 45-46 to 79 and 82). The poet-praeceptor exploited this metaphor in the frame of his list of desiring women (1.269-72), and Ovid repeats it throughout the first pentad of *Metamorphoses*. Like the maidens “hunted” by gods in Greek myth, Hippolytus is being hunted by Phaedra. More importantly, Phaedra’s construction of Hippolytus as a maiden bolsters both his feminine position and, necessarily, Phaedra’s masculine position.

At odds with the effect of her gaze, Phaedra continues by drawing attention to the peculiarly masculine nature of Hippolytus’ beauty. She emphasizes his bravery (*fortis*, 74), his

Hippolytus in this passage and of herself earlier in the epistle (4.43-46), and argues this is an example of the exaggeration of Euripidean elements found in other parts of the epistle (cf. Eur., *Hl.* 208-38, noted above, n. 16).

47 See also *Ars* 1.45, 49: *scit bene uenator, ceruis ubi retia tendat;... tu quoque, materiam longo qui quaeris amor*. See Hollis (1977: ad 45) for further references to hunting as an erotic image in Roman poetry. The association between erotic pursuit and hunting can be traced back to ancient Greece. See, e.g., Sourvinou-Inwood’s treatment of hunting imagery and erotic pursuits in Greek art. She identifies Theseus as the paradigmatic pursuer.

48 Cf. Apollo’s pursuit of Daphne: *ut canis in uacuo leporem cum Gallicus aruo/ uidit, et hic praedam pedibus petit, ille salatem, Met. 1.533-34*; Pan’s pursuit of the huntress and follower of Diana, Syrinx (*Met.* 1.689-700); Jove’s deceit of Callisto in a hunting context (*Met.* 2.409-40); Mercury’s pursuit of Herse (quoted above; *Met.* 2.708-832); and Alpheus’ pursuit of Arethusa (*Met.* 5.572-642) in a hunting context (*lassa reveterebar (memini) Stymphalide silua, 585*), where the huntress is hunted (605-6, 626-29).
hardened (*rigor*, 77), unadorned (*fine colo modico*, 76), unlike a woman’s (*ut femina*, 75), good looks. She also describes his equestrian (79-80), athletic (81-82), and hunting (83) prowess.

Her praise of his *cultus* echoes the precepts of Ovid’s *magister amoris* in his *Ars* (1.505-24).

Phaedra rejects young men “done up like women” (75) for a “masculine beauty which prefers to be cultivated in moderation” (76). Hippolytus’ hair, she notes, has a style which “lacks art” (77) and his face is tanned (*flava*, 72) and lightly dusted (78) from his exercises. The poet-praeeceptor of the *Ars* likewise enjoins young men to cultivate a clean but unkempt look: *sed tibi nec ferro placeat torquere capillos,/ nec tua mordaci pumice crura teras...forma uiros neglecta decet*, 1.505-6, 509. In fact, his exemplars include Phaedra and Hippolytus: *Hippolytum Phaedra, nec erat bene cultus, amauit*, 1.511 (in addition to Ariadne and Theseus: *Minoida Theseus/ abstulit, a nulla tempora comptus acu*, 1.509-10). The poet-praeeceptor also recommends a tan from exercising in the Campus Martius: *munditie placeant, fuscentur corpora Campo*, 1.513, much like Phaedra describes Hippolytus as having. McKeown comments, in connection with *Amores* 2.18, on the scholarly consensus that 2.18.19-20 refers to the *Ars*, indicating the work was recently begun at the time of the second edition of the *Amores*, while the *Heroides* would have just been finished, and he suggests that the two projects may well have overlapped. In the literary chronology, however, one may imagine that the poet-praeeceptor

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49 This passage resembles the dichotomous construction of masculine desire in *Ars* 1, discussed in chapter 2, where women’s desire is implicitly, by comparison, constructed as immoderate: *parcior in nobis nec tam furiosa libido;/ legitimum finem flamma uirilis habet*, 281-82.

50 McKeown, vol I, 74-89, vol. III, 384-86: “The present tense of *profitemur* (19) and *scribimus* (22) seems to suggest that Ovid was actively engaged on more than one of his amatory works when 2.18 was written, perhaps not only the *Amores* and *Heroides*, but also, if line 19 refers to the *Ars*...that poem as well” (87). See also Jacobson, 300-18.
has read Phaedra and Ariadne’s letters in the *Heroides* as easily as one may imagine that Phaedra’s self-representation is informed by the poet-praecceptor’s insight into her own myth.

Nevertheless, Ovid’s ventriloquized epistle sets up Phaedra for failure. Her control of the gaze which frames the passage, undermines her attempt to construct Hippolytus as an adult masculine subject—a potential *vir*.

Gordon argues that in *Heroides* 15, Ovid portrays a female lover, Sappho, who assumes, not the actively desiring feminine role available from the historic Sappho’s poetry, but the dominant masculine role in the discourse of Greek pederasty. Phaedra’s appropriation of the gaze, in the same collection of epistolary poems, can be read as a similar appropriation of the role of ἐραστής. Hippolytus is well-suited to the complementary role of ἐρόμενος since he is traditionally a paradigm for the ephebe.

Furthermore, the intersection of mobility and acquisitive desire also marks Phaedra’s masculine position vis-à-vis the immobile abandoned heroines of the rest of the collection. Keith

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51 Conte (1994) suggests that the poet-praecceptor constructs his lessons from the fictional world of Roman erotic elegy instead of “real life” anecdotes (51-55): “*Ars amatoria*’s teachings contain a dense network of references for which almost every single precept has a precedent in the larger text of elegy; the *Ars* is like an ordered summary of situations already seen and words already spoken” (55).

52 Fulkerson, 1-22 and passim: “Ovidian heroines—puellae doctae—are excessively literary and so self-consciously fashion themselves as alluding authors influenced by what they have read” (2). Jacobson (150) reads Phaedra as a magistra amoris in her own right.

53 Gordon (in Hallett and Skinner, 1997: 281) and Lindheim (13-77) argue that many of the heroine-writers describe the heroic deeds of their beloveds in contrast to their own powerlessness, in order to, in Lindheim’s words, create “for the hero an image of his own power” (115). Following Fulkerson’s reading of the heroines as a “community of writers,” one could read Phaedra’s emphasis on Hippolytus’ masculine beauty as an example of Phaedra’s appropriation of the common narrative of abandoned woman, as she does of Ariadne’s (122-142).

54 Gordon (in Hallett and Skinner, 1997), 277-78.

55 Ibid., 284-86.


57 Gordon (in Hallett and Skinner, 1997: 274-91) notes similarities between *Heroides* 4 and 15, but does not suggest Phaedra is following Sappho’s example in this respect.

58 The ephebe himself holds a marginal position aligned with the feminine in the Greek imagination because of his shared opposition to the adult Greek hoplite, as Vidal-Naquet and Tyrrell (64-87) have demonstrated.
(in Hardie, Barchiesi and Hinds, 214–39; 2009a) remarks the opposition of the mobile masculine hero to the immobile female body in Roman epic. As Ovid is engaging multiple generic conventions in his epistles, including and especially those employed by Vergil’s Aeneid, such gendered positions can be found in the Heroides as well, where, Bolton argues, “landscape…can also be read as evidence of gender, as just who is allowed to move within and beyond the landscape is sharply defined not only by mythological concerns, but also by moral and gender considerations.”

We may observe that Kennedy, citing Barthes, in his analysis of the Heroides, notes that the lover’s discourse is feminine in its immobile nature. Phaedra acknowledges this when she wishes that she had remained immobile: Gnosia me vellem detinuisset humus, 68.

In this epistle, genre offers another way for Ovid’s ventriloquism to construct a Phaedra who undermines her self-presentation. The opening of the letter announces its generic context as well as a tragic contaminatio.

Quam, nisi tu dederis, caritura est ipsa, salutem
Mittit Amazonio Cressa puella viro.
(Her. 4.1-2)

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59 Bolton, 273. Bolton’s study of gendered spaces in the Heroides links the sea to sexuality, the immobile land to the immobile woman, and the transgression of this gendered boundary—a woman crossing the water—to a destructive destabilization of normative gender roles. Bolton focuses her reading of Her. 4 (278-80) on Phaedra’s mobility in her narrative of hunting in a pastoral landscape (4.41-44), which, Bolton argues, does not result in a successful connection with Hippolytus. “[I]t cannot eliminate her sexual identity, which locates her firmly within the house as the wife of Theseus and the mother of his children” (280).

60 Kennedy (in Hardie [2002]: 228), quoting Barthes (1979. A Lover’s Discourse: 13-14): “Woman is sedentary, Man hunts, journeys; Woman is faithful (she waits), man is fickle (he sails away, he cruises). It is Woman who gives shape to absence, elaborates its fictions, for she has time to do so; she weaves and she sings; the Spinning Songs express both immobility (by the hum of the Wheel) and absence (far away, rhythms of travel, sea surges, cavalcades). It follows that in any man who utters the other’s absence something feminine [sic] is declared.” Taken out of context, Barthes formulation makes love seem like the result of the tedium and loneliness of domestic slavery. Cf. Kauffman (56-57), who quotes this passage to highlight the idea of weaving as poetic composition.

61 See, e.g., Larmour (131-32): “Thus, we may speak of a kind of contamination, with parts of one story being woven into another” (132). Larmour (137 and passim) discusses Phaedra, Hippolytus, and contaminatio in Her. 4 and the Byblis and Scylla episodes in the Met. See also chapter 2, n. 75 for bibliography on contamination in Vergil and Ovid.
The programmatic greeting in line 2 marks its epistolary form, while the elegiac meter and Phaedra’s self-identification as a puella act as a generic marker. Nevertheless, we are soon reminded of Phaedra’s provenance in the tragic tradition. Most shockingly ironic (and darkly comic), is Phaedra’s command in the third line (perlege) and her rhetorical question which follows.

Perlege, quodcumque est: quid epistola lecta nocebit?
Te quoque in hac aliquid quod iuvet esse potest.

(Her. 4.3-4)

*Heroides* 4 is unusual not only for its motivating instance—an attempt at seduction,—but also for its literary tradition, in which letter-writing plays a key role in the narrative. The extant *Hippolytus* contains a most harmful letter, the one written to Theseus by Phaedra and read after her suicide, charging Hippolytus with rape. Rosenmeyer, following Jost, categorizes Phaedra’s letter as a “kinetic” letter because it functions as an agent in the plot, affecting the outcome of the play. The letter is like an actor, giving voice to Phaedra’s lifeless body which remains onstage. Rosenmeyer suggests that Euripides introduces the letter in his second *Hippolytus* for the sake of propriety, “a way to mute, at least temporarily, the disturbing implications of

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62 See Rosenmeyer (30-35) on ancient epistolary conventions, including the greeting.
63 Although she does not treat Her. 4, Lindheim’s reading of the single epistles focuses in part on the intersection between the elegiac and epistolary genres (6-7 and passim).
64 Casali (1995: 1-3) notes that the intrusion of a letter into a preexisting story, in this instance, complicates the central problem in the story, i.e., the revelation of Phaedra’s desire. In addition, he notes the act of writing “is already a forewarning of Phaedra’s (tragic) letter to Theseus” (1).
65 “One could not ask for a better example of Jost’s category of kinetic letters, as Phaedra’s letter instigates violent action and reaction, links suicide with homicide, and requires divine intervention to “rewrite” its contents” (88). See Rosenmeyer (65-66 and 65 n. 12, 13) for an explanation of the difference between “communicative” and “kinetic” letters as formulated by F. Jost.
66 In her analysis of embedded letters in Euripides’ plays *Iphigenia at Tauris, Iphigenia at Aulis, and Hippolytus*, Rosenmeyer (61-97) argues: “letters provide a means of communicating that bypasses, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, the usual directness of dramatic dialogue. In the process, the letters become more than just a means of passing on information: they becomes actors in their own right” (95).
67 As Rosenmeyer (90) points out, Phaedra’s letter “speaks” to Theseus: Βοάι Βοάι δέλτος ἀλάστα, Eur., III, 877. See Rosenmeyer (90, n. 62) for further readings of this passage.
Phaedra’s passion.\textsuperscript{68} The delay of the peripeteia, however, is only momentary for the letter itself acts as a token which initiates the anagnoresis. The letter’s function in the tragedy as a device for recognition makes it a symbol of the outcome of the recognition—Hippolytus’ charge, Theseus’ curse, and Hippolytus’ death.

The Ovidian Phaedra unwittingly activates the allusion, ironically by asking what harm a letter can do (\textit{quid epistola lecta nocebit}, 3) in the opening of her letter of seduction. This allusion acts as an interpretive guide for the external reader who will be unable, or able only with difficulty, to read Phaedra’s account of her desire without assuming that it holds the same destructive power as the Euripidean (and/or Sophoclean) Phaedra’s desire. Furthermore, representations of this myth in Roman art suggest that some version of Phaedra’s story included a seduction letter to Hippolytus.\textsuperscript{69} \textit{Perlege} perhaps points to this letter, anticipating Hippolytus’ (former) refusal to finish reading or, perhaps, Hippolytus’ (former) refusal to hear Phaedra out in person.\textsuperscript{70} Such an allusion would further multiply the possible meaning of the lines, adding to the interpretive frame the tragic connotation of sexually aggressive and transgressive behavior (the attempts of a woman to seduce a man, and a member of her family openly); for an affair between Phaedra and Hippolytus would have been legally incestuous under Roman law.\textsuperscript{71}

\textsuperscript{68} Rosenmeyer, 90.
\textsuperscript{69} See Casali (1995: 3, 13 n.12), Jacobson (146, n.11), and Jolivet (249-50, n. 78) for further references. See also Leo (178-79) who argues for a seduction letter in \textit{HII}.
\textsuperscript{70} As noted earlier, Webster argues that in \textit{H1} Hippolytus veiled himself and probably left the stage in reaction to Phaedra’s approach (65, 67); see Barchiesi (1993: 337) who connects Phaedra’s invitation to read with Theseus’ unsuspecting opening of her letter in \textit{HII}.
\textsuperscript{71} Watson (137) draws this distinction between the Greek and Roman legal status of stepmother. In Greece the union would only be considered adultery. See Watson (137 n. 11) for further bibliography on incest between step-parent and step-child. At the end of the first century CE, after incest prohibitions had been relaxed and even a paternal uncle was allowed to marry his niece “[a]fter the precedent of Claudius and Agrippina,” a stepmother was one of four affines still prohibited to a Roman man as a marriage partner (Corbier, 177).
In the second *Hippolytus*, the audience must guess at the contents of her letter based on Theseus’ reaction. He reports her charges against Hippolytus, but not her words. Because the audience has watched the events unfold earlier in the play, they know that her charges are unfounded even if Theseus does not. By contrast, *Heroides* 4 offers unmediated access to Phaedra’s Ovidian letter. While Phaedra is writing a confession, so to speak, one which takes pleasure in expressing her desire and may even, she supposes, give pleasure (*quod iuvet esse potest*, 4), she is in fact providing evidence, but this time against herself. Ovid’s engagement with Phaedra’s tragic heritage once again acts as an interpretive guide, inviting the audience/reader to question the veracity of her claims, whether they concern Theseus’ behavior or her own desire.72

The theme of silence and revelation familiar from the Euripidean play is also expressed in Phaedra’s opening lines.73 While the greeting refers to the lineage of both the writer and the addressee (*Amazonio Cressa puella viro*, 2), Phaedra avoids naming either of them. As in the Euripidean play, Phaedra hesitates to name her beloved, delaying until line 36 to do so.74 *Amazonio... viro* also recalls the moment in Euripides’ play where Phaedra avoids naming Hippolytus even while she reveals to the nurse her desire for him by calling him “whoever he is,

72 Bassi (42-98) argues that all mediated speech such as a letter in Greek literature and drama is marked as deceptive in opposition to unmediated dialogue.
73 See Goff (1990: 1-26 and passim) and Zeitlin (219-84) on this theme in Euripides’ *HII*: “The action is set on stage before the façade of the house, thus arranging a spatial dialectic between outside and inside, seen and unseen, open and closed, exposed and hidden” (Zeitlin, 243).
74 The Euripidean Phaedra manages to suppress Hippolytus’ name entirely. It is the nurse who names him, in connection with the issue of inheritance should Phaedra die (310), and after Phaedra has revealed her desire (352). His name, spoken aloud, is the trigger for Phaedra’s speech and revelation of her desire (310-353).
the son of the Amazon.” The phrase *Cressa puella* echoes the words of the chorus, who address Phaedra “Oh unhappy Cretan girl” just after her revelation.

Like the Euripidean Phaedra, whose silence is a strategy for preserving a reputation which is governed by shame, the Ovidian Phaedra’s speech is constrained by her concern for *pudor*.

   His arcana notis terra pelagoque feruntur;
   Inspicit acceptas hostis ab hoste notas.
   Ter tecum conata loqui ter inutilis haesit
   Lingua, ter in primo restitit ore sonus.
   Qua licet et sequitur, *pudor* est miscendus amori:
   Dicere quae puduit, scribere iussit amor.
   Quidquid Amor iussit, non est contemnere tutum;
   Regnat et in dominos ius habet ille deos.

   *(Her. 4.5-12)*

As Kaster has noted, the Roman virtue of *pudor* resembles the Greek emotion of *αἰδώς*. Both rely on the notion of a judging community or audience for their function and, through constraint and a desire to appear socially normative, govern individual behavior. While *αἰδώς* is

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76 Eur., *HII*, 372: ῥ ξάλαννα πεί Κρηςία. Casali (1995: 2-3) adds to the allusion the stereotype of the Cretan liar, pointing to Phaedra’s lying letter in *HII*, the current letter, and her elegiac pose: “Phaedra’s elegiacity is a lie, *puella* is a lie, a misleading signal” (3). Fulkerson, in contrast, reads Phaedra’s self-identification as an allusion to and an identification with her sister, Ariadne: “While Phaedra is indeed from Crete, this adjective is most often in elegy used not to refer to Phaedra but to Ariadne; it may take the reader (and Hippolytus) a moment to determine which Cretan is writing” (129).

77 Cf. to, e.g., Eur., *HII*, 331 (* εκ τῶν γέρω τειχρῶν ἕθθά μηχανόμεθα*).

78 For a discussion of this emotion and its function in the Phaedra tragedies, see chapter 1. See Cairns (10-11), Kaster (3) and Scheff (209) for the similarities between *αἰδώς* and *pudor*.

79 See Kaster on the threat of judgment connotated by the word *pudor*. He defines “four core elements” of its meaning: “displeasure with oneself, vulnerability, just criticism, and social loss” (4). He goes on to note that *pudor* is often contrasted with fear (*metus, timor*): the former was an internal, the latter an external emotion. Although *pudor* is internal, as the definition above implies, a critical audience, either real or imaginary, before which one may potentially lose face, is required.
generally understood to be an anticipatory emotion, preventing bad behavior, *pudor*, Kaster notes, tends to be reactive.\(^{80}\) So for Phaedra to say she is ashamed to speak something (*Dicere quae puduit*, 10) is to imply that she is aware that what she is ashamed to speak amounts to behavior which will incur social censure. Also implicit in her *pudor* is the awareness that she is sexually transgressive. For women, *pudor*, says Kaster, “was largely limited to a single frame of reference, the sexual … congruent with their *pudicitia.*”\(^{81}\)

Again following the example of Euripides’ Phaedra, the Ovidian Phaedra claims that divine injunction is responsible for her revelation (*scribere iussit amor*, 10). The Euripidean Phaedra resists speaking her desire throughout the play, and would die in silence, Aphrodite announces, were the goddess not to reveal it.\(^{82}\) This is where the Ovidian Phaedra departs from her tragic tradition. While the Ovidian Phaedra calls the contents of her letter “secrets” (*arcana*, 5), in contrast to her Euripidean counterpart, she admits previous attempts to express her desire of her own volition (*ter tecum conata loqui*, 7).\(^{83}\)

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\(^{80}\) Kaster, 12-14. Kaster does note, however, that “*pudor* can also denote…a desire to avoid behavior that causes [the feeling of shame]” (4).

\(^{81}\) Kaster, 9. See Newlands (1995: 146-74, esp. 168) for the association of female speech, sexuality, and shame in the tales of Luretia (*Fasti* 2) and Myrrha (*Met*. 10).

\(^{82}\) Aphrodite announces that she has inspired Phaedra with a love for Hippolytus and intends to reveal her desire to Theseus as a means to punish Hippolytus (Eur., *HII*, 21-50). Eur., *HII*, 39-40, 42: \(\eta\ \tau\acute{a}l\omega\nu\alpha\nu\\varsigma\ \alpha\mu\pi\omicron\lambda\eta\nu\omicron\nu\alpha\iota\varsigma\nu\varepsilon\varphi\omicron\omicron\nu\omicron\mu\omicron\sigma\omicron\iota\varsigma\omicron\iota\varsigma\iota\alpha\iota\varsigma\gamma\omicron\nu\omicron\iota\varsigma\iota\omicron\varsigma\omicron\iota\varsigma\varphi\omicron\omicron\omicron\varsigma\iota\varphi\omicron\omicr..."

\(^{83}\) Casali (1995: 4) points out that the Ovidian Phaedra’s three attempts to speak her desire correspond to the Euripidean Phaedra’s attempts to suppress her desire—through silence, self-control, and finally suicide. Casali suggests that Ovid is dramatizing a tension inherent in her tragic tradition: “Phaedra’s attempts in her personal past, not to communicate her passion to Hippolytus might interfere with the attempts to *make Phaedra communicate her passion in the past of the literary history*” (4). Jacobson (148) reads the repetition of *ter* as a parody of an epic motif, suggesting Odysseus three attempts to embrace his mother in the underworld (Hom., *Od*., 11.206-8) and Aeneas’ three attempts to embrace the ghost of Creusa (Ver., *Aen*. 2.792-93) as epic antecedents: “The tragic actions of great heroines are transfigured into a lover’s paralysis.” He also notes the occurrence of this motif elsewhere in Ovid’s elegies: Hypermnestra’s letter (*Her*. 14.45-46), which he characterizes as “almost an epic situation,” and the lover’s three attempts to apologize to his beloved for beating her (*Am*. 1.7.61-62), which he cites as another Ovidian parodic use.
Phaedra’s Euripidean *pudor* is mixed with elegiac *amor*: *pudor est miscendus amori*, 9.

In a letter billing itself as a hybrid, *his arcana notis terra pelagoque feruntur* (5) takes on a metapoetic significance. The text (*notis*) containing her “secrets,” which are “carried across land and sea,” is moving in both directions, from Phaedra’s writing location toward Hippolytus and from Greece toward Ovid’s writing location, Rome. *Feruntur* simultaneously expresses four ideas: a physical transfer from Greece to Rome (“land and sea,” *terra pelagoque*); a translation (*translatio*) from the Greek; borrowing from a source model, as *feruntur* often indicates a citation; and a translation from tragedy to elegy.

In the new generic context, Phaedra is reborn, so to speak, and, although she calls herself a *puella* (2), she constructs herself as an elegiac *amator*.85

Ille mihi primo dubitanti scribere dixit:
'Scribe: dabit victas ferreus ille manus.'
Adsit et, ut nostras avido fovet igne medullas,
Figat sic animos in mea vota tuos.
Non ego nequitia socialia foedera rumpam;
Fama, velim quaeras, crimen nostra vacat.
(Her. 4.13-18)

While Phaedra claims she will not break her marriage bonds because of *nequitia*, the word itself is an elegiac marker, which Jacobson notes is found in no other letter in this collection, but is

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84 See *OLD*, fero, 38, “to get (from a source), derive”; see Hinds (1998: 2) on *feruntur*'s use as an Alexandrian footnote. I would like to suggest, moreover, that a possible play on the word *notis* may infer that Phaedra’s secrets are written in texts (*notis*) already familiar, i.e., “known,” to Ovid’s audience. Although the “o” in *notis* is short naturally and by position, while *notis* the perfect passive participle of *nosco* has a long “o,” *nota* is cognate with *nosco* and its function as a linguistic “sign” relies on the notion of recognizability.

85 For Phaedra’s elegiac self-presentation, see Casali (1995: 3), Davis (1995), Fulkerson (126), and Jacobson (147).

86 The use of *nequitia* in an elegiac context to mean “depravity,” or “wantonness” [*OLD*, *nequitia*, 1,3] can be traced back to Gallus, fr. 145 Hollis. Citing this fragment, Keith (2008: 139-65, see especially 141-45) discusses the connection of elegiac *nequitia* to the leisure and luxury afforded by Augustan imperial expansion in Propertius’ poetry. Propertius, for example, asks Cynthia if she is publicly living a wanton life: *Hoc uerum est, tota te ferri, Cynthia, Roma,/et non ignota uiuere nequitia?* (2.5.1-2). At the start of *Am. 2*, Ovid figures his elegiac poetry as tales of his *nequitia: hoc quoque composui…/ ille ego nequitiae Naso poeta meae* (*Am. 2.1.1-2*), the publishing of which Tragedy, at the beginning of the following book implies Ovid should be ashamed: *nequitiam vinosa tuam*
familiar from Ovid’s *Amores*.

In the second *Hippolytus*, by contrast, Phaedra’s attempts to conceal her abject desire are foiled by a meddlesome and rhetorically persuasive nurse. While both Sophocles’ *Phaedra* and Euripides’ *Hippolytus* express the idea that Eros cannot be conquered, in Euripides’ first *Hippolytus*, dialogue attributed to Phaedra identifies the god as her “teacher of daring and courage.” The elegiac Phaedra who pens *Heroïdes* 4 is compelled to write elegiac verse by Amor (11-14). She is elaborating, perhaps, upon Eros the teacher of *HI*, but she is also assuming a programmatic masculine elegiac position expressed in the opening poems of the *Amores* of both Propertius and Ovid. Phaedra’s generic engagement, nevertheless, is motivated by a desire to maintain a feminine position. Unlike the *amator* of *Amores* 1.2, who surrenders to Cupid and joins his triumphal parade as a captive (*en ego, confiteor, tua sum noua praeda, Cupido;/ porrigimus uictas ad tua iura manus, 19-20*), Phaedra will not be the captive of Amor; Hippolytus will be her captive (*dabit victas ferreus ille manus*, 14). This position is in line with the feminine elegiac position of the *puella-domina.*

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*convivia narrant* (*Am. 3.1.17*). When Phaedra claims she does not commit adultery because of *nequitia*, she is, perhaps, implying that it was not Ovid’s poetry which gave her the idea. For uses of the word in elegy, see also, e.g., Prop. 1.6...26, 1.15.38, 2.24.6, 3.10.24, 3.19.10; Ovid *Am. 1.13.32, 3.4.10, 3.11.37, 3.14.17.*

87 Jacobson, 150.

88 Rosati (1984:122-28) outlines traces of the argument given by the Euripidean nurse, filtered by the Roman comic and elegiac *lena*, who serves a similar function, in Phaedra’s own arguments.

89 In Sophocles’ *Phaedra*, unattributed dialogue expresses the power of Eros (684N.; Barrett, 23). In *HII* the power of Aphrodite and Eros is described, e.g., by the nurse (433-81) and the chorus (525-64, 1268-82).

90 ἔχω δὲ τόλμης καὶ θράσους διδάσκαλον... Ἐρωτα, πάντων δυσμαχώτατον θεόν (*HI*, fr. 430 Kannicht; Webster, 67).

91 Cf. Prop. 1.1.1-8; Ovid, *Am. 1.1.1-4, 21-30*, especially Cupid’s direct address to the poet: “quod” *que* “canas, uates, accipe” *dixit* “opus! 24” to *Her.4.13-14: Ille mihi primo dubitanti scribere dixit: / “scribe: Dabit victas ferreus ille manus.” *Am. 2.1.3: hoc quoque iussit Amor to Her. 4.11: Quisquid Amor iussit* See Jacobson, 149.

92 See Luck (61, 121-22) for this theme in Roman erotic elegy. The poet-praecceptor of Ovid’s *Ars* is one example of a male elegiac subject who claims dominance. He offers as analogy, Achilles’ submission to his own praecceptor, Chiron: *verberibus iussus prebuit ille manus* (*Ars* 1.16), an analogy which echoes Phaedra’s reported promise of Cupid that Hippolytus will offer his conquered hands to her: *dabit victas ferreus ille manus* (*Her.* 4.14). The
addition, Phaedra invokes the programmatic themes of elegiac *furta*, eluding a husband or guard:

*Non tibi per tenbras duri reseranda mariti/ ianua, non custos decipiendus erit* (141-42).

Furthermore, Phaedra’s use of *cognota nomine* (138) to overcome the normal obstacles to a lover is reminiscent of Cynthia’s alleged invention of relatives in order to indulge in infinite kissing with other men (*quin etiam falsos fingis tibi saepe propinquos,/ oscula nec desunt qui tibi iure ferant*, Prop. 2.6.7-8). Here, her dissimulation is meant to deceive not the authority figures but the *amator*, and it is unsuccessful.

Phaedra, however, follows the example of Propertius’ masculine elegiac *amator*, who claims his elegiac incipit is also his erotic initiation.93

*Cynthia prima suis miserum me cepit ocellis,
contactum nullis ante Cupidinibus.
tum mihi constantis deiecit lumina fastus
et caput impositis pressit Amor pedibus,
donec me docuit castas odisse puellas
improbus, et nullo uiuere consilio.
ei mihi iam toto furor hic non deficit anno,
cum tamen aduersos cogor habere deos.*

(Prop. 1.1.1-8)

Like Propertius’ *amator*, Phaedra represents herself as innocent, new to the love which orders her to write.

*Non ego nequitia socialia foedera rumpam;
Fama, velim quaeras, crimine nostra vacat,
Venit amor gravius, quo serius; urimur intus;
Urimur, et caecum pectora vulnus habent.
Scilicet ut teneros laedunt iuga prima iuvencos,*

*praeeceptor* boasts, however, that his captive will be Cupid himself (*Ars* 1.21-24), from which he will exact revenge for the submissive elegiac position the *praeeceptor* held in the past. Here the exception proves the rule that the submissive position, although feminized, belongs programmatically to the male elegiac *amator*, a gendered position his exemplary masculine analog demonstrates.

93 See Davis (1995: 44) on Phaedra taking the masculine role of *amator.*
Phaedra claims her reputation is free of charge (18) and well-guarded (27) and she characterizes her love as late-coming (19, 26), a first love (23, 27), which lacks artifice (25). She compares herself to an untamed bull (21) and first fruits (27). Her choices of comparanda are highly ironic. Davis points out that her animal comparisons are all male animals (a young bull and a horse), further emphasizing her masculinity. Phaedra’s comparisons, however, also intersect with Greek and Roman agricultural metaphors traditionally used to describe marriage. Marriage is commonly figured as yoking an animal, the domestication of a wild animal, and sex with the cultivation of fields (sowing, ploughing, harvesting). The text reminds us that she is already married to Theseus, for the images reify her passive position in the kinship structure as

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94 Her language here is suggestive of *Ars Amatoria*, which we have seen, surfaces elsewhere in her poem. Her claim that she is not practicing an “art of love” learned at an early age is therefore suspect. Spentzou (43-84) has noted a tension in the *Heroides* between a longing for innocence and the *ars* associated with love. The poet-praeceptor suggests letter-writing as a means of seduction in the *Ars* for both men and women (1.457-68; 3.479-82). Farrell (1998) and Lindheim both consider these passages in connection with the collection of *Heroides*. While Farrell argues that the *Ars* teaches male letter writers to deceive their addressees for the purpose of seduction, and female letter writers to deceive only would-be interceptors of their missives, a lesson reflected in the letters of the *Heroides*, he excludes Phaedra, a female writer who intentionally deceives her addressee in her letter of seduction (318). In contrast Lindheim (27-28) argues that the *Ars* encourages deceptive writing on both sides: “[F]or both sexes the letter serves as a choice weapon of seduction, and the poet instructs all writers to shun epistolary honesty” (27). Whether an exception or in line with the other single epistle-writers, Phaedra is not being entirely honest to her addressee. Such an interpretation is in line with the general precepts of *cultus* as a means of deceptive seduction (*Ars* 1.611; 3.101-28, 155, 210); on this topic, see Conte (1994: 54) and Kauffman (52).

95 Davis (1995), 47.

96 See King, Sourvinou-Inwood (65-68, 91, n. 47, 48) and Vernant (in Detienne, vii-xvi) for a description and references to agricultural and domestication metaphors in connection with marriage in ancient Greece. See Leach and Myerowitz (109-10) for a discussion of this imagery in *Ars Amatoria*: “The work of the male lover is likened to that of the farmer, sailor, or hunter who tames and masters these objects [women] from the natural world” (109). Myerowitz (212, n. 8) offers further references and Greek comparanda. See also Larmour (139) on taming of horses as an ancient sexual metaphor, which he compares, citing Glenn (441), to the erotic connotations of Phaedra’s speech at Eur., *HII*, 231.
dominated, tamed, and/or cultivated by a man. Again, Phaedra’s use of the elegiac discourse of desire betrays her and reminds the reader that she is not the untouched maiden she represents herself to be.\textsuperscript{97}

If we look closely at Phaedra’s language, her “voice” sounds tragic even as it speaks in an elegiac code. Take, for example, Phaedra’s claim that she will not break her marriage contract because of elegiac *nequitia* (17). Phaedra simultaneously identifies with elegy by speaking in its code, and distances herself from it by refusing to embrace the elegiac life of *nequitia*. She claims that she is no ordinary *amator*. Her *amor* is “more than” what is experienced by the elegiac crowd. Her degree of difference is responsible for a more burdensome (*gravius*, 19), more serious (*serius*, 19), and worse (*peius*, 26) experience of love as a fire (19, 20) and wound (20, 21). Young lovers become jaded. Their love is merely *ars* (25).

The language in this passage is heavy, so to speak, with meta-poetic signals. If McKeown’s conjecture is correct,\textsuperscript{98} and the *Ars* and *Heroides* were being written at the same time, Ovid is again constructing a Phaedra who reveals herself to Ovid’s external readers as the “tragic” Phaedra while writing what is meant to be her elegiac self, for Phaedra is essentially saying “I am not the *amator* of the *Amores*, who goes on to teach his *Ars Amatoria* later in life. My *amor* is not associated with light (*levis*) elegiac *nequitia*, it is more serious (*gravius*).” *Gravis*, in generic terms, is set in opposition to elegy, and most frequently describes epic, but in *Am*. 3.1, this adjective is used to describe tragedy in opposition to elegy. In this poem, personified

\textsuperscript{97} Jacobson, 148. Fabre-Serris (156-57) argues that an allusion to c. 62.42-45 equates Phaedra’s *fama* to the virginity of the Catullan maidens (cf. *Est aliquid, plenis pomaria carpare ramis/ Et tenui primam delegere ungue rosam* (*Her.* 4.29-30) to *idem cum tenui carptus defloruit ungui*, c. 62.43): “As a married woman, Phaedra cannot offer Hippolytus her virginity; instead, she will sacrifice her *fama*” (157). See also Rosati (116-17).

\textsuperscript{98} See n. 50.
Tragedy and Elegy vie for Ovid’s poetic attention. Tragedy says to Ovid: *tempus erat thyrso pulsum grauiore moueri.* 3.1.23 (cf. also 35, 36). Hinds argues in *Her.* 12, Medea’s “tragic identity is not suppressed, but rather is set in productive tension with her new epistolary environment,” and we see the ruptures as “self-conscious generic contamination.” The Medea of *Her.* 12 “is about to ‘enter’ a tragedy.” In *Her.* 4, Phaedra’s literary future is already written in another letter, which she will pen offstage in Euripides’ play.

Underlining Phaedra’s poetic incompetence is her inability to know her audience. The addressee of the epistle is the Euripidean Hippolytus, prude and misogynist, who reacted so violently on the tragic stage to Phaedra’s desire. Phaedra urges Hippolytus to be more elegiac himself.

Tu modo duritiam silvis depone iugosis:
Non sum militia digna perire tua.
Quid iuvat incinctae studia exercere Dianae
Et Veneri numeros eripuisse suos?
Quod caret alterna requie, durabile non est:
Haec reparat vires fessaque membra novat.
Arcus, et arma tuae tibi sunt imitanda Dianae,
Si numquam cesses tendere, mollis erit.

( *Her.* 4.85-92)

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99 See chapter 1 for a more detailed discussion of *Am.* 3.1.
100 Elegy says: *sum levis, et mecum levis est, mea cura, Cupido,* 3.1.41
102 Ibid., 40.
103 In *HII,* Hippolytus gives a famous misogynistic speech (616-68). The Ovidian Phaedra refers explicitly to the tragic tradition at the end of her letter: *quamvis odisse puellas/ diceris,* 173-74. Here *diceris* reads very much like an Alexandrian footnote to Euripides’ play. Rosati (114-15), in contrast, takes Phaedra’s obscure greeting to be an anticipation of this Hippolytus, following, he argues, the precepts from the *Ars* (1.455-58, 467-70). Such correspondences reinforce the intratextual dialogue between the two poems, which undermines Phaedra’s claims to a *rude pectus* (23); nevertheless, were we to understand her as following these guidelines, she would appear, as she does in other moments of her letter, to be failing in her studies.
She claims that she is not an appropriate participant in his military exercises, recalling the opposition set up by the Roman elegists between actual military duty and their own militia amoris. She chides him for not resting from his service to Diana through service to Venus. Palmer translates numeros as “dues,” taking it to mean parts of a process or an exercise, but the linguistic play of numeros, which can also refer to poetic meter, and alterna, especially when the numeri belong to Venus, calls to mind the alternating verses of the elegiac couplet. Hippolytus’ refusal to worship Venus is also his refusal to be an elegiac subject. The sexual innuendo of this passage, recalling Phaedra’s earlier description of Hippolytus at the festival, is at home in elegiac verse, but its irreverence is ill-suited to the chaste and pious Hippolytus. Phaedra’s words liken Hippolytus’ hunting with the virgin goddess Diana to sex (incinctae studia exercere Dianae, 87; Arcus...Si numquam cesses tendere, mollis erit, 91-92), and sex (Veneri, 88) to rest which allows his fessa membra to become durabilis once again.

104 See Palmer (ad loc.) for a note on militia applied to hunting; see also OLD, 1d. for figurative use with other “occupations or services.” Some MSS read materia for militia, strengthening the metapoetic resonance.

105 We see an example of this theme in Am. 1.9: Militat omnis amans, et habet sua castra Cupido, 1. See Lyne (1980: 71-78) for this theme in Roman erotic elegy.

106 See Palmer (ad loc.) and OLD, numerus, 12 b., “the successive movements performed in an exercise,” which cites this line in its examples.

107 OLD, numerus, 14.

108 Ovid is fond of puns on the elegiac meter, the alternus versus; cf., e.g., Am. 1.1.3-4: par erat inferior uersus, risisse Cupido/ dicitur atque unum surripuisse pedem; 17-18: cum bene surrexit uersu noua pagina primo,/ attenuat neros proximus ille meos; 3.1.7-10: uenit odoratos Elegia nesa capillos,/ et, puto, pes illi longior alter erat./ forma decens, uestis tenuissima, uultus amantis,/ et pedibus uitium causa decoris erat. See Sharrock for a discussion for this use of alternus in Roman erotic elegy.

109 Armstrong (99-108) considers Phaedra’s desire to follow Artemis for sexual love a “distorted reflection of the devotion of her beloved stepson” (99). Furthermore, “Phaedra’s appropriation of the Artemesian is in many ways a travesty...it also reveals the complexities and contradiction inherent in the goddess’s worship” (104) since the goddess is virgin but presides over new brides. The argument for alternating love with hunting also echoes the argument of Hippolytus’ Therapon in HH (88-120) and in HI (fr. 428N.), addressed to Hippolytus by an unidentified speaker.
Phaedra seems to be practicing the lessons of the *Ars*, despite her claim that the qualitative difference of her late-coming love is its lack of *ars* (25). Phaedra has already hinted at her admiration of *ars* with her praise of Hippolytus’ own success in following the poet-*praecceptor*’s advice on masculine *cultus* (75-78). Like the poet-*praecceptor*, or perhaps imitating him, Phaedra uses mythological *exempla* in the form of a catalogue as a didactic strategy. First she offers a list of Cretan women as an apology for her hereditary desire.\(^{110}\)

\begin{verbatim}
Forsitan hunc generis fato reddamus amorem,  
Et Venus ex tota gente tributa petat.  
Iuppiter Europen, prima est ea gentis origo,  
Dilexit, tauro dissimulante deum;  
Pasiphae mater, decepto subdita tauro,  
Enixa est utero crimen onusque suo;  
Perfidus Aegides, ducentia fila secutus,  
Curva meae fugit tecta sororis ope.  
En, ego nunc, ne forte parum Minoia credar,  
In socias leges ultima gentis eo!  
Hoc quoque fatale est: placuit domus una duabus;  
Me tua forma capit, capta parente soror.  
Thesides Theseusque duas rapuere sorores:  
Ponite de nostra bina tropaea domo.  
\(\text{\textit{Her.}} 4.53-66\)
\end{verbatim}

This list echoes and could be argued to be an elaboration of the examples given by Phaedra in *HII*, just before the nurse discovers her desire for Hippolytus. Here Phaedra introduces her mother (337) and Ariadne (339) as examples of the evils from which she will fashion good by her suicide. The couplets in Ovid’s list and their order echo the stichomythia of Euripides’ text;

\[^{110}\text{See Armstrong (1-28, 109-66) on Cretan women and sexuality, and (12-16) for a summary of Roman literary reception of the myths of Cretan women: “In the context of Augustan Rome, women such as Pasiphae, Phaedra, and Aerope (and even Ariadne, on some accounts) come to represent not just the wildness of the sexual impulse, or even women’s proverbial lustfulness, but an alternative lifestyle which is at once diametrically opposed to the Augustan ideal and, presumably in a slightly less extreme form, all too prevalent at Rome” (16). The chorus of *HII* also provides examples of victims of Aphrodite and Eros, Iole and Semele (545-64). It is noteworthy that Iole is likened to a bacchant (\(\\text{\textit{ὅπως τε Βάκ−−χαν}}, 550-51\)) which is echoed in the antistrophe in the same metrical position by the genitive of Bacchus (\(\text{\textit{τοκάδα τῶν διηύ̣νοιο Βάκ−−χου}}, 560-61\)) in a phrase which identifies Semele. The echo reinforces the similarity of the two women while drawing attention to the similarity of women under the influence of Aphrodite and Bacchus.\]
for in Euripides, Phaedra’s dialogue, interspersed with the nurse’s, is mirrored by Ovid’s hexameter lines:

Φαίδρα: ὦ τλῆµον, οἶν, µήτερ, ἡράςθης ἔρων.
Τροφός: ὅν ἔχε ραύρου, τέκνου; ἤ τί φῆς τόδε;
Φαίδρα: εὖ τ’, ὧ τάλαιν ὡµαίε. Διονύσου δάµαρ.
Τροφός: τέκνου, τί πάσχεις; εὐγγόνους κακορροθεῖς;
Φαίδρα: τρίτη δ’ ἔγω δύστηνος ὡς ἀπόλλυμαι.
(Eur., III, 337-341).

The Ovidian Phaedra follows her tragic model by placing herself as the final exemplar in the list of Cretan women. When she calls herself the “last of the line” (ultima gentis, 62), she is in a sense speaking of Euripides’ Phaedra, who not only intends to be last through her suicide, but does indeed accomplish this at the end of the play. The Ovidian Phaedra, by contrast, interprets her membership in such a family as a challenge to live up to their reputation: ne forte parum Minoia credar, 61. She also uses it as a justification for her forwardness.

The Ovidian Phaedra’s list, in fact, shares more in common with the poet-præceptor’s list of desiring women in Ovid’s Ars Amatoria 1.283-340. Each brief example encapsulates her primary signification. In Phaedra’s list, for example, Pasiphae’s treatment has been shrunk. In the Ars catalogue, Pasiphae’s story is given the most attention (38 lines).111 In her daughter’s letter (Her. 4), all that remains of the lengthy treatment in the Ars (hanc tamen impleuit uacca deceptus acerna/dux gregis, et partu proditus auctor erat, Ars 1.325-26) is the information in the last two lines—her name, the trick of the cow disguise and her pregnant body acting as an index: Pasiphae mater, decepto subdita tauro,/ Enixa est utero crimen onusque suo (Her. 4.57-58).

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111 Ars 1.289-326. See chapter 2 for full discussion of this passage.
Phaedra’s list is artfully constructed. The homoioteleuton of *prima est ea gentis origo* (55) and *ultima gentis eo* (62) connects the first (prima) and last (ultima) entries while creating a neat frame for the list. Nevertheless, with the ventriloquized Phaedra, Ovid plays a poet whose verse is all *ars* and no *ingenium*, for the content of her rhetorical exemplars work against her poetic project. Phaedra represents herself as a victim of Aphrodite like the other women of her family before her. Her identification rehearses the motivating plot of Euripides’ extant play, where Aphrodite opens the play by announcing her intention to use Phaedra as a human weapon against Hippolytus (1-57). Phaedra never learns this fact, although the chorus suggests it in their own catalogue of rhetorical examples (545-64, quoted in chapter 2). The subjects of each couplet alternate, male lover to female lover: Iuppiter (55), Pasiphae (57), *perfidus* Aegides (59), *En, ego nunc* (61), but the alternation implicitly establishes a paradigmatic status between the four examples. Their similarity is further reinforced by the content of the couplets. Jupiter, Pasiphae, Theseus, and Phaedra herself are the active lovers who use deceit to attain their desires. Although Theseus is only said to escape the labyrinth with the help of Phaedra’s sister, his epithet, *perfidus* (59) and the description of the *curva tecta* (60), literally “curved and covered things,”\(^{112}\) suggest deceit and concealment.\(^{113}\) Jacobson argues that the theme of deceit functions “as if to underscore the presence of deceit in her own attempt to win Hippolytus. What is, so to speak, inherited from the relationships of one generation by those of the next is moral *corruption*” [my emphasis].\(^{114}\) Jacobson echoes the strong ancient association between deceitful

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\(^{112}\) *tecta* is the perfect passive participle from *tego*, “to cover” (see *OLD, tego* 1).

\(^{113}\) See Bergren for a recent treatment of the connection between weaving, composition and truth in the Greek imagination.

\(^{114}\) Jacobson, 156.
speech and “morally corrupt” sexuality which scholars have identified.\textsuperscript{115} At the close of her letter, Phaedra makes her paradigmatic relation with her mother explicit: \textit{potuit corrumpere taurum/ mater: eris tauro saevior ipse truci}, 165-66. The couplet also draws an explicit comparison between Hippolytus and Pasiphae’s bull, ostensibly challenging him to be more human(e) to Phaedra and her desire than Pasiphae’s bull. The comparison, of course, has the opposite effect of aligning Phaedra’s desire with her mother’s bestial desire. It also makes painfully clear Phaedra’s true intent, “to seduce” (\textit{corrumpere}), while recalling both mother’s and daughter’s tragic origin,\textsuperscript{116} through the same verb whose root, \textit{rumpere}, recalls the tragic death of Hippolytus.\textsuperscript{117}

She describes the inappropriate female desire afflicting the women in her family as both divine retribution (54) and as a law: \textit{in socias leges ultima gentis eo}, 62. Here she specifically uses the discourse of imperial expansion. This passage resembles the elegiac theme of \textit{servitium amoris}.\textsuperscript{118} There is, however, more to Venus’ imperial expansion than simply \textit{omnia vincit amor}.\textsuperscript{119} Crete is a nation conquered by the \textit{imperium} of Venus,\textsuperscript{120} whose subjects (\textit{ex tota}

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\textsuperscript{115} See chapter 1 for a full discussion of this association.
\textsuperscript{116} Euripides’ \textit{Hippolytus I} and II, Sophocles’ \textit{Phaedra}, and Euripides’ \textit{Cretans}.
\textsuperscript{117} \textit{HII}, 1198-1248. Hippolytus actually dies later in the company of Theseus, but his accident is ultimately the cause of his death. Seneca later uses the same verb to describe Hippolytus’ dismemberment in his \textit{Phaedra}, when his horses tear his body from the tree trunk where he is impaled: \textit{et pariter moram/ dominumque rumpunt}, 1101-2 (Fitch. 2002. \textit{Seneca VIII, Tragedies}. Cambridge; London). See Most for a discussion of images of dismemberment in Seneca’s plays from a cultural, historical and literary perspective.
\textsuperscript{118} See Conte (1994: 322-23), Fitzgerald (72-77), Greene, Luck (37, 61, 121-22, ), Lyne (1980), and McCarthy for the traditional elegiac theme of \textit{servitium amoris}, the marginal position assumed by the elegiac subject in relation to his female beloved (reversing gender hierarchies) and in relation to the free-born Roman male citizen (as slave). For Phaedra to take this position as slave to love is to assume the (emasculated but still) masculine guise of the elegiac \textit{amator}. As Gold (1993 89-90) has argued, however, the \textit{puella}’s role is entirely relational. She therefore oscillates between dominator and dominated in opposition to the \textit{amator}. See also Greene and Wyke (2002: 159-62, 172-73) on the \textit{puella}’s inconsistent depiction as dominator-dominated.
\textsuperscript{119} Vergil, \textit{Ecl.} 10.69: \textit{Omnia uincit Amor: et nos cedamus Amori}.
*gente*, 54) owe a tribute (*tributa*, 54) to the goddess to be exacted from their own suffering as slaves to abject desire (*hunc amorem*, 53). Applying the concept of the abject as formulated by Butler following Kristeva in the previous chapter, we saw an example of how the Augustan discourse of desire constructs normative desiring subjects by means of their opposites—“threatening spectres,” to borrow Butler’s term—121 whose desires define the borders beyond which desire is no longer recognizable as human desire. The catalogue found in *Ars Amatoria* 1.283-340 and its frame figure these abject desires as bestial, criminal, fatally destructive, and a symptom of madness. These fearful desiring subjects and the normal desiring subject they surround and delimit constitute an Augustan “law of desire.” According to Phaedra, Aphrodite’s punishment invokes this law (the *generis fato* (53) is part of the *tributa* (54) Aphrodite seeks) and condemns the women of her family to love in ways that are not permitted inside the realm of normative desire. The structure of her catalogue appears to reverse the trajectory of abjection. Female love is wild and irrational as a punishment. The myth which serves as an aetiology for this claim, and the frame which surrounds the list, however, only reinforce the construction of female desire as ahistoric and “natural.” The *generis fato* to which Phaedra refers is a curse upon the descendants of *Sol* for acting as witness against Venus’ own transgressive sexuality—her

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120 Cf. *Met* 5.365-72, where Venus’ desire for imperial expansion is the cause of Persephone’s rape by Dis: ‘*arma manusque meae, mea, nate, potentia* dixit/...*cur non matrisque tuumque/ imperium profers? agitur pars tertia mundi*, 365, 371-72. See Barchiesi (in Hardie, Barchiesi and Hinds, 112–26) for a discussion of Venus’ designs for empire building in *Met.* 5. Barchiesi identifies a sort of master plot of Venus. As an elegist, a poet of Venus, Ovid is her appointed bard: “She wants the universe, and now she has it, thanks to the monarchy of the only progeny still alive from all those divine stories of sex narrated by Ovid” (122). See also Bowditch and Keith (2008: 139-65) for the intersection of imperialism and elegiac aesthetics.

121 Butler (1993), 3. “[T]he construction of gender operates through exclusionary [sic] means, such that the human is not only produced over and against the inhuman, but through a set of foreclosures, radical erasures that are, strictly speaking, refused the possibility of cultural articulation...the construction of the human is a differential operation that produces the more and the less ‘human,’ the inhuman, the humanly unthinkable. These excluded sites come to bound the ‘human’ as its constitutive outside, and to haunt those boundaries as the persistent possibility of their disruption and rearticulation” (8). See also Butler (1993), 1-16 and Kristeva (1982), 1-31.
adulterous affair with Mars. The aetiology of abject female desire is female vengeance connected with abject female desire on the divine level. The irony is heightened by the fact that Phaedra will, with a (second) letter, become the index of a contrived sexual crime—Hippolytus’ rape of Phaedra. Moreover, the frame, which ostensibly sets up Cretan women as victims suffering on behalf of their ancestor’s witness against Venus’ illegal behavior, provides an aetiology for the repudiation of female desire by law (in socias leges, 62) as a result of the invocation of a law (against adultery) which requires the repudiation of active female sexuality.

In addition to the catalogue of Cretan women, Phaedra offers an Alexandrian catalogue of actively desiring women and their beloved hunters.

Clarus erat silvis Cephalus, multaeque per herbam
Conciderant illo percutiente ferae,
Nec tamen Aurora male se praebat amandum:
Ibat ad hunc sapiens a sene diva viro.
Saepe sub ilicibus Venerem Cinyraque creatum
Sustinuit positos quaelibet herba duos.
Arsit et Oenides in Maenalia Atalanta;
Illa ferae spolium pignus amoris habet.
Nos quoque iam primum turba numeremur in ista:
Si Venerem tollas, rustica silva tua est.
Ipsa comes veniam, nec me latebrosa movebunt
Saxa neque obliquo dente timendus aper.

(Her. 4.93-104)

The list provides examples which seem to be straightforward analogs to Phaedra and Hippolytus.122 The poet-praeceptor’s list in Ars 1 highlighted the crimes and punishments of desiring women. Phaedra’s list suppresses and omits this aspect of female desire in her examples.123 In this way her list appears to be an attempt to construct a more inclusive list of the

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122 Jacobson (153) draws attention to the same examples used by the nurse in HII at 454-56 (Cephalus and Eos, Zeus and Semele) in order to persuade Phaedra not to commit suicide.

123 In his discussion of this catalogue, Davis (1995: 53-55) notes that the second (Adonis) and third (Meleager) examples foreshadow the deaths of both Phaedra and Hippolytus: Adonis was killed by a wild animal while
Phaedra’s examples are presented as egalitarian love affairs where lover and beloved vacillate from female to male (Cephalus offers himself to Aurora “to be loved;” Meleager is “on fire” for Atalanta to whom he obligates himself with a pledge, pignus amoris, 100) or love is shared equally between the partners (Venus and Adonis). As Lindheim notes, the epistolary tradition in which the Heroides participate bestows upon the writer control over her self-presentation: “She can highlight as significant whichever details she chooses. Conversely, she has the power to suppress whatever she desires to remain unspoken or unemphasized.”

Although Phaedra borrows mythological examples for the purpose of her elegiac project, she has chosen poorly. For Phaedra is herself an example plucked from the tragic stage. The denouement of each mythological love contains the seeds of tragedies. In this respect the catalogue reflects the tragic haunting of the previous catalogue of Cretan women, the epistle as a whole, and its author’s inability to suppress or transcend her generic origin.

Phaedra’s examples are meant to provide an opportunity for Hippolytus to self-identify as lover-hunter; however, the list unintentionally provides the reader with an opportunity to identify our heroine-writer with (Cinna’s?) Myrrha. At line 97, Phaedra suppresses the names of both Adonis and Myrrha, calling Adonis Cinyraque creatum. Within the Heroides we find a strategy of emphasis through exclusion—and a bit of humor at the heroine’s expense. While it is in Phaedra’s interest to suppress the name of his mother in her example of Adonis, her convenient

Hippolytus was killed by the Neptunian bull; Meleager angered his step-mother, who killed him and then committed suicide by hanging while Phaedra, in fear of Hippolytus’ reaction, accused him of rape, sealing his fate, then hung herself; see also Casali (1995: 6-7) and Jacobson (153-54) for the destructive nature of each example. Furthermore, the mention of Adonis may proleptically foreshadow the death of Hippolytus. At the close of III Artemis promised Adonis’ death in payment for Hippolytus’ (1420-22; Jacobson, 153).

124 Lindheim, 22-23.
oversight in fact draws attention to itself by her inclusion of his father’s name. Myrrha, the unnamed mother-sister, will rehearse Phaedra’s incestuous role in the *Metamorphoses*. Each entry participates in the same strategy of omission. Cephalus was raped by Aurora; among the *multae ferae* (93-94) was Procris, whose suspicion was a result of Cephalus’ (unwilling) infidelity. Atalanta’s *spolium* (100) leads to Meleager’s murder of his uncles, an act which trigger’s his mother’s revenge and his death. “If you take away Sex, your forest is rustic” (*si Venerem tollas, rustica silva tua est*, 102) and safe, Phaedra implies! The catalogue inadvertently proves that women in the forest spell trouble. Phaedra claims that she will fear neither the shadowy rocks nor the curved tusk of a boar. Perhaps she does not know Adonis’ myth, but we do. Venus was not killed by the boar but Adonis was. Again, Ovid’s voice can be heard through his “dummy,” Phaedra. While the voice of Phaedra attempts to keep silent, a characteristic familiar from the Euripidean Phaedra, about her similarity to a character like Myrrha, Ovid’s voice irrupts through the name of the father, drawing our attention to what

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125 In his clever comparison of the modern shopping list to the Alexandrian poetic catalogue Hinds (1993: 30) notes: “shopping lists which leave things out are deeply irritating; Alexandrian poetic catalogues which leave things out are…deeply Alexandrian.” His argument is offered in support of a suggestion that the list of letters in *Amores* 2.18 is not incomplete, but intentionally conflates the Hypsipyle letter with the Medea letter by means of omission. If an exclusion in *Am. 2.18* draws attention to the similarities between two separate letters, then, I would argue, a suppressed name in a mythological example may do the same.

126 *Met. 10.32-518; Casali (1995), 7.*

127 This story is told at length in *Met. 7.672- 865.*

128 This story is told at length in *Met. 8.260- 525*. Cf. Spentzou (79), who notes that this story in Phaedra’s catalogue hints at the darker side of love.

129 In *Argonautica*, Jason correctly interprets Atalanta’s symbolic meaning as “trouble” in the symbolic system of myth, specifically in relation to a group of men who must work together, such as Meleager and his fellow hunters. Although she wishes to join the crew, Jason fears the *ἔρις* brought on by *φιλότης* (*περὶ γάρ μενέαιν ἐπεσθαί/ τὴν ὄδον. ἀλλ’ ὃσοι αὐτὸς ἔκὼν, ἀπερήτυς κούρην, / δεῖσε γὰρ ἀργαλέας ἐρίδας φιλότητος ἐκῆτι, 1.771-73).*

130 *Met. 10.708-739; Casali (1995: 7) notes that Adonis’ death not only takes place after Hippolytus’, but is Artemis’ revenge for the death of Hippolytus, a revenge the goddess announces in *III, 1420-22: ἐγὼ γάρ αὐτῆς ἄλλον εξ ἐμῆς χειρός/ ὃς ἐν μάλιστα φίλητος κυρὴ βροτῶν/ τόξος αφίκτοις τούτω θείῳ τιμωρησομαι. A comic, but nevertheless pointed reference back to Hippolytus’ own death.*
Phaedra would dissimulate. In just the same way, the list of hunting lovers, for example, attempts (but ultimately fails) to situate Hippolytus in a literary tradition of erotic hunters.

Phaedra claims that desire (Venus) determines kinship roles (\textit{generis...catena,/ imposuit nodos cui Venus ipsa suos, 135-36}). Phaedra is simultaneously mother, step-mother, and wife, which constructs Theseus as father and husband and Hippolytus as son and husband. In his chapter on this letter, Jacobson concludes that \textit{Heroides} 4 is a long rhetorical joke.\textsuperscript{131} Ovid cannot, according to Jacobson, situate the letter at the moment of crisis, as in other poems, because that would necessitate two letters, one to Hippolytus and one to Theseus.\textsuperscript{132} This insight also points to the peculiar problem of incest in Phaedra’s case. Her role in relation to two different members of the same family becomes redundant (wife : wife) and therefore causes an erasure of her own place in the kinship system while creating an impossible contradiction between the two men. Jacobson, pointing to the opening lines of the epistle (\textit{Qua nisi tu dederis, caritura est ipsa, salutem/ Mittit Amazonio Cressa puella viro, 1-2}), argues that Phaedra, either attempting to prove that there is no incest or engaging in self-deceit, is writing herself out of the family intentionally by replacing kinship roles with elegiac roles.\textsuperscript{134} I would argue that Phaedra’s opening is less a denial of current roles than a re-definition, shifting the position of both in the kinship system from mother/son to maiden/potential husband. Throughout her epistle, Phaedra manipulates kinship roles or uses the names that determine those roles through kinship

\textsuperscript{131} Jacobson, 157.
\textsuperscript{132} Ibid., 146, 157.
\textsuperscript{133} Ehwald prints “quam” at \textit{Her.} 4.1.
\textsuperscript{134} Jacobson, 147. He points to the “juxtaposition of ‘geographical’ adjectives” which emphasize geographic and national distance. “The current relationship, wife and son of Theseus, virtually mother and child, is completely obscured,” and \textit{puella viro} stands in as new relation “sharp with erotic-elegiac overtones.”
relations to dissimulate adultery. She calls them *nomina vana*, demonstrating that, in her opinion, names signifying symbolic roles are arbitrary and meaningless in themselves.

Instead of writing herself out, Phaedra uses various techniques to write Theseus out of her story. Removing Theseus from the kinship role of husband allows her to move Hippolytus into this role without an apparent redundancy or conflict. The elegiac position she claims for both Hippolytus and herself in line 2 (*puella viro*) leaves Theseus only a marginal, unacknowledged role or non-existent role as husband since the status of the elegiac *puella* is always obscure. She exists somewhere in the interstices between adulterous wife to a cuckolded husband and avaricious *meretrix* loyal only to the lover with the most pleasing gifts.\(^\text{135}\)

Phaedra does not even mention Theseus until line 65 and there he is named as a player in Ariadne’s myth, not Phaedra’s:

\[
\text{Hoc quoque fatale est: placuit domus una *duabus*;}
\]
\[
\text{Me tua forma *capit, capta* parente *soror*.}
\]
\[
\text{**Thesides Theseusque duas rapuere sorores:**}
\]
\[
\text{Ponite de *nostra bina* tropaea domo.}
\]
\[
(\text{Her. 4.63-66})
\]

Here the doubling through aliteration, polyptoton, and the use of plural adjectives to describe the sisters makes the two affairs complementary analogs;\(^\text{136}\) but, as Ovid’s readers know from the mythological tradition, while the sisters can be collapsed (*duabus*, 63; *duas...sorores*, 65), the two men cannot be. Theseus shares mythological narratives with both sisters, but Hippolytus does not, and Phaedra’s formulation makes this clear. While *domus una* includes both *Thesides*

\(^{135}\) James (2003: 47-52) on the relationship of the *puella* and *ego* to the traditional figure of *vir* as husband, and (71-107) the *avid a puella*.

\(^{136}\) Lindheim (122-142) argues that “Phaedra alters her own story to fit into the mold of Ariadne” (122) both in her self-presentation as a virgin as well as in her decision, informed by Ariadne’s own experience with Theseus, to take on a new lover rather than persuade the abandoning hero to return.
Theseusque, line 64 splits the pair of “lovers,” connecting the addressee, Hippolytus (tua), with the writer (me), and the father (parente) with the sister (soror). The near chiastic structure actually emphasizes the difference between the pairs because of its grammatical variation.

Phaedra’s formula leaves room for only one man to one woman and Theseus is taken. While the grammatical structure succeeds in distinguishing the two men, the very texture of her language reveals the kinship relation, which forbids Phaedra’s desire—the son of Theseus and Theseus.

Phaedra does not speak of Theseus as her husband until line 111, where she enumerates his failures to perform his kinship role as husband and father properly. Theseus’ name is surrounded by repeated iterations of the name of Pirithous, love for whom has superseded that for Phaedra and Hippolytus: Illum Pirithoi detinet ora sui; praeposuit Theseus, nisi si manifesta negamus, Pirithoum Phaedrae Pirithoumque tibi, 110-112. In line 112 Phaedra equates herself with Hippolytus grammatically. They both endure exactly the same fate, the same suffering, which Phaedra calls iniuria (113). She emphasizes their shared suffering by referring to herself and Hippolytus in the first person plural, with plural pronouns (nos, 113; uterque sumus, 114), and by enumerating the iniuriae committed by Theseus against each of their families (115-137 Phaedra’s incestuous desire is repeated in the list of letters found in Am. 2.18.24: Hippolytique parens Hippolytusque legant. Here the focus is on the son, but the effect is the same.

Her argument resembles the argument Plutarch attributes to Phaedra in (presumably) Hi: ὅτι τήν τε Φαιδραν καὶ προσεγκαλοῦσαν τῷ Θησειὶ πεποίηκεν ὡς διὰ τὰς ἔκεινοι παρανομίας ἔρασθεῖσαν τοῦ Ἱππολύ του, Mor. 27f-28a. In Sophocles’ Phaedra, Theseus has been absent for so long, he is believed to be dead (fr. 686 Rdt.; Barrett, 12).

See Rosati (119) on Phaedra’s construction of the two as equally victimized by Theseus. See Lyne (39-40) for Catullus’ use of iniuria as infidelity, especially in poem 72. He argues that, because it engages the language of amicitia with which Catullus describes the sacred foedus between himself and Lesbia, “Catullus means that Lesbia has not just committed them against him (i.e., acts of infidelity), she has committed them with such willful and inimical intent that the wholeness of Catullan love (exalted amicitia) is now impossible” (40). See also Oliensis (in Hallet and Skinner: 151-71), who charts how the client/patron relationship of amicitia and its vocabulary is translated into the elegiac code in the relationship between lover and beloved in Tibullus, Propertius, and Horace.
116). She even lists her own sons as *iniuriae* committed against Hippolytus, while denying any role in the pregnancy or rearing.

Prima securigeras inter virtute puellas
    Te peperit, nati digna vigore parens.
Si quaeras, ubi sit, Theseus latus ense peregit:
    Nec tanto mater pignore tuta fuit.
At ne nupta quidem taedaque accepta iugali;
    Cur, nisi ne caperes regna paterna nothus?
Addidit et fratres ex me tibi, quos tamen omnis
    Non ego tollendi causa, sed ille fuit.
O utinam nocitura tibi, pulcherrime rerum,
    In medio nisu viscera rupta forent!

(Her. 4.117-26)

It is as if she conceptualizes her womb as a weapon used by Theseus to deny Hippolytus his rights as heir (*addidit...ex me*, 123), a womb Phaedra wishes had burst during birth (*viscera rupta forent*, 126).140 This image, when combined with the suggestion that Theseus refused to marry Hippolyta in order to deny Hippolytus an inheritance (122), adds to Theseus’ bad behavior the stereotypical charges against wicked stepmothers common in Roman literature and declamation. The stepmother was characteristically suspected of plotting to remove physically or legally the children of her husband’s previous marriages in order to benefit her own children and/or herself.141 The benefits were commonly associated with rights of inheritance.142 By Phaedra’s account Theseus is not only a bad father to his son, but the *saeva noverca* as well. In order for Phaedra to take on a new kinship role in relation to Hippolytus—lover instead of step-

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140 In Euripides’ *Medea*, Medea famously announces toward the end of a speech complaining about the miserable life of women that she would rather go to war three times than give birth once. Its placement in her speech suggests that, in the binary gendered roles of soldier and mother, she would prefer to be a male warrior, hence *not* a woman capable of reproducing: *κακῶς φρονοῦντες: ὡς τρὶς ἄν παρ’ ἀσπίδα/ στήναι ἥλωσιν ἀν μᾶλλον ἢ τεκεῖν ἀπαξ*; 250-51. Ennius’ *Medea* repeats the sentiment: *nam ter sub armis malim vitam cernere/ quam semel modo parere*, Jocelyn, fr. 109.

141 See Gray-Fow and Watson (92-206) for the tradition of the *saeva noverca* in Latin literature and its basis in Roman life and law. See Watson (109-13) for the portrayal of Phaedra as a *saeva noverca* in Latin literature.

142 Gray-Fow, 753-57; Treggiari, 391-92; Watson, 140-48.
mother—, however, she ends up alienating herself not only from her other kinship roles of wife to Theseus and mother to their sons, but alienating herself from her own body and its reproductive capacity. Moreover, Rosati, citing *Ars* 2.365-69, where the poet- *praeeceptor* faults Menelaus for not being present to prevent Helen’s abduction, thereby facilitating her adultery, argues that Phaedra’s accusations against Theseus’ absence amount to an accusation that he is a *leno maritus.* While this accusation strips Theseus of his rights as husband, it is a reminder of Phaedra’s adulterous intentions and her future abject status (as a defeminized, sexually aggressive adulteress), should she successfully seduce Hippolytus. Such a representation is yet another example of Phaedra’s inability to use poetic language to expand the limits which bound and define normative desire. Her desire, even in her own formulation, is excluded socially and biologically from the feminine.

Phaedra’s accusations that Theseus is not performing his kinship roles properly (implicitly) justifies her refusal to perform her own role as wife, mother, and (step)mother properly and (explicitly) authorizes the role she suggests for Hippolytus: *I nunc, sic meriti lectum reverere parentis, / Quem fugit et factis abdicat ipse suis,* 127-28. For, in Phaedra’s estimation, Theseus’ bad performance (*sic meriti*) and the abdication of his role (*abdicare*)

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143 Rosati (1984), 119.
144 Jacobson (156) contrasts the Ovidian Phaedra to the Euripidean in *HII:* “Phaedra’s children now incur their mother’s hatred, who regrets ever having borne potential enemies and rivals of Hippolytus. Whereas in the *Hippolytus* Phaedra’s love and concern for her children not only remain intact and strong, but prove a guide for her behavior [sic].” Phaedra’s attitude toward motherhood is similar to Sappho’s in the collection (*Her.* 15. 69-70), an attitude Gordon (in Hallett and Skinner, 1997: 283) associates with her masculine representation in the poem.
145 These lines in effect answer the question Hippolytus poses to the nurse in *HII,* 651-55: ὡς καὶ εὗ γ’ ἤμι πατρόϲ, ὡς κακὸν κάρα./ λέκτωριν ἄβδετον ἦλθε εἰς συναλλαγάς./ ἀγώ ῥυτοῖς νασμοῖσιν ἐξομόρροιαι./ ἐς ὦτα κλύζων, πῶϲ ἄν οὖν εἰςν κακὸς./ ὡς οὐδ᾽ ἀκούϲας τοίῳ ἄγνεύειν δοκῶ. Barrett (18) and Webster (67), based on fragments from *HII,* argue that in this play Phaedra attempts to persuade Hippolytus to seize rule from his father (fr. 432N.-434N.). This is perhaps Ovid’s source for her argument in this passage.
demands a new set of relations within the kinship structure. Once she has established Theseus’ renunciation of his own role in the family, Phaedra begins to redefine her own.

In this passage more than any other in the letter, the intersection between the past generic performances of the “role” of Phaedra on the tragic stage and the performance of gender and kinship roles are made manifest. The names, as Phaedra demonstrates, are meaningless (vana, 130) in themselves. The behavior of a “stepmother who will have sex with her step-son” (privigno...coitura noverca, 129), as it is performed by the character Phaedra familiar from tragedy, and her opposite, a “stepmother who is faithful to [her] stepson” (privigno fida noverca meo, 140), is almost indistinguishable.

As Phaedra points out to Hippolytus, although she has “translated” their role from tragedy to elegy, there will be no need to rehearse the elegiac plot of furta.

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146 The tone of this couplet recalls Ars 3.113, where the poet-praeceptor announces to his female students simplicitas rudis ante fuit; nunc aurea Roma est, 113. This is perhaps another clue that the two projects were simultaneous and/or we are meant to read Phaedra’s epistle as if she has read the Ars. This last suggestion does not exclude the possibility that Ovid has written books of the Ars as a prequel, so to speak, of his earlier amatory poetry.

147 In addition to Phaedra’s depiction as a step-mother in love with her step-son in Euripides and Sophocles, the fear of the “amorous stepmother” also appears in Latin literature and declamation. In Rome, a man would likely remarry a woman of child-bearing age. In some cases the wife may be the same age or younger than her husband’s adult children. Such circumstances have been cited as possible causes for this fear. Gray-Fow, 748-49; Treggiari, 401; Watson, 136-39.
Oscula aperta dabas, oscula aperta dabis;
Tutus eris mecum laudemque merebere culpa,
Tu licet in lecto conspiciare meo.

(Her. 4. 137-46)

Phaedra wishes to be call “trustworthy/faithful to her stepson” (140). This title plays with the stock character of the saeva noverca (“wicked stepmother”), which Phaedra has also indirectly evoked in her charges against Theseus. Here, she is not shifting the suspicious accusations onto another. Instead, she refuses the reputation of an evil stepmother who would plot against her husband’s children by claiming its opposite, the fida noverca; yet her reputation is based on a misinterpretation of her incestuous erotic affection as maternal affection. She is transferring appearances and interpretation, not performance. Such a move is doubly elegiac. The strategy accords with the elegiac trope of deceiving one’s ward in order to carry on an affair. Fides, moreover, when read with elegy’s tradition of employing Roman virtues in erotic relationships, takes on added erotic meaning. Conte argues that the Roman erotic elegists redefined Augustan discourse to suit the world of lovers.148 “Thus, elegy’s need for recuperation induces it to welcome within itself the values of fides, pietas, and sanctitas…. The fides of elegy is named by a language of love, the chastity requested of Cynthia is not the one a wife and mother austerely displays, and so forth.”149

In Heroides 4 Phaedra has retrofitted herself and Hippolytus qua exempla to elegiac roles. Phaedra attempts to demonstrate that the performance of normative kinship roles, noverca and provignus, at least, closely resembles the performance of the very incest taboo which circumscribes them—embracing (amplexos, 139), living in the same house (143), kissing

149 Ibid., 39-40.
(oscula, 144), sharing a bed (in lecto...meo, 146). In this she anticipates Judith Butler, who theorizes gender and kinship roles as an effect of their performance. One does not behave like a stepmother because one is a stepmother; one is a stepmother because one performs the role in way that makes her recognizable as a stepmother. Meaning is provided by the “audience”—in the case of the Heroides, either by the other members of the household or Ovid’s readers. Phaedra stresses the power of this audience to bestow meaning on a name (videar, 129; laudabimur, 139; dicar, 140; merebere, 145), as she imagines a positive response to their duplicitous performance. Such a revelation is in part a continuation of the theme of appearance and reputation which is so important to Euripides’ play, but in Ovid, because Phaedra demands that we reconceptualize her performance through the discourse of other generic contexts—the epistle and elegy—appearance and reputation are now inextricably linked to generic codes and interpretation.

Phaedra’s citation of the role of (step-)mother introduces alternative kinship bonds in which she becomes her husband’s daughter and her lover’s mother, and father and son are replicated as father-in-law and son-in-law. In her analysis of Antigone, Judith Butler considers the symbolic and social norms governing kinship and their role in creating culturally intelligible subjects and, through the incest prohibition, their appropriate objects of desire. Summarizing Lacan’s definition of the symbolic, she observes:

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150 Butler (1993), 12-14 and passim.
151 See Goff (1990: passim), McClure (112-57), and Gill, who argues that Hippolitus presents sophrosune as a phusis, “a fundamental part of his nature,” (86) in contrast to Phaedra, who is also concerned with appearing to be sophron to others, but “is conscious of an inner conflict between ‘herself’...and the alien force or ‘other’ within her.” Gill describes Phaedra’s ethics as “derivative” in that it depends on the perception of others (89): “This is the strongest point of contrast between Hippolitus’ self-presentation and Phaedra’s. There is no tension between ‘him’ and his passion; his deepest desire is to act in accordance with his ethical ideal” (91). Casali (1995: 11) points out the irony of Phaedra’s “optimistic unconcern about being seen together with Hippolytus,” for she herself has identified the source of Venus’ anger against her family as the Sun, who saw Venus and Mars together.
The symbolic is defined as the realm of the Law that regulates desire in the Oedipus complex. That complex is understood to be derived from a primary or symbolic prohibition against incest, a prohibition that makes sense only in terms of kinship relations in which various “positions” are established within the family according to an exogamic mandate. In other words, a mother is someone with whom a son and daughter do not have sexual relations, and a father is someone with whom a son and daughter do not have sexual relations, a mother is someone who only has sexual relations with the father, etc. These relations of prohibition are thus encoded in the “positions” that each of these family members occupies. To be in such a position is thus to be in such a crossed sexual relation, at least according to the symbolic or normative conception of what that “position” is.  

Critiquing the Lacanian distinction between a social norm and a “symbolic position,” Butler suggests that the symbolic position of a kinship role—she offers the father—stands as a paradigm for each individual person assuming the role of father, defining its limits. She argues, however, as she also does for the categories of gender and sex, that this paradigm is temporal and open to transformation through each of its iterations and instantiations. “Kinship is not simply a situation she [Antigone] is in but a set of practices that she also performs, relations that are reinstated in time precisely through the practice of their repetition.”

The symbolic position of father, or, in this case, the symbolic position of a (step-) mother is thus an “ideality” which is never fully realized in any individual who assumes the role of father. Phaedra’s bad performance of the kinship role of (step-) mother represents a renegotiation of the relations of prohibition in Theseus’ family and a potential transformation. In addition to the aspect of performativity already inherent in the familial position—behaving in a way that approximates a (step-) mother—Phaedra’s literary heritage introduces a dramatic performance—her tragic role. Phaedra’s poetic project is not only an attempt to overcome the limits of the

153 See Butler (1993, 2006), passim.
155 Ibid., 57-58.
kinship system and the sexual relations it governs, but is also an attempt to overcome the generic
code of tragedy which defines her paradigmatic status, by transferring both performativity and
performance to the discourse of Roman elegy, where sexual desire is valorized.

Because the exchange of women which subverts the kinship system relies on a lack of
female desire, as noted in the previous chapter, female desire must be repudiated. Literary
representations of female desire reflect its abject status when they construct it as always
inherently intemperate and destructive to men and the families they make up. In literary
representations, dangerous and wild female desire is set in opposition to and defines the borders
of what is recognizable as normative femininity which is characterized by a passive, almost
undetectable, sexuality. Because no desire is “feminine,” female desire resembles its opposite,
“masculine,” when it appears. The abjected female desire is constituted as a double, a Mr. Hyde
of masculine desire—also a flame, but out of control, not just active and acquisitive, but
excessive and greedy. In Ovid’s poem, when Phaedra represents herself as gazing at
Hippolytus, her control is interpreted as a masculine act and leads to the destabilization of
Hippolytus’ gendered position because Ovid writes her poem within the dichotomous gendered
discourse current in the Augustan era.

In her self-presentation, Phaedra makes some attempt to justify her desire and the
renegotiation of kinship roles it requires by calling the institution which governs them, pietas

156 The poet-praeceptor of Ars tells us “passion is more sparing among us [men] and it is not so mad; the manly fire
[of passion] has a law-abiding limit” (parcior in nobis nec tam furiosa libido;/ legitimum finem flamma uirilis habet,
1.281-82).
and by an appeal to divine examples and their absolute power over the mos maiorum.

Iuppiter esse pium statuit, quodcumque iuvaret,
Et fas omne facit fratre marita soror.
Illa coit firma generis iunctura catena,
Imposuit nodos cui Venus ipsa suos.

(Her. 4. 133-36)

Phaedra’s poetics are constructed as an attempt to disturb Augustan discourse. The fictional epistle functions as an opportunity for Ovid to interrogate the power of poetry to persuade and effect change. Fulkerson argues that the letters, although not necessarily persuasive to their internal addressee, are successful in persuading the external readers of their status as works of literature. She likens the heroines as a “community of writers” to the Augustan poets: “In fact, the heroines are, because of their very abandonment, perfectly situated to become (like) male Augustan elegists: for both, desire creates poetry.” In addition, the “doubleness” of the epistles, which Lindheim identifies in their engagement of the epistolary and elegiac genres, their multiple addressees and readers, the double-authorship of heroine and poet, the epistle and its source text(s), and the self-presentation of the heroines—alternating between powerful and helpless—blurs and destabilizes traditional dichotomies, revealing their constructed-ness.

157 Jacobson draws attention to Ovid’s semantic play with words carrying Augustan ideological resonance, including rusticus: “Ovid’s relativism, no less than it effected the transformation of the sense of words which were highly charged for Augustus (like rusticus; consider especially the princeps’ moral and rural programs), was able to deflect the meaning of whole myths” (7); “Ovid’s perception of the correspondences between language and the reality represented—the way the same word can relate to different realities or, conversely, different words to the same reality—is acute” [emphasis added] (8).

158 Farrell (1998) makes a complementary argument that the epistles are a paradigm for the process of interpretation, dramatizing issues of authenticity, censorship and textual editing.

159 Fulkerson, 2.

160 Lindheim, 6-7 and passim. Kauffman offers a complementary reading of the epistles as a generic hybrid of rhetoric and poetry. She calls Ovid an aleator in his play with discourse (48) and argues that Ovid’s particular version of the epistolary discourse is “antigeneric and anticanonical… It…presents several ideologies in dialogue or conflict rather than a single coherent one. Every discourse of desire is therefore simultaneously a critique of language” [emphasis added] (32-33).
Nevertheless, Phaedra in the end does not go so far as to claim her new performance of kinship roles as a legitimate renegotiation—a radical alternative or potential within the current discourse—because there is no way to describe it. Nor does she create a new symbolic system by offering new nominations for her rearticulated family. Instead she concedes that her performance is deceitful: *nec labor est celare.../ cognato poterit nomine culpa tegi*, 137-38. Shame, which prevents both the Euripidean and Ovidian Phaedra from speaking to Hippolytus directly, is again invoked as a corrective emotion, guiding the proper performance of behavior within the system of kinship. The figure of covering a crime invokes the visual and literary metaphor of αἰδώς as a mantle, which surfaces in Euripides’ *HII*, and repeats Augustan associations of feminine *pudor* (or lack of) with the figure of covering and uncovering. Its influence is now absent, for Phaedra contends that shame has been routed by love: *quid deceat, non videt ullus amans./ depudui, profugusque pudor sua signa reliquit* (154-55).

Shame (*pudor*) is generically marked in this letter as tragic and is in a dialectic relationship with elegiac love. The irrepressible tragic “source” acts almost like a metaphor for

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161 See chapter 1 and Ferrari (54-56, 72-86) for a discussion of this figure in Greek art and literature along with further references. See Kaster (3 n.5) for the metaphor of *pudor* as a garment with references and comparanda.

162 Ovid’s text echoes Vergil’s Dido, who also acknowledges both her “crime” and the need to “cover” it. There too, *pudor* motivates this performance, for she has sworn an oath to *pudor* (4.27), and, although she later disregards her reputation and openly expresses her desire, she does so under the name of “wife,” again a performance: *neque enim specie famae monetur/ nec iam furtiium Dido meditatur amorem:/ coniugium uocat, hoc praetexit nomine culpam*, Aen. 4.170-173). The poetess Sulpicia, by contrast, explicitly denies *pudor* power over her behavior, a poetic move which expresses both a sexual desire and her renunciation of normative feminine behavior: *Tandem uenit amor, qualem texisse pudori/ quam nudasse alicui sit mihi fama magis*, 3.13.1-2. See Keith (in Hallett and Skinner, 295-310) and Merriam on Dido as a possible literary paradigm for Sulpicia. Radford argues the Sulpician poems are the work of a young Ovid, Holzberg (1999) argues the Sulpicia poems allude to and therefore post-date Ovid, and Hallett (2006: 42) suggests Ovid may have alluded to Sulpicia’s work in his *Ars*. See Fabre-Serris (161) and Parker for a brief summary of the debate and an argument for attributing all the poems in the corpus to Sulpicia, instead of restricting her authorship to 3.13-18. In either case, a literary dialogue between the two poets is intriguing. If Ovid is alluding to Sulpicia, he is looking toward an authentic female expression of love as a model for his representations of female desire. If a pseudo-Sulpicia is alluding to Ovid, the author is implicitly accepting Ovid’s representation as a suitable model for same. Fabre-Serris argues that *Her. 4* (and 15) allude directly to the Sulpician corpus. All texts engage with the Augustan discourse of *pudicitia*, which characterized normative female (non)sexuality.
abject female desire. While Phaedra’s elegiac performance of her tragic role—that of noverca—as a tactic for the dissimulation of her performance of her elegiac role may rely on their similar performativity, she is ultimately unable to disguise her source text.\footnote{Casali (1995) argues that the elegiac genre cannot change the tragic story: “[W]hen the expressive code is changed the story does not change: Phaedra will die, Hippolytus will die… Behind the distorting filter of elegiac language the reader recognizes the prefiguration of the ‘tragic’ end of the story” (5). See also Verducci (19-20), who notes that allusions in the epistles work against the heroines: “The fictive speaker thus becomes, through her own words, the involuntary and unconscious victim of the poet’s authorial and often allusively literary parody” (19-20).} As Barchiesi notes, Phaedra’s injunction *finge videre* (4.176) at the close of her letter emphasizes the metatheatricality of her epistle, evoking the role of spectator while also echoing Hippolytus’ own wish to look at himself.\footnote{\textit{HII}, 1077-80: \textgriff{φευ’/ ειθ’ ἦν ἐμαυτὸν προσβλέπειν ἐναντίον/ ετάνθ’, ὡς ἐδάκρυς’ οἴα πάσχομεν κακά;} Barchiesi (1993), 342.} In the end Phaedra’s revolutionary poetics are unsuccessful. Phaedra’s generic “core” is naturalized by Ovid’s text, which demonstrates that it is not in fact an effect of its performance.\footnote{According to Fulkerson, the \textit{Heroides} “focus the spotlight on the ability (or inability) of poetry to make a difference in the world. That is, the \textit{Heroides} provoke us to ask to what extent a heroine has the textual authority to change her story but, more importantly, to what extent our own literary experience will permit her to effect this change” (146).} Presenting Phaedra’s construction as her own is proof of this, for, as Harvey argues in the case of Erasmus’ ventriloquized Folly, “she, too, enacts the folly she personifies through the disruptions of her rhetoric.”\footnote{\textit{Contra} Verducci (31-32 and passim), who, while also connecting the issue of allusive tension to the question of poetic authority, argues that the epistolary writers seem “real” because they successfully defy expectations set up by their source texts: “‘their characters become coherent but autonomous forces defiant of the categories to which tradition assigns them.’”}\footnote{Harvey, 60. Quoting Erasmus, Harvey continues her argument, that, although women are associated with disguise and deception, they remain “undisguisable (“a woman is still a woman…no matter what role she may try to play” (62).} 

At no point does Ovid take off the “Phaedra” mask or slip out of character, but, as we have seen, while he writes her writing about performance and performativity, he speaks through her to the audience, ironically reminding them, with her own loaded words, of representations of her which were performed on the stage. He also reminds the audience, through this process, of
his own literary performance, playing the part of a woman, who, while trying to switch roles before an audience expecting the familiar “tragic” Phaedra, puts on an ill-fitting elegiac costume which shows the tragic costume beneath.

Desire is thus an experience defined both by gender and genre in this text. Tragic, feminine desire is incestuous, destructive because of its transgression of the incest taboo. It is therefore necessarily abjected—forced outside the boundaries of normative desires which are imaginable and expressible. Elegiac desire, both because of its dialectical generic relationship with tragedy in this epistle, as well as through Phaedra’s own representation, is aligned with the masculine. When Phaedra attempts to redefine herself as an elegiac lover, she inevitably constructs herself and her desire as masculine, destabilizing and threatening the gendered position of her male beloved. What we are left with is a formula, through its inextricable connection to genre, which naturalizes Phaedra’s desire as “essentially” destructive. Ovid’s text constructs Phaedra’s unimaginable tragic desire in such a way that it cannot be reimagined, rearticulated, or rescued from the margins of intelligibility through a generic translation.\textsuperscript{168} As noted earlier, Phaedra invites the readers (including Hippolytus) to join her as an audience of Hippolytus’ desirable and virile body. Her act of looking, however, amounted to a masculine command of the gaze, destabilizing the gender hierarchy and threatening her own intelligibility as a feminine subject. At the end of the letter she invites Hippolytus to create another audience: \textit{verba precantis/ perlegis, et lacrimas finge videre meas}, 175-76. After attempting to manipulate language by using it in another generic code and failing, Phaedra relents and allows herself to

\textsuperscript{168} Lindheim argues that although Ovid constructs a male fantasy of Woman, “the unrelenting construction of Woman undermines itself by its very insistence” (183). The performative aspect is deconstructive of the fiction: “once she has established herself as an actress, or perhaps even a deceiver, it is no longer possible to determine where performance stops and “reality” begins”…In her guise as shape shifter, Ovid’s Woman actually puts into question the feasibility of the very principle by which Ovid chooses to define Woman” (183-84).
become what she always was, the spectacle of a female body suffering from abject desire. The masculine gaze is safely back in the hands of the men.

And yet, Ovid constructs an often sympathetic figure. Butler argues that Antigone’s use of Creon’s language makes her claim inexpressible, but maintains that Antigone offers alternative configurations for kinship structures. So too, Phaedra’s use of the discourse of desire found in the *Ars*, repeats and reinvests ideologies of desire which excludes her own experience. The difference, however, between the poet-praeceptor’s use of this discourse and Ovid’s construction of Phaedra’s is, of course, the speaker. The poet-praeceptor and his readers formed a group which was set up in opposition to the examples of female desire (including Phaedra). They could talk about the wild, crazy, and dangerous love of characters like Pasiphae from a safe distance. When Phaedra, who is in a paradigmatic relationship to Pasiphae in the megatext of myth, talks about female desire in a love letter, she is not distanced, but right in the middle of the experience, and she is inviting the reader to participate in her experience, to move outside of the safe, normative center of socially appropriate desire into the abject world.

In the process of “uncovering” the true nature of Phaedra’s desire, Ovid’s text also reveals the limits of Augustan discourses of desire, gender, and genre. We can make out the traces of a new kind of desire at the margins. As noted earlier, Phaedra recommends to Hippolytus a love affair which is in many ways egalitarian. Although she is perhaps not

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169 Butler (2000), 27-55, and passim: “[T]o the extent that she occupies the language that can never belong to her [i.e., public/political language], she functions as a chiasm within the vocabulary of political norms. If kinship is the precondition of the human, then Antigone is the occasion for a new field of the human, achieved through political catachresis, the one that happens when the less than human speaks as human, when gender is displaced, and kinship founders on its own founding laws” (82).

170 Ibid., 1-25 and passim.

171 Zajko (195-96) suggests a similar reading of the Hermaphroditus myth. See chapter 6 for a fuller explanation of his ideas.
sensitive enough to the network of associations her list of erotic hunters may form, her frame suggests that the short catalogue is intended to provide examples of mutual, reciprocal love in myth (Cephalus and Aurora, Meleager and Atalanta, and Venus and Adonis; *Her.* 4.93-104). This message repeats the idea of reciprocity and mutuality expressed throughout her epistle: that the two lovers will be “equally guilty” (*et pariter nostrum fiet uterque nocens*, 28),¹⁷² that they are equally victims of Theseus (111-22), and that they should become conspiring performers (137-46). Such egalitarian love would make little sense to a Roman whose understanding of erotic relationships is predicated on power dynamics which require a passive and active, dominant and submissive partner.¹⁷³ The oscillation of gendered positions evident in this list, the list of Cretan women that proceeds it, and Phaedra’s own oscillating gender alignment is likely Ovid’s way of conveying that Phaedra fails to maintain a new feminine, non-destructive, active desire because it straddles opposing and mutually exclusive gendered subjectivities. Her self-construction, nevertheless, can also be interpreted as an act of defiance against the categories currently offered by contemporary Augustan discourse of desire, a refusal to choose an available category with which to identify consistently. From this perspective, Phaedra’s attempt to define a subjectivity which is both feminine and active within its borders suggests the possibility of such a subject in another, as yet unimagined discourse.

¹⁷² Fabre-Serris, 157.
Chapter 4 Inscripting Desire

In chapter two we explored the semiotics of mythology and how Ovid’s narrator manipulates mythological exempla as signs within this semiotic system (or, as Segal has termed it, the megatext) in order to communicate lessons to his reader pupils. We saw how the relations of these signs to each other, to the narrative frame, and to the total system created meaning sometimes in excess of the intentions of the authorial voice. Chapter three considered Phaedra as an author who, much like the praeceptor of the Ars, engages with the language of myth in order to tell her story; however, her own status as sign within this very system continually obstructs her from successfully controlling her message. Her own relation to the examples she uses undermines her attempts to alter her symbolic meaning. The generic code of elegy cannot accommodate her desire. It can signify it only as masculine, a result which serves to repeat her original abject status in the tragic code.

In this chapter we will consider Ovid’s narration of this process. Byblis’ story in the Metamorphoses is a dramatization of the coming into being of an author. Her name, in fact, means “papyrus leaves” or “book” in Greek (Byblos), a pun which draws attention to her multiple literary associations: the subject of books, a writer of books, and a reader of books.1 The Byblis passage can be read as an epic narrative of the writing instance of Heroides 4—presenting the before and after, which the reader of Phaedra’s epistle was left to conjure on her

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1 Ahl, 211-12; Janan (1991), 240; Raval, 295-96 and passim. In addition to the pun on her name, Ahl draws attention to Byblis’ connection to water, in which papyrus grows. She is turned into a stream which bears her name. Her mother, Cyane, is a water nymph and her grandfather, the river Maeander, a river, Janan (243) notes, which acts as an “artistic paradigm” in the Met. See also Boyd on the Maeander as a model and map, so to speak, for the narrative structure of the Met. Ahl (211-13) also points out Byblis’ connection to Io, another “writer,” who was reported by Apollodorus and Plutarch to have wandered to the town Byblos when searching for her lost son; to Daedalus through their shared reliance on wax; and to the Sibyl accoustically. See Ahl (144-50) for his discussion of the Io episode.
This intratextuality between *Heroides* 4 and Byblis’ story in book 9 of the *Metamorphoses* is signaled by the correspondences between themes as well as the very similar structure of the letter Byblis writes, which opens with nearly the same line as Phaedra’s: *quam, nisi tu dederis, non est habitura salutem* (*Met.* 9.530; cf. *qua*³ *nisi tu dederis, carituta est ipsa, salutem, Her.* 4.1). Lindheim has argued that in his *Heroides*, Ovid exploits the apparent sincerity of expression which traditionally belongs to epistolarity: “The letter functions as a veil behind which Ovid hides, as he constructs, by means of ‘transvestite ventriloquism’ or cross-gendered narration, an elaborate fiction of granting a woman a voice.”⁴ In the *Metamorphoses*, the veil, to borrow Lindheim’s metaphor, has been lifted from Ovid’s transvestite ventriloquism. The letter is “written” in the narrative of a male poet, who is now given the power to emphasize or suppress what elements he chooses.⁵ The insincerity or perhaps the *ars* which we suspect behind Phaedra’s emotional plea to Hippolytus is revealed by the narrator of Byblis’ tale and we are privy to the rhetorical strategies in the Heroidean letter which is the centerpiece of the passage.

Byblis’ decision to compose and her formation as a subject in relation to her object of desire, which the creation of her text requires, are both the story of the poetic production of a text and the production of language. In order to express her desire in a way which Caunus will “understand,” and accept as “desire,” Byblis must define who she is in relation to Caunus and to

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² This is the temporal aspect of Curley’s (n.d.: 195) argument that Ovid’s reinterpretation of Greek tragedy in the *Metamorphoses* effects changes to the story allowed by the generic transition from drama, which limits spatial and temporal aspects, “here-and-now,” to epic which affords seemingly unlimited narrative possibilities in the “there-and-then.” See in particular 18-24, 193-200.
³ Ehwald prints *quam*.
⁴ Lindheim, 7. See chapter 3 for a more detailed discussion of this process in Her. 4.
⁵ Lindheim (22-23) notes that the letter writer (of the *Heroides*) is free of “the impediment of an ordering, external narrating voice that might accord to her tale secondary status, curbing its length and de-accentuating its importance” (23).
the kinship system in which they participate. In the process Byblis is also defining her own signifying power as *exemplum* in the “megatext” of myth. She is, of course, already known to Ovid’s readers as a mythological heroine who is in various ways involved in an incestuous desire with her brother.\(^6\) She has also been identified as a paradigm of female desire by the poet-

*praeeceptor* in his list considered in chapter 2. Among the members of this paradigm are Phaedra and the Phaedra-like figures we consider in this study.\(^7\)

In addition, allusive cues direct the reader to assimilate Ovid’s presentation of Byblis’ story to Phaedra’s from the Attic tragedies of Euripides and Sophocles. Correspondences to Phaedra’s Ovidian epistle, which plays intertextually and allusively with Euripides’ and (possibly) Sophocles’ tragedies, offer a mediating text.\(^8\) Moreover, as we noted in chapter 1, Byblis’ narrative frame also participates in this allusive play; for Caunus is a Hippolytus-like figure, whose (over)reaction recalls that of Euripides’ character in *HII*.\(^9\) In *HII*, Hippolytus calls the nurse’s message about Phaedra’s desire “unspeakable words” (λόγων ἄρρητον εἰϲήκουϲ᾽ ὀπα, Eur. *HII*, 602) and “terrible things” (δείν᾽, 604), and orders the nurse not to touch him (οὐ μὴ προϲοίϲειϲ χεῖρα µηδ᾽ ἄψη πέπλων, 606), before launching into a speech defending his misogyny (616-667). Caunus reacts with equal horror to the letter Byblis’ messenger has given

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\(^6\) Met. 9.450-665. Byblis’ story was famous, told to Latin readers by Parthenius (11). Ovid follows this version, in which Byblis hangs herself after her rejection by Caunus, in *Ars Am.* 1.283-84: *Byblida quid referam, uetito quae fratis amore/ arsit et est laqueo fortiter ulta nefas*. Greek versions included Apollonius of Rhodes (according to Parthenius 11 in *The Foundation of Caunus*), Aristocritus (also according to Parthenius 11, in *On Miletus*), Conon (preserved by Photius of Byzantium), Nicaenetus (quoted by Parthenius 11), Antoninus Liberalis (30), Nicander (II), and Hyginus (243.6). See Anderson (ad 450-665), Celoria (193-95), Jenkins (440-41), Jenkins (440-41), Lightfoot (433-36), and White for the literary tradition. On Ovid, see also Bömer (ad loc.), Otis (386-88, 415-17), and Hollis (1977: ad 283-84).

\(^7\) See chapter 1 for a full explanation of my term “Phaedra-like figure” as well as evidence and references connecting Phaedra to these maidens: Scylla, Byblis, and Myrrha.

\(^8\) See chapter 3 for a discussion of these correspondences and further references.

\(^9\) See chapter 1 for Caunus as Hippolytus.
him. Where Hippolytus orders the nurse to keep her hands off of him, Caunus nearly lays (violent) hands upon the messenger (\textit{uixque manus retinens trepidantis ab ore ministri}, Ovid \textit{Met.} 9.576), calls him the “wicked author of a forbidden love” (\textit{o uetitae scelerate libidinis auctor}, 577), and orders him to flee (\textit{effuge}, 578), recalling Theseus’ orders for Hippolytus in \textit{HII} (Eur. \textit{HII}, 893). Like Hippolytus, Caunus too goes into exile, but of his own accord. We are told “he flees his fatherland and the unspeakable crime” (\textit{patriam fugit ille nefasque}, Ovid \textit{Met.}, 633).\textit{Patriam} recalls the father’s involvement in Hippolytus’ exile, while \textit{nefas} echoes the nurse’s “unspeakable word” to which Hippolytus reacts (above). Finally, as we noted in chapter 1, Byblis, like the Heroidean Phaedra and other heroines in Ovid’s poetry, rehearses the love/shame conflict which, although mediated by Hellenistic sources to some degree, Curley and Larmour trace back to the representations of Phaedra in tragedy, and which we will consider in more detail below.\textsuperscript{10}

As it was in Phaedra’s epistle (\textit{Her.} 4), tragedy is again the site of the other in Byblis’ epic tale. Her tragic inheritance, through the Euripidean and Sophoclean figure of Phaedra, marks generically her gendered body which stands as an abject figure defining masculine normativity. But her story in the \textit{Metamorphoses}, in addition to being another iteration of the abject Phaedra, is also a story about poetic creation, meaning, and poetic reception. Ovid’s poetics, through the narration of \textit{Byblis}’ poetics, reveals the process of his construction as well as the possibilities which are inherent but excluded not only by her literary tradition, but also by the contemporary Augustan ideologies of desire which define and interpret its reception. If we read Byblis as writing Phaedra’s epistle, then we are not only privy to the process of writing a letter,\textsuperscript{10}

\textsuperscript{10} See chapter 1 for a detailed discussion of this theme as it is expressed in Euripides’ two \textit{Hippolytii}, Sophocles’ \textit{Phaedra}, and Chapter 3 for the association between Greek \textit{ai̇̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊̊...
but the process of writing a poem in the epistolary genre and, in a sense, Ovid’s own process of composition.

Byblis is represented as writing her psychological experiences which first manifest themselves in a dream (468-73).\(^{11}\) Julia Kristeva’s theoretical mix of psychoanalysis and semiotics makes her critical approach to literature a fruitful lens through which to read the Byblis narrative in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*.\(^{12}\) Kristeva defines the “writing subject” as an author whose composition is informed as much by culture, society, history, and her own place in this matrix as by her authorial intention.\(^{13}\) The process of signification—using a symbolic system like language to communicate—implies a level of agency because the speaker must identify themselves as speaking from a certain position in relation to their signified object and to the addressee(s). Kristeva calls this positioning or “positing” the “thetic” stage.\(^{14}\) We will consider this process in more detail below. What we should note for now about the writing subject and her relation to thethetic stage are the ideological and discursive constraints on the positions

\(^{11}\) Freudian psychoanalysis focuses a great deal of attention on analysands’ dreams, in which, they maintain, the unconscious may be glimpsed because repressive mechanisms are relaxed and desires can make themselves manifest in various forms. See Freud [1900. *Interpretation of Dreams*] for an explanation of what he called “dream-work.” Freud believed myth functioned much like the collective dream of a community. While Freud was hesitant to apply wholesale psychoanalytic analysis to myth, Jung and Campbell expanded the association with individual dreams and myth, reading myth as an articulation of a more universal “collective unconscious.” For a summary of their theories, see, e.g., Jung. [1949. “The Psychology of the Child Archetype,” in Jung and Kerényi. *Essays on a Science of Mythology.* Princeton.] and Segal. [1984. “Joseph Campbell’s Theory of Myth” in Alan Dundes, ed. *Sacred Narrative: Readings in the Theory of Myth*, p. 256-269. Berkeley; Los Angeles; London.]. See Csapo (86-91) for a brief summary of this theory, (91-110) applications of Freudian analysis to the interpretation of Greek and Roman myth, and (80-131) for a general overview and critique of Freudian analysis.

\(^{12}\) See Kristeva (1984:13-17) for an explanation of her influences and methodology.

\(^{13}\) Roudiez in introduction to Kristeva (1984), 7-8. “[C]onsciousness is far from dominating the process and …the writing subject is a complex, heterogeneous force…The writing subject, then, includes not only the consciousness of the writer but also his or her unconscious….The subject of writing also includes the non-conscious…an area covered by the notion of dominant ideology” (8). The writing subject’s positionality, i.e., status within a society, gendered, racial, class, and so on, will also determine the strength and focus of the repressive function governing their desires.

\(^{14}\) See Kristeva (1984: 43-45) for an explanation of this process for a speaking subject, and (68-71) for the thetic in artistic practices.
available to a writing subject. Such constraints are culturally and historically driven and limit the number of speaking positions from which a subject can be “heard” by other members of her community.\textsuperscript{15}

The writing subject is also embodied, and her composition is produced by the experiences of her individual material existence, e.g., sex, class, ethnicity. Ovid presents Byblis in just this way. He situates her genealogically (daughter of Miletus and Cyane, 447-453), geographically (Miletus in Asia Minor, 448-49),\textsuperscript{16} and materially (vividly describing her body as she writes her letter, 517-29).\textsuperscript{17} Since she is a literary construction, however, Byblis’ representation as a writer reflects Ovid’s ideological universe and the anxieties which it represses or displaces onto marginal figures. On the surface, the story is another mythological tale of incest which is expanded by the incorporation of, among other things, the tragic model, Phaedra, and the \textit{topos} of the tragic Hellenistic maiden in love. In this capacity, Byblis is a male fantasy of abject female desire; but her representation reveals more than just the misogynistic currents of Augustan discourse.

Byblis is the third writing subject represented in the \textit{Metamorphoses} if one considers Io’s inscription in the ground (\textit{littera pro uerbis, quam pes in puluere duxit}, 1.649) and Philomela’s

\textsuperscript{15} While literature, especially poetry, complicates the thesis of a subject and the symbolic system which this thesis makes possible, a literary work is still located within the logic of such symbolic systems. Therefore the producer of a text and the textual product rely on the rules governing these systems: “[w]ithout the completion of the thetic phase…no signifying practice is possible” (Kristeva, 1984: 63). See Kristeva (1984: 62-67) for poetry’s reliance on symbolic systems and its simultaneous transgression of such systems.

\textsuperscript{16} Her geographical location doubles as a genealogy, since the town is named after her father: \textit{et in Aside terra/moenia constituis postoris habentia nomen}, 448-49.

\textsuperscript{17} Perhaps another aspect of Byblis’ corporeal representation is her letter. Tissol (44-46) argues that Byblis’ letter foregrounds the physicality of the written word, especially when she erases \textit{soror} and when her writing spills into the margins of the page. This physicality moves Byblis’ desire from the realm of the abstract to the tangible; “Because writing has taken Byblis’ words into the physical sphere, her metaphorical \textit{caducas} takes on a sylleptic edge. More than just fallible, her hopes actually fell” (46).
signs (*notae*) woven into a garment (*stamina barbarica suspendit callida tela/ purpureasque notas filis intexuit albis,/ indicium sceleris, 6.576-78*) as textual productions. Philomela’s message is called a “poem” or “song” (*carmen, 582*) when Procne reads it. In both cases, the process of signification is a success. Io is able to communicate to her father (*corporis indicium mutati triste peregit, 1.650*) while Philomela manages to tell her sister of her rape and imprisonment by Tereus (*germanaeque suae carmen miserabile legit, 6.582*). Janan notes, however, that Byblis is the first instance of a character composing a traditional written text (a letter) in the *Metamorphoses*. As such, she functions as Ovid’s avatar. Her story describes the process of signification for the writer of a text and the importance of the reader to this process. On this metapoetic level, Ovid explores anxieties over a poet’s ability to control meaning, both in terms of literary belatedness and the constraints the literary tradition places on a Roman poet, and in terms of reception—how a writer’s words will be interpreted by the reading public. This final point is of particular interest in Ovid’s case, as his own reception by

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18 Janan (1991), 240. Farrell (1998: 314) makes mention of the Io passage in his discussion of letter writing advice in *Ars* 3.617-18, where Io is alluded to through the figure of Argus. See Jenkins (439-41) on the rarity of writing in the *Met.* as well as Ovid’s innovation of the letter in Byblis’ story. See also Ahl, 211.

19 Janan (1991), 245. By contrast, Jenkins, focusing on the transvestite ventriloquism at work in the Byblis story, argues that this episode “highlights the disparity in discourse, for the omniscient, impersonal epic voice may relay with impunity what the epic character itself must not speak—or write” (451). He suggests Orpheus, who tells Myrrha’s story, Byblis’ paradigm, is the “stand-in” for Ovid.

20 Ahl (201-35, especially 211-14) reads the Byblis episode as an example of the theme of self-expression under social constraints. In relation to this theme, Ahl offers as an example Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon*, where he comments “[p]eople grasp only what they already know…They [the chorus] cannot overcome their preconceptions about what is and is not possible. They would not believe that Clytemnestra, a woman, could have engineered the relay of beacon fires to warn her of Troy’s fall. Women do not do things like that” (231). He identifies, as part of this theme, an anxiety over communicating effectively, persuasively, and most importantly, safely, to a reader. See also Enterline (48) who suggests the repeated failure of language in the *Met.* signals an anxiety over the decline of the importance of rhetoric in Roman political life. Jenkins also focuses his reading of this passage on the importance of the reader. “The spectacularly unfavorable reception by Caunus reveals more than just Caunus’ distaste at the proceedings; it is also an inquiry into the responses of readers confronted with a challenging and perhaps disturbing text” (450). Jenkins reads this passage from the point of view of the reader. I consider this passage from the point of view which Ovid foregrounds, that of Byblis, the writer. See also Tissol, who also considers the anxiety over reception from the point of view of a speaker or author in the Myrrha (40-41) and Byblis (48-49) passages: “A
Augustus may have resulted in his exile. From exile, Ovid tells us that his punishment was due to *carmen et error* (*Tristia* 2.207).\(^{21}\) The *carmen* is presumed by most scholars to be his *Ars Amatoria*. The *error* is much contested,\(^{22}\) but Byblis’ story, informed by Kristeva’s formulation of the process of signification, suggests how a poem could in fact be both. For Ovid’s representation of this process through the abject character of Byblis introduces into the symbolic world of myth a new connotation for her exemplary status. In opposition to her traditional role as cautionary tale, Ovid presents us with its negative—a sympathetic girl in love. Albeit fleeting, and ultimately denied, Byblis attains a degree of subjectivity otherwise not allowed (to borrow Ovid’s own words).\(^{23}\)

Kristeva’s understanding of the special power of poetry to disrupt and reconfigure discourses as she formulated it in her 1974 thesis, *La Révolution du Langage Poétique*, suggests a way of understanding the power of Ovid’s poem to destabilize discourses of desire while simultaneously representing and reinscribing the Augustan ideologies which they reproduce.\(^{24}\)

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\(^{21}\) Ahl, 235: “One needs the right art at the right time. Few writers recognized how easily someone could slip than Ovid himself. His “song and error” led him into conflict with the powerful and sent him away to die in exile.” See also Newlands (1995: passim, esp. 54-59, 175-208) on the *Fasti*’s expression of Ovid’s anxiety over the dependence upon a patron for the success of his poetic message through mythological avatars such as Orion and Ophiuchus at a time when the emperor was increasingly curtailing freedom of speech.

\(^{22}\) See Hollis (1977: xiii-xvii) for an excellent discussion of this line and Ovid’s *relegatio*, including further references on the topic.

\(^{23}\) Forms of *concedo* (“to allow”) are used by Byblis’ narrator (*concessa*, 9.454; *inconcessae*, 9.638), and Orpheus as narrating poet (*inconcessis*, 10.153) to describe Byblis’ and Myrrha’s desires.

\(^{24}\) French feminist theories, especially the ideas of Cixous and Irigaray, which have not been considered in my reading, offer multiple approaches to women’s writing which could be productively applied to Byblis as a female writing subject. See Gold (1993) for a brief overview of feminist approaches, including theories of women’s writing developed by the French feminists, Cixous (*écriture feminine*), Kristeva and Irigaray (*parler femme*), and their utility for reading ancient male-authored texts. In this article, Gold applies Alice Jardine’s idea of “gynesis” to Propertius.
Kristeva borrows the term, *chora*, from Plato’s *Timaeus* to describe her theoretical space in which pre-symbolic semiotic relations and categories are in flux, continually formed and dismantled and reformed. This semiotic chora is pre-symbolic, therefore before meaning, but it is under the influence of the symbolic in the form of psychology and culture.\(^{25}\) What separates this space from the order of the symbolic, in which signification and meaning take place, is the lack of differentiation between a subject and an other. In order for a subject to signify and thereby communicate using language or some other symbolic system, there must be a thesis of a subject, that is, the differentiation of the subject from everything else currently undifferentiated in the semiotic chora.\(^{26}\) She calls this moment the thetic stage, a term I will be using in this chapter to describe Ovid’s representation of Byblis and her own process of self-identification and self-representation. Byblis’ story is all about making difference out of same (twin brother; same family).\(^{27}\)

The process of signification, therefore, requires the subject to define the place in the symbolic order (e.g., kinship, gender) from which she is speaking. For example, Byblis, as a signifying subject would necessarily define her position in the symbolic order of kinship by calling Caunus “her brother.” Byblis’ story is, among other things, a study of the creation of the signifying subject. Byblis must establish her position as a desiring subject before she can express her object of desire. Because the positing of the subject is required in the thetic phase

\(^{25}\) See Kristeva (1984: 21-106, especially 25-37) for an explanation of the semiotic chora: “The semiotic can thus be understood as pre-thetic, preceding the positing of the subject. Previous to the ego thinking within a proposition, no Meaning exists, but there do exist articulations heterogeneous to signification and the sign: the semiotic *chora*” (36).

\(^{26}\) Ibid., 34-36, 43-45. “All enunciation, whether of a word or of a sentence, is thetic. It requires an identification; in other words, the subject must separate from and through his image, from and through his objects. This image and objects must first be posited in a space that becomes symbolic because it connects the two separated positions, recording them or redistributing them in an open combinatorial system” (43).

\(^{27}\) Janan (1991: passim) identifies the theme of repetition and difference, which surfaces in this passage as it does throughout the *Metamorphoses*, as a symptom of a uniquely Roman anxiety over belatedness in the literary tradition.
for signification, denoting an other, “the signifier represents the subject—not the thetic ego but the very process by which it is posited.”

In order for the signifier “brother” to refer to Caunus when it is uttered by Byblis, Byblis must first identify herself as a subject who would be a sister in relation to Caunus. This self-identification is a thesis, and situates her simultaneously in the various other kinship relations this position entails (daughter to Miletus and Cyane, granddaughter to Maeander and Apollo, etc.). She must make Caunus the other; however, their relations as desiring subject-object of desire are countermanded by their positions in the symbolic system of kinship.

Byblis tries to reimagine new kinship roles which allow her to differentiate herself from her brother; this mythological thetic stage is necessary for her to signify her desire in the realm of the Symbolic. Without redefining her relationship to Caunus, her desire is unrecognizable to Caunus as amor. As a subject speaking from her current position in the kinship system, i.e., sister, her desire appears (or is “read”) under the terms of the (Augustan) discourses of desire, which Ovid’s poetry reproduces, as madness and incest. For this reason, Byblis must make Caunus a very specific other, or rather not an other who is excluded from those with whom sex is possible.

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29 See chapter 1 for a full discussion of kinship, the system of exchange, and its articulation in Greek tragedy, and chapters 2 and 3 for its articulation in Ovid’s work.
30 See also Ahl (213-14), in his discussion of this episode. He identifies the “assault upon fixed forms of words” as a larger theme of social constraint and self-expression in the Metamorphoses.
31 Kristeva (1984: 66-67) emphasizes the need for a semiotic “code” to be shared in order to function as a means of communication: “[a human being’s] semiotic “code” is cut off from any possible identification unless it is assumed by the other (first the mother, than the symbolic and/or the social group)” (66). Looking to social anthropology, she further explores the shared dependence of the social and the symbolic on the thetic (72-85). Responding to Lévi-Strauss (249, n. 90), Kristeva remarks “All things stemming from social symbolism, hence kinship structures and myth itself [emphasis added], are symbolic devices, made possible by the thetic, which has taken on social symbolism as such” (74).
32 Madness and sexual desire seem to be interchangeable for women in Classical literature and often accompany one another. See chapter 2 for a discussion of madness and ecstasy in relation to desiring women.
permitted by the kinship system. As the narrating voice tells us at the opening of the tale:

“Byblis is set as an example for girls to love what is permitted (Byblis in exemplo est ut ament concessa puellae, 454).” Such an introduction is a plot spoiler. The narrator defines Byblis’ meaning as a mythic sign and establishes from the beginning that Byblis was unsuccessful in shifting her position in the symbolic economy of kinship and desire.

Nevertheless, we are invited to read/hear a tale which describes her struggle against her already determined and fixed value as an exemplum of destructive female desire by attempting to shift her position in the kinship system and thereby reorient her relations with Caunus. A new positionality would redefine her desire as concessum and change the implied meaning of the narrator’s statement (quoted above) from “a [negative] example [cautioning] girls to love what is permitted” to “a [positive] example for girls to love what is permitted [in emulation].”

According to Kristeva, the process of signification is the poetic process. “The thetic—that crucial place on the basis of which the human being constitutes himself as signifying and/or social—is the very place textual experience aims toward…. But at the same time and as a result, textual experience reaches the very foundation of the social—that which is exploited by sociality but which elaborates and can go beyond it, either destroying or transforming it.”

We will see that Byblis’ play with signification, by exploiting, not negating, the instability of signs—her

33 The opening of Myrrha’s tale makes this point even more explicit: choose one man from your many suitors, Myrrha, but don’t let it be that one (undique lecti/ te cupiunt proceres, totoque oriente iuventus/ ad thalami certamen adest: ex omnibus unum/ elige, Myrrha, uirum— dum ne sit in omnibus unus, Met. 10.315-18), i.e., the one excluded by the incest taboo, your father.

34 Kristeva (1984) argues that poetic mimesis “dissolves” the process of creating meaning, because its mimetic denotation points to a solely discursive construction (there is not a real object as a referent) and its mimetic enunciator is likewise solely discursive. “Mimesis, in our view, is a transgression of the thetic when truth is no longer a reference to an object that is identifiable outside of language,” and for this reason, “[m]imesis and the poetic language…prevent the imposition of the thetic from hiding the semiotic process that produces it” (58), putting the subject of enunciation “in process/on trial”. See 57-59 for further discussion of mimesis and meaning. See esp. 16-17, 62-71, 99-106 for an explanation of the “text” and its signifying practices.

mythical symbolism and kinship roles in general—is ultimately unsuccessful. Kristeva maintains that in order for poetry to effect a “revolution in poetic language,” by changing symbolic systems, poetry’s language, informed by the multiple meanings of signs re-introduced into the symbolic economy from the semiotic chora, must be accepted into linguistic and symbolic systems.\(^\text{36}\)

The new, multiple meanings a poetic text attaches to signs were always there but excluded at the thetic stage. For example, Byblis will try to introduce into the symbolic kinship roles of sister and brother an erotic valence through the introduction of the elegiac code, as Phaedra has in her Ovidian letter. In Ovid’s text, the dramatization of the process of signification reveals that the place of enunciation for Byblis and (therefore Phaedra, whose writing instance she enacts) is over-determined by literary tradition. Byblis’ story shows that Phaedra never had a chance. Ovid’s narrative of Byblis’ process of signification both relies on theses (in this case, the mythological thesis which establishes Byblis’ exemplarity in the mythic “megatext” and the theses of various positions in the system of kinship), and draws attention both to the foundation of these positions, and to those positions which are necessarily excluded in the process. Ovid, however, as we shall see, is successful in positing himself as a writing subject through the process of her generic repudiation and abjection.\(^\text{37}\)

By introducing her story as an example (\textit{Byblis in exemplo est, 9.454}), the narrator situates us in a didactic context as a (reading) audience.\(^\text{38}\) It also focuses our attention on her

\(^{36}\) Ibid., 17: “this instinctual operation [poetry’s process of signification, \textit{signification}] becomes a \textit{practice} [sic]...if and only if it enters the code of linguistic and social communication.”

\(^{37}\) See Kristeva (1984: 68-81) for poetry’s origin in the sacrifice of the scapegoat.

\(^{38}\) Ovid’s didactic introduction of Byblis anticipates Orpheus’ use of Myrrha’s tale in the next book, which he calls: \textit{exemplum: dira canam, 10.300}. See Anderson (ad loc.). Structurally, the Byblis and Myrrha passages in the
signifying power as a sign within a symbolic system. While on the surface we are reading a cautionary tale, Ovid’s poetry, as so often, is charged with metapoetic meaning. It also reveals the power of the reader. As noted earlier, if the language which the enunciator speaks is not shared by an other (i.e., Caunus), a subject’s position in the symbolic system which defines social relations and their cultures is unstable and without meaning.\(^{39}\) Therefore, if Caunus does not successfully interpret (or refuses to read) Byblis’ words, her new ‘role’ as elegiac lover-beloved will be socially illegible. Likewise, if Ovid’s reader does not accept Byblis’ translation into a new genre, her signifying power as a mythological sign remains unchanged. Byblis’ story demonstrates that a writing subject is mute (\textit{muta}) and unable to be effective without a reader, for Byblis, we learn, after announcing her desire to everyone (\textit{inconcessaeque fatetur/ spem Veneris, 638-39}) and pursuing her brother through Caria (\textit{profugi sequitur uestigia fratris, 640}), finally collapses in silence (\textit{Bybli, iaces, 651; muta iacet, 655}).

Byblis’ mythological tradition is established by the narrator from the very beginning through the positing of subjects in their kinship relations.

\begin{quote}
\textit{Hic tibi, dum sequitur patriae curuamina ripae, filia Maeandri totiens redeuntis eodem cognita Cyanee praestanti corpora forma, Byblida cum Cauno, prolem est enixa gemellam.}
\end{quote}

\textit{Metamorphoses} are very similar. Both end with an aetiology—a “naming” of their new form—as most of the tales in the \textit{Metamorphoses} do. See Myers for a treatment of aetiology in Ovid’s \textit{Met.} as a whole (passim; 22, 24 for references to this episode). Byblis gives her name to the stream into which she is transformed: \textit{nomen habet dominae, nigraque sub ilice manat} (9.665). Myrrha becomes the myrrh tree: \textit{murra/ nomen erile tenet} (10.501-502). In fact, in the Myrrha narrative, the narrating “\textit{praeceptor,}” the misogynistic Orpheus, suggests that his audience self-select: \textit{procul hinc, natae, procul este, parentes} (300). If this portion of the audience chooses to remain and hear the recitation of the passage (or read on), he directs them either to “think it didn’t really happen” (\textit{nec credite factum, 302}), or, if you do, treat it as a cautionary tale: \textit{facti quoque credite poenam} (303). In other words, this story is so horrifying (to your detriment, daughters and fathers) that (I command you to believe) it is made up. If this did happen, (understand that) it was punished.

Cyane is recognized (*cognita*, 452) as the daughter of Maeander (*filia Maeandri*, 451) and the mother of Byblis and Caunus (*prolem est enixa gemellam*, 453).\(^{40}\) Here *cognita* as a sexual euphemism creates a direct link between sexual relations and kinship relations which are “recognizable” within the family and as a family. Byblis’ and Caunus’ relationship as twins is also established. The next line positions Byblis in a greater mythic “megatext.” Byblis’ exemplary status (*Byblis in exemplo est ut ament concessa puellae*, 454) in this “megatext” makes her always already a signifier of abject desire and Ovid’s language constructs her in just such a way. She is not allowed to fall in love with her brother gradually; she always was, even before she knew it.

\begin{quote}
illa quidem primo nullos intellegit ignes
nec peccare putat, quod saepius oscula iungat,
quod sua fraterno circumdet bracchia collo,
... 
sed nondum manifesta sibi est nullumque sub illo
igne facit uotum; uerumtamen aestuat intus.
\end{quote}

\textit{(Met. 9.457-59, 464-65)}

Byblis is not complicit in her identification as lover of her brother; she is represented as incestuous \textit{by nature}. We are told Byblis has deceived herself: *mendacique diu pietatis fallitur umbra* (460). Her innate sexuality is further reinforced by the juxtaposition of her name with the adjective *Apollinei*: *Byblis Apollinei correpta cupidine fratris* (455). Identifying Caunus as the grandson of Apollo (although she is his granddaughter too) suggests an opposition of her

\(^{40}\) The rape of Cyane which is briefly mentioned here is an example of the \textit{topos} of the \textit{locus amoenus} where unguarded maidens are raped, a \textit{topos} frequent in the early books of Ovid’s \textit{Met.} (e.g., Jupiter sees Io alone, 1.566-686, 713-46; Pan pursues the hunting Syrinx, 1.687-712; Jupiter the hunting Callisto, 2.401-530; Jupiter steals Europa from her flower-picking companions, 2.833-75; as Dis does Persephone, 5.341-571). These rapes nearly always result in pregnancy. The most famous exception is Persephone. For the \textit{loca amoenia} in Ovid see Hinds (in Hardie [2002]: 130-6 and passim), Parry, and Segal (1969a).
Bacchic nature to his Apollonian, an opposition that is picked up again at the end of the episode when she is likened to a bacchant (641-43). The worship of Bacchus was often suspected of or associated with promiscuous sex. Thus the Roman charges in the Bacchanalia included *stupra promiscua ingenuorum feminarumque*. Most importantly, the suggestion of Byblis as Caunus’ Dionysiac twin is a signal of feminine madness, gendered by its association with maenads, the female followers of Bacchus, and by the irrationality of their worship. Byblis shares her association to Bacchus with the other Phaedra-like figures we’ve considered in the previous chapters (Pasiphae, *Ars Am.* 1.312; Phaedra, *Her.* 4.47-49). Her non-Apollonian nature reinforces her stated exemplary status and foreshadows her maenadic end.

Even before she realizes her abjected status, Byblis is performing the role of the incestuous lover, Phaedra, not the kinship role of loving sister. In her letter, Phaedra recommends the performance of *privigno fida noverca meo* (*Her.* 4.140), in order to hide (*celare, 137*) the role *privigno…coitura noverca* (129) beneath the cover of the name “relative” (*cognato poterit nomine culpa tegi, 138*). Among the activities common to both, Phaedra lists openly kissing and lying in the same bed (*oscula aperta dabas, oscula aperta dabis;/ tutus eris mecum laudemque merebere culpa,/ tu licet in lecto conspiciare meo, *Her.* 4.144-46). So too Byblis,

In Euripides’ *Bacchae*, Pentheus charges the maenads with drunkenness and “slinking off separately to lonely corners to serve the beds of men” (*ἄλλην δ’ ἄλλοϲ᾽ εἰϲ ἐρηµίαιν/ πτώϲϲουϲαν εὐναίϲ ἀρσένων ὑπηρετεῖν*, 222-223; ed., Murray, 1909).

Livy 39.8: *additae voluptates religioni uini et epularum, quo plurium animi inlicerentur. cum uinum animos < ... >, et nox et mixti feminis mares, aetatis tenerae maioribus, discrimen omne pudoris extinxissent, corruptelae primum omnis generis fieri coeptae, cum ad id quisque, quo natura pronioris libidinis esset paratam uoluptatem habert. nec unum genus noxae, stupra promiscua ingenuorum feminarumque erant, sed falsi testes falsa signa testamentaque et indicia ex eadem officina exibant.*

See chapter 2 for a discussion of the symbolic connotation of such similes in Greek and Latin literature and other examples of passionate women likened to bacchantes.

In addition, as I have argued in previous chapters, the suggestion of Bacchus also signals generic contamination. It is perhaps too subtle here, but may have been strong enough to provide direction to a reading.
even before she knows why, is taking advantage of the affection afforded to siblings by indulging in one too many kisses (saepius oscula iungat, Met. 9.458) and throwing her arms about her brother’s neck (sua fraterno circumdet brachia collo, 459). She even prims (uisuraque fratrem/ cultura, 461-62) in order to catch his eye.\(^{45}\) Byblis is still a member of Phaedra’s credulous audience. Although she is not aware of her motivations, the narrator tells us that the fires of female desire motivate her (ignes, 457; igne, aestuat, 465).

As Ovid presents the story, Byblis’ dreams reveal her true nature, her innate meaning as a sign in the semiotics of myth, in much the same way Phaedra’s words in her letter betray her (poorly) repressed tragic core. Anderson notes that “Ovid’s dramatic sensitivity here anticipates Freud.”\(^{46}\) He likens Byblis’ erotic dream to the “subconscious.”\(^{47}\) Jocasta, another tragic heroine, but one whose incest offered a model for Freud, also speaks of dreams of incest in Sophocles’ play, *Oedippus Tyrannos* (980-82);\(^{48}\) however, in her account, the dreams are merely wish-fulfillment. In Byblis’ case, dream is destiny and it is overdetermined, not only by Byblis’ mythological tradition, but also by Phaedra’s. As noted above, correspondences to the Greek tragedies featuring Phaedra, Ovid’s *Heroides* 4, and the Scylla and Myrrha episodes which

\(^{45}\) Byblis’ cultus recalls that of Pasiphae (*Ars* 1.303-7), whose fine clothes and mirror, the praeceptor tells her, has no effect on her bull. Byblis’ toilette is meant for the gaze of an inappropriate love interest and, although we are not told it is to no avail, a literary reader can guess that Caunus is not charmed. The praeceptor tells Pasiphae: ille tuus nullas sentit adulter opes, *Ars* 1.304. Furthermore, Byblis’ jealousy over Caunus’ interest in other women (et si qua est illic formosior, inuidet illi, Met. 9.463) is reminiscent of Pasiphae’s more absurd, but equally horrifying, Junonian jealousy of her “rivals,” cows (*Ars* 1.313-22).

\(^{46}\) Anderson, ad 468-71

\(^{47}\) Ibid., ad 464-65. See n. 11 above for a brief discussion of Freudian dream interpretation, the subconscious, and further references.

\(^{48}\) σὺ δ’ ἐς τὰ μητρὸς μὴ φοβοῦ νυμφεύματα: / πολλοὶ γὰρ ἢδη κἀν ὀνείρασιν βροτῶν/ μητρὶ ξυνηθενάθησαν. See Bassi, 31-33.
surround Byblis’ story in books 8 and 10 connect Byblis to the Phaedra of Greek tragedy.\textsuperscript{49}

Byblis does not recognize her own tragic model until she sees a performance in her dreams.

\begin{quote}
\textit{spes} tamen obscenas animo demittere non est
ausa suo uigilans; placida resoluta quiete
saepe uidet quod amat; \textit{uisa est} quoque iungere fratri
corpus et erubuit, quamuis sopita iacebat.
sommus abit; silet illa diu repetitque quietis
ipsa suae speciem, dubiaque ita mente profatur:
'me miseram! tacitae quid uult sibi noctis imago?
quam nolim rata sit! cur haec ego somnia uidi?\textsuperscript{51}
\textit{(Met.} 9.468-75)\end{quote}

Byblis’ hopes (\textit{spes}) are premature. We are told only that she is “burning inside” (\textit{aestuat intus}, 465) and has an aversion to the names of kinship (\textit{nomina sanguinis}, 466). Although her desire is not yet apparent to her (\textit{manifesta sibi}, 464),\textsuperscript{50} nevertheless, her hopes are \textit{obscenas} (468). The straightforward meaning of the adjective, “indecent,” with a specifically sexual connotation, proleptically describes Byblis’ hopes. A less overt, but equally important meaning, I would suggest, is attached to this adjective. Varro (\textit{Ling.} 7.96) tells us \textit{obsc(a)enus} is derived from \textit{scaena}, “the stage” (\textit{Obscaenum dictum ab scaena}). It comes to mean shameful (\textit{turpe}) because it describes what should only be said on the stage (\textit{in scaena}).\textsuperscript{51} Here I believe the secondary meaning works in conjunction with the language of spectacle (\textit{uidet, uisa est}, 470;

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{49} See chapter 1 for a detailed discussion of the correspondences between these texts and further references. See Curley (n.d.: 444-47), Janan (1991: 246, n. 18) and Raval (289, 300) for correspondences with Phaedra’s epistle (\textit{Her.} 4), and Raval (passim) for correspondences with the \textit{Heroides} in general. See Ahl (214), Larmour, Nagle (1983), Rosati (121-22), Tissol (36-52), and Verducci (190-97) for a comparison of Phaedra’s epistle (\textit{Her.} 4) and the Byblis and Myrrha episodes in Ovid’s \textit{Met.}\textsuperscript{50} Contra Anderson (ad 468-71), who argues that her suppression of \textit{spes obscenas} (468) while awake “implies that Byblis has become aware of her desire.”\textsuperscript{51} OLD, \textit{obsc(a)enus}, 2-4; \textit{obscaenum dictum ab scena}; eam ut \textit{†Graeci aut Accius scribit sc<a>ena ... quare turpe ideo obscaenum, quod nisi in scaenam palam dici non debet} (Varro, \textit{De Lingua Latina}, 7.96); Miller (2004: 34) citing Barton (142n.173) citing Varro (above), uses the English word obscene to describe Catullus 64.62-67, where the description of Ariadne violates her subjectivity in a way that is pornographic, obscene: “the alienation of either the flesh or the experience from the self, its specularization \textit{ob scaenum} (for the stage) is the essence of the obscene.” Ernout and Meillet (ad loc.) report that the etymology of \textit{obscenus}, -\textit{a}, -\textit{um} is unknown, but also conjecture a connection between \textit{obscenus} and \textit{se(a)ena} from the Greek word \textit{σκηνή} (“stage”) through an Etruscan intermediary.
repetit...speciem, 472-73; imago, 474; uidi, 475) to reinforce the idea that Byblis is watching a dramatic performance (uidet quod amat, 470) in which she is the player (uisa est, 470). The passive of video, of course, is commonly used to indicate dreams, but its juxtaposition with the active in the same line as well as the frequency of looking, seeing, and image words, puts the literal meaning in play.

At the close of her letter in the Heroides, Phaedra invites Hippolytus to be an audience of her suffering body (verba precantis/ Perlegis, et lacrimas finge videre meas, 175-76). Ovid constructs a similar tragic spectacle in book 9 of his Metamorphoses by painting a vivid picture of Byblis beginning the letter (517-29): her posture (in latus erigitur cubitoque innixa sinistro, 518), talking to herself in direct speech (519-20), her trembling hand (manu trementi, 521) as it writes, erases, and rewrites. As Anderson notes, “Ovid’s dramatic intention focuses more on how we react to this girl’s wretched struggles than on the process of reaching a decision.” It is no wonder, then, that Ovid implies in Byblis’ story a mixture of the visual with the erotic. Phaedra tells Hippolytus that “shame must be mixed with love” (pudor est miscendus amori, Her. 4.9). In this line elegiac amor is juxtaposed with Phaedra’s traditional shame, indicating that she is infusing her tragic symbolism with elegiac meaning. Byblis’ own fusion is announced by the narrator. She wears her generic persona on her face like a mask (in uultu est audacia mixta pudori, 527). We are imagining Byblis’ suffering as a performance, as Phaedra has asked Hippolytus to do (“imagine my tears, Her. 4.176) and as Byblis has watched her own performance in her dreams (474-86). Her suffering female body resembles Phaedra’s on the

52 OLD, visum, -i, n. [pple. of VIDEO], a. “a vision (usu. as presented in a dream).”
53 Anderson, ad 472-73. In his introduction to the episode, Anderson (ad 450-665) notes: “While in no way condoning Byblis’ passion, Ovid does convey his sympathy for her and he comes nearer to tragedy here than in any other tale since that of Cephalus and Procris.”
tragic stage.\textsuperscript{54} As noted in chapter 3, Phaedra accomplishes little in Euripides \textit{HII} besides suffering. Her two other acts are writing a letter and committing suicide. Adding to the dramatic quality of Byblis’ epic tale is the quantity of direct speech which makes up a large portion of the narrative—128 of the 227 lines (439-665).\textsuperscript{55}

After seeing her performance (470-73), Byblis admits to herself (\textit{mente profatur}, 473) what she has seen, and finally recognizes the nature of her desires and, necessarily, her own exemplarity, although she is hesitant to admit its import.\textsuperscript{56} She asks \textit{tacitae quid uult sibi noctis imago}, 474. The word \textit{imago}, repeated again a few lines later (\textit{saepe licet simili redeat sub imagine somnus}, 480), engages with the rhetoric of exemplarity introduced at the beginning of the passage (\textit{Byblis in exemplo est}, 454). For the Romans, an \textit{imago} was an artistic representation. Busts of revered ancestors of aristocratic families were also referred to as \textit{imagines}.\textsuperscript{57} The wax masks were made in a man’s lifetime once he attained the position of magistrate. The masks were displayed in the atrium of aristocratic homes and were worn after

\textsuperscript{54} Zeitlin (1996) has identified the passivity effected by the peripeteia of Greek Attic tragedy, which leads to suffering and pathos, as a feminine experience which tragedy offers to the masculine Greek subject in the audience of Attic tragedy. She argues that the peripeteia results in “a shift…from active to passive, from mastery over the self and others to surrender and grief. Sometimes there is madness, always suffering and pathos” (363). See 349-52 for the body as a feminine theme in Attic Greek tragedy. See esp. 247-48 and 351 for Hippolytus’ feminine suffering which reflects Phaedra’s.

\textsuperscript{55} 9.439-665. I am counting Byblis’ letter as direct speech because it is quoted verbatim. Holzberg’s (2002: 134-35) count is 122. Holzberg, moreover, includes only 212 lines in the Byblis episode. I have started at 9.439 because I consider the paratextual transition part of the frame and significant to the understanding of Ovid’s tale. See Keith (2002: 265) for direct speech as an indication of tragic influence in the Pentheus episode of \textit{Met.} 3, which contains 167 out of 223 lines.

\textsuperscript{56} Raval (2001: 287) also argues that Byblis’ dream reveals to her own desire, which we readers have already recognized through her symptoms. Raval’s point is that Byblis incorporates this into a larger narrative of “being in love,” which she constructs from her readings of the \textit{Amores} and \textit{Heroïdes}. See also Janan (1991: 245) for correspondences between Byblis’ experience of love and the experience the poet-lover of \textit{Am.} 1.2.1-8. I am more interested in the metapoetic significance of Byblis’ recognition of her “role” as it has been repeatedly represented in the literary and, in particular, tragic tradition. For Raval, Byblis is constructing herself as an elegiac lover. I would add that she is constructing an elegiac narrative against and despite her own recognition of a previously established and inexorable tragic generic tradition.

\textsuperscript{57} See e.g., Boyle (3-5) and Flower (1999: 1-15, 91-127 and passim) for \textit{imagines} in ancient Rome.
the death of the family member by actors in the family’s funeral processions. In her thorough treatment of the *imagines* in Rome, Flowers notes the similarities between the ancestor masks and theater masks. Both offer “a repertoire of characters...Within the setting of a funeral procession the mask had to work with the costume and props to help the actor bring an individual to life, while also suggesting a recognizable character type.” The funerals themselves processed through the site of many tragic performances (the forum) and included accessories similar to those used in theatrical performances: “audience, dialogue, action, actors, costumes, masks, props, stages.” Moreover, the actors wearing the masks made up the audience at a funeral, where theatrical productions were staged, usually on the second day.

The masks acted as role models for political achievement and personal virtue. Both artistic *imagines* and family portraits offered the Roman a reflection of the self. Flower connects their function to the “shame culture” of Rome. As a “status symbol” and a watching audience of the members of his family (in the *atrium* and at funeral events), the ancestor masks reminded a young Roman man of the past honor held by his family while shaming him to maintain this status. Considered in the context of the Roman culture of self-definition against representations of the Same or Other, Byblis’ dream *imagines* act much like the funeral busts of the same name, recognizable *exempla* with which she could identify or not. Moreover, the mimetic pleasure she experiences (*imitata voluptas*, 481) is reminiscent of the Platonic anxiety

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58 Flower (1999), 114-35.
59 Ibid., 115.
60 Boyle, 4.
61 Flower (1999), 92.
62 In addition to the definitions “a representation in art of a person or thing” (*OLD*, *imago*, 1), “A death-mask of an ancestor” (*OLD*, *imago*, 2), the word can also mean “a reflection in a mirror or sim.” (*OLD*, *imago*, 3, 9) and “an illustration, parallel, model, example” (*OLD*, *imago*, 10).
over the dangers of negative examples in poetry. Such a discursive intersection further reinforces the tragic nature of her exemplarity.

Just as Kristeva locates the initiation of the thetic stage in the Lacanian mirror stage, so Byblis is driven back to a thetic stage when faced with her mirror image. Lacan’s mirror stage describes the moment when a child, seeing its own image in the mirror for the first time, can conceive of himself as a whole, coherent body and can distinguish his body from other objects. This moment sets in motion the entry into the world of language and symbolism, as the ability to distinguish also introduces the ability to name the now differentiated objects. According to Kristeva, “[p]ositing the imaged ego leads to the positing of the object, which is, likewise, separate and signifiable.” The thesis of the body image is necessary for this naming process, for naming an object necessarily names the subject’s symbolic relation to that object. Byblis returns to the thetic stage as a result of seeing an image (imago) of herself. Byblis’ moment of recognition establishes her as both a sign in the symbolic system of myth (for Byblis’ imago is one familiar to Ovid’s readers) and as a reader of this language, specifically a reader of Ovid’s text in the language of myth (for her recognition of her own imago demonstrates that she is also familiar with what she sees).

Byblis is faced with the contradiction introduced by her “tragic” desire. A (Roman) woman is the object of desire, a beloved, not a lover. Her normative position in the sexual dyad, as we have discussed in previous chapters, is passive. Furthermore, a sister, according to the

63 Republic, II, 377e-378b: Ὅταν εἰκάζῃ τις κακῶς τῷ λόγῳ, περὶ θεῶν τε καὶ ἑρωῶν οἱ οἷοί εἰσιν, ὡσπερ γραφεύς μηδὲν ἑοικότα γράφων οἷς ἀν ὠνομα βουλήθη γράφαι... ὡς ἀδικών τά ἐσχατα οὐδέν ἀν βασιλεύσων ποιοῖ, οὐδ᾽ ἀν ἀδικοῦντα πατέρα κολάζων παντὶ τρόπῳ, ἀλλὰ δρώῃ ἀν ὡσπερ θεῶν οἱ πρώτοι τε καὶ μέγιστοι.

64 Kristeva (1984), 46.
relations governed by the kinship system, is prohibited from any erotic relation to her brother, be it active or passive. Such a contradictory position is characteristic of Kristeva’s semiotic functioning, which is in a dialectical relationship with the symbolic effected by the thetic, splitting the signifying subject. In other words, each individual who engages in a symbolic system is faced at the thetic stage with the “heterogeneous contradiction” of all the possible and undifferentiated identities and the one identity which excludes these possibilities. In the thetic stage, through the positing of the subject, one chooses a symbolic position from which to relate to objects and excludes various other possibilities for the subject, thereby (temporarily) eliminating any ambiguity in an individual’s identity as speaking, communicating, and a writing subject.

Byblis’ “thesis” is both symbolic and literary, narrative levels which are sometimes indistinguishable in the episode and are in constant tension. The tension between her tragic literary tradition and the role with which she self-identifies, i.e., sister, creates a desire to renegotiate her relationship to her brother linguistically: *iam dominum appellat, iam nomina sanguinis odit,/ Byblida iam mauult quam se uocet ille sororem* (466-67). Raval notes that the position of her name and her kinship role reflects Byblis’ conception of the distance between the two roles. Her grammatical position as subject of all three verbs demonstrates her agency in

65 “[W]e see the condition of the subject of significance as a heterogeneous contradiction between two irreconcilable elements—separate but inseparable from the process in which they assume asymmetrical functions” (Kristeva, 1984: 82). Kristeva’s (1984: 17) term, “significance,” refers to the process of signification associated with literary practice and the text, regulated by social, cultural and legal systems but transforming these systems if it is introduced into their discourse. See Kristeva (1984: 81-82, 202-7) for a full description of this relationship in the process of signification.

66 Phaedra’s strategies for rewriting her mythological and familial position in relation to Hippolytus ultimately fail in her self-presentation. Her mythological tradition proves to be too strong to suppress and it irrupts throughout her letter. This, as we saw, creates an ironic tension between the female voice of Phaedra and the “source” texts employed by Ovid.

67 Raval, 293.
the project of renaming, even before she is aware of why she has begun. This line also expresses Byblis’ wish (mault) for a discursive metamorphosis, a spatial and temporal movement away from kinship relations. Her hoped for outcome, to be Byblis to Caunus, not sister to brother, is foregrounded syntactically. In addition to her search for a new relationship to Caunus, Byblis, as Jenkins has noted, cites the variants of her myth during her soliloquy (Caunus as lover: 9.511-12, Byblis confessing in person: 513-14, and Ovid’s innovative epistle: 515-16), suggesting that she is diving back into the chora, so to speak, of her literary tradition for a mythic position.

An anxiety over the future is signaled at the very beginning of her letter.

'quam, nisi tu dederis, non est habitura salutem, hanc tibi mittit amans; pudet, a, pudet edere nomen! et si quid cupiam quaeis, sine nomine uellem posset agi mea causa meo, nec cognita Byblis ante forem quam spes uotorum certa fuisset. (Met. 9.530-34)

Fear over the consequences of her letter of confession is the ostensible reason for her wish to warp time, or see into the future to determine whether things turn out the way she hopes (spes...certa fuisset, 534), before she signs the love letter (sine nomine uellem/ posset agi mea causa meo, nec cognita Byblis, 532-33). The epistolary genre, as Rosenmeyer has noted, is concerned with time, seeking to bridge the temporal distance between the moment the letter was written and the future in which the addressee will read what is written by creating a sense of the present in the language itself. Byblis, however, is overshooting the future present and is moving to the future perfect, the time when Caunus “will have read” her letter and made a judgment about its contents. In its dialogue with Ovid’s Heroides, Byblis’ “future” resembles the ironic tension in the heroine’s epistles, whose literary futures predict the very outcome the

68 Jenkins, 441.
69 Rosenmeyer, 74-75.
heroines struggle to prevent.\textsuperscript{70} We, the external audience, share, along with the author who is holding Byblis’ pen, the knowledge of Byblis’ future.

This greeting, however, expresses a connection between time and identity. “And should you ask what I desire, without a name I would prefer…” (532). Respectability, reputation, and chastity—normative feminine behavior all falling under the virtue \textit{pudicitia}—excludes, as I have argued, any active sexuality, let alone an incestuous one. For this reason Byblis says that it shames her to give it a name (\textit{pudet edere nomen}, 531). Feminine desire is an absence of desire, leaving \textit{quid cupiam}, for Byblis, \textit{sine nomine, nec cognita}. The future tense (\textit{habitura}, 530), which suspends Byblis somewhere in time between the present and the unknowable future also reflects her liminality. For time belongs to the symbolic world to which she cannot belong as long as she refuses her own symbolic identity (\textit{sine nomine uellem/ posset agi mea causa meo, nec cognita Byblis}, 532-33).\textsuperscript{71} The narrator, of course, has defined the symbolic identity Byblis seeks to avoid (454); nevertheless, she is represented as unaware that she is already an exemplar.\textsuperscript{72} The repetition of the first person possessive adjective, implicitly connects the nouns they modify (\textit{nomen} and \textit{causa}), and emphasizes Byblis’ perceived control over her identity both through the repetition and through the conceptual connection. It is her name to use or not and her case to plead. Byblis’ future hope, we will see, is for a new symbolic position.

\textsuperscript{70} Barchiesi (1993).
\textsuperscript{71} Kristeva (1986: 192 and passim) connects the diachronic characteristic of syntax in language to the idea of linear time. As a consequence the temporality of grammar informs the “thesis” of the subject in relation to the predicate in a sentence (1984: 54-55), and the positing of a subject in culture (1984: 66-67, 72) includes a temporal delay until her symbolic role is recognized by other members of the community. When one considers, as Butler does, the positing of the subject as a performativity requiring repetition (1993: 12-14 and passim; 2000; 2006), the symbolic is limited by time (for each citation is only temporary, never permanent), but simultaneously relies on time (as the continual citation of the symbolic role or law over time creates the illusion of permanence).
\textsuperscript{72} Such an ironic tension resembles the tensions inherent in Ovid’s \textit{Heroides} as Barchiesi (1993) has described it. See chapter 3 for a discussion of this dynamic in Phaedra’s letter (\textit{Her.} 4).
As Raval argues “[t]he word nomina [9.466] suggests that Byblis views the primary obstacle in her relationship with Caunus as a dilemma not just of blood and biological ties, but of naming itself.” Raval’s focus is on Byblis’s discursive construction of herself as lover; yet Byblis is not just rehearsing the discourse of “being in love” from Roman erotic elegy, but rather trying to construct herself as a desiring subject using the only discourses she has at her disposal. Raval comes to roughly the same conclusion, that her destruction is a linguistic failure created by her gendered position. “When a woman tries to inscribe herself in the world of elegy as a desiring subject, she is destroyed.” As I have argued, however, it is more than just elegy from which woman is excluded as lover, it is Augustan discourse in general, from which every Roman literary genre at the time drew and reinterpreted its own unique code. This discourse of desire was determined by kinship systems governing sexuality. Because, as Lévi-Stauss points out, the kinship system which excludes sexual relations between brother and sister through the incest taboo which subtends it is symbolic, Byblis’ problem is symbolic and tied to the kinship roles which she and Caunus hold. It is, therefore, entirely a problem of names.

As Raval has well noted, proper names figure prominently in the entire passage as part of its strong focus on the power of language and names to construct intrapersonal relations. “She assumes that in the removal or denial of the title “sister” she can change the way in which Caunus views her.” Byblis’ name appears ten times in 227 lines, Caunus’ four, and the word nomen six. The story itself is framed by aetiologies of place names—the town Miletus, named

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73 iam dominum appellat, iam nomina sanguinis odit,/ Byblida iam mauult quam se uocet ille sororem (9.466-67).
74 Raval, 293. See also Tissol (36-52) who argues that the manipulation of names is an opportunity for wordplay and irony: “For my purposes, the relevance of incest lies in the terms used to justify and account for it, terms that not only further illustrate the resources of wordplay...but also expand wordplay’s reach beyond ordinary limits” (36-37).
75 Raval, 308.
76 Raval, 293.
after Byblis’ father (449), and the spring in Caria, named after Byblis (665). The passage begins with the juxtaposition of the siblings’ names (453, quoted above) and the polyptoton of Byblis at the beginning of three successive lines (453-55). In her letter, Byblis repeats Caunus twice in direct address (quam bene, Caune, tuo poteram nurus esse parenti!/ quam bene, Caune, meo poteras gener esse parenti, 488-89). The repetition of their proper names rather blatantly declares the theme of the story. The more subtle subtext, of course, is the generic and genealogical overdetermination tied to those names. They are characters from mythology, whose identities have been codified by literary tradition. Encoded in their names are their stories, and as we have seen, their names do not simply signify their myths, but also stand in paradigmatic relation to other mythological characters. But Byblis wants to change the import of her name. Her twice repeated direct address to Caunus calls for his response. Her new subject position requires his acknowledgement. What good is a name if no one recognizes it?

As noted earlier, the narrator describes in detail Byblis’ struggle to compose her letter (518-529). She “writes, deletes, changes, criticizes, and approves” (et notat et delet; mutat culpatque probatque, 524) what she has written in an attempt to find a means of representing her desire to her addressee. In her last emendation, the narrator signals that Byblis intends to use the epistle to write herself in her own words: scripta ‘soror’ fuerat; uisum est delere sororem, 528. The alliteration of “s” in the beginning and end of the line, along with the word “soror” in the second and last position, draws attention to her kinship role to Caunus. Humphries translates this line “she had written sister: that required erasing.” There are at least two other implications

77 Janan (1991), 241: “Ovid, more than any other Roman writer, signals his awareness of the particular constraints brought to bear upon an artist by a literary tradition that determines—and overdetermines—the significance of his every poetic gesture.”
that perhaps lurk beneath Humphries’ straightforward translation. The first evokes the *scriptra puella* of Roman erotic elegy, the significance of which we will discuss in detail below. The second engages with the narrative of the writing process in which Byblis is both author 
(*meditata...componit verba*, 521) and material of her poem. As a writer in the epistolary genre in the style of the *Heroides*, Byblis can be understood as representing herself in a self-conscious way to her beloved addressee. This re-presentation, here as in the *Heroides*, amounts to an attempt to rewrite her own literary tradition. She “had been written as a sister [by Ovid, Parthenius, and Apollonius, among others], but it seemed good to erase [herself as] sister” and write a new role for herself.

quam, nisi tu dederis, non est habitura salutem,
hanc tibi mittit amans; pudet, a, pudet edere nomen!  
(Met. 9.530-31)

Byblis’ epistolary greeting recalls that of Canace in *Heroides* 11 (*Aeolis Aeolidae quam non habet ipsa salutem/ mittit, Her. 11.1-2*). Such a correspondence is not surprising, as

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79 Lindheim (13-77, passim) argues that the epistolary form of the *Heroides* gives the author “the authority to arrange the narrative as she sees fit, in agreement with her own perspective on events...each letter [in the *Heroides*] allows its writer to offer a self-portrait, a version of herself that she has carefully constructed and edited” (23); however, Lindheim’s analysis demonstrates that in select letters the writer is more concerned with constructing herself with a view toward the desires of her beloved, thereby reinscribing herself as a marginal and helpless figure.

80 See Jacobson (147, n. 13) who likens Byblis’ deletion to Phaedra’s avoidance of kinship names in *Her.* 4. Farrell (1998) argues that the deletion of *soror* is the act which allows Byblis’ passion to be expressed sincerely: “Far from exercising her *inventio* in casting about her store of *exordium topoi* for a suitable beginning, she is wrestling with the conflicting emotions that make speech impossible and writing difficult” (320); “high rhetoric is but a figure for grand passion” (321). Kennedy’s (in Hardie [2002]: 224-26) idea of “temporality” in the *Heroides* suggests the heroines have the power to reimagine their myths in the epistles: “The heroine’s stories, when we come to read their letters, are, in this sense, already written... The epistolary form freezes them at a moment within the story, foreseeing or desiring a particular ‘end’ to their stories, which may or may not approximate to the ‘end’, the outcome or consequences, with which the external reader is familiar” (225). Contra Lindheim, who argues that the heroines do not rewrite their stories: “Rather than struggling against the tellings that the prior texts have provided in an effort to rewrite their stories, the heroines choose to inhabit their traditional, recognizable selves and stories” (34).

81 In all of the earlier versions of the Byblis story she is sister to Caunus.

82 Palmer does not include this line, which the ms s does. See Palmer (xli-xlili) for a very brief discussion of these lines in the manuscript tradition.
Canace is the other mythological lover of her brother.\(^\text{83}\) Her greeting foregrounds their incestuous love by repeating in polyptoton their shared patronymic (*Aeolis Aeolidae*). The similarity of Byblis’ greeting to Canace’s reminds the knowledgeable reader of Byblis’ own incestuous desire even as she tries to suppress her identity as Caunus’ sister (*pudet edere nomen, Met. 9.531*).\(^\text{84}\) The similarity, one could argue, may also be an intertextual strategy on Byblis’ part, as she remembers suddenly the source of the *exempla* she was surprised to know before she begins to write (*Aeolidae thalamos timuere sororum./ unde sed hos noui, 507-8*).\(^\text{85}\) As a reader of the *Heroides*, Byblis would find in Canace a model for her own love. Canace’s story ends with her suicide (as some variants of Byblis’ myth), but her love for Macareus is, in Ovid’s formulation at least, both reciprocal and consummated.

As noted above, however, the first line of Byblis’ letter also closely reworks that of Phaedra’s: *Qua\(^\text{86}\) nisi tu dederis, caritura est ipsa, salutem* (*Her. 4.1*), as does her story. There is no *durus pater* in Byblis’ story, preventing her romance with Caunus, as there is in Canace’s.\(^\text{87}\) Miletus, in fact, only serves as a transition story and the symbolic third figure whose relation to

\(^{83}\) Canace and Macareus, children of Aeolus, fell in love and conceived a child.

\(^{84}\) Such an allusion in Byblis’ letter may further strengthen her association with Greek Attic tragedy, for Canace herself was the subject of a Euripidean tragedy, *Aeolus* (fr. 14-41 Nauck). See Verducci (1985: 198-205) and Webster (157-60) for a discussion of the fragments. See Jacobson (160-175), Knox (1995: 257-58), Palmer (380-86), and Reeson (37-38) for Euripides’ play and a summary of the mythological tradition and further references.

\(^{85}\) Raval also points to *Met. 9.506-8* as an allusion to *Her. 11* (289-90) which characterizes Byblis as a reader of the epistles: “Here Ovid self-consciously draws attention to the allusion to *Heroides* 11 and to Byblis’ status as reader” (289-90). Raval places the allusive emphasis on Byblis’ self-identification with Macareus, a male lover, but I would suggest the primary identification is with Canace. Byblis’ borrowing of Canace’s greeting supports this suggestion. See Paratore (1970), Raval (298-304), and Verducci (191-97) for further discussion of Byblis’ reading of *Heroides* and correspondences with *Heroides* 4 and 11 in particular. See also Fulkerson (1-22 and passim), who argues that the heroines of the *Heroides* demonstrate their familiarity of the literary tradition, including the other letters in the collection, in their own epistolary poetry. The intertext between Canace’s and Byblis’ composition prepares the reader for Byblis’ own allusion; cf. *Dextra tenet calamum, strictum tenet altera ferrum* (*Her. 11.3*) and *dextra tenet ferrum, uacuam tenet altera ceram* (*Met. 9.522*). See Anderson (ad 520-22) and Raval (299-300).

\(^{86}\) Ehwald prints *quam*.

\(^{87}\) Canace, with a writing implement in her right hand and a sword in the other, claims: *Sic videor duro posse placere patri*, *Her. 11.6.*
Byblis and Caunus prohibits their sexual union. Byblis, despite her young age, instead resembles
the tragic Phaedra. In Ovid’s epic (re)interpretation of the epistle, his tale of Byblis claims its
tragic model with references to the Ovidian mediating text of Phaedra’s epistle and to Euripidean
themes and correspondences. Like Phaedra, Byblis’ aim is to seduce her beloved (513-14). In
both cases, the beloved is a relative; in the story of Byblis, the kinship is stronger—they are not
only blood relatives, but twins (prolem...gemellam, 453). Moreover, Byblis and Caunus are
children of Miletus, who, we are told a few lines earlier (439-49), fled Crete in order to allay
Minos’ fears of a coup from a younger rival. The connection to Minos reminds the reader of
Phaedra, his daughter, and, perhaps, the inheritance (or curse, if we believe Phaedra’s claim) of
Cretan women’s abject sexuality.88

Byblis is plagued by the same problem Phaedra has. Both employ the elegiac code in
their love letters; however, the only discourse available for the expression of their desire acts as a
trap, imprisoning them in the same stereotypes from which they wish to break free. Kristeva
calls such a generic shift a transposition because it “involves an altering of the thetic position
[sic]—the destruction of the old position and the formation of a new one. The new signifying
system may be produced with the same signifying material.”89 While Phaedra and Byblis do
indeed posit themselves in new relations to their kindred beloveds, the continuity of signifying
material—the mythic, tragic, and Augustan symbolic systems—works in reverse to limit and
circumscribe the positions a Phaedra or Byblis may take. This is the result of the “ordering”
Kristeva describes in the semiotic chora: “its vocal and gestural organization is subject to what

88 And perhaps Ovid’s readers are reminded of Minos’ abject sexuality. According to a variant reported by
Apollodorus (3.1.2) and Antoninus Liberalis (30), Miletus was fleeing the sexual advances of Minos. See Anderson
(ad. 418-49) for a summary of this tradition.
89 Kristeva (1984), 59.
we shall call an objective ordering [ordonnancement] [sic], which is dictated by natural or socio-historical constraints…We may therefore posit that social organization, always already symbolic, imprints its constraint in a mediated form [emphasis added] which organizes the chora [sic].”

Phaedra and Byblis take on a new elegiac role, but their choices have already been prescribed by the discourses of myth and female desire which tragedy, elegy and epic all reproduce.

The rhetorical question in her incipit, quo feror? (509), is acoustically similar to the noun furor, the linguistic signal of a woman out of control, or rather, under the control of sexual desire. The passive feror also introduces the image of a subject literally under the control of something other—being dragged—with no knowledge of the outcome/destination (quo?). The question is followed immediately by the characteristically elliptical description of her passion (obscenae flammae, 509; nec nisi qua fas est germanae frater ametur, 510), suggesting on the one hand that we are to assume that Byblis is being dragged (feror; a situation akin to madness, furor) by an “obscene” and “not permitted” love for her brother, as noted above. Her desire is described by the narrator using the traditional image of a fire (ignes, 457; igne, aestuat intus, 465), one common to both men and women. Her fire, however, even though she does not recognize it (illa quidem primo nullos intellegit ignes, 457), is gendered in its excessiveness. The particular feminine excess of her desire is signaled by the comparative saepius (458), the adverb nimium (462), the qualification of her hope as obscenas (468), and the element of deceit (mendaci…pietatis, 460), even if Byblis is lying only to herself. The narrator’s language recalls the discourse employed by the poet-praeceptor in Ars 1, where he characterizes feminine desire

90 Ibid., p. 26-27.
91 See chapter 2 for a full discussion of this theme with comparanda and references.
as parcior in nobis nec tam furiosa libido (281) and acrior est nostra plusque furoris habet (342). The “obscene” nature of women’s lust is demonstrated by the list he provides, starting with Byblis herself (Ars 1. 283-84). Demonstrating his lesson to male pupils that women cover their desire better than men (uir male dissimulat, tectius illa cupit, 1.276), Byblis will dissimulate her desire. After reading part of her letter, Caunus calls her desire uetitae (o uetitae scelerate libidinis auctor, Met. 9.577), mimicking the poet-praeceptor’s own assessment of Byblis (Byblida quid referam, uetito quae fratris amore/ arsit et est laqueo fortiter ulta nefas, Ars 1.283-84). The narrator of the Metamorphoses calls Byblis’ desire furores (9.583) and Byblis herself furibunda (637) and demens (638), echoing again the description of women’s desire in Ars 1 (281, 342, quoted above). The language of madness precedes a simile likening Byblis to a bacchant (Met. 9.641-43) as it does in the poet-praeceptor’s description of Pasiphae.92 In chapter 2 we considered how similes of bacchantes combine the metaphor of feminine sexuality as a wild, uncontrollable ecstasis with the performance site of tragedy through the divine figure of Dionysus. Again, we are reminded of Byblis’ tragic inheritance of Phaedra’s tragic destructive desire.

When Byblis begins her monologue, she adopts the same discourse. She describes her feminine desire as madness (quae male sum, 493), an “obscene flame” (obscenae...flammae, 509), and one that is deceptively hidden (celatos...ignes, 516). In her letter, she figures her desire as a sickness generated by a wound which has visible symptoms—both physical and behavioral. She describes her desire, combining all of these metaphors in one sentence—“a fiery madness burning inside” and an illness against which she has fought and lost (540-42).93

92 Fertur, ut Aonio concita Baccha deo, Ars 1.312.
93 Anderson, ad loc.
esse quidem laesi poterat tibi pectoris index
et color et macies et uultus et umida saepe
lumina nec causa suspria mota patenti
et crebri amplexus et quae, si forte notasti,
oscula sentiri non esse sororia possent.
ipsa tamen, quamuis animi graue uulnus habebam,
quamuis intus erat fior igneus, omnia feci
(sunt mihi di testes) ut tandem sanior essem.
(Met. 9.535-42)

After her epistolary proposition is refused, Byblis calls her desire a wound (uulneris, 585), and
something that must be hidden (quae celanda fuerunt, 586). She blames her poor judgment on
her love-sickness (si non male sana fuissem, 600).

Byblis’ excessive desire to seem more attractive to her brother (nimiumque cupit formosa
uideri, 462) draws attention to the fact that she is from the beginning concerned with appearance.
The passage itself offers Byblis up as a spectacle to the external reader as well as to Byblis
herself. The word umbra (460, “shadow”), used to describe the false image of familial virtue
(mendacique…pietatis, 460), engages with the idea of vision through the contrast of light and
dark. It is ironic that the “shadows” of the day are deceptive, while the imagines noctis (474,
480) make manifest (483) what the umbrae could not (460). As discussed above, the dream is
described in language evocative of a dramatic performance. Byblis is both the audience (uidet,
470; repetitque…speciem, 472-73; uidi, 475; mea uisa, 495) and co-star with her brother, Caunus
(uisa est quoque iungere fratri, 470; ille…est oculis…placet, 476-77). She takes pleasure in the
“visions” because she is the sole audience member. There is no one to act as witness (testis, 481)
to her dreams in the trial and judgment of her desire. After her dream, however, she (alone)
becomes a credible witness (testis) and can recognize the criminal desire (manifesta libido, 483).
Manifesta engages this idea of being “caught in the act” when others are looking, since mani-
comes from *manus*. Nor does Byblis “catch” herself red-handed before her dream because she does not recognize her behavior as symptoms of sexual desire.

She tells herself to make a mental picture (“imagine that it pleases me,” *finge placere mihi*, 506), which includes Caunus as an audience member (“it will be seen as a crime by him,” *scelus esse uidebitur illi*, 506). The language of the passage blurs the function of the senses—seeing and hearing—and their role for an audience member or a reader. One both sees a performance and hears the dialogue spoken by the actors. In the ancient world, one saw the words of a text and heard them because they were read aloud. But when a written text engages with the rhetoric of dramatic performance, the idea of “seeing” the meaning of a text goes beyond seeing the individual letters which make up words. The reader sees the performance which he imagines in his head. Phaedra closes her letter to Hippolytus with a request to “imagine” her suffering (*uerba precantis/ Perlegis, et lacrimas finge uidere meas*, Her. 4.175-76), to create a mental image of what she describes in her letter. As she begins to write her letter, Byblis says “a secret letter will *confess* my hidden passion” (*littera celatos arcana fatebitur ignes*, Met. 9.516), and “let him *see*: let us *confess* our insane love” (*uiderit; insanos…fateamur amores*,’ 519). Her confession, like Phaedra’s, is a written one, but the sense of her statement is that Caunus will come to know about her desire by visualizing what she confesses in writing because the letter is a sort of mediating ‘actor’. The text itself “speaks,”

94 *OLD, manifestus, [app. MANUS + festus]*.  
95 Anderson (ad loc.) translates *viderit* as “Let Caunus see to his own actions,” citing other instances of this use at 10.624 and *Ars Am.* 3.671. He argues the phrase “limit[s] the responsibilities of the speaker and place[s] the onus on the other person, the subject of *viderit.*” My translation is intentionally ambiguous, allowing the multiple meanings of *video* to interact with other uses of the verb in this passage, creating a semantic network suggesting simultaneously sight, spectacle and appearance.
performs the amores which Byblis could not confess aloud. Byblis’ letter resembles the letter of Euripidean Phaedra, whose letter is said to cry out to Theseus.  

This preoccupation with appearance is directly linked to her concern for preserving reputation governed by pudor, a virtue, which, for Roman women, was directed toward governing proper sexual behavior and the reputation which resulted from their behavior. As noted in chapter 1, this theme of concealment/revelation as it intersects with reputation/appearance is an important one in Eurpides’ HII. In the previous chapter, we also saw how this theme is doubly significant to the Ovidian Phaedra’s construction (Her. 4) because of its centrality to her tragic source text(s) and its currency and engagement in Augustan literature. Perhaps following the Ovidian Phaedra’s example, Byblis claims to Caunus that she is compelled to write what pudor prevents her from saying. Both Phaedra and Byblis choose to write letters in order to overcome their shame. Phaedra tells her reader: Ter tecum conata loqui ter inutilis haesit/ Lingua, ter in primo destitit ore sonus./ Qua licet et sequitur, pudor est miscendus amori;/ dicere quae puduit, scribere iussit amor, Her. 4.7-10. Her tongue is useless (utilis) and pudor is blamed for her inability to speak. Byblis questions whether pudor will prevent her from confessing her love in person: poterisne loqui? Poterisne fateri?/ coget amor, potero; vel, si pudor ora tenebit,/ littera celatos arcana fatebitur ignes, Met. 9.514-16. Phaedra

96 As noted in chapter 3, Phaedra’s letter in Euripides’ HII also “speaks out”: Βοᾶί Βοᾶι δέλτος ἀλακτά, Eur., HII, 877. See Rosenmeyer (90, n. 62) for a discussion of this passage.
97 Kaster, 9. See chapter 3 for a discussion of pudor and its association with feminine pudicitia.”
98 See chapter 1 for a definition of the Greek emotion, αἰδώς as well as a brief explication of the theme of αἰδως in Euripides’ Hippolyti and Sophocles’ Phaedra with further references.
99 See chapter 3 for a definition of the Roman virtue pudor as it relates to women in particular, a comparison of pudor to αἰδως, and the theme of pudor in Her. 4, along with its connection to the Greek Phaedra’s αἰδως.
says that her letter carries “secrets” (*his arcana notis, Her. 4.5*); Byblis says that her “secret” letter will confess her hidden passion (*littera celatos arcana fatebitur ignes, Met. 9.516*).

Despite her insistence that she feels a sense of shame in confessing at the beginning of her letter, she later claims to have no regard for reputation (*reuerentia famae, 556*). Byblis here offers a condensed version of Phaedra’s argument in *Heroides* 4 for privileging appearance. In both letters the women point out how the performance of their proper kinship roles is similar enough to be confused for the improper, incestuous, performance.

Nec labor est celare, licet peccemus, amorem:  
*Cognato* poterit **nomine** culpa tegi.  
Viderit amplexos aliquis, laudabimur ambo:  
Dicar privigno fida noverca meo.  
**Non tibi per tenebras duri reseranda mariti sed tuae**,  
Janua, non custos decipiendus erit.  
Ut tenuit domus una duos, domus una tenebit;  
**Oscula aperta dabas, oscula aperta dabis**;  
Tutus eris mecum laudemque merebere culpa,  
Tu licet *in lecto conspiciare meo*.  
(*Her. 4.137-46*)

*nec nos aut durus pater aut reuerentia famae aut timor impediet*; tamen ut causa timendi,  
dulcia **fraterno sub nomina** furta tegemus.  
*est mihi libertas tecum secreta loquendi*,  
et damus amplexus et *iungimus oscula coram*;  
(*Met. 9.556-60*)

Both letter writers note that there are no authority figures standing in the way. Phaedra draws her examples from elegy (the locked door of a harsh husband, a guardian), while Byblis’ examples are more concerned with a child’s authority figures (a harsh father, shame, and fear). As noted above, her lack of a *durus pater* reminds us of Canace’s *pater* who prevented her own sexual relationship with her brother (quoted above), suggesting again that Byblis’ poetic persuasion has benefitted from reading the letters of other heroines. The examples of Phaedra and Byblis draw attention to the very figure whose kinship relation should prevent the sexual
liaison they desire (husband, mariti, Her. 9.141; father, pater, Met. 9.556). Byblis’ language of deception echoes Phaedra’s. The idea of physically covering (tegi, Her. 4.138; tegemus. Met. 9.558) coupled with its abstract cover, a name (nomine, Her. 4.138; nomine, Met. 9.558), suggests a disguise.100 The name of “relative” (cognato, Her. 4.138) or “brother” (fraterno, Met. 9.558) is a role accompanied by the costume of behavior which covers (tego) the player, disguising the actor beneath. Both women note that such a performance will afford them and their lovers the freedom (libertas, Met. 9.559) of privacy (in lecto meo, Her. 4.146; libertas ... secreta loquendi, Met. 9.559) as well as the opportunity for public displays of affection, i.e., kissing in full view (aperta, Her. 4.144; coram, Met. 9.560).

As noted earlier, scripta “soror” (528) echoes scripta puella, a signal which suggests that Byblis, in the final draft of her letter, will follow Phaedra’s example101 in an attempt to reconceptualize her desire in the elegiac code.102 Byblis is described as writing on wax writing tablets (tabellas, 523; ceris, 529), the constant companion and confidant of an elegiac lover and beloved.103 Early in the passage, the narrator hints at her elegiac project. Her careful cultus (462-63) is reminiscent not only of Pasiphae’s absurd preparations in the Ars (1.289-326), but also the well-manicured puellae of Roman erotic elegy.104 In fact, a woman’s care for her appearance as a means of catching and keeping the attention of a man is the praeeceptor’s

100 So too, the poet-praeceptor of the Ars uses the same verb when he claims women cover better (tectius, 1.276) their desire.
101 See chapter 3 for a discussion of Phaedra’s elegiac self-presentation in Heroides 4.
102 See Raval (295-96) on Byblis’ status as writer and subject of her text, with references to woman as tablet in Greek literature and woman as text (scripta puella) in Roman erotic elegy, and (passim) for elegiac elements in Byblis’ letter. See Gold (1993), Keith (1994), and Wyke (1987, 1989, 2002) for a more general discussion of the scripta puella.
103 See, e.g., McCarthy and Roman on the importance of wax tablets to the elegiac poet.
104 See Keith (in Edmondson and Keith, 192-201) for a very recent discussion of the dress of the elegiac puella.
primary lesson for his female readers in book 3 of the *Ars*.\textsuperscript{105} In addition to the elegiac language of her letter (*amans*, 531, 547; *uiolenta Cupidinis arma*, 543; *dura/-us*, 545, 556), Byblis adds the neoteric exclamation “a” (9.531), echoing the sympathetic narrator’s response to the plaints of maidens like Calvus’ Io,\textsuperscript{106} and more recently Vergil’s and Ovid’s Pasiphae (*Ecl*. 6.47, 52; *Ars* 1.313).\textsuperscript{107} Byblis strengthens her neoteric associations with a second Catullan allusion, although faint, in her description of the old men whose concern is lawful behavior. Like Catullus and Lesbia in c. 5,\textsuperscript{108} who seek to confuse the *senum seueriorum* with their uncountable number of kisses, Byblis, in a series of jussive subjunctives (*iura senes norint... inquirant... servent*, *Met*. 9.551-52), playfully bids Caunus disregard the *senes* and embrace the philosophy “ignorance is bliss” (*quid liceat nescimus adhuc, et cuncta licere/ credimus*, 554-55).\textsuperscript{109}

Byblis’ inexplicable urge to replace the names describing her kinship relation to Caunus (*nomina sanguinis*, 466), also acts as a strong signal of her inclination toward elegiac roles. In fact, she is already calling Caunus *dominus* (*iam dominum appellat*, 466), a role describing the enslavement of the lover to the beloved. *Servitium amoris* in elegy, however, is always the predicament of the male *amator*.\textsuperscript{110} The *puella* plays the part of the *domina* who rules over his

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{105} *Ars* 3.127-280; See also *Rem. Am.* 341-44, and *Medicamina*. For a recent discussion of the connection of *cultus* to femininity, see Shumka (in Edmondson and Keith, 172-91, esp. 173-78).
\item \textsuperscript{106} *a virgo infelix, herbis pasceris amaris* (Calvus, Courtney, fr. 9).
\item \textsuperscript{107} *a, uirgo infelix, quae te dementia cepit, Ecl*. 6.47; *a! uirgo infelix, tu nunc in montibus erras*, 52; *a, quotiens uaccam uultu spectauit iniquo*, *Ars* 1.313.
\item \textsuperscript{108} *Vivamus, mea Lesbia, atque amemus; rumoresque senum seueriorum/ omnes unius aestimemus assis*, 5.1-3.
\item \textsuperscript{109} Another Catullan allusion may be felt in Byblis’ comment that Caunus’ mother is neither a tiger, nor made of rock or iron, nor nurse at the teat of a lion. Cf. *haec nochure mihi. neque enim est de tigride natus/ nec rigidas silices solidumue in pectore ferrum/ aut adamanta gerit, nec lac bibit ille leaenae*, (9.613-15) with *quaenam te genuit sola sub rupe leaena,/ quod mare conceptum spumantibus exspuit undis, quae Syrtis, quae Scylla rapax, quae uasta Carybdis,/ talia qui reddis pro dulci praemia uita?* (Cat. 64.154-57; Raval 304-5).
\item \textsuperscript{110} Raval, 294.
\end{itemize}
heart. For Byblis to call Caunus a *dominus* aligns him with the feminine role, her with the masculine, and indicates to the readers familiar with the elegiac code that Byblis’ attempt to fit her desire into the elegiac paradigm is problematic.

Like Phaedra, Byblis claims that she is compelled to write a letter of seduction by *Amor* (*coget amor*, 515; *pugnauique diu uiolenta Cupidinis arma/ effugere infelix...superata fateri/ cogor*, 543-44, 545-46; *non fassurae, nisi cogeret ultimus ardor*, 562). Yet, as we saw in the previous chapter, this is a programmatic claim made by the male authors of Roman erotic elegy. This claim, therefore, aligns both Phaedra and Byblis with a masculine elegiac subjectivity, a subjectivity Phaedra works to correct, but to no avail. Byblis’ epic letter, by contrast, demonstrates a more successful self-presentation as a feminine subject. To this end, Byblis invites Caunus to look at her, making herself the object of his masculine gaze and she draws attention to her feminine weakness: *plus quam ferre puellam/ posse putes ego dura* tuli, 544-45.

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111 In his first book of elegies, Propertius asks his friend Gallus why he is pursuing Cynthia, for *nec poteris, qui sis aut ubi, nosse miser!/ tum graue seruitium nostrae cogere puellae*, 1.5.18-19. See chapter 3, n. 118 and Raval (294, n. 25) for references on this *topos* in Roman erotic elegy.

112 In contrast, Phaedra correctly self-identifies with the *puella-domina* (*Her.* 4.14) in her attempt to construct herself as a feminine elegiac subject; however, her gendered position is blurred by her simultaneous identification with the *amator* who is compelled to write by love (*Her.* 4.13-18) and is being punished by Venus (*Her.* 4.53-54).

113 Byblis follows the example of the majority of the female writers of the *Heroides*, who draw attention to their own bodies. “Emblematic of their sexual passivity is their habit of dwelling on their own physical appearance while ignoring the man’s” (Gordon, in Hallett and Skinner: 280). Phaedra and Sappho are exceptional in this respect. See Gordon (280-83) for a comparison of the feminine and masculine gaze of the *Heroides*. See chapter 3 for a full discussion of the gaze in *Her.* 4.

114 *Dura* modifies, perhaps *arma* (543), or perhaps stands as a substantive: “I bore adversities.” Metrically, however, the short “a” makes *ego* an alternative modified noun, adding another feminine elegiac persona (the *puella dura*) to the costume of *puella* Byblis is wearing for her letter.

115 These lines recall simultaneously the defenseless victim of divine desire, Callisto, (*illa quidem contra, quantum modo femina posset/ (adspiceres utinam, Saturnia: mitior esses)./ illa quidem pugnat; sed quem superare puella, Met.*, 2.434-436) and the super-feminine courage of Polyxena (*fortis et infelix et plus quam femina uirgo, Met.*, 13.451). While both characters are gender-benders to some degree (Callisto refuses suitors and chooses the
As noted above, Byblis also engages with the discourse of *pudor*. Livy, Vergil and, even more significantly, the female writer Sulpicia, very explicitly connect this theme to a woman’s sexuality. In Sulpicia we have a female literary analog (and a potential model). Phaedra (*Her. 4*), Byblis, and Sulpicia are preoccupied with disclosing their desire by speaking (e.g., Sulpicia: *mea gaudia narrat*, 13.5; *dicetur*, 13.6; *ferar*, 13.10; Byblis: *edere nomen*, 9.531; *agi mea causa*, 533; *fatentis amorem*, 9.561; *fassurae*, 562). The three writers also share the metaphor of covering in relation to preserving reputation in the interest of *pudor*. We may compare with Sulpicia’s figure of the clothed and denuded *amor* (*amor, qualem texisse pudori/ quam nudasse*, 3.13.1-2) and the image of putting on “face” for the sake of reputation (*vultus componere famae*, 3.13.9) to Phaedra’s figure of covering *culpa* with the cloak of a name (*Cognato poterit nomine culpa tegi*, *Her. 4*.138), and Byblis’ figure of covering *furta* (*sub nomine furta tegemus*, *Met. 9*.558).

Unlike Sulpicia, Byblis demonstrates a normative feminine wish to maintain her good reputation, i.e., to seem to be preserving her *pudicitia* and not to be seen exhibiting any libido unless it is in response to men designated as appropriate suitors. Her fire is “inside” (*intus erat furor igneus*, 541) and she claims to have fought against her desire (*pugnauique diu uiolenta Cupidinis arma/ effugere infelix*, 543-44). Her suggestion of “playing the part” of loving siblings is in the service of keeping up appearances. The performance she suggests for her and Caunus is meant for an imagined audience, perhaps the *senes* whose concern for *nefasque fasque* (551-52) company of Diana; Polyxena offers her chest to the sword, a masculine death), both are maidens whose stories, like Byblis’, are poised on the transition from virginity to marriage.
the younger generation need not share (*quid liceat nescimus adhuc*, 554).\(^{116}\) Moreover, the judgment of those watching is still of primary concern, as her mention of *causa timendi* (557) and *secreta loquendi* (559) suggests.

As we demonstrated above, Byblis shares with many male-constructed female characters in Augustan literature such as Dido and the Ovidian Phaedra, the metaphors of female desire as wildness, madness, or sickness, and as uncontrollable or excessive. The excess of Byblis’ letter, filling up even the margins of the tablets (*Talia nequiquam perarantem plena reliquit/ cera manum summusque in margine uersus adhaesit*, 564-65), replicates the excess of her desire. As Raval notes, Byblis’ desire, like her text, transgresses the normative borders defined by the incest taboo.\(^{117}\) Janan considers Byblis’ excessive text a metaphor for poetic expansiveness, employed as a tool for differentiation from literary predecessors.\(^{118}\) Her expansive tendencies, argues Janan, resemble Ovid’s; her textual failure “points to [expansion’s] logical conclusion, the using up of all new possibilities…the exhaustion of the Roman literary tradition, struggling with its own sense of belatedness.”\(^{119}\) Repetition and the limiting of possibilities of difference are expressed by the incest of Byblis’ story, whose poetic context is a literary tradition trapped by its

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\(^{116}\) Byblis claims here that the younger generation are allowed to disregard *leges* (552) because they are ignorant of them (*nescimus adhuc et cuncta licere/ credimus et sequimur magnorum exempla deorum*, 554-55). The reader recognizes her insincerity and sees instead a sophisticated and calculated argument since she has demonstrated that she knows *fas* from *nefas* and is not naively following the examples of the gods, which she has rejected earlier (497-501). See also Anderson (ad 551-53) for a similar response.

\(^{117}\) Raval, 302. Raval also argues that Byblis is responding, as a reader of Ovidian elegy, to the poet-lover’s request that his beloved’s written response be effusive (301-2; *Am.* 1.11.19-22), but, as Raval points out in her discussion of Byblis’ reading of the *Ars* (297-98; *Ars* 1.455-58, 3.469-78), hers is a “misreading;” the poet-lover is asking for an effusive *reply*. Caunus has shown no erotic interest in Byblis, let alone sent her a love letter to which she is responding. See Farrell (1998: 319-20) who argues Byblis’ decision to write at all is a “misreading” of the *Ars* and a symptom of her gender transgression since the poet-*praecceptor* enjoins his male pupils to use writing as the first tool of seduction (*Ars* 1.437-86).


\(^{119}\) Ibid., 249.
own aesthetic privileging of Same over Other. More than a metapoetic figure, the representation of Byblis’ desire as excessive (even her own as it spills into the margins) takes up the ideological work of characterizing female desire as abject.

Caunus refuses to be a reader of her text, throwing the tablets down, only partially read (lecta sibi parte, 575). Although reading is discursively blurred with performance, after the failure of her letter, Byblis privileges physical performance over the textual. Byblis has learned that a reader’s mental images are much harder to control, and therefore the meaning of the text is even more unstable. By writing the letter, Byblis has created the proof for the trial of her desire which her dream performance lacked: quid enim temeraria uulneris huius/ indicium feci, 585-86. Her words, she determines, had to be hidden (celanda...uerba, 586-87) from Caunus, as much as their fictive desire had to be hidden from others (furta tegemus, 558). Here is another reversal of performativity and textuality. The furta, actions which can be disguised beneath the costume and performance of the role named brother (fraterno sub nomine, 558), are now merely uerba, words which must be delivered as ambiguous dialogue (ambiguis...dictis, 588) by Byblis in a performance for Caunus.

et tamen ipsa loqui nec me committere cerae
debueram praesensque meos aperire fuores.

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120 Like Byblis’ father, whose symbolic position defines her love for Caunus as incest, Ovid’s literary “fathers” define the appropriate material for poetry (Janan, 1991: 252-53 and passim): “The poem replicates itself (and, through a complex pattern of allusion, its author Ovid’s poetic career), limiting creative options to the already known—the literary realization of incest” (242).

121 The two earlier female-authored “texts” in the Met., Io’s message in the dust and Philomela’s woven letter (discussed above), are also described as “proof” (indicium): littera pro uerbis, quam pes in pulvere duxit./ corporis indicium mutati triste peregit (1.649-50); stamina barbarica suspendit callida tela/ purpureasque notas filis intexuit albis./ indicium sceleris (6.576-78). In both cases the metaphorical court case hints that the signifying subject relies on the judgment of a reader to bestow meaning on her message. See Anderson (ad 1.532-34), who also notes the legal phrasing.

122 See also Farrell (1998: 322-23) who argues, as he does for the Heroides written by women, that feminine writing is sincere: “Byblis...sees (too late) that the letter is too frank a medium” (322). He contrasts this to “the feminine rhetoric of physical persuasion” which Byblis determines would have been preferable.
uidisset lacrimas, uultum uidisset amantis; plura loqui poteram, quam quae cepere tabellae; inuito potui circumdare bracchia collo et, si reicerer, potui moritura uideri amplexaque pedes adfusaque poscere uitam. omnia fecissem, quorum si singula duram flectere non poterant, potuissent omnia, mentem. (Met. 9.601-9)

This is a complete performance including gesture and textuality. Her desire to use every medium (written and spoken language and gesture), and her wish to use every possible articulation (omnia fecissem...potuissent omnia, 608-9) in order to communicate her desire once again repeats and reaffirms the excessive nature of Byblis’ desire.

Byblis cannot conjure up the right performance in the mind of her unwilling reader; she should have performed it herself. This inability of an author to control her text surfaces in the repetition of forms of mitto. When she is awake, transmitting her desires is equivalent to admitting her desire to herself and taking on a Phaedra-like role. Byblis does not dare to cause her obscene hopes to enter her mind (lit. “send down,” demittere, 468). As long as she refuses this role while awake (tale nihil uigilans committere temptem, 479), her desire remains safely hidden from an audience (testis, 481). As discussed above, Byblis modifies the formulaic epistolary greeting, in a way which also betrays her anxiety over “sending” her text to her reader. “A lover sends to you healthy greeting, which, unless you give it [to her], she will not have it [to send]” (quam, nisi tu dederis, non est habitura salutem,/ hanc tibi mitit amans, 530-124 See Raval (304) and Tissol (46-47) for further discussion of this passage. “Speech require the speaker’s presence, from which flow all the rhetorical advantages of gesture, of facial and bodily expression, and most importantly, of adjustment to the perceived response of the audience [emphasis added]” (Tissol, 47).

OLD, demittere, 9 suggests this translation for this passage.

See Rosenmeyer (30-35) for an explanation of this formula. See Anderson (ad 528-29, 530-31) and Farrell (1998: 321) for Byblis’ own variation of the formula and the Heroidean variations.
The salutem as text relies on the reciprocity of the receiver of the text. A bad omen accompanies the physical sending of her text. The tablets fall, “nevertheless she sent [them]” (misit tamen, 572). In contrast to Byblis’ desires, for which she requires the recognition of another, the omen of the falling tablet constitutes “sure signs” (signaque certa, 600), which she was not mentally fit to interpret. She realizes too late that the message should have prevented her from committing (committere, 601) herself to wax, and considers whether her choice of dissemination affected the reception of her text (forsitan et missi sit quaedam culpa ministri, 610). “Sending” her desire in various media is the site of Byblis’ vulnerability—the moment between utterance and reception, when her position as a writing subject is in jeopardy. Once sent, there is nothing left which the text has not said, nothing “unspeakable” left to send (iam nequeo nil commississe nefandum, 626).128

Even before she has picked up the pen Byblis can “imagine” how the quietis/...suae speciem (472-73), which she takes pleasure in recalling (repetit, 472), will seem/be seen by Caunus, the reader of her letter. Byblis realizes signification—the process by which signs take on symbolic meaning—requires “two judges” (tamen arbitrium quaerit res ista duorum, 505).

126 Salutem plays on the double meaning of salus as “health” and “greeting,” emphasizing Caunus’ influence over Byblis. See Jacobson (147) for the same wordplay in Her. 4.1-2.

127 Cf. Am. 1.12.3-4. The amator has entrusted his tablets containing a letter to his beloved to the servant Nape. When the reply is negative, the amator blames an omen—Nape tripping on her way out the door: omina sunt aliquid: modo cum discedere uellet,/ ad limen digitos restitit icta Nape. Am. 1.11 and 1.12, in their narration of the amator’s sending and receiving of love notes, share some of the same anxieties as Byblis’ tale. Both poems stress the power of the messenger and the reader in the success of the amator’s communication. Byblis’ messenger finds a fitting time to deliver the tablets (apta minister/ tempora nactus adit, Met. 9.572-73), but when Caunus’ reaction is negative, Byblis suspects that the messenger did not find a fitting time, choosing one in which Caunus was distracted by other matters (forsitan et missi sit quaedam culpa ministri;/ non adit apte, nec legit idonea, credo,/ tempora, nec petit horamque animunque vacantem, 9.610-12). Likewise, the amator enjoins Nape to find a fitting time when his beloved’s mind is free (uacuae bene redde tabellas (1.11.15). The stress on the reader’s leisure indicates a desire for intellectual receptivity to the message.

128 See also Jenkins (passim) for a discussion of this anxiety and its connection with anxieties over literary reception. Byblis’ desire remains in the realm of fantasy until it is received and becomes a speech-act (439). “When the liminal discourse of the letter—a suspended confession of love—crosses the limen into Caunus’ quarters, it is no longer a soliloquy, but a true (and paradoxically ineffable) discourse” (450).
For this reason, she does not know yet what the symbolic meaning of the “things seen” “signify” (quid mihi significant ergo mea uisa, 495). She is both the generator and interpreter of the visual signs. Without a “second judge,” an other to complete the circuit, i.e., a successful communication including the receipt of her message and the verification of its meaning through a shared understanding, her intentional meaning as author is not confirmed.129

Ovid’s text acknowledges that an author needs a reader. It also acknowledges the potential for the reader to assign to the signs of a text a meaning which differs from the intended meaning of the author.130 Byblis’ inner monologue clearly expresses this anxiety—“what I envision as pleasure will be interpreted by him as criminal” (finge placere mihi; scelus esse uidebitur illi, 506). The positions of author and reader standing in conflict is artfully reflected by Ovid’s grammatical structure, which juxtaposes mihi in the last position before the caesura to illi at the end of the line. The intersection with writing, performance, and performativity—the citing of proper kinship roles as well as the citing of Byblis in exemplo—further suggests that an individual text’s reception has the power to reinscribe or, conversely, to redefine normative symbolic roles and the meaning of individual signs in a symbolic system, as Kristeva has argued.

In line 506, the phrase belonging to Caunus’ imagined reaction is a full foot longer, indicating perhaps that the role of reader has more sway over the meaning of a text. It is certainly true that the reaction of Hippolytus to Phaedra’s message in the tragic dramatization of her myth strongly

129 Byblis’ function as sole witness and judge of her desire before she sends her letter is reminiscent of the wish of Hippolytus in Eur. HII where Hippolytus wants to call himself to witness (ei μὲν γὰρ ἤν μοι μάρτυς οὗς εἰμί ἐγώ, 1022), and wants to face himself, who will assuredly be a sympathetic judge of his misfortunes (εἰθ’ ἦν ἐμαυτόν προεβλήτησιν ἐναντίον/ στάνθ’, ὡς ἐδάκρυς’ οία πάσχοιμεν κακά, 1078-79). See Goff (1990: 25) for a discussion of this passage.
130 Tissol, 48-49.
informs her symbolic meaning in the “megatext” of Greek myth, and the only interpretation of Phaedra as a paradigm in the Metamorphoses is that of Hippolytus/Virbius.\textsuperscript{131}

Caunus is, in terms of gender and sexuality, the normative twin of Byblis. Byblis has quite literally “crossed the line” (modumque/exit, 631-32) in her pursuit of Caunus.\textsuperscript{132} As his abjected doppelganger, Byblis cannot position herself as subject to Caunus’ other because they are, in fact, the same. The story anticipates Kristeva’s and Butler’s definition of the abject—something internal to the self which is repudiated and transformed, psychologically and linguistically, into a fearsome other.\textsuperscript{133} With the line in the introductory frame, Byblis Apollinei correpta cupidine fratris (455), the narrator makes clear Byblis’ positionality, a Bacchic ecstasy defined by its oppositional relation to Caunus who is identified as the son of Apollo. The Dionysus-Apollo dyad has been imagined by some as a Janus figure.\textsuperscript{134} Both gods shared the same sanctuary in Delphi. Both were ephebes. Apollo was most closely associated with the rational and temperate. One thinks immediately of the inscriptions on his Delphic temple: \textit{μηδέν ἀγαν} (“nothing in excess”).\textsuperscript{135} Dionysus, on the other hand, was often considered a god of the irrational, the emotional, and the excessive. As noted above and discussed in detail in the previous chapters, female desire was frequently figured as a Dionysian ecstasy. This is not

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\textsuperscript{131} Met. 15.497-546. Hippolytus, now Virbius, narrates the story to Egeria as a consolatio: me Pasiphaeaia quondam/ temptatum frustra patrium temerare cubile/ quod uoluit, finxit uoluisse et crimine uerso/ (indicium metu magis offensane repulsae?)/ damnauit, meritumque nihil pater eicit urbe/ hostilique caput prece detestatur euntis, 500-5.

\textsuperscript{132} Janan, 253, n. 36.

\textsuperscript{133} Kristeva (1982), 4, 67-68, and passim; Butler (1993), 3. See chapter 2 for a full discussion of the construction of the female desiring subject as abject.

\textsuperscript{134} Most famously by Nietzsche in his Birth of Tragedy (1872), but more recently by Seaford in his monograph Dionysos (1990).

\textsuperscript{135} Pausanias, 10.24.1.
surprising as Dionysus was represented as eastern and effeminate. As a result, Apollo is implicitly gendered masculine in opposition to Dionysus.

Line 455 neatly and thickly weaves together these connotations, which had been constructed and reinforced through mythic discourses, in five short words. *Apollonei* writes Caunus as the rational, masculine subject, fittingly qualified by his role, properly performed, as brother in the symbolic order of kinship. Byblis stands in opposition, a woman whose sexuality is both out of control (signaled by the passive participle, *correpta*), and in violation of the symbolic order of kinship because it is sexual desire for a brother. Pausanias tells us, however, that there was another description on Apollo’s temple: γνῶθι σεαυτόν (“know thyself”).

Tragedy dramatizes the danger of female sexuality to the male subject, but it also dramatizes the danger of the return of the abject to that same, rational subject. Euripides’ *Bacchae* explicitly articulates the need to know one’s inner Dionysus. Nicaenetus’ version of Byblis’ story seems to teach this very lesson. Caunus, whose epithet in the passage quoted by Parthenius is “always loving justice/laws” (ἀει φιλεόντα θέμιστας, 11.2), is in love with Byblis and flees Miletus to avoid his desire.

As noted above, the reception of a text carries the potential for reaffirming or disrupting normative discourse. Although Byblis’ twin refuses to be her reader, to receive and therefore bestow meaning on her text, Ovid’s readers have not. For the external reader, however, a rupture may be discerned in the Augustan discourse of desire by the suggestion of her tale. Kristeva theorizes “linguistic changes constitute changes in the status of the subject [sic]—his relation to the body, to others, and to objects.” Kristeva (1984), 15.
concludes, “[t]he [literary] text is a practice that could be compared to political revolution: the one brings about in the subject what the other introduces into society.” Kristeva’s “text” has a very specific definition. She defines it as a signifying practice which transforms the very language it uses and she maintains that these texts are found during historical and cultural locations of crises. I would argue that Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* is one such text. Its *incipit* announces a mandate to tell of “figures” transformed. Each of these transformations plays with the idea of continuity in difference, exposing the heterogeneity of the mythic signs in each story. Furthermore, the historic moment of his text’s production is also one of crisis.

Byblis is not only a paradigm of abjection, but a uniquely Augustan subject. Her experience of desire, as it is represented in Ovid’s poem, is in conflict with gendered sexual norms as defined by Augustan legislation and ideology, most especially *puericitia*. Byblis’ initial return to the thetic stage, in which she sought to erase *soror* and reposition herself as an elegiac lover to Caunus is a response to being faced with the contradiction in her own identity caused by the introduction and subsequent recognition of her desire. Her “new” erotic desire

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137 Ibid., 17.
138 See Kristeva (1984: 16-17, 99-106) for a full description of “text.” “That this practice assumes laws implies that it safeguards boundaries, that it seeks out these, and that in the process of this search it transforms the law, boundaries, and constraints it meets. In this way such a practice takes on meanings that come under laws and subjects capable of thinking them; but it does not stop there or hypothesize them; it passes beyond, questioning and transforming them” (101).
139 Although Kristeva’s text is a modern text produced in capitalist societies, she concedes that earlier times have produced a similar, albeit different, signifying practice: “This signifying practice—a particular type of modern literature—attests to a “crisis” of social structures and their ideological, coercive, and necrophilic manifestations. To be sure, such crises have occurred at the dawn and decline of every mode of production: the Pindaric obscurity that followed Homeric clarity and community is one of many examples” (15).
140 Miller (2004: 60-94, 130-59) makes a very similar argument in his recent reading of Propertius. Applying the Lacanian categories of the Imaginary, Symbolic and Real, Miller suggests that the Propertian subject, divided by civil wars, struggles to express his experience in symbolic systems which no longer reflect the reality of Roman society. “What we see in this period [is]...the gradual restructuring of the field of social, discursive, and power relations that made poetic discourse possible within imperial society. Elegy is a symptom of that reconstruction” (158).
creates a conflict with her kinship role of sister, because it violates the symbolic prohibition of incest. It creates a conflict with her gender role as woman, because it transgresses Augustan discourses of (feminine) desire. Her search for an identity which makes her poetry comprehensible could be imagined as the crisis with which Ovid (or one of his readers) grapples at a time when social and political hierarchies are in flux. On a meta-poetic level, Byblis’ (and Ovid’s) desire to innovate regarding her generic role creates a conflict with generic tradition, reflecting a Roman poet’s struggle to retain poetic authority while innovating.

Byblis’ Bacchic (641-43), abject voice, now that it has been written, demands to be heard. She cries out from beyond the borders of Miletus.

\[
\begin{align*}
tum uero maestam & \quad 635 \\
defecisse ferunt, tum uero a pectore uestem & \\
diripuit planxitque & \\
suos furibunda lacertos, & \\
jiamque palam & \\
est demens inconcessaeque fatetur spem Veneris, & \\
siquidem patriam inuisosque Penates desert & \\
& \\
sequitur uestigia fratris. & 640 \\
\end{align*}
\]

\textit{Ismariae celebrant repetita triennia Bacchae, Byblida non aliter latos ululasse per agros Bubasides uidere nurus; quibus illa relictis Caras et armiferos Lelegas Lyciamque pererrat.}  

\textit{(Met. 9.635-45)}

Byblis openly (\textit{palam}, 9.638) announces her inappropriate desire (\textit{inconcessae...Veneris}, 638-39), although it is associated with her madness (\textit{demens}, 638). She thereby creates other, chance readers\textsuperscript{141} who may complete the process of signification begun by her literary “confession.” Ovid acknowledges poetry’s productive and destructive potential for creating new

\textsuperscript{141} The Bubasian daughters-in-law see that she is \textit{speaking} (literally “ululating,” befitting both of her generic personae, the lament of the tragic woman, and the meter of lament, elegy). Again we see the blurring of text and performance that draws attention to the problems of signification, authorial intent, and reception central to this passage.
meaning in a symbolic system when his “stand-in,” Orpheus, is killed by women who resemble Byblis and the cautionary tales he has just told, as if his telling conjured them. Furthermore, their inability to hear Orpheus over their own clamor (11.15-19) suggests that a signifying subject who is too rational and refuses any feminine elements of desire is as mute as Byblis (non exauditi...uatis, 11.19).

Janan also considers the theme of incest through a psychoanalytic lens. Her Lacanian reading focuses on Byblis as a stand-in for Ovid and as an embodiment of literary belatedness. Her conclusion is also concerned with the audience and implicates the audience in a pattern of readings trapped in frames, expectations, and intertextuality. While Janan is concerned exclusively with literary tradition, I am interested in Ovid’s literary inheritance as a set of discursive tools with which he constructs paradigms of female desire. In the end, I agree with Janan, that Ovid’s text exposes the trap, the author’s complicity in its construction, and the necessity of a reader to read beyond such a determined frame of reference. The figure of the desiring woman, however much she repeatedly resembles our male author, is a figure of abjection. Byblis’ role as an “altera Ovid,” to borrow Janan’s phrase, functions as part of a larger project which shifts anxieties over poetic failure and the inability to control meaning for a

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142 Jenkins, 451.
143 Orpheus says that he will sing about boys loved by gods and girls struck by inappropriate fires, who deservedly pay the penalty for their sexual desire (puerosque canamus/ dilectos superis inconcessisse puellas/ ignibus attonitas meruisse libidine poenam, 10.152-54). He is killed by a band of maenadic Thracian women (Met. 11.1-53) who call him a nostri contemptor (7). Orpheus is called a uates Apolloneus (8) twice in this passage. Enterline (52-54) identifies this passage as one which destabilizes the fiction that an enunciating subject can control the meaning created by their own utterances. She points to the final lines of the Met. (15.871-79), where, she argues, “Ovid’s continued presence depends on the fantasy of a reading counterpart who recognizes and is dedicated to speaking or writing his words and his name” (53). This “phonographic imaginary” both demands a complicit and ideal reader—one who will receive and properly interpret the message according to the intention of the author—and foregrounds the absent presence of the author. See also Newlands (1995: 146-74) on the connection of rape, silence, female sexuality, and freedom of speech in Fasti.
144 Enterline reads the Bacchic shouts as a “protest” rising up against the male poetic voice (76-77).
text onto the abject body of the desiring woman, designated Other, and safely removed from the poetics of the male author behind her representation.

The reason Byblis’ thesis is unsuccessful and she cannot secure a position from which to create a meaningful poem with the power to persuade (or charm) is her “nature.” She cannot find an intelligible position with which to use language because she was never (nor never can be) inside the symbolic system. Her poetry, in the end, is received by her (and therefore Ovid’s) audience, not as an erotic elegy, but as a poetic monstrum.146 Her poetry “sounds” like an unsuccessful attempt to mime elegy in a tragic register. She is repudiated for her excess, her bestiality, and her threat to kinship systems; but along with her sexual body, Ovid successfully sloughs off the constraints of literary influence, poetic limitations, and mortality.147 As noted earlier, Ovid’s focus on Byblis’ suffering body as it composes also foregrounds her as the type of writing subject Kristeva has described. Ovid forces us to interpret her as an author in her specific material context, not as a disembodied poetic voice. This representation does not remind us that Ovid is also embodied. Rather it shifts materiality onto the body of the fictional

146 Newlands (1995: 146-74) notes that, in Ovid, “the vocal woman is often punished for transgressing this [gender and kinship] cultural norm, and typically the punishment takes the form of silence the woman has refused to keep” (166-67). She cites, in addition to Lara and Lucretia in the Fasti, Philomela, Byblis, and Myrrha in the Met.

147 In her study of Ovid’s Metamorphoses, Enterline (1-90) notes a similar pattern of displacement in the rape narratives of the Met. She considers the poem’s interest in the subject’s imagined control over their voice and its signifying power. Although Enterline argues that the rhetorical power of the poetic voice is ultimately robbed of any efficacy by the narrative of change and failure which plagues it throughout the poem, she demonstrates a pattern of displacing such anxieties onto the resisting, silent female body who is most often the object and subject of the poetry (e.g., Daphne, Syrinx, Philomela). “Such displacement effectively occludes the contradictions inherent in the phonocentric fantasy of the voice-consciousness, disguising a problem within [sic] any speaking subject as a sexually violent clash between [sic] gendered subjects. The narrator embodies the potential for any poetic speaker to be alienated from his/her own tongue in stories about the difference between “his” voice and “her” resistance” (71). In the stories Enterline considers, “her” resisting body is changed and adopted as a tool for poetry (e.g., Syrinx becomes the pipes of Pan).
female author, relieving Ovid of his corporeality. By aligning the negative aspects of poetry and his own writing instance with this abject figure, Ovid is able to disemboby his own corpus.\textsuperscript{148}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{148} Farrell (in Hardie, Barchiesi and Hinds: 127-41) has argued along similar lines that throughout the \textit{Met.} the fragility and temporality of the physical poetic \textit{corpus} is juxtaposed against the immortal poetic voice. “At all points the liability of the text to change is tied to its material, bookish form. Opposed to this is the status of the poem as song, which being immaterial is not liable to those forces that threaten the stability of the material text” (141).
\end{flushright}
Chapter 5 Playing the Part

The story of Iphis would, on the surface, appear to be yet another example of the unnatural desire of women. Ovid narrates the myth at the end of Met. 9, between the tale of Byblis and Myrrha, and tells the story of two young people who will soon be married, Iphis and Ianthe (666-797). Their betrothal was arranged, very traditionally, by their fathers. Despite appearances, however, this happy couple is unusual by Roman standards and an anomaly in Ovid’s epic. Iphis is a biological girl disguised as a boy. Only Iphis’ mother and her nurse know Iphis’ true sex. Before Iphis was born, her father, compelled by poverty, reluctantly commanded that the child be killed if it were a girl, but Telethusa, a pious worshipper of Isis, is visited by the goddess in a dream. Isis commands Telethusa to keep her child, regardless of the sex and promises her devotee protection. Telethusa obeys the goddess and pretends the child is a boy. Luckily the name, Iphis, chosen by Ligdus, her husband, is common to both sexes. The immanent marriage, as a source of anxiety for both daughter and mother, motivates the plot because it will expose Iphis as a girl. After running out of excuses, and on the eve of the wedding, Telethusa begs Isis for help and the goddess transforms Iphis into a biological boy. Unlike Byblis’ and Myrrha’s stories and the similar tales of desiring maidens found throughout books 7-10, Iphis’ story has a happy ending. She marries her beloved, and while we are not told explicitly by the narrator, there is no indication that there are any negative social repercussions for her earlier performance of the opposite sex.

The wedding scene which closes Iphis’ tale (9.795-97) is distinguished by a light which is revealing (lux radiis patefecerat, 795) in contrast to the metaphorical concealments characteristic of the other desiring women discussed in the previous chapters. The presence of
the illuminating sun\(^1\) and the attendance of the proper divinities,\(^2\) which Iphis herself questioned before her transformation (\textit{pronuba quid Iuno, quid ad haec, Hymenae, venitis/sacra}, 762-63), mark Iphis’ desire as natural and appropriate. Why does her transformation lead to a happy ending? Why is she not, like her Ovidian sisters in the \textit{Metamorphoses}, changed into a plant or rock, which commemorates her eternal mourning?\(^3\) The obvious answer is that the ending is determined by mythological tradition; however, Ovid’s text never simply retells stories in pretty verse. His play with irony and discourse employs the literary and mythological tradition to amuse, shock, and engage an Augustan audience. As we have seen in the previous chapters, the construction of Phaedra-like figures in Ovid’s work, who wreak havoc because of their desire, reveal Ovid’s and his audience’s anxieties about desire in general or the desire of women in particular. These desiring women also define the borders of normative sexual subjects—both that of passive feminine sexuality and that of rational, self-controlled masculine sexuality—in their construction as opposing forces, embodying all that normative Roman sexuality is not.

While the narrative voices which construct these figures in Ovid’s poetry are personae wholly separate from Ovid, implying that his opinions may differ to some degree, their representations

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\(^1\) The sun famously changes course in the myth of Atreus and Thyestes. This is reported in Euripides’ \textit{Electra} (727-42), \textit{Iphigenia at Taur}us (193, 816), and \textit{Orestes} (1001-6), and possibly in Sophocles’ (lost) \textit{Atreus}. In Seneca, the sun turns back in horror at the cannibalistic feast Atreus serves to his brother (\textit{Thyestes}, 695-705, 789-884, 985-995: \textit{quo vertis iter/mediisque diem perdas Olympos?/ cur, Phoebe, tuos rapis aspectus?}, 792-93). In Accius’ \textit{Atreus}, as in Seneca, the sky is said to thunder (\textit{sed quid? tonitus turbida toruo/ concussa repente aequora caeli/ sensimus/sonere, Atreus}, fr. 183-85 Worthington). Ovid alludes to this at \textit{Ars} 1.329-30, pointing to Aerope’s desire as the original cause (see chapter 2 for a discussion of these lines). Ovid’s narrator in the \textit{Ibis} (427-30) wishes for his enemy to commit some equally grave crime which will cause the sun to change course.

\(^2\) Compare this marriage to the ill-omened marriage of Procne and Tereus: \textit{non pronuba Iuno,/ non Hymenaeus adest, non illi Gratia lecto;/ Eumenides tenuere faces de funere raptas,/ Eumenides strauere torum, tectoque/ incubuit bubo thalamique in culmine sedit} (\textit{Met.} 6.427-32).

\(^3\) Scylla (8.1-151) is changed into the Ciris bird, named after the crime she committed of cutting her father’s purple lock: \textit{Ciris et a tonso est hoc nomen adepta capillo} (8.151). The weeping Byblis (9.665) melts into a spring: \textit{sic lacrimis consumpta suis Phoebeia Byblis/ ertitur in fontem} (9.663.64). Myrrha (10.298-500) is changed into a Myrrh tree and her tears into its fragrant sap: \textit{flet tamen, et tepidae manant ex arbore guttae} (10.500).
nevertheless rely on and repeat current Augustan discourses of desire and feminine sexuality, reinscribing an ideology which defines active female sexuality as abject, “like Phaedra’s.”

Ovid’s engagement with tragedy, moreover, in his use of tragic characters as examples of female desire (as we saw in Ars 1), his appropriations of tragic characters in other generic contexts (e.g., Phaedra in elegy or Medea and Althaea in epic), and his tragic inflection of non-tragic figures (such as Byblis and Myrrha), highlights the importance of performance to the social construction of normative subjects. Thus far we have focused on how Phaedra (Her. 4) and Byblis (Met. 9.439-665), a maiden who engages allusively with Phaedra’s tradition, function in Ovid’s poetry to demonstrate that female desire is wild, irrational, bestial, and dangerous “by nature.” Phaedra and Byblis express fantasies of abandoning their roles as noverca and soror to Hippolytus and Caunus, and instead playing the part of an elegiac puella. Neither heroine, however, can perform a new role for herself, because her tragic role as step-mother or sister continually resurfaces, despite her attempts to suppress it. Ovid’s allusive and meta-poetic play with both figures engages genre as a metaphorical force to suggest that both their gender roles and their tragic roles can be neither modified nor reimagined. Such an ironic tension, I have argued, works metaphorically to inscribe gendered sexuality as generically determined, linking active sexuality in women to the paradigm of the tragic Phaedra.

The character of Iphis interprets her own desire as Phaedra-like, but various elements in her story construct her and the other players in her drama, by contrast, as normative within the sex/gender system. These narrative cues (e.g., her and her mother’s pietas, passivity, and their unquestioning acceptance of patriarchal hegemony) draw attention to Iphis’ own innocent ignorance. Phaedra and Byblis cunningly exploit the performative aspects of social and sexual roles in the hopes of realizing a sexual subjectivity which is otherwise repudiated by the
symbolic system of kinship. Ultimately, however, they end up performing the very role they were seeking to avoid, that of the tragic incestuous Phaedra. Their own attention to performance and to the dramatic elements and meta-theatrical wordplay of the narrative repeatedly underlines the tragic role they try to repress. Iphis, on the other hand, is successfully performing the role of puer, mandated by her father. While her performance is deceitful, because her father is unaware that Iphis is a biological puella, she nonetheless achieves what neither Phaedra nor Byblis can.

The dramatic elements and wordplay in Iphis’ story draw attention not to what she wishes to avoid, but to what she unwittingly, but happily, does. As we will see, however, the very elements which help to differentiate Iphis, despite her own misreading, from the Phaedra-like figures of Ovid’s poetry, also disturb Iphis’ normative construction because of their multiple and irrepressible connotations. Ovid’s artful play with his mythological subjects (and subjectivities) and with the expectations of his audience, informed by various literary and mythological traditions, which his allusions and intertexts bring in and out of focus, summon up the threat of Iphis’ Phaedra-like doppelgänger, a figure with which Iphis mistakenly self-identifies. The spectre of Phaedra and her destructive outcome, nevertheless, is ultimately overcome when Iphis’ true nature is revealed to be masculine, and her body is changed from female to male.

Several elements in Iphis’ tale give her epic story a dramatic context and draw our attention to the problem of performance in her story. Like Phaedra’s in Heroides and Byblis in the same book of the Metamorphoses, Iphis’ representation bears many of the marks of tragic contamination found in other tales of the Metamorphoses. Most obviously, Iphis is herself engaged in a performance, wearing the costume of puer. Indeed, Iphis’ acting is so good that she

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4 Iphis was not, so far as we know, the subject of a Greek or Roman tragedy. See chapter 1 for a discussion of tragic contamination in Ovid with further references.
has fooled her father, her fiancée and her future father-in-law. Moreover, she gives a long soliloquy reminiscent of the maidens of neoteric and Hellenistic literature (e.g., Catullus’ Ariadne, Apollonius’ Medea), which draws upon the conventional soliloquies of the tragic stage (e.g., Euripides’ Medea, Sophocles’ Deianira). The passage also shares with material borrowed from tragedy a high proportion of direct speech—58 lines of 132 (nearly half the passage, 44%).

Both Byblis and Telethusa have spectacular dreams in which they watch a performance which informs their subsequent actions. Byblis’ dream resembles the performance of a Greek tragedy, Telethusa’s dream the spectacles of a religious procession and a Roman triumphal parade. Enhancing the dramatic resonance is the fact that, in ancient Rome, comedies and tragedies were regularly performed in religious (ludi scaenici) and triumphal contexts.

Inachis ante torum pompa comitata sacrorum
aut stetit aut uisa est; inerant lunaria fronti
cornua cum spicis nitido fluentibus auro
et regale decus. cum qua latrator Anubis
sanctaque Bubastis uariusque coloribus Apis,
quique premit uocem digitoque silentia suadet;
sistraque erant numquamque satis quaeitis Osiris
plenaque somniferis serpens peregrina uenenis.

(Met. 9.687-94)

Isis appears before Telethusa’s bed with a parade (pompa) of companions. Details of her exotic costume are described (inerant lunaria fronti/ cornua cum spicis nitido fluentibus auro/ et regale decus, 688-90), as well as the members of her train, described with epithets (latrator

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5 726-763. See chapter 1 for a discussion of tragic contamination in Hellenistic poetry. See Fowler and Curley (n.d., 260-96, 420-28, 452-54) for the “desperation speech” in Greek and Roman literature. A more detailed discussion and comparison of Iphis’ soliloquy to similar speeches can be found in the following chapter (6).

6 See chapter 4, esp. n. 55 for direct speech in the Byblis episode. See Keith (2002: 265) for direct speech as an index of tragic influence in the Pentheus episode of Met. 3.

7 See chapter 1 for further bibliography on Roman drama and performance contexts and examples of plays performed in celebration of triumphs. See also, e.g., Boyle (13-16) and Beacham (1991: 20-26; 1999: 1-4, 24-44) for the political, military, and religious performance contexts of Roman drama.
Anubis, sancta Bubastis, uariusque coloribus Apis, numquamque satis quaesitus Osiris, serpens peregrina). Augmenting the visual spectacularity of the colorful and exotic Egyptian parade are auditory elements: the sound of Isis’ rattles (sistra, 693) as well as the suggestion of sound created by Anubis’ epithet (latrator, 690) and the hushing gesture of Apis (digitoque silentia suadet, 692). When Telethusa later prays to Io/Isis, she describes her dream as a visual and auditory experience.

   te, dea, te quondam tuaque haec insignia uidi
   [cunctaque cognoui, comitesque facesque] 8
   †sistrorum,† memorique animo tua iussa notaui.
   (Met. 9.776-78)

The worship of Isis had become very popular in Rome by the late Republic.9 Important Isae were located in Italian cities, including Rome and Pompeii. The Pompeian Iseum has structural remains dating back to the Augustan era.10 Artistic representations of Isis could be seen in both the Isea and private homes. The Isiac shrine of the Casa degli Amorini Dorati in Pompeii, for example, featured a representation of a procession including Isis, Anubis, Serapis, and Harpocrates.11 The Navigium festival, celebrated by worshippers of Isis, included such a procession. This procession was described by Apuleius in his Metamorphoses 11.7-16 a century

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8 See Anderson (ad loc.) for comments on the damaged text at 777 and suggested emendations.
9 See, e.g., Donalson (115-37), Takács (1995: 71-80, and passim), and Witt for the cult of Isis during the late Republic and early principate. See, e.g., Bricault, Versluys and Meyboom, eds. (passim, esp. 1-14, Versluys’ introduction to the volume), Camps (ad 2.33.4), Donalson, Witt (70-88) for a general discussion of the popularity of her cult in Italy.
10 See Donalson (94-96) and Moormann (in Bricault, Versluys, and Meyboom: 137) for dating of the early structure of the Pompeian temple and further references. The Iseum Campense, among other shrines and temples dedicated to Isis, was located in the Campus Martius in Rome. The presence of an Isis cult in this location dates back to the Republic (Donalson, 96, 111 n. 20). See Donalson (93-109) and Takács (1995: 76 n. 11) for a list of temples in Italy and Rome and further references.
11 See Kleiner (163-78) and Swetnam-Burland (in Bricault, Versluys, and Meyboom: 132-33) for a description of this shrine and similar representations of Isiac worship in Italy.
and half after Ovid’s poem was published. Lucius, still in his animal form, witnesses this procession in the town of Cenchreae, the port for Corinth. According to Apuleius, some participants wore costumes in the procession (11.8), creating a carnivalesque atmosphere and providing yet another level of correspondence for the knowledgeable reader to Iphis’ own myth of costume-wearing. Apuleius, in fact, mentions one male participant dressed as a woman (feminam mentiebatur, 11.8.9). Moreover, the elegiac poets represent puellae participating in Isis’ cult. Propertius mentions her worship at 2.28.61-62 and 4.5.34, while at 2.33.1-22 he laments Cynthia’s piety toward the goddess and her cult, which draws her attention away from the amator. Tibullus and Ovid also characterize their elegiac mistresses as devotees of Isis. Because of the ubiquity of Isiac worship and artistic and literary representations of the goddess and her cult, Ovid’s readers would be familiar with the goddess and the divinities and sacred objects associated with her worship.

The exotic nature of the spectacle in Telethusa’s dream also resembles the marvelous items on display in triumphal parades which processed through Rome. In these pompae, conquered representations of foreign lands, especially high ranking or royal captives, along with treasures looted from their territory are offered to the eyes of Roman citizens. The epithets in this passage act somewhat like the tituli which were carried by the paraded captives and among the spoils. Not only were dramatic performances produced at triumphal celebrations, but a

12 See Donalson (67-72) and Witt (165-84) for a description of the procession in the Navigium festival. See, e.g., Griffiths (ad loc.) for a discussion of the Apuleius passage.
13 See Tib. 1.3.23-26, Ovid, Am. 1.8.73-74, 3.9.33-34 for other elegiac representations of Isis worship.
14 Boyle, 5-7. See, e.g., Verg., Aen. 8.714-28, Prop. 3.4.11-22 and Ovid, Ars, 1.213-28, for contemporary poetic representations of the Roman triumphal parade. See Am. 1.2.25-52 and 3.2.43-62 for “elegiac” triumphs. Am. 3.2 features a parade of gods (pompam deorum, 61) in which Venus nods assent to the narrators erotic wishes, offering a light-hearted counterpart to Telethusa’s parade.
15 The narrator in Propertius 3.4 imagines himself reading these from the lap of his puellæ: inque sinu carae nixus
notorious revival of Accius’ *Clytaemnestra* and *Equos Troianus* in 55 BCE, which featured 600 mules and 3000 bronze bowls, reenacted Pompey’s (third) triumph over Asia, celebrated six years before the performance (61 BCE).\(^{17}\) Furthermore, Ovidian allusions to *Aen.* 8 and Prop. 3.11 in the description of the Isis parade in Telethusa’s dream point specifically to the triple triumph of Octavian (29 BCE), which celebrated, amongst other conquests, the princeps’ victory over the Egyptian force of Cleopatra and Antony at the battle of Actium in 31 BCE.\(^{18}\)

Both Vergil’s and Propertius’ poems commemorate this event. The battle of Actium is described by Vergil at *Aeneid* 8.675-713 as part of the ekphrasis of Aeneas’ shield (8.653-728). Vergil focuses on the image of Cleopatra pitting the Egyptian gods against the Roman gods (Vergil, *Aen.* 8.696-700).

> regina in mediis patrio uocat agmina sistro,
necdum etiam geminos a tergo respicit anguis.
ommigenumque deum monstra et latrator Anubis
contra Neptunum et Venerem contraque Mineruam
tela tenent.

Propertius 3.11.31-56 also describes the battle of Actium in a poem justifying his own servitude to a *puella* by cataloguing powerful women.

> scilicet incesti meretrix regina Canopi,
una Philippeo sanguine adusta nota,
ausa *loui nostro* latrantem opponere Anubim,

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\(^{16}\) See Curley (n.d.: 59), Beacham (1991: 156-62), Goldberg (265-67), Boyle (155-56) for a discussion of Pompey’s triumph and the performance of these plays at the dedication of Pompey’s theater. Rudd (on Hor. *Epist.* 2.1.193) suggests that the bowls may have been part of Pompey’s own loot.

\(^{17}\) Cic., *Fam.* 7.1.2. Plut., *Pompey*, 45-46, 52.4. See Curley (n.d.: 59), Beacham (1991: 156-62), Goldberg (265-67), Boyle (155-56) for a discussion of Pompey’s triumph and the performance of these plays at the dedication of Pompey’s theater. Rudd (on Hor. *Epist.* 2.1.193) suggests that the bowls may have been part of Pompey’s own loot.

\(^{18}\) I am indebted to Erik Gunderson for this suggestion.
et Tiberim Nili cogere ferre minas,
Romanamque tubam crepitanti pellere sistro,
baridos et contis rostra Liburna sequi,
foedaque Tarpeio conopia tendere saxo,
iura dare <et> statuas inter et arma Mari!

brachia spectaui sacris admorsa colubris
et trahere occultum membra soporis iter.

(Prop. 3.11.39-46, 53-54)

Ovid’s description of Isis’ procession incorporates the language of both Vergil’s and Propertius’ description of Cleopatra (Met. 9.690-94).

et regale decus. cum qua latrator Anubis
sanctaque Bubastis uariusque coloribus Apis,
quique premit uocem digitoque silentia suadet;
sistraque erant nunquamque satis quae situs Osiris
plenaque somniferis serpens peregrina uenenis.

Isis’ regal beauty in Ovid (9.690) recalls Cleopatra named as regina in both Vergil (8.696) and Propertius (3.11.39). Isis, like Cleopatra is accompanied by her sacred sistrum (Aen. 8.696; Prop. 3.11.43; Met. 9.693), a barking Anubis (Aen. 8.698; Prop. 3.11.41; Met. 9.690), and snakes (Aen. 8.697; Prop. 3.11.53; Met. 9.694). This association of Isis and Cleopatra was emphasized by the Egyptian queen herself and was likely familiar to Ovid’s readers. Cleopatra self-identified as Isis, incorporating traditional Isiac iconography in her own representations on coinage, on temple walls, and in her title nea Isis.19

Propertius 3.11 depicts a Cleopatra who resembles our Phaedra-like figures.20 Her political power is undermined in 3.11 by her gender and her abject sexuality. She is called a meretrix (3.11.39). Her character is qualified by an association with incest (incesti meretrix

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20 Cf. Hor. Ode 1.37 in which Cleopatra is called a fatale monstrum (21). See, e.g., Hamer (1-23), Keith (2000: 118-22), and Wyke (in Edmondson, 2009: 334-380) for Augustan representations of Cleopatra.
regina Canopi, 39) and a charge that she has sex with her slaves (famulos inter femina trita suos, 30), and she is represented as prostituting herself to Antony in order to gain rule over Rome (coniugis obsceni pretium Romana poposcit/ moenia et addictos in sua regna Patres, 31-32).

According to Dio, the image of the snake,21 which appears in Vergil’s and Propertius’ poetic representations (Aen. 8.697; 3.11.53), was repeated in Augustus’ 29 BCE triple triumph, where an image of Cleopatra with an asp is said to have been carried.22 This strong association of Cleopatra with a snake further connects her to Ovid’s Isis, who is also accompanied by a snake (Met. 9.694). Moreover, Dio tells us that the worship of Isis within the pomerium of Rome was banned by Octavian in the year following his triumph (28 BCE), and Agrippa outlawed it outright in 21 BCE.23 The decrees were meant to restrict public worship and decrease interest in the cult. “Possible danger came not from Egyptian cults but from the fact that their adherents congregated in association.”24 In Isis’ procession we have, along with the image of a Roman spectacle, the suggestion of a parading and therefore performing Phaedra-like figure, whose gender, nationality, and legal status stands outside the legal and discursive boundaries of Roman normativity.25

21 Cleopatra committed suicide using a poisonous snake, giving the repeated image of snakes in Vergil, Propertius and Ovid the symbolic valence of self-punishment for her crimes. Cf. Byblis, called by the poet-praeceptor at Ars 1.284 ulta nefas.
23 Dio 53 2. See Camps (ad 2.18.19), Donalson (131-34), Takács (1995: 75-80), and Wyke (in Edmondson, 2009: 347-48). Takács (1995: 76) argues that Octavian’s and Agrippa’s bans were directed toward public processions only, and not private worship inside temples or homes. What Ovid presents to us in Telethusa’s dream is, nevertheless, still against the law according to her understanding.
25 Politically, the status of the worship of Isis in the Augustan era is analogous to that of Dionysus in the second century BCE. See chapter 2 for a discussion of the Senatus consultum of 186 BCE curtailing the worship of Dionysus in the city of Rome.
As recent scholarship on Egyptian influences in Rome, including the worship of Isis, has shown, the meaning of Egyptian artifacts and Egyptianizing art, *aegyptiaca romana*,\textsuperscript{26} varied for each individual.\textsuperscript{27} “Responses to *aegyptiaca* were context and audience-dependant, and would not have been mutually exclusive.”\textsuperscript{28} For some, art and artifacts associated with Isis, including representations of the goddess in frescoes (or perhaps poems), carried important religious significance. Certainly her worship was popular enough to require legal attention. To others, *aegyptiana romana* would be merely an exotic curiosity, perhaps imbued with mystery or magic because of its assumed ancient and foreign origin.\textsuperscript{29} Swetnam-Burland suggests an analogy between the “symbolic, extra-pecuniary value” of Egyptian artifacts and the spoils of war, both of which were displayed in treasuries and temples.\textsuperscript{30} “Just as the ancient relics in sanctuaries reminded viewers of their connections to the distant past, such Egyptian materials reminded Roman viewers of their own Romanitas, and of Rome’s status as an imperial power.”\textsuperscript{31}

Isis introduces a complex and contradictory set of meanings to Iphis’ tale.\textsuperscript{32} Her intertextual relationship with the famous poems (cited above) celebrating the triumph over Cleopatra, the infamous Egyptian other, reminds readers of Rome’s imperial power. Cleopatra’s Vergilian and Propertian construction as an abject sexual subject, a discursive process which we

\textsuperscript{26} I am following the definition of *aegyptiaca* provided by Swetnam-Burland (in Bricault, Versluys, and Meyboom: 119) as “things or matters related to Egypt.”
\textsuperscript{27} See e.g., Versluys (in in Bricault, Versluys, and Meyboom: 13-14) and Swetnam-Burland (in Bricault, Versluys, and Meyboom: 115, 135, and passim).
\textsuperscript{28} Swetnam-Burland (in Bricault, Versluys, and Meyboom), 135.
\textsuperscript{29} See, e.g., Kleiner (163-78) on what she has termed “Egyptomania.”
\textsuperscript{30} Swetnam-Burland (in in Bricault, Versluys, and Meyboom: 124-6 and passim).
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., 126.
\textsuperscript{32} In Antoninus Liberalis’ and Nicander’s tale of Leucippus, whose myth appears to be the source for Ovid’s tale of Iphis, Leto is the goddess who changes Iphis into a boy. See below for details about Leucippus’ myth and a comparison between Ovid’s and Antoninus’ versions.
have identified in Ovid’s own construction of Phaedra-like figures, further bolsters Rome’s imperial hegemony over the other by means of a gender hierarchy in which Roman political power, aligned with the normative masculine sexual subject, punishes and repudiates its feminine enemies. As Propertius 4.6, another poem celebrating Actium, declares: *uincit Roma fide Phoebi: dat femina poenas* (57). *Femina* here refers to Cleopatra, who is never named in this poem. On the other hand, the intersection with the foreign, but popular goddess Isis, whose worship was familiar and well-represented in art and artifacts displayed by prominent Romans and visible in *Isea*, but was also an other, outlawed in Ovid’s time by the same emperor in power when Iphis’ story in the *Metamorphoses* was written and published, simultaneously attests to the enrichment of foreign goods which the imperial power enjoyed and the anxiety over the threat of foreign influence by the very men who introduced these goods into Rome.33

The worship of Isis in Rome, for the reasons noted above, was as controversial and complicated as it was popular. My focus is on the performance aspects of this passage in Ovid’s description of the *pompa* as a spectacle. Its spectacularity is further reinforced by allusions to Octavian’s triple triumph over Cleopatra as well as the importance of spectacle in the worship of the goddess in Rome. Isis’ multivalent representation as both foreign, abject other, through the legislation against her worship and her association with Rome’s enemy Cleopatra, and an important contemporary Roman religious figure, assimilates her stage entrance in Telethusa’s dream simultaneously to the dramatic representation of Woman on the tragic stage (and to Ovidian representations of Phaedra-like figures in his poem), and to the performance of Roman imperial might in the triumphal parade. Her function in the story, however, because she works to

33 See Keith (2008) for a recent exploration of the relationship between the elegiac *amator* and the Roman politics of empire building in the late Republic and early principate. See Bowditch on the metapoetic resonance of the representation of foreign goods in elegy.
further interests of patriarchal hegemony, as we shall see, can be interpreted as the performance of the complete assimilation of Rome’s conquered. Such a reading, nevertheless, does not exclude an equally important oppositional reading, which imagines the other working against the patriarchal (and imperial) imperative.

Ovidian allusion to public spectacle strengthens the dramatic quality of the passage as a whole and provides an interpretive framework. On the one hand, the emphasis on performance draws attention to the performance of gender roles in the passage, in particular, the girl Iphis’ performance of the role “boy,” even though the narrative itself pays little attention to what could offer ironic, comic, or pathetic material in the manner Ovid exploits throughout his corpus.\(^{34}\) While the happy ending is more in line with comedy,\(^{35}\) it is the threat of anagnoresis and its resulting peripeteia which is most valuable for understanding Iphis’ relation to the Phaedra paradigm, and what meaning that relation reveals for constructions of female desire in Ovid’s oeuvre.

According to Antoninus Liberalis (17), Nicander told the story of Leucippus (as he calls Iphis) in the second book of his Heteroiomena.\(^{36}\) While the Iphis story found in Ovid’s Metamorphoses corresponds to Antoninus’ summary of this myth closely, Ovid’s version includes important differences. The location of the two stories is the same—both take place in Crete—, but none of the characters have the same names. It is noteworthy that, in Antoninus

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\(^{34}\) Consider, e.g., the passage considered in chapter 2, *Ars* 1.305-7, where queen Pasiphae prims before her mirror before attempting to seduce a bull.

\(^{35}\) See Anderson (ad 673), Ormand (2005: 92), and Pintabone (279-80) for correspondences with comedy, including the *topos* of shared love.

\(^{36}\) See Anderson (ad 9.666-797), Bömer (1977: 469-72), Celoria, and Wheeler (190-94 and passim) for Antoninus Liberalis’ and Nicander’s tale and a comparison to Ovid’s Iphis. Celoria (153) points out that Leucippus is the name of another cross-dressing mythological character, whose story is told by Parthenius (*Amat. Narr.* 15) and Pausanias (8.20.3); see also Buxton, 229.
Liberalis’ account of Nicander’s version of the story, the names of the mother, father, and daughter—Galatea (“white as milk”), Lamprus (“shining”), and Leucippus (“white/bright horse”)—are all suggestive of light, an image which holds an important place at the end of Ovid’s version of the story, illuminating, so to speak, Isis’ plan for her devotees. Another similarity is found in the importance of supernatural advice. Galatea, like Telethusa, appears to have received some guidance from dreams, as Antoninus briefly mentions: τῶν ὀνείρων καὶ τῶν μάντεων, οἱ προηγόρευον τὴν κόρην ὡς κόρων ἐκτρέψειν (17.3). There is no indication in Antoninus, however, that the dreams and seers are in any way connected with Leto, to whom Galatea prays. Their guidance is supernatural but not explicitly divinely sanctioned. Moreover, there is no imminent wedding in Antoninus Liberalis’ version. Instead, Leucippus’ beauty threatens to give away the secret.

In the Greek version, Leto’s epithet, Φυτίη suggests that the story is a metaphor for the liminal experience of puberty. The story ends with two aetiologies: the first for a festival connected to Leto Φυτίη in Phaestus, the Ἐκδύσια where youths changed from children’s clothing to adults’, and the second, for a marriage ritual in which girls lie down beside a statue of Leucippus. Indeed Antoninus’ version is explicitly concerned with the biological changes: “to

37 Celoria, 152-53.
38 postera lux radiis latum patefecerat orbem,/ cum Venus et Iuno sociosque Hymenaeus ad ignes, Met. 9.795-96. Wheeler (190 and passim) notes Ovid’s change of names is both an innovation and a pun on the Greek names, pointing out the metrical equivalence between Lamprus and Lygdus, Galataea and Telethusa (192). Moreover, Wheeler observes that the name Lygdus also picks up on the idea of brightness through a possible association with the Greek word λυγδός, “white marble” (193). See Wheeler (passim) for further etymological associations of the names Lygdus, Telethusa, and Ianthe.
39 Celoria (ad loc.) comments that the import of the dreams and seers is lost. Ovid’s version could be taking up this tradition and/or embellishing this element.
40 See Lightfoot (475) for a discussion of the complications arising from associating this myth too closely with any specific religious ritual.
Leto the grower, who grew genitals for the maiden” (Φυτιὴ Λητοῖ, ἥτις ἔγυσεν μὴδὲα τῇ κόρῃ, 17.6). Ovid’s choice of Io/ISIS over Leto/Φυτίη may be intended to distance his own version from that of the mythological tradition which Antoninus and Nicander follow. With the ritual associations removed, Ovid’s tale can focus instead on the transformation effected by the power of discourse and performance. As noted earlier, the worship of Isis, although a foreign deity, may effect a Romanization for Ovid’s readers, who would recognize the contemporary popularity of her cult, especially among Roman women.

Moreover, Ovid’s assimilation of Isis to the mythological maiden Io, a common association, implies another level of Hellenistic influence to Iphis’ tale. Moschus’ Europa, discussed in chapter 2, offers one example of a Hellenistic depiction of Io in the ekphrasis of Europa’s golden basket (43-62). Calvus’ Io is also an important Roman depiction, a neoteric epyllion, while Propertius 2.33.1-22 draws the religious cult and the maiden’s myth together in one poem.

quae dea tam cupidos totiens diuisit amantis,
quae cumque illa fuit, semper amara fuit.
tu certe Iouis occultis in amoribus, Io,
sensisti multas quid sit inire uias,
cum te iussit habere puellam cornua Iuno
et pecoris duro perdere uerba sono.
a quotiens quermis laesisti frondibus ora,

41 Io’s own story, however, is itself a tale of sexual maturation through sexual initiation. Her rape by Zeus makes her an adult woman through her pregnancy and successful delivery of a boy child, Epaphus. See Wheeler (191, n. 11), who notes only that Ovid’s divine substitute introduces the cult of Isis, but offers references for other, more elaborate explanations. As Oliensis (110) points out, Io/Isis has her own mythology of manufacturing phalli. Osiris’ epithet (numquamque satis quaesitus Osiris, 9.693), Oliensis suggests, reminds us of his myth of reconstitution in which his penis cannot be found and is replaced by one made by Isis.
42 Raval (2000), 163-64; Ramsby, 137-38.
43 See, e.g., Heyob’s 1975 monograph on Isis worship among Roman women.
44 See Hollis (1977: 60-64) for a discussion of Io and the intertext identified above, among others. See Höschele for a discussion of Io in the Hellenistic and Roman literary tradition.
mandisti <et> stabulis **arbuta pasta** tuis!
(Propertius 2.33.5-12)

Propertius allusively echoes an extant line from Calvus’ poem,

**a virgo infelix, herbis pasceris amaris** (Calvus, *Io*, Courtney, fr. 9)

which we have seen surface also in Vergil’s description of Pasiphae at *Eclogue* 6.45-60

**a, uirgo infelix, quae te dementia cepit!**
**a! uirgo infelix, tu nunc in montibus erras:**
(Vergil, *Ecl.* 6.47, 52)

and Ovid’s own tale of Io at *Metamorphoses* 1.568-746.

**frondibus arboreis et amara pascitur herba**
(Ovid, *Met.* 1.632)

For Ovid’s literary audience, the Vergilian intertext focuses the connection between Io and Pasiphae, the centerpiece of the poet-praeceptor’s list of dangerous desiring women (see chapter 2), while Propertius’ poem renders Io, the sympathetic *uirgo* raped by Zeus, indistinguishable from Isis. Like the sacred figure of Isis and the abject figure of Cleopatra, the two figures of Io and Pasiphae repeat symbolically the tension which predominates in Iphis’ tale—a tension between her own interpretation of her desire as Phaedra-like, a figure who continually threatens to surface, with her (narratively constructed) representation as Io-like, i.e., a sympathetic *uirgo*.

Iphis’ tale ends with a divine miracle, her change from *uirgo to puer* (9.787-91) just before her wedding to Ianthe. This metamorphosis also transforms her non-normative desire as a feminine/passive female lover of a feminine/passive female beloved into normative desire. Myths
of sex changes were not new.\textsuperscript{45} Antoninus Liberalis (17.4-5) offers several mythological comparanda, all examples of sex changes—Caenis/Caeneus, Tiresias, Hypermestra, and Siproites.\textsuperscript{46} For Antoninus, Leucippus is a paradigm for any change of sex. These paradigms offer a possible symbolic value for Iphis which is wholly separate from the abject sexual subjects represented by Phaedra and her heirs. Three of these stories appear in Ovid’s \textit{Metamorphoses}: Caenis/Caeneus (12.169-209, 459-535), Tiresias (3.316-38), and Hypermnestra (unnamed daughter of Erysichthon, 8.739-884). I would add to the list the tale of Hermaphroditus (4.285-388).\textsuperscript{47} If Iphis retained this paradigmatic association in Ovid’s time, it is worth considering Iphis’ story in book 9 in relation to those found in the same poem.

The tales of Tiresias and Hermaphroditus involve the change of a man.\textsuperscript{48} Tiresias is changed from a man to a woman and then back again. Hermaphroditus’ sex change is more of an erasure or perhaps a multiplication. His gender, no longer one or the other, defies categorization.\textsuperscript{49} While the biological sex of a man is the focus of both tales, their context is informed by issues of female desire. Hermaphroditus’ hybrid gender is the direct result of a female desire much like those we have seen in previous chapters.\textsuperscript{50} Salmacis’ female desire

\textsuperscript{45} See Forbes Irving (149-70) for myths of sexual transformation.
\textsuperscript{46} See Celoria (ad loc.) for a summary and discussion of each of these myths.
\textsuperscript{47} Also appearing very briefly in book 4 is the story of Sithon, a woman changed to a man, which is listed as one passed over by Alcithoe in favor of Hermaphroditus’ tale (\textit{nec loquor ut quondam naturae iure novato/ ambiguus fuerit modo uir, modo femina Sithon, 4.279-80}). Anderson (ad loc.) tells us Sithon is “otherwise unknown.” Barchiesi and Rosati (2007: ad loc.) add that the transformation appears to be reversible and, citing \textit{modo…modo} (280), at will.
\textsuperscript{48} See Nagle (1984: 239-40 and 249-50 respectively) for further discussion of these passages as they relate to the theme of identity and sexuality.
\textsuperscript{49} See, e.g., Brisson, Robinson, and Zajko, on Roman sexuality and the myth of Hermaphroditus.
\textsuperscript{50} Salmacis is another elegiac Phaedra, a \textit{puella} and \textit{amator}. Her reversal of the scenario of the \textit{locus amoenus} and her command of the gaze is reminiscent of Phaedra’s reversal of the maiden at a religious festival (\textit{pace} Nagle, 1984). In the Hermaphroditus passage, Salmacis is picking flowers in the manner of maidens in a \textit{locus amoenus}, but Hermaphroditus is the virgin who is seen and, once seen, desired: \textit{legebat,/ cum puerum uidit uisumque optavit}
accomplishes biologically what others’ did symbolically, very literally robbing a man of his phallic power.\textsuperscript{51} Tiresias’ story, by contrast, is told as an explanation for his expertise in the sexual pleasure of both men and women.\textsuperscript{52} The argument, between Juno and Jupiter, is over whether women or men get more pleasure from sex. Jupiter argues that women do, and Tiresias agrees. This judgment is consistent with the depiction of the female libido as stronger than the male in the other Ovidian passages we have considered. Juno’s reaction to Tiresias’ verdict also seems to imitate excessive female desire. We are told that Juno bore Jupiter’s decision more heavily than was fair and not in proportion to the matter at hand (\textit{grauius Saturnia iusto nec pro materia fertur}, 3.333-34).\textsuperscript{53} Her blinding of Tiresias (334-35) is suggestive of the desire to preserve \textit{fama}, which is measured by those who see and judge (\textit{iudicis…lumina}). As we have seen, for women, \textit{fama} is inextricably linked to their sexuality.

Both of the woman-to-man sex changes in the \textit{Metamorphoses} (besides Iphis’) are a means of escaping sexual victimization by men, and both are wishes granted by Poseidon in

\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{habere}, 4.315-16. Cf. the tale of Proserpina in \textit{Met.} 5.386-95 (\textit{pace} Robinson, 218). Proserpina is picking flowers (\textit{uiolas…carpit}, 392; \textit{legendo}, 394) when Dis takes her. Dis is overcome with desire upon seeing her: \textit{simul uisa est dilectaque raptaque Diti,} 395. The Naiads suggest Salmacis mix her elegiac \textit{otia cum duris uenatibus} (4.307), metapoetic advice which recalls Phaedra’s advice to Hippolytus (\textit{Her.} 4.87-92). Salmacis’ care for her appearance (308-13) is similar to Pasiphae’s in \textit{Ars} 1.306-7. Salmacis’ speech is modeled on Odysseus’ speech to Nausicaa (Hom., \textit{Ody.} 6.149-85), an allusion which offers another level of gender complication, since the scene between Odysseus and Nausicaa places the nude male heroic body before the gaze of a woman. See, e.g., Anderson (ad 4.320-28), Barchiesi and Rosati (ad 4.320-38), and Galinsky (186-89) for a discussion of the epic parody in this passage and bibliography.
\item See Oliensis (2009: 92-110) for the anxiety of symbolic castration in Latin literature, with a focus on Scylla as a castrating figure in Ovid’s \textit{Met}.
\item In his treatment of androgyne and hermaphroditism in the ancient world, Brisson (2002: Chapter four) interprets Tiresias, in all of his mythological representations, as a figure who mediates traditionally binary categories, including and especially gender.
\item Nagle (1984: 240) cites other variants of this myth and argues Ovid chose this version in order to highlight his theme of \textit{ira} among goddesses. Nagle connects Juno’s violent reaction to her need to “publicize her act of vengeance to prevent future slights” due to insecurity over her power in relation to male gods.
\end{itemize}
return for his rape of the women making the request. Erysichthon’s daughter (8.739-884) is granted the ability to shape shift in order to escape the slavery into which her father has sold her. Her change to a man is but one form she takes. The verb used of her transformation, *induit* (854), suggests a costume which can be removed,54 and it is (*illi sua reditd forma est*, 870).

After Caenis’ rape by Poseidon, the god tells the girl to make a wish. She wishes *tale pati posse nihil. da femina ne sim* (12.202). She does not ask to be a man, but her request—not to suffer/be passive sexually, which is identical with not being a woman—demands that she become the opposing sex, male.55 Iphis’ sex change is not associated with female sexuality, except by its proximity to Byblis and Myrrha. It is instead the wish-fulfillment of her father, whose request for a boy child is compelled by poverty. While transformation is achieved by the power of a divinity, hers is a gift not in return for sex but for her mother’s piety. It is, however, similar to

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54 *Induere*, “to put (a garment, arms, or sim.) on (a person)” (*OLD*, 1), also has the meaning “to adopt” an appearance (3a.), a part, or a character (3b.). Propertius employs *induere* to describe Vertumnus’ changing forms, including gender/sex changes, which he assumes and then removes at will: *opportuna mea est cunctis natura figures:/ in quacumque uoles uerte, decorus ero:/ induue me Cois, fiam non dura puella:/ meque uirum sumpta quis neget esse toga* (Prop. 4.2. 21-24). It is noteworthy that in the *Met.* (14.698-764), Vertumnus, dressed as a woman in order to gain access to his beloved, Pomona, narrates the tale of the other (elegiac, male) Iphis who commits suicide after being rejected by his beloved, Anaxarete.

55 See Hallett (1989: 215 and passim) for *pati* as a description of normative feminine sexuality. Quoting Seneca Minor on the topic of female homoeroticism (*Libidine vero ne maribus quidem cedunt pati natae: (di illas deaeque male perdant!)* adeo perversum genus inpudicitiae viros ineunt, Ep. Mor., 95.21), Hallett argues that “in Seneca’s eyes sexual conduct other than passive yielding to men…is clearly and primarily associated with activity viewed as masculine, and indeed is said to transform women physically into men” (215). See also Parker (in Hallet and Skinner: 55-56, 58-59 and passim) and Pintabone (257-58, 275-76). Cf. Iphis’ own use of *patior* to describe Pasiphae’s comparatively normative sexuality: *passa bouem est, et erat qui deciperetur adulter* (9.740). The etymology of Ianthe (“bloom of a violet,” Wheeler, 194) may also engage with the suggestion that to be a women is to suffer masculine, sexual *vis*, since the Latin for violet, *viola* is acoustically similar to *violare*, “to violate” or “rape”; Ahl, 153-54; Wheeler, 197, n.35. In either case, her floral name, through the association of picking flowers with the loss of virginity, and in particular, the rapes of maidens in the myths presented in in the *Met.* looks forward to the consummation of their union (because she is like a flower to be plucked) while establishing, proleptically, her gendered, passive position in the heterosexual matrix (because flower-picking is found in myths of maidens about to be raped; cf. Europa, 2.833-75, and Proserpina, 5.341-571; pace Wheeler194, 197, n. 35). Cf. Sappho 105(c) for the association of a trampled flower with a girl’s loss of innocence: *οίνιν τάν ύδατινδον ἐν ἠρεσθαι, ποιμένες ἄνδρος/ πόσι καταστίβοισι, χάμαι δὲ τε πόρφυρον ἄνθος, and the very similar image in Cat. 11.21-23: *amorem, qui illius culpa cecidit veluti prati/ ultimis flos, praeterente postquam tactus aratro est.*
the other female to male changes in one respect, for there exists the threat of victimization as we shall see below.

Having considered Iphis in relation to stories about sexual metamorphoses in the poem, let us now consider her tale in relation to the contiguous story of Byblis. In many ways, Iphis’ story mirrors the tale which it follows.\(^{56}\) The narrative transition between the two suggests the similarity and calls for a comparison: *Fama noui centum Cretaeas forsitan urbes/ implesset monstri, si non miracula nuper/ Iphide mutata Crete propiora tulisset* (666-68). The Cretans are distracted from the gossip over the “new/strange supernatural event” by a “recent marvel.” Iphis and her family are Cretan. Although in Asia, Byblis is a second generation Cretan immigrant. Moreover, the story itself is driven by information learned from a dream. Telethusa, like Byblis, decides on a course of action based on a very vivid dream. The Egyptian goddess and her exotic retinue seem to add a foreign flavor to a common Greek setting,\(^ {57}\) but, as noted above, the popularity of Isis in Ovid’s Rome renders Telethusa’s dream and her worship of Isis potentially familiar and Roman.\(^ {58}\) Likewise, Byblis’ very Roman elegiac dream constructs her as “Roman” despite the foreign land. Both loves are hindered by a problem concerning a lack of difference—Byblis and Caunus share the same natal family, Iphis and Ianthe share the same genders. The girls’ shared upbringing and education and the alliteration of their names emphasize their similarity and again resemble the similarity of the siblings. Byblis means to perform the role of someone she is not, both to the outside world for the sake of propriety, and to Caunus in order to

\(^{56}\) See Janan (1991: 239), Otis (185-89), and Pintabone (271-73) for correspondences between the two episodes.

\(^{57}\) Armstrong’s work on Cretan Women suggests that the Romans’ fascination with mythical Crete stems from its similarities to Roman culture, while maintaining its status as foreign other. *Contra* Hallett (1989: passim), who argues that the Greek provenance of so many Roman representations of female homoeroticism remove the reality of such sexual behavior from contemporary Rome.

\(^{58}\) See, e.g., Swetnam-Burland (in Bricault, Versluys, and Meyboom: 113-36): “The Italian cults of Isis helped create a market for Egyptian imports, which were displayed in their sanctuaries” (135).
win his sympathy. Iphis’ performance, commanded by the goddess and her mother, transforms her into the very role she plays.

Let us reconsider the introduction to Iphis’ story. For this narrative transition provides a guide for the comparison of the two episodes which end book 9. Byblis’ tale is referred to as nouum monstrum (666-67), while Iphis is miracula nuper (667). Although the two words—monstrum and miraculum—can be synonyms, and their choice may be driven simply by a desire for variety, they also point to a qualitative difference between the two myths. Monstrum is, as the first entry in the Oxford Latin Dictionary defines it, “an unnatural thing or event regarded as an omen, a portent, prodigy, sign,” and is commonly used to describe a thing or person with a decidedly negative connotation—e.g., “a horrible creature,” or “a wicked person.” This is the connotation it carries generally in the Metamorphoses, and particularly in the only other instance of the word in book 9. Iphis includes Pasiphae’s story among the omnia monstra which Crete bears (735-36). By contrast, miraculum has an ambivalent

59 This is how Anderson (ad loc.) reads the words. He points to their use at 7.294, where Medea’s restoration of Aeson’s youth is called tanti miracula monstri. Their use here, however, suggests to me that they are decidedly not synonyms, as the phrase “the wonder of so great a wonder” would be unartfully redundant, whereas “the wonder of so great a monstrous deed” well-describes the awesome but horrible magic of Medea. Pintabone (271) also notes a difference in tone between monstrum and miraculum in these two passages.

60 OLD, monstrum, 2-5.

61 Cf., e.g., the portents produced by the fury Tisiphone, which terrify Ino (monstris exterrita coniunx, 4.488); the sea monster (monstro...aequoreo, 11.211-12) to whom the daughter of Laomedon is to be sacrificed as punishment for her father’s perjury; 14.414, where the transformations wrought by Circe’s magic are called uariarum monstra ferarum. More significantly, Scylla, another desiring woman in the Met., whose story opens the preceeding book of the poem, is called a monstrum by her beloved, Minos (certe ego non patiar Iouis incunabula, Creten,/ qui meus est orbis, tantum contingere monstrum, 8.99-100), while a few lines later, the Minotaur, the offspring of Pasiphae’s abject desire, is also called a monstrum (matris adulterium monstri nouitiate biformis, 8.156).

62 Perhaps looking back to the narrator’s description of the Minotaur (8.156, cited above, n. 61).
connotation, signifying a neutrally wondrous or amazing person, thing, or event.\(^{63}\) Iphis’ story is amazing, but not necessarily horrible.

Iphis’ desire seems, at first, to be the most abject we have encountered thus far because it is between two girls. This, at least, is how she interprets her story.

\begin{quote}
'\textit{cognita} quam nulli, quam \textit{prodigiosa nouaeque cura} tenet \textit{Veneris}? si di mihi [parcere uellent, parcere debuerant; si non, et] perdere uellent, \textit{naturale malum} saltem et \textit{de more} dedissent. \textit{nec uaccam uaccae, nec equas amor urit equarum. urit oues aries, sequitur sua femina ceruum. sic et aues coeunt, interque animalia cuncta femina femineo conrepta cupidine nulla est. uellem nulla forem! ne non tamen omnia Crete monstra ferat, taurum dilexit filia Solis. femina nempe marem; meus est furiosior illo, (Met. 9.727-37)
\end{quote}

Iphis describes her desire as an “unrecognizable, freakish care for a new/strange sexual desire,” echoing the narrator’s description of Byblis’ story as a \textit{nouum monstrum}, and repeating the idea that her desire is so unlike human desire (\textit{cognita nulli}) that it is not recognizable as desire.\(^{64}\) She opposes her desire to one which is bad (\textit{malum}), but at least “natural” (\textit{naturale}) and “following custom” (\textit{de more}). She uses the traditional examples from the animal world (731-34), pointing out that even in the animal world there is a “heterosexual” mandate: two females do not mate in the animal world. Iphis uses these examples to argue that her desire is “more full of fury than

\(^{63}\) \textit{OLD}, \textit{miraculum}.

\(^{64}\) As Hallett (1989: n. 16) notes, \textit{prodigiosa} is itself a novel word and is not attested in \textit{OLD} before Ovid’s \textit{Met}. \textit{Prodigiosa} is used later by Martial to describe a \textit{tribas}, Bassa: \textit{mentiturque virum prodigiosa Venus./ commenta es dignum Thebano aenigmate monstrum,/ hic ubi uir non est, ut sit adulterium}, 1.90.8-10. Note also his use of \textit{monstrum} to describe the masculine self-construction of the \textit{tribas}. See Hallett (1989: 216-17) for a discussion of the two passages. Hallett (passim) argues that both authors are drawing on a familiar \textit{topos} of female homoeroticism which is “masculinizing, Hellenizing, and anachronizing” (211). See also Makowski (31-32) on \textit{prodigiosa} at 9.727 and Iphis’ soliloquy.
that” of Pasiphae because the bull was male. Iphis counts hers as among the monstra of female desire which Crete has produced.

Most readings of this story which are sensitive to the complicated and intertwined discourses of sex, gender, and sexual desire are concerned, for the most part, with reconstructing Roman conceptions of female homoerotic love, locating Iphis’ female homosexuality qua sexuality in the figure of the tribas. Tribas is the name given by Romans to certain women who had sexual relationships with other women. The tribades, however, are mentioned only by a few sources and are constructed in a particularly masculine manner. As Hallett has argued, the tribas can only be imagined as a masculine figure, sometimes with male sexual organs, if not substitutes, because Roman sexuality was defined by mutually exclusive sexual roles of active and passive which are rigidly gendered masculine and feminine. Parker’s “teratogenic” grid maps Roman sexual subjects according to “active/passive” and “male/female” on the x-axis, and manner of penetration on the y-axis. In such a strict binary system, normative Roman men are active, penetrating sexual subjects, normative Roman women are passive and penetrated. Roman boys can be passive/penetrated, but adult men who fall under this category are considered effeminate pathici, while women who take active/penetrative roles sexually can only be

65 Makowski, 31-32; Ormand (2005), 90; Pintabone, 268-69.
67 E.g., Martial 1.90, 7.67, 7.70, Phaedrus Fabulae 4, Seneca Rhet. Contr. 1.2.23,
68 See Cantarella (167-69) and Hallett (1989) for further literary representations of tribades.
69 Cf., e.g., Martial 7.70.2: recte, quam futuis, uocas amicam. Futuere is the verb which describes vaginal penetration with a penis (Parker, in Hallet and Skinner: 48). See, e.g., Gordon (in Hallet and Skinner: 283-84, 287-89), Hallett (1989), Pintabone (258), and Parker (in Hallet and Skinner: 58-59) for the phallic tribades.
70 Parker (in Hallet and Skinner), 49. See also Cantarella, Hallett (1989), Halperin Winkler and Zeitlin, Lilja, Richlin (1992), Skinner (1991, 1993), and Craig Williams for Greek and Roman sexuality, including what is now termed “homosexuality.”
imagined as *monstra.*\(^{71}\) Ormand’s interpretation of the Iphis passage departs slightly from these readings, but still relies on the figure of the *tribas* and her relationship to the active/passive configuration which defines Roman sexual subjects in order to understand Iphis’ sexual identity as a *non-*identity:

“Only by seeing the *tribas* or “active woman” as the category of female sexual deviance in Rome and recognizing its curious absence in this story can we understand what makes Iphis’s love a violation of “nature.” Hers is not the love that dare not speak its name; it is a love that has no Roman name to speak.”\(^{72}\)

He concludes that any other “lesbian” love beyond the *tribas,* such as Iphis is represented as experiencing, was not a reality to the Romans (not a denial of reality as Hallett (1989) has argued) because only active/passive configurations counted as sex.

Since Iphis has interpreted her desire on the basis of this conception of sex, she believes that she is hindered by only one thing.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{...non te custodia caro} \\
\text{arcet ab amplexu nec cauti cura mariti,} \\
\text{non patris asperitas, non se negat ipsa roganti;} \\
\text{nec tamen est potienda tibi, nec, ut omnia fiant,} \\
\text{esse potes felix, ut dique hominesque laborent.} \\
\text{[nunc quoque uotorum nulla est pars uana meorum,} \\
\text{dique mihi faciles quicquid ualuere dederunt.]} \\
\text{quod uolo uult genitor, uult ipsa socerque futurus;} \\
\text{at non uult natura, potentior omnibus istis,} \\
\text{quae mihi sola nocet...}
\end{align*}
\]

\[(\text{Met. 9. 750-59})\]

Iphis expresses a paradox which she seems to share with the epistolary Phaedra and epic Byblis.

None of the usual obstacles are standing in the way of her love affair (*custodia, 750; cura mariti,*

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\(^{71}\) “The sexually active woman is a monster (Veyne 1985: 30, 33). She may escape censure only by being passive (or by a careful manipulation of the symbols of passivity…)” (Parker, in Hallet and Skinner: 59). See also Gleason (59).

\(^{72}\) Ormand (2005), 101-102.
751; *patris asperitas*, the beloved herself, 752). In fact, everyone is trying to facilitate the union, including the gods (754). Only nature (758), i.e., biology, stands in the way. In the case of Phaedra, Byblis, Iphis, and the other desiring women of Ovid’s work, however, the singular obstacle is the system of kinship. Phaedra and Byblis are prevented from pursuing their beloveds by the incest prohibition. Their current kinship relations to Hippolytus (step-son) and Caunus (brother) exclude these two men as appropriate sexual partners. Ianthe, too, is excluded as an appropriate sexual partner by the Roman sexual categories of active and passive and she is excluded as a potential spouse (bride or groom) by the symbolic system of exchange. For, as Rubin has noted, the heterosexual matrix of the incest prohibition assumes a previous homosexual prohibition. Women do not exchange women in marriage alliances, nor do men exchange men. Women are given to men as brides and these unions create affinities between the men in two different families and ensure the production of new family members.

Each woman’s problem shares the obstacle of redundancy, or a lack of difference. In the stories of incest, this redundancy is obvious: Phaedra already has a husband, Byblis and Caunus are twins, and Myrrha is both a member of the same family as her father and duplicates the role of his wife by her incest. For the non-incestuous desires of Scylla and Medea, the redundancy is

73 Likewise Phaedra tells Hippolytus: *Non tibi per tenebras duri reseranda mariti/ lanua, non custos decipiendus erit, Her.* 4.141-42; Byblis tells Caunus: *nec nos aut durus pater aut reuerentia famae/ aut timor impediet, Met.* 9.556-57.

74 Cf. Alcithoe’s two-line summary of Sithon, changed from a woman to a man, which she describes as “the law of nature reversed” (*naturae iure nouato/ ambiguus… Sithon,* 4.279-80). Wheeler (198-99) points out the “theme of sexual potency” in the tale of Iphis, which ironically reminds the reader of what is missing for the couple. In particular he notes the “semantic cluster of *potior* and *possum* [in 9.753-54 cited above]…The verb *potior*, in particular, is significant because it is a euphemism for the act of intercourse.”

75 Byblis complains: *at mihi, quae male sum quos tu sortita parentes,/ nil nisi frater eris; quod obest, id habemus unum,* 493-94.

76 Rubin, 180. Rubin notes exceptions to this rule (181-82). Of particular interest is the “transvesticism” of the Mohave, where rituals permitted an individual of one sex to assume the gender role of another (181)—a man could be the wife of a man, a woman the husband of a woman. In this particular system, the “transvestite” unions were considered heterosexual on the basis of the proper, ritually approved performance of the opposite gender.
less overt. Both maidens attempt to assume control over their own sexual currency, choosing
their partners and exchanging themselves, thereby duplicating the role of their fathers. Ovid’s
text reminds us of redundancy in every case. In the Iphis passage, this redundancy is expressed
in the girl’s shared age, the alliteration of their first names, and, of course, their shared sex.77 It
is also emphasized by the lexical choices of the narrator and Iphis’ own voice, and in their
frequent alliteration and polyptoton.

\[
\textit{par} \text{ aetas, par } \textit{forma fuit, primasque magistris}
\textit{accepere artes, elementa } \textit{getatis, ab isdem.}
\textit{hinc amor } \textit{ambarum} \textit{tetigit rude pectus, et aequum}
\textit{uulnus utrique dedit, sed erat fiducia dispar.}
\textit{coniugium pactaque exspectat tempora } \textit{taedeae,}
\textit{quamque uirum putat esse, uirum fore credit Ianthe;}
\textit{Iphis amat, qua posse frui desperat, et auget}
\textit{hoc ipsum flammas ardetque in uirgine uirgo,}
\textit{(Met. 9.718-25)}
\]

The frequency of words that mean “equal,” “both,” and “same” (e.g., \textit{par, isdem, ambarum,}
\textit{aequum, utrique}) draws attention to the similarity of the girls, while this doubling is augmented
through the accumulation of repetition: the alliteration of consonants and vowels (bolded and
underlined above) such as, e.g., “p,” the syllable “par” (\textit{par...par...dispar}, 718, 721), and
especially the initial “i” in Ianthe and Iphis, juxtaposed at the end and beginning of contiguous
lines (723-24); the polytoton of words, e.g., \textit{aetas} (718, 719), \textit{uirum} (723), and \textit{uirgo} (725).

\[
\textit{nec uaccam uaccae, nec equas amor urit equarum.}
\textit{urit oues aries, sequitur sua femina ceruum.}
\textit{sic et auess coeunt, interque animalia cuncta}
\textit{femina femineo conrepta cupidine nulla est.}
\textit{(Met. 9.731-34)}
\]

\footnote{77 Pintabone, 263.}
In addition to the repetition of alliterated sounds, the polyptoton of animals names (e.g., *uacca*, 731) and *femina* and its adjective, *femineus* (732, 734), mirrors Iphis’ anxiety about the redundancy of a same-sex couple.

\[
\text{nec mihi contingent; mediis siti\'emus in undis.}
\text{pronuba quid Iuno, quid ad haec, Hymenae, unitis}
\text{sacra, quibus qui ducat abest, ubi nubimus ambae?}
\]

(*Met.* 9.761-63)

Finally, the ubiquity of first person plural verbs (e.g., 761, 763) in addition to words meaning “equal,” “same,” and “both” (e.g., *ambae*, 763 as well as those cited above, 718-25) again reinforces the sense that Iphis and Ianthe are identical and inseparable.

Phaedra and Byblis recognize that this system is cultural, not natural, and their desire is satiable if they can successfully outmaneuver the rules. They rely on the performativity and the polysemy of kinship roles and on rhetorical arguments, citing divine and mythological precedents. In contrast, Iphis, although she has already been performing quite successfully the culturally acceptable role of boy and groom-to-be, does not consider performance a sufficient means for overcoming her obstacle. The polysemic nature of *uir* as biological man and social husband refuses, so Iphis believes, a *uirgo* the opportunity for a legitimate marriage with a biological woman: *quamque uirum putat esse, uirum fore credit Ianthe; Iphis amat, qua posse frui desperat*, 723-24. *Fruor* has a sexual connotation in this line, specifically of masculine eroticism. Iphis understands the legitimacy of the union based on sex.

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78 Phaedra and Byblis demonstrate some level of understanding that their desire is repudiated by a discursive and performative symbolic system, by identifying certain names as problematic (*nouerca, soror*) and choosing new ones, and by exploiting the similarity in performativity between their normative kinship relation to their beloved and the erotic role they desire. See chapters 3 and 4 for a full discussion of these passages.

79 Pintabone, 265.

80 See Adams (198), Ormand (2005: 95), Pintabone (267), and Wheeler (198).
Because, she believes, the two women cannot consummate the marriage (frui desperat, 724; et iam mea fiet Ianthe--/ nec mihi continget, 760-61), they “will be thirsty in the middle of waves” (mediis sitiemus in undis, 761). Nor does Iphis admit any precedents. Iphis observes that hers is the first female homoerotic love among any living thing. Neither animal nor god offers an example of such a love (cognita…nulli…nouaeque…Veneris, 727-28). As noted earlier, Iphis wishes the gods would give a “natural” punishment (perdere uellent,/ naturale malum saltem et de more dedissent, 729-30), such as the one given to Pasiphae, for biology (i.e., nature) offered Pashiphae the possibility of fulfilling her desire (taurum dilexit filia Solis./ femina nempe marem, 736-37; tamen illa secuta est/ spem Veneris…/…et erat, qui deciperetur, adulter, 738-40). Iphis believes nature has given her no hope (spes est quae capiat, spes est quae pascat amorem, 749).

Despite her own reading of her situation, Iphis’ desire is normative in relation to the paradigmatically abject female desire of Phaedra and Byblis. The acquisitive desires of Pasiphae, Phaedra and Byblis were unfeminine in their active pursuit of their love interest, and in a symbolic discourse which constructs meaning through difference, unfeminine resembles masculine. For this reason, the literary representation of their desire mimicks that of a male lover. This is not true of Iphis, however. Her desire, and her construction as a desiring

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81 Ormand (2005:94-95) and Pintabone (267-68) interpret dispar (9.721) as referring to Ianthe’s ignorance of Iphis’ sex, which makes her desire “different,” but also as referring to Ianthe’s desire for marriage in contrast to Iphis’ focus on physical desire. Pintabone points to Iphis’ examples of sex among animals and Pasiphae’s desire for an animal (731-40) as evidence that she is not concerned with marriage. I would argue that nothing in the passage implies that Iphis does not have an equal desire for normative marriage, but that she does not think they qualify. For Iphis believes the performance of active/passive sex is necessary to instantiate marriage (cf. 9.762-63, where Iphis asks the gods why they would attend a marriage “without a leader,” qui ducat abest).

82 “[T]here is a zero-degree mapping between gender and ancient sexual ideology. To be active is to be masculine; to be passive is to be feminine” (Ormand, 2005:84)

83 See Ormand (2005:84-85 and passim) for a brief comparison of masculine self-control and women’s monstrous lack thereof and further references: “women were assumed to lack the self-control that characterized successful
subject, are feminine in their passivity. When the narrator introduces Iphis’ love for Ianthe, it is informed first by her father’s betrothal, next by the beauty of Ianthe, the shared age and upbringing of the two children, their potential economic parity, and finally by the egalitarian nature of their love.

The love is shared by both (amor ambarum, 720), and it touches their singular, shared (?) heart. The alliteration emphasizes this aspect. While amor is figured as a wound, it is equal and given to both. Likewise, after Iphis’ soliloquy, the narrator describes love as a fire. The fire is attributed in the first instance to Iphis: auget/...flammas, ardetque in uirgine uirgo (724-25), but the polyptoton of uirgo confuses her identity and underscores the lack of difference between the two lovers. In the second instance, Ianthe burns: nec lenius altera uirgo/ aestuat (764-65). The comparative, lenius, a marker of difference in other Ovidian representations of female desire, does not here contrast opposing gendered emotions, but is negated in order to construct two like masculinity, so that expression of their passions tends toward morally reprehensible extremes, especially adultery and promiscuity” (84). See also Richlin (1992: 203-5), Parker (in Hallet and Skinner: 58-59), and Craig Williams (50, 141).

See, e.g., Oliensis (110), Ormand (2005: 97-99) and Pintabone (passim) on Iphis’ feminine passivity.

Pintabone (263) suggests Ianthe’s “‘dowry of beauty’ (formae dote, 9.716-17) may imply that Ianthe is economically the equal of Iphis: her looks may be the only dowry she brings to the marriage.”

See Ormand (2005: 94) on modern narratives of egalitarian lesbian love in relation to this passage.

See Pintabone (263) on the similarity between the lovers.
states of being. Moreover, altera uirgo again blurs the distinction of the two since altera underlines that she is one of a pair.

Iphis’ love for Ianthe is an aspect of her filial pietas, since her father has chosen the bride and arranged the marriage. Iphis is simply embracing the wishes of her father, internalizing the paternal injunction as desire for an object her father has chosen. Her paternal alliance is reinforced by her name, inherited from her grandfather (708-9). Her transformation could be seen as the fulfillment of her father’s wish for a son (or a dead daughter): quae uoueam.../ utque marem parias (675-76). Iphis does not care what role she plays—bride or groom—, but leaves it up to another [male artist—she imagines Daedalus, but we know Ovid will be the artisan behind her transformation]: ipse licet reuolet ceratis Daedalus alis,/ quid faciet? num me puerum de uirgine doctis/ artibus efficiet? num te mutabit, Ianthe (742-44).90

Iphis does not inscribe herself as a boy. The role she plays is commanded by her mother who is following the orders of a goddess. Iphis’ and her mother’s deceit are therefore doubly feminine. Obedience is a passive position, while deception is an activity commonly attributed to women. Furthermore, although desire and action are scripted by the men of her family, for her name is taken from her grandfather and her gender performance is commanded by her father, her story takes place in an exclusively female world. This is not surprising, for Greek boys were likely raised in the women’s quarters,91 but the gynocentric narrative, where neither Ligdus nor any other man is an actor after the betrothal is mentioned, enhances Iphis’ femininity. Ovid’s innovation of Isis as a savior goddess may have augmented the female focus of the story since, as

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89 Cf. Ars 1.281, where the poet-praeeceptor compares male desire, which is more sparing, to the maddened passion of women: parcior in nobis nec tam furiosa libido.
90 Pintabone, 275.
91 See Golden (123) for child-rearing in the gunaikonitis.
noted earlier, women in particular were drawn to her cult and her worship. When mentioned by the elegists, the worship of Isis was a programmatic obstacle to his access to the puella. Iphis’ boyish disguise is also not mentioned again until Telethusa prays a second time to Isis, foregrounding the homosexual nature of her desire while helping the audience to forget that one of these girls looks, acts, and is assumed to be, a boy.

This feminine world is preoccupied with hiding Iphis’ biological sex from the world of men. For, as mentioned above, there is an implicit threat. Ligdus commands (mando, 679; mandabat, mandata, 681) that a female child be killed (necetur, 679). His mandate is softened by his language—he prays (uouveam, 675), weeps (et lacrimis uultum lauere profusis,/ tam qui mandabat, 680-81), and unwillingly (inuitus, 679) makes a request he abhors (quod abominor, 677)—and by his concern for his wife—he asks first that she have an easy labor (minimo ut releuere dolore, 675). Nevertheless, the narrator introduces Ligdus’ short speech as a warning (coniugis aures/ uocibus his monuit, 673-74), and tells us after that his decision was firm (certa...sententia, 684). The women in this story are already silent victims. Telethusa disguises her daughter so that she does not have to kill her. The nurse is implicated in Telethusa’s deception by her dependent status as servant or slave. Overt violence simmers just beneath the surface.93

92 Cf. Prop. 2.33.1-4: Tristia iam redeunt iterum sollemnia nobis:/ Cynthia iam noctes est operata decem./ atque utinam pereant, Nilo quae sacra tepente/ misit matronis Inachis Ausoniis. See also, Prop. 2.28.61-62, 4.5.34, Tib. 1.23-26, Ovid, Am. 1.8.73-74, 3.9.33-34.

93 Robins (48-50) also notes that the threat of violence is an important element of Ovid’s narrative. He interprets Iphis’ experience of her father’s “foundational prohibition” against a female child in terms of Freudian trauma. He argues that Iphis’ self-hatred is a result of her own internalization of that prohibition: “It is a predicament brought about by the law of the father that insists that certain gender hierarchies are natural and that their violation must be paid for by death, a law that is painfully internalized and compulsively repeated by the young Iphis” (50). This is compelling; however, Robins’ argument forgets the male author behind the construction, and what is motivating him to produce a subject like Iphis. In addition, Robins focuses solely on the implicit threat against Iphis, neglecting all of the other women implicated in the conspiracy.
The futility of Telethusa’s constant pleas to her husband not to “restrict her hopes within a narrow compass”94 (sed tamen usque suum uanis Telethusa maritum/ sollicitat precibus, ne spem sibi ponat in arto, 682-83), followed by certa in the first position of the next line (684), amply conveys her sense of anxiety and desperation in the face of inflexible law. Telethusa is grammatically confined and imprisoned, along with her futile prayers (vanis), by suum maritum. Hope, which is erotic in the Byblis passage and in Iphis’ own soliloquy,95 is here ambiguous, signifying perhaps a hope for the experience of motherhood and a healthy loving child, or, more darkly, the hope for her own well-being and position in the family as one who has dutifully born a male child to her husband.96 With such a mood we enter the women’s story.

94 Anderson’s (ad loc.) translation.
95 Cf. Byblis: spes tamen obscenas animo demittere non est/ ausa suo uigilans, 9.468-69 and inconcessa uque fateur/ spem Veneris, 638-39. See also nec cognita Byblis/ ante forem, quam spes uotorum certa fuisset, 9.533-34 and excidit et fecit spes nostras cera caducas, 9.597, less explicit sexual references, but given Byblis’ motivation for writing her letter, her hopes for its success are identical with the hope of seducing Caunus. Cf. Iphis, who refers to the spem Veneris of Pasiphae (9.739) and who a few lines later defines hope as an achievable activity connected to love, i.e., sex: spes est, quae capiat, spes est, quae pascat amorem, 749. In the same book, Deianira is called multorumque fuit spes...procorum (9.10) because of her beauty. Spes could refer to the hope of a good marriage, but certainly has erotic undertones given the emphasis on her looks (pulcherrima, 9.9) and the heroic rivalries the narrator details.
96 The “bacha posh” (“dressed up as a boy”) of Afghanistan, a modern example of parents cross-dressing their daughters, may give us perspective on the types of social pressures, threats, and punishments which a woman who has not given birth to a son can face. A recent article in the New York Times (Jenny Nordberg, “Afghan Boys are Prized, So Girls Live the Part,” September 20, 2010) describes the practice and shares anecdotal testimony from parents of and girls who were dressed and presented to society as boys for social and economic reasons in a gender-segregated society. Boys, even notional boys, are free to move about, help their fathers and take after school jobs which contribute to the family income. The article describes how the pressure is focused on the mother, who is considered a failure if she cannot produce a male child. “It is a commonly held belief among less educated Afghans that the mother can determine the sex of her unborn child, so she is blamed if she gives birth to a daughter.” A female politician, Mrs. Rafaat, reported that her political career and the reputation of her husband were being compromised by her lack of a son. She, a former bacha posh, decided to dress her daughter as a boy. What is most interesting is that the practice seems to be well-known, and the bacha posh, at least in the examples offered by the article, are known to be girls by some or most of the family and community. Of the Rafaats, the journalist reports: “…the appearance of a son before guests and acquaintances is just enough to keep the family functioning.” Most girls’ social genders are re-established at puberty, because their physical development makes their biological sex obvious (the problem presented by Antoninus/Nicander in the Leucippus story: ἐπεὶ δὲ ηὐξέτο ἢ κόη καὶ ἐγενέτο ἀφατόν τι κάλλος, 17.4), or because their family has arranged a marriage (Iphis’ situation). Zahra, a fifteen-year old bacha posh, is quoted as saying “Nothing in me feels like a girl,” when asked why she wanted to remain a boy. Mrs. Siddiqui, a former bacha posh, equates the transition back to a rebirth: “When you change back, it’s like you are born again, and you have to learn everything from the beginning…You get a whole new life.
We are left to imagine what would happen to any of these women if they were discovered to have been lying for so long about something so significant to Ligdus and the community at large. The narrator tells us that Telethusa has managed to postpone the wedding date, using health and religious excuses (766-67), but that these have run out. The day was close at hand. The verb itself, *institerant*, is suggestive of a threat of violence, for it can mean “to loom, threaten” of things, but also “to assail, press (in battle).”97 She is described as fearing (*timens*, 766) the wedding day. Although we are not told why, its juxtaposition with Ianthe’s own anticipation for the wedding (*quod petit haec Telethusa timens modo tempora differt*, 766) suggests it is because the wedding night will expose Iphis’ biological sex and Telethusa’s thirteen-year lie. Her actions again communicate her anxiety. This time she begs the goddess who enjoined her to lie initially, Io/Isis (770-781). She acts like a suppliant, loosening her daughter’s hair and her own, and embracing the altar: *crinalem capiti uittam nataque sibique/ detrahir et passis aram complexa capillis*, 771-72. Telethusa herself says that she (and Iphis) are afraid when she calls upon Isis to bring help and to heal their fear: *fer, precor, ’inquit ’opem nostroque medere timori*,’ 775. She also thanks (or blames) the goddess for the “fact that she [Iphis] is alive, and I go unpunished” (*quod uidet haec lucem, †quod non ego punior;†* 779), indicating that being discovered would have or potentially will result in some punishment for them both.

\[ ut\ dolor\ increuit\ seque\ ipsam\ pondus\ in\ auras\ expulit\ et\ nata\ est\ ignaro\ femina\ patre,\ iussit\ ali\ mater\ puerum\ mentita;\ fidemque \]

97 OLD, insto, 6, 2a.
From very early in the narrative, Ovid represents Telethusa engaged in deceit: *mentita*, 706; *ficti*, 707; *falleret*, 710; *mendacia fraude latebant*, 711; *ficto languore*, 767; *materiam ficti*, 769. She and the nurse, who is her fellow conspirator (*conscia*, 707) are in the know and opposed to the *ignaro patre* (705), Ligdus. That it is at the orders of a goddess (*pone graues curas, mandataque falle mariti*, 697) further excludes mortal men. Io/Isis’ commands replace those of Ligdus (the goddess’s language repeats the words of the narrator: *inuitus mando…tam qui mandabat, quam cui mandata dabantur*, 679, 681), the traditional head of house, and shift the women’s allegiance up from the symbolic kinship system governing normative gendered roles and preserving male rule of law (Telethus originally beseeched her husband with prayers: *Telethusa maritum/sollicitat precibus*, 682-83) to divine law. In the end, the women’s allegiance to Io/Isis pays off. The *spes* which Iphis shakes from her rational plan (*consilium*, 746) is identified by Telethusa in her prayers as the plan and dutiful gift of the goddess (*consilium munusque tuum est*, 780). The women’s deceit, however, does not threaten the masculine world, but works to restore it. The universe of Iphis is well-ordered and controlled by divine reason.

Men represent the law and the symbolic economy of kinship in this passage: Ligdus’ only agency is to command, i.e., lay down the law (681), and negotiate a marriage contract (715), while the grandfather’s name identifies Iphis as a masculine member of the paternal line (708). The reason controlling Iphis’ universe is thus aligned with masculinity even if the god is
female. Moreover, the assimilation of the Egyptian goddess to the maiden, Io, further strengthens the patriarchal message. Ovid calls Isis “daughter of Inachus” (Inachis, 687). Io’s myth as it is told in the first book of the Metamorphoses (583-746) focuses on Io’s relationship with her father, Inachus; the father of gods and men, Zeus; and the son who results from the union, Epaphus. Io is named as the daughter of Inachus by other poets as well, giving her patriarchal alignment a strong literary tradition.

Io’s metamorphosis is a rare example of an upward metamorphosis in Ovid’s poem—from cow to goddess (1.747). Likewise, Iphis’ transformation benefits her. Should one interpret her metamorphosis as an upward hierarchical movement similar to Io’s from beast to god, the conclusion drawn would work to further reinforce patriarchal hegemony where a change in status from female to male is equivalent to an increase in status. Io/Isis is in a sense protecting Iphis from the male violence of which she herself was victim (Jove raped Io; Ligdus threatens to kill Iphis), but her resolution allows Iphis to live unharmed because she is now a member of the sex who control the violence, not because she is divinely protected from it.

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98 Pintabone notes that these elements amount to the appearance of a “patriarchal hierarchy” “in order” (262).
99 Her tale begins with the Inachus’ mourning over her absence (Met. 1.583-87). Io is first seen by Zeus while she is returning from her father (a patrio redeuntem...flumine, 588-89; cf. Anderson and Bömer, ad loc.). Io seeks out her father in her animal form, with whom she manages to communicate in a pathetic scene (639-667).
100 Cf. Moschus, Europa, 44 (Ἰναχὶς Ἰώ); Prop. 2.33.4 (Inachis); Ov. Her. 14.105 (Inachi), Met. 1.611 (Inachidos uultus).
101 There are a number of ostensible similarities between Ovid’s representation of Io’s myth and Iphis’ in the Metamorphoses. After closer inspection, however, the similarities weaken. For example, in the Io episode, Jove deceives his wife in order to avoid her jealous rage; in the Iphis episode, Telethusa deceives her husband to save her daughter’s life. Io’s story opens with her father Inachus mourning the loss of his only daughter; Iphis’ with her father mourning his decision to kill his daughter. Jove’s deceit temporarily tortures Io; Telethusa’s/Isis’ deceit temporarily guards her life. Io experiences two transformations: to cow and then to goddess; Iphis experiences two transformations as well, but her form remains constant. Instead Iphis’ first transformation is into a cultural boy, her second into a “natural” boy.
As noted above, Iphis believes her love to be entirely new and therefore freakish. While we recognize the normativity of her desire and gender position, she does not, and she wishes for such normativity. Iphis’ description of her sexual desire (Veneris, 728) as nouus (727) echoes the narrator’s description of Byblis’ desire as a nouum monstrum (666-67). Iphis continues to describe her love for Ianthe using figures familiar from the Augustan discourse of desire, despite its misogynistic construction of female desire. She uses the common metaphor of fire (equas amor urit, 731; urit iones aries, 732; ignes, 746). She imagines desire as something which captures living things (conrepta cupidine, 734). The image of love capturing a lover and the metaphor of love as a fire are found throughout Augustan poetry to describe both men and women. Iphis, however, describes her desire as furiosior (737). This is the term with which Iphis genders her desire. The comparative form, expressing excess, “more than,” reinforces its feminine nature, while defining in opposition a normative degree zero of masculine desire. We have seen this sentiment expressed in Propertius 3.19 and Ars 1 as an introduction to lists of women driven by sexual desire. Propertius’ narrator compares Cynthia’s desire to his, claiming that hers has more control over her: Obicitur totiens a te mihi nostra libido;/ crede mihi, uobis

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102 The male elegiac lover is figured frequently as a captive. Cf., e.g., Ovid Am. 1.2.19-20: en ego, confiteor, tua sum noua praeda, Cupido;/ porrigimus uictas ad tua iura manus; or, expressed with less explicit language, in Propertius, who opens his collection with a description of Cupid as standing on his head in triumph (1.1.1-6). Combining the images of captive lover and love as fire, Vergil describes Dido as “captured” by a “hidden fire” for Aeneas at the opening of Aen. 4 (At regina graui iamdudum saucia cura/ uulnus alit uenis et caeco carpitur igni, 1-2; cf. Aen. 4.101), but also describes “every type” of creature suffering from the same “fire” in Geo. 3 (in furias ignemque ruunt: amor omnibus idem, 244; cf. Geo. 3.358). In erotic elegy, the fire of love is associated most frequently with the male amator. Ovid lists ignes as one of the weapons of Cupid, which he connects in the following pentameter with the elegiac meter of Tibullus (donce erunt ignes arcusque Cupidinis arma./ discentur numeri, culte Tibulle, tui, Am. 1.15.7-28); at the beginning of Amores 2, he offers his elegies as a means of helping young men to recognize the fire (of love) they are experiencing (agnoscat flammae conscia signa suae, 2.1.8); cf., e.g., Prop. 1.7.24, 1.10.10, 1.13.28. Ovid refers to Propertius’ elegies as flammae at Tr. 4.10.45 (saepe suos solitus recitare Propertius ignes). For the figure of fire as love, see, e.g., OLD, “ardeo,” 5-7; “flamma,” 8.a, b; “ignis,” 9; Maltby (2002) 122n.6, 418n.6; TLL, s.v., “ardeo,” II. B. “de ipsis hominibus, de iva studio furore amore superbia luctu;” “ignis,” III. A. “de amore et libidine;” “flamma,” II. A.1, a. “de ardore amoris.” See Pintabone (264-65) for a discussion of the image of love as a fire in this passage and in Latin literature.
The poet-praeceptor of the Ars says that men’s sexual desire is more sparing (parcior, 281), less maddened (nec tam furiosa, 281), while women’s sexual desire is keener (acrior, 342), and has more madness (plusque furoris, 342).

Iphis commands herself to control her feelings, to collect herself, and to shake from her counsel a love which is “hopeless” and “foolish.”

She calls her love “hopeless” (inops, 746) because it is for another woman. As demonstrated above, she cannot conceive of sex without an active and passive partner, and for her, these roles can only be played by a man and a woman. A marriage—the only context Iphis permits for a sexual relationship with her beloved—which is unconsummated is no marriage. In an erotic context, she does not admit the possibility that an individual of the female sex can perform masculinity successfully, although she herself is currently performing the role of boy in every other context so successfully that her father assumes she will transition to adult masculinity without difficulty. Erotic hope (spes), which nourishes love (pascat amorem, 749), is aligned in Iphis’ mind with loving (ama) what is permitted to a woman (fas, femina debes, 748), i.e., not

103 Propertius continues. Cynthia’s rabida nequitia is more likely to be controlled than a dry burning field will be quenched, a river will change its course, the Syrtes would be a peaceful port or Malea would be welcoming one:

necsitis captae mentis habere modum./ flamma per incensas citius sedet aristas,/ fluminaque ad fontis sint reditura caput,/ et placidum Syrtes portum et bona litora nautis/ praebat hospitio saeua Malea suo,/ quam possit uestros quisquam reprehenderere cursus/ et rabidae stimulos frangere nequitiae (Prop. 3.19.4-10). His poem thus constructs wild feminine desire as “natural” in the same way that the praeceptor of Ovid’s Ars does (see chapter 2 for a detailed discussion) and Iphis herself (see above).

104 Ars Am. 1: parcior in nobis nec tam furiosa libido:/ legitiimum finem flamma uirilis habet, 281-82; omnia feminea sunt ista libidine mota;/ acrior est nostra plusque furoris habet, 341-42.

105 Pintabone, 267 and passim.
another woman, and opposed to Iphis’ hopelessly destructive fire (ignes, 746). Iphis therefore privileges amor with spes and constructs it as socially mandated, repudiating her own desire, which is ignis, not amor, and without spes (inopes).

Iphis’ injunction to seek what is fas, and to love “what a girl should” (748) recalls Byblis’ story. At the beginning of the Byblis passage we are told that Byblis is a warning for girls to love what is permitted (Byblis in exemplo est ut ament concessa puellae, 9.454). Byblis at first tries to fight her obscenae flammae (509), admitting in an ironic aside that her love is nefas (obscenae procul hinc discedite flammae,/ nec nisi qua fas est germanae frater ametur, 509-10). In her letter, however, Byblis claims that such legalities are no concern for the young (551-52), and at the close of her story, Byblis publicly proclaims her “impermissible” hope for sexual love (inconcessaeque fatetur/ spem Veneris, 638-39). The repeated thematics create a strongly marked narrative association between the two contiguous stories, but only to foreground their difference. For Iphis banishes her ignes (passion) from her consilium (rational plan). In contrast, Byblis bans hers from her cors (nosto uetitus de corde fugabitur ardor, 502), a seat of emotion. Perhaps because Iphis is governing her desire with reason, she, unlike her Ovidian neighbor, is able to control it.107 She does not write a letter to Ianthe confessing her libido inconcessa, nor does she attempt to seduce Ianthe as a biological woman or outside of marriage.

In accordance with her obedient and pious nature, she assumes the gods will decide her fate.

106 I would like to thank Erik Gunderson for drawing my attention to the relationship between fas, spes, amor, and what is excluded.
107 Ormand (2005) defines Roman sexual deviancy as lack of control: “What was shameful was to be mastered by one’s desires, to be unable to control one’s sexual urges. Such a lack of control could lead to socially deviant desires” (80). See also Skinner (1991: passim).
uixque tenens lacrimas 'quis me manet exitus,' inquit, 'cognita quam nulli, quam prodigiosa nouaeque cura tenet Veneris? si di me [parcere uellent, parcere debuerant; si non, et] perdere uellent, naturale malum saltem et de more dedissent. 

(Met. 9.726-30)

Her total resignation of agency is emphasized by the repetition of parcere (728-29) and the repetition, assonance, and homoioteleuton of parcere uellent, perdere uellent, and (de) more dedissent in the last two feet of lines 728-30. She also implies that her prodigiosa cura is, without the intervention of the gods, deadly (exitus). Iphis’ sexual desire for Ianthe is overcome by her stronger desire for normativity. She comments that her desire is, in all other ways but biological, in line with society’s (quod uolo uult genitor, uult ipsa, socerque futurus;/ at non uult natura, potentior omnibus istis, 757-58). She wishes that the gods had given her a misfortune both naturale and de more. Her musings over what Daedalus, who constructed Pasiphae’s cow costume, could do to help her situation do not include a “boy” costume. The obvious handicraft would be a dildo, a device common enough in literature, especially Greek Old Comedy. Her failure to consider this solution speaks both to her sexual innocence—she really is the virgo sine arte who Phaedra and Byblis claim to be—and to her specifically normative, passive femininity, for Martial’s epigrams and Lucian’s poetry demonstrate that, at least a few generations after Ovid, the Romans associated the use of a dildo with the tribades. Instead, Iphis wonders which of the two girls the artificer will make into a boy: quid faciet? Num me

108 Tarrant has bracketted parcere...,et (9.128-29); nevertheless, were one to follow Heinsius in omitting these words, we are still left with an expression of resignation to the will of the gods in si di me perdere vellent, which fails to question the will of the gods or their justice, but questions only the punishment they exact.
109 OLD, exitus, 3.
110 For the use of dildos in ancient Greece and evidence of its use in homoerotic settings, see Brooten (54-58) and Rabinowitz (2002: 140-46, 165 n. 128-132, 135).
111 See Brooten (152-54). Ormand (2005: 91-92) cites Anderson (ad 726) on the humor of Iphis’ “new, revolutionary, unheard of love.”


The Latin is explicit about her ambivalence, while giving Ovid’s reader the bonus of a metaliterary tease: will the artificer change the story with his “doctis artibus?” As we have seen, Ovid has created a nuanced version of Leucippus through a change of names and the introduction of the goddess Isis. Iphis’ question, “will the artifex change you, Ianthe,” suggests that the ending, too, is open to innovation.

Iphis’ reference to *doctis artibus* also draws attention to her own lack of *ars*, noted above, and to the rhetorical strategies she could, but does not, exploit, further distancing Iphis from the Phaedra paradigm. Unlike Phaedra and Byblis who provide comparanda for their desires, Iphis does not offer any examples of myths similar to her own. We know from Nicander/Antoninus, of course, that there were mythological paradigms and we have considered those which appear in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. Iphis could also, but does not, draw upon the tradition of pederasty in the Greek world for models, nor does she cite Sappho. This literary oversight on Iphis’ part is another crucial instance of her difference from the other desiring women. Instead, Iphis lists examples which oppose her own story. Her animal exemplars are meant to demonstrate that in the wild, there is no female homosexuality (731-734). Iphis thereby participates in a tradition of erotic animal examples which Vergil employs in the *Georgics*, and Ovid employs elsewhere in his poetry. Her only mythological example is Pasiphae, whose heterosexual *spes Veneris* is again opposed to Iphis’ homosexual desire.

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112 I am grateful to Erik Gunderson for suggesting the association of *doctis artibus* with sophisticated literary allusivity, or lack thereof.

113 See chapter 2 for a discussion of this topos in *Georgics* 3.242-83 in comparison to Ovid’s animal exemplars in *Ars* 1.279-80 and Chapter 2, esp. n. 33 for further references on the topos in Greek and Latin literature. Cf. Myrrha (*Met.* 10.323-31). See Ormand (2005:89-90, 92-93) on Ovid’s play with this topos.

114 Ormand (2005), 89-90, 92-94.
Yet the setting of Iphis’ story, Crete, sets up the expectation that we are entering another narrative of Cretan female sexuality—the second in book 9 and the fourth so far in the *Metamorphoses*.

Fama noui centum Cretaenas forsitan urbes implesset monstri, si non miracula nuper Iphide mutata Crete propiora tulisset. *proxima Cnosiaco nam quondam Phaestia regno* progenuit tellus *ignotum* nomine Ligdum, *ingenua de plebe* uirum; *nec* census in illo *nobilitate sua* maior, *sed uita fidesque* *inculpata* fuit…

(Met. 9.666-73)

As Armstrong has well-shown, and Ovid’s own heroines admit, Crete is the locale par excellence for women with uncontrollable and unnatural sex drives. In her letter to Hippolytus, the Ovidian Phaedra, a Cretan herself, considers her lust an inherited curse, passed down by the women in her family: *hunc generis fato reddamus amorem* (*Her*. 4.53). Iphis also indirectly comments on the sexuality of Cretan women in her use of Pasiphae as an example of an unnatural love which is less mad than her own. When she describes Crete as bearing *omnia monstra* (735-36), followed by the example of Pasiphae who is identified by her desire and her family (*taurum dilexit filia Solis*, 736), she implicitly connects Crete’s monsters with female sexuality and its threat to the symbolic system of kinship. The mythological tradition very explicitly makes this connection. Europa, the mother of Minos, was raped by Zeus in the form of a bull. Pasiphae, the wife of Minos, gave birth to the Minotaur after having sex with a bull.

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115 Armstrong, passim.
116 As the narrator of the Scylla episode in book 8 has told us of the Minotaur: *creuerat opprobrium generis foedumque patebat/ matris adulterium monstrui noutiate biformis* (8.155-56). He is not only a *monstrum*, but an *opprobrium*, and *foedum*, directly linked to her adultery, not Pasiphae’s bestiality. This confirms that the monstrous aspect of female desire in the world of myth is not their frequently poor choices of mates, but their sexual activity outside of a marriage sanctioned by the family and the law. See Bro oven (120-21), Or mand (2005: 86), and Parker (in Hallet and Skinner: 58-59) for the “constellation” of “adultery, promiscuity, and the active role in sex.”
Her two daughters by Minos, Ariadne and Phaedra, were both lovers of Theseus. Ariadne betrayed her father because of desire. Phaedra pursues her step-son, unable to fight her desire.

Despite the setting and Iphis’ own self-construction in the familiar discourse of female desire, the narrative frame soon marks this story as different, as does the narrative transition describing Iphis’ tale as *miracula nuper* rather than *noui monstri* (666-67), noted earlier. Telethusa is called *Cressa* when she begins to supplicate Io/Isis after her dream: *Cressa manus tollens, rata sint sua uisa, precatur* (703). This is the only occurrence of the epithet in the *Metamorphoses* and stands in stark contrast to its use in the *Ars Amatoria*, where it is used to identify the adulteress Aerope (1.327), and *Heroides*, where Phaedra self-identifies as *Cressa* (4.2).117 The employment of this epithet in a religious context, however, hints that we are not dealing with the usual crowd of Cretan women. To begin with, we are not in Knossos, the home of Minos and his family, but in Phaestia, close to the Knossian kingdom, but distinct from it.118 Iphis, like Phaedra and Byblis, employs the Augustan semiotics of female desire. In the case of Phaedra and Byblis, such a discourse was harmful because it left no room for a positive expression of active female desire. Iphis, in contrast, does not trap herself. Instead her soliloquy strikes the reader or listener as naïve, innocent and touching. The reason for this is the discursive construction of her desire in the narrative frame, which does not figure her desire as *furor*, sickness, or bacchic ecstasis. Iphis’ ability to control her impulses rationally likens her desire to

117 Fulkerson (on Her. 4.2; 129) notes that *Cressa* is more frequently used in Roman erotic elegy to refer to Ariadne. She provides a list of its elegiac uses at p. 129, n. 23, which includes Ariadne, Pasiphae, and Aerope.

118 Phaestos was located on the South coast of Crete (Barrington Atlas of the Greek and Roman World, 2000, “Creta,” 60, C2). See Anderson (ad loc.)
male desire as it is characterized by the poet-praeceptor of the Ars or the poet-lover of Propertius 3.19—moderate and under control.\footnote{See n. 89 above.}

Class is another marker of difference in this passage. Ligdus, Telehusa, and Iphis are economically removed from the center of Cretan aristocracy, the royal palace in Knossos, as well as geographically. “The land bore an undistinguished\footnote{See \textit{OLD}, \textit{ignotus}, 3., “lacking fame or honour, inconspicuous, obscure.”} man, Ligdus by name” (\textit{progenuit tellus ignotum nomine Ligdum}, 670).\footnote{See Wheeler (192) for further wordplay emphasizing Ligdus’ “plebeian” status.} The physical and economic distance from the notorious Cretan royal family adjusts the reader’s expectations. The class indistinction also adjusts expectations, since the lower class, while often aligned with the base \textit{vulgus}, is just as frequently associated with simplicity, honesty, and hard-work.\footnote{Wheeler (192-93) notes that Antoninus’ Lamprus is a poor man born from a noble family (Ant. Lib. 17.1), a background indicated by the association with brightness connoted by the names Lamprus, Galataea, and Leucippus. “Ovid thus appears to be ‘correcting’ the source by making his a tale of humble piety rewarded rather than nobility recognized.” Cf. Ovid’s depiction of the humble and pious couple, Baucis and Philamon (8.624-724: \textit{parua quidem stipulis et canna tecta palustri, sed pia}, 8.630-31) who graciously received Jupiter and Mercury, disguised as humans, and who were rewarded by the transformation of their home into a golden temple and the granting of their wishes to serve as priests in the temple and to die together.} This is especially true in Rome, where agriculture was the privileged source of income and the peasant farmer was ideologically valorized.\footnote{Lyne (1980), 155, \textit{(in Woodman), 47-49. Several famous works on agriculture were written during the Republic (e.g., Cato’s \textit{De Agricultura}, Varro’s \textit{Res Rusticae}, Vergil’s \textit{Eclogues} and \textit{Georgics}). Even the elegists engaged this theme. See, e.g., Tibullus 1.5, and Propertius 2.19, 3.13. On this theme in Tibullus and its relation to Roman ideals of the rural life, see Miller (2004: 95-129) and Lyne (1980: 149-63). See Astin (240-66) on Cato’s \textit{De Agricultura} and the aristocratic “farmer.” See Syme (1939: 450-53) on the tension between the Augustan promotion of the “peasant farmer” and the reality of the agricultural economy after the proscriptions, to which Vergil’s own family was victim.} The elder Cato tells us in the \textit{praefatio} 4 of his \textit{de Agricultura}: \textit{at ex agricolis et viri fortissimi et milites strenuissimi gignuntur, maximeque pius quaestus stabilissimusque consequitur minimeque invidia}\textit{os, minimeque male cogitant\textae sunt qui in eo studio occupati sunt.}
While the landowning aristocracy aligned themselves with the humble farmer, by the late Republic wealth was also associated with decadence and moral turpitude. Livy’s *praefatio* cites this as a cause for the decline of Rome: *nuper diuitiae auaritiam et abundantes uoluptates desiderium per luxum atque libidinem perundei perendique omnia inuexere.* Likewise, in the poems of Catullus, Skinner detects a sense of “moral dignity” in Catullus’ socio-economic position in relation to the elite Lesbia. “Lesbia, the faithless noblewoman, becomes an avatar of ingrained aristocratic corruption.” One does not have to look far to find historical upper class women in the late Republic and early Empire who acquired a reputation for sexual promiscuity and/or perversion. Figures such as Cleopatra, whom we considered earlier, Clodia, Sempronia, Fulvia, and even Augustus’ own daughter and granddaughter, both named Julia, were represented by contemporary and later male Roman authors, rhetors, and historians as sexually aggressive and dangerous, their sexuality often conflated with their violent, dangerous behavior. Apuleius tells us that Clodia is Catullus’ Lesbia and some have argued that this new woman was the inspiration for the *puellae* of Roman erotic elegy, although the current consensus

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124 See, e.g., Horace *Odes* 3.16.17-18: *crescentem sequitur cura pecuniam/ maiorumque fames.* In this poem, Horace explicitly connects wealth with the sexual corruption of women. See Oliensis (in Hallett and Skinner: 165-67) for a discussion of this poem.

125 Sallust also identifies greed and decadence as a contemporary problem in Roman society. At the beginning of *Bellum Catilinae* he states: *Etiam tum ulta hominum sine cupiditate agitabatur: sua quoique satis placebant* (2.1); at the beginning of *Bellum Iugurthinum:* *At contra quis est omnium, his moribus, quin diuitiis et sumptibus, non probitate neque industria cum maioribus suis contendat?* (4.7).


127 Such attacks, of course, seem to be motivated by attempts to remove guilt from a man in order to repair a male homosocial alliance, as in the case of Fulvia, or by anxieties over women’s political influence. For as Syme (1939), who appears to have shared the Roman anxiety, put it, “[i]nfluences more secret and more sinister were quietly at work all the time—women and freedmen. The great political ladies of the Republic, from the daughters of consular families such as Sempronia and Servilia down to minor but efficient intriguers like that Praecia … found successors in the New State” (384-85). See Bauman (60-154), Delia, Edwards (35-62), Hejduk, Hillard, Joshel (in Richlin, 1992b: 119-21 and passim), Pomeroy (1995: 185-89), and Wyke (2002: 39-40; in Edmondson, 2009: 350-51) for representations of the women listed above as sexually aggressive and for further references on the subject.
seems to be that the elegiac *puellae* are mere literary constructs, now resembling aristocratic women, now *meretrices*.\(^{128}\) Ovid himself claims that, were it not for wealth, the mythological women under consideration in this thesis would never have gotten into so much trouble (*Rem. Am.* 743-48).\(^{129}\) Despite Ligdus’ humble economic standing, his virtuous character is extolled:

\[uita fidesque/ inculpata fuit\] (672-73). And he begs the forgiveness of the virtue *pietas* for his commands to his wife (*Pietas, ignosce*, 679). Telethusa’s virtuous character is also marked by her piety towards the goddess, Io/Isis.\(^{130}\) Moreover, Wheeler notes the etymology of Telethusa suggests religious devotion, through its derivation from the Greek word *τελέθω* (“come into being”) and hence its connection to *τελετή* (“initiation rite”).\(^{131}\)

Ligdus is “unknown” (670). Words like *ignotus* (*in + gnotus*, pple. of *nosco*) and *cognotus* (pple. of *con + nosco*) derived from *nosco* (“to get to know,” [in pf. tense] “to know”) resonate on many levels in the context of *Metamorphoses* 9. “Unknown” has the connotation of lacking a reputation, not famous, like the infamous Byblis or Pasiphae. It also connotes a lack of sexual initiation.\(^{132}\) Byblis is conceived when her mother, Cyane, is “known” (*cognita*, 452) by Miletus. Byblis wishes “not to be known” by Caunus until her hopes are certain (*nec cognita Byblis*, 533). Phaedra calls the hunting she is drawn toward in her pursuit of Hippolytus “unknown arts” (*ignotas...artes*, 37). “Unknown” also anticipates the description Iphis gives to

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\(^{128}\) See James (6-7) and Wyke (2002: 11-45) for a summary of this debate and further references. See James (2003: 21-25, 35-68, and passim) for a proposed “type” of Roman woman the *puella* reflects.

\(^{129}\) *perdat opes Phaedra, parces, Neptune, nepoti,/ nec faciet pauidos taurus auitus equos./ Cnosida fecisses inopem, sapienter amasset:/ diuitiis alitur luxuriosus amor./ cur nemo est, Hecalen, nulla est, quae beperit Iron?/ nempe quod alter egens, altera pauper erat* (*Rem. Am.* 743-48).

\(^{130}\) We are, of course, told that he is humble, but free-born (*ingenua de plebe*, 671; *OLD*, *ingenuus*, 2., “free-born”), an important distinction, allowing Ligidus’ character to be noble although he himself is not. See Pintabone, 262-63.

\(^{131}\) Wheeler, 194. Wheeler also points out a similar etymology for Ianthë’s father’s name: Telestes, meaning “initiate” or “initiator.” See also Ahl, 149.

\(^{132}\) See Adams (190) for the use of *nosco* and its compounds to mean “‘know’ (of carnal knowledge).” He points to Cat. 72.1, 61.180 and Ovid, *Her.* 6.133 (*cognovit*) as examples.
her desire “known to no one” (*cognita...nulli*, 727), i.e., “unknown.” Iphis is referring to the novelty of her desire, but the very similar adjective used to describe Ligdus’ geographic location suggests that “known to no one” is a good thing in Crete, for to be known is connected in book 9 with female sexuality and famous paradigms demonstrating its danger.

Phaedra in her letter commanded an acquisitive masculine gaze, destabilizing her own gendered position as well as her beloved’s. By contrast, Iphis is represented at no point in the narrative as gazing at Ianthe’s body, in accordance with her construction as a feminine subject.133 All of the women in the tale including Iphis are exclusively under the scrutiny of the male gaze of Ligdus, the narrator (whose gender is unmarked, but by association with the male author, is also implicitly male), and the reader/voyeur, directed by these male eyes. Ianthe is introduced as the object of a masculine gaze, that of the narrator (we are told she is blond before we are even given her name: *flauam...lanthen*, 715), and the community at large, for she is praised most of all by the Phaestians, for her beauty, valuable enough to stand in for her dowry (715-17).

The opening of the passage also draws attention to and emphasizes the materiality of Telethusa’s pregnancy. The heaviness is described very literally by adjectives with this meaning (*grauidae*, 673; *grauem uentrem*, 685; *graues curas*, 697), by the noun, “weight,” referring to the child itself (*maturo pondere*, 685; *pondus*, 704), and by verbs meaning to lighten (*releuere*, 675; *leuarit*, 698).134 Even before she is born, Iphis is heavy and material, a “weight” (*pondus*) made

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133 See Fredrick (1995), who interprets the masculine gaze upon feminine mythological figures in Roman wall paintings and its connection to positions of power using Mulvey’s ideas of the voyeuristic and sadistic (masculine) gaze. See chapter 3 n. 30-33, and chapter 4 n. 113 for bibliography on the gendered dynamics of the gaze in literature.

134 In a paper presented at the 2010 CAMWS-Southern Section meeting (Saturday, October 30, Richmond, VA),
heavier, so Ligdus suggests, by her biological sex: onerosior altera sors est (676). While onus can simply mean an unborn child,\textsuperscript{135} because it is carried by the mother, his two requests—that her labor “be lightened” (reuelere, 675) in the preceeding line and that she bear a son in the same line—encourages the opposition of a heavy and therefore material female body as foetus and her lighter male counterpart. She is not just a metaphorical burden to the family, but embodied in a way that a boy or man is not.

Our next description of Iphis is set thirteen years later. She is first situated symbolically in the family through the name of her grandfather, an androgynous name (708-10). Almost immediately we are directed to look at her equally androgynous body, inscribed as a boy (712), but beautiful as a boy or girl: 

\textit{cultus erat pueri; facies, quam siue puellae/ siue dares puero, fieret formosus uterque} (712-13). What is most interesting about these two lines is the grammatical sex change which anticipates the discursive (and presumably biological) change at the close of the story. “The dress was a boy’s; the [grammatically feminine] face, which, should you give it to a girl:/ or to a boy, both would be [grammatically masculine and] beautiful.” With the move from lines 712 to 713 we also switch grammatical genders from the feminine \textit{facies} and \textit{puella} to the masculine \textit{puer} and \textit{formosus uterque}. Finally, we are invited to look at Iphis’ body as it changes (786-90): her feet (\textit{gradu}), her complexion (\textit{ore}), her countenance (\textit{uultus}), and her hair (\textit{capillis}). Once her woman’s body disappears, the story comes to an end.

\textsuperscript{135} OLD, onus, 1b.
In contrast to the materiality of the women in this episode, Ligdus as the only male actor, is never represented in physical terms. He is described only in terms of abstract characteristics (ingenua de plebe, 671; nobilitate, 672; uita fidesque/ inculpata, 672-72). Moreover, the narrator tells us that Ligdus is born from mother Crete: proxima Cnosiaco nam quondam Phaestia regno/ progenuit tellus ignotum nomine Ligdum (679-80). Identifying the land as the mother of Ligdus writes real women and their sexuality out of his family background. Arthur tracks a similar discursive process in Hesiod’s Theogony. She notes that poetic creativity is aligned with culture and with the divine, shifting corporeality (specifically hunger and consumption) and mortality (which requires food) to the material world, aligned with Woman through the figure of the first Woman. Loraux finds this shift in Athenian myths of autochthony, where Athena becomes the “mother” of Athenian men, while Pandora, a pan-Hellenic figure, is the mother of all women, not just Athenian, limiting biological reproduction and its materiality to Woman and freeing Athenian [man] from human woman, the body, and mortality through its divine, non-material origin.

The Iphis story does similar work. Ligdus’ virtue is disconnected/biologically decoupled from the notorious female sexuality associated with Crete, which stands as a paradigm for active female sexuality as a whole. Ligdus’ lack of a human mother also removes from Iphis’...
construction such an inheritance. Iphis, of course, has a mother, but her biological birth must be corrected by a divine augmentation. In the end, human reproduction is aligned with both Woman (in the fully embodied, pregnant figure of Telethusa) and female sexuality. Human reproduction is replaced by divine creation, which is aligned with poetic creation through the figure of Daedalus (742-44), for both can make girls into boys. Both disembodied creative processes—divine and poetic—, furthermore, are opposed to transgressive female sexuality by default, since the absence of human reproduction—autochthony—avoids any association with the female paradigms of abject erotic desire: Pasiphae, Phaedra, or even Ariadne.

Ligdus describes Woman as a lack: “…and that you have a male [child]. The other outcome is more burdensome and fortune denies [it masculine] strength” (utque marem parias. onerosior altera sors est./ et uires fortuna negat, 676-77). Ancient grammarians etymologized uir (“man”) from uis (“strength”), an association which suggests Ligdus is defining Woman as one who is not a man: uires fortuna negat. In addition to the semantic association between uis and uir in this passage, Wheeler notes, is the etymology of Iphis’ name, which derives from the Homeric Greek word ἴς (“force”), cognate with uis. Woman is not even signified, but is only referred to as the “other outcome” of a birth—if she does not have a

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138 Wheeler argues this is a secondary but equally important reading of 677, the primary reading being “fortune denies him [Ligdus] the resources [for uires; emphasis added] to raise a girl,” a reading which “portends the sexual crisis of Iphis who, as a woman, will indeed lack the uires to consummate her love for Ianthe” (196-97). For Wheeler, the proleptic statement refers only to the uires lacking for a character in this story. I take Ligdus’ statement to refer more broadly to the weakness which makes Woman a burden because she is dependent on male uis. Pace Pintabone, 276.
139 See Wheeler (194-96) for a discussion of and further references for the association and etymology of uir from uis and the conceptual connections between force, violence, sexuality, and masculinity. See also Maltby (s.v. “vir”) and Ahl (38-40).
140 Wheeler (194 and passim) claims that Ovid’s audience would have caught the bilingual pun because bilingual puns are common in the poem and because uis was used in imitation of the Homeric ἴς. See Wheeler (194, nn. 24, 25) for comparanda and references. He points also to 9.708-709 (197, n. 35), where, he suggests, as here, the text hints at the etymology of Iphis with syllabic wordplay with the repetition of –ui- on either side of Iphis.
male child, the *altera sors* is logically female in a binary system. Iphis’ transformation is described as a waxing, filling this lack (*maiore, 787; augentur, acrior, 788; plus, 790)*.

Ironically, in this story, the *altera sors*, which Iphis embodies, is a bit more complicated. Iphis’ fluid biological sex and cultural gender suggest that desire is not determined by gender or sex,\(^{141}\) that there is more than one alternative to a biologically and culturally male child, and that these alternatives may be subject to change after birth.

The repetition of *uir*, as both a noun and a compound, throughout the tale destabilizes its signifying power. In line 723 (below), the narrator articulates the sex/gender quandary using the word *uir*. The lines that follow draw attention to the acoustic similarities between the signifiers for the two sexes.

\[
\text{quamque } \text{uirum putat esse, uirum fore credit Ianthe;}
\]
\[
\text{Iphis amat, qua posse frui desperat, et auge}
\]
\[
\text{hoc ipsum flammæ ardetque in uirginæ uirgo,}
\]
\[
(Met. 9.723-25)
\]

Iphis began with *uis*, simply not enough.\(^{142}\) This is confirmed by the augmentation, not the addition of her transformation.

\[
\text{mater abit templo. sequitur comes Iphis euntem,}
\]
\[
\text{quam solita est, maiore gradu; nec candor in ore}
\]
\[
\text{permanet et uires augentur, et acrior ipse est}
\]
\[
\text{uultus et incomptis breuior mensura capillis,}
\]
\[
\text{plusque uigoris adest habuit quam femina. nam quae 790}
\]
\[
\text{femina nuper eras, puer es}....
\]
\[
(Met. 9.786-91)
\]

Compare this to Antoninus’ tale of Leucippus, where a penis is created: Φυτωη Λητο,/  

\(^{141}\) Pintabone, 277-78.  
\(^{142}\) Wheeler (passim), by contrast, argues that Iphis’ etymology and the constellation of Latin words denoting masculinity, strength, and sexual power (e.g., *uir, uis, uires, uigor*) implicitly provides an “omen” of her eventual sex change. All of these words point to what she does not yet have, but soon will. Ancient grammarians derive *uirgo* from *uir*: Festus 261: *feminas antiqui...uiras appellabant; unde adhuc permanent uirgins et uiragines*; Isid. Diff. 1.590: *virgo est quae virum nescit*. See Ahl (39-41), Maltby (s.v. “virgo”), and Wheeler (198, n.40).
ἡτὶς ἐγνυει μήδεα τῇ κόρῃ (17.6), effecting a biological sex change. In Iphis’ case, the physical changes are quantitative not material. 143 Her step is wider, her strength has increased, her expression is keener, her hair is shorter, and there is more liveliness to her. In Ovid’s text, Iphis becomes a puer by the modification of her former feminine body and her physical inscriptions. Iphis’ sex change is effected not by Leto “the grower” of new genitalia, but by her own performance and costume.

On the one hand, such a transformation speaks to Roman ideas about the transformative power of mimesis, as attested in Seneca Rhetor’s story of Gallus Vibius, who became insane through imitating insanity. 144 A metamorphosis into a madman is one thing, but a metamorphosis into the opposite sex seems more radical than mere performance can achieve. 145 Poetry, however, does have such power. A discursive transformation is achievable through art.

143 Wheeler (199-200, and passim) argues Ovid’s wordplay with words denoting strength, sexual potency, and masculinity, allows him to tell the story both ways: “etymological wordplay allows the poet to refer indirectly to delicate anatomical details whose explicit mention, the decorum of Latin epic apparently forbids… The reader attentive to the issue of etymologizing in this tale may recognize in the words iires and uigor a semantic connection with the name of Iphis that signals the fulfillment of what the maiden had been missing to consummate her marriage with Ianthe… As the last line of the tale amply testifies [potitur sua puer Iphis Ianthe, 797], the miracle of sexual transformation is also a miracle of language” (199-200). As noted above (n. 41), in one mythological variation, Isis generates a phallus for Osiris.

144 Seneca Rhetor, Controversiae 2.1.26: nam dum insanos imitator, dum lenocinium ingeni furor putat, quod toties simulabat ad verum redigit. In his erotodidactic poems, Ovid’s praeceptor enjoins his pupils to simulate emotions, for through performance they will become sincere: est tibi agendus amans imitandaque uulnera uerbis;/...saepe, quod incipiens finxerat esse, fuit, Ars Am. 1.611, 616; quod non es, simula, positosque imitare furores:/ sic facies uere, quod meditatus eris,/... qui poterit sanum fingere, sanus erit, Rem. Am., 497-98, 504. Myerowitz (29-40) argues that, in the Ars, “man” and “love” are constructed as performativities in order to “lay bare the essential and ultimate lack of seriousness of culture… This human, cultural part of love (as of all human existence) is all we can alter, choose, create, and control, and it is human creation, response, choice, and control that is the focus of Ovid’s poem” (31-32).

145 Hallett (1989: passim) argues that the masculinization of tribades in Roman literature effects a sort of metaphorical sex change, and (217-22) that the “real life” examples of female-to-male transformations, offered by Pliny Maior (Nat. Hist., 7.23) and cited by Aulus Gellius (Noct. Att., 9.4.12ff.) allay anxieties over female homoeroticism: “The widely held Roman notion that female homoeroticism could not be expressed without masculine sexual parts and practices is, of course, itself a denial of biological and social reality … But it was evidently easier for Roman males who wrote about tribadism to deny the actual and avow the unlikely than to abandon assumptions about how, according to biological nature and Roman culture, women ought to behave” (221-22).
Even Iphis believes this to be true, although the artist she had in mind was a sculptor of sorts, and not the author behind the narrative voice. It is almost as if Iphis’ story reinvests poetic discourse with authority after its failure in the Byblis story before it, not to mention the letters of the *Heroides*. There is no need to generate any new source of power (*uis*) since it has always been there.

Before there is a “happily ever after” for Iphis’ tale, however, the masculinity in which she has always participated by means of performance (dressing and living as a boy) and discourse (Iphis, *uirgo*, and their semantic links to words meaning strength, power, and man), must be manifest (to Ovid’s readers) and dominant. While we have seen masculine positions performed by feminine bodies (e.g., Phaedra’s performance of the literary role of an *amator*), their performances are not successful, but reveal the cause of their failure through the process. Phaedra’s active, masculine writing persona is repeatedly disrupted by her irrepressible “tragic core.” Iphis’ success, following the assumption of her masculine “core,” restores the normative gendered categories of Roman discourses of desire and power, defeating the Phaedra-like connotations hiding in the figure of Isis, Iphis’ own self-assessment, and the threat of violent tragic *peripeteia* which is lifted by Isis’ miracle. Such a resolution suggests that Iphis obtains her flower (*Ianthe*) by means of her power (*uis*), available to her because she was always destined to become a man (*uir*).

The etymological play, however, through its ubiquity in the episode prior to her transformation, and especially through the acoustic similarities between the words for maiden and man, destabilizes the oppositional categories feminine and masculine, while the comparatives which describe the augmentation of Iphis’ masculinity (*maiore*, 787; *acrior*, 788; *breuior*, 789; *plusque uigoris*, 790) draw attention back to the comparatives used to repudiate
abject female desire and delineate normative masculine desire in *Ars* 1, a technique repeated in the rhetoric of the passages we have considered from *Heroides* and *Metamorphoses*. Iphis’ transformation as an augmentation of already present characteristics exposes the Roman man in the abject body of Phaedra. Just as Iphis the *uir* is an augmented *uirgo*, so too, normative, masculine desire shares fundamental characteristics with feminine desire. They are in fact different expressions of the same experience.

In addition to troubling the power dynamic which subtends sex as our Roman sources consistently define it, Iphis’ tale, as it is told by Ovid, suggests a new row on Parker’s “teratogenic grid.” Through her simultaneous identification with feminine and masculine subjectivities and her passion for an object of desire whom she and the narrator conceive of as in all ways equal (but for Ianthe’s ignorance of Iphis’ biological sex), Ovid’s reader/audience unwittingly includes in its definition of sexual desire a desire informed by a new lack of active/passive configurations. “Ovid has created a situation in which his lovers are, startlingly, equal.”¹⁴⁶ Before her transformation, Iphis neither longs to penetrate nor be penetrated by her beloved. Her novel egalitarian desire stands in stark contrast to the behavior of the other characters in the story who, in their various ways, make decisions and act on the basis of assumptions informed by the normative Roman ideas of sex, sexuality and marriage.

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¹⁴⁶ Ormand (2005), 92; n. 56.
Chapter 6 Conclusion

Servare potui: perdere an possim rogas?
(Ovid, Medea, quoted by Quintilian 8.5.6)

In the second chapter we looked at the effect of the very traditional catalogue-style list the poet-praeceptor offers of mythological desiring women. Such a list constructs all of the examples, including Phaedra, and the category of desirable women who are the subject of the erotodidactic poem’s study, as paradigms, substitutable as symbols who represent the irrational, dangerous (to men and their families) desire of women. Phaedra-like figures are repeatedly represented as “doing gender wrong.”¹ Ovid’s play with the borders of normativity and the abject shows he is aware of the performativity of power and gender hierarchies, that it’s all in the costume one wears. His representations of punishments, however, (e.g., the list of women and men punished because of women’s desire from Ars 1, divine vengeance for various slights throughout the Met., or the silencing and often painful metamorphoses of women in the same poem) reveal that Ovid is also aware that one aspect of this performance of power is violent repression. Although the borders are imaginary, crossing them may get you killed, whether you are a woman behaving like a man or a man behaving like a god.

The poet-praeceptor of the Ars is a narrative voice wholly separate from Ovid, the author writing him. Recent scholars have noted that the poet-praeceptor is represented as an

¹ Cf. Butler (2006), 190. See chapter 1 for an explanation of Butler’s formulation of the social pressures upon individuals to perform normative gender roles as a society or state defines them, as well as my application of her theory as an interpretive tool for Ovid’s representations of Phaedra-like figures.
untrustworthy and self-contradictory teacher.² Such a representation distances Ovid from the poet-praeceptor’s lessons. Furthermore, Ovid’s non-didactic poems do not just list Phaedra-like figures in order to teach a lesson or prove a point. As we have seen in poems like Heroides 4 and the Metamorphoses, Ovid often represents their experiences of love from their point of view. Instead of the teacher as narrator we have the character herself narrating the story or an omniscient narrator who has access to her experience. Phaedra (Her.4) and Byblis are attuned to social performance as a means of constructing themselves as a subject in relation to other members of a family and larger community. In Ovid, their self-construction through performance is complicated by the memory of the tragic performance of Phaedra on the Attic stage, whose multiple incarnations have influenced Ovid’s depiction. Their new performance is an attempt to redefine their exemplary meaning in the mythic megatext. The Ars list offers a representative example of their symbolic value in the megatext. Byblis is summed up as: uetito quae fratris amore/ arsit et est laqueo fortiter ultra nefas (1.283-84). Phaedra is referred to indirectly in the poet-praeceptor’s direct address to Hippolytus’ horses: Hippolytum rabidi diripuistis equi (1.338). Although the represented writing subjects, Phaedra and Byblis, demonstrate that they know that the social performance of their gendered roles and the literary performance of their tragic roles have the power to deconstruct and reconstruct themselves as a signifying symbol, Ovid further demonstrates that, in their case, gender and genre create a difference in poetic authority. Women, symbolized by the tragic figure of Phaedra, cannot manipulate the symbolic economy.

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² See chapter 2 for a discussion of Ovid’s unreliable narrator. See also, e.g., Downing (6-70), Myerowitz (37), and Newlands (1995: 52-53).
Ovid seems to be recommending that his reader take advantage of the performative aspect of social and gender roles and status, but be aware of his appropriate place (keep up appearances) and audience (always be mindful of how you are seen). By representing these “authors” as writing their own stories, Ovid is implicitly aligning himself with these heroines.\(^3\)

On the surface, his rhetorical strategy of associating his own poetic voice with their voices, which he repeatedly represents as unsuccessful and powerless, appears to be self-defeating. Enterline has argued that such an alignment in his *Metamorphoses* is a symptom of Ovid’s anxiety over poetic authority. Identifying Echo (among other female figures in the *Met.*) as a surrogate for Ovid, Enterline notes that “[a]lthough the poet pictures his own survival on his reader’s lips, his own earlier story of the same circumstance [i.e., Echo] stresses two problems the final lines occlude: even the most faithful, literal revoicing alters the original.”\(^4\)

Ovid was known for his inability or unwillingness\(^5\) to control his rhetorical style. His rhetorical excess has been represented as a characteristic *natural* to Ovid, reproducing the categories of *ars* and *ingenium*, while positing it as his *essence* as a person, not a poet.

Quintilian concludes that Ovid’s *Medea* demonstrates what the poet was capable of *si ingenio*

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\(^3\) For a discussion of Ovid’s alignment with Phaedra in *Her.* 4 through a process of “transvestite ventriloquism,” see chapter 3; with Byblis in *Met.* 9, see chapter 4, esp. n. 19.

\(^4\) Enterline, 57. “I understand the embodied ego in Ovidian poetry to be an unstable, composite linguistic effect subject to recurrent failure” where “this subject emerges in the wake of linguistic crisis” (22). Enterline cites, e.g., Io (45-46) frightened by her own voice after her metamorphoses: *et conata queri mugitus edidit ore/ [pertimuitque sonos propriaque exterrita voce est]* (1.637-38). Voice is “lost” by characters throughout the *Met.* literally and figuratively (through the loss of control of the voice and its power). “Ovid’s fantasies and anxieties about the performative power of his own rhetoric inform each text’s libidinal economy” (15). Enterline concludes that representations of female victims, especially ventriloquized stories (e.g., Arethusa), in the *Met.*, resist ideologies of gender categories and subordination. In the libidinal economy of the *Met.*, she argues, desire is violence, but the gender with which that violence is associated is not determined (85). I have argued, instead, that Ovid’s representations reinvest such ideologies with authority by repeating them, even when they are parodic. Note that Enterline’s analysis is focused on rape narratives in the *Met.*, while I have looked closely at desiring women in the *Ars*, *Heroïdes*, and *Met.*

\(^5\) Quintilian accuses Ovid of being *nimium amator ingenii sui* (*Inst. Orat.*, 10.1.88) and Seneca Rhetor claims that Ovid was well aware of his “faults”: *non ignoravit vitia sua, sed amavit* (*Controv.* 2.2.12).
suo imperare quam indulgere maluisset (Inst. Orat. 10.1.98). Even a modern scholar, Nikolaidis, commenting on Ovid’s foray into tragedy, has opined: “for Ovid’s temperament, inspiration and fancy could hardly be accommodated within the strict limitations of this genre. His natural bent and unrivalled dexterity in handling amorous themes…were practically incompatible with the rigid form and solemn contents of tragedy. Consequently, it is highly improbable, despite Quintilian’s view, that the tragic Ovid, composing in a literary province alien to his personal liking and natural aptitude, would be for posterity so attractive a poet as Ovid the elegist” [emphasis added].

Viewed from this perspective, representations of excessive women could be merely an effect of their author’s excessive “nature.” Instead, I suggest that the authorial voice of Ovid, who controls these representations, is aligned with reason behind the madness. Her voice rescues his because it repositions him within legitiimi fines (Ars 1.282) in opposition to the comparative excessiveness (plus furoris, Ars 1.342) of the female voices whose desire is a metaphor for artistic creation and who are sometimes represented as artists.

Harvey’s explanation of the effects of “transvestite ventriloquism,” which we considered in connection with Phaedra’s epistle in chapter 3, offers one motivation for such an alignment. As Harvey has demonstrated with texts like Erasmus’ Praise of Folly, the marginal “dummy” of the female narrator created by a male author offers a degree of license. She allows him to utter otherwise dangerous messages, from which the author can distance himself, since her transgressive voice can be attributed to a “realistic” construction of an abject woman. His

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6 Nikolaidis, 385. He continues: “we would be curious to know how and to what extent Ovid managed to repress his temperament, spontaneity and natural propensities—and so successfully at that…in order to serve a literary genre with strict and quite different demands from those to which he was naturally most fitted” (386).

7 Harvey, passim, esp. 54-75: “Folly functions as an enabling source and also as a shield; she lends Erasmus a freedom of subject and style, while always providing the very excuse that produced the voice in the first place” (63; cf. Erasmus 1979: 138, 160).
“transvestite ventriloquism,” moreover, while being a potential vehicle for subversive messages, can also work to reinforce oppressive ideologies. Ovid’s ventriloquized author/narrators, Phaedra and Byblis, appear complicit in their own repudiation because they represent, in “their own” voice, their female desire as abject. Moreover, despite his admission that normative social and gender roles are “fictions,” often in tension with the subjects behind the “masks,” Ovid appears more than willing to benefit from the power imbalance. For male players in his poetry consistently and unapologetically take advantage of freedoms and license for which women are always punished. Punished women include the desiring women whose marginal voice, albeit temporarily sympathetic, nevertheless make Ovid’s voice less marginal in comparison to their repudiated utterances. Poetic persuasion, intention, and endurance is not at risk if it is composed by the right (type of) poet. Byblis never had any authority, but Ovid by virtue of his multiply performed masculinity does.

Ovid has a personal motivation to replicate Augustan discourses of desire and femininity and reinvest this ideology with authority even while parodying them. The *Ars* has been interpreted as subversive. Ovid began writing it soon after the passage of the law it appears to undermine; however, as Habinek has argued, the *Ars* is the result of a movement to areas of expertise. It is not a manual for sexual liberation under repressive legislation. Laws define new sexual subjects who become a curious subject of study, a science of sex. Mythological paradigms are another tool for shoring up the borders of these sexual categories. Mad, wild, abject, female desire is necessary for normative male desire to exist as a category. He creates her and creates himself at the same time, but his repudiation of her desire amounts to real injury or violence enacted against real women.

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8 Habinek, 23-43.
Why is sexual desire such an important theme in Ovid’s poetry? Besides his obvious and continued interest in erotic subjects beyond his erotic poetry, in the Augustan era, the private is all that is left. The *lex Julia* defines private space as the only space where *vir(tus)* can be performed since men retain a superior status over other marginal bodies in their *domus*. Within the hierarchy of family and the sexual matrix of active self and passive other, a Roman man may still perform his masculinity in society where a *princeps* newly controls all previous performativities. Given that masculinity now only has one site—the home, especially the bedroom—in which it can be performed and therefore maintained as a fiction, Ovid’s erotic epic is not only his sole real “choice” but it also makes the personal political. Ovid needs the erotic female body in order to claim any authority in this singular site for masculine superiority and control. While epic has been transformed into *militia amoris*, tragedy becomes the site of the other.

Nevertheless, recent scholarship on artistic representations of men in feminizing sexual roles, including and especially in Roman erotic elegy, has suggested that the Roman male took pleasure in “playing the other” (to borrow a phrase from Zeitlin by way of Skinner). Maintaining a position of masculinity in ancient Rome required constant vigilance in every area of life—public and private. Identifying with the feminized, passive position may have served as an escape. As Skinner posits in the case of Catullan poetry, such a fantastical identification

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12 Skinner (1993), 120.
13 See Skinner (1993: 111-17 and passim) for the expression of active and passive gendered categories in various cultural relations in ancient Rome (and Greece), especially sex and politics and for its representation in poetry (116 and passim), in particular Cat. 63. See also Parker (in Hallett and Skinner: 47-65).
with a marginal figure “must have afforded a fleeting relaxation of stringent psychic controls, a luxurious but relatively harmless foray into sentimental self-indulgence.”

If Ovid and his Roman readers were highly attuned to the performativity of status and gender (and their intersection in power politics), as I have argued, and Roman men by the late Republic experimented with feminized subject positions, at least in spheres like poetics, why does the temporary or limited adoption of an active and therefore masculine position by a woman appear to be so threatening? Why were politically active women represented as sexually abject and why was a sexually active position for a woman consistently represented as abject, likened to a bacchant, or to an incestuous woman from the tragic stage or one of her Hellenistic heirs, the incestuous maiden? I would argue that, in order for Roman men to enjoy the license to oscillate between masculine and feminine subject positions free from a determining biological sex and without fear of remaining permanently feminized, the gendered position of a woman (or any other marginal figure, e.g., a slave) had to be constructed as natural, ahistorical, and tied to their sexed bodies, i.e., as fixed precisely.

In terms of symbolic discourses and positions, woman’s role as an abject other, defining the limits to his normative masculine identity, makes his position dependent on hers. In one of two extant lines from Ovid’s tragedy, Medea (quoted above), Medea asks, perhaps Jason or Creon, “I can protect you: you ask whether I can destroy you?” Such a comment articulates the power of the abject female subject. For the fiction of normative male sexuality is founded on abject female desire. When she appears as a mythic paradigm in literary representations, she appears as more than a fascinating monster. Her existence exposes and therefore destroys the

14 Skinner (1993) 120.
15 Boyle 168.
fiction of a stable male subject. Hippolytus is very literally torn to pieces because of female desire. 16 Reborn as Virbius, Hippolytus introduces his story at *Metamorphoses* 15.479-621: ‘Fando aliquem Hippolytum vestras si contigit aures/ credulitate patris, sceleratae fraude novercae/ occubuisse neci, 497-99. He describes Phaedra’s attempts at seduction (500-2). The *fraus* of Phaedra, Virbius maintains, ultimately resulted in his dismemberment which made him unrecognizable as the young man, Hippolytus: *nullasque in corpora partes/ noscere quas posses*, 528-29.

If marginal figures are by nature passive and subordinate to the Roman male, then he may put on whatever costume he pleases, knowing he can resume his (never ceded) place of power in the hierarchy. For example, the myth of Achilles at Skyros reveals a hero whose masculinity is too strong to be threatened by a girl’s costume. 17 The Saturnalia festival offered to Romans an annual tradition of role reversals, during which time women, children and slaves could play the part of *paterfamilias*, but there was no fear that they would take his place due to their “natural” position. 18 Abject female desire and the marginal position of powerlessness it embodies alleviates social, cultural, and political anxieties in Roman men of the Augustan age, whose ability to perform their masculinity had been seriously curtailed by the new emperor’s assumption of traditional social and political roles once shared among the aristocracy.

“Literature under the new regime was less a means of self-assertion than a complex negotiation

16 In his discussion of the figure of dismemberment in Neronian poetry, including Seneca’s tragedies, Most concludes that dismemberment explores personal identity: “In the impossibility of reconstructing Hippolytus’ disseminated body may be expressed, then, at the most fundamental level, our incapacity, once that construct has been recognized as such, to reimagine it any longer as a pristine, organic unity.”  
17 See Cyrino for a discussion of and further references to the Roman fascination with gender reversal and transvesticism, with a focus on this myth in particular. On this myth in Rome, see also Heslin. See Gold (1998) on transvesticism in Roman comedy.  
18 See, Dolansky for a very recent article on the Saturnalia, including hierarchical reversals in the festival and bibliography.
of new Imaginary and Symbolic categories of what *Romanitas* and *nobilitas* meant in a world of public subordination to a single central author."19  Moreover, all Roman men occupy a feminized position in relation to the emperor. Such a tenuous position makes it all the more important to maintain a superiority over other groups. Preserving an already unstable status provides a motivation for Ovid and his contemporaries to sustain the inferior position of the other through repeated symbolic (i.e., discursive, literary, and artistic representations) repudiation. Iphis, I argued in chapter 5, differs from Phaedra and Byblis because she was always already a *vir* even while she was still a *virgo*. Iphis’ story can be read as a very literal translation of the Roman anxiety over the performance of active and passive socio-sexual roles,20 which the ideological construction of stable and determined gendered positions alleviates.

Iphis’ story, however, does not merely tell us about the spectre of an abject masculine subject. Her transformation also tells an implicit tale about female desire. For this is not a story about what we would now refer to as lesbianism, although two women are sexually attracted to each other. In fact, one girl thinks the other is a boy. Nor is it about *tribadism*. Iphis lacks the active sexuality which constructed the phallic figure of the *tribas* in the Roman male imagination.21 By focusing on Iphis’ psychological experience of her passion as an emotion in conflict with her self-identified gender and kinship role, Ovid has made this story another tale of strange feminine desire. In this case, however, the desiring maiden does not claim agency, usurp her father’s role, or pursue her inappropriate object of desire. Her desire, as noted in the

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19 Miller (2004), 75.

20 Her transformation has been read by Makowski (30-32) as proof of Ovid’s “homophobia.” Some would take issue with Makowski’s use of modern terms which introduce categories not in use in Roman constructions of sex and sexuality. Recently Habinek (23-43) has argued that Ovid’s *Ars* begins to construct a subject along lines more familiar to modern sexualities, which defines a sexual subject by the sex of their preferred object of desire.

preceeding chapter, can be read as another characteristic of her pietas. According to Pintabone, the active/passive binary which appears to be the obstacle in this tale “suggests that in her obedience to/acceptance of her “female nature,” Iphis is rewarded by becoming a male.”22 This divine intervention and happy ending ultimately confirms what the reader has suspected and the narrator has suggested from the beginning—Iphis is not Phaedra’s heir. She is her own exemplum. But is she? Her story ends book 9 and ushers us into the tale, and tales, of Orpheus. Among them is another Phaedran lover, Myrrha. Were it not for Io/Isis’ miracle, the revelation of Iphis’ biological sex could have destroyed three women (Iphis, Telethusa, and Ianthe) and, more importantly to a Roman, I suspect, her father. His reputation would be ruined, he would be revealed to be a liar, a man with no respect for the custom of marriage alliances, and he would have lost Ianthe’s family as affines and any future affines as a result of this false marriage arrangement. This “sad” ending resembles those of Phaedra and her heirs—Scylla, Byblis, and Myrrha—, a resemblance which suggests a comparison to their stories. Such a comparison reveals that Iphis and her mother share key plot and thematic elements found in HII and the Ovidian reprisals.

In Euripides’ HII a nurse and a chorus of women act as Phaedra’s confessors.23 A similar female character also appears to have been a confidant to Euripides’ first Phaedra and Sophocles’

22 Pintabone, 276. Pintabone (passim) argues that the tension created between Iphis’ feminine nature, the outcome of the story, and her ability to convince her father that she is male while self-identifying and behaving like a female leaves itself open to multiple interpretations while simultaneously foreclosing “mutual and erotic love between women” (281). So Oliensis (109-10) reads transformation both “as a reward for her consistently feminine, passive, and unassuming stance” and a happy ending in contrast to book 8, where Scylla steals a phallus and Achelous loses a phallus. By contrast, Makowski has argued that Iphis’ transformation is “itself a comment on the superiority of heterosexuality over homosexuality and of marriage over tribadism” (32).

23 In Euripides’ HII the nurse and chorus of Troezen women wonder why Phaedra is suffering (267-83), Phaedra’s nurse tries to persuade Phaedra to tell them (284-310), and she finally relents (310-51). After Phaedra settles on a plan of action, she asks the chorus to be silent conspirators (710-12).
Phaedra (Phai., fr. 693a), as does the chorus of Sophocles’ play (Radt fr. 679-80P). Phaedra’s nurse does not keep her secret, but attempts to be a mediator and, by her revelation to Hippolytus (HII, 601-15), sets in motion the series of speeches, accusations and oaths, which seal his fate. So too, the Ovidian Phaedras have a nurse or similar mediating figure who acts as confessor or helper. Heroides 4, the letter itself, I would argue, is this mediating figure, for it stands as a substitute for Phaedra in her attempts to seduce Hippolytus. Byblis also writes an epistolary substitute for herself, but uses (as Phaedra could have) a household servant to deliver it (deque suis unum famulis, Met. 9.568). Scylla has neither a nurse nor a textual mediator, but night is called her nurse, and it is described as augmenting her boldness to act on her plan to obtain her desire (Talia dicenti curarum maxima nutrix nox interuenit tenebrisque audacia creuit, Met. 8.81-82), in much the same way the Euripidean nurse encourages Phaedra to give in to her desire (HII, 433-524). Myrrha’s story offers the closest representation to the Euripidean nurse (Met. 10.382-430). The Euripidean nurse begs Phaedra to reveal the reason for her illness in her desire to help her mistress. She promises to do what she can to help Phaedra in order to cure her (HII, 293-96, 478-81, 507-24). So too, Myrrha’s nurse begs her young charge to tell her what is

24 See Barrett (34-38) and Webster (75-76) on the role of Sophocles’ chorus and nurse and a mediator between Phaedra and Hippolytus. While Webster believes both Euripides (in HI) and Sophocles (in Phaedra) likely featured a nurse or other character as messenger to Hippolytus, Barrett (35-36) argues this is true for Euripides’ HI, but unlikely for Sophocles.

25 Euripides’ first Phaedra, by contrast, approaches Hippolytus herself (Webster, 67). Webster (68-69) suggests that the nurse attempts to persuade Hippolytus to revere Aphrodite generally, before Phaedra has approached him, a role played by Hippolytus’ companion near the beginning of HII (fr. 428N).

26 Although Byblis’ servant-helpmate is given no direct speech, he plays a much more prominent role. His completion of the task is narrated in detail, as is Caunus’ response and verbal attack (568-581). Byblis suggests his poor service as one reason for the rebuff she suffers (610-12).

27 Curley (467), comparing Scylla’s nutrix nox to Myrrha’s nutrix notes “[s]he intervenes when needed (intervenit, 8.82), soothes anxieties (curarum, 8.81), and fosters boldness (audacia creuit, 82).”
wrong, and offers her help.\(^{28}\) In both Euripides and Ovid, the nurses act of their own accord in order to facilitate a sexual union between the woman and her incestuous object of desire (\textit{Met.} 10.428-30, 437-41; \textit{HII}, 565-600). In Iphis’ tale there is also the trace of a nurse figure with whom Telethusa conspires to deceive her husband. She is only mentioned once, at the birth of Iphis, but even this brief mention establishes her role as a co-conspirator in her plan to conceal the sex of the child: \textit{ius sit ali mater puerum mentita: fidemque/ res habuit, neque erat ficti nisi conscia nutrix} (9.706-7). Her nominal presence functions as a signal of a Phaedra-like tale which threatens to surface at any moment in the story before Iphis’ transformation.

Telethusa has a dream which guides her plan of action (\textit{Met.} 9.686-701). The dream is not an element in Euripides’ \textit{HII}, nor is there evidence that \textit{HI} or Sophocles’ \textit{Phaedra} featured a dream, but it does connect Iphis to Byblis (\textit{Met.} 9.468-72) as well as to earlier Hellenistic and Roman desiring maidens.\(^ {29}\) For both Telethusa and Byblis, their dreams determine their plan of action. Telethusa disguises Iphis' sex at birth, following Io/Isis’ orders in her dreams (\textit{pone graues curas mandataque falle mariti}, 697). Byblis’ erotic dreams about her brother make clear her desire (\textit{quam me manifesta libido/ contigit}, 483-84). Moreover, dreams are not uncommon

\(^{28}\) \textit{instat anus canosque suos et inania nudans/ ubera per cunas almentaque prima precatur,/ ut sibi committat, quicquid dolet} (\textit{Met.} 10.391-93); \textit{habeo, quae carmine sanet et herbis;/...magico lustrabere ritu;/...sacris placabilis ira} (10.397-99).

\(^{29}\) E.g, Moschus’ \textit{Europa} (2.1-17). Krevans (263-64) compares Ilia’s dream in Ennius (35-40 Sk) to Europa’s dream in Moschus (2.1-17) in their capacity as “seduction-dreams”: “Although the dream frightens Europa (2.20), it is described as a “sweet” dream (2.1), and she openly acknowledges her desire for the foreigner after she awakens (2.25)” (264). Krevans traces three distinct literary models for Ilia’s dream: the “symbolic nightmare of tragedy,” the classic Homeric dream conveying a message or command, and the “seduction-dream” found in both epic (Nausicaa, Medea) and tragedy (Io). Comparing Ilia’s dream (Ennius, \textit{Annales}, 34-50 Sk) to Medea’s (\textit{Ap.}, \textit{Argo}. 3.616-32), Krevans notes “[b]oth dreams contain a handsome stranger who is involved in some way with separating the maiden from her family, and the dreaming heroine is simultaneously frightened by and attracted to the stranger.” See Connors (102) for references and further details on Ennius’ influences.
in Greek tragedy\textsuperscript{30} and Roman literature, epic and tragedy, has a tradition of contamination (freely incorporating elements across genres).\textsuperscript{31}

As we have repeatedly seen, Phaedra-like desire is figured as “new” and “monstrous.” So too, Iphis, perhaps familiar with the discourses of desire employed in the Ovidian corpus, calls her desire both “new” (\textit{nouae...Veneris, Met. 9.727-28}) and, counting hers with the other Cretan desires, “monstrous” (\textit{monstra}, 736). Likewise, when Scylla offers her father’s magical lock to Minos, the narrator calls it a “strange deed” (\textit{turbatusque noui respondit imagine facti, Met. 8.96}), and Minos, a few lines later, refuses to allow Scylla, “so great a monster,” to set foot on Crete (\textit{ego non patiar...Creten,...tantum contingere monstrum}, 99-100). Byblis is called a “strange monster” as the narrator moves into the Iphis story (\textit{fama noui...monstri, Met. 9.666-67}), and in Orpheus’ introduction to Myrrha’s tale, he claims that she was not worth the “new tree” she eventually became (\textit{tanti noua non fuit arbor}, 10.310). In her epistle, perhaps because she is attempting to persuade Hippolytus that an affair with her would be a positive experience, Phaedra reinterprets this idea. Instead of \textit{nouus} appearing in the sense of “strange,” it takes on the meaning of “new and fresh,” connected to the concept of first fruits, which he will have the pleasure of plucking (\textit{Tu noua seruatae carpies libamina famae, Her. 4.27}).

Their desires are “strange,” “new” or “monstrous” because they do not fall within the legitimate bounds of human desire. Iphis’ tale, like the other passages we have considered,

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\textsuperscript{30} Keith (2000: 106-7) and Connors (passim) have argued that Ilia’s dream in Ennius appears to have, in addition to its epic model, Homer’s \textit{Odyssey} 11.235-59, a tragic model in Sophocles’ \textit{Tyro}. See also Krevans (passim) and Skutsch (ad loc.) for a discussion of the tragic aspects of Ilia’s dream.

\textsuperscript{31} See Boyle (241 n. 35) for a definition of this practice in drama. Boyle (37) credits Naevius with introducing contamination (the mixing of multiple source plays), citing Terence’s comment on this practice in Naevius’ comedies at \textit{And. 18}. Boyle notes, however, that Naevius employed this technique in his epic (mixing the \textit{Iliad} and \textit{Odyssey}) and, very likely, his tragedy; cf. Ter. \textit{And. 16-19} on this practice among other dramatists, including Ennius; Boyle, 67, 89. See Hinds (1993: 39; 1998: 142), Keith (2002: 251-52) on generic contamination (the blending of multiple genres) in Ovid.
reminds us of the existence of the laws which govern these boundaries. In addition to the
commands of her father, whose violation the plot dramatizes (Met. 9.679-81, 697), Iphis urges
herself: *pete quod fas est, et ama quod femina debes* (748). Laws are also associated with a
masculine figure, Minos, in Scylla’s tale, where the end of the tale marks the origin of lawgiving:
*ut leges captis iustissimus auctor/ hostibus inposuit* (Met. 8.101-2). The tales of Byblis and
Myrrha are preoccupied with these laws. Byblis’ story is introduced as a lesson of the laws
which govern female desire (*ut ament concessa puellae, Met. 9.454; non soror…qua debebat,
amabat, 456*) and ends with a reminder that her desire transgressed these laws (*inconcessamque
fatetur/ spem Veneris, 638-39*). Byblis herself cites and compares the laws (*iura*) of the gods to
those of humans (500-501) and recognizes their relation to her desire (*qua fas est germanae,
510; uetitus…ardor, 502*), but claims that what the laws allow are the concern of old men: *iura
senes norint et quid liceatque nefasque/ fasque sit inquirant legumque examina seruent* (551-
52). She is anxious over witnesses (*testis, 481; indicium feci, 586*) and refers to her admission of
love as a legal defense (*mea causa, 533*). Caunus calls her love *uetitae libidinis* (577).

Myrrha’s story is similarly introduced by Orpheus as a punished crime (*facti quoque
credite poenam, Met. 10.303; crimen…isto, 312; hic amor est odio maius scelus, 315*) which
Greece is lucky to lack (*quod abest regionibus illis,/ quae tantum genuere nefas, 306-7*). And
also like Byblis’ tale, Orpheus ends by referring to the crime (*crimina portat, 470; facinus, 471;
scelus, 474*). Myrrha herself calls upon the laws (*iura, 321*) of her parents to drive out her
unpermitted and criminal desire (*nefas scelerique, 322*), but questions its status as a crime (*si
tamen hoc scelus est, 323*). She calls the laws governing animal desire “happy,” but those of
human desire “malicious” and “jealous” (*felices…humana malignas,/ cura dedit leges…/ inuida
iura negant, 329-31*). She later acknowledges her desire is criminal (*spes interdictae, 336;
scelus, 342; nefas, 352; concubito uetito, 353; sceleris…conscia, 367; scelus est, 413; ad facinus,
448; sceleti, 460), and calls herself an impious maiden (inpia uirgo, 345; cf. 354, 366, 469), who confounds the laws (iura, 346) governing kinship relations (345-48).

Phaedra’s letter (Heroides 4) also reveals a knowledge of laws, which she claims to have followed in the past (socialia foedera, 17; crimen nostra vacat, 18; crimen condiscitur, 25; me sine crimen gessi, 31), but which she now claims are outdated (vetus pietas, 131), having been updated by Jupiter himself (Iuppiter esse pium statuit.../ Et fas omne facit fratre marita soror, 133-34). Nevertheless, she still suggests they circumvent these laws using technicalities (poterit...cupla tegi, 138; cf. 137-46). She also argues that Aphrodite has cursed the women of her family with inappropriate desire (53-62), but by figuring this curse as a law (socias leges, 62) she establishes the repudiation of female Cretan desire as demanded by one law because it is a violation of another (she refers to the crime of Pasiphae’s adultery, crimen, 58).

Most importantly, Iphis is represented as struggling with an inner conflict—a choice between normative behavior and the behavior her non-normative desire motivates. This representation is expressed in a soliloquy resembling the Euripidean Phaedra’s speeches in HII, the soliloquies of Scylla, Byblis, and Myrrha in Metamorphoses, and (if we consider moments in Heroides 4 as soliloquized, so to speak) integrated into elements of the Ovidian Phaedra’s epistle. Iphis’ speech reworks many elements of what Fowler has termed the “desperation speech,” which he traces back to Homer, but finds most frequently in Attic Greek tragedy.32 Curley has identified this type of speech in Latin literature with tragic influences and models:33 “Ovidian soliloquies, in allowing characters to speak for themselves in dire situations, evoke the

32 Fowler (7-8) cites as the classic example Ajax’s speech in Sophocles’ play (430-80). “They all portray characters in distress (ὀχθησας); they begin with a cry of anguish, and sometimes with questions equivalent to τί δράσαι; they entertain alternatives and reach decisions” (Fowler, 23).

disclosures and deliberations of the tragic stage.” In Ovid’s work, he terms this the “Medea-code,” employing Conte’s idea of code-modeling. In the speeches of Medea, Scylla, Byblis, and Myrrha, he also identifies a common modesty-desire topos, which they draw from Phaedra’s tragic origin. The pattern, as I observe, includes some or all of the following elements: an internal debate over two mutually exclusive choices, one being love and the other the proper performance of symbolic kinship or gender roles roles; a wish or command for the desire to disappear; an exclamation of aporia, usually at the beginning of the heroine’s speech; the identification of a singular obstacle; a wish for impossible circumstances; the use of examples to provide a context or explanation for her desire; and finally, a plan of action.

Scylla is torn between amor and her role as a daughter (laeter…doleamne, Met. 8.44), a choice she hopes Minos will not force her to make (tantum patrias ne posceret arces, 54), for, she claims, she would die before she betrayed her father (nam pereant potius sperata cubilia, quam sim/ proditio potens, 55-56). This conflict between love and normative kinship roles as well as a wish for death recalls the Euripdean Phaedra’s conflict and her original plan—to die without revealing her desire (HII, 401). Byblis is similarly torn between her amor and her role as sister (uerum nocet esse sororem, Met. 9.478), over which she too claims to prefer death (aut nostro uetitus de corde fugabitur ardor/ aut, hoc si nequeo, peream, precor, 502-3), and which she orders from her heart (obscenae procul hinc discedite flammae, 509). Myrrha’s conflict repeats Scylla’s (Met. 10.337-40), in that she is caught between her role as daughter and amor, which she orders herself to resist and refuse (hoc prohibete nefas scelerique resistite nostro, 322;

Ibid., 282. Curley (n.d.: 282) notes that the topos of the desperation speech, as it is expressed in Apollonius, Catullus, Vergil, and Ovid, is a “self-interrogation…for the heroine’s own benefit.”

Ibid., 291-92, 420-28, 452-54.

See chapter 1 for a discussion of this theme in HII.
Phaedra, perhaps like her Euripidean model, has struggled between amor and pudor, but she is writing the letter because amor has won (pudor est miscendus amori;/ Dicere quae puduit, scriber iussit amor, Her. 4.9; Depuduit, profusque pudor sua signa reliquit, 155). Pudor is the virtue governing femininity, in particular feminine sexuality. For this reason, Phaedra’s real conflict is between her desire and her gendered kinship role. Because love has already routed her pudor (155), she attempts to resolve the contradiction for Hippolytus through her various arguments, most pointedly by a deceitful performance of proper kinship roles (137-42). Iphis resembles Phaedra and her heirs in her own struggle between amor and what she believes to be the proper performance of feminine gender roles, for she reasons that because she is not a biological male, the performance of a masculine role is excluded for her. She, like Ovid’s Scylla, Byblis, and Myrrha, commands herself to recognize the gender role which her sex demands and to want what is appropriate (stultos excutis ignes?/ quid sis nata uides, nisi te quoque decipis ipsam:/ et pete quod fas est, et ama quod femina debes, Met. 9.746-48).

All of the Phaedra-like figures make some exclamation of aporia (Scylla: in dubio est, Met. 8.45; Byblis: me miseram, 9.474, quo feror?, 9.509; Iphis: quis me manet exitus, 9.726; Myrrha: quo mente feror? quid molior?, 10.320, me miseram, 334, quid in ista revolver?, 335). Even Phaedra comes close to such an exclamation when she compares herself to a maenad (Nunc feror, ut Bacchi...Eleleides, Her. 4.47), for to be like a maenad is to be out of control and

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37 See chapter 3 and 4 for a detailed discussion of pudor as a feminine virtue and its function in this epistle.
38 Ovid puts a similar exclamation in the mouth of his tragic Medea: feror hic illuc, ut plena deo (Sen. Rhet., Suas. 3.7)
therefore unable to help oneself.\textsuperscript{39} They identify a single obstacle which has put them in this unresolvable circumstance: Scylla identifies her father (\textit{hunc ego solum, Met. 8.70}); Byblis, her relation to Caunus (\textit{quod obest, id habebimus unum, 9.494}); Iphis, nature, i.e., her biological sex (\textit{quae mihi sola nocet, 9.759}); Myrrha, her relation to Cinyras (\textit{quia iam meus est, non est meus, 10.339}); while Phaedra’s letter, as noted above, is an attempt to overcome her obstacle, the kinship relations that triangulate her role between Hippolytus and Theseus.

Phaedra-like figures in Ovid then wish for impossible circumstances which could solve their dilemma. Thus Scylla wants to become Minos’ hostage (\textit{Met. 8.47-48}), to fly into his camp (51), to have no father (72); while Byblis wishes for hers and Caunus’ families to be somehow replicated—not the same, but two of a kind—, with his more wealthy than hers (9.487-91); Myrrha wishes she were born in a land where no incest laws prohibit child and parent from having sex (10.334), and that Cinyras also desired her (355); and Phaedra wishes to accompany Hippolytus on his hunts (\textit{Her. 4.103}), to set up house with him in Troezen (107), and that her womb had burst before her sons, his rivals to inheritance, were born (125-26). Iphis forecloses her own impossible wish even as she expresses it when she wonders what the most clever artist, Daedalus, who solved Pasiphae’s problem, could do to solve hers: \textit{ipse licet reuolet...quid faciet? (Met. 9.742-3).} \textit{Exempla} provide a means to understand their particular problem, whether they are drawn from Cretan women (\textit{Her. 4.55-60, Met. 9.735-40}), mythical lovers (\textit{Her. 4.93-100, Met. 9.507}), the gods (\textit{Met. 9.497-99}), other \textit{gentes} (\textit{Met. 10.331-33}), or animals (\textit{Met. 9.731-34, 10.324-28}).

\textsuperscript{39} See chapter 2 for a detailed discussion of maenadic and Dionysiac imagery in Ovid and Latin literature in general.
Scylla’s and Byblis’ soliloquies end with a plan of action (Met. 8.67-68, 9.513-16). Phaedra has carried out her plan by writing her letter (Her. 4). Myrrha’s nurse provides her with a plan (Met. 10.429-30). In Iphis’ case, the goddess Isis/Io has had a plan for her from the beginning, which she and her mother do not fully know (9.696-701, 780). The divine consilium (780) provides the impossible circumstance (sexual transformation) which resolves the unresolvable dilemma, allowing Iphis to perform her gender and kinship roles properly and obtain her desire by marrying Ianthia (potiturque sua puer Iphis Ianthia, 9.797).

Because her story contains elements so familiar from the Phaedra-like figures in the Heroides and Metamorphoses (the soliloquy, the dream, feminine deceit, the nurse), but with a difference (she does not act on her desire and the elements are shared between her and her mother), and because we are not yet done with the paradigm, but after being presented with what appears to be a new paradigm for female desire we are given another Phaedra in book 10 to remind us again of how dangerous women in love can be, I would argue that Iphis, albeit subtly, directs us to recall Scylla or Byblis. Wheeler has argued that the reader of the Metamorphoses undergoes her own transformation, “of forming certain expectations, of being surprised or deceived, of having to revise assumptions.” In its cycles of repetition and difference, its retelling of different stories in different ways, Ovid’s text challenges us to return again in our mind to previous passages, informed by a break or innovation in a traditional pattern. As Nagle remarks, Orpheus, despite his misogyny, appears to be won over by the end of his tale of

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40 Wheeler, 30. He is here referring to the experience of reading the proem, but calls this “paradigmatic for the reading of the Metamorphoses as a whole.” Newlands (1995: passim) argues that Ovid also manipulates the relations of contiguous mythological examples in Fasti as a strategy for creating competing and often subversive meaning: “[t]he Fasti creates thematic interconnections by bold juxtapositions of seemingly disparate material that offer the reader the challenge of finding a thematic link, an interpretation, that helps bridge episodes and address common issues” (17).

41 See, e.g., Hinds (1998: 99-122), Janan (1991: passim), and Wheeler (1-33 and passim) for repetition and difference in Ovid’s poetry and further references.
Myrrha, citing in particular his narration of her metamorphosis which he calls her *honor* (*Met.* 10.501-2).\(^{42}\) Orpheus is perhaps providing a new model reading for the Phaedra paradigm, in which the sympathetic, psychological exploration of a mythological character haunts the reader even after the narrative establishes, questions, and then reestablishes her symbolic value as *exemplum*.\(^{43}\)

What would have happened had divine intervention granted these girls their impossible wishes? Say a *deus ex machina* arrived to resolve Minos’ conflict with Nisus, or to change Byblis from sister of Caunus to the daughter of a friend of the family. How different are these maidens in the end? Such questions, for the modern reader at least, suggest alternatives to the exchange of women and the heterosexual mandate it effects. A Phaedra is only a *monstrum* because her desire breaks taboos by confusing relations between kinship roles, which are, in the end, both symbolic and performative. For it is not the incestuous nature of her desire but her active pursuit of it, which surfaces as the preoccupation and anxiety in all of these tales. Her pursuit either refuses her passive function as a gift to be exchanged between men (Phaedra between Minos and Thesus; Myrrha and Scylla between their fathers and potential affine-suitors), or it interferes with future exchanges [of them or of women from other families] (Byblis between Caunus and a future father-in-law or Ianthe’s father and a future son-in-law),\(^{44}\) disrupting and challenging male control over familial and political symbolic systems.

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\(^{42}\) Nagle (1983), passim: “Whereas Ovid remains sympathetic [to Byblis], Orpheus becomes so. As Myrrha flees for her life, Orpheus’ ambivalence turns to sympathy” (314).

\(^{43}\) This is the process Pintabone has described in Ovid’s Iphis episode: “In Ovid’s story of Iphis and Ianthe, gender is framed in terms of cultural stereotypes that are first shown, then overturned, and then reaffirmed” (276).

\(^{44}\) See chapter 1 for a full discussion of the exchange of women and its representation in the texts under consideration.
Ovid himself bookends his career with recognitions that the abject female desiring subject is a fiction. In *Amores* 3.12, Scylla heads a list of exemplary mythological subjects meant to demonstrate poetry’s ability to create believable, but wonderous fictions: Scylla patri caros furata capillos/ pube permit rabidos inguinibusque canes (*Am. 3.12.21-22*).

From exile, Ovid provides a list of tragic *materia amoris* (*Tr. 2.382*), beginning with Phaedra, or, more specifically, her desire: *caecae flamma nouercae* (*2.383*). Ovid truncates the list at 406 because, he tells his reader, Augustus, it would be too long (*407-8*). This is part of a longer argument that all genres are really just interested in sex, which Ovid makes in defense of the content of his own amatory poetry. At the beginning of his career, in *Amores* 3.12, Ovid is affecting frustration with the credulity of his audience, but his poetic persuasiveness (that Cynthia is worthy of love) results in his popularity, figured as her sexual promiscuity—his *corpus* is her body which is widely circulated. At the end of his career, in *Tr. 2*, Ovid is concerned only with one reader, and his frustration is more genuine. He is attempting to reverse his poetic persuasiveness, providing a list, not of desiring women, but of poets who have treated them, representing himself as one of many—common and insignificant.

As I have argued, this fictitious abject subject is constructed in order to create a masculine desiring subject who appears normative in relation to her. Her irrationality reflects in opposition his self-control; her wildness, his civilized nature; her madness, his sanity; her

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45 The poem itself is concerned with the sexual promiscuity of Corinna, for which he blames his own poetry: *fallimur, an nostris innotuit illa libellis?/ sic erit: ingenio prostitit illa meo*, 3.12.7-8. Tibullus 1.4.63 provides a model for Scylla as an exemplum of poetic creation: *carmine purpurea est Nisi coma*.

46 The metaphor of the elegiac *puella*’s body as text is transparent in this poem, as the circulation of his poetry leads to the circulation of her body. In order to control her circulation, Ovid encourages the reader not to be so credulous by proffering examples of literary fictions, implying, of course, that Corinna’s beauty is another literary construct (*et mea debuerat falso laudata uideri/ femina; credulitas nunc mihi uestra nocet*, 43-44). See Fear (228-29) for a similar reading of Prop. 2.5.1-4, where Cynthia’s promiscuity is conflated with the popularity of Propertius’ book of the same name. See Gold (1993), Keith (1994), and Wyke (1987, 1989, 2002) for the elegiac *puella* as a figure for the poetry itself.
deserved punishment, his deserved reward and position as punisher. Both the narrative’s repudiation of her and her exile from the realm of normative desiring subjects establish the very border of the realm of normativity. These paradigms we have considered also serve as scare figures who demonstrate the destructive capacity of women’s desire while justifying the suppression of that desire through its very representation. But she is, of course, created from his imagination and the classical tradition of myth, made up of elements of her creator’s desire which threaten his own socially and legally required fiction of a rational, disciplined desiring subject.

Ovid himself was repudiated, sent outside the borders of civilization to Tomis,47 where he writes *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto*.48 Ovid’s list in the *Tristia*, written from his own abject position of exile, is an argument that it was all a literary game that writers have been playing since Sappho (365) and Homer (371). But what happened to Ovid shows that the playful representations have the power to create new subjects. What is one creator’s abject opposite, shoring up his own claim to authority through normativity, is a new subject position for another. Ovid’s *Ars* itself demonstrates this, teaching a new crop of *amatores* and *puellae* how to be elegiac subjects, a programmatically abject position in relation to Roman values and morals (slave opposed to freeborn, effeminized passive position to an otherwise marginal feminine beloved, who is sometimes constructed as even more marginal because of her foreign origin and her prostitution, etc.). For this reason, Ovid’s text never completely repudiates his female desiring subject.

47 I am grateful to Erik Gunderson for suggesting this connection between Ovid and his abject Phaedras.
48 Ovid was exiled to Tomis in 8 CE by the emperor. See, e.g., Hollis (1977: xiii-xvii), Feeney (2006: 464-88, in Peter Knox) for Ovid and the circumstances of his exile. See also chapter 4 for a brief discussion of his exile in relation to the *Ars*. 
Her repetition in various forms throughout his corpus may be a symptom of anxiety over women’s sexuality and over the hierarchies of power articulated by representations of sexual subjects, but it also testifies to a fascination with these abject figures. Skinner argues “[t]he craving to undergo such a disorienting emotional experience, if only temporarily and artificially, was…a basic component in the construction of ancient male sexuality.” The reading subject, according to Elsner, may also share with the abject female desiring subject, her madness, at least while she is in the process of reading. He argues that the reader is complicit in her own deception that *ars* is *natura*, and this desire for self-deception is akin to madness. Moreover, we have seen that these abject sexual subjects also articulate the relationship of a poet with his text and his audience. Their sexual circulation, like that of the text, introduces promiscuous, excessive, and sometimes dangerous interpretations of an author’s verses. Repudiated, she carries with her those aspects of authorship and the text which threaten the fiction of poetic authority, intentionality, textual control, and immortal fame. But, as Ovid’s Phaedras remind us through their repeated representation, an author has little control over her meaning once her

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49 Skinner (1993), 120.
50 Elsner, 159-161 and passim. Elsner’s study considers the Pygmalion episode from *Met*. as a metaphor for creating and viewing realistic art: “The ivory statue…generates him as a viewer-lover, just as the *Metamorphoses* generates us as its readers” (155). “Ovid suddenly brings the reader up against the boundaries of his own desire as generated by the text. What can happen in a story can’t happen in life. The erotic myth of Pygmalion’s statue turned to flesh is as much an assertion of absence as it was of fulfillment” (165).
51 This relationship is expressed explicitly through their representation as writing subjects (see especially chapter 4), and implicitly through their self-construction as an elegiac *puella* who is both *mater*ia and material of Roman erotic elegy. On this topic, see Gold (1993), Keith (1994), Wyke (1987, 2002), and chapters 3 and 4.
52 The realism of *Am.* 3.12 translates this into Corinna’s promiscuity, for which Ovid, her writer, is at fault: *ingenio prostitit illa meo* (8). Horace expresses a similar (mock) fear for the future of his book once it has been published at *Ep.* 1.20, e.g., dirtied by the hands of commoners (*manibus…volgi*, 11), eaten by moths (12), or used as a school text (17-18). He addresses the book as if it were a separate being altogether from its author (1-9): *Vertumnum Ianumque, liber, spectare videris* (1).
message is uttered.\(^\text{53}\) Ovid’s poetry and his abject subjects have the power to introduce new meanings for the paradigms of female sexuality, regardless of his (or Augustus’) intention. His poetry does not belong to him. It no longer belongs to his first Roman readers, for that matter. As Ovid himself predicts at the close of the *Metamorphoses*, “he,” wearing the many guises of his narrators, from the misogynist Orpheus (*Met. 10-11*) to the lonely Penelope (*Her. 1*) lives on *ore populi* (*Met. 15.873*).

Zajko borrows the idea of “listening with” individual narratives of experience from Dreger: “The dynamic of ‘listening with’ those who undergo particular experiences involves an ethical obligation to ‘recognize the community (and the communal obligations) of the culture in which these narratives are created.…a story is never an island unto itself: if it were, it would be almost incomprehensible and therefore not really recognizable as a cohesive story’.”\(^\text{54}\) We readers, as we “listen with” Ovid’s Phaedras, recognize them as subjects again and again. Moreover, if a reader’s interpretation of an artistic creation is motivated by her own desire (to be the other or to believe the unbelievable),\(^\text{55}\) then her sympathy with the female desiring subject is the result of desire. Such a desire to sympathize may well occur in that part of the narrative before the subject has been repudiated, for the stories we have considered either narrate the aetiology of female desire’s abjection or at least point to it allusively or even explicitly.\(^\text{56}\)

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\(^{53}\) Pygmalion, notes Elsner (159 and passim), is both the creator and viewer. He can, therefore, completely control the interpretation of his statue as artistic creation. Ovid is not so fortunate. “If Pygmalion the artist is a figure for Ovid the writer, then the myth as a whole undermines the integrity of Ovid’s writing since he is not its only reader, he cannot control its meanings as Pygmalion does those of the statue” (Elsner, 167 n.28).

\(^{54}\) Zajko (195-96), quoting Dreger (169).

\(^{55}\) Orpheus, Ovid’s narrator of the Myrrha episode, addresses this issue before he begins: *desit in hac mihi parte fides, nec credite factum./ uel, si creditis, Met. 10.302-3*.

\(^{56}\) As is the case with Byblis (*Byblis in exemplo est, ut ament concessa puellae, Met. 9.454*) and Myrrha (*si credetis, facti quoque credite poenam, Met. 10.303*).
desire is also the motivation of artistic creation, Ovid and the reader repeatedly bring Phaedra to life.  

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57 See Elsner (159-60) and Sharrock (1991: passim) on Pygmalion’s “desire for creation” in Ovid’s tale of Pygmalion.
58 Pygmalion brings to life a hyper-virtuous woman, who cannot be a real woman, in reaction to the abject sexuality of the Propoetides. Here Ovid and his reader bring to life women like the Propoetides. See Elsner and Sharrock (1991: passim).
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I. Abbreviations

*LIMC*  *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* (Zürich and Munich, 1981-).

*LSJ*  *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, eds. Oxford, 1776).


*TLL*  *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* (Leipzig, 1900-)

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