9-2017

**Vim Parat**: Patterns of Sexualized Violence, Victim-Blaming, and Sororophobia in Ovid

Melissa Marturano  
*The Graduate Center, City University of New York*

---

**How does access to this work benefit you? Let us know!**

Follow this and additional works at: [http://academicworks.cuny.edu/gc_etds](http://academicworks.cuny.edu/gc_etds)

Part of the Classical Literature and Philology Commons, History of Gender Commons, and the Women's Studies Commons

---

**Recommended Citation**

[http://academicworks.cuny.edu/gc_etds/2303](http://academicworks.cuny.edu/gc_etds/2303)

---

This Dissertation is brought to you by CUNY Academic Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in All Graduate Works by Year: Dissertations, Theses, and Capstone Projects by an authorized administrator of CUNY Academic Works. For more information, please contact deposit@gc.cuny.edu.
VIM PARAT: PATTERNS OF SEXUALIZED VIOLENCE, VICTIM-BLAMING, AND SOROROPHOBIA IN OVID

by

MELISSA KATHLEEN MARTURANO

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Classics in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

2017
Vim Parat: Patterns of Sexualized Violence, Victim-Blaming, and Sororophobia in Ovid

by

Melissa Kathleen Marturano

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Classics in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Date: [enter full name here without titles]

Chair of Examining Committee

Date: [enter full name here without titles]

Executive Officer

Supervisory Committee:

Ronnie Ancona

Dee Clayman

Philip Thibodeau

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
ABSTRACT

Vim Parat: Patterns of Sexualized Violence, Victim-Blaming, and Sororophobia in Ovid

by

Melissa Kathleen Marturano

Advisor: Ronnie Ancona

My dissertation argues for the importance of understanding the depiction of sexualized violence and rape in the Roman poet Ovid’s extensive corpus through the modern feminist concepts of victim-blaming (blaming victims of sexual abuse for their own abuse) and sororophobia (female figures participating in misogyny). It explores sexualized violence and rape in Ovid long-form, examines the discernible patterns that emerge and the deviations from them as he depicts that violence throughout his texts, and more importantly, introduces victim-blaming and sororophobia into an analysis of these patterns. Despite the fact that previous scholars have done substantial analyses of the patterns of sexualized violence and rape in Ovid’s texts, my dissertation demonstrates—for the first time—how and why the phenomena of victim-blaming and sororophobia should be seen as fundamental parts of those patterns.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The dissertation is one of the highest academic achievements an individual can obtain, but I would not have been able to achieve it without the extensive intellectual and emotional support of many others in my professional, personal, and political life. I cannot name all of them here, but I thank them for the countless ways they have helped me throughout the project.

I would first like to express my gratitude to my dissertation advisor, Professor Ronnie Ancona, who has been one of the strongest advocates of my work and whose vast expertise in Classics and feminist scholarship continually sharpened it. And although I was often stubborn, it should be known that Professor Ancona was usually right. I would secondly like to acknowledge the contributions of my committee members: Professors Dee Clayman and Philip Thibodeau. Professor Clayman’s knowledge of Greek poetry deepened my understanding of Ovid’s, and at the beginning of my time at CUNY, she taught me the fundamentals of in-depth research and communicating that research to the wider public. I began this project in Professor Thibodeau’s Metamorphoses seminar and early on, he encouraged and guided the core arguments of my work and continued to do so with his astute and considerate suggestions and edits to my dissertation.

Two other Classical mentors could not remain unmentioned: Magistra Louise Young, my first Latin teacher who inspired me more than she could ever know, and Dr. Patricia J. Johnson, my college advisor, who introduced me to Ovid and feminist perspectives in Classics.

I would like to thank my friends, comrades, and loved ones who continually supported me throughout graduate school. My friends and comrades not only believed in the broader (political) importance of my work, but allowed me to develop my ideas with them again and again. Here I would like to especially highlight Esther, to whom I hope to soon return the favor. My family—Amanda, Maureen, and John—nurtured and raised me in a house full of books, the
Classics, the love of learning, and strong opinions strongly held. I would not be here without them. Finally, there would be no dissertation and (relatively) sane Melissa without the encouragement, love, and compassion of my partner, Noah, inheriting his excellent copyediting skills from his mother, Lyn, who also lovingly read and edited my dissertation in its later stages.
# Table of Contents

**Preface to the Dissertation and Summary of Arguments**  
1

**Chapter One: Introduction**  
4

I. Misogyny, Sexuality, Rape, and Consent in the Roman World  
II. Victim-Blaming Now and in Antiquity  
III. Sororophobia: A Definition and Its Presence in Ovid’s Texts and Classical Authors  
IV. Other Aspects of Roman Misogyny and Their Reflection in Ovid’s Texts of Rape  
V. Ovid’s (Lack of) Sympathy  
VI. Methodology and the Wider Scholarly Context  

**Chapter Two: Sexualized Violence and Rape in Ovid’s Early Corpus**  
58

A. The *Heroides* and Sexualized Violence and Rape  

I. Introduction to and Scholarship on the *Heroides*  
II. The Epistles  

1. *Heroides* 5: Oenone’s Abuse and Sororophobia Against Helen  
2. *Heroides* 8: Hermione’s Rape by Orestes and the Defense of Helen  
3. *Heroides* 21: Cydippe, Acontius, and Marital Rape  
4. *Heroides* 3: Briseis’s Literal *Servitum Amoris* and Achilles  
5. *Heroides* 17: Helen and (the Implication of) Coercion  

III. Conclusions: The *Heroides*
B. Sexualized Violence and Rape in the Amores

I. Introduction to and Scholarship on the Amores

II. The Poems

1. Amores 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3: The Beginning Triumphs of Sexualized Violence

2. Amores 1.5: Objectification and Sexual Conquest

3. Amores 1.7: “I Hit You and It Felt Like a Kiss”

4. Amores 1.9: The Miles Amoris and Sexualized Violence

5. Amores 2.8: The Rape of the Slave Cypassis

6. Amores 2.12: The Women Are to Blame!

7. Amores 3.5 (and the Fasti): The Rape of Rhea Silvia by Anio

III. Conclusions: Amores

C. The Ars Amatoria and Sexualized Violence and Rape

I. Introduction to and Scholarship on the Ars Amatoria

II. The Narrative and Ideologies of Rape in the Ars Amatoria:

1. The Rape of the Sabines: The First “Seduction”

2. Pasiphae and Deidamia Exempla: Unrapeability

3. Militarism and Sexualized Violence in the Ars Amatoria


III. Conclusions: Ars Amatoria
Chapter Three: Metamorphosis in the *Metamorphoses* and the *Fasti*

I. Metamorphosis as Violence Akin to Rape

II. Metamorphosis and Rape and Their Aftermaths

III. The Feminization of Rape and Metamorphosis

IV. The Feminization of the Body and Victim-Blaming

V. Conclusions: Metamorphosis, Rape, Femininity, and Victim-Blaming

Chapter Four: The *Metamorphoses*, the Epicenter of Rape in Ovid’s Corpus

I. Introduction to Sexualized Violence and Rape in the *Metamorphoses*

II. Selected Episodes of Sexualized Violence, Rape, and Sororophobia in the *Metamorphoses*

   1. The Attempted Rape of Daphne by Apollo: *Primus Amor*

   2. *Bos Paelex*: The Rape of Io by Jupiter and the Sororophobia of Juno

   2b. The Attempted Rape of Syrinx by Pan: An Embedded Tale in Io’s Narrative

   3. The Rape of Callisto by Jupiter in the *Metamorphoses* and Diana’s and Juno’s Sororophobia

   3b. *Si non formosa fuisset*: The Rape of Callisto by Jupiter in the *Fasti*

   3c. Diana’s Relationship with Chione and Arethusa: Layers of Sisterhood

   4. The Rapes of Corone and Nyticmene and Minerva’s Relationship with Victims

   5. The Attempted Rape of Herse by Mercury and Aglauros’s Petrification

   5b. Minerva and Sororophobia in the *Metamorphoses*: Aglauros, Medusa, and Arachne

   6. *Fert praedam*: The Rape of Europa by Jupiter in the *Metamorphoses* and *Fasti*
7.  *Collectum odium*: The Rape of Semele and Juno’s Sororophobia  
8.  The Last Episodes of Juno’s Sororophobia: Latona and Alcmene  
10. The Rapes of Proserpina, Cyane, and Arethusa: The Muses Inspire Their Own Tale  
10b. The Rape of Proserpina by Dis in the *Fasti*  
11. The Rape of Philomela by Tereus and Sisterly Revenge of Philomela and Procne  
12. Caenis/Caeneus and a Curious Case of Anti-Sororophobia  

III. Deviations from the Mean: Unique Episodes of Sexual Abuse in the *Metamorphoses*  
   1. Narcissus and Echo: *Simulacra* of Rape and Sororophobia  
   2. Pomona and Vertumnus: *Vim parat?*  
   3. The Attempted Rape of Hermaphroditus by Salmacis and Female Sexual Abusers  
5b. The Rape of Leucothoe by Sol and the Literal Sororophobia of Clytie  

IV. Conclusions: The *Metamorphoses*  

**Chapter Five: Sexualized Violence and Rape in the *Fasti***  

I. Introduction to the *Fasti* and Sexualized Violence  

II. Scenes of Sexualized Violence in the *Fasti*  
   1. The Attempted Rape of Lotis by Priapus: The First “Comic” Rape  
   2. The Attempted Rape of Omphale (and Hercules) by Faunus: *Hic meus ardor*  
   3. The Rape of Juturna by Jupiter and The Rape of Lara by Mercury  
   4. The Rape of Lucretia by Sextus Tarquinius: The Ovidian Matron  

256  
259  
261  
264  
277  
279  
292  
294  
299  
306  
313  
319  
322  
324  
332  
341  
348  
361
5. The Rape of Anna Perenna by Numicius and Anna Perenna’s Sororophobia 386
6. The Rape of Flora by Zephyrus and the “Benefits” of Sexualized Violence 389
7. The Rape of Carna by Janus: The Comeuppance for Resistance 394
8. The Attempted Rape of Vesta by Priapus: The Last Scene of Sexual Abuse in Ovid 397

III. Conclusions: The Fasti 402

Chapter Six: Images of Sexualized Violence in Ovid’s Exile Poetry 404

I. Ovid’s Exploration of Gender, Femininity, Destabilization, and Myth 407
II. Ovid, Actaeon, Augustus, and Diana 425
III. Conclusions: The Exile Poetry 433

Afterword 435

Bibliography 439
Preface to the Dissertation and Summary of Arguments:

My dissertation argues for the importance of understanding the depiction of sexualized violence and rape in the Roman poet Ovid’s extensive corpus through the modern feminist concepts of victim-blaming (blaming rape victims for their own rapes) and sororophobia (female figures participating in misogyny).¹ It explores sexualized violence in Ovid long-form, examines the discernible patterns that emerge and the deviations from them as he depicts that violence throughout his texts, and more importantly, introduces victim-blaming and sororophobia into an analysis of these patterns. While previous scholars, including Richlin (1992), Murgatroyd (2005), and James (2016), have done substantial work on sexualized violence in Ovid and have analyzed many of these textual patterns in Ovid, my dissertation demonstrates how and why victim-blaming and sororophobia should be seen as fundamental parts of those patterns.

My dissertation contributes to and extends a wider feminist, classical conversation on the nature of Ovid’s representation of female figures and their gendered experiences within his texts. This project is useful to classicists interested in the philology and overarching themes of Ovid because of its intense focus on his texts, to feminist classicists because it helps us to better understand how a Roman man working during the Augustan period represented female figures, and finally to feminist academics outside of Classics because it documents the nature of sexualized violence in a highly influential author. Sexualized violence is one of the most discussed topics in Ovid and in the wider feminist, academic, media, and legal communities. What is more, the inclusion of victim-blaming and sororophobia—both feminist and sociological concepts—allow me to illuminate aspects of Ovid’s texts that may be ignored, hidden, or marginalized; bring the experiences of female figures to the center (even if they are just the

¹ Throughout the dissertation, since Ovid writes about rape primarily through explorations of Greek and Roman mythology, I will avoid referring to immortal females and males such as nymphs, satyrs, gods, and goddesses as “women” or “men” and rather use circumlocutions such as “female figure” or “male figure.”
distorted mirror images of female figures, to paraphrase Eva Keuls 1990); better understand *how* an ancient male author like Ovid depicted female figures and violence against them in his texts; and to make connections between the ancient past and our (Western, American) present.

My research aims to identify and analyze the patterns in Ovid's depictions of rape throughout his corpus.\(^2\) I make wide connections between the scenes of rape in Ovid from the first case of sexualized violence in Ovid’s corpus (the rape of the nymph Briseis by Achilles in *Heroides* 3) to the last (the attack on the goddess Vesta by Priapus in the *Fasti*, Book 6). Ovid tells his audience of the virginity or sexual history of the victim and of her beauty, her body, and her clothing, such an emphasis highlighting the importance of the male gaze and objectification in his work. He describes why and in what ways the rapist is attracted to her and how her fear makes her even more attractive. We learn of her resistance to the rape through flight and other means. He often displaces the action of the rape itself onto surrogate (vaginal and phallic) imagery or other forms of violence. Ovid, as well, intensely focuses on the psychology of both the victim and the rapist and on the violence in the aftermath of the rape, particularly through metamorphosis and other forms of bodily change. Philomela, for instance, in *Metamorphoses* (*Met.*) Book 6 suffers both bodily mutilation (the violent removal of her tongue by her rapist after she decries his actions) and transformation in the wake of her attack. In the extended scenes of rape in Ovid, especially in the *Met.* and the *Fasti*, we can find all or most of these features. Although Ovid will often compress, expand, suppress, and reverse some of these patterns, sometimes even radically, in order to generate variety in his texts, the kernel of these patterns is still discernible. And I argue that there are more patterns in his scenes of rape to consider.

\(^{2}\)My dissertation will feature analysis on every extant work of Ovid except the *Remedia Amoris*, *Medicamina Faciei Femineae*, and the *Ibis*, which do not include any instances of sexualized violence.
A recurrent theme is that of Ovid’s narrators (the narrators representing the voice of “Ovid” and his internal characters) blaming the victim for her rape. Victim-blaming means ascribing responsibility for sexualized violence to the victim of the attack and partially, or even fully, exonerating the sexual abuser. Ovid’s texts, first, engage in victim-blaming in their attribution of blame to the rape victim’s beauty and body. Furthermore, they showcase victim-blaming through the violent reprisals and punitive transformations that his female rape victims face in the aftermath of their attacks from female characters such as Juno, explicitly because they were sexually violated. We read of blame for the rape ascribed to the victim from the narrator, from the victim herself, or from goddesses such as Minerva, Diana, and Juno. Goddesses in particular blame them, terrorize them, turn their bodies into animals, and more in the wake of their abuse by male gods and never subject the male gods to the same violence. Juno, like the narrators representing “Ovid,” even often blames the rape on the victim’s beauty. These kinds of misogynistic acts by female figures against other female figures, after they have been sexually abused, manifest not only victim-blaming but also the phenomenon of sororophobia, a term coined by Helena Michie in her 1992 book by the same name to describe misogyny from women perpetrated against other women, often for what are perceived to be sexual transgressions. As Ovid’s characters participate in sororophobia, they deepen and materialize the victim-blaming.
Chapter One: Introduction

I. Misogyny, Sexuality, Rape, and Consent in the Roman World

My analysis of the patterns of sexualized violence and rape in Ovid, particularly the inclusion of victim-blaming and sororophobia, will need to be grounded in an understanding of ancient misogyny, rape, consent, and the elements of Rome’s patriarchal culture, which supported rape, with a particular emphasis on Ovid’s contemporary context. We should first tackle how the Romans defined sexualized violence and rape, then how they, along with Ovid, participated in victim-blaming and sororophobia, and finally, other important constituents of Roman misogyny that surface in Ovid’s works. Romans (and Greeks alike) did not have one word that encompassed the semantic field of “sexualized violence” or “rape,” but instead had many words, constantly conflated with other significant meanings that gained the meaning “sexualized violence” and “rape” in particular contexts (Nyugen 2006, 76). Most scholars, because of how thoroughly the Romans legislated sexualized violence, have turned to their legal codes to mine information about the terms Romans used for rape and how they—at least legally—conceived of rape. From the Republic to late antiquity under the Byzantines, stuprum, iniuria, vis, raptus, stuprum per vim, and raptus ad stuprum, could all legally describe a form of sexualized violence, with iniuria, vis, and stuprum per vim most popular during Ovid’s time.

Stuprum in particular poses challenges to researchers because while formerly it could mean any public disgrace, but in Ovid’s period, owing to Augustus’ intervention into public sexual morality, it could mean seduction or rape of a free boy, girl, or widow (Fantham 2011, 217). But we should not prioritize legal codes to the exclusion of other evidence in literature: we must turn to the wider cultural matrix to establish norms (H. Gardner 2012, 121). Ovid himself touches upon the ambiguity of stuprum in the Ars Amatoria (Ars) when he presents the story of
Achilles and Deidamia’s sexual relationship, the consent for which the praeceptor amoris, the narrator of the didactic poem, intentionally problematizes (Fantham 2011, 118–20). For Ovid’s contemporaries, Augustus (and also his adopted father, Caesar) more clearly defined some of these words and their connections to rape. For example, the *Lex Iulia de vi*, passed first by Caesar and then reaffirmed by Augustus, defined both *vis* and *stuprum per vim* as rape (J. Gardner 1986, 121 Dixon 2001, 43 and Nyugen 2006, 86). Ovid himself throughout his poetry often relies on the term *vis* to signify rape of his characters, along with the verbs *rapio* and *violo* as well as euphemisms such as *vim parat* (from which I derive the title of my dissertation).

Despite the shifting terminology, one thing remained constant about Roman conceptions of rape (in their law codes at least): Romans defined rape solely as the forcible and non-consensual penetration of a free girl, boy, woman, or man by a man. The Romans had a limited and primarily legal definition of rape, which did not encompass the many realities of what rape could be, and one that was intended to preserve the power of free male citizens over their womenfolk and their own bodily integrity. The ability to be recognized as a rape victim deeply depended on marital status and class for a girl or woman, and on one’s class for every other category of person. A free woman could only be appropriately penetrated by her husband, but she could not be raped by him. Being a free girl or woman meant one’s virginity, chastity, and sexuality were tightly controlled by first her father and then her husband, with little say over her own body. Free, citizen Roman men were obsessed with the purity of their bloodlines, the maintenance of the distinction between free and slave, and their power over legitimate exchanges of women (Williams 2010, 104; Caldwell 2015, 63). It is evident from our sources that laws against rape were not to protect women or to honor their sexual choices, but to protect men from the vitiation of a woman’s chief economic value, as a pure reproductive agent for men, and to
protect a man’s legitimacy in the eyes of other men (Nyugen 2006, 84). If women were raped, it was an attack on their male family members, a sign that the men had been penetrated like a woman. Rape was seen as a failure and distortion of the normal exchanges of women’s bodies as commodities and signs of honor between men: it was an attempt to cause chaos to that system (Klindienst 1991). In fact, only a woman’s male guardian or husband could prosecute sexualized violence (J. Gardner 1986, 121; Dixon 2001, 43). That obsession with a woman’s purity, and thus, the strength and vitality of a man’s patriarchal position, could explain why many of the legal protections for and the vast majority of the literary depictions of rape involved free virgins and married women. In fact, the very first rape of Roman history, was that of Rhea Silvia, a Vestal Virgin, by the god Mars. Ovid himself mirrors the deep cultural anxiety of Roman men surrounding the rape of free virgins in his works where most of the women raped are high-born virgins or nymphs, except in the Amores and the Ars where the status of the female characters—wives (uxores), freedwomen (libertinae), or sex laborers (meretrices)—is contentious. He also includes the rage that patriarchs experience when the virginity and sexual purity of their daughters is vitiated, such as the murderous reaction of Leucothoe’s father, Orchamus, in Met. 4.

But even though Roman outrage surrounding rape primarily stemmed from free, citizen male interests, that does not amount to complete ignorance of how rape affected women bodily, emotionally, and psychologically. Rape was a violation of a woman’s symbolic, pure reproductive body and her literal body. H. Gardner (2012) has challenged previous scholarship that too strongly posits that the Greeks did not see “rape as embodied event,” in her work on the

---

3 Virginity to the Greeks and Romans may have also been particularly attractive because it was seen as an untapped source of sexual and generative potential (Irwin 2005, 13–14). This very energy was also seen as threatening because it had not yet been transformed into marriage and childbearing. The Danaids, who killed their husbands after their father forced them to marry (or in other words, forced them to sexually mature), are the chief examples of virginal women who did not have their sexuality “properly channeled” for male control and used that potential for violence against men rather than submission to them (Fletcher 2005, 26).
Greek comedian Menander. I do not want to perpetuate that assumption about the Romans. Ovid frequently articulates the trauma rape brings to a female figure. Sexualized violence in Ovid even often results in the absolute dissolution of the body through the traumas of metamorphosis, mutilation, and/or death. But a big question is whether Ovid takes pleasure in the pain of women before and after such violence (see my discussion later in this chapter).

Slaves had few protections for their bodily integrity and against the exploitation, punishment, and penetrations of their bodies, this lack of bodily integrity being the fundamental mark of a slave. Being a free woman meant being penetrated by one man, with little say. If one is a slave—an inherently effeminate status exactly because of a lack of bodily integrity—that susceptibility to penetration and sexual abuse only deepens. Slave women would have been triply susceptible, female slaves defined by their “sexual availability” (while free women are defined by their “sexual unavailability”) (Perry 2014, 1). Free women and female slaves were both chiefly marked by their ability to be penetrated by men (the phrase pati mulierbra, or “to play the sexual part of woman,” meant “to be penetrated”), their sexual value, and their reproductive capabilities and they would have been expected to participate in both the same kinds of sexual and reproductive labor, although Romans (and the Greeks alike) sharply delineated among “wife,” “slave,” and “sex worker” as categories for women (Fischer 2013). At a more fundamental level, similarities between free and slave women existed in Rome because free women were often the property of their male relatives and eventually their husbands, although a few women could become their own economic guardians (Evans Grubbs 2002, 24).

4 Bradley (1984, 55) argues that female slaves were valued highly for their reproductive purposes and “there is no example on record of a female slave being sold who might not have been expected to bear children after sale.”

5 I understand, like many feminists before me, that the oppression of women and misogyny lies in the rise of the importance of private property and the need to perpetuate generational wealth through reproductive control of women’s bodies (de Beauvoir 1949, Rubin 1975 [relying on Levi-Strauss], Irigaray 1977, Barrett 2014). The aftereffects of these origins form the foundation of misogyny today (Rubin 1975, Barrett 2014). Misogyny had practical roots in economic exchanges between patriarchal family units and strengthened its grasp through
Overall, both male and female slaves would have been ubiquitously subject to sexual abuse by their masters, even if Romans refused to think of that as a possibility or as the reality. Free citizen Roman men, although they could not legally pursue homoerotic relations with free boys and men like Greek pederasts could, were able to turn with impunity to their male slaves or male sex laborers (Williams 2010, 19). The rape of a free-born boy or male was a very grave offense under Roman law because free males were exempt from physical violence and penetration by other men (Walters 1997). Penetration would threaten their essential virility in a culture where virility is derived from penetrating others (Williams 2010, 17–19). In Rome, rape against a free woman was punished because of her family’s standing, but a rape against a free man was punished because of a male’s individual and “personal dignity” (Nyugen 2006, 81).

The legal recourse for abused slaves was the Lex Aquilia (to prevent the abuse of one’s slaves by others) and the Lex Fabia (to prevent the abduction of one’s slaves), but only a master could pursue this in court (male and female slaves like free women did not have independent legal standing) and he did so to protect his property from economic and financial abuse, not for the well-being of the victim. Although the Romans would not have recognized rape against slaves, even a cursory look at Roman literature demonstrates how endemic the abuse of slaves was to upper-class, free male culture and how it is even the source of humor. Ovid in Amores 2.7 and 2.8, as I will analyze in Chapter Two, documents the rape of Cypassis. Plautus’ comedy Casina revolves around the sexual abuse of a slave woman, and as De Boer (2010, 10) argues, no one in the household seems to question that one of her masters will have his way with her; it is pernicious ideologies about sex and gender differences and more (Rubin 1975). We must not see the oppression of women as exclusively biological or think that the weaponizing of sexual differences between men and women is natural. As Whittig (1980) has argued, women were marked as different by men as a form of social control and they have used that mark for millennia to continue that control. Misogyny has ideological and material roots. Rape is one way to again affirm that mark of man and that mark of woman. From a psychoanalytical perspective, such as that of Irigaray, rape is the way to affirm the difference between the phallus and not, the one who has something (the man) and the one who has nothing (woman), the one has control (the man) and the one who does not (the woman).
rather a question of whether it will be the paterfamilias or his son. Sexual relationships of free persons with slaves must always be considered sexual abuse and rape because of the vast power differential between them. We can, of course, never know the statistics of how widespread sexualized violence was in Rome, but the presence of an enormous slave culture speaks self-evidently to a high proportion of the population experiencing rape (Perry 2014, 1; Baird 2015).

War in antiquity, which subjected populations of free and enslaved women and girls to mass sexual abuse, added to the ubiquity of such violence. Gaca throughout her research (2010, 2011a, 2011b, 2013, 2014, 2015) has shown that free women and girls would have been particularly attractive to ravaging soldiers because of their status and upbringing.

Another marginalized portion of the population that could not be raped under Roman definitions were sex laborers, male or female, who sometimes were free, but often enslaved. Being a sex laborer amounted to the same loss of bodily integrity as slavery, no matter one’s status. But, in many respects, sex laborers had the lowest status of them all. Slave owners when selling their male or female slaves could stipulate that the next owner not sell that slave into sex labor through the *Ne Serva Prostituatur* law (McGinn 1998, 328). Female sex laborers in the ancient world (and now) made clear—at the most fundamental level—the sexual labor expected and demanded of women by men. And instead of performing that sexual labor unpaid, they profited from it (particularly if they were free and not enslaved sex workers). The clarity they brought to the sexual labor extracted from women and their profits from that labor stigmatized sex workers in Rome and continues to do so today. Because of this intense stigma, owners of sex laborers could not even turn to the laws against *iniuriae* like other male Roman slave owners to protect their property through the *Lex Aquilia* or *Fabia* (McGinn 1998, 328). It becomes clear in plays like the *Miles Gloriosus* by Plautus that sex laborers have no right to redress and safety
through the law: Philocomasium, a free sex laborer abducted by the braggart soldier and has no legal right to free herself and must be freed by private ingenuity (De Boer 2010, 16).

Rape in Rome occurred in a cultural context in which Roman male sexuality routinely eroticized power, domination, and violence. In Roman culture, similarly to our own, it is impossible to define rape as “sexualized violence” or “violent sex.” Sex and violence were inextricably intertwined to the Romans and to us. Rape is a form of violence, but it derives its power and methods through sex. To quote Catharine MacKinnon—“if it’s violence, not sex, why didn’t he just hit her?” (1989, 323). The eroticization of power itself was fundamental to all sexual relations in Rome. Male sexuality eroticized power dynamics and differences between the penetrated and penetrator, the penetrating partner and the penetrated partner, free and slave, which was essentially a sexualized difference between the masculine (the actor) and the feminine (the one acted upon) (Williams 2010, 17–19). Richlin (1983, 2014) understands Roman male sexuality to be priapic in nature—embedded in phallocentrism, penetration (and thus, violence

---

6 Foucault (1990) argued for the desexualization of the violence of rape and asserted there was little distinction between physical assault and forcible penetration. One is not violence and the other violence through sex/sex through violence, they are simply violence. His arguments on the desexualization of rape relate to his hope, as articulated in Histoire de la sexualité I, that we can resist how the state and other actors since the nineteenth century have controlled bodies through sexuality and sexualization and defined it as the chief source of someone’s identity. But Cahill (2000) reminds us that although she agrees with the resistance of the state’s interest in regulating bodies sexually, the desexualizing of rape ignores the distinctions of how the male and female become embodied because of patriarchy and “only serves masculine interests.” Rape and the imposition of sexuality both enforce gender and thus, oppressive hierarchies. If we refuse to see both the sex and violence in rape, we refuse to see gender.

Relatedly, Madorossian (2014) asserts that all violence is sexual and that rape should be seen as another manifestation of the violent masculinity endemic to our culture. She agrees with Foucault that rape is not an exceptional form of violence and argues that all violence “entails the mobilization of a relational and structural paradigm of masculinity/femininity that is not only operative in rape per se but of which one particular form is rape as we know it...I do not intend to dilute the significance of rape or take women out of an equation that predominantly affects them but rather to reveal the representativeness and centrality of both rape and women in a culture where violence is always sexualized” (2014, 5). Women experience rape because they occupy most often—in this paradigm of the dominating and the dominated, the structurally masculine and the feminine—the feminine, dominated position. Rape is the “paradigm violence” in such a culture.

7 But, of course, we do not have to abide by Roman, male notions that conflate penetration with power and see penetration as the source of power for the penetrator and loss of it for the penetrated. Deborah Kamen and Sarah Levin-Richardson (2015) in their recent chapter assert that we must move behind the rigid dualities of male-defined sexuality and strive to broaden our notion of Roman sexuality to account for the sexual activity and subjectivity of women. For example, fellare (to suck) is an active verb women often use in Pompeian graffiti.
against and possession) of one’s effeminate subordinates such as women, slaves, and sex laborers, and sexually aggressive behavior toward those subordinates. Men proved they were men through penetration and domination of others and could even challenge the accusation of effeminacy (mollitia) by threatening to violently rape other men, such as in Catullus 16. There was even the common notion that the etymology for the word for man (vir) derived from vis, or violence, power, rape (Wheeler 1997). Being a man amounted to being sexually powerful and enacting violence over others. Ovid in his own poetry, as well as his predecessors, Tibullus and Propertius, make plain that rape, its violence, and its power over women were heavily sexualized and attractive to men (Desmond 2006; Amores 1.5, 1.7, 1.9; Tibullus 1.6, 1.10; Propertius 2.15).

This very eroticization of power, violence, and dominance becomes clearest during wartime, in which Greeks, Romans, and other peoples in the Mediterranean world engaged in mass rapes of free and enslaved women and girls. We know of the practice as far back as Homer in the Greek context, and the Romans participated in it ubiquitously. Men could not fully conquer a territory until they had sexually conquered the women, the symbolic representations of prosperity and fertility of the state and land (Dougherty 1998, 272). In Rome, the symbolism surrounding women and the state is clearest through the Vestal Virgins, who must always remain virgins to represent the sanctity of the Roman city: just as they are never penetrated, neither shall Rome, their bodies metonymies for the city walls (Parker 2004). Kathy Gaca (2010, 2011a, 2011b, 2013, 2014, 2015) has even shown that sexualized violence against women is not incidental, but one of the fundamental motives for ancient war to begin, a quest for Eros through Thanatos and a massive economic boon through enslavement of women and girls for further sexual labor. Leatherman (2011) confirms that this persists in modern warfare in which sexual victims of war are routinely trafficked into modern (sexual) slavery.
Rape provided more than military and economic power in Rome, and we see throughout Roman history that the rape of women could be a source of economic, military, and political power: the Romans’ desire for rape is intimately bound to their desire for power (Beard 1999). The rape of the Sabines brought about Rome’s expansion of land and people through war and the stolen women’s reproduction. The rape of Lucretia, especially in Livy, was originally intended to increase the political power of Sextus Tarquinius by delegitimizing Collatinus as a rival for tyrannical power, but it ultimately increases the political power of more Roman men through Republicanism. Ovid himself evinces this wartime eroticization of violence against women in his ample use of the militia amoris, a trope of elegiac poetry in which poets are compared to soldiers fighting on the battlefield of love and a trope that speaks to generic tensions between elegy (poetry of love) and epic (poetry of war). Ovid makes the implicit violence of this stance explicit in Amores 1.9 in which he relates the penetration of a city’s walls by a soldier to the penetration of his lover’s home. Once a city’s walls have been breached, the sexualized violence against women begins. Ovid mirrors the links between rape and war, eros and violence, and moreover, the genres of elegy and epic, more so through his inclusion of animalistic predator-prey similes first used to describe the actions of soldiers in Homer (Iliad 22.139–42, 22.308–19, 22.263–64) in order to describe victims fleeing their rapists such as Daphne fleeing Apollo (Met. 1.525–32). These similes additionally relate to a common characteristic of Ovid’s rape scenes: he describes rape as an erotic experience fueled by attraction to the fear of victims—as seen during the rape of Philomela (Met. 6.520–6)—fear and resistance that will soon be overpowered.

In Roman thought, as well, there was a strong conflation of seduction, rape, and marriage, all acts involving the sexual compulsion of women. For example, in Terence’s play the Eunuchus, Chaerea, rapes Pamphila while she is sleeping, but ultimately marries her because she
is discovered to be an upper-class woman. To the Romans, rape can be seen as leading to a happy ending as long as it results in a legitimate marriage (Beard 2014a, 9). The Romans even traced the first marriages in their history to the rape of the Sabines, and in Livy’s account of the rape, the men attempt to seduce the women in martial submission after they are abducted with blanditiae (flatteries) (Ab urbe condita/AUC 1.9.6). These blurry lines between seduction, rape, and marriage even manifested outside of literature later in antiquity when the Romans legislated against abduction marriages (or those often begun in rape) through laws like Theodosian 9.24 (Evans Grubbs 1989). The women raped by their future husbands in both Roman literature and reality would have had little choice of partners beyond their rapists because of the paramount importance of a woman’s chastity. It is a “happy ending” only in the sense that the best and lone option available was realized for the women. Greek mythology has evidence of the same conflations, in stories like those about Persephone, Thetis, and Nausikaa (the princess of Phaeacia, found in Odyssey Books 6–8), where seduction, rape, and marriage imagery and motifs abound. Persephone marries her rapist, Thetis marries her rapist, and Odysseus uses the language of wooing on Nausikaa after he is compared to a hungry lion preying upon a flock at the conclusion of Odyssey 6.130–6. But marriage and rape were also intimately connected with death in Graeco-Roman thought. The rape of Persephone most clearly demonstrates that link: as soon as Hades abducts her, he takes her to the realm of death and marries her as his queen. Zeitlin (1988, 142) observes that for the Greeks and Romans, marriage, rape, and death were all seen as radical destructions of the body, childhood, virginity, and more. Women like the Danaids in mythology could fear this sexual and reproductive transition so thoroughly that they bring death to their husbands. But rape and death were a reality for many women in antiquity during wartime, such as during the lethal mass rapes against the Phocians in Herodotus 8.33 (γυναῖκας
They killed certain women by having sex through gang rape,” Gaca 2011b). It is telling that sexual desire for a woman was so intimately connected with a man’s desire to dominate her sexually or otherwise. These confluences between rape and desire for sex and marriage amount to an obscuring of rape as a way to enact power. Ovid in his portrayals of sexualized violence most obviously locates the source of rape in an uncontrollable, burning desire for sex, not in an uncontrollable, burning desire for power (when power and desire cannot be separated). The desire for power is there, but more latent.8

In contrast to the limited definition of rape Romans adopted, which revolved around forcible penetration of certain classes of women through violence, my dissertation will define rape more widely and will understand rape in the way radical feminist Lisa Milbank (2012) does:

Rape...is an experience which feels to the survivor like a fundamental crossing and violation of boundaries, which happens using some form of coercion, strength, or manipulation. Some things that people do can cause that experience. Someone can attempt to rape without causing an experience of rape. Someone can experience rape without the perpetrator intending to rape, but it is always the case that the perpetrator knew enough to know that they might have been raping.

This “fundamental crossing and violation of boundaries” involves a forcible penetration of a bodily orifice (mouth, vagina, anus) with a penis, another body part, a foreign object. Most think of “forcible penetration” as violence alone, but force can mean threats of violence, threats of economic harm, the use of intoxicating substances such as drugs and alcohol, the exploitation of a person’s physical or mental disability, and more. In Western cultures, women make up the vast

---

8 As in ancient Rome, power, power dynamics, and violence are eroticized in American culture and sexual relations. Andrea Dworkin (1983), Catharine MacKinnon (1989 a,b), and Lisa Milbank (2012) have written extensively on the erotics of rape and even what we might see as consensual sex becomes the sexualization of power, hierarchies, and violence. These radical feminist scholars urge us to understand that the sexuality of modern, Western men is rooted in sexualizing patriarchal domination of women’s bodies and reproduction, at any cost, and the sexuality of women must be rooted in the submission to that domination—or else. We can find this ideology everywhere in a culture, even in something as seemingly harmless as the schoolyard saying of “he hits you/is following you/is pulling your hair because he likes you.” Thus, male violence towards women, sexual or otherwise, is seen as passion, love, and an excess of sexual and emotional feeling (Bourke 2007, 113 and passim). We often conceive of rape, like the Romans, as stemming from passion rather than from an expression of violence and control.
majority of rape victims and men the vast majority of rapists. Radical feminists such as Dworkin
MacKinnon, Cahill, and Milbank—understanding the gendered significance of rape—see being
raped and being a rapist as fundamental to the production of gender and (hetero)sexuality,
femininity and masculinity, power and weakness, of the gender that provides the sexual labor
and the gender that derives profits from it (to paraphrase Kempadoo and Doezema 1998, 5 in
their analysis of the modern, global sex worker movement). Rape is one of the many ways that
the “male” and “female” find socially imposed and material embodiment. As rape works to
enforce gender, it enforces social control and patriarchal structures. There is a social, economic,
and political purpose to rape of which we should be always mindful.⁹

But we also must account for acts of sexualized violence beyond rape, a distinction that
will be useful for analyzing Ovid’s texts because he shows us various forms of sexualized
violence, such as attempted rape. Joanna Bourke (2007, 9) in her book, Rape, Sexual Violence,
and History, provides an excellent wider definition of sexual abuse:

Refusing, and in defiance of institutional directives, to bestow primacy on any single, static
definition, I have proceeded on the simple principle that sexual abuse is any act called such
by a participant or third party....First, a person has to identify a particular act as sexual,
however the term ‘sexual’ is defined. Second, that person must also claim that the act is
non-consensual, unwanted, or coerced, however they may wish to define those terms.

Using much wider definitions for sexualized violence and rape than the Romans will allow us to
better understand the reality of these experiences in Ovid’s texts and also their scope. For
example, these definitions will allow us to analyze the violence that Salmacis and other women

⁹ MacKinnon (1989a, b) condemns all (hetero)sexuality under patriarchy as mired in the reification of domination
and submission, male and female, and asserts that one of the only ways women can be liberated is by eradicating
patriarchy’s grip on sexuality. MacKinnon is one of the most controversial figures in feminism for these statements
and although I largely agree with her, I take the criticisms of queer theorists like Franke (2001, 203) seriously,
which warn us that sexuality, although compromised by power, should not always be viewed as a danger, either.
in the *Met.* enact against their male victims as sexualized violence. Rape is something that primarily happens to women in Ovid and is definitively gendered, but not exclusively so.

Most feminists today understand sexualized violence as a manifestation of “rape culture” or “rape-supportive culture” globally, first used in print by Noreen Connell and Cassandra Wilson in *Rape: The First Sourcebook for Women* (1974), but used often by second-wave feminists in their organizing in the 1960s. Rape culture speaks to the prevalence of sexualized violence and also to its normalization. In the United States, one out of five women experiences a form of sexualized violence over their lifetimes (CDC Report 2010) and the numbers are similar internationally (Jewkes, et al. 2013). Rape is on the extreme end of a continuum of various kinds and methods of sexualized violence. For such large numbers of women to be raped, it must be condoned by members of society and its legal, cultural, economic, and media institutions, and it is much more prevalent among members of marginalized groups, such as women of color, indigenous women, sexual minorities, migrants, sex workers (Davis 1981, Crenshaw 1991, and Olive 2012). Under rape culture, as well, in order to conceal its ubiquity, rape victims are blamed and punished for the violence against them. Nancy Sorkin-Rabinowitz (2011) has adopted this term in her analysis of rape in Greek culture and literature and like other feminists before her, asserts that rape is a transhistorical method of social control. “Rape culture” as a term and a concept could be applied to Rome, as well. Rape in Greece and Rome was widespread and rape was excused in cultural institutions, such as in marriage. One of the most fundamental components of my dissertation is the understanding that Ovid mirrors how modern societies conceive of responsibility and victimhood before and after an act of sexualized violence as they simultaneously attempt to conceal the prevalence of rape and further normalize it.\(^\text{10}\)

\(^{10}\) Activists and scholars like Yasmin Nair (2014) have criticized the term and concept of “rape culture” because of how “meaningless” it becomes in its breadth and its attempts to encompass a wide variety of violence and contexts.
A robust concept of consent for sex did not exist for women in Roman law and thought. As discussed previously, free, citizen women could resist rape and any form of sexual control by a man who was not her husband, but could not exercise consent over her body with her husband. Free women in Rome only had bodily boundaries insofar as they had men making, enforcing, and protecting the boundaries for them. A free woman did not have true consent over her own sexuality since the consent was the purview of the men in her life, such as her father when she was under his potestas or that of her husband. Even if she was sui iuris, she could not defend herself in court if raped and she could still, as mentioned, be raped by her husband with impunity. But a great portion of the women in Rome had no right to any sexual boundaries, and slaves and/or sex laborers could rarely, if ever, say “no” to sexual encounters. On the other hand, free, citizen men did have a strong sense that they were entitled to freedom from violence and entitled to bodily boundaries to which women were not (Walters 1997, Williams 2010, 17–19).

Masculinity in Rome, a concept and status continuously contested, earned, and proved, amounted to bodily integrity, stability, and control. To be masculine, was to be impenetrable.

But even if women legally or culturally did not have much access to sexual consent, the sexual consent of women was a topic understood and well explored by men in Roman literature. For example, Livy in his exploration of the rape of Lucretia discusses consent when the matron makes a distinction between her body violated by Sextus and her unwilling mind (AUC 1.58.7). Livy and Ovid show how women express their lack of consent to sexualized violence primarily

---

Nair does not deny the international ubiquity and persistence of rape through history, but she wants us to recognize that there is a large distinction between rape as an act of an intimate partner and rape as an act of war. “Rape culture” reduces important historical, cultural, and geopolitical distinctions that cannot be brought under one umbrella. I agree that we should be careful and intentional with the term and the concept, but I do not agree that it should be discarded completely. Just as we must be careful with the term and concept of “patriarchy” and what it means in a specific context, it is still useful to understanding the oppression of women throughout time and space.

11 Although consent to sex began to be taken more seriously in United States beginning in the 1960s as a result of the rise of feminism, women could legally be raped by their husbands in parts of the country (since laws against sexual assault and rape are controlled by local and state legislatures) until July 5, 1993 (Bennice and Resick 2003).
through the fear and flight of the female characters. Violent resistance to sexual exploitation, abuse, and violence is rare in Roman literature, but goddesses in ancient mythology do punish mortals who threaten them with rape, and the story of the Danaids killing their husbands, haunted the ancient, male psyche and became, as we discussed, a symbol of why men should fear women and how such women must suffer perpetually in the underworld for their crimes.

Today, feminists, legal scholars, and the like have a much more robust notion of consent than the Romans did, even if those notions of consent are not normalized in wider society. Consent to sex is a positive assertion of free will. One cannot consent to sexual activity if one is coerced physically, emotionally, or economically, asleep or unconscious, impaired by drink or a physical or mental disability, or put in danger or threatened if he or she does not submit to the sex act. Liberal feminists often define the difference between normal sex and rape by the presence or lack of consent. But consent faces pressures in a patriarchy and my understanding of consent lies more with the radical feminist tradition and how one’s free will is impacted by structural domination. Using the theories of radical feminists like MacKinnon (1989a, b) in her works “On Consent and Coercion” and “Pornography and Ethics,” I understand that consent is under duress and compromised by power dynamics and systems of oppression like misogyny; and people living under those power dynamics and systems of oppression, such as women, without having the privileges of wielding them or benefitting from them, are using their free will and their agency to make the best “choices” they can in limited circumstances (Milbank 2012). There are deeply embedded burdens on consent, and consent cannot be seen as a binary of “no” or “yes” exactly because of those burdens (Milbank 2012). A woman’s “no” is defined under oppression, inequality, domination, and fear, and so is her “yes.”

We must see that sexuality is

---

12 Sexual abusers will exploit these power dynamics and limited circumstances for gain (Milbank 2012). For example, white men know they have power under patriarchy and white supremacy: how will they use that to coerce
not politically neutral, but is instead, mired in political power. The very presence of rape as a possibility against women always compromises their freedom (Dworkin 1987, 170).

MacKinnon’s theories further impugn the existence of completely and freely given sexual consent under patriarchy by exploring how the eroticization of rape in our culture, how the glorification of rape as “sexy” has shaped women’s sexuality. Women have been taught to find submission, violence, and force desirable and thus, society manufactures women’s consent to (sexual) power. Society pressures many women to accept their (sexual) subordination and to find it attractive. As Anderson and Doherty (2008, 6) write, since “normative heterosexuality is imbued with a dominance/submission dynamic, it leaves little room for notions of women’s active desire or consent and little to no imperative for men to check that women are actively consenting.” Nevertheless, all these constraints on consent do not mean that women cannot enjoy sex, that women are always victims, that they cannot make choices or have joy through sex, that there can be no political resistance and praxis through sex, but it instead means that the taint of patriarchy is indelible. It stipulates that nothing in our society, with its innumerable outlets, media, and methods for power and abuse, can escape male systems of power. This taint of patriarchy may make us uncomfortable, we might not want to confront it and are actively taught to not confront it, but it is there and the first step is to recognize that taint.13 The presence of such

---

13 When an interviewer in 2006 in the Guardian disagreed with MacKinnon’s theories and how they problematize all relationships between men and women, he asked if there is an “innocent space” between them. MacKinnon responded: “Yes! People work it out with great difficulty. But the first step is not to deny that [power’s] there.”
power should make us uncomfortable, but instead of perpetually making women victims, such knowledge must empower us to resist and find more egalitarian alternatives.

I want to add another element to my discussion of consent that is useful for studying rape through myth. Ovid primarily writes about the rape of mortals and lesser deities by Olympian gods and goddesses. Most of these instances can easily be categorized as rape because of the obvious lack of desire on the victim’s part: the female figure’s fear, her flight, her words, the use of violence. But what about the stories such as that of Semele and Jupiter (Met. 3.233–338), Adonis and Venus (10.503–739), where the mortals seemingly consent to and enjoy their sexual relationship with the more powerful gods and goddesses? I will define any sexual relationship between a mortal and a god, a mortal and a lesser deity, and a lesser deity and an Olympian god as rape. There can never be true consent because of the mortal’s or the lesser deity’s lack of physical (and otherwise) power in relation to the god or goddess. The issue in cases like these should never be whether the subordinate sexual partner can say “yes,” but if they can say “no.”

II. Victim-Blaming Now and in Antiquity

Greeks and Romans often explored a female figure’s consent to sex by suggesting, explicitly or implicitly, that a female figure and her appearance, clothing, character, and social status caused sexualized violence. Modern feminists label this attribution of responsibility for sexualized violence to the victim of the attack and the subsequent partial—or even full—exoneration of the sexual abuser “victim-blaming.” Modern feminists recognize that women today are blamed for their rapes for many reasons: for daring to enter a public space, for having a sexual history, for being alone, for being the wrong race, for wearing the wrong outfit, for drinking, for being uppity, for not resisting hard enough, for not crying out. Many feminists, sociologists, and psychologists (and the intersections between them) have documented how in
Western cultures, like that of the United States, victim-blaming rests upon the power of “rape myths” surrounding a woman’s status, appearance, dress, behavior, and sexual history and surrounding how we conceive of femininity and masculinity, sex, and sexuality more generally.

Bohner, et al. (2010, 19–22) delineate five kinds of rape myths: that a woman secretly wanted to be raped or that she made herself sexually available in some way; that women lie or exaggerate about sexualized violence; that men must rape because of their biology, or that a certain man cannot be a rapist because he is white, not of color; that not all women can be raped or their rapes do not warrant much sympathy; and that women must be forced into sex or that what happens is not rape because women do not understand the nature of sex. Is she lying? Was her skirt too short? Has she had sex with this man before? Is she a sex worker? Does she owe the man sex for the supposed benefits he has given her? Rape myths have wide currency in the culture and media of the United States, and there is a high rate of rape myth acceptance in the general population, especially among the dominant social group of white, straight, cisgender, class-privileged men (Aosved and Long 2006; Suarez and Gadalla, 2010). The general population also more easily accepts rape myths about women of color, especially black women, than white women because of women of color’s colonial associations with hypersexuality and white women’s associations with bloodlines and sexuality purity (George and Martinez 2002).

Victim-blaming and the rape myths that support it allow society as a whole to believe that the world is fundamentally safe (the influential “just world hypothesis” first proposed by Melvin Lerner), that systematic male violence against women is not a problem, that rape is not a problem of masculinity, and that there are simple solutions to male violence if women follow certain rules of engagement with men (Bohner, et al. 2010). In fact, in our individualistic, neoliberal society, rape has become “all about prevention, risk-taking, hazards” (Anderson and Doherty 2008, 77).
Rape is seen as a miscalculated failure of a woman’s personal responsibility, not a widespread societal ill. Stringer (2014, 9) argues that we are taught to ignore the social responsibility for rape and to render it personal. One of the consequences of neoliberalism is that our society has a profoundly misguided definition of “victim,” as someone who suffers because of her own psychology, body, and will, rather than systems of power (Stringer 2014).

Victim-blaming is, ultimately, a very powerful distraction to exonerate and justify systems of misogyny, which derive a significant source of their power from rape. Moreover, victim-blaming often transforms into self-blame from rape victims (Ahrens 2006; Bourke 2007, 50; Suarez and Gadalla, 2010; Ullman 2010). Women blame themselves because it is easier to individualize what happened rather than condemn systems of power, and they are encouraged and taught to do so by patriarchal forces and socialization. Victim-blaming, like the violation of rape itself, becomes more profound for women who experience multiple oppressions such as women of color; in general, a white woman is much less likely than a black woman to be held responsible for her own rape (George and Martinez 2002; Donovan and Williams, 2002).

In Ovid, female figures are primarily blamed by the narrator and other characters because of their beauty, body, and appearance, thereby creating causal relationships between female figures and sexualized violence, rather than male figures and sexualized violence. How do Ovid’s sexual abusers see the bodies of their victims and then react with aggression? How is the female body the locus of the attack and not male sexual aggression against that body? There is something fundamental about female figures that allows them to be victimized by sexualized violence. As Ovid focuses on their bodies, he distracts his audience from the male figures who are responsible. When we focus on the female body and locate it as the source of sexualized violence, we are masking the wheels of patriarchal power and its tools. Naturalizing the female
body as the source of rape also naturalizes the male visual and sexual reaction to it. Male figures become innocent bystanders, consumed by the need to respond to what they see of the female figures. Ovid’s focus on the female body as the source of a rape deeply relates to the physical transformations rape victims face in the *Met.* and the *Fasti.* The victim’s body is blamed for the attack and then the transformation of the body furthers and materializes that blame. Ovid, moreover, consistently features female figures alone before they are raped, separate from male protection of their fathers and more in the wilds of Greece and Italy. In the modern United States, the vision of a woman alone, opening herself up to male predation is one of the most powerful and widely believed rape myths (Bourke 2007, 69–70). In Ovid, as well, his victims blame themselves for the violence against them and very few have the opportunity to condemn the male figures who have raped them and others with impunity. Cyane (*Met.* 5.409–37), Philomela (6.549–70), and Lara (*Fasti* 2.583–616) and more all face violence for such bravery.

Victim-blaming was embedded in wider Roman society. As we have already discussed, slaves and/or sex laborers would always be blamed for the violence against them. They were fundamentally sexually available and could not be raped. Free-born girls and women, on the other hand, could be raped by certain classes of men (not their husbands) and were considered innocent before Roman law (Treggiari 1991, 278–9; *Digest* 48.5.6.1). But one Roman law, *Digest* 47.10.15.15, stipulates that citizen girls or women could be blamed for sexual abuse against them—particularly the act of *adsectatio* (a form of sexual abuse that could range from street harassment to stalking)—if she was known to be or accused of being dressed at the time of her attack in the garb of a slave or a sex laborer (women who could not be raped under Roman thought and law). The sexual abuser could receive less severe penalties or be exonerated if he was able to prove that she wore such clothing, demonstrating how a version of victim-blaming
was enshrined in Roman law. It was a woman’s responsibility to maintain the appearance of chastity both through the clothing she wore and by walking in public with chaperones (Caldwell 2015, 49–50). Clothing was one of the most powerful signifiers and tools of social status and control in Rome, and a citizen woman was expected to wear stolae, pallae, and vittae, never the togae of sex laborers. Dixon (2001, 51) connects Digest 47.10.15.15 to modern cases of victim-blaming where a woman’s attire can help a rapist to justify and condone his actions against the woman. This law shows the impact of multiple oppressions and marginalization on the victim-blaming women experience, a phenomenon still very much alive in our own times. Ovid himself almost exclusively focuses on the rape of respected, free-born women and nymphs, except in the case of Briseis (Her. 3) and Cypassis (Amores 2.7 and 2.8), both slaves who face sexual abuse.

Ovid is not the only author in antiquity to engage in victim-blaming. He has the most elaborate rape descriptions extant from antiquity, but if other ancient authors have any extended description of rape (an admittedly rare scenario), these authors comment on the rape victim’s beauty and ultimately attribute rape to physical attraction. Pindar describes the virginity of Cyrene in Pythian 9.19ff and the desire of Apollo for her body and sexuality. Livy participates in victim-blaming also by attributing Lucretia’s rape by Sextus to her appearance and behavior (AUC 1.57). Herodotus includes the most fundamental type of rape myth by questioning whether famous women like Europa and Helen were really raped, because, according to the historian, a woman cannot be abducted if she truly does not want to go (Histories 1.4–5). Euripides incorporates this type of rape myth, too, in his tragedy the Ion by consistently undermining Creusa’s claim that she was raped and did not desire Apollo (Rabinowitz 1993; 2011). Creusa, although she has one of the most powerful, first-person accounts of her own rape in ancient literature, in the same account calls the god beautiful, and characters such as her son directly
question if she was raped and work to evoke sympathy for Apollo (Ion 881–905). Rabinowitz (2011, 11) in her analysis of the Ion reminds us that Euripides, a man, is constructing a portrayal of rape that aligns with male concepts of desire and how ancient men want women to be sexual and posits that the play can enforce wider societal beliefs of gender and sexuality. The same could apply to Ovid, Livy, Herodotus, and others. The assumption that female figures desired or invited rape was, moreover, essential to visual depictions of sexualized violence in antiquity as well. Sourvinou-Inwood (1991, 73–4) has documented various artistic signifiers of a female figure’s consent to male predation: female figures are often in flight with their hands and arms in a defensive position, but they make eye contact with their attackers, the eyes the entrance and medium to desire, as evidenced by Plato’s Phaedrus 251–5. Both Greek authors and Ovid, furthermore, accept that female figures participating in male activities, or activities distant from male purview, open themselves up to male predation. The majority of Ovid’s rape victims (also found in earlier depictions of Greek mythology) are raped in nature and the wilds, are alone, and have masculine interests such as hunting. Deacy (1997, 54) notes this phenomenon, in particular, for female goddesses who experience sexualized violence while participating in masculine activities, as for example, Hera when battling the giants (Apollodorus 1.6.2) and Athena when she retrieves weapons from Hephaistos and he attacks her (Diodorus Siculus 3.71.4).

**III. Sororophobia: A Definition and Its Presence in Ovid’s Texts and Classical Authors**

There is a vast array of victim-blaming in Ovid’s corpus. The narrator attributes Daphne’s abuse by Apollo to her beauty, thereby tingeing all other references to beauty before an act of sexualized violence with that attitude (Met. 1.488–9). In the Fasti, the narrator suggests that Callisto committed a crimen during her rape by Jupiter (2.162). Daphne and Philomela blame themselves for what happens to them (Met. 1. 546; 6.537–8), and Caenis blames herself so
profoundly for her rape that she rejects womanhood and what she perceives to be its intrinsic penetrability, asking Neptune—her rapist—to transform her into a man (12.189–205). But some of the most violent blame that rape victims receive in the stories is from other female figures. This not only manifests victim-blaming but sororophobia, or misogyny from females against other females. Ovid in his texts mirrors how female figures are socialized to be enforcers of blame against other female figures and how victim-blaming often becomes sororophobic because it is enacted by female figures. My dissertation, therefore, will closely link the phenomenon of victim-blaming to sororophobia. When female figures blame other female figures, there is something specific about that blame with which we must grapple.

Sororophobia was a term coined by the feminist scholar Helena Michie (1992) in her exploration of “Woman” not as a unified category of identity, a category of Sameness, but a category of Otherness, fraught with differences, tensions, and hostilities. Michie primarily addressed this phenomenon through Anglo-American literature from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, beginning with a discussion of Jane Eyre and the eponymous character’s inability to form loving relationships with other women and to only find fulfillment intellectually and emotionally in her relationships with men, such as Mr. Rochester. But one of the most common, generative, and evocative sources of difference between women is sexual in nature and surrounds perceived sexual transgressions. In Ovid Juno, Diana, and Minerva enact violent reprisals and punishments against female rape victims explicitly because they were raped. For Juno, the queen of the gods and the wife of Jupiter, the divine world’s most prolific and serial rapist, raped female figures are primarily her sexual and reproductive competitors. Juno and Minerva even blame the rape on the victim’s beauty, like the narrators of Ovid’s poems.
In psychological and sociological literatures, sororophobia is called “internalized misogyny” or “internalized sexism” and has been studied extensively by scholars such as Syzmanski and Carr (2009), Bearman, Korobov, and Thorne (2009), and E.J.R. David (2013). Internalized oppression—first explored in relation to racism by the anti-colonial philosopher and theorist Frantz Fanon in his book *Peau noire, masques blancs* (1952)—not only decreases a marginalized individual’s self-worth, it creates intragroup friction and even violence. As one begins to believe negative stereotypes about oneself, those negative stereotypes can be transferred to others in the group and lead to dehumanizing processes like violence. Irigaray (1977) understood this phenomenon as an extension of homosocial society where women are set up to compete as capitalist commodities in both economic and sexual exchanges between men. Sororophobia arises in a context where because of patriarchal oppression, women are given limited access to power and often primarily only through their sexuality and their proximity to men. Juno wants to maintain her very gendered position as the wife of the supreme ruler of the gods and she must destroy women and nymphs who threaten her (limited) power. Andrea Dworkin in 1983 explored this phenomenon among American right-wing women and their antifeminist activism. She asserted that right-wing women supported their own subordination as a defense mechanism to protect themselves from male violence by attaching themselves closely to the power of men, hoping and willing that men will be violent with *other* women.

While sororophobia, or internalized misogyny, can describe any act of violence, emotional, psychological, or physical that women commit against themselves or other women to enforce patriarchal oppression, I focus on its use for policing female sexuality. Moreover, I have chosen to use the term “sororophobia” throughout instead of “internalized misogyny” or “sexism,” one, for subjective reasons, preferring its power as a word, and two, because of how
Michie used it to specifically analyze literary accounts of this special kind of misogyny, making it appropriate for my own literary project. Suzuki (2007) has used the term “sororophobia” as well in her discussion of Margaret Atwood’s novels, Atwood being one of the most prominent contemporary feminist authors to explore this theme in her work, particularly in *The Handmaid’s Tale* (1985), *Cat’s Eye* (1989), *The Robber Bride* (1993), and the *Penelopiad* (2005).

At a fundamental level, internalized oppression like sororophobia is socialized in women for the benefit of men and ultimately should be practiced against women even in the absence of men. The patriarchal oppression of women cannot be maintained without the participation of both genders. Sororophobia is a way to obfuscate the origins and weapons of that oppression and its connections to victim-blaming, in particular displacing responsibility for its violence onto women. Sororophobia shows that female figures are complicit in misogyny, but Ovid’s exploration of it never names its true source: patriarchal power. Ovid’s focus on sororophobia in many ways effectively exonerates the rapists of any blame for their violence. It will become clear that Ovid luxuriates in the lead up to rape and its violent aftermath through transformation, *but* he rarely shows us the violence of the act of rape itself. By creating such an emphasis, he displaces the violence of the literal rape onto the transformation (or whatever sort of parallel violence follows the rape) (Richlin 1992, 165), and to have so many female figures—both divine and mortal—punitively transform, mutilate, or terrorize other female figures, he locates the blame of that violence against females in other females and not in the male figures who raped.¹⁴ This displacement makes female figures such as Juno comparable to rapists and in fact, even more brutal because we do not “see” the rape. Overall, the female figures’ sororophobic violence becomes analogous to rape *and* becomes sexualized in nature. Sororophobic violence, in fact,

---

¹⁴ Richlin applies her observations about the displacement of the violence of rape onto transformation or other types of bodily harm to all of the rape scenes in Ovid. Marder (1992) independently made a similar observation about the rape and mutilation of Philomela, although she does not apply that analysis more widely. See Chapter Four.
even consistently eclipses the violence of rape in Ovid’s corpus. We must recognize sororophobia—and all its implications—as the barely disguised misogynistic trick it is.

Sororophobia is, furthermore, a reaction to the hierarchical and patriarchal nature of the divine in the Graeco-Roman mythology. Juno cannot punish Jupiter for his sexual betrayals, since he is the king of the gods and more powerful than she. The goddess instead harms those subordinate to her, such as lesser goddesses (Latona), nymphs (Io and Callisto), and mortals (Semele and Alcmena). Minerva reacts similarly. After Neptune raped Medusa in Minerva’s temple, the narrator of the epics tells the audience that Minerva had to punish someone for the violation her temple experienced (neve hoc inpune fuisset, “since this could not go unpunished,” Met. 4.801). But it could not be Neptune, a male god and her superior in the divine order. The goddess rather had to attack someone more vulnerable: Neptune escaped without a reprisal from the goddess because of his patriarchal position over Minerva in the hierarchy of the gods.

The examples in Ovid of sororophobia are multifaceted. It does not only happen in response to rape, but can arise in response to sexual jealousy, such as with Lavinia against Anna Perenna (who is a victim of rape later in the Fasti’s narrative by the river Numicus) (Fasti 3.632–638). But I will primarily focus on how it works in tandem with the victim-blaming of survivors of sexual abuse in the aftermaths of their attacks. We have Oenone in Her. 5, a former rape victim of Apollo, denying that Helen could have ever been raped by Theseus (131–132). Deianira in the Her. and the Met. blames Iole, a prisoner of war, for her abduction and rape by her husband, Heracles (Her. 9.111–130 and Met. 9.138–151). Dryope in Met. 9. 324–393 escapes punishment for a time after her rape by Apollo but is punitively transformed into a tree for disturbing the peace of Lotis, raped by Pan, and transformed into a flower. As a last initial example, Diana shuns the raped and pregnant Callisto from her band of virgins and opens her up
to violence from and transformation by Juno (Met. 2.463–645 and Fasti. 2.173–174).

The sororophobia from female goddesses in Ovid often leads to more violent consequences for the female figures they are punishing, but that is not a hard and fast rule. Leucothoe, raped by Sol, is betrayed by her sister, Clytie, to their father, and Leucothoe is subsequently buried alive (Met. 4.234–235). Nevertheless, my research must acknowledge how sororophobia in Ovid’s Met. and Fasti operates in a system where the gods are constantly punishing mortals and lesser divinities (the first bodily transformation we see in the Met. is Jupiter changing Lycaon into a wolf for his affront against the king of the gods). But in Ovid, the goddesses usually only punish nymphs and female mortals for sexualized crimes against their own dignity. Even Minerva’s punishment of the upstart mortal, Arachne, for winning their tapestry contest, which scholars like P.J. Johnson (2008) have seen as an Ovidian comment on the persecution of artists, is in reaction to Arachne’s woven tale of divine male sexual iniquity and bestial lust (Met. 6.103–126).15

We must keep in mind that few female figures in the Met. have sexual desires and sex in the course of the poem with impunity. Ovid’s portrayal of rape in the Met. is part of a larger cultural and masculinist narrative on the dangers and transgression of female sexuality: as Keith (2000) has asserted, epic as a genre helps to produce and maintain masculinity and femininity, or in other words, is a “technology of gender” (Keith using de Lauretis’ 1984 theory on representations and self-representations of women). Scylla dies because of her devotion for Nisus and her subsequent betrayal of her father (8.1–151), Byblis (9.439–665) and Myrrha (10.298–502) suffer transformation for their incestuous desires, Venus punishes sex workers for their labor (10.220–242). Even the romanticized and chastely devoted Thisbe, who deeply loved

15 Ovid, of course, connects himself to Arachne not only by nature of them being artists, but by the materials they chose to represent: the sexual violence of the gods against women. The same can be said of Philomela, who weaves a depiction of rape by Tereus, a way to communicate her trauma to her sister without words (Met. 6.571–619).
Pyramus, cannot survive to consummate her desire (4.122–168). Ovid’s general refusal to show a female figure having healthy sexual desires, in my mind, shows how deeply he scorns female sexuality and is one of many examples of his lack of sympathy for female figures (see below).

Several of Ovid’s rape narratives deviate from the script of female figures facing violence at the hands of other female figures. In these stories, female figures refuse to enact misogynistic mandates, instead supporting other female figures and working to resist male violence. Echo (Met. 3.359–401), Cyane (5.409–437), Procne with her sister Philomela (6.571–674), Caeneus (formerly the woman Caenis) (12.429–535), and Lara (Fasti 2.583–616) help victims of rape, but Ovid’s texts punish these female figures for such acts of resistance, and ultimately delegitimize the motives and means for such solidarity between female characters. In Ovid’s universe this bravery and compassion is never rewarded permanently or even condoned. Richlin (1992, 168) has commented that one of the most disturbing aspects of the representations of rape in Ovid is this very refusal to see protective sisterhood go unpunished. For example, Lara warns Juno of what Jupiter is about to do to Juturna in order to save her sister and he rips her tongue out. She is then led to the underworld by Mercury, who is attracted to her silenced and brutalized body. He rapes her, despite her supplication, and she bears his children (Fasti 2.607–616). Procne believes her husband repeatedly raped and mutilated her sister and chooses the love of her sister over the love of her husband and child, a rare instance of the triumph of female solidarity, but the triple transformation of Procne, Philomela, and Tereus into birds punishes Procne and Philomela’s revenge and equalizes their crimes with the earlier ones of Tereus (Met. 6.653–674). Women being complicit in and responsible for the metamorphosis, mutilation, and/or death of women after their experiences of sexual abuse is far too common, but not the universal, in Ovid.

It should also be stated that sororophobic women, such as Clytie, never escape unscathed,
their contributions to the maintenance of patriarchy insufficient to protect them from further harm or despair. Clytie’s participation in sororophobia does nothing to end her suffering, and she faces intense madness and bodily destruction after her sister’s burial and transformation. Juno, the most prominent sororophobic agent, similarly achieves little through sororophobia. She commits violence against other female figures in the hope that Jupiter will learn his lesson, but in vain. Her husband’s desire for other female figures is bottomless and her revenge never restores her honor. Overall, both sororophobia itself, and the punishment of female figures who commit it and also those who refuse to commit it, illustrate that misogynistic violence is pervasive in Ovid’s texts, leaving female figures with little means of escape, hope, or solace.

There is a wider literary context for Ovid’s exploration of sororophobia and there is, in fact, a long tradition of sororophobia in Graeco-Roman literature, especially against Helen. Since Homer, Helen has been stigmatized for her sexual “choice” to go with Paris. Helen even blames herself for the act in the Odyssey Book 4.145, and in Euripides’ Trojan Women the surviving women of Troy, who have had all their male relatives killed by the Greeks and who are about to be enslaved by them, blame Helen for their suffering and not the murderous, enslaving Greeks (passim). They even demand her death from Menelaus when he shows some hesitation about doing so. The Trojan women scapegoat someone more vulnerable than they are with no control over her life, knowing they could never punish the men who brutalized their families and are to brutalize them further. In the Odyssey we have more Homeric sororophobia: Penelope and Eurykleia approve of the deaths of the maids who sexually transgressed the rules of Odysseus’ oikos (Book 23). Clytemnestra in Aeschylus and in the other tragedians kills Cassandra, a rape victim of her husband, Agamemnon. After Ovid, Apuleius pervasively included sororophobia in his tale of Cupid and Psyche through the figure of Venus (whose model is the Ovidian Juno) and
Psyche’s sisters, who all terrorize Psyche for her sexuality (*The Golden Ass*, Books 4–6).

Classical scholars before me have discussed the pattern of goddesses enacting violence against other female figures in Ovid, such as Curran (1978), Nagle (1984), Janan (2009), and McAuley (2012), all of whom explore the *ira* of goddesses against other females and emphasize the intimate links between that *ira* and sexualized violence. They have not only recognized these patterns of female violence in the aftermath of sexual abuse, but have written about their wider implications and meanings for Ovid, particularly focusing on this *ira* as stemming from sexual and reproductive rivalries, jealousies, and drives. I, on the other hand, argue that sororophobia casts new light on the role and motivations for such violence and offer a new, more sociological explanation for it. My research into female violence against rape victims is unique in Classics because of this explicitly feminist theoretical framework and analysis, one which not only introduces sororophobia into an analysis of Ovid’s texts, but which also connects victim-blaming and sororophobia. My research also benefits from the understanding that sororophobia derives its power and purpose from patriarchy and male supremacy, drawing from the writings of Mitchie (1992), Irigaray (1977), and Dworkin (1983). Female complicity in the structures and methods of misogyny has a source and a goal. My dissertation, moreover, focuses on mortal women and their acts of violence against other mortal women such as Clytie’s persecution of Leucothoe, which Curran, Nagle, Janan, and McAuley do not emphasize in their analysis of the female and the divine. Other classical scholars touched upon these issues of female violence against other females in the context of other authors, like Kyriakou (1994) with goddesses in Pindar’s corpus, but not with sororophobia as an analytical framework nor to this extent.

**IV. Other Aspects of Roman Misogyny and Their Reflection in Ovid’s Texts of Rape**
Ovid’s representations of rape further rely upon and participate in many elements of Roman misogyny and reflect the masculinist ideologies of wider Roman society, primarily the fear of and desire to conquer independent female sexuality, the animalization of women, the comparison of women to the earth and nature generally, the silencing of women (in the many ways one can define that), and the objectification of women’s bodies. Women, to the Romans, were a frightening and threatening Other who presented (sexual and other) dangers to men. These dangers had to be suppressed for the safety of (free citizen) men and for their society as a whole to function. Women were seen as deceptive, greedy, amoral, violent, excessively interested in corporeal pleasures, and most particularly sexually out of control and voracious. (Free citizen) men were the only gender capable of physical and emotional self-control and if they exhibited any of these features I listed, they were effeminate (Raval 2002). If women were not controlled sexually and stepped out of their socially prescribed roles, Romans feared there would be bedlam and that their systems of exchange and patriarchy would collapse (Hertz 1983, Jed 1989). For example, Horace frequently—as Gamel (1989, 190) states—associates “unbridled female sexuality with moral decline, civil war, and military vulnerability” (Odes 3.6.33–36; Odes 3.24.27–30; and Carmen Saeculare 17–20). Men were expected to be patriarchs protecting, guiding, and controlling women; enforcing their roles as only wives, mothers, and sexualized beings; relegating them to the private sphere of the home; and reducing most or all of their moral choices to sexuality, motherhood, marriage, and reproduction—and they had to do all of this with constant vigilance or else. Men feared that women without constraints could control their own sexuality and reproduction and thereby challenge the patriarchal control of their fathers and husbands and of wider society and the right of patriarchy to maintain itself. At the root of much feminist analysis is the understanding that misogyny is the violent control of women’s bodies to
perpetuate systems of patriarchy and is the means by which men ensure they have male heirs and future patriarchs to maintain systems of male supremacy (Rubin 1975; Klindienst 1991).

Two examples from Roman literature will suffice to illustrate the sentiments and the depths of Roman misogyny, particularly its emphasis on the dangers of women’s sexuality. First, in the Pro Caelio 49, Cicero in an attempt to defend his client Caelius against charges of murder, turns attention away from Caelius onto Caelius’ former lover, the infamous Clodia, who testified against him. In an attempt to discredit her testimony and lay some of the guilt for the murder at her feet, he censures her and her sex life. Cicero hopes he can foment the misogyny of Roman men in the jury pool to win his case. Cicero relies on Roman fears of hypersexual, independent women with his descriptions and also on the stigma of being a sex laborer. Next, Juvenal in his sixth satire, a widely cherished misogynistic screed, tries to convince his audience that marriage is a dangerous, harmful institution because women themselves are dangerous and harmful. One of the central points of his argument is that women are sexually crazed monstrosities who will never remain sexually loyal to their husbands because of their debased natures. His chief example is the figure of Messalina, the promiscuous wife of the emperor Claudius. Messalina, according to Juvenal (115–135), is such a sexual monstrosity that she degrades her regal status by working in a brothel and she is so insatiable that she even wants to continue working after the brothel closes and does not want to go home to her palace and family. This understanding of women as hypersexual will be particularly useful in seeing how and why Ovid can justify the notion in the Ars 1.341–4 that women cannot be raped because they always want sex. Ovid’s writings on rape ultimately contradict the Roman notion that men have a deep-seated sense of sexual control in comparison to women. The vast majority of his rapists are men and they react excessively and violently to sexual stimuli, with their desire often likened to fire and destruction.
Fears about female sexuality and the need to control it especially manifested in depictions of the wilderness (deserted forests, uninhabited shores, the animal kingdom), where female figures were outside the control of civilization. Again and again in mythology, there is the figure of the sexually independent mortal virgin or nymph, alone in the countryside, who ultimately meets the fate of male sexual control over her body. Daphne, Io, Syrinx, and Callisto were all virgin nymphs who were brought into sexual, patriarchal domination through sexualized violence from male gods. The purpose of these stories is to show the dangers of the wilds for male and female figures: female figures could be subject to brutality away from civilization, but female figures could escape the laws of man and defy their sexual and reproductive purposes (Robson 1997, 77). The connections of independent female sexuality with the wilds also evoke the links Greeks and Romans made between female figures and animals. Ancient female figures were frequently compared to animals in literature and the examples span Greek and Roman writings (Anacreon 408 and 417; Theocritus 18.30; Pindar *Pythian* 4.142; Horace *Carmina* 1.23, 2.5, and 3.11). Virgins especially were compared to feral, reckless animals that needed to be tamed by male figures, such as fillies. Peleus’ rape of Thetis (featured in *Met.* 11. 257–65) is one of the best representations of how the ancients conceived of independent female sexuality and the threats it posed to male figures if not controlled. Thetis turns into various terrifying, predatory animals before Peleus is finally able to conquer her sexually. Female figures were also frequently depicted as animals in the visual arts (Zeitlin 1988; Robson 1997).

Animalization is a way to dehumanize female figures and also a comment on their sexuality and sexual desires. Turning to the natural world to understand humanity was common among the ancients (Baker 1993; Gilhus 2006; and Newmeyer 2010), but comparing female figures, in particular, to animals made dehumanizing them easier. Ovid continues this tradition in
his poetry, for example by comparing women to bulls who must be tamed in the *Ars Amatoria* (1. 471–2) and using Pasiphae and her desire for interspecies sex with a bull as a paragon of all female sexuality and its animality (289–326). Ovid as well, like many other ancient authors, used figurative language (especially similes) connecting rape to predatory interactions between animals, with the male as the predatory figure and the female as the prey figure. There are countless examples of this analogy in Homer’s epics, Vergil’s *Ecologues*, Horace’s *Odes*, and also in the visual arts. Predator and prey imagery in these contexts conflate the physical hunger of the predator for prey with sexual desire because the ancient Greeks and Romans often conflated physical hunger with sexual desire (Glenn 1998). For Ovid in the *Metamorphoses* and *Fasti*, the animalization of female figures, especially in his use of predator and prey imagery during rape, often becomes the animalization of transformation.

Comparing women to animals is deeply related to analogizing women to the earth and analogizing the earth to a female body. In patriarchal societies, men are broadly associated with the culture and women with nature (de Beauvoir 1949; Ortner 1974; DuBois 1988). Men create culture and thus, the rules for maintaining nature. By both animalizing women and comparing them to the earth, men tout an ideology that justifies male control of women: just as man dominated the animals with hunting, just as he dominated the earth with agriculture, so women can too be dominated. Equating women with nature means men have the right to manipulate them and control them for their own purposes (Dworkin 1983, 175; and Butler 1990). In modern environmental feminism, eco-feminists see the man-made, capitalist degradation of the environment and the climate crisis as the abuse of Mother Earth (a female). Man can dominate

---

16 Women as analogous to nature and men as analogous to civilization, although often presented as a black and white dichotomy in ancient and modern texts and ideology, is a more nuanced dynamic in reality. As Ortner (1974) argued in her influential article on the nature and culture dichotomy, women, because of their traditional, seclusion within the domestic sphere and childrearing, are the most common disseminators and preservers of culture.
and abuse the earth because he has feminized it and labeled it inferior to him. Greeks and Romans, in particular, often portray sex with female figures as the cultivation of the earth (Keith 2009, 259), and Ovid does this ubiquitously in the *Ars* when discussing how to seduce women. The earth is a female body to be penetrated and the female body is the earth to be tilled.

The connections of women to earth relate, as well, to how Ovid explores the locale of sexualized violence in his texts. The poet situates the great majority of his scenes of sexualized violence in the realms outside of civilization, particularly in the *locus amoenus*, an idyllic, calm, lush environment, isolated from the ways of man, but whose very tranquillity belies violence and whose lush vegetation bespeaks an undercurrent of sexual energy and danger. The *locus amoenus* is the typical site for sexualized violence in Greek and Roman mythology, with one of the earliest examples of such a location in the rape of Persephone in the *Hymn to Demeter*. Its vegetation, growing without the help of man, defines the *locus amoenus* as a place of anti-civilization, of chaos, where sexuality is uncontrolled, like that of female figures, and even a place where female figures are unguarded and for the taking without their fathers there (although often pottery depicts male paternal figures sanctioning rape in the wilderness, again showing the connections between marriage and rape in the eyes of the ancients, Sourvinou-Inwood 1991, 73–4). Rape often happens outside of civilization, but marriage often happens within it. Nevertheless, both actions aid the control of female sexuality (Zeitlin 1988). By the time Ovid is writing, any description of a solitary place in a forest with flowers or water would have caused suspense and anxiety in his audience about violence to come. Ovid, however, not

---

19 We too have our mythologized locations for rape: the dark street, the “bad” neighborhood. In our representations of rape in literature, film, and more, we infuse certain locations with danger and fear, especially for women (Jowett and Abbott 2012). The news is saturated with stories of “stranger rapists.” These make women fear walking alone at night on a dimly-lit street rather than fear their own bedrooms with their intimate partners, although a woman is
only uses the *locus amoenus* as a site for sexualized violence, but also for the subsequent acts of violence rape victims suffer at the hands of female goddesses, although we often do not “see” the rape, only the sororophobia. For example, Diana banishes Callisto after her rape by Jupiter from her band of nymphs in the *locus amoenus* (*Met* 2. 460–495, *Fasti* 2.163–5). This is yet another indication of how Ovid links rape and sororophobic violence and makes them analogous.

These analogies of female figures to animal and earth also create a dangerous dichotomy between civilization and nature, male and female. Male figures can enter nature to tame and rape her, but nature can simultaneously threaten their role in civilization and effeminize them. Often in the *Met.*, Ovid includes famous stories of mythology, which epitomize the fear of the destruction of a male figure and his masculinity once he enters the *locus amoenus*, the home of untamed femininity, including those of Actaeon and Pentheus (*Met*. 3.165–252; 692–733). The *locus amoenus* most typically represents sexual danger for female figures, but Ovid shows its danger for male figures, as well, and although sexualized violence is the most typical violence in the *Met.*, Ovid uses the environment to denote and reflect many different kinds of violence against the human body, such as transformation, mutiliation, and death. Greek and Roman men, as alluded to above, viewed any place without agriculture as places of chaos and danger, particularly sexual danger. For example, in the *Odyssey* 5 and 9–12 all the places and people, especially female figures, who threaten Odysseus do not have agriculture: the vegetation (and hence female sexuality) on Circe’s and Kalypso’s matriarchal islands grow lushly, naturally, and wildly, without the rule, control, and manipulations of male figures.

We do not have the voices of ancient women to comment, lament, or challenge these misogynistic ideologies. The silence of women from antiquity is deafening. We have very little

---

much more likely to be raped by someone she knows in a location she knows (CDC Report 2010). We feel fear when in a film we see a woman walking by herself at night rather than when she walks into her own home.
firsthand evidence of their worldviews, their emotions, their subjectivity. We can find glimpses of it in the poetry of Sappho and Sulpicia and even in the graffiti of Pompeii (Levin-Richardson 2013). But men in Greece and Rome necessarily ensured that women had very little role in the creation of culture and ensured that men controlled the discourse of their cultures by discouraging and penalizing women for having public voices. As Mary Beard (2014b) notes, we see this in one of the earliest examples of ancient literature, the *Odyssey* 1.325–64, when Telemachus banishes the voice of his mother from the public sphere and proves his masculinity by silencing her. Overall, if ancient men controlled the discourse, they could keep their power and supremacy. The dominance of Rome’s misogyny and patriarchal structures and discourses supporting them were so strong, there were few who seriously questioned the natural order of gender and sex (Gutzwiller and Michellini 1991, 66). The nature of the access that Ovid provides us to “female figures” is one of the most contentious issues in Ovidian scholarship, which I will discuss more in my analysis of the *Her.* in Chapter Two. Ovid focuses intensely on female figures in all of his work and often highlights their worldviews, emotions, and subjectivity, but it is my conclusion, like that of Richlin (1992) and Fulkerson (2009), that his powerful and controlling male filter prevents us from the authenticity feminist classicists crave. Pomeroy (1975) warned classicists in her groundbreaking work on women in antiquity that we must turn to sources outside of literature to find more authentic evidence of ancient women, a notion later echoed by Culham (1985) and Pomeroy and Ancona’s series, “Women in Antiquity.” Culham, though, controversially advocated for the almost wholesale expulsion of literature from feminist classical inquiry, while Pomeroy advocated that authors like Euripides could provide us with some window into women’s authentic experiences. Ovid also violently silences many of his female characters, like Philomela (*Met.* 6.549–70) and Lara (*Fasti* 2.583–616) and intentionally
or not, reflects and reinforces the ideologies of his own society. In his texts, femininity becomes synonymous with animalization, a lack of humanity, and silence, so much so that he takes on the mantle of femininity and likens himself to rape victims in his exile poetry to understand his own condition of silencing by a stronger masculine power, Augustus (see Chapter Six).

Another facet of Roman misogyny and its support of sexualized violence that we must contend with—at least briefly—is the pervasive notion that women lied about rape. The ancient Greeks and Romans, like Americans today, circulated stories of women lying about rape, often as a way to avenge a man who sexually rejected them. These types of stories, as Yohannan (1996) documents, are anthropological constants in patriarchal societies, especially in the ancient Mediterranean. We have the story of Bellepheron and Anteia, Peleus and Cretheis, Hippolytus and Phaedra. Seneca revived this story in his tragedy Phaedra and even made Phaedra show regret for causing the death of Hippolytus with her false accusations before she commits suicide. These stories allow men to work out their fears about women’s power and confirm what they want to believe about women and the dangers their sexualities pose to men. They embolden the misogyny of men and project a kind of epistemological violence against women: they can never be believed (Hall 2015). In Ovid, we do not see female figures lying about rape, but he still demeans the gravity and violence of rape through his participation in victim-blaming.\textsuperscript{20}

Finally, since victim-blaming is so intimately connected with a female figure’s beauty, appearance, and body in Ovid, it will be useful to include here (and elsewhere) discussion around

\textsuperscript{20} Notions that women lie about rape in America persist for the same reasons: to uphold an ideology that rape is not a widespread problem, that it is instead a masquerade to hurt men. Raphael (2013, 111) reports in her book that most Americans believe many rape accusations—up to fifty percent—are false and are made in response to “bad sex” or sexual rejection, like the ancient stories often emphasize. Halley (2015) discusses the phenomenon of white women lying about being raped by black men in order to protect their social status and to commit racist violence and those lies had real, material, and lethal consequences because of black men’s social and sexual vulnerability. I firmly believe that it takes away a woman’s humanity to say that she could not lie, not be mistaken, even not be vindictive, hateful, and racist, but in most circumstances—especially since rape most often happens within ethnic groups—what is the use of lying about rape in a culture where one can face so much repudiation and blame after being raped?
the male gaze and the subsequent objectification of female bodies and their profound connections to sexualized violence. Ovid, throughout his corpus, clearly connects how his sexual abusers respond visually to the bodies of their victims and their desires to sexually possess female figures. Rapists in Ovid look at and respond sexually to female bodies and Ovid frequently showcases those sights and reactions. We read how the rapists see their victims, how they note and desire their beauty, how they objectify them, and then how they work to possess and violate the bodily integrity of female figures. The rapists see, they want, and then they attack. In his extended scenes of sexualized violence and rape, it becomes apparent that there is a logical relationship between the male gaze, objectification, and rape—“violability” and “ownership” being two of the cornerstones of the male gaze and objectification (Nussbaum 1995, 227). It will be a fundamental contention of my dissertation that these visualizations also enforce victim-blaming the female figures for their own experiences of sexual abuse. A male figure looks at a female figure’s body and she provokes him to enact violence against her.

The role of the maze gaze and objectification in Ovid and their connections to rape is a popular subject of Ovidian scholarship. My arguments will rely on and be supported by the work of Richlin (1992), Sharrock (2002c), Salzman-Mitchell (2005), Rimell (2006), and Lovatt (2013) and on the foundational work of feminists outside of Classics on these concepts, such as that of Mulvey (1975, 1989) and Irigaray (1977). The works of these feminist scholars will be useful to my research because of their position that the male gaze and its resultant objectification of the female form is a source of patriarchal control for men and is another way (of many) to dehumanize women by reducing them to their bodies. The male gaze turns women into objects,

---

21 My specific understanding of the male gaze is perhaps more predicated on the radical feminist tradition than some of the more recent pieces of classical scholarship on the gaze, which attempt to show that female figures are given the power of the gaze and thus, ultimately, are given a power to subvert male domination. Much important research has been done to explore how vision and the gaze in Ovid are not completely controlled by one gender. See, in particular, my discussion of the Salzman-Mitchell (2005) and Rimell (2006) below.
visual symbols of desire and fantasy, something signified rather than something signifying. It normalizes male supremacy and the subjugation of women. Catharine MacKinnon, throughout her feminist scholarship, and particularly in “Not a moral issue” (1983) believes that the objectification of women under the male gaze is the most fundamental way women are subjected to violence by men: objectification helps to justify the dehumanization of violence and has causal relationships with other forms of violence against women, such as victim-blaming women.

Objectification, as a form of violence, mirrors the specific violence of rape in various ways, most particularly since the dehumanization of being under the male gaze and objectified anticipates and contributes to the later dehumanization of rape. Objectification turns women into materia to be possessed, and rape is an act of violent and physical possession. Objectification not only lays the foundation for that violence to happen, but shapes and reflects how that violence is felt by the victim. The gaze, the primary site and origin of sexual desire for the ancients, was moreover thought by the ancients to be penetrative and violent. For example, Varro in De Lingua Latina 6.80 connects the word video “to see” with the word vis, the Latin word, as we discussed earlier in the chapter, for various forms of violence including rape. In Ovid, the gaze of the rapist is penetrating, and then he penetrates her (Salzman-Mitchell 2005, 24). We additionally frequently see visual and material depictions of phalloi with eyes in antiquity, the relationship between the gaze, male power, and penetration made explicit, as Frontisi-Ducroux describes in “Eros, Desire, and the Gaze” (1996) The gaze is dehumanizing, penetrating, and enforces male domination, just like rape, but it also influences how we perceive responsibility and blame for the rape and where we perceive its source: from the bodies and behavior of women.

I extend the classical research mentioned above on the gaze in Ovid by connecting the male gaze, objectification, and its impact in the rape narratives of Ovid to victim-blaming.
Ovid’s descriptions of the appearance of rape victims are the foundation of the blame the victims receive from Ovid and his characters. The male figures are rarely condemned for looking (a notable exception being Actaeon’s gaze upon Diana’s naked body, *Met.* 3.162–252), but the female figures are routinely condemned for being the object of the gaze. Bourke (2007) and Suarez and Gadalla (2010) demonstrate the power of rape myths (discussed above) surrounding a woman’s appearance and dress in our own times and the ways in which they exonerate her attacker and ascribe to her the culpability for attack. When Ovid luxuriates in these descriptions of a female figure’s beauty before her rape, he often focalizes the perspective and attraction of the rapist and her body becomes a spectacle for the audience to derive fetishistic, scopophilic, and voyeuristic pleasure (to use Mulvey’s Freudian analysis of the male gaze). As Lovatt (2013, 8) says: “rape is a great source of visual pleasure in the *Met*.” Richlin (1992) sees these intense visualizations and focalizations as evidence of Ovid’s pornographic intent with his rape scenes: they are a way to titillate and arouse the audience’s sexual desires for violence against female figures. This, among other factors, indicates to Richlin that Ovid is not sympathetic in his descriptions of sexualized violence, but misogynistic, a perspective on Ovid with which I agree and will elaborate upon below. The objectification of female figures and the priority of the male gaze and their connections to victim-blaming are so ingrained in Ovid that even when women, nymphs, and goddesses describe their own experiences with rape, they too focus on the state of their bodies, their beauty, and their appearance before the acts of rape and participate in victim-blaming themselves, as we see with Arethusa in *Met.* 5.601–2.

This focus on the body of a female figure before the rape in victim-blaming relates deeply to the transformation of the victim’s body after the rape in the *Met.* and *Fasti*. The victim’s body is first blamed for the attack by the narrator or other character and then the transformation of the
body furthers and makes that blame material. I conceive of transformation as a form of violence and punishment (as I will explore below in Chapter Three) and the metamorphosis locates the body of the rape victim as a site for further punishment. These same transformations mutilate the beauty of their former human bodies (Ovid discusses this explicitly during the transformation of Callisto, Met. 2.466–495). Their human beauty dies, along with their human bodies and more. In addition, this should bring to mind sororophobia because of who transforms the female figures. The rape victims in Ovid are primarily blamed and punished by other female figures in the text and these female figures often enact the punitive, animalistic transformations, realizing the connection their bodies and femininity already had to animality in ancient thought. These punishments are enacted against the beauty of the rape victim. For example, Minerva transforms Medusa’s hair into a pit of snakes, after Medusa was raped in her temple by Neptune; Ovid’s earlier narration identified Medusa’s hair as the major source of her beauty (Met. 4.790–801).

V. Ovid’s (Lack of) Sympathy

Another issue we should discuss and one I will address throughout my dissertation is Ovid’s (lack of) sympathy for his victims. This is a particularly contentious issue in Ovidian studies, especially when treating sexualized violence in his corpus: is Ovid a proto-feminist, compassionate toward his female characters, or a misogynist for whom we should not apologize? This question profoundly impacts how scholars construe Ovid’s representation of female figures and whether Ovid is engaging in a social critique of gender and power. As I will explore in more depth in Chapter Two in my discussion of the Ars, most scholars believe that Ovid is sympathetic (to a degree), whereas my view leans more toward those of Richlin (1992), who argues that he is predominantly not (if at all). One of the most crucial achievements of Richlin’s analysis in “Reading Ovid’s Rapes” was to attack the belief among (feminist) classicists that
Ovid is sympathetic to his rape victims, a view which emerged originally from Curran’s (1978) “Rape and Rape Victims in Ovid’s *Met.*” In Ovid, we see the trauma as well as the fear of female figures again and again and in extraordinary detail as they endeavor to escape and resist that trauma. Everett Beek (2015, 132–4) understands this emphasis on female psychology and trauma as a sympathetic move from Ovid that prioritizes constructing sexualized violence primarily as a female and embodied experience and not something primarily about male interests. But female figures in Ovid are terrorized by predatory male figures without much respite (the *Met.* alone has nearly fifty rapes), and one must ask why we receive this onslaught of violence against female figures. These same female figures can, furthermore, never resist sexualized violence without facing further harm to their lives and bodily integrity through physical transformation. Richlin reads Ovid, especially the *Met.* and *Fasti,* as akin to pornography in which we are to revel in violence against female figures, in which we are to see this violence and fear as erotic. She insists that Ovid participates in misogyny, and to exonerate him of his misogyny “is to join the magician’s act as he saws away [at the lady in the box]” (1992, 159).

---

22 Hardie (2002a) explores the continuous rapes in the *Met.* through a Lacanian psychoanalytic lens. He concludes that the rapes are an expression of an (erotic) desire for something that will never be there (the so-called Lacanian “lack”). This desire cannot be fulfilled and through repetition is displaced again and again onto new targets and scenarios. Hardie never once calls what Apollo does to Daphne as attempted rape, but instead sees it as an example of thwarted and displaced desire. He also prioritizes Apollo’s point of view. Daphne is the “phallic fetish” object Apollo cannot possess (2002, 45–50). This contrasts with Richlin’s (1992) assertion that the rapes are an expression of power and are considered erotic exactly because of that power. Eros for Hardie is about lack.

Hardie’s particular framework suppresses a consideration of power because he never uses the language of sexualized violence. A Lacanian analysis does not forbid such an acknowledgment of power: according to Lacan, the Symbolic order reifies the phallus and thus, the desires of male sexuality for possession and domination, which, if we care to infer, can often translate into sexualized violence. Hardie says Daphne is the victim of scopophilia, fetishization, the male gaze: but what does that actually mean for her? Hardie has the type of analysis before him to discuss power and lack, but he leaves power too implicit for comfort.

Lindheim (2003) in her own Lacanian analysis of repetition in the *Her.* contends that Ovid, by consistently showing female figures suffering from and responding to the same pain, is endeavoring to construct a totality, a homogeneous version of Woman in his anxiety about the anomaly they present to the men, who, according to Lacan, always crave sameness and symmetry because of their creation of and complicity with the Symbolic order. This understanding can apply to the repetition of the rape, particularly in the *Met.* and *Fasti.* Ovid places female figures in situation after situation of sexualized violence and in the process creates a system of gendered expectations and characteristics: for Ovid, being a female figure means being vulnerable.
Ovid was operating in a patriarchal and misogynistic culture where almost every sexual relation was predicated on the eroticization of power. It is my belief that Ovid is not challenging that misogyny of Rome but mirroring it. As people argue that Ovid is sympathetic, what are they missing in plain sight, what are they ignoring about history and the continued existence of misogyny and the oppression of women? How responsible are Ovid and the texts he creates for violence against female figures? Can we trust men like Ovid to represent rape without becoming aroused by the act, when he lived in a culture that had rape at the center of its erotics, when it sexualized violence against female figures? What is more, even if one could prove that Ovid was not a misogynist (which is both implausible and impossible), his works would have an impact within a misogynistic culture, been part of discourse that justified that misogyny, and ultimately reinforced violence against women. He would have produced a “technology of gender” that worked to create and produce notions and practices surrounding masculinity and femininity. Art can transcend time and space. We know this truth in Classics because of the continuing value Ovid and other authors provide to our world. But art can be immanent and uphold power, dominance, and hierarchies within its own culture (and the next). Rabinowitz has argued similarly about Euripides in her 1993 book Anxiety Unveiled: Euripides may provide us with challenging female characters and has been seen as a proto-feminist by many classicists, but tragedy was a way for Athenian men to explore and maintain their own social positions.

I would argue that the search for sympathy in Ovid’s narratives of rape, like that of Everett Beek (2015) and many more, is misguided. As Richlin maintains, that very hope for

23 Ovid’s misogyny as author, moreover, in other areas is pervasive and well-documented. For example, he continually objectifies female figures throughout his corpus. Corinna enters the Amores without Ovid ever describing her face or personality, only peripheral parts of her body (1.5) and, as many of the elegiac poets before him, he conceives of female figures as materia for his poetics (1.1, 1.3, 2.1, 3.1) (Wyke 1989, 2002 and Sharrock 1990). Using female figures as materia is misogynistic because it establishes female figures as something to control, to project upon, to construct for a man’s own purposes. She can be manipulated because a man can dominate her. Overall, the question we should be asking about Ovid’s sympathy towards female figures is: why would Ovid shed his established misogyny when talking about sexualized violence? Why would this topic be treated differently?
sympathy speaks more to how scholars need to feel comfortable reading and enjoying Ovid’s misogyny. We can never firmly reconstruct the intentions of Ovid (and misogyny does not have to be intentional), but many, such as Frontisi-Ducroux (2004) and Murgatroyd (2005), both of whom are great critics of Richlin’s position, would like to project a tone on Ovid that can often sanitize the texts we have before us. Other scholars, such as Greene (1998, 1998, 2012) and Cahoon (1990, 1996), see Ovid’s forays into elegiac poetry and its misogyny to be primarily parodic in nature or even social critique (also included in my discussion of the Ars in Chapter Two). But parody is not neutral (or rather, nothing is) and it can enforce the standards of the status quo, as in the oppression of women. The view that Ovid is generating sympathetic social critique, despite being so deliberately ambiguous, in my mind, illustrates how some scholars are unable to accept that Ovid could be a poet and an artist we would not like personally. We continue to read Ovid today because we can see ourselves in him and if we see ourselves in his literature, we are not only apologizing for him, but for us. Richlin (1992) and Janan (2009) take the stance that, although the poet’s texts were shaped by particular cultural and political contexts just as we are as modern readers, there are constants between his texts and our own age that cannot be ignored. We continue to read Ovid because we recognize ourselves in those constants. Gold (1993) and Rabinowitz (1993) argue similarly when discussing the importance of feminist analysis for the study of the ancient world: Roman misogyny is an often eerie mirror for our own in the West. Even if we can grant that Ovid is exposing the horrors of sexualized violence in his works, what is he also glorifying in the process, especially when rape was erotic to the Romans? Why is the line between critique and glorification so blurry and yet many desire the critique? That obfuscation profoundly matters to me as a reader and scholar of Ovid.
But this is not to say that Ovid cannot be complex and paradoxical in his representations of female figures and their gendered experiences, and my dissertation welcomes these readings. There have been important works on Ovid as paradoxical and polysemous about gender and femininity, which have explored the many examples of the subjectivity and power of female figures in his texts. Studies like those from Patricia Salzman-Mitchell (2005) and Victoria Rimell (2006)—both of which will be used widely throughout my dissertation—have compelled us to see the complications in Ovid’s texts and his destabilization of traditional gendered power dynamics. Salzman-Mitchell investigates the gaze in Ovid’s *Met.* and the danger of us simply conceding control of the gaze to male figures. Rimell argues for an exploration of desire, sex, the gaze, and ultimately subjectivity in Ovid as “relational” and “symmetrical” (or Medusan) rather than solely “hierarchical” and “asymmetrical” (or Narcissan): how is it mutual, egalitarian, competitive, and intersubjective (2006, 3)? Do we only have to see loss, possession, and destruction (or in other words, themes akin to sexualized violence and rape)?

Both these scholars interestingly use the images and paradigms of Medusa to prove the destabilization of gender and patriarchy in Ovid’s texts, although, for Rimell it is the central premise of her work to find Medusan and Narcissan reflections and concerns throughout Ovid’s corpus. Medusa causes anxiety for men exactly because of her control over the gaze and even the creation of men into art by petrifying them into statues. She can immobilize, or in other words turn male figures into female figures (following the famous 1977 Barthian theory that “man” is time and movement and “woman” is space and immobility). I, however, align more with the reasoning of Salzman-Mitchell. Rimell’s contentions about the prominence of “intersubjectivity” are well taken, but her disproportionate emphasis on equality between male and female figures comes at the expense of acknowledging violence, domination, and rape. For example, she claims
that Ovid in the *Ars* never concedes erotic control to either gender (19, 2006). But encouragements from the *praecceptor amoris* to violate the boundaries of women and rape with impunity contradict such a conclusion. Women in *Ars* Book 3 can be compared to predators (3.419–22), but they are not hunters in the same way Ovid’s male figures are or as often. Rimell offers compelling examples of gender destabilization in Ovid’s texts, but I do not believe he ever truly deconstructs gender. Sexualized violence and rape in Ovid’s works create and enforce an ideology of domination and hierarchy to the detriment of (ancient and modern) women.

Salzman-Mitchell more successfully balances the exploration of gender trouble (so to speak) in Ovid’s texts, particularly in the *Met*. To use her terminology derived from Fetterley’s influential 1978 work on feminist literary critics, she offers “releasing” and “resistant” readings of Ovid and his depictions of female figures (2005, 22). How do female figures, like Medusa, look? What do they see? Is the gaze essentially masculine? Is the gaze inherently violent? Her effort is to recover female figures from an androcentric text and discover what is beyond how we typically view the gaze and its connection to masculinity, domination, and violence. She is interested especially, as her arguments develop, in how female figures use the gaze not only for violence in Ovid, but to become witnesses to male and female divine abuse, such as Cyane (*Met*. 5.409–437), Alcmena (9.273–333), Iole (324–94), and more. But, in contrast to Rimell, Salzman-Mitchell rarely loses sight of the power of the male gaze and general androcentrism and their power over the female figures in the text. The female figures can look, they can bear witness, but they are rarely permitted to respond with the same level of violence (2005, 206). To me, some facets of how Ovid represents female figures are not polysemous and worthy of feminist complications but bluntly indefensible, such as his luxuriously poetic description of Philomela’s rape and mutilation (*Met*. 6.549–62). Rimell primarily “releases” and does not do enough to
“resist” the ineluctable and conspicuous misogyny of the text. Ovid can be paradoxical, and yes, even sympathetic toward female figures and *still a misogynist*. Despite Rimell’s strong evidence exploring the relational, rather than the hierarchical aspects of sex, desire, and subjectivity in Ovid, the hierarchical expressions of desire are too pervasive and too foundational to ignore. Sometimes, we cannot explain away the misogyny in Ovid’s texts.

Sharrock (2002c) in her discussion of the gaze and reading of texts most closely approximates my beliefs in regards to Ovid’s paradoxes and polysemy. She correctly observes that some aspects of patriarchal texts can be “complicated, reclaimed, made fragmented”—but many cannot. We can never explain away the misogyny: there will always be a “taint” (Sharrock 2002c, 274). Ovid and other ancient male authors may destabilize gender, but they never essentially challenge gendered frameworks and systems. At the same time, Sharrock presses us to see complications, reclamations, and fragmentations of readings as a legitimate tool to topple hierarchies inside texts and without since she believes the recognition and labeling of misogyny can only go so far in achieving an effective feminist analysis and praxis (Sharrock 2002c, 272). Overall, I do not believe Ovid is incapable of sympathy for female figures, but I also do not believe that anyone can be fully sympathetic to female figures under patriarchal cultures like Ovid’s, and men are particularly conditioned to dehumanize women because of the benefits they receive from doing so. Dolbhofer (1994) is right to remind us that Roman men, based on their texts and legal codes, were not expected to have sympathy for the raped woman, but for her father or other male relatives. We can never have a fully “releasing” reading of Ovid, and to go down such a path alone is naive. To do so would be to ignore the dominant tenor of Ovid’s texts and the material conditions of misogyny that created his mindset and created his texts.

**VI. Methodology and the Wider Scholarly Context**
There has been an explosion of interest in Ovid since the 1970s, particularly in terms of feminist scholarship. His intense and often controversial focus on women, femininity, gender, and sexuality throughout his corpus has given feminist scholarship in Classics ample opportunity to show Ovid in a new light, to prove the inherent value of feminist perspectives to Ovidian and classical studies, and to better explore the nature of misogyny in Ovid. Scholarship on Ovid is ever-growing: such a breadth of research presents challenges to any researcher, but also places me in a relevant and wide conversation within the classical community. The study of sexualized violence and rape in Ovid is, in particular, one of the most fertile areas for scholarship since the 1970s. Many scholars before me have elaborated on the recurring patterns and characteristics of rape in Ovid’s works, especially the *Met.* and the *Fasti*, including Anderson (1972 and 1997), Curran (1978), Gregson Davis (1983), Richlin (1992), Gentilcore (1995), Newlands (1995), W.R. Johnson (1996 and 1997), Murgatroyd (2005), Salzman-Mitchell (2005), Hejduk (2011), Everett Beek (2015), and James (2016), with Richlin, W.R. Johnson (1996), Murgatroyd, and Everett Beek providing analysis of these patterns across two or more of Ovid’s texts. The work of all these scholars has been enormously influential on my own work—particularly Richlin’s groundbreaking article, “Reading Ovid’s Rapes” and its unabashedly feminist critique of Ovid’s misogyny—but I demonstrate the significance of these patterns further through the introduction of victim-blaming and sororophobia into the analysis of sexualized violence in Ovid. Also, no authors to my knowledge have written extensively about sexualized violence in the *Her.* (although, scholars such as Rimell 2006 and Fulkerson 2005, 2009 briefly discuss the role of sexual abuse in the epistles), and only a small selection of scholars, such as Cahoon (1990) and Newlands (1995), have written about the exile poetry and its connections to rape in the poet’s wider corpus, although none that I know of argue that rape imagery specifically persists and
extends in his exile poetry through his use of predator-prey analogies, a prominent feature in his narratives of rape, in order to define his own fear and trauma under Augustus’ power.

The primary challenge, however, of my dissertation will be in bridging the gap between Ovidian scholarship on sexualized violence and rape, and the wider feminist academic conversation about it. Richlin attempted to open that door by reminding her audience that how we respond to and even ignore these rapes is a product of our Anglo-American misogynistic culture, which normalizes sexualized violence, that misogyny in art has been a constant and a universal in the Roman past and our present, and that Ovid’s depictions of rape help us to understand ourselves and why we continue to read Ovid. Unlike many Ovidian scholars, I adopt the transhistorical narrative to misogyny Richlin promotes in most of her feminist work, such as in the *Garden of Priapus* (1983) and *Arguments with Silence* (2014). There is a troubling continuity to misogyny in the West that we must grapple with as feminists. With this work, I am turning to the past to understand the present and turning to the present to understand the past, and that is one of the primary reasons why I read Ovid as a feminist classicist. I am seeking, through literature, glimpses of the origins of particular strains of misogyny that persist today. I am of the mind that scholars should turn to the past to derive political, moral, and ethical ideologies and perspectives (for example, Langlands and Fisher’s recent 2015 volume took such a position as they explored ancient and modern concepts of sexuality). What is more, interpretation of literature from the past is always compromised by the present, there is no “dispassionate” or “objective” way to interpret it. With this dissertation, I make the argument that modern feminist principles can illuminate an ancient text and liken how Ovid represents rape to how we do today in Western cultures. I see a universal of sorts between our culture and Ovid’s own. The similarities to how we victim-blame and participate in sororophobia are staggering, profound,
and meaningful. How do ideologies of misogyny remain constant and how does reading Ovid continue to reinforce them? The focus will always fall on Ovid’s texts, but there will be the underlying understanding that by exposing the victim-blaming and sororophobia in his texts, I am also exposing connections between the past and the present, between the Romans and us.

Since Richlin, classical feminist scholarship on Ovid and rape has been often narrowly classical and philological in its scope. But some scholars like James (1997, 2003, 2012, 2016) have consistently made attempts at bridging the gap between the past and the modern world when analyzing Ovid. For example, James (2012)—in tandem with Liveley (2012)—discusses how to teach Ovid and his texts of rape in a modern college classroom. Scholars like Rabinowitz (2011), outside of Ovidian studies in Classics, have attempted to use modern analyses of feminist concepts like “rape culture” in Greek tragedy. Continuing the conversation Richlin began in 1992 about Ovid and modern concepts of misogyny and rape not only necessitates reading broadly in both Classics and feminism, but entering mostly uncharted waters in classical scholarship, particularly because I am not aware of anyone before me who has applied the concepts of victim-blaming or sororophobia to an analysis of Ovid or any other ancient author. Only Gloyn (2013) has touched very briefly upon how her students victim-blamed Ovid’s rape victims in the Met. What my dissertation achieves is showing how victim-blaming and sororophobia is endemic to Ovid’s texts. Gloyn’s students engaged in victim-blaming because they reflected the reality of the text and their own reality. It becomes clear through Gloyn’s article that the victim-blaming in Ovid can form a symbiotic relationship with conceptions of rape today. Scholars like Curran (1978), Nagle (1984), Janan (2009), and McAuley (2012) have all analyzed the ira of Juno and other goddesses at victims of rape and recognize that such vengeance is fundamental to Ovid’s text in the aftermath of rape, but in their explications of such
Ira none of them recognize or introduce victim-blaming or sororophobia into their analyses.

I am profoundly indebted to and inspired by the many feminist and (predominantly) female classical scholars before me who have read Ovid’s texts, especially the *Met.*, as texts of rape. I hope that my research can further elucidate Ovid. If we continue to read Ovid, a very popular author and perennial member of the Western literary canon, we should always strive to better understand, from a feminist perspective, something so ingrained and pervasive in his texts. We should see the patterns of rape in his corpus—many of which scholars before me have recognized and analyzed—but as my dissertation contends for the first time, we should also see how and why victim-blaming and sororophobia are fundamental parts of those patterns.

As one might surmise from the introduction of victim-blaming and sororophobia in an analysis of Ovid and much of what I said previously, my dissertation will be a feminist reading of his texts, and feminist theory will be my primary methodology in tackling Ovid. At the most fundamental level, feminist classicist literary criticism, to me, means recovering at least the cultural constructs of women—to paraphrase Richlin 1990—from male-authored, ideologically patriarchal, and androcentric texts. Ovid as a male fiction writer writing for other men (even if he knew that women would read his poems), blinkered by Roman patriarchal thinking and culture, cannot grant us direct access to the lived reality of Roman women—he can only reveal how a very specific class of Roman men decided to conceive of and represent them (French 1990), and often the most we can hope for are distortions of women and their sexuality (Dixon 2001, 34). It is unfortunate that that is often the most we can hope to achieve, that we cannot expect men to genuinely present women because they are so invested in hegemony over them (Gold 1993, 87).24 Feminist classicist literary critics, as many of the women I cited above have lamented

24 Of course, the goal of literature is never to directly represent the reality of men or women, even if poetry like that of Ovid is often inspired by reality and derives much of its beauty and power from reality.
especially Richlin 1992), are often trapped in closed systems of what *men* say about *women* and in analyses that center the words of a man rather than a woman. Consequently, my analysis here can never be truly radical and must work, reluctantly, within patriarchal systems.

We, moreover, cannot recover women from antiquity from one author alone, as Culham (1985) has warned classicists, exhorting us to detexualize and widen our understanding of antiquity and turn to material culture. Although my dissertation is very much textualized, when appropriate I have and will incorporate material culture, history, and law into my research to provide context for my philological analysis of Ovid’s literature. Engaging in such “multi-centering” might bring my analysis closer to “real” Roman women (McManus 1990, 226), although, of course, the powers and filters of patriarchy heavily compromise and mediate material culture, as well. Ovid’s texts are a product of his culture and its norms and they are shaped by and were likewise instrumental in shaping ideologies about women (Stehle 1989, 143). We can learn much from Ovid about the creation, maintenance, and discourse of misogyny, but we must always be aware of the limitations of knowledge about women Ovid presents. Something we can be more certain about is the effect of Ovid’s writings on his audience and what they reinforced in his culture. A feminist reading of his poetry acknowledges the effects of Ovid’s text on the audience to his own times and more contemporary audiences and how he would have helped and continues to help to engender and enforce misogynistic ideology. What acts were and are his texts normalizing in men, as they represented sexualized violence and rape? How would a Roman woman have reacted to the rapes? How do I as a woman today react? And of course, as a woman, how am I still complicit in misogyny by analyzing and valuing his work?

Richlin urges us in her 1992 article to remember that “content is never arbitrary or trivial” and has a purpose (159). Ovid’s continued presence today speaks to our own ideologies, our own
purposes, and our own desires for the content (Richlin 1992; Keegan 2002). That alone should be enough for a feminist like myself, despite the challenges Ovid’s content may present to feminists, to read him. We must understand the beginnings of misogyny and how and why it persists today, and Ovid can, in a small way, help us to see that. With his poetry, we can in part reconstruct the ideologies, biases, and suffering women in antiquity faced (Richlin 1990, 181). Furthermore, modern feminist concepts like victim-blaming and sororophobia can help us to understand the ancient texts and the ancient texts can help us to better understand how we view women and their plight today (Gold 1993, 78). Liveley (2012, 546) contends that such modern feminist concepts enable us to “renegotiate, resist, reread, and respond” to ancient texts and contemplate what they say about our own cultural experiences. I can analyze, with the assistance of feminist concepts, how Ovid represented female figures and their gendered experiences of rape, lay bare his (perpetuation of) misogyny in those representations, ultimately help to create more feminist-informed readings of Ovid, give a glimpse of what women suffered (through Ovid’s heavy filter), and speak to the continued oppression of women through rape today. A feminist reading of the text, moreover, means not apologizing for how he portrays rape, as I have explored above. His depictions of sexualized violence are complex masterpieces of Latin poetry, but they are also nakedly brutal and even ghoulishly revelatory in their violence against women. Bringing feminism to these texts, most importantly, means challenging the master narratives of “Man” in the Western tradition by demanding that Ovid’s texts be fundamentally seen as texts of rape, that we see the female figures Ovid represents and their pain, and that whenever we can, we also emphasize how these female figures resist against a violence that seems almost inevitable, even if Ovid dooms the success of their rebellions alone and together (Klindienst 1991).
Chapter Two: Sexualized Violence and Rape in Ovid’s Early Corpus

A. The Heroides and Sexualized Violence and Rape

I.) Introduction to and Scholarship on the Heroides

This chapter begins to explore how sexualized violence and rape permeate Ovid’s corpus. In the Heroides (Her.), Amores, and Ars Amatoria (Ars) we see Ovid frequently commenting on, depicting, and even condoning rape, but not at the same length and scope as he does in his longer-form poems, the Met. and the Fasti. In these earlier works, Ovid foreshadows, most especially in the Amores and the Ars, what he will do later and more extensively in his portrayal of sexualized violence. While the Met. and the Fasti receive the most scholarly attention when examining the role of sexualized violence in his corpus, serious work has been done on the Amores and Ars by, for example, James (1997 and 2003), Greene (1998, 1999), and Desmond (2006). The epistolary, elegiac poems (1–15 written by mythological female figures without a reply and the poetess Sappho, 16–21 written by mythological heroes with subsequent responses by their heroines) have generated ample feminist-informed scholarship on female subjectivity, female authorship, the mythological canon, genre, the female voice, female figures and rhetoric, intertextuality, and Ovid’s own exile, but there has been relatively little attention toward sexualized violence and rape in the Her. Only a few scholars have briefly touched upon their role in the epistles, such as Lindheim (2003), Fulkerson (2005), and Rimell (2006).

Several lines of scholarship on the Her. will be useful to my exploration of sexualized violence and rape in these poems. But I first must mention that scholarship on the Her. until recently had been profoundly absorbed in debating and proving the authenticity of many of the poems. The poems often include inconsistencies and evidence of interpolations by later authors. Some scholars just outright deny Ovidian authorship for certain epistles. Knox (1995), for
example, marks most of the poems not listed in Ovid’s catalogue of the heroines (Amores 2.18) in the Her. as spurious, such as that of Hermione, the daughter of Helen and Menelaus (analyzed below in this chapter) and Sappho, yet not that of Briseis, the captive consort of Achilles. But as Casali (1997, 305–6) contends in his review of Knox’s 1995 commentary: there is absolutely no reason for Ovid to poetically list every single epistle he wrote. Instead, “all the epistles should labor under the suspicion of being spurious.” For my purposes, however, I will consistently assume that the epistles are predominantly genuine and that the Her. are worthy of scholarship beyond textual criticism, thereby reflecting the work of Lindheim (2003), Spentzou (2003), Rimell (2006), and Fulkerson (2005, 2009) on these epistles, although I will be sensitive to obvious interpolations and inconsistencies in the text (see my discussion of Her. 5 from Oenone to Paris, her former lover, below and its probable interpolation of a description of rape).

Some of the primary concerns of recent scholarship on the poems have been the relationship of the Her. to Roman love elegy and traditional elegy, its construction of femininity and masculinity, and the relationship of the Her. to other parts of Ovid’s corpus. Many have noted that the female figures in these poems take on the characteristics of the male amator in elegy. For example, Volk (2010, 48) writes of the collection of the first fifteen Her:

“The heroines go through such typical elegiac emotions as desire, anger, and despair, as well as the basic elegiac feeling of being a victim of both the beloved and love itself. However, contrary to the usual set up, these elegiac lovers are women and it is the men who have taken over the role of the idolized but untrustworthy elegiac puella.”

Ovid invests his heroines with the characteristics an elegiac amator takes on in his pursuit of the

---

25 Elegy as a genre first had connections with mourning. But because of the innovations of Roman poets like Tibullus, Propertius, and Ovid, the genre (and its meter) began to have connections with unrequited eros (Nagy 2010). Ovid will grapple with both the more traditional origins of the genre and the Roman interventions in the genre. In the Her. and the exile poetry, elegy is both for mourning and love. My dissertation—perhaps in an effort to achieve ring composition—will conclude with a chapter exploring the connections between the Her. and the exile poetry and how they conceive of sexualized violence and femininity, beginning and ending the project with mourning and amatory elegy. But in all the other works of Ovid I explore in the dissertation, the poet primarily grapples with amatory elegy, particularly juxtaposing and creating tensions between amatory elegy and epic poetry.
puella, but all the elegiac poets mark these characteristics as feminine. What does it mean for Ovid to represent stereotypically feminine females, female figures who lament, become envious, and are submissive to male figures? What ideologies of gender does he support with these epistolary poems? Is Ovid restoring normative gender relations, particularly by showing a female figure to be a slave to love, experiencing the so-called servitium amoris (figuratively and literally, especially with his representation of Briseis in Her. 3)? Or is Ovid universalizing these behaviors and showing they are genderless (Fulkerson 2005, 85)? The female figures of the Her. become stereotypically feminine in other ways. In the Ars, Ovid tells his male students that men are rhetorically superior to women when writing letters (1.449–467). The paired-Her. (16–21) may echo his disbelief in the rhetorical potency of women in the face of men: the man in each case wins his amatory battle against unwilling women like Helen and Cydippe, a woman forced into a relationship with her suitor Acontius by a magical apple and oath to the goddess Diana (Fulkerson 2009, 85). The paired poems, more importantly, hold up a dichotomy of men initiating the correspondence and the sexual relationship and women “receiving”—in other words, normative, Roman, sexual dynamics enforcing active and passive roles. Rimell (2006)—whose work I engaged with in Chapter One and I will engage with more in the upcoming pages—complicates these notions of passivity and activity in the double epistles and comments on the erotic power both Helen and Cydippe hold over Paris and Acontius. Her work, though I have reservations about its emphasis on the “relational,” rather than the “hierarchical” portrayal of desire in Ovid, will be particularly helpful to my analysis of the Helen and Cydippe epistles.

Some of the most recent feminist scholarship on the Her., like the work of Lindheim (2003), Spentzou (2003), Rimell (2006), and Fulkerson (2005, 2009), has primarily emphasized the authenticity and nature of the female voice and experience in the Her. and Ovid generally.
My analysis in this chapter explores how Ovid depicts sexualized violence through the voices of female figures (and also how Paris and Acontius justify their rapes of Helen and Cydippe). What is remarkable about the *Her.* and its discussion of rape is the prominent voice of female figures like Oenone, Hermione, Helen, Cydippe, and Briseis airing, claiming, and lamenting their own suffering from sexualized violence. Outside of the *Her.*, in Ovid’s corpus only Rhea Silvia (*Amores* 3.6.71–8), Leucothoe (*Met.* 4.214–255), Arethusa (5.572–641), the Muses (5.294–331), Philomela (6.549–70), Alcmena (9.273–333), Dryope (9.324–93), and Flora (*Fasti* 5.183–206) have that opportunity, while the Minyeides, Calliope, and Iole narrate myths of the rapes of other female figures in the *Met.* 4.190–255, 5.332–641, and 9.324–93 and the Minyeides narrate the rape of a male figure in *Met.* 4.314–88.²⁶ In a small way, these rapes told from the perspective of female figures challenge the domination of Ovid’s male, poetic voice in an experience he almost invariably engenders as feminine. Scholars such as Enterline (2000) believe that Ovid giving female rape victims the space to air their grievances and him offering his audience a multiplicity of voices about rape proves Ovid’s sympathy toward female figures and offers a deconstruction of a single male fantasy about female sexuality and the violations of it.

But no one should forget the presence of Ovid, as a male supernarrator, and his representations and ventriloquisms of female figures. There is his filter with which all feminist scholars must grapple and there is never an authentic female voice found in his works. As I argued in Chapter One, there can never be a fully “releasing” reading of Ovid’s texts—we will always have to be “resisting” readers of Ovid, like Fetterley suggests in her influential 1978 feminist theory. Fulkerson (2009, 86; 2016) is suspicious of and largely doubts Ovid’s sympathy

²⁶ Met. 5.332–641 is the most prominent place for the voices of female figures in the epic and simultaneously the most prominent place for female figures to confront their own and other female figures’ experiences with sexualized violence: the Muses recount their own assault, the rape of Proserpina, the rape of Cyane, and the assault of Arethusa. Arethusa is a more deeply layered internal narrator: she narrates her rape within the story the Muses narrate.
to female figures in the *Her.* (and elsewhere): even if Ovid grants female figures a poetic voice, why must he consistently feature female figures at their physical, psychological, and sexual nadir? Can female figures ever have positive sexual experiences in his texts? Female figures are rarely anything but abject in his corpus, whether as a result of being lovelorn or as a result of sexualized violence, and that abjection is integral to the perennial and controversial question in scholarship regarding Ovid’s sympathy toward female figures. Yet, in her monograph on the *Her.* from 2005, Fulkerson argues that Ovid, though he is the supernarrator, creates a poetic community of female figures and associates the poetics of elegy and lament with female figures (something I will examine in Chapter Six on Ovid’s exile poetry). The *doctae feminae* (learned women) of this collection respond to and appropriate the poetry of other female figures in their community and this is why—to be considered in more depth below—the epistles of Oenone and Helen allude to one another. Fulkerson’s monograph is an exercise in exploring intratextuality, gender, and genre. She maintains that even if the female figures are unsuccessful at convincing their addressees and they are hindered by the androcentric literary tradition, their poetic community, akin to that of the Roman male elegiac community, matters. Fulkerson is more interested in the female figures’ “struggles” to persuade and how their struggles take place in a reactive and communicative poetic group than in outcomes of their poetry (2).

Lindheim’s 2003 monograph, as well, seriously takes into account Ovid’s looming presence as a male supernarrator and author. She argues that Ovid wants his audience to think they are receiving the genuine subjectivity of female figures because of the epistolary format and genre, but his presence and control as a male author cannot be ignored. First, Ovid continually has female figures shape their identities in relation to their male lovers and make the male figures the protagonists in their lives. Ovid presents them often to be “willingly on the margins” of their
own stories (2003, 9), such as we will see with Briseis in *Her.* 3. This very marginalization ultimately works to enforce the misogyny of Ovid’s texts and his society. Ovid, moreover, through the repetition of female figures again and again in the same situation, poetically attempts to create a unified, reductive statement on female figures, a fantasy that he understands them, that their heterogeneity can be contained and homogenized. The repetitiveness in the *Her.* is the key to understanding how the poet constructs gender and its characteristics. Using Lacanian analysis, Lindheim posits that Ovid through this very repetition is attempting to impose a symmetry on “Woman” that does not exist. She shows that Ovid is constructing his own Symbolic (or masculine) order within the *Her.* But she ends her monograph with hope that we see through this imposed homogeneity: the Symbolic is always unstable.

In contrast to Lindheim, Spentzou (2003) asserts that we *can* find the voices, words, rhetoric, and desires of female figures outside of Ovid’s control and she argues in her monograph, using French post-Lacanian psychoanalytic feminism, that the *Her.* provides us with a type of *l’écriture féminine* (such as that espoused by Luce Irigaray and Hélène Cixous). This is what she refers to as “recuperative” reading of the *Her.* She asks: “How can we uncover signs of female strength as they slip through the gaps of the master narratives?” (68). Each time a heroine writes a letter, she is committing an act of transgression, revolting against the canon, turning from *scriptae puellae* (written women) (of Maria Wyke, 2002) to *scribentes puellae* (writing women). The voices of female figures telling their own stories is intrinsically disruptive to patriarchy and androcentrism and show female figures to be “protagonists and critics, readers and writers, lovers and interpreters” (29) controlling their own destinies and desires. The female figures are “resistant readers” of the canon (to again use Fetterley’s theory), they are skeptical, and they are primarily appropriative of the male canon. Spentzou’s recuperative reading is, for
the most part, a valid one, and it is, moreover, strengthened by her observation that the female figures in the *Her*. often write in defiance of the patriarchal authorities in their lives. But Spentzou fails to prove that the female figures are engaging in a type of fully “feminine writing.” *L'écriture féminine* requires an independence from a man or men that the *scriptae puellae* of the *Her.* do not achieve because *Ovid is writing them into poetic existence*. Spentzou successfully establishes how the letters reflect some of the characteristics of *l'écriture féminine*, but not that they essentially are examples of it. Spentzou admits herself at the end of her monograph that it is impossible to distinguish between Ovid and the female figures (194) and how could we, when he created them? Rimell’s (2006) perspective on the *Her.* is similar to that of Spentzou, in that she believes we can move beyond Ovid’s dominant masculinity and find a subversive femininity within the epistles. She views the epistles as a way for Ovid to identify with the Other, just as the *amatores* (lovers) do in Roman love elegy (a position which began with Hallett 1973, the so-called “counter-cultural ideology” found within the poetry of Tibullus, Propertius, and Ovid). Furthermore, the epistles, especially the double ones, showcase how Ovid explores intersubjectivity and relational interactions between men and women. Rimell proposes that there are more than just hierarchies in Ovid: instead she urges us ask how he destabilizes gender.

Ovid may destabilize gender, but it is important to recognize that he never deconstructs it or fundamentally challenges it, a position I clarified in my introduction. Yes, the heroines in these poems have subjectivity and a voice, they display expertise in rhetoric and poetry, and more, but their subjectivity stereotypically revolves around men and sexuality, and men like Acontius in *Her.* 20 can exploit letters, words, and readings to dominate them into erotic submission, or to quote Rimell, “textually and sexually entrap them” (2006, 157). In the double epistles, the men initiate the conversation, and their desires for the women win out. Cydippe can
expose Acontius for what he has done to her in her letter, she can assert her will in limited
circumstances, but she still must marry him, despite her powerful protestations (Lindheim 2003,
28; 34). I believe instances like these uphold male fantasies of female weakness, vulnerability,
and passivity and that Ovid is interested in such a dynamic and upholds it for purposes
unsympathetic to female figures. I am much more convinced by positions such as those of
Lindheim and Fulkerson that recognize the misogynistic effects of Ovid’s writing. Rimell
concedes the “other side of the argument” often in her analysis of the Her., in other words, how
Ovid enforces hierarchies between the male and female, but she, appears more invested in
illuminating how he subverts gender and features relationships between male and female figures
in which the power is contested, controversial, and mutable. Hierarchical interactions, in her
understanding, long for sameness and symmetry, while the relational long for difference and
alterity. This exploration of sameness and difference coincides with Rimell’s ingenious search
for images and recapitulations of Narcissus (sameness and symmetry) and Medusa (difference
and alterity) throughout Ovid. To Rimell, this split between the Narcissan elements and Medusan
elements speaks positively to Ovid’s poetry and its epistemological complexity. She argues that
the hierarchical, the Narcissan, is not the central force within Ovid. I, of course, value this
complexity in Ovid’s poetry, concede such a complexity, and do not reject all releasing readings
of Ovid, but as Sharrock (2002c, 270) says, the taint of misogyny always lingers and in Ovid, it
not only lingers, but it consistently reemerges and comes to dominate his texts.

II. The Epistles:

The Her. features many mythological heroines, who have been abused and raped by male
figures. Sexualized violence, however, is only addressed directly in the laments of Oenone (Her.
5), Hermione (8), and Helen (17). I will analyze the epistles of all these female figures, how they
depict and explore sexualized violence, and how the epistles additionally allude to and communicate with one another. I will also include discussion of and ask the same questions of Her. 21 of Cydippe and of Her. 3 of Briseis. Cydippe and Briseis do not define themselves as rape victims and do not use the language of rape, but that is what they have experienced because of the sexual power Acontius and Achilles have over them. As Cydippe recounts how she must succumb to Acontius in marriage and thus sexually, and as Briseis recounts her sexual relationship with Achilles as his captive, the women describe their rapes.

1. Heroides 5: Oenone’s Abuse and Sororophobia Against Helen

I begin with Oenone, who in Her. 5 recounts her attempted rapes by satyrs to Paris after he recently departed for Greece to retrieve Helen as his prize. The satyrs pursued her aggressively and she fled to protect her chastity, like many rape victims in Ovid (135–138):27

\[
\begin{align*}
&Me\ Satyri\ celeres\ (silvis\ ego\ tecta\ latebam) \\
&\text{quaesierunt\ rapido, turba\ proterva, pede} \\
&\text{cornigerumque\ caput\ pinu\ praecinctus\ acuta} \\
&\text{Faunus,\ in\ immensis\ qua\ tumet\ Ida\ iugis.}
\end{align*}
\]

Satyrs, a violent mob of them, ran after me quickly—I was hiding, covered by the foliage—and Faunus as well, with his horned head encircled with prickly pine, sought me where Mount Ida swells in its immense ridges.

But in what most scholars believe are interpolations into the text, Oenone may also graphically represent her rape by Apollo and her resistance to it (139–146):28

---

27 All the Latin text is from the Loeb editions of Ovid’s texts. All translations of Ovid are mine.
28 Casali (1997, 305–306) believes that any mention of her rape by Apollo makes little sense in a context in which she is trying to convince Paris of her fidelity to him after he has left. Apollo’s rape would have had to transpire before then because he gave her healing powers. This alone, according to Casali, should disqualify lines 139–146 and the stylistic inconsistencies and the complete lack of outside corroboration that Apollo and Oenone interacted in any other source further strengthen that position. He concedes, however, that most editors cut out 140–6, not 139–146. Casali is criticizing what he perceives to be an uncritical inclusion of spurious lines in Knox’s (1995) commentary on the Her. in this epistle and in several others. He calls this passage “absurd.” Casali suggests that the origin of this interpolation comes from a misinterpretation of Apollo’s love for Admetus later in 151–2. But in another account of Oenone’s life and her love for Paris, that of Parthenius, he discusses how she was “possessed by some god” (Erotica Parthemata 5). This should remind us that the gods often give powers to their rape victims, such as Apollo does with Cassandra and the Sibyl. Could this be the reasoning behind the inclusion of this story for the first time? Ovid here could be looking at a possible (the chronology of Parthenius’ work is
Me fide conspicus Troiae munitor amavit; 
ille meae spolium virginitatis habet. 140
Id quoque luctando; rupi tamen ungue capillos
oraque sunt digitis aspera facta meis.
Nec pretium stupri gemmas aurunque poposci; 
turpiter ingenuum munera corpus emunt.
Ipse ratus dignam medicas mihi tradidit artes 
admisitque meas ad sua dona manus. 145

The builder of Troy (Apollo), known for his loyalty, loved me. He has the spoils of my virginity. He did this through struggling. However, I ripped his hair with my nail and his face, which was scratched with my fingers. I did not demand a price of gems or gold for his stuprum; it is shameful for gifts to buy a noble body. That man thinking me worthy, gave to me the arts of healing and permitted me to his attend to his gifts.

I, too, am convinced that these lines can be an interpolation, but there is value in determining their Ovidian and not so Ovidian characteristics. The use of the word *stuprum* here is frank, much franker than Roman poetry usually is, as Knox (1995, 191) observes in his commentary, but Ovid deploys this word twice to mark the rape of Deidamia by Achilles in *Ars* 1. 698–9, so it is not completely uncharacteristic of him as an author (*Haec illum stupro comperit esse virum/ viribus illa quidem victa est...Quid blanda voce moraris/ Auctorem stupri, Deidamia, tui?* (“She discovered that he was a man by *stuprum*, she certainly was conquered by his powers...why do you delay the author of the *stuprum*, Deidamia, with coaxing voice?”)). The account, however, of her resisting her attack physically is unique: the female figures in Ovid who resist rape do so through flight, concealment, metamorphoses, not confrontation. For example, in the authentic text of this epistle, Oenone describes how she hides from satyrs: she does not confront them.

Oenone in her epistle not only considers her own experiences of sexualized violence, but also impugns the veracity of Helen’s story of sexualized violence at the hands of Theseus, when
he abducted her as a young girl and brought her to the underworld. This is done in an effort to convince Paris that Helen cannot be trusted sexually, this distrust (whether part of her rhetorical appeal to her former lover or really felt) providing us with one of the first examples of sororophobia in Ovid’s corpus. How could someone whose chastity has already been compromised be trusted (*nulla reparabilis arte/ laesa pudicitia est*, “Bruised modesty is not repairable by any skill,” 103–104)? Oenone attempts to prove her chastity to Paris despite his return to Troy and his relationship with Helen and hence her discussion of the attacks of the satyrs and Faunus. She particularly questions whether Helen could have remained a *virgo* during her abduction by Theseus, a young and desirous man (129) and avers that Helen is not really a victim of sexualized violence, but rather someone who wants to be raped (*vim licet appelles et culpam nomine veles; quae totiens rapta est, praebuit ipsa rapi*, “Although you may call it force, you cover up your blame in name; she who has been raped so often, offered herself to be raped,” 131–2). This is a sentiment the narrator of the *Ars* echoes later as a way to convince his readers that there really is no such thing as an unwilling woman (1.673), even repeating the *vim licet appelles* phrase verbatim (*vim licet appelles: grata est vis ista puellis*, “Although you may call it force, force is pleasing to girls”). Many of the women, nymphs, and goddesses who engage in sororophobia in Ovid have been victims of sexualized violence and rape in the past, a reality that makes their violence against female figures more devastating and pathetic. Helen later on in *Her.* 17 defends herself against the accusations of Oenone (but in the mouth of Paris) and explicitly labels her status as a victim of abduction and assault. She did not go willingly with Theseus, she was a child, and all that he stole from her were kisses (17.21–32). Helen condemns Paris for abandoning Oenone, though, of course, one could understand her defense as self-interested: how can Paris be faithful to her if he has already proved his perfidy to another woman (17.195–197)?
2. *Heroides* 8: Hermione’s Abduction and Rape by Orestes and the Defense of Helen

Hermione, from nearly the very beginning of her epistolary appeal to Orestes presents herself as a victim of abduction and rape by Pyrrhus, the son of Achilles (8.3–9):^29^

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{Inclusam contra iusque piumque tenet.} \\
&\text{Quod potui, renui, ne non invita tenerer;} \\
&\text{Cetera femineae non valuere manus.} \\
&'\text{Quid facis, Aeacide? Non sum sine vindice,' dixi:} \\
&'\text{Haec tibi sub domino est, Pyrrhe, puella suo!}' \\
&\text{Surdior ille freto clamantem nomen Orestae} \\
&\text{traxit inornatis in sua tecta comis.}^30
\end{align*}
\]

Pyrrhus keeps me, shut in, in defiance of laws and piety. I have renounced—the only thing I am capable of—that I am being held willingly. What’s more, my women’s hands were not strong. I said: “What are you doing, descendent of Aeacus? I am not without an avenger. Pyrrhus, this girl of yours has her own master!” But that man deafner than the sea dragged me, crying out the name of Orestes, under his roof, with my hair disordered.

She was betrothed to Orestes (*sub domino...suo*), but she has instead been taken like a captured slave (*capta...serva*) by a man acting like a barbarian, raping and pillaging in war (11–12), and Orestes has not made any effort to retrieve her, though she desperately needs an escape and he is the answer. She complains bitterly that if she were cattle, Orestes would have already saved her, an abducted woman (*rapta*), a complaint illuminating the linguistic and cultural links between the theft of property and rape of women, also property, in the eyes of the Romans (*An siquis rapiat stabulis armenta reclusis,/ Arma feras, rapta coniuge lentus eris?*, “But if anyone should take the cattle from opened stalls, you would bear arms: will you be slow after your betrothed has been taken?” 17–18). She defines herself as a commodity again later in the poem and more baldly: *ecce Neoptolemo praeda parata fui* (“Behold I was prepared as the booty for

---

^29^ Pyrrhus is referred to throughout the poem as Pyrrhus, Neoptolemus, and Aecidus (the descendent of Aeceus, his great-grandfather). Hermione also refers to Pyrrhus by alluding to land of his mother, Deidamia: Scyros.

^30^ As discussed above, Knox (1995) contends that the entire Hermione epistle should be eliminated from the *Her.* collection. He analyzes particularly lines 65–74 to demonstrate its many textual problems, inconsistencies, and factual errors. For example, these lines muddle the genealogy of Pelops and they repeat lines from *Ars* 2.5–8. Knox has convinced me that these lines are suspect and could be interpolated, but not that the entire epistle is spurious.
Neoptolemus,” 81–82). *Praeda* is a fairly common Ovidian description for rape victims. For example, in the rape of the Sabines in the *Ars* Book 1, the rape victims are called *praeda*, too (1.114; 125). It is one thing to have the machismo-driven *praecceptor amoris*, the narrator of the *Ars*, speak of women and their relationships with men in this way, but another to be confronted with Hermione’s acute self-awareness of her dehumanized status.

Hermione continues to establish herself as a rape victim and as one in need of rescue by comparing her abuse to that of her mother’s by Paris—if Menelaus could wage a war to retrieve Helen from Paris, Orestes can save her from Pyrrhus (19). It is no shame to wage such a war, she urges, but she consoles him that no such war is in fact necessary: he can come alone without a *mille rates* (a thousand ships) (23–4). She does, nevertheless, realize what a great contrast there is between her mother and herself in their current situations: she is a captive and her mother is free (*Pyrrhus habet captam reduce et victore parente*, “Pyrrhus has me captive, although my father has returned and is a victor,” 103–4). Interestingly, unlike Oenone earlier, Hermione in her epistle affirms the rape status of her mother, using the language of rape explicitly (*Taenaris Idaeo trans aequor ab hospite rapta*…, “She, from Taenarus, abducted across the sea, by the Trojan stranger,” 73). The victimhood of Helen is contested and problematized several times in the *Her.*, initially by Oenone (in relation to Theseus), then by her daughter, Hermione (in relation to Paris), and lastly by Paris and Helen themselves (in relation to Theseus). The weight Hermione gives to the rape status of her mother supports her case to Orestes, and simultaneously, speaks to the cyclical nature of violence against female figures in Greek and Roman mythology: Helen was raped by Theseus and Paris and her daughter was raped by Pyrrhus (just as Europa and her descendant Semele were raped, both by Jupiter, *Met.* 2 and 3). Hermione, while she affirms that her mother was raped, still, in a nice touch of psychological realism from Ovid,
perceives Helen’s absence from her childhood as the abandonment of her duties as a mother:

*Ipsa ego, non longos etiamtunc scissa capillos,/ Clamabam: 'sine me, me sine, mater, abis?*’ (“I myself, at that time, having ripped my hair, not yet long, cried out: ‘Mother, you go without me, without me?’” 79–80). This anger from Hermione could very well be an example of victim-blaming. What could her mother do for her daughter if she was raped and abducted?

All of the *Her.* offers a glimpse into the raw emotions, vulnerability, and anguish of female figures. They in many ways provide us with some of the closest, yet heavily filtered, access to the voice of female figures in ancient literature. But Hermione, more so than the other heroines in the collection, speaks considerably and passionately about the emotional, psychological, and physical effects Pyrrhus’ kidnapping and rape has had on her. She recounts her resistance when Pyrrhus first took her and its ultimate futility (*Cetera femineae non valuere manus*, 6) and documents how the psychological damage from her captivity manifests itself physically (*rumpor et ora mihi pariter cum mente tumescent/ pectoraque inclusis ignibus usta dolent.* “I am destroyed and my face swells along with my mind and my chest pains (me), burned with internal passions,” 57–8). One of the only small freedoms Hermione has is to weep in their bedroom before she resists Pyrrhus in that same bed, a man she chiefly views as her enemy (106–10):33

---

31 In these lines Hermione seems to be indicating that her mother was abducted when she was very young, and hence, her hair is not yet as long as it would be if she were older. Details like this allow her to illuminate her extreme youth and to add to the pathos and pity of her story. Both Greeks girls and boys kept their hair long, and during the rituals surrounding puberty either began to bind, braid, or cut their hair (Lee 2015, 72).

32 *Rumpo* and *dirumpo* are often used in sexual contexts. For men, *rumpo* and *dirumpo* indicate the “bursting effects of sexual activity and desire” according to Adams’ *Latin Sexual Vocabulary* (1982, 150), such as in Catullus 11.20. For women, it speaks to the effects of experiencing *futatio* (“fucking”) and is used rather lewdly against them (Adams 1982, 150). In these lines, though Hermione is speaking to the psychological and emotional impact of her forced marriage to Pyrrhus, the use of the word *rumpor* to describe that trauma here could subtly refer to the physical and sexual impact of this forced marriage on Hermione: rape by Pyrrhus.

33 Many commentators on the *Her.* have noted the collection’s intense focus on the body fluids of female figures, especially their tears and sometimes their blood (3.3–4, 5.72, 8.107–9, 14.6–8). Kennedy contends that such references to the body fluids of the female figures remind the audience of the presence of the female figures in the face of the absence of the male figures in their lives: the readers can see the tears of the female figures, although the female figures cannot see their lovers (2002, 224). Rimell similarly asserts that the female figures make us confront their corporeality and materiality (2006, 124). Spentzou connects this prominence of female bodily fluids—and the
Perfruor infelix liberiore malo
nox ubi me thalamis ululantem et acerba gementem
condidit in maesto procubuique toro,
pro somno lacrimis ochi funguntur obortis
quaque licet fugio sicut ab hoste viro.

I unhappily enjoy misfortune with some freedom. When night shuts me in the bedroom, wailing and weeping fiercely, and I sink down in the sorrowful bed, my eyes produce springing tears instead of sleep and when able, I shrink from the man as if from an enemy.

The heroine also suffers from delusional and imaginative thinking about her captor. Her fragile mental state sometimes disorients her and she touches Pyrrhus willingly, instead of resisting him, forgetting where she is and left with great shame (111–114):

Saepe malis stupeo rerumque oblita locique
ignara tetigi Scyria membra manu,
utque nefas sensi, male corpora tacta relinquo
et mihi pollutas credor habere manus.

Often I am stupefied by evil and forgetting my affairs and my location, I, in ignorance, touched his Scyrian limbs with my hand, and as I sensed the unspeakable act, I abandon his body, having touched it shamefully, and I believe myself to have defiled hands.

Her only real revenge against Pyrrhus, beyond writing Orestes this letter, is to call Pyrrhus Orestes, so Pyrrhus, her captor, can never forget where her true affections lie (115–7).

Fulkerson (2005, 97–102), in her analysis of Hermione’s epistle, argues that the heroine abundantly packs her epistle with imagery that evokes her status as captive, slave, and/or rape victim, such as her comparisons of herself to Helen and her use of words like praeda (81, cited above), abducta (86), capta…serva (11, cited above), captam (103, cited above) raperet (12), bursting, teeming emotions of the heroines—to the thoughts of Hélène Cixous on l’écriture féminine. Just as the ink flows from their pens while writing, the tears, the blood, and for Cixous, the milk of the breasts, flow from female bodies. These are fluids, words, and freedoms that phallocentrism cannot control: they are boundless. Cixous strongly associated freedom from phallocentrism with writing and advocates for “textual physicality” (Spentzou 2003, 111). These theories can be found in most of her writings, but particularly in the “Le rire de la Méduse” (1975). Ovid himself in his exile poetry, a series of elegiac laments, thematically, generically, and linguistically linked to the Her., adopts a kind of l’écriture féminine. In one of the many ways he destabilizes his gender, equates his pain and grief to that of female figures and evokes heroines in the epistles, he draws attention continuously to his tears falling upon his letters, most prominently in Tristia 5.1, in which he compares himself to endlessly weeping Niobe. For more on Ovid’s exploration of gender and gender reversals in the exile poetry, see Chapter Six.
rapta (cited above), rapta (18, cited above), and rapiat (17, cited above), as a rhetorical ploy to shame Orestes, berate him, arouse his pity, and persuade him to come to her. According to Fulkerson, such imagery is not reflective of her lived reality, but instead are exaggerations to realize her erotic goals. Fulkerson primarily objects to Hermione’s definition of her marriage to Pyrrhus as abduction and rape since Menelaus bartered the marriage of his daughter himself. For me, one cannot deny the role of rhetoric and hence, persuasive strategies in any of the epistles, and I largely agree that Hermione’s epistle is deeply rhetorical and its chief purpose is to draw Orestes to her. Hermione could very well be embellishing and insisting on the victimhood of her mother for persuasive effect. But all this does not mean we must doubt the fundamental sincerity and veracity of her words, especially if we consider, as I examined in Chapter One, how marriage in the ancient world was often conflated with rape, textually and in the visual arts. Marriage sometimes even sanctioned rape for real Roman women. Evans Grubbs (1989) has, for example, shown the cultural prominence of “abduction marriages” in later imperial Rome. That marriage could very much be experienced as rape for women in the ancient world issues an important challenge to Fulkerson’s position on Hermione. We know that Hermione did not want to marry Pyrrhus, but was given in a patriarchal exchange to him by her father (33). In this epistle, she speaks to the perspectives of women in non-consensual marriages. Would they, like Hermione, perceive themselves as victims of rape and abduction? Her self-proclaimed status as a captive speaks, moreover, to the links between marriage and slavery in the ancient world. Both female slaves and free wives performed similar economic and sexual labor in the household, a materialist connection and conflation in the female experience that we explored in Chapter One and will explore in more depth below with Briseis’ epistle.

3. Heroides 21: Cydippe, Acontius, and Marital Rape
Cydippe is another heroine who has been forced to abandon her plans for her husband and marriage because of sexual assault. Though she never uses the vocabulary of rape to describe what Acontius did in her letter to him, that is exactly what happens to her: he tricks Cydippe, with the help of the goddess Diana, while she visits the temple of Diana at Delos, into reading a vow inscribed on an apple thrown before her feet. The vow (“I swear by Diana that I will marry Acontius”) compels her to marry him (and thus, have sex with him) against her will (20.1–4, 21.113–14). He claims he needed to resort to this trickery because she was betrothed to another suitor as he burned in love for her (20.22–32). Cydippe resists the dictates of the oath for months. She remains with her betrothed and attempts to marry him several times, falling desperately ill in the process and evincing the physical compulsion the oath imposes upon her. The most famous version of this story before Ovid was that of Callimachus, but Ovid makes the pressure Cydippe experiences much more evident than in Callimachus’ Aetia (fragments 67–75), from which we do not have her perspective. We know from the narrator in the Aetia that she faces three bouts of illness, which begin on the intended day of her marriage before her father concedes that she must marry Acontius: a fit of epilepsy, a deathly fever, and a pervasive chill (75.10–21). In Ovid, she herself discloses that she has become violently ill as a result of the oath’s demands and her plans to marry (21.155–168). She documents the extent of her illness early on in her epistle: she is exhausted, emaciated, and pale (21.13–16), and she develops deathly fevers like Cydippe in the Aetia (46–47; 169). She reveals later that she is so ill that she is unsure if she can finish the letter and is uncertain if her health will ever improve (21.27–28, 31–2). Cydippe throughout her letter appears to be immensely unhappy about the oath and how it ties her to Acontius. She even fears to read the letter because it might compel her to make another oath (of course, to Acontius, only the first oath matters, 20.1–2), but she reads it out of fear of Diana (5–6).
Because of her evident fear of and contempt for Acontius and his actions, Cydippe’s letter is markedly different from many of the epistles before hers in the *Her.*: she is seemingly using her rhetoric to convince a man *not* to pursue her. But her letter to Acontius changes tone and intention in its conclusion: she admits that she has feelings for Acontius (*Ei mihi, quod sensus sum tibi fassa meos!*, “Ah me, [you, Acontius, rejoice] because I have confessed that I have a passion for you!,” 204). Her feelings for her betrothed have faded and she now spurns his cowardice and how he has done little to lay claim to her sexually (192–204). For example, he has been slowly distancing himself from her, no longer kisses her or physically interacts with her, and calls her his own with a timid voice (*et timido me vocat ore suam*, 196). Ovid has been setting us up for this reversal all along: the symptoms of her illness are all characteristic of elegiac love sickness (for example, Briseis 3.141, Canace 11.27–8, Byblis *Met.* 9.536, and *Ars* 1.729). Such a reversal from Cydippe should color our interpretation of her declarations about her ill health (and thus, her unwillingness) in retrospect. Is her letter—even partially—an act? Was she once the *dura puella* who has been seduced, although outwardly reluctant?

If we follow the analysis of scholars like Fulkerson (2005) on the use of persuasion in the *Her.*, one could say that Cydippe’s descriptions of her illness are a rhetorical ploy and an erotic strategy: she exaggerates her symptoms, like Hermione exaggerated her status as a rape victim, as a way to have influence over Acontius, to inflame Acontius’ passion, and seduce him. The elegiac poets and their characters often claim they are experiencing the illnesses of love, but it is unclear if their physical symptoms are overstated for manipulation or if their illnesses exist at all, conjured them up purely for manipulation. Are Cydippe’s symptoms of poor health *real?* The simple answer is yes. Cydippe recounts displaying them before her community, her family stopping the wedding proceedings because of them (21.155–172); and Acontius in his letter has
witnessed her in sickbed (20.129–142), but what are her purposes in documenting them for him? Rimell (2006, 157) understands the signs of desire from Cydippe towards Acontius, like her love sickness and her declaration of passion, as evidence of the complex power dynamics between the two—she uses their relationship as evidence for the presence of “relational” and not strictly the “hierarchical” in Ovid—though she recognizes how much Cydippe’s free will has been compromised by the oath and by Diana’s involvement. Rimell additionally observes more implicit signs of Cydippe’s attraction to and seduction of Acontius. Early in the letter Cydippe describes herself as beautiful and laments that she is suffering because of that beauty (et placuisse nocet...laudata gemo, “Must I suffer for having been pleasing? Having been praised [for my beauty], now I groan,” 34; 37). Later, responding to Acontius’ plea to finally see her, she extensively outlines her body and appearance to him (213–226). If he came to her, he would see her body ravaged by illness: (sane miserabile corpus,/ ingenii videas magna tropaea tut! “You would behold the great trophies of your cleverness, my truly wretched body,” 213–4). But her illness has not sapped her of beauty completely: she emphasizes her white, marble-like beauty (forma...marmoris), an attractive quality she shares with Narcissus and Pygmalion’s creation (21.216–218 vs. Met. 3.483, 3.491, 10.247–9) and which Acontius proclaims to be beautiful (hoc faciunt flavi crines et eburnea cervix, “Your blond hair and your ivory neck cause my desire [hoc],” 20.57). Within this same passage, she says she is as white and bloodless as Acontius’ deceptive apple (color est sine sanguine, qualem/ in pomo refero mente fuisse tuo, “My color is bloodless—the sort I recall was in that apple of yours,” 215–6). The apple represents Acontius’ desire and her virginity: apples are regularly used as symbols of young and nubile female sexuality in Greek and Latin poetry (for example, Eclogues 3.64–5 and Propertius 1.3.24).34

34 Virginal female sexuality is not only associated with perfectly ripe fruit, but unplucked fruit such as in Aeschylus’ Suppliants (663, 998) and in Sappho 105 (where a virgin is an unplucked apple and a hyacinth). But women who are
Rimell (2006, 16) maintains that Cydippe’s mention of her physical similarities to the apple is intended to tantalize Acontius further and according to Hardie, her analogy, moreover, binds Acontius to her like the literal apple with the inscribed oath bound her to him.

But her words in lines 213–226 do not speak to seduction and desire alone. According to Rimell’s analysis, Cydippe’s words here—and the epistle as a whole—point to contradictory, polysemous desires. In these lines, she depicts her beauty to Acontius, but simultaneously hopes that her body repulses him (Si me nunc videas, visam prius esse negabis,/ ‘arte nec est,’ dices, ‘ista petita mea’, “If you were to see me now, you will deny that I seemed beautiful to you earlier, you will say: ‘I did not seek that girl with my skill,’” 221–2) and that this repulsion will compel him now to have her swear an oath to the contrary (Forsitan et facies iurem ut contraria rursus..., 225). Her description of her body is sensual, but it can act as a condemnation of how he made her a sane miserabile corpus, the great tropaeum for his ingenuity (213; 216–217): even if she is attractive to Acontius, she is emaciated, ill, and suffering because of him, and at near the very end of her letter, she ultimately hopes that will change his mind (221–6). Her seduction belies something sinister. For these very reasons, unlike Rimell, I believe the “hierarchical” element of this relationship is the most foundational and should more prominently guide our analysis of these epistles than the “relational.” The hierarchical should be the priority. I am not denying the complexity and polysemy of her sexual attraction to Acontius, but the origin of their relationship as one of sexual domination matters profoundly and below I will highlight how the reality, language, and imagery of said coercion permeates the epistle.

First, the apparent complicity Cydippe displays in the beginning of their relationship does not negate the original act of compulsion against her. Would she be writing to Acontius, feeling anything about him, without his initial act of pressure, without the oath, his textual and then too sexually voracious are often compared to overripe fruit like Neubole in Archilochus Col. Ep. 26–31.
physical entrapment? In my view, her hatred of what he has done reads as genuinely felt and Cydippe uses the letter to air her grievances against him before she accepts her new role as (coerced) wife of Acontius. He and Diana have won and she has been compelled to become his, but now she must write freely. Her confession of feelings and other evidence for her attraction that scholars like Rimell have noted should not distract us from the sexualized violence he perpetrates: her eventual surrender, in mind and body, to Acontius, comes after months of coercion from himself and from the gods. We should consider her “willingness” as a function of her making the best decision she can, and we should consider her attraction to him to be for her survival: if she does not marry him, she will succumb to the illness consuming her body. She is well aware if she does not succumb, her health will never recover; Acontius informs her of this openly in his letter: her health will not return until she abides (177–8). And if she must surrender, why should she not develop a passion for him? It is psychologically realistic for Cydippe to develop such a defense mechanism to cope with her future and her upended life.

Her letter, unnervingly, reads as a testament to a type of sexual domination that does not require Acontius to be near her to achieve, a feat that Cydippe herself acutely recognizes (es procul a nobis, et tamen inde noces, “You are far from me, and yet you harm me from there,” 207). One can also see how Cydippe uses her letter to document her resistance to and contempt for Acontius’ abuse before she ultimately surrenders to him to live. She tells Acontius that she has been and is desperately battling against the fate he imposed on her (which the hero, in his own letter, apprises her has been sealed no matter her hostility to it, 18–20; 93–8). She primarily resists Acontius by attempting to marry her betrothed three times despite the pain it brought (21.155–172). Cydippe additionally endeavored to establish her own relationship with Diana to reverse the oath, burning incense to her, yet she concludes that Diana still unfairly favors him
Although I do everything, I burn incense piously for Diana, she still favors you more than is just, and as you want me to believe, she, with an anger that remembers, vindicates you,” 7–9). Within the letter, she shames him and asks why he exults in taking her by deception, rather than honorably (121–122; 129–132). She even asserts that the oath does not count because she did not intentionally make it (quae iurat, mens est. sed nil iuravimus illa; illa fidem dictis addere sola potest, “It is the mind that swears, and I have taken no oath with it; it alone can add faith to words,” 135–6), which is similar to the argument Lucretia makes after her rape by Sextus Tarquinius, defending her chastity (corpus est tantum uiolatum, animus insons, “only my body is violated, but my mind is innocent [of the crime]” Livy, Ab urbe condita 58.7). For many lines, it appears that she hopes that by underscoring the depths of her illness, despair, and lack of consent to his seduction that Acontius will release her from her oath and abandon his pursuit. But then Ovid has her confess her attraction to him.

This confession seems to irreparably change the tenor of this relationship, but at the end of the poem she imagines herself, enslaved in chains to Diana and Acontius, a vision which showcases her fundamental unwillingness (teque tenente deos numen sequor ipsa deorum/ doque libens victas in tua vota manus, “And since you hold the gods, I myself follow their power and I give my shackled hands into your vows,” 239–240). Her desire for him has become real, as Rimell has shown, although, as I have argued, it derives from coercion. She is both libens and with victas manus. Her description of herself here should remind us of the imagery of the servitium amoris, but this time it is literal and adheres more to traditional gender roles. As many scholars, most particularly James (2003, 145–150), have explored, the servitium amoris and its position of male inferiority to a controlling domina is a ruse, which seeks to hide with whom the
real erotic power lies and to dominate the *puellae* of elegy sexually. Greene (2012, 358) suggests that the *servitium amoris* allows the elegiac poets to explore alternate modes of masculinity, while still maintaining the benefits of it. Ovid again and again exposes the position’s pretexts. For example, in *Amores* 1.7, his description of Corinna as a wounded female war captive paraded in a Roman triumph and the description of himself as a victorious Roman general signifies how he views Corinna in relationship to himself, how he views the relationship between men and women. *He* is the brutal general and *she* is the slave, the true victim of *servitium*. When the elegiac amator is violent toward the puella, he lays bare who is truly in control (Gold 1993, Fredrick 2012). The *Amores* narrator, moreover, initially attempts to win over the elegiac puella in 1.3.21–4 by likening her to rape victims, Io, Leda, and Europa, thereby comparing himself to Jupiter (Greene 2012, 359). Who then is truly the servus? Finally, the whole premise of the *Ars* is that the praeceptor amoris shows feigned submission to women to be a long-term strategy to dominate women sexually (Bowditch 2005, 272). Gibson (2003, 45) phrases it best: the *servitium amoris*, especially in Ovid, is a plan men exploit to control women sexually, not a state of mind.

How does Acontius view himself and his relationship with Cydippe? Acontius is “driven single-mindedly by lust” (Kenney 1996, 5) and refuses to concede responsibility for what he is doing to Cydippe and what he will do. He claims he was never deceitful before: she made him this way (*sollertem tu me, crede, puella, facis*, “Girl, believe me, you make me clever,” 20.26)! And who would not want to marry a man like him anyway (227–8)? Ultimately, Acontius does not consider the oath to be coercive or violent. He, in fact, definitively refuses the label of a rapist: he is not taking her by a sword like other men, just by a harmless littera, which, as we have seen, radically changed the course of Cydippe’s life, has been slowly killing her, and has severely compromised her ability to freely enter their relationship (*per gladios alii placitas*).
rapuere puellas; scripta mihi caute littera crimen erit?, “Other men have raped girls who pleased them with swords; will my poem, cautiously written, be a crime?” 37–38). And for someone who is very concerned about differentiating himself from rapists, he does not at all care about Cydippe’s consent to the oath and his subsequent actions. The hero first attempts to manufacture Cydippe’s consent by pronouncing that her blush after saying the oath shows her willingness to accept it and pronouncing that the shaking of her locks of hair acts as a nod of approval to it; what is more, Diana was the witness to these acts of consent (adfuit et, praesens ut erat, tua verba notavit/et visa est mota dicta tulisse coma…adfuit et vidit, cum tu decepta rubebas, “And Diana was there, as present as she was, and she noted your words and how your hair, having been moved, appeared to have accepted the words…Diana was there and saw when you blushed after you were deceived,” 19–20, 79). Acontius then reminds her that she has few options and that he is willing to use violence to take her away if necessary (39–40; 43–4; 47):

\[
\text{Di faciant, possim plures inponere nodos,} \\
\text{ut tua sit nulla libera parte fides!…} \\
\text{captabere certe…} \\
\text{exitus in dis est, sed capiere tamen…} \\
\text{Si non proficient artes, veniemus ad arma…}
\]

May the gods make it so that I can lay more bonds on you and so that your oath to me may leave you free nowhere…You certainly will be captured. The gods decide this matter, but you will be captured nonetheless…If cleverness does not help me, I will turn to arms.

Acontius reminds her that he has waited outside her front door to pressure her to submit (129–130). He shows his contempt for her consent further by declaring that he is sympathetic to Paris, for like the other hero, he will take Cydippe and have her with violence if he deems it necessary (Non sum, qui soleam Paridis reprehendere factum, /nec quemquam, qui vir, posset ut esse, fuit, “I am not one who is wont to condemn what Paris did [to get Helen], nor any man who, in order to become husband, was a man,” 49–50). Here, Ovid plays upon the double meaning of vir as
meaning “man” and also “husband,” illuminating again, as I explored in Chapter One, how closely the Romans associated the sexual possession and domination of women with masculinity.

The comparison Acontius makes of himself to Paris is an apt one. As Kenney (1996, 190) writes: “both attempt to displace a rival who has a better legal claim to the beloved and both have divine support,” meaning that Acontius displaces Cydippe’s betrothed approved by her father and Paris displaces Helen’s husband, Menelaus. And later, Acontius compares himself to Achilles as well when he took Briseis as a sexual slave, but he does so within lines of his declaration of desire to be assaulted by her and enslaved by her (69, 77–8, 81–2, 85–6):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Briseida cepit Achilles...} \\
\text{utque solent famuli, cum verbera saeva verentur,} \\
\text{tendere submissas ad tua crura manus!} \\
\text{ipsa meos scindas licet imperiosa capillos,} \\
\text{oraque sint digitis livida nostra tuis...} \\
\text{Sed neque conpedibus nec me conpesce catenis—} \\
\text{servabor firmo vinctus amore tui...}
\end{align*}
\]

Achilles captured Briseis…And just as slaves are accustomed [to do], when they fear the savage beatings [of their masters], [may it be allowed for me] to extend my submissive hands to your legs…May you yourself imperiously tear out my hair and may my mouth become livid by your fingers…But do not bind me with shackles and chains—I will be kept [well enough], conquered by my passionate love for you.

Throughout his letter, Acontius vacillates wildly between threatening Cydippe with the oath she made to Diana, his physical presence, historical/mythological precedents, and the favor of his doting goddess and cajoling her with images of his weakness, desire for violence, and submission to her. He is desperate, but will rely on his violent masculinity if necessary.

Acontius places the blame for all his passion squarely at the feet of Cydippe’s beauty. In his letter he provides a description of her beauty and its impact on him (20.53–60; 63–4):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{...aut esses formosa minus, peterere modeste;} \\
\text{audaces facie cogimur esse tua.} \\
\text{tu facis hoc oculique tui, quibus ignea cedunt 55} \\
\text{sidera, qui flammae causa fuere meae;}
\end{align*}
\]
...Or if you had been less beautiful, you would have been sought modestly. But I am forced by your appearance to become bold. You and your eyes cause this, your eyes to which the fiery stars submit, your eyes, which are the source of my burning passion. Your blond hair causes this and your ivory neck. Your hands cause this, which I pray may embrace my neck. Your grace and your visage cause this, which are chaste, but without being rustic, and your feet cause this, which I believe surpass those of Thetis. Compelled by this form of yours, it is not a wonder if I wanted now to have the pledge of your voice.

He makes clear throughout this passage that her beauty (formosa, facie tua, decor, vultus, hac forma, etc.) created his desire for her and is exactly what forced him to pursue her so aggressively. Such an attribution of responsibility to her body, appearance, and beauty for his violence speaks once more to victim-blaming. Acontius has to have her and it is all her fault because of how she looks. Acontius’ language in this passage presents himself as the victim of her coercion: he is the one who is being forced in their relationship and he is the one who is the captive to her (cogimur, tu facis, flammae causa meae, faciunt, hac ego compulsus forma).

Overall, these statements on her beauty and its power exonerate him of responsibility for his assault and in turn blame her, render him as a victim of compulsion, evoke images of the servitium amoris deepening that sense of compulsion, and obfuscate the real power dynamics between them: he is the one forcing her to marry him and have sex with him through a binding oath sanctioned by a goddess.\footnote{Hardie (2002, 116) suggests that Acontius attempts to reenact and reinforce the oath by alluding to it in the letter (e.g., 96–97, 111–2). He wishes to make his sexual domination of Cydippe even stronger.} Cydippe responds to Acontius’ language of victim-blaming in her letter. She is critical of the notion that she must suffer because of her beauty, but implicitly upholds his victim-blaming by in turn wishing she lacked any charms to have avoided Acontius’ oath and the pain it brought (et placuisse nocet?/ si tibi deformis, quod mallem, visa fuissem,/...
culpatum nulla corpus egeret ope, “And must I suffer for having been pleasing? If I had seemed ugly to you—and I wish that I had—my body, considered reprehensible, would need no help,” 34–36). Like many of Ovid’s victims of sexualized violence, she turns to self-blame to conceive of her abuse. Victims in Ovid’s texts primarily blame themselves for what their rapists have done, particularly their bodies and beauty, a phenomenon that we will discuss in the most depth with Daphne and her understanding of her assault in Met. 1.545–6.36

The similarities to Daphne do not end there. Acontius’ declaration in lines 55–6 (tu facis hoc oculique tui, quibus ignea cedunt/ sidera, qui flammae causa fuere meae) above is reminiscent of the narrator’s description of Daphne’s beauty before her rape by Apollo in the Met. (Videt igne micantes/ sideribus similis oculos, “He sees her eyes burning with fire like stars”).37 Acontius and the narrator of the Met. (with Apollo’s desires focalized) are already similar because they deploy language that is equally objectifying, they dismember the female body, and they situate the cause of the sexualized violence in female bodies (20.53–64; Met. 1.489ff). Moreover, the rhetorical strategies Acontius deploys mirror Apollo’s. He menacingly reminds her that he has the power of Diana behind him, who has shown a propensity for violence (nihil est violentius illa,/ cum sua, quod nolim, numina laesa videt, “Nothing is more violent than when she sees—which I hope does not happen—that her powers have been offended,” 99–100). He specifically reminds her that spurning Diana would be a lifelong mistake: who else would she call out to in childbirth (191–2)? Apollo boasts of his powers as a god, all in an effort to expose and utilize those power dynamics to his advantage, like Acontius (1.514–8). Acontius reads consent into Cydippe’s body language after she reads the oath (19–20, 79), just as Apollo does

---

36 Some victims blame their rapists instead of themselves, such as Leucothoe in Met. 4.238–9.
37 This passage is also similar to Ars 1.621–2 and Amores 2.16.44, and of course, it is similar to Propertius’ famous first line of his book of elegies: Cynthia prima suis miserum me cepit ocellis (“Cynthia first captured wretched me with her eyes”). I discussed in Chapter One how the eyes and their gaze were one of the primary sources and sites of sexual desire for the ancients. They not only allowed people to become attracted, but also were attractive.
after he informs Daphne that she will be a symbol of his power (565–6), both of the female figures ambiguously nodding and assenting to their possession. Such echoes between the Acontius and Cydippe episode and that of Daphne and Apollo have profound importance on the interpretation of Cydippe as a victim of sexualized violence, despite her reversal in affections. Through these similar images and themes in each story, we can more clearly see Cydippe’s status as victim of sexual assault and Acontius’ status as sexual abuser.

What is more, Cydippe is deceived by the apple of Acontius and Diana in an area similar to that of the *locus amoenus* (Spentzou 2003, 80), whose features we explored in Chapter One. For example, in lines 21.100–104, Cydippe writes how she wandered with her nurse in secluded areas in Diana’s temple district and she fell under Acontius’ gaze; she then returns to Diana’s temple, a place for chastity, but his inscribed apple finds her there (105–7). The *locus amoenus* is the archetypal location for sexualized violence in antiquity, in Daphne’s attempted rape by Apollo and in many stories of rape throughout Ovid’s corpus. Its imagery is often the prelude to sexualized violence and Cydippe does not escape that violence. Cydippe being subjected to Acontius’ voyeurism in this location also evokes stories of rape in Ovid. The narrator of the *Met.* meticulously documents how Apollo gazes upon Daphne before he attempts to rape her (1.490–501). Acontius’ and Cydippe’s relationship, furthermore, demonstrates the conflations among seduction, marriage, and rape in Roman thought generally and in Ovid, which we have seen in Chapter One and which we will see in the Daphne episode. Acontius, through the oath, has simultaneously sexually dominated Cydippe against her will and forced her to marry him. His letter is an attempt to seduce her and hide his power. In Apollo’s attempted rape of Daphne, the conflations Ovid makes among seduction, rape, and marriage are very clear and linear. Apollo first tries to seduce Daphne, and when that fails, he resorts to force, and when he realizes that she
has been transformed into a laurel tree, he laments that now they cannot marry, which is a desire he supposedly had all along (but which he never announced in his earlier attempts at seduction of the nymph) (‘quoniam coniunx mea non potes esse,/ arbor eris certe’ dixit ‘mea’, ‘since you cannot be my wife,’ he said, ‘you will certainly be my tree’” 557–558).

4. *Heroides* 3: Briseis’s Literal Servitum Amoris and Achilles

In *Her*.

3, Ovid adapts the *Iliad* and introduces a letter from Briseis to Achilles after he rejects Agamemnon’s embassy and diplomatic offer in 9.307–429. Briseis, traditionally, is a slave of Achilles and slavery for young, fertile women like Briseis in antiquity meant sexual slavery, as we explored in Chapter One. We can see the firm connections between enslavement for a woman and her sexual enslavement in the *Iliad* when Agamemnon speaks about Chryseis, his concubine, and her future to her father (1.28–30): she will weave and sleep in Agamemnon’s bed. Slavery for either gender marked the enslaved person as essentially feminized: one was able to be controlled, possessed, traded, owned, exchanged, abused, and most of all, penetrated by another with impunity. In the *Iliad*, Briseis’ relationship with her captor, Achilles, is complex: she resents and bewails her captive status and lost life and family, but she does express her hope to marry him (which is perhaps an awareness of her dependency on him and the best choice she could make in very limited circumstances) (19.315–37). Even within Homer, Briseis, unlike Chryseis, is not a wordless signifier of patriarchal exchange and domination. We have access to her emotions in Homer, but Ovid here, in her voice, expands on her psychology.

Briseis does not state that she was raped or explicitly use the language of rape to define her relationship with Achilles—although that is the reality of her situation—but she is highly aware of her slave status and Achilles’ power over her (*si mihi pauca queri de te dominoque viroque/ fas est, querar,* “If it is right for me to complain about you a little, my master and my husband, I
shall…” 5–6). Unlike Hermione in Her. 8, she does not directly relate her status of a captive/slave to her status as a rape victim. The only time she writes the word *rapta* is to describe the actions of Agamemnon, who never assaults her (1). She begs for Achilles to accept Agamemnon’s diplomatic offer to return her to him and asks why she deserves this neglect and abandonment from someone she loves (41). Perhaps because of her isolation and dependency on her captor—she proclaims that he is master, husband, and brother to her (alluding to Andromache’s famous words to Hector in *Iliad* 6.429, *tu dominus, tu vir, tu mihi frater eras*, “You were my master, my husband, my brother,” 52)—she fears complete abandonment by him when he leaves Troy for Greece. She has experienced complete social death: removed from her homeland and her family and placed in a dehumanizing position as a sexual slave, and it is clear from her letter to Achilles that she cannot cope with more upheavals. In her anxiety, she envisions Achilles marrying another woman when he returns to his homeland in Greece (65–80).

But, in her vision of the future, she would still want to be Achilles’ slave, if she cannot be his wife (*victorem captiva sequar, non nupta maritum*, “I should follow you, a victor, as a slave and unmarried,” 69), the title of wife meaning little to her (*Nec tamen indignor nec me pro coniuge gessi/Saepius in domini serva vocata torum*, “Nevertheless, I am not angered nor have I conducted myself as wife, more often being called to the bed of my master as a slave,” 99–100). Briseis imagines weaving for Achilles and his new wife (70, 75–76). Briseis’ labor as a slave will be economic and sexual. She will weave for the master, copulate with him, and produce more slaves. As argued in Chapter One, this very economic and sexual labor illustrates the tenuous line between the labor of a “free” wife and an enslaved woman in antiquity.

Andromache, when she sees her future after the death of Hector and the fall of Troy, envisions how she will weave for her Greek master. Neither she nor Hector vocalize their fears of the
sexual, in addition to economic, labor she will endure. But Andromache weaves for her husband and sleeps with him to produce legitimate heirs: she too already participates in economic and sexual labor. Fischer (2013) draws connections between images of wives weaving on Greek pottery and images of sex workers, most of whom would have been enslaved, weaving. Greeks and Romans anxiously separated “wives” from the “sex workers” to control access to citizenship and personhood, but their exploited and free labor is similar.

Ovid’s emphasis on her slave status is not to highlight how she has been raped, but instead, as Barchiesi (2001, 38) contends, to highlight how she is suffering from both traditional slavery and the servitium amoris. In Ovid’s depiction of their relationship, Briseis has been unwillingly separated from a man she fiercely loves, by whom she is willingly enslaved, and who arouses her jealousy by bedding other women (111–112). For example, in the poem’s conclusion, she desires him to order her, as her master, to come back to him, no matter his destination (Me modo, sive paras impellere remige classem,/ sive manes, domini iure venire iube, “Whether you prepare to launch your fleet with your rowers, or whether you remain, just order me to come by your right as master,” 153–4). Lindheim (2003), in her analysis of Briseis’ epistle, demonstrates that the heroine’s focus on her slave status allows her to construct herself in the image of how Achilles desires her: in the Iliad, Achilles continually refers to her as γέρας (booty). Briseis in Homer’s epic never sees herself this way. She instead is proud of her former high status and expects to be elevated to that status once again (Lindheim 2003, 58). In Ovid, on the contrary, she has given up on being his wife and reveals that she feels ashamed when another captive calls her a domina, something she was before her capture (101–2). Briseis even refers to herself as sarcina (baggage) in line 68, denigrating her status more. Lindheim declares it is no accident that Ovid presents us with a woman who desires slavery and abjection. The Her. provides the audience with the
illusion that they are receiving realistic, authentic voices from female figures. The letters could be a way for “subjective narration” and “empowerment,” but the letters, in fact, “marginalize” the heroines (2003, 14). Briseis “does not stress her own power as a writer over the shape of the material, but instead grants her addressee central control over what she writes” (2003, 32). Fulkerson (2005, 92), in contrast, emphasizes Briseis’ complicated assertions of will and desire for Achilles despite her opposing assertions of her slave status: this is how she asserts herself over the source material and challenges the canon. But I agree more with Lindheim: why do so many of the female figures in the Her. denigrate themselves to be objects of male desire? Ovid, in this way, reveals his identification with the male hero and his anxiety about female figures.

Moreover, suppressing Briseis’ position as a rape victim (which is how we should perceive all the sexual relationships slaves have with their masters—a slave can never truly consent to sex with someone who has so much power over their bodies and their lives) echoes a similar suppression by the amator in the Amores. The narrator in 2.8 documents his sexual relationship with the slave of his puella, Cypassis. He attempts to justify his relationship with Cypassis by comparing himself to Achilles and her to Briseis (and also to Agamemnon and Cassandra) (13–14). But this relationship, as I will explore in the section of the chapter on the Amores, is one of rape because of the inherent imbalance of power between the narrator (a free male) and Cypassis (a female slave), just like those between Achilles and Briseis. But the narrator of Amores 2.8 displays no awareness that he is raping Cypassis or that that is exactly what Achilles did to Briseis. Or rather, he is aware, but refuses to say so. The narrator obviously and without compunction manipulates and intimidates Cypassis in his position of power over her, an advantage the praeceptor amoris in the Ars takes as he urges his students to use force against female slaves (1.394–7). He warns Cypassis that if she does not have sex with him, he will
inform on her to her mistress (25–6). But coding Cypassis as Briseis codes her as a victim of rape and a sexual slave of war, informs the audience’s sense of the power differential between them, one that the amator very much avails himself of in order to rape Cypassis.

5. *Heroides* 17: Helen and (the Implication of) Coercion

The last epistle I want to examine in this chapter is that of Helen. At first glance, an examination of this epistle would not seem appropriate here—or at least not such a lengthy discussion. Helen does briefly refer to her attempted rape by Theseus in *Her.* 17, but she does not present herself as a rape victim of Paris. Many scholars have understood her letter as an extended apology for her dawning realization for her affection for Paris and have detected that Helen’s response to Paris’ entreaties, while initially cold, begins to shift around line 91, where she begins to slowly admit her attraction to him (91–94). This is similar to the difference in tone we saw at the end of Cydippe’s letter to Acontius when she confesses her feelings for him (although, as I maintained, that does not change her status as a victim of sexualized violence). Helen tells him that she could imagine a girl desiring his embraces: potestque/ velle sub amplexus ire puella tuos (“a girl can want to be held in your embrace,” 93–4). Michalopoulos in his 2006 commentary on the Paris and Helen epistles, connects Helen’s initial reaction to Paris (nihil pudet hoc!, “nothing shames you,” 86) and her gradual shift in how she responds to Paris to Ovid’s advice in the *Ars* Book 1 given to men, the intended audience of Books 1 and 2 of the didactic poem, with women being the intended audience of Book 3. Women at first will react negatively to protect their pudor, but will then later succumb to blandishments from their suitors (Pugnabit primo fortassis, et “improve” dicet:/ Pugnando vinci se tamen illa volet, “Perhaps she will resist and she will say ‘wicked man!’ but she will want to be conquered through fighting,” 665–6). Michalopoulos contends that Helen is acting exactly according to Ovid’s amatory precepts. This advice from the
narrator of the *Ars* is a prelude to more extensive advice to employ force against women because they like it: women cannot be raped, they just prefer rough sex and men proving themselves to be *viri* through acts of *vis* against them (*Ars* 1.664–704). Ovid substantiates his assertions about women through a mythological exemplum. Women are like Deidamia who want to be forced by Achilles to have sex, an important passage for understanding Ovid’s depiction of consent to sex that I will identify as rape later in this chapter. But Ovid makes Helen fit the same ideal as Deidamia: she wants *vis*. Fratantuono and Braff (2012, 52) have noted that at the end of her letter Helen asks to be taken by violence by Paris (*quod male persuades, utinam bene cogere posses!/ vi mea rusticitas excutienda fuit*, “I wish you could successfully compel, what you unsuccessfully urge! My rusticness should have been expelled by violence,” 185–6). In Ovid, *rusticitas* often is a pejorative, a state of being excessively old-fashioned and too simple to indulge in desire, love, and adultery, though this is a quality Helen formerly values about herself (17. 11–14; Michalopoulos 2006, 330). She hopes that Paris forces her to overcome her fear of adultery through *vis*: in this way, she could be induced to be happy (*sic certe felix esse coacta forem*, 188). The connection Ovid makes in *Her.* 17 to the *Ars* adds layers of complications to how we should view Helen’s consent and Ovid’s overall model and conception of consent to sex from female figures, and once again proves that the *Her.* is not as sympathetic to female figures as many would like to believe: it contains patriarchal ideologies that cannot be ignored.

Helen and Paris’ relationship must always inspire the consideration of the nature of fate, free will, the gods, responsibility, and coercion.38 Helen in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, as Blondell

---

38 Fratantuono and Braff (2012) explore how Roman poets in the first century B.C.E. and first century C.E. represented Helen’s responsibility or lack of responsibility for her abduction and the Trojan War. They document how Horace does not view her as a rape victim, but as adulteress. Propertius views her similarly and says she is the cause of the Trojan War, but pursuing Helen to Troy was worth it. There is Vergil’s famous passage in which Aeneas calls Helen the *communis Erinmys* to the Greeks and the Trojans. Ovid, as we will explore below, makes her responsible for the Trojan War in *Amores* 2.12.17–18. But Ovid, more so than the other Augustan poets, has
(2010) has ably argued, is presented as simultaneously willing and unwilling by Homer, his characters, and Helen herself. She “oversignifies” and constantly embodies a disturbing doubleness: she is both stolen away by Paris and consenting to their relationship. Throughout Homer she is agent, victim, good wife, and whore all at once. This doubleness is encoded in the epic’s language. For example, the Greek word ἀνάγω—a word we find ubiquitously in Homeric descriptions of Helen’s relationship with Paris and her arrival in Troy—can mean “lead off as wife” and “abduct as captive” (see Iliad 3.48, 6.292, 13.627, 22.115–16, and 24.764). As we discussed in Chapter One, there is possibly such ambiguity about Helen’s consent because the Greeks and the Romans closely conflated rape and marriage and struggled to distinguish them. Although, it appears that Ovid shows Helen as a willing participant, I believe there are signs and traces of Helen’s doubleness and her lack of consent to Paris in Her. 17.39

First, as Frantantuono and Braff observe (2012, 51), Helen opens her letter with a word reminiscent of the vocabulary of rape: Paris’ letter has violated (violarit) her eyes (Nunc oculos tua cum violarit epistula nostros, “Now since your letter has violated my eyes,” 1). This word sets a significant tone for the rest of the letter. Second, Ovid chiastically and thematically links the epistles of Acontius and Cydippe. There is the noticeable shift in how Helen and Cydippe view themselves in relation to Paris and Acontius that I mentioned above. Paris and Acontius both are on a mission to satisfy their lust and sexually possess women to whom they have no right and also have the help of the gods on their side to ensure their mission is completed. Both Cydippe and Helen express displeasure and fear at reading the letters from Paris and Acontius
(Nunc oculos tua cum violarit epistula nostros,/ non rescribendi gloria visa levis, “Now that your letter has sullied my eyes, the glory of not writing back to you seems slight,” 17. 1–2 vs.

Pertimui, scriptumque tuum sine murmur legi, iuraret ne quos inscia lingua deos, “I was deeply afraid and I read your letter without a murmur, lest my unknowing tongue might make a vow to some gods,” 21.1–2). Paris says that Helen was promised to him in marriage by Venus (pollicita est thalamo te Cytherea meo, 20). Consequently, Helen’s free will has been compromised from the get-go. Cydippe suffers a similar vitiation of her free will because of Diana and Acontius’ complicity. Cydippe ultimately “succumbs” to Acontius, attempting to make the best of a situation and live, but, again, what he does is still sexualized violence. Paris, not satisfied with Venus’ sanction, additionally threatens violence against Helen in his letter, as he proclaims that he will become a second Theseus if necessary (te rapuit Theseus, geminas Leucippidas illi;/ quartus in exemplis adnumerabor ego, “Theseus abducted you, [your brothers] abducted the twin daughters of Leucippus: I will be counted fourth among such examples,” 329–330). Acontius, too, threatens violence (39–40; 43–4; 47). The threat from Paris should be taken seriously and should be seen as having a real psychological impact on Helen. She writes her letter after he has issued the threat. And thus, we should in turn ask: is Helen too, like Cydippe, making the best choice she can when there could be violence? Is an assertion of agency on her part, allowing herself to be “seduced,” a defense mechanism of sorts? Blondell (2010) asserts that Helen in the Iliad condemns herself as both a “bitch” and a “whore” when talking of herself to others to grant herself some semblance of her past agency in going with Paris, but could it not be a way to assert agency when she in reality has very little, trapped between violent groups of Greek and Trojan men who are enraged at a sexual decision she might not be responsible for?

The coercion Helen experiences, nevertheless, appears less severe than that of Cydippe:
she does not appear to believe that Paris has Venus’ sanction to take her as his wife, although it is canonically true (119–210). Most of her letter concerns expressing her fears about the consequences of making “the choice” to leave with him. For example, she fears his fickleness with women and what that means for their future (196–210). She more readily and earlier in the letter admits her attraction to Paris than Cydippe (e.g., 91–94) and she never conceives of herself as a captive to Paris like Cydippe does with Acontius, even after she “surrenders” to Paris. But Rimell (2006, 157), analyzing the “hierarchical” elements in her relationship with Paris, contends that we must seriously consider the undue burden of Venus’ intervention on Helen and how “Helen has the entire weight of mythology on her.” With the Her., we should always take into account the pressure of intertextuality and the canon on the characters. Ovid can change much, but he cannot fundamentally change their fates. Spentzou (2003, 31), however, sees power in Helen’s indeterminacy at the end of the letter. She resists Paris’ narrative and the master narrative of Homer as much as she can before it must finally come to fruition.

And even if Ovid and Helen herself do not present her as a rape victim of Paris, Helen does speak frankly about her rape by Theseus. Paris, like Acontius, deploys a type of rhetoric, which attempts to persuade Helen that she has no choice but to go with him. As stated above, he avows he will act like Theseus and take her, suggesting that all this has happened before, so all this can happen again: she has already been vulnerable to violence. Aligning himself with Theseus, moreover, indicates, how violent Paris is willing to become to take her, complicating notions of Helen’s consent to her relationship with Paris. When Helen responds to his letter, she interprets his citation of her rape as a slight against her chastity, that somehow she deserves to be in a cycle of violence. She defends her chastity and refuses to be blamed for anything Theseus did to her—a disavowal of the victim-blaming Paris put forth (21–26):
Because Theseus committed violence against me, I seemingly deserve to be abducted twice, all because I was abducted once? It would have been my fault, if I had been lured away; but since I was taken, what else was there for me to do but to refuse? He, however, did not get the outcome he desired. I returned suffering nothing more than fear.

This is an interesting disavowal in the context of Ovid’s other rape victims: as mentioned above, they most characteristically ultimately blame themselves and their beauty for the actions of their abusers. Helen’s condemnation of the notion that she deserves rape is, in fact, unique in Ovid.

III. Conclusions: The Heroides

The Her. begins Ovid’s career-long interest in representing sexual abuse and forecasts many of the recurring features we find throughout his corpus including his interests in mythological rape, the psychology of trauma and rapists themselves, victim-blaming, and sororophobia. But unlike later works in his corpus, the Her. intensely focuses on female subjectivity and female figures discussing their own experiences of abuse, a concern that arises much more sparsely and diffusely in Ovid’s other works. In Her. 5 and 8, Oenone and Hermione explicitly use the language of sexual abuse to describe their suffering, while the role of sexualized violence in the epistles of Cydippe, Briseis, and Helen is more latent and contentious. But I have illuminated the reality of their situations and shown the coercion fundamental in their relationships with Acontius, Achilles, and Paris. The epistles are, moreover, highly allusive to

\[\text{An, quia vim nobis Neptunius attulit heros,} \\
\text{rapta semel videor bis quoque digna rapi?} \\
\text{Crimen erat nostrum, si delenita fuissem;} \\
\text{cum sim rapta, meum quid nisi nolle fuit?} \\
\text{Non tamen e facto fructum tuit ille petitum;} \\
\text{excepto redii passa timore nihil.}\]

Helen defends her mother, Leda, against Paris’ accusation of impropriety and says she was deceived by Jupiter’s plumed disguise: Jupiter is the adulterer and not her mother (41–46). Although, it should be noted that Helen believes the fault of adultery or the loss of chastity lies with the woman if she goes willingly (Crimen erat nostrum, si delenita fuissem, 23) and colors her mother’s rape with vocabulary that implies responsibility such as admissum (45–6): matris in admissa falsa sub imagine lusae / error inest; pluma tectus adulter erat (“She was deceived into committing a crime by a false image. Jupiter, the adulterer, was covered by plumage”).
one another, which not only displays Ovid’s characteristic intratextuality, but predicts how Ovid wants us to see patterns in his representations of rape. Hermione, Cydippe, and Helen all experience sexual abuse in the context of marriage. The Cydippe and Briseis epistles feature the *servitium amoris*. Acontius declares himself to be the victim of Cydippe by comparing himself to Achilles and her to Briseis, but soon reveals that he will act violently like Paris against her if he must. In fact, all of these epistles orbit around the (highly contested) abduction and rape of Helen by Paris. Oenone impugns Helen’s status as rape victim to Paris, while her daughter, Hermione, defends it in order to represent her own by Orestes. Acontius wants to make Cydippe his own Helen. Briseis is captured, enslaved, and raped by Achilles during the Trojan War because of Helen’s abduction. In the *Amores* and *Ars*, Ovid once again turns to myth, even the myth of Helen and Paris in *Amores* 2.12, to both explore and justify sexualized violence. Ovid’s narrator in these works (common to both) is a modern Roman man who uses myth to dramatize how he dominates Roman women and to help other men *learn* how to dominate them.
B. Sexualized Violence and Rape in the *Amores*

I. Introduction to and Scholarship on the *Amores*

The *Amores*, three books of Roman love elegy, is suffused with images of men dominating women physically and sexually: its female figures are frequently compared to rape victims, have their consent vitiated, are battered, and are actually raped. Like the *Her* before them, the *Amores* includes many of the patterns and features we will see at greater length in the *Met.* and *Fasti*, most particularly attraction to violence against women and their fear and victim-blaming. In this section, I will explore how Ovid portrays the sexual domination of women in the *Amores* through rape and through other means and what images, tropes, patterns—and thus ideologies—emerge that make rape more normalized. Greene (1998, xii) rightly argues that the *Amores*, like other pieces of Roman love elegy, clearly demonstrates an ideology of gender and “hegemonic discourse of patriarchal value systems.”\(^{41}\) Masculinity is seemingly destabilized in elegy only to be ultimately strengthened.\(^{42}\) Greene (1998, xii) asserts that elegy, with its tropes of the *servitium amoris* (women as powerful *dominae* in control of men) and the repudiation of traditionally masculine activities like politics, still creates a violent masculinity through acts like abuse and sexualized violence, particularly that of Ovid. Much more so than his elegiac predecessors, Ovid exposes the overt, pervasive violence against women inherent, though often masked, in the elegiac code. He uses elegy to “depict a regularized, systematic male anger and revulsion against women” because it was already there, even if Ovid takes that violence to more exaggerated levels (James 2003, 156). His version of masculinity in the *Amores* is much more openly threatening than that of Tibullus and Propertius and affirms it again and again through the

\(^{41}\) Greene restates and extends these arguments in her 1999 and 2012 articles about the *Amores*.\(^{42}\) And this is a trend we see throughout Ovid’s corpus. For example, several male rapists in the *Met.*, like Jupiter (2.425) and Sol (4.219), disguise themselves as female figures to gain greater access to their victims. They turn from male to female, destabilizing gender temporarily, only to prove their masculinity through the use of sexualized violence against female figures, sexual control of women being an integral component of Roman masculinity.
degradation of women. As De Boer (2010), relying on Greene, observes, Tibullus and Propertius never show us anything like Amores 1.7 and 2.8 (to be discussed below), although that is not to say their narrators were not capable of violence against durae puellae, the typically hard-to-get female characters of Roman love elegy (see particularly Tibullus 1.10 and Propertius 3.8).

James (2003) and her student De Boer (2010) read the Amores as documenting sexualized violence against meretrices—women vulnerable economically in Rome because of their lack of citizen status and their occupation—at the hands of an entitled, violent equestrian male. How does the narrator physically and economically exploit the women in the Amores? Their analysis is foundational to my understanding of this collection as chronicling violence against women and they provide an interesting feminist and economic analysis of the poems, which attempts to elevate the lives and experiences of sex laborers in Rome, who still need more scholarly attention. Ovid’s text could reflect an economic, social, and gendered reality: how did female sex laborers in Rome have to juggle a concern for their wages with the danger of male violence? But a fundamental flaw in this type of analysis is that it suppresses all the paradoxical and unstable evidence about the status of the women in the Amores (and the other elegiac poets) and ignores how that destabilization of identity reflects happenings in Augustan Rome. Booth (2009, 66) observes how the elegiac puella seems to be married in Amores 1.4, a sex laborer talking with her madam in 1.8, living alone with her slave Cypassis in 2.7, married to Ovid in 2.5, definitively married to another man in 2.19 and 3.4 with the legal status of uxor emphasized. The women we meet and their status in his poetry are constantly problematized and this problematization could be part of Ovid’s larger poetic (and subversive) engagement with Augustus’ moral program and with the emperor’s legal and ideological opposition to adultery, primarily for free, upper-class persons (Gibson 2003, Sharrock 2003 and 2012). I read the puellae in the Amores as
intentionally ambiguous in social status. I, moreover, will call the elegiac puella in Ovid “Corinna” only when only when she is so named explicitly, such as in Amores 1.5.

II. The Poems

1. Amores 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3: The Beginning Triumphs of Sexualized Violence

Ovid’s depiction of violence against women in the Amores is intimately tied to the work’s pervasive use of imperialistic, militaristic, and conquering imagery, a type of imagery that strongly emerges in the first three poems of the collection. Ovid begins Book 1 with a description of his narrator, an elegiac poem named “Ovid,” as the conquered subject of Cupid (et in vacuo pectore regnat Amor, “Love rules in a once empty heart,” 1.26) and continues the imagery of conquest more extensively in Amores 1.2, in which he envisions Cupid’s victory over him as a Roman-style military triumph (19–20, 29–30). Cupid is even said to fetter the narrator with chains (et nova captiva vincula mente feram, “I will bear your new chains with the mind of one who is captive”). This is a striking change from Ovid’s elegiac predecessors: he is not the servus of his mistress, but of Cupid. The only time he uses the word servitium in his corpus is in Amores 1.2 to characterize the hierarchical relationship between himself and the love god (acrius invitios multoque ferocius urget, quam qui servitium ferre fatentur, Amor, “Love urges those unwilling much more fiercely and ferociously than those who confess to undergo slavery,” 17–18) (Ryan and Perkins 2011, 35). Habinek (2002, 49) rightly notes that the prominence and use of “Augustan imperialist projects” in these first two poems and “the unquestioned assumption that empire consists of an asymmetric relationship between part and whole, including the objectification of the conquered” in Amores 1.2 characterizes much of the collection. Ovid is the praeda of Cupid (he calls himself praeda in lines 19 and 29), but someone else, a woman, will submit to his own power. Thus, Amores 1.3 shifts the tone of the collection as the narrator starts
to document asymmetrical relationships between men and women. Cupid, as a conqueror, has placed him in an effeminate position of submission (we must consider all military victories as sexualized, especially because of the close connections between militarism and sexualized violence) and now the narrator will ensure a woman maintains her proper role. Similarly, in Amores 1.9, to be explored below, he will fashion himself as a soldier in the militia amoris and what do soldiers do to officially win the war and conquer the land? They commit sexualized violence against women, who anthropomorphically represent the land, its possessions, and its ability to produce resources (see DuBois 1988 and Dougherty 1998).

Ovid consistently throughout the Amores solidifies the connections among sex, violence, and war to reinforce his power over the women of the poems. Ovid’s version of elegy does not complicate or deconstruct traditional notions of gender and power, but instead reinforces them in ways that might at first be counterintuitive (Greene 2012, 370). Cahoon believes that the ubiquitous military imagery of conquering and captivity are an “exposé of the competitive, violent, and destructive nature of amor, an exposé that calls into question fundamental Roman attitudes in both public and private” (1988, 193). Cahoon, as an Ovidian scholar, believes that the violence against women in Ovid’s works should, as a whole, be understood as critique. As I will explain at the end of this chapter and as I began to address in Chapter One, I believe that Ovid could expose the nature of misogyny in elegiac poetry and Rome and yet condone and even enforce it. Cahoon concludes her 1988 article, however, with the following important reminder: “To regard love as a kind of warfare is not just a funny conceit about the nature of the sexual act because real hostility and real violence result from such an attitude” (302). She admits here, even if inadvertently, the impact of misogyny in literature despite the intentions of an author.

In Amores 1.3 the narrator is still searching for poetic materia for his elegiac poems. He
endeavors to convince the still nameless woman he has asked to inspire his poetry—or become his poetic materia—by promising her that she will be made famous like Io, Leda, and Europa, through song (carmen) (20–6). But all three female figures are rape victims of Jupiter, adding a patently ominous tone to the beginning of their relationship—the narrator in effect revealing his attraction to the degradation of female figures by male figures (Greene 1998, xiv, 70). Poetry will immortalize this woman just as poetry has immortalized the rapes of these female figures. Habinek (2002, 48) suggests that Ovid could be demonstrating an equality in suffering between the narrator and the woman here because the narrator has established himself as a captive of Cupid previously, but that position is untenable for the rest of the collection and overlooks the realities of sexualized violence in the Amores. From here on in, Ovid and his narrator are in control physically and poetically. Cupid has a triumph in 1.2 and the narrator will have one for himself in 1.7 to mark his violence against his puella: she never receives triumphs for violence against him and is never in a militaristic (or otherwise) position of power over him.43 In short, the narrator continually inserts himself into militaristic, imperialistic, and conquering imagery and positions—and as we are about to explore—additionally likens himself to mythological male figures, like Jupiter, in positions of power over female figures to enforce his masculinity.

Amores 1.3 is modeled on Propertius 1.3, which similarly compares the elegiac puella to mythological victims of rape as she sleeps (including a maenad and Io). Greene, analyzing both these poems, sees Propertius’ narrator as projecting fantasies of masculine control, domination, and rape onto a still, mute woman. She writes: “the speaker’s arousal seems to depend on turning his ‘real’ mistress into a static, pictorial object he can gaze at without any resistance of reality [or her subjectivity]” (2012, 359). Cynthia is the sleeping maenad that a satyr can more easily

43 However, in Amores 2.14, when the puella gives herself an abortion, the narrator compares her to a marauding soldier, who commits violence against her own body and offspring (2.14.1–8), and moreover, laments all the great, epic soldiers who could have never existed if they were aborted by their mothers.
possess and rape (*Cynthia non certis nixa caput manibus,/ ebria cum multo traherem vestigia Baccho*, “Cynthia resting her hands on hands not certain, when I dragged my steps, drunk with much wine,” 8–9). Propertius even manipulates her body into a more desirable image, placing an apple near her breast (24–26), the apple being a common image of sexual desire. Ovid, by coding the women with images of Leda, Europa, and Io, projects a fantasy similar to that of Propertius upon his *puella*: she is powerless and he is like Jupiter, who deceived, battered, and dehumanized female figures. As Greene says, this is not the *servitium amoris* by any means (2012, 361). As in Propertius’ fantasies, women are objects that men make something happen upon, passive. By introducing the *puella* to his poetic collection with these analogues, images, and fantasies, it is clear that the narrator sees act of domination and violence as fundamental to his conception of their relationship and his desire. Amores 1.5 continues this conception.

2. *Amores 1.5: Objectification and Sexual Conquest*

*Amores* 1.5 has become central to studies of objectification, the male gaze, the silencing of women, fetishization, the *puella* as poetic *materia*, and the figurative dismemberment of women’s bodies in Ovid and in Latin poetry. In this poem, Ovid details every part of Corinna’s nude, unblemished body (*nusquam corpore menda*) without showing us her face or giving her a voice (17–23), which are the most essential ways to establish a person’s humanity and subjectivity (Greene 1998, 83). Philodemus (*AP* 5.1.32 = *Sider* 12) provides a precedent for 1.5,

---

44 His reference to Bacchus, although deployed here as a metonymy for wine, is also significant. It strengthens the image of Cynthia as the vulnerable, sleeping maenad. Bacchus often targets them sexually.

45 Liveley (2012, 545–6) recently wrote about how to better teach Propertius 1.3 to students: how can we as feminist educators teach them to see the poem from Cynthia’s perspective and not that of the male narrator? How can we help them resist becoming embroiled in rape fantasies? How would she feel about his fantasies? She says it has successfully helped students to understand that boyfriends and lovers can also be dangerous to women sexually.

46 Such conception of the relationship could stem from the Augustan political milieu and how it affected and transformed Roman masculinity. For example, Liveley (2012, 543) argues that Ovid uses images of domination and violence “as a performance of the male anxieties attending the crisis in masculinity and Romanitas brought about by Augustan politics and violently played out in and upon both female and elegiac corpora (bodies/texts).”

47 Later on in *Amores* 1.7, Ovid will objectify the *puella* as intensely after she was battered and claim that the effects of her abuse, her disheveled hair, make her more attractive and align her with mythological female characters who were similarly beautiful in the aftermath of their abuse by men. See my discussion below.
but as Booth (2009, 70) remarks, the poem travels from feet to face. Ovid dismembers her body, her shoulders, stomach, legs, for visual pleasure and then does not even reveal her face or anything above her shoulders. She is object, not a subject, divided into beautiful parts. He mentions what he sees before his eyes (ut stetit ante oculos...nostros, 15), but not what Corinna sees from hers. Ovid omitting Corinna’s face is intentional and one of the many reasons we should see Corinna and the elegiac puellae in his collection as materia for poetry. If Corinna is faceless, she can be anyone for his art and her facelessness, at same time, intensifies the dehumanization of objectification. Sharrock (2002, 151) observes this about Amores 1.5:

“The poem presents Corinna as the materia and the fons et origo of erotic poetry, but also (it is almost the same thing) as the fetishized object of the gaze, the constructed thing, the fiction that guarantees the superior status of the speaker in the scale of realism. He speaks, he looks, he touches, he writes.”

The effects of the male gaze and the puella’s materialization for the text are, therefore, two-fold: it sets up Corinna—and all women in the Amores—as mute objects and passive fantasies and establishes the narrator as the one in control of their bodies and how they are represented. Hardie (2002, 40) even suggests that making the woman the equivalent to text is, moreover, a way to create a fetish object. In Amores 1.3, the narrator’s call for the puella to become the materia for his poetry (te mihi materiem felicem in carmina praebe, “Offer yourself as fertile materials for my poems,” 19) complements and underpins his comparisons of her to famous mythological rape victims. She will be his textual materia, just as female figures became the sexual materia of Jupiter. The materialization of women and the representation of rape in poetry are both acts of dehumanization and Ovid correlates sexual and poetic power very closely. Ovid later in the Amores is again clear about how masculinity, poetry, and textualization all relate to domination

48 Booth is also right to assert that, in contrast to Ovid, Propertius shows us the face of Cynthia from the first line of his poetry (2009, 66): Cynthia prima suis miserum me cepit ocellis (“C. first captured wretched me with her eyes”).
49 The dismemberment of Corinna’s body into separate, shot-by-shot parts also makes a metapoetic comment on the nature of the "dismembered and fragmented" narrative in the Amores according to Salzman-Mitchell (2008, 39).
of women sexually. In 3.7, the narrator describes his problems with sexual impotence and his failure to have sex with a *puella*. Many scholars take this poem as a literal and metapoetic statement about Ovid’s relationship with the elegiac genre: how does his impotence with the elegiac *puella* mirror his growing disinterest in the genre of elegy in *Amores* Book 3? The narrator lucidly distills how he once controlled the *puella* as sexual and poetic material with both the phallus and the pen. And as female figures become *materia* within Ovid’s poems, they are to be read and shared among a literary community of men, reflecting how women are exchanged sexually by men between families and communities (Greene 1998, xiv). We saw similar links between textual and sexual subjugation earlier with Cytippe in *Her.* 20 and 21: the oath inscribed in the apple is the source of Acontius’ sexual power over her (Enterline 2000, 55). Daphne, too, in the *Met.* experiences both sexual and textual domination: Apollo, as he appropriates her body transformed into a laurel, completes his intended rape of her figuratively and vows that the leaves of her tree will be used to honor him as the god of poetry (*Met.* 1.559).

*Amores* 1.5, like 1.3, should be central, as well, to discussing the links between objectification of female bodies and sexualized violence against female figures. Many feminists like Irigaray (1977) and MacKinnon (1983), who study and condemn objectification and the gaze, define objectification’s dehumanizing and dismembering effects under the male gaze as an act of violence against women. MacKinnon in particular believes that objectification of women is the most fundamental and primary way women are oppressed and subjected to violence: objectification helps to justify the dehumanizing effects of violence and can lead to other forms

---

50 Something to note here is that texts in Greek and Roman antiquity are not always characterized as women, even in Ovid. In Ovid’s exile poetry, he personifies the *Tristia* as children (1.1.16), just as Aristophanes characterizes his first version of the *Clouds* as an exposed child (530–1). Martial famously characterizes many books of his epigrams as slaves. But even if these texts are not women, slaves and children are still in an effeminized position in society.  

51 He begins the third book of the *Amores* collection tempted by the genre of tragedy anthropomorphized as a woman and then lured back, temporarily, to genre of elegy, also anthropomorphized as a woman.
of violence. Ovid, throughout his corpus, clearly connects how his sexual abusers respond visually to the bodies of their victims and their subsequent desires to sexually possess the female figures, a type of scopophilia that leads to violence. Apollo sees Daphne, subjects her to the male gaze, and then the narrator says that seeing is not enough for the god (…*videt oscula, quae non/est vidisse satis*, “He sees her lips, which are not enough for him to have seen,” 500–501). This is furthermore the case for Jupiter with Callisto (*Met. 2.409–10*), Tereus with Philomela (6.451–57), and Acontius with Cydippe (*Her. 20* passim). These male figures see, they react, and they want. Moreover, despite Ovid’s graphic description of Corinna’s body, we are not presented with a sex scene, only the offhand comment of “Who does not know what happens [after he lists off the many features of her naked body]? (*cetera quis nescit*)” In fact, the closest Ovid comes to describing the sex act is through his remark that he pressed Corinna nude all the way up to his body (*et nudam pressi corpus ad usque meum*, 24). This same lack of explicitness is true for Callisto, Philomela, and Cydippe: the bodies of these female figures come under intense sexual scrutiny by male figures and the narrator, but we never see the sexualized violence itself.

But does Ovid show us sexualized violence in *Amores* 1.5? Most scholars recognize the intense objectification in the poem and how the narrator completely prioritizes his point of view and desire, but not how this leads to vitiating Corinna’s consent to sex. Ovid writes (13–16):

```
Deripui tunicam; nec multum rara nocebat,
pugnabat tunica sed tamen illa tegi;
quae cum ita pugnaret, tamquam quae vincere nollet,
victa est non aegre proditioane sua...
```

I ripped off her tunic: the thin garment was not impeding much. But nevertheless she was fighting to be covered with that tunic. She was fighting, though, like someone who does not want to win and she was conquered without difficulty by her own betrayal…

This implies that her resistance is a coy game and should remind us of the position of the narrator in the *Ars*, that women like to be forced into sex (*Vim licet appelles, grata est vis ista puellis*:

```
quod iuvat, invitae saepe dedisse volunt, “Although you may call it force, that very force is pleasing to girls…” 674–5). To prove his position, he cites Deidamia’s reaction to Achilles (viribus illa quidem victa est, ita credere oportet:/ Sed voluit vinci viribus illa tamen, “It seems necessary to believe that she certainly is conquered by his strength: but she nevertheless wanted to be conquered by his strength,” 699–700). Richlin (1992, 168) argues that this Ars passage proclaims that “women’s feelings [are] consistently unreal” and lines 13–16 of Amores 1.5 include this same sense of unreality. We do not have Corinna’s point of view, only that of the male narrator. Maybe like the narrator in the Ars, he wants to think that her resistance is play-acting rather than real. This very act of vitiation is an essential aspect of his objectification of Corinna. Her body is under his gaze and he will be the one to determine whether they will have sex or not, and how others perceive their sexual relationship and her consent to it. Later, in Ovid’s Amores 3.5, we will, for the first time in the collection, see a woman clearly and indubitably express resistance to her abuse and rape, although Ovid has already included such depiction in his corpus with the Her. The imagery in these lines of 1.5 is additionally profoundly militaristic, extending the imperialistic imagery from Amores 1.1 and 2 and establishing his role, to be expanded upon in 1.7 as a soldier in a Roman-style triumph and in 1.9, as a miles amoris, a soldier of love (Cahoon 1988). The body of Corinna is a possession to be snatched and conquered: she is the materia of poetry, war, men, and sexualized violence.\

The theme of resistance to sex as part of some game or performance that we find in Amores 1.5, appears in 1.4., as well. The narrator asks the puella, when she goes back to her vir,

---

52 In a Propertian precedent to this poem (2.15.17–21), Propertius intensely objectifies the body of Cynthia and documents how his narrator will tear off her clothes to see all of her body while they have sex, although she wants them kept on, drawing a connection between sight and sexual desire, a central part of the Roman conception of the gaze and sexuality. He is like Apollo in the Met: it is not enough to have seen what he has (…videt oscula, quae non/ est vidisse satis, “he sees her lips, which are not enough for him to have seen,” 1. 500–501). Again, we only have the perspective of the male narrator and do not see what Cynthia feels about Propertius threatening violence against her.
to act like she is being forced to engage in affection with him (63–65). The narrator believes that even if her resistance to her vir is play-acting, such a performance will console him. Later in Amores 2.19, the narrator demands that the puella be inaccessible and set up obstacles for their affair. He derides the vir of this puella because he has not done anything to challenge his access to her sexually. He wants her to be like Danae and Io (or in other words, victims of captivity and sexualized violence): Jupiter faced obstacles to acquire those female figures and inaccessibility makes the attraction to these female figures all the stronger (27–30). Greene (2012, 369), in her analysis of Amores 2.19, argues that this once again shows how the narrator is attracted to women who are captive, violated, weak, and silent, and these attractions enforce misogynistic ideologies surrounding Roman male and female sexuality. Greene (1998, 2012), inspired by the scholarship of Gayle Rubin (1975), uses Amores 2.19 (as well as 3.4) to explore how Ovid portrays women as symbols and tools of exchange between men and how Ovid is reflecting “the mercantilist and imperialist values in Augustan culture” (1998, xv). In 2.19 Ovid appeals to the vir since he is the one who legitimately controls the sexuality of the puella. Men in Rome prove their masculinity by dominating and controlling women. These very sexual exchanges of women are at the root of “male authority and dominance” in Roman society (Greene 1998, 95). Greene (2012, 370) even interprets Ovid’s appeal to the vir in 2.19 as a form of solidarity, a homosocial moment between two men looking to sexually possess a woman by different means.

3. Amores 1.7: “I Hit You and It Felt Like a Kiss”

Amores 1.7 returns to the imagery of the triumph (from 1.2), but this time Ovid’s narrator is the brave, victorious general and the puella is his captive (forti victa puella...viro est) (35–38). He imagines this triumph after he has struck her in anger and insanity (mea vaesana laesa puella manu, 4), disheveled her hair by ripping it from her head (at nunc sustinui raptis a fronte
capillis, 49), and brutally cut her well-born cheeks with his nails (ferreus ingenuas ungue notare genas, 50). The poem is intended as his apology to her and as evidence of his remorse. But instead of showing his remorse, the narrator envisioning himself as a general and her as a captive is meant to be a form of exaggerated, flippant humor. How mighty could he be if his defeat was only a defenseless woman? (De Boer 2010, 44). But this joke has important misogynistic implications and ideologies. Cahoon (1988, 296) believes that the depiction of himself as victor shows how he grotesquely transitions from feigned guilt to “delight.” With the use of these militaristic, conquering visualizations here and elsewhere, we must take seriously that the narrator reveals how he physically and sexually dominates women and how this very domination is the basis of his desires. Her status as a captive is one that would already be highly sexualized because of how Romans eroticized power dynamics, particularly those between master and slave.

Earlier in the poem, he explicitly likens her to female mythological characters, who have experienced abuse—and in Cassandra’s case particularly, sexual abuse—at the hands of male figures, comparisons reminiscent of the mythological heroines he cites as analogues in Amores 1.3. What is more, his descriptions of them are highly objectifying and fixated on the beauty in their pain.⁵³ He is particularly interested in their long, flowing, disheveled hair, their appearance being an effect of the violence they have experienced. He notices his puella’s hair and what he has done to it (Ergo ego digestos potui laniare capillos, “Was I really able to tear out that well-arranged hair,” 11). But he still finds her beautiful despite his violence (nec dominam motae dedecuere comae/ sic formosa fuit, “But the disturbed hair was not unbecoming for my mistress: she was beautiful in this way [with her hair disturbed],” 12–13). And then he luxuriously details how the hair of Atalanta, Ariadne, and Cassandra appeared in the aftermath of their abuse from

---
⁵³ Greene in her 1999 article on Amores 1.7 extensively teases out the implications of this poem for our understanding of the male gaze and its connections to violence against female figures in Roman poetry.
men—they, too, were still beautiful despite their suffering (13–18). Like many of the men in Ovid’s corpus, such as Mercury with Lara in Fasti 2.611–12 and Tereus with Philomela in Met. 6.561–2, he finds the sight and evidence of the pain and abuse she has suffered alluring. Both the narrator here and Tereus are particularly attracted to what their own violence has done to the women (Tereus, for example, continues to rape Philomela for one year after her mutilation).

The narrator of 1.7 asserts later in the poem that a certain type of erotic violence is acceptable and even sexy, as long as it does not affect her hair or her face (41–2, 45–50). He laments that it should have been enough for him to rip her clothing from her body violently (47). This lament may seem to be him backtracking on his previous, objectifying descriptions of the puella and the mythological heroines in the aftermath of their attacks in lines 11–18, but the narrator soon relates how he finds the paleness and silence from her fear appealing. She is like the creation of Pygmalion, pale as marble (Met. 10.247–9), yet still trembling (adstitit illa amens albo et sine sanguine vultu, / caeduntur Pariis qualia saxa iugis,/ examinis artus et membra trementia vidi, “She stands upright, frantic, with a bloodless, white face, just as rocks hewn from the Parian ridges, and I saw her lifeless limbs and trembling body,” 51–3). Using the analysis of Irigaray (1977) and de Lauretis (1987), Greene (1999, 410) points out that the puella, under his gaze, has been made into a work of art; this type of immobilizing specularization is inherent to the impact and powers of the male gaze on women. The puella’s statuesque appearance relates profoundly to her status as materia for the amator/poeta. He derives sexual and artistic pleasure from seeing her battered and he exploits her abuse “as opportunity for an extravagant display of his poetic talents” (Greene 1999, 411). Her silence, at one level, can be explained as an offshoot of her objectification and materialization under the male gaze, but it likewise originates from her fear. Fear is enticing to many of the sexual abusers in Ovid’s corpus, like Apollo before he
attempts to rape Daphne in the *Met.*, as Curran (1978) and Richlin (1992) note.

The narrator even asks her to perpetrate a kind of retributive violence against him, despite her weakness. De Boer (2010, 44–5) observes that this particular plea from the narrator to the *puella* not only tries to relieve him of responsibility for what he has done, to equate them as abusers, it once again highlights his strength over her: her hands are *infirmae* (*infirmas adiuvat ira manus*, “Anger helps weak hands,” 66) and his are *formidatae* (*ter formidatas reppulit illa manus*, “She thrust back my dreadful hands three times,” 62). But the cruelest and most frightening aspect of the poem comes at its end: he asks her to rearrange her hair so that they can both forget about what transpired: *neve mei sceleris tam tristia signa supersint;/ pone recompositas in statione comas* (“And so no miserable signs of my crime may remain, put your hair, reordered, back in position,” 67-68). Greene (1999, 418) contends that Ovid, with this demand, takes on the role as the one who signifies: he has power over how others should understand him and her. Greene also observes that the use of the word *statio* continues the militaristic imagery: her hair will follow rank. Ovid’s work is full of cruel witticisms, humor, and ironies like this before, during, and after he describes sexualized violence against female figures throughout his corpus. The effects of the *puella’s* silence in *Amores* 1.7, her fright, her weakness, the signs of how vulnerable she is physically serve to further establish ideologies on femininity, masculinity, sexuality, and the erotics of violence. Later in *Amores* 2.12, he claims that he has won victories over women without shedding blood

---

54 There is a precedent in Propertius for this type of desired violence from the *puella*. Propertius describes a *dulcis rixa* between his narrator and the *puella* in 3.8 (*Dulcis ad hesternas fuerat mihi rixa lucernas/ vocis et insanae tot maledicta tuae*, “I had a sweet fight yesterday at midnight, so many curses of your mad voice,” 1–2). The narrator demands that the *puella* be even more violent with him because he understands the violence as a sign of passion (*nimirum veri dantur mihi signa caloris*, “The signs, undoubtedly, of true passion are given to me,” 8). He even wants her to make him look like a woman would while she grieves violence against her. He wants to have a scratched face and chest and torn tunic, the typical appearance of a woman in mourning. But he uses imperatives to express his desires for erotic violence, showing he has control over the situation (3–6) (*inade, nota, mimitare, fac*).

55 For example, before the rape of Callisto, when the nymph is interacting with Jupiter, disguised as her beloved goddess Diana, Callisto says that Diana is a greater divinity than Jove (*numen…mauis love, Met. 2.428–9*).
(Haec est praeicipuo victoria digna triumpho/ In qua, quaecumque est, sanguine praeda caret,

“This victory is worthy of a particular triumph, in which (victory), whatever it is, the gain lacks blood,” 5–6)—but that is not true, as evidenced in this poem. The puella has been harmed by him and he has eroticized it. The use of the word praeda in 2.12 is also significant because this is used often to describe rape victims, like the Sabine women in the Ars 1.114 and 126.

4. Amores 1.9: The Miles Amoris and Sexualized Violence

Amores 1.9 additionally has implications for a study of sexualized violence in his corpus. Many see 1.9 as an absurdist joke and rhetorical exercise for the narrator of the Amores to justify his elegiac lifestyle and distance from traditional masculinity. It takes precedents of the militia amoris in Propertius and Tibullus and runs them into the ground (which is typical of Ovid’s relationship with elegy). Ovid’s narrator attempts to prove with one-on-one comparisons that militat omnis amans (every lover is a soldier) and that his masculinity is not defective and a sign of otium. Instead, lovers are as active as soldiers and have similar pursuits, goals, and strategies. For example, Ovid argues that soldiers siege the gates of cities and that lovers siege the doors of their puellae (hic portas frangit, at ille fores, “The soldier breaks the city gates, but the lover breaks down front doors,” 20). But as Cahoon (1988, 297) argues, a siege hoping to penetrate a closed barrier should remind us of sexuality in general and particularly sexualized violence. Comparisons such as these reinforce what the narrator has said earlier about his conception of himself in relation to the puella in 1.3, 1.5, and 1.7: as one of conqueror and conquered. Once Ovid compares himself to a soldier, he opens up his poems even more to images of sexualized violence, common and almost inevitable offshoots of conquering and war: “rape manifests the ira common to both amor and arma” (Liveley 2012, 542).

56 Sharrock (2012, 73) speaks more to this rhetorical tactic of Ovid’s in Amores 1.9: “Ovid inverts the normal language of elegiac poetic production, laziness, leisure, and softness as applying not to his current state of erotic elegy and activity, but to his previous state before Love made him active.”
The poem also speaks to the connections (and tensions) between the role of Venus and the role of Mars in Roman history, a history of “love” and “war.” (Mars dubius, nec certa Venus: victique resurgunt,/ quosque neges umquam posse iacere, cadunt, “Mars is doubtful and Venus is not certain: the conquered rise again and those whom you deny could ever fall, do fall,” 29–30). Roman history was founded on both principles, particularly evident if we consider the rape of the Sabines and the subsequent war with their Latin neighbors. This is the very tension between elegy and epic that has led Ovid to ingrain militaristic imagery so profusely into his depiction of erotics in the Amores: it should come as no surprise that Romans would try to understand sexuality and power as such a conflict between “love” and “war.” Sex for them involved the sexualization of power and the military and military feats were some of the greatest sources of power, achievement, and identity for Roman men. As Kathy Gaca (2010, 2011a, 2011b, 2013, 2015) discusses ubiquitously in her research, men in antiquity proved their masculinity by conquering women sexually and conquering other men in war: conquering the enemy and sexualized violence against women can be inseparable in war for the Romans.

What is more, Ovid has the narrator compare himself to Achilles and his relationship with Briseis and to Agamemnon and his relationship to Cassandra (ardet in abducta Briseide magnus Achilles...Atrides visa Priameide fertur/ Maenadis effusis obstipuisse comis, “Great Achilles burns for abducted Briseis...Agamemnon is said to have been stupefied, after having seen Cassandra, by her flowing, Maenad hair,” 33, 36–7). In the Amores, we have seen the puella

57 Ovid will continue to explore tensions between Venus and Mars throughout the Ars. Many scholars believe such an exploration is a subversive move for Ovid, particularly if we consider how closely connected these gods were to Augustus and the propaganda he created to legitimize and maintain his power. How does Ovid use the gods for the agenda of poetry, poetry, which Augustus deemed dangerous to the values, ideals, and laws of his regime? The work of O’Gorman (1997), Peter Davis (1999), and Armstrong (2005) touches upon how Ovid, as poet, appropriates the imagery of the princeps. The use of the triumph is also an imperial mechanism exclusively reserved for the Augustan family as F.D. Harvey (1983) observes. Ovid, somewhat appropriately, gives Cupid a triumph since he is part of Augustus’ family (he is related to him through the goddess Venus and the hero Aeneas), but he gives Cupid a triumph over the narrator and his pursuit of eros, something problematic in Augustan Rome because of the moral legislation. He then, as we have seen, gives himself a triumph in Amores 1.7 over a puella.
compared to the raped and battered Cassandra twice before (1.3 and 1.7) and will see Cypassis in 2.8 compared to both Briseis and Cassandra. The comparisons to these women in 2.8 are to justify his rape of a slave; Briseis and Cassandra are also slaves. In Amores 1.9, he suppresses Cassandra’s status as rape victim to Ajax and Agamemnon and again describes Cassandra’s hair, as in Amores 1.7. The description of her hair as that of a maenad subtly evokes sexualized violence, as well. Briseis is not labeled a rape victim, either. In fact, in every instance of Ovid using Achilles and Briseis in his poetry, he squelches her status as a victim of rape, even in her Her. poem in which she primarily sees herself as his lover and potential wife. Overall, Amores 1.9 is part of a system of poems, that liken war, violence, and eros, and that also do not plainly label what the women experience as sexualized violence. But Ovid’s military metaphors here and elsewhere become clearer with feminist analysis and demonstrate that he has encoded his poetry with frequent suggestions and graphic depictions of sexualized violence. Feminist analysis has, furthermore, illuminated the reality of Amores 2.8: the rape of a slave.

5. Amores 2.8: The Rape of the Slave Cypassis

The narrator in Amores 2.8 (a poem in a diptych with 2.7) callously depicts his coercive sexual relationship with Corinna’s female slave, Cypassis (after he denied a relationship with her to the puella in Amores 2.7). Many scholars, such as Cahoon (1988), James (1997 and 2003), and De Boer (2010), have deemed this relationship as one of rape because of the vast power differential between the narrator, an equestrian man, and a female slave. In Chapter One, I discussed the nature and reality of rape in Rome, particularly for slaves: the sexual abuse and rape of slaves was expected and normalized, even if the narrator, while denying his relationship

58 De Boer (2010, 70) points out in this diptych that we not only see the sexual abuse of Cypassis, we see the emotional abuse of the puella: Ovid argues that what she is sensing and feeling is not real. He paints her as a manically sexually jealous and paranoid woman who cannot even have Ovid make eye contact with another woman. For both the puella and Cypassis, the narrator’s “rhetoric talks them into submission” (Henderson 1991, 62).
with Cypassis to the *puella*, feigns surprise in 2.7 that anyone would willingly have sex with a slave (*quis Veneris famulae conubia Liber inire/ tergaque conplecti verbere secta velit?*, “Which free man would want to enter into a sexual relationship with a female slave and embrace a back cut by a whip?” 21–22). We must always remember that slaves could never truly consent to sex because of their status. And Ovid here reveals what a performance the *servitium amoris* truly is: Ovid was never a slave, but we see the actual effects of slavery for Cypassis. The narrator cruelly exploits the power differential between a free man and an enslaved woman to threaten and manipulate her into sex. He demands that he receive “a sweet reward” for keeping their relationship secret from the *puella* (*Pro quibus officis pretium mihi dulce repende/ concubitus Hodie...tuos*, “For the duties I performed, sleep with me as a sweet reward,” 21–2). But the narrator comments that Cypassis refuses to sleep with him and pretends that she is afraid of their sexual relationship (*renuis fingisque novos, ingrata, timores*, “You refuse to give me this and make up new fears, ungrateful girl,” 23). His accusation that she pretends to be afraid implies strongly that he knows what she wants. This once again evokes comments made by *praeeceptor amoris* in *Ars* about women and their resistance to rape. As we have discussed, the narrator says women cannot be raped, they like to be forced into sex, just as Deidamia liked being forced by Achilles (664–700). If they resist, their displayed resistance is part of a complex game of seduction and power between men and women. In 2.8, the *amator* threatens that if she continues to foolishly refuse to sleep with him, he will inform on her to the mistress (25–6). He even calls himself her master and reminds her that it is enough to please even of one her masters, if not both (*unum est e dominis emeruisse satis*, “it is enough to have satisfied one from your masters,” 24).

Cypassis’ silence throughout both *Amores* 2.7 and 2.8 shows that the narrator knows she can never protest what he is doing and that he can rape her with impunity (James 1997, 69).
James is right to assert that her silence is reflective of the reality of slave experiences with sexualized violence. Cypassis would not reveal the sexual relationship to her mistress in order to prevent further abuse, and she cannot turn to anyone or any institution to protect her. He also knows that she fears and is shamed before her mistress since he notes her blushing in reaction to the mistress’ accusations (15–6). Ovid’s narrator exploits Cypassis’ physical and emotional reactions to his great benefit. Her blushing could very well just be a sign of her anxiety about what her mistress could do to her—despite the reality of the situation—and the puella could have understood it as such (we never know how the puella interprets Cypassis’ blushing, only Ovid does). But, as Janan (2012, 387) contends, the narrator exploits her blushing as a signifier of her guilt, a signifier the mistress could have seen to prove his own guilt even if he never turned red; he mentions her blushing and then says he saved them from detection by swearing to Venus and Cupid (15–19). And unless Cypassis gives him what he wants sexually, he will use that signifier against her to inform on their relationship to the mistress, to become his own accuser. Janan (2012) in her article on this poem is very interested in what Ovid sees during his fight with the puella: he sees that the puella turns to look at Cypassis in her anger, he sees her blushing, he sees the evidence he can use against her to receive his sweet reward of coerced sexual activity.

Another important aspect of the way in which Amores 2.8 represents sexualized violence is that the narrator, in order to dignify himself while sleeping with a slave, compares his relationship to her with that of Achilles with Briseis and Agamemnon with Cassandra, just as in 1.9 (11–14). This type of relationship suited kings, so it should suit him (quod decuit reges, cur mihi turpe putem, “…What befits kings, why should I think [such things] shameful for me?” 14). But coding Cypassis as Briseis and Cassandra codes her as a victim and a sexual slave of war and informs the audience’s sense of the power differential between them. The allusions in
Amores 1.7 and 1.9 to women in like situations (such as Ariadne) or the same women, should also have these very resonances: why does the narrator continually conceive of his relationships with women, free or slave, as one of domination? Comparing her to Briseis and Cassandra also reminds Cypassis of her place and base position, particularly in relation to him (James 1997, 69) and helps to pave the way for the violence against her. Using exempla makes her rape more inevitable. Moreover, Ovid encourages his students in the Ars to rape the slaves of their dominae. The slave woman is like a trapped, wounded bird, boar, or fish (1.391–3), which a trained hunter should conquer and take for himself (perprime temptatam, nec nisi victor abi, “Assail the woman you have tried, nor leave until you are victor,” 394). The praeeceptor amoris is fully cognizant of the power differentials between a free, equestrian man and a female slave and expects his implied students to use those differentials to their sexual advantage. He even says that a slave girl of the puella will never inform on the lover because she shares a common guilt with him (Tunc neque te prodet communi noxia culpa, Ars 1.395). This signifies a complete denial that the slave girl is raped by the amator, but rather that she commits a crime like he does.²⁵⁹

6. Amores 2.12: The Women Are to Blame!

Before we move on to the longest narrative of rape in the Amores (3.5), I want to analyze one of the clearest articulations of victim-blaming in Ovid: Amores 2.12. The narrator muses on how women and their rapes have been the cause of wars, just as a woman is the cause of his own personal war (17–26). At first, he seems to put the blame on Paris for the Trojan War: Helen is described as rapta, hence she is in a passive position and not the active. He similarly exonerates Helen in Ars 2.363–4 when he blames Menelaus for starting the war: he should have never

²⁵⁹ Encouragements to abuse slaves like this from Ovid and Amores 2.8 as a whole, according to Henderson (1991) and De Boer (2010) should also make us reevaluate the relationship the narrator of the Amores has with the slave woman Nape in Amores 1.11 and 1.12. Ovid says nothing explicitly sexual about their relationship, but these passages from the Ars and Amores 2.8 are telling. Henderson outlines many verbal echoes between 1.11 and 2.8.
abandoned a dove (Helen) to be taken up by the claws of a hawk (Paris). But the exempla of women (Lavinia, Hippodamia, the Sabine women, and also a cow) who come after take on the active position: the verbs connected with them are active (*vertit*, *impulit*, *inmisit*, *dedit*, *dabat*) with men as their objects (*Lapithas, populum...biformem, Troianos, soceros, animos*). Lavinia is the one who has compelled men to fight in Italy (*Femina Troianos iterum nova bella movere/* *Impulit*, “The women drove the Trojans again to declare war,” 20). Even a cow has actively roused (*animos...dabat*) the lust of the bulls that grapple over possession of her. This level of activity is an insidiously misogynistic reversal of the experience of rape and deflects attention from the active violence of rape by men. Here Ovid instead says that the men did not cause violence, but the women did. The men are the objects of the desire the women incited. Earlier in 2.12, the narrator brags about how he has not shed blood in his victories over women (*Haec est praecipuo victoria digna triumpho,/ In qua, quaecumque est, sanguine praeda caret*, “This victory is worthy of a particular triumph, in which (victory), whatever it is, the gain lacks blood,” 5–6). Although, he has likened a woman to a captive and suppresses how he has committed violence in 1.7, this exact boast places him on a higher moral ground than women who have caused so much violence through their rapes. They start bloody wars and Ovid does not.

7. *Amores 3.5 (and the Fasti): The Rape of Rhea Silvia by Anio*

*Amores* 3.5 is the last poem I analyze in this section. Here, the narrator recounts the rape of Rhea Silvia by the river Anio (more commonly, the Tiber). It is the most extensive narrative of rape in the *Amores* and this poem more so than others in the collection, can help us forecast the rape narratives we see in the *Met.* and the *Fasti*, particularly because of its length, mythological subject matter, and presence of victim-blaming from both the narrator and the rape victim herself. The premise of the poem is that an overflowing river is separating the narrator from one
of his *puella*. He hopes to persuade the river to help his relationship rather than hinder it. The river should be sympathetic to his plight: rivers themselves are lovers, like Achelous with Deianira (35–6). But, as Ovid often does, he suppresses that Achelous’ relationship with Deianira was one of sexualized violence (something he fortunately does not deny in his depiction of the relationship in *Met.* 9.1–88). But then he elaborately cites the relationship between the Tiber and Rhea Silvia as another exemplum, but does not suppress her rape.

Rhea Silvia comes to the river, distraught and alone, after Mars has raped her and impregnated her with Romulus and Remus, the founding twins of Rome, and after her uncle has banished her. Ovid refers to these acts in Line 48 with the phrase *delictaque Martis* and *patruique nefas*, Rhea violated in different ways by two men. There is a focus on her disheveled and battered appearance and her solitude. Ovid comments that the Tiber was still charmed by her appearance, sinisterly indicating attraction to violence against women (45–49) and mirroring the desire the narrator of *Amores* exhibits toward violated and abused women, as well (1.7):

*Ilia cui placuit, quamvis erat horrida cultu,*  
*ungue notata comas, ungue notata genas.*  
*Ilia gemens patruique nefas delictaque Martis*  
*errabat nudo per loca sola pede.*

Ilia pleased him, although she was unkempt in appearance, her hair branded by her nails, her cheeks branded with her nails. She, while weeping over the evil deed of her uncle and the crime of Mars, was wandering through the lonely places with bare feet.

The Tiber, at first attempting to convince her to be his before using coercion, expresses concern for her solitude and battered appearance, of course belying his intensions toward her (*Quo cultus abiere tui? quid sola vagaris,/ Vitta nec evinctas inpedit alba comas?*, “Where has your beauty gone? Why do you wander alone, why is your hair not bound by a white ribbon?” 55–6). Rapists in Ovid often try to use persuasion first and then resort to force when that fails, and that is specifically what he suggests in the *Ars* Book 1 (to be discussed below). The Tiber comments
that the man who looks at her and does not pity her has a heart of stone, but he will pity her (Ille habet et silices et vivum in pectore ferrum./ Qui tenero lacrimas lentus in ore videt, “That man has flint and living iron in his chest, who can be unmoved as he sees tears on a delicate face,” 59—60). This is similar to the rhetoric we see from Apollo towards Daphne before he attempts to rape her. Apollo reassures her that he is not a threat (Non inequor hostis, “I do not follow as an enemy,” Met. 1.504). Tiber, like Apollo in his attempted rape of Daphne, reacts to the loose, unbound hair of his victim. Both gods find their victim’s free hair attractive; free hair can be a sign of openness to sexuality since it transgresses the bounds of proper feminine decorum. And both gods consider these women’s loose hair as one of the facets of their beauty (even if their hairstyle, like Rhea Silvia’s, is a result of abuse). The Tiber directly asks her why it is so disheveled and loose as she wanders near his banks (Amores 3.5.45–9, 55–6 and Met. 1.497–8).

The hair of female figures is integral to more widely understanding Ovid’s representations of genre, gender, femininity, and rape. Earlier in the Amores, the narrator directly correlates a woman’s finely groomed hair to the genre of elegy itself in 3.1.7: he describes the anthropomorphized version of elegy as a woman with ordorati…capilli (“perfumed…hair”), which echoes what he says from the very first poem about the typical elegiac love interest (longas compta puella comas, “A girl with her long hair arranged,” 1.1.20). But when a female figure’s hair is loose, Ovid seems to make everything more epic in tone, such as in Amores 1.7 in which the puella’s hair is loose and disheveled because of his physical violence against her, which he equates to military violence. The image of a female figure with loosened hair has a

---

60 Loose hair is not exclusively a sign of sexual availability in Ovid: Claudia Quinta in Book 4.309–10 of the Fasti is thought at first to be a promiscuous woman for many reasons, including her cultivated and fancy hair. But in my mind, this is an example of how female figures cannot ever win since everything about them is sexualized.

61 Scioli (2015, 191) connects this detail to Propertius 1.3.23, in which the narrator gazes upon the loose hair (along with what he believes are the many other attractive features) of Cynthia as she is sleeping. This can be a sign that Ovid saw the violence and rape imagery implicit in Propertius 1.3—as we discussed earlier in this section—that many feminist classical readers after him, such as Ellen Greene, have recognized.
more definitively epic context because often the most iconic images of female figures after a war are those with unbound, disheveled hair, indicating both their mourning and also their openness to sexualized violence by the victorious army. Fredrick (1997) argues that when Ovid brings in generic elements from epic, such as a female figure’s disordered hair, that is when the violence against female figures primarily occurs. Female figures with unbound, long hair frequently experience or have experienced (sexualized) violence in Ovid: for example, we see that Rhea Silvia, with her loose hair, will experience sexualized violence here in 3.5. and that Corinna experiences sexualized violence from the narrator with her hair down in 1.5 (candida dividua colla tegente coma, “With her parted hair covering her neck,” 10).

These comments on the hair of female figures also speak to the ubiquitous generic tension of the *Amores* between elegy and epic, evident from the beginning of the collection when Cupid prevents Ovid from writing epic so that he can write elegy. This tension is fundamental to the *Amores* itself and becomes particularly evident when the narrator describes violence against female figures and when the narrator eroticizes that violence in *Amores* 1.5, 1.7, and more. Keith (2012) believes Anio remarks on Rhea’s loose hair, which was once ordered by a white ribbon (vitta alba), make a similar generic comment: she was an elegiac puella and has the potential to be one again. When Apollo in the *Met.* notices the freely flowing hair of Daphne, he wonders what it would be like more ordered, implying his interest in her being an elegiac puella for him (Spectat inornatos collo pendere capillos/ et ‘quid, si comantur?’ ait, “He sees her with her hair, disordered, hanging around her neck and he asks, ‘What if her hair was arranged?’” *Met.* 1.497–8). For both Rhea Silvia and Daphne their attackers hope for a more “elegiae” reality before the “epic” one. A female figure’s loose hair is also related in Ovid (and other authors) to Bacchic/ecstatic rituals, feminine emotionality, mourning, female violence and transgression,
and revenge (all of which we will see with the Procne and Philomela story in Met. 6.531, 657). Loose hair is a metaphor for the wild disorder of femininity itself and the dangers it can present to men. Women with their styled and put up hair in Rome are married and, thus, their hair signifies how they have been placed under patriarchal and sexual control of their husbands. This is exactly why the god Apollo expresses an interest in confining the loose hair of Daphne after he sexually reacts to her loose hair: she will be even more attractive then because she will be his. It is a desire to sexually control the nymph and aligns with his wish to have married Daphne.

Ovid plays with genre similarly in his presentation of Rhea Silvia’s rape by Mars in the Fasti (to be explored below). He asks Mars to set aside his militaristic qualities and behavior, or in other words, his epic qualities and behavior, and to enter the elegiac world of the Fasti (3.1–10). We then immediately receive what Ovid determines to be an elegiac—or erotic—event for Mars: the god’s relationship with Rhea Silvia. Hinds (1992) emphasizes that Mars is inermis (unarmed) (Fasti 3.8): “he has been captured by a woman and has as much right as anyone to enter the elegiac world” (93). This is the extent of Hinds’ comments on the role of genre in this episode. But the epic world is not far from this scene because his relationship with Rhea Silvia is one of rape. Eros is not the only element in his relationship with Rhea Silvia since it is one of violence. Mars, here, does not truly give up his militarism, particularly if we consider how closely related rape and war are in Ovid and in Roman minds. Ovid in his scenes of sexualized violence and rape often features a tension between elegy and epic or, in other words, the tension between the erotic and violence (see Anderson’s 1997 exploration of this very tension in the story of Daphne and Apollo in the Met.).

Rhea Silvia in both the Amores and the Fasti experiences rape in an elegiac context, but the elements of epic are inescapable: the mythology, the presence of the gods, the violence, and even the disordered hair. Hinds’ entire article asks us
to recognize how generically complicated the *Fasti* is, how it is “a rather epic kind of elegy” (108), but it is curious that he is rather tight-lipped about that very tension in a rape narrative.

Anio, after his comment on Rhea Silvia’s hair, suggests that she cast aside her fear, to trust him, and to enter his waters (*Ilia, pone metus! tibi regia nostra patebit,/ teque colent amnes. Ilia, pone metus,* “Ilia, put aside your fears! My kingdom will open itself up to you and rivers will nourish you: put aside your fears!” 61–62). He offers her marriage and rule over the hundred nymphs within his waters, implying that she will become a nymph herself (*tu centum aut plures inter dominabere nymphas,* “You will be ruler among the hundred or more of my nymphs,” 63).

These attempts at reward for rape become more prominent in the *Fasti*: the rapes of Lara (2.611–16), Anna Perenna (523–696), Proserpina (4.417–50; also in *Met. 5.332–461*), Flora (5.183–206), and Carna (6.125–30) all result in the rapists granting their victims divine status or more elevated divine status. Everett Beek (2015) deems these acts of apotheosis as “compensation” for violence and argues that violence, like rape, is the direct antecedent to transformation in the *Fasti*. In Chapters Three and Five, I contend in more depth that although female figures like Rhea Silvia might achieve a promotion in status, their transformations place them in positions that maintain their abuse and subordination to their rapists. Rhea Silvia, terrified, weeping, and not convinced by Anio’s offer, soon realizes that it is futile to flee and surrenders herself to his waters, to be raped again by a god and to forever become his consort (67–70, 80–1):

*Ilia oculos in humum deiecta modestos*  
*spargebat teneros flebilis imbre sinus.  
Ter molita fugam ter ad altas restitit undas,  
currendi vires eripiente metu…*  
*atque ita se in rapidas perdita misit aquas.  
Supposuisse manus ad pectora lubricus amnis…*  

Ilia with her modest eyes cast on the ground, crying, sprinkled her tender breast with a flurry of tears. Three times she struggled to flee, three times she stood by the deep waves,
with her fear snatching away her powers to run…She thus, completely hopeless, sent herself into the rapid waters. The sinuous river lay his hands on her breasts…

Leucothoe has a similarly resigned realization when Sol appears before her, intending to have sex with her, in Book 4 of the *Met*: she knows that she cannot resist a god and decides to submit to him (*at virgo, quamvis inopino territa visu,/victa nitore dei posita vim passa querella est*, “But the maiden, although terrified by the unexpected vision and conquered by the splendor of the god, put aside all complaints and she suffered the violence of the god,” 232–3).

Never before in the *Amores* does Ovid provide us with this type of focalization (or is the perspective through the narrative told) from a woman as she is experiencing violence or about to experience violence. We learn very acutely of Rhea Silvia’s fear, her physical injuries, her psyche. We will likewise see this focalization in the *Met* and the *Fasti*, where Ovid intensely focuses on the psychology of both victim and abuser. Peter Davis (1999, 444) reads Ovid’s depiction of Rhea Silvia’s rape as compassionate because it exposes the trauma of rape: “the narrator’s picture of Ilia is clearly intended to highlight the pain that she ensures…and to arouse sympathy for a woman caught up in the processes of history.” This ties into his analysis of the *Amores* as politically subversive. What is Augustus hiding about the brutality of his family? How have Augustus’ ancestors subjected women to the brutalities of rape? But, as discussed above in the *Her.* section, this type of subjectivity can still be problematic because Ovid rarely provides us with female figures who are not abject and in pain. Yes, female figures have their subjectivity, but why only in events such as rape? Moreover, Ovid can seriously explore the suffering of female figures and also make a joke of it. We must remember that the story of Rhea Silvia in *Amores* 3.5 is framed by an extended rhetorical joke of the narrator endeavoring to convince a river to bend to his amatory wishes and to have the river commiserate with his struggles.

Ovid additionally has Rhea Silvia reveal her own shame and gives her a voice, a first in the
Amores. Scioli (2015, 191) likens her monologue to something from the Her. Before she is submerged, she blames herself for violating her vows as a Vestal Virgin (71–8), exhibiting how Ovid’s rape victims characteristically self-blame rather than blame their rapists. Daphne (Met. 1.545–6), Arethusa (5.601–3), Philomela (6.537), all do the same, although Hermione in Her. 8 and Leucothoe in Met. 4 place the blame at the feet of their rapists and call them to task for what they have done. In her short speech, we also gain insight into Rhea Silvia’s fears surrounding the social judgments she will face because of Mars’ actions. Rhea Silvia laments that she will now be known in history as an adulteress and someone who has relinquished her pudor (Quid moror et digitis designor adultera vulgi?/ Desint famous quae notet ora pudor!, “Why do I delay and why am I defined as an adulteress by the pointing of the crowd? Let the face which bears renowned modesty die,” 77–8). The emphasis here on the dire social ramifications of rape on a female figure is not unique in Ovid. The narrator has previously alluded to the patruique nefas (48), or Amuilius’ enforced exile of the priestess and presumed infanticide of her children. In the Fasti, Rhea Silvia, will in addition to suffering her uncle’s crimes, shame the goddess Vesta and extinguish the flame because of her pregnancy (3.45–48). The narrator directly locates these religious condemnations in Rhea Silvia becoming a mother (Silvia fit mater; Vestae simulacra feruntur/virgineas oculis opposuisse manus… “Silvia becomes a mother; the images of Vesta are said to have covered their eyes with their virgin hands…” 45–6). In many ways, Rhea Silvia’s two rapes result in complete social death: she no longer has a family or a community to which she belongs and Anio’s rape eventually removes her from human society altogether as he transforms her into a water nymph. Ovid will explore the social deaths of female figures like Io, Callisto, Philomela, Lara, and Lucretia later in both the Met. and the Fasti. But before we move

62 Later in the Fasti Rhea Silvia does not recount her rape, but she does recount the dream she has during the rape foretelling the birth of her twins and their important futures (3.26–38), echoing Ennius.
on, it must be said that although, Rhea Silvia blames herself in the *Amores* for her predicament and the narrator will as well in this poem and the *Fasti*, she has not done anything of her own volition against her * pudor* and her vows: Mars and the Tiber have forced her.\textsuperscript{63}

Furthermore, the focus on her appearance earlier by the narrator and the Tiber’s sexual response to it, is another layer of victim-blaming. Victim-blaming is embedded in how the narrators of Ovid’s works present their raped characters and how their rape victims present themselves. Ovid establishes that Rhea Silvia’s appearance is what incited his desire to rape her (*Ilia cui placuit, quamvis erat horrida cultu…hanc Anien rapidis animosus vidit ab undis,* “Anio passionately saw her from the waves,” 47, 51). The river sees her body, her hair loose and sexualized, is pleased by what he sees, and will have her even if his attempts at seduction and persuasion falter. This is the most common chain of events in Ovid’s narratives of rape after he describes a female figure’s beauty and then describes the male figure’s response and thus, the most common way he victim-blames the rape victims in his poetry through his authorial voice.

In Ovid’s later depiction of the rape of Rhea Silvia in the beginning of *Fasti* Book 3.11–48,\textsuperscript{64} he shows us her rape by Mars, which was only the tragic backdrop to her rape by the Tiber in *Amores* 3.5.\textsuperscript{65} Ovid in the *Fasti* is inspired by Ennius’ tale of Rhea Silvia’s as Mars

\textsuperscript{63} In *Amores* 3.4.39–40, the story of Rhea Silvia, Mars, and the conception of Romulus and Remus is cited to justify the narrator’s adultery: adultery has been a part of Rome since its inception. The narrator of 3.4 does not define what happens to Rhea Silvia as rape. And in 3.4, the narrator reverses his position in 2.19: in the earlier poem he wants the husband of his *puella* to place more obstacles on his access to her sexually and in this poem he wants fewer obstacles to sleep with his *puella*. Greene says Ovid’s implication here is to convince the husband that he will be a better Roman if he allows his wife to be like Rhea Silvia (2012, 370).

\textsuperscript{64} I will analyze rape narratives Ovid repeats across multiple works together if a rape comes up in a work earlier chronologically (such as here with the *Amores* vs. the *Fasti*) or the rape is of greater importance in one work (for example, the rape of Lotis is mentioned briefly in the *Met.*, but I will first discuss it at length in Chapter Five, my chapter on the *Fasti* where it receives more than two lines). I will always attempt to be sensitive to the specific contexts, generic concerns, and themes of each work. Ovid’s interest in certain rape victims and narratives across different texts is an interesting way to explore how he portrays rape, how he creates patterns in his depictions of rape, how he can be flexible with myth itself, and how he represents myth (Murgatroyd 2005, 236).

\textsuperscript{65} This is something that Livy, as a historian, doubts. He proposes that Rhea Silvia, as a Vestal, was attempting to find a more respectable way to explain the contravening of her vows (*Livy, Ab urbe condita* 4.2). Livy never shows us her rape: he only mentions that that is how Rhea Silvia becomes pregnant with the founding twins of Rome. He is
impregnates her (Annales 29), although he more plainly demonstrates how Rhea Silvia became pregnant by the war god. (Ennius never shows us her rape, only the suggestive dream and the subsequent pregnancy; Ovid, on the other hand, depicts how Rhea Silvia fell asleep, how Mars attacked her while asleep, and how she relates a prophetic and sexually symbolic dream about her offspring and exile separately.) As with Anio, Rhea Silvia seeks the bank of a river, often associated with the locus amoenus and this is a detail also directly from Ennius (ventum erat ad molli declivem tramite ripam, “She had gone to the sloping bank with a gentle footpath,” 13).

She rests by the bank with her tunic and her hair loosened (fessa resedit humo, ventosque accept aperto/pectore, turbatas restituitque comas, “Tired she sat on the ground and she accepted the winds with her chest exposed, and lay down her hair thrown into confusion,” 15–6), but not from trauma as we have seen in the Amores. She carries an empty urn with her, a symbol for her own body: she will soon become a vessel for Mars to fill with his divine seed (14). Mars spots her on the bank of the river, beautiful, vulnerable, and sleeping, and desires her immediately, Ovid echoing the language of Apollo seeing Daphne for the first time (Mars videt hanc visamque cupit potiturque cupitam, “Mars sees her and desires her seen and acquires the one he desired,” 21 vs.

---

much more concerned with how she loses custody over her children and how Romulus and Remus become shepherds. Livy, throughout this account, very much depersonalizes Rhea Silvia (we never hear her speak, although Ovid lets her speak in both his accounts in the Met. and Fasti), and it is clear that the Vestal is completely at the whim of the men in her life, especially her uncle, who punishes her severely after she becomes pregnant.

66 Dreams are often a forecast of erotic activity to come or a simultaneous depiction of erotic activity. For example, Athena implants a dream into Nausikaa’s head (Odyssey Book 6) about her upcoming marriage before she meets the entirely naked Odysseus, a man she comes to admire and whom her father deems worthy of being her suitor. Scioli (2015, 197) suggests that Ennius uses the dream Rhea Silvia has while Mars rapes her to serve as Rhea Silvia’s “internal manifestation of her external reality,” especially since he does not show his audience her rape by the god. In her dream, a handsome and godly man leads her out of her home to the bank of a river and then afterwards, she wanders alone, looking desperately for her sister. The handsome and godly man is Mars, and leading her out of her home to the river indicates the location of her rape and symbolically depicts the loss of the sexual protection of her domus, and her wandering in the dream predicts her later exile because of her pregnancy. Scioli also observes that this dream is interesting because of its use of female subjectivity, one of the earliest in Roman literature. Rhea Silvia recites her dream to her sister. Ovid maintains this subjectivity by having Rhea Silvia recite her dream, as well (Fasti 3. 27–38). Ovid, although he is more explicit about the rape, makes her dream as sexually subliminal and symbolic as that of Ennius. For example, Rhea Silvia’s band falls from her bound hair, her hair becomes loose, indicating her sexual availability and awakening and from the band, two palms grow: the twins in her womb.
Phoebus amat visaque cupit conubia Daphne, “Phoebus loves and desires to have sex with Daphne, having been seen,” Met. 1.490). Like many of the rapists before and after in the corpus of Ovid, the war god sees her and then he wants her. Unlike Anio and Apollo, Mars has no need to seduce: he can just have sex with her while she is asleep. Ovid describes the rape itself with a euphemism (et sua divina furta felflit ope, “He hid his theft with his divine powers,” 22). Rhea Silvia, moreover, sleeps through the entire rape, a detail, which leads Murgatroyd (2005, 7) to conclude that this episode has humorous overtones like many of the other narratives of sexualized violence in the Fasti such as that of Lotis, although in more subtle ways. Rhea Silvia is one of the only female figures in Ovid to sleep through her rape, with the exception of Chione in Met. 11.301–17, whom Mercury places under an enchanted sleep so he could rape her before Apollo. (Chione is also the only victim of dual rape in the Met., as well). Female figures like Thetis (Met. 11.237–40), Lotis, Omphale, Lucretia, and Vesta (Fasti 1.427–34, 2.333–50, 2.790–5, 6.335–44) are sleeping before their attacks, but they awaken when they sense their attacks by Peleus, Priapus, Faunus, and Sextus and other noises around them (like braying donkeys).

From the very beginning of the episode, the narrator victim-blames Rhea Silvia by saying that the Roman priestess captivated Mars (cum te Romana sacerdos/ cepit, 9–10). Like in Amores 2.12, she becomes responsible for instigating her own rape because she is the subject of an active verb (cepit). She has caused the god to become violent. Ursini (2008) suggests that the use of cepit here is similar to how Propertius describes Cynthia in Elegy 1.1 (Cynthia prima suis miserum me cepit ocellis, “Cynthia captured miserable me with her sweet eyes”), thereby attributing to Rhea Silvia a type of sexual agency that is seductive and self-aware. Then the narrator emphasizes how her beauty and body incite the sexual desire of Mars, echoing the victim-blaming she experienced from the narrator in Amores 3.5. This, again, is the most
characteristic way Ovid engages in the phenomenon of victim-blaming. Her rape stems from her body and beauty, not from male violence. The stress, as well, on her appearance—highly sexualized because of its lack of proper feminine decorum—places further blame on Rhea Silvia for her own violation. Her body is exposed, sending signals about her sexuality, and is there for the taking. The attempted rape of Lotis by Priapus, the first story of sexual abuse in the *Fasti*, has similar features. Her clothing and appearance are not fit for a proper Roman woman (she and her fellow Naiads have uncombed hair, short dresses, exposed body parts) and she is also sleeping. (Mars is the only figure to successfully rape a sleeping woman in the *Fasti*, Rhea Silvia being one of several sleeping victims, including Omphale and Vesta.) (1.405–10, 423–4).

**III. Conclusions: Amores**

Roman love elegy, despite the pretense and trope of the *servitium amoris*, has always fundamentally glorified the sexual domination of women by men. Ovid, out of the major love elegists, made that most transparent and suffuses the *Amores* with images, fantasies, and stories of his narrator enacting violence against and eroticizing violence against *puellae*. In fact, the narrator throughout is a conqueror of women, whom he imagines parading wounded in a triumph (1.7), whose doors will be invaded by him as the *miles amoris* (1.9) (the specter of whom will emerge in Tereus from *Met.* 6 and in Sextus Tarquinius from *Fasti* 2), and whose rape he justifies by comparing himself to Achilles (2.8). Even in *Amores* 3.5, the mythical rape narrative of Rhea Silvia by Anio, Mars looms, the first rapist of Rhea Silvia, the conqueror of both war and women, and to whom the narrator earlier likened himself in *Amores* 1.9. Ultimately, in the *Amores*, we find both the ideologies and praxis of the narrator’s destructive and militaristic erotics, which he later theorizes, expands upon, and teaches to other men in the *Ars*. 
C. The *Ars Amatoria* and Sexualized Violence and Rape

I. Introduction to and Scholarship on the *Ars Amatoria*

The *Ars* consists of three books purporting to teach the “art of love,” first to men and then to women. The first book teaches men how to seduce and win a woman, the second teaches men how to maintain a relationship with her, and the third offers compressed advice to women seeking men. But the way the narrator of the *Ars*, or the self-stylized *praecantor amoris*, conceives of eros for men is deeply troubling. *Ars* Books 1 and 2—and this must be said bluntly—are guides for teaching men to brutalize and rape women. As the *praecantor amoris* teaches his students how to start a relationship and then sustain one, he in reality instructs his students how to have sex with a woman at any cost. We learn that he teaches his students an erotics of domination (to use the words of Greene) and that his strategies for eros are steeped in violent misogyny. In this section, I will explore when Ovid depicts rape and victim-blaming in the *Ars* and also ideologies and didactic advice to his students that support them.

The issue of Ovid’s and the *praecantor’s* misogyny in the *Ars* is one of its most contentious, and a central one in Ovidian scholarship. Should we indeed take its teachings seriously or instead view the poem as a joke, as parody and/or a critique of misogyny? Even if the *Ars* is a joke or parody, humor can have serious implications and consequences. Parker (1992), using Foucault’s theories on power and the nature of discourse from *Surveiller et punir* (1975) and *Histoire de la sexualité* I (1976), views the *Ars* as a way to enforce sexual and social control over women: it simultaneously reflects the ideologies of patriarchy and supports them. I agree with Kappeler (1986) as well in her comments about how discourse and ideology are created: every representation we see of women and rape in textual or visual media was shaped by and helps to further create misogynistic ideologies no matter the largely unknowable intentions
of the author. Even if we do not know Ovid’s intentions, we can more certainly gauge the impact of his words on his audience and on our own. Projansky (2001) argues “narratives of rape are themselves functional, generative, formative, strategic, performative, and real”—or in other words, have actual effects on society. And thus, it is a mistake not to take the information and advice within the Ars seriously, despite Ovid’s many parodies of elegiac and didactic poetry within it, how often Ovid undermines and retracts his own teachings (Davisson 1996), and how extensively Ovid focuses on deceit, lying, and artificiality within the poem (Sharrock 2012, 75–7). In what ways does Ovid’s narrator teach his primarily male audience to use their male entitlements and systematic power over women; teach them to economically, emotionally, and physically manipulate and abuse women to achieve sex in a highly patriarchal culture; and teach them to brutalize and rape women—teachings that he, tellingly, in comparison to his other areas of erotic advice, never truly undermines or retracts elsewhere in the Ars or Remedia?

But many scholars take the position that we should primarily read the work of Ovid in the Ars (and in the Amores) as works of parodic social critique. Cahoon (1988), Keith (1994), Greene (1998; 2012), Enterline (2000), Brunelle (2005), and James (2012) all assert, in various

---

67 Cynthia Garret (2004) wrote an interesting article on how the Ars impacted the ways in which Elizabethan society, poetry, and even legal codes conceived of women’s consent to sex. The notion that women enjoy force and rape simulations (to be examined more below in connection with Ovid’s use of the Deidamia myth) gained “important cultural currency from 1590–1610” after the publication of Heywood’s translation of the didactic poem (38).

68 The closest the narrator of the Ars comes to contradicting his teachings of misogyny is in Ars 2.169–175. There, he concedes that sometimes violence is too much to secure and dominate a woman, all the while alluding to domestic violence of Amores 1.7 by the amator against the puella (Desmond 2006, 40). In this passage, he downplays the reality of the violence in that poem and says that he merely disturbed (turbasse, 169) her hair (he did not tear her hair) and he is not even sure he ripped her tunic as she claims he did (Nec puto, nec sensi tunicam laniasse, “I do not think, nor did I feel that her tunic had been ripped,” 171). In the end, she made him pay, literally, for what he did (et pretio est illa redempta meo, 172). And thus, the advice of the praeceptor to his students here is primarily mercenary in nature. Even if the puella is exaggerating the abuse she received from the amator, it is better to be gentle with her rather than violent because the gentler the amator is with his puella, the less it will cost him monetaely. This passage from the Ars also helps us to see, at least from the praeceptor’s perspective, that the puella after 1.7 did have her small revenge. This admission of failure is unique in didactic poetry, where the narrator has to present himself as an incontestable expert to create legitimacy (Sharrock 2005). I will explore other possible contradictions of his misogynistic teachings later in the chapter in response to Holzberg (1997), but I will ultimately argue that they do nothing to undermine or retract the violent overtones of the Ars.
ways, that Ovid in these works, through their narrators and content, is critiquing the violence lurking beneath Roman masculinity, sexuality, and erotics and how elegiac poetry normalized that violence. I concede that Ovid does nakedly expose all this to his audience and makes his poetry more explicitly and ludicrously violent in response to the relative implicitness of his elegiac predecessors, but what does he reinforce in the process of that very exposure and amplification of violence? It is also very difficult to prove that Ovid is writing critique because, again, we can never reconstruct his intentions. Volk (2005, 91) rightly asserts that “of course, we have every right to find the praecceptor amoris pathetic or disgusting; however, we do not have the right to claim that this is what the real Ovid wants us to do.” The moralism from these scholars is a projection on Ovid and nothing more. It is, moreover, fundamentally wrong-headed to argue that texts like Ovid’s in a patriarchal culture cannot enforce misogyny, even if attempting parody and critique. This misunderstands how power works and is perpetuated: one can be part of the solution and the problem (something Foucault made clear over four decades ago in Surveiller et punir). Brunelle (2005) believes the issue of Ovid’s sympathy toward female figures has been resolved: he is not a misogynist, he is a man and poet who critiques it. Such a position cavalierly rejects powerful arguments, like those of Richlin (1992), to the contrary. Brunelle even contends that satirical elements found in the Remedia’s oozing fluids and general disgust of the female body are to be understood as attacking the misogyny of his readers (2005, 143). Satire’s focus on the body, especially the female body (as Gold highlights in her 1998 article) can never reasonably be understood as condemning misogyny, but should be understood to enforce it. Juvenal Satire 6 does not a feminist manifesto make.

Cahoon (1990), however, puts forth the most convincing argument that Ovid could be engaging in a critique of misogyny throughout his corpus in his representations of rape. She
argues that particularly in *Met.* 5.294–688—the muse Calliope’s account of the rapes of Proserpina, Cyane, and Arethusa—Ovid’s use of rape is part of his overarching strategy in the epic to critique Olympian hierarchies (1990, 201). Sexualized violence is a product of hierarchies between the male and female, and Ovid’s exile was a product of a hierarchy between the monarch and his subjects. Moreover, how are rape victims vulnerable to power, silenced, persecuted, and terrorized? How is Ovid himself in a similar position with the “Olympian” Augustus? Klindienst (1991), Newlands (1995), Enterline (2000), and King (2006) echo Cahoon and assert that Ovid uses rape victims to explore his own plight and feminine position in exile, particularly rendering the artistic ones like Philomela his doubles. This personal connection and investment works to prove Ovid’s sympathy more firmly and is something I will explore at length in Chapter Six. But this still does not abrogate or even ameliorate Ovid’s misogyny toward female figures like Philomela, according to Richlin in particular (1992). As we will see in Chapter Four, Ovid’s narrator objectifies Philomela, victim-blames her, makes her blame herself, shows us her rape and mutilation, and equates her revenge against Tereus to his violence against her, ultimately delegitimizing her resistance to male violence (*Met.* 6.438–674). I would, overall, be much more convinced that Ovid was sympathetic if he showed more than one example of a female figure condemning or resisting rape without further violence to her body and life. The only female figure who condemns rape successfully is an Olympian goddess, Ceres, as she reacts to the rape of her daughter Proserpina before Jupiter, in *Met.* Book 5 and *Fasti* Book 4.

It also cannot be understated that Ovid feels entitled to depict the mutilation and rape of Philomela, a woman, to analyze his own suffering. He is again using female figures as poetic *materia* as he and other elegists before him did, and he does so brutally. This very misogyny and Ovid’s responsibility for it matters and is missing from many of the examples of scholarship
working to prove Ovid as a social critic. In contrast to the scholars mentioned above, I am more interested in the *impact* of Ovid’s words in a misogynistic society and context and how he contributes to and mirrors its misogyny rather than challenges it, a challenge I believe can be largely a modern invention and consolation. His ambiguity should be troubling to us. Richlin (1992) and Keegan (2002) urge scholars to acknowledge that ambiguity: if they do not, they perpetuate the misogynistic, masculinist ideologies of Ovid’s time and participate in the very silencing of female figures that Ovid does with Philomela and more. Enterline (2000) appreciates how Ovid aestheticizes violence against female figures, but believes that this aestheticization is part of Ovid’s critique of misogyny. She likens Ovid to Freud: in her words, both do repeat or perpetuate patriarchal culture, but ultimately condemn it (2000, 33). This flies in the face of the feminist psychoanalysts who rose in the wake of Freud and exposed the misogyny intrinsic to his theories and writings (Irigaray 1974, 1977; Cixous 1975; DuBois 1988, and more). Like Ovid, Freud documents misogyny, but he does not essentially challenge it because of his prioritization of the phallus and the power of the father (Rubin 1975; DuBois 1988; Barrett 2014).

Moreover, before we delve into analysis of individual scenes in the *Ars*, we should recognize how Ovid explores sexualized violence and rape in nearly every piece of his extant work and how his works and their depictions of sexualized violence are always intertextual. The advice the *praecceptor amoris* gives to his male audience in the first two books of the *Ars* is ubiquitous throughout Ovid’s extended rape narratives in the *Met.* and *Fasti* (Zissos and Gildenhard 2007). Ovid gives his rapists tools and praxis from his didactic poem for their violent efforts. For example, Zissos and Gildenhard (2007, 25–27) find Tereus heeding the advice of the *praecceptor* before his rape of Philomela in many ways, particularly in his use of contrived weeping to bring his violent and erotic goals to fruition (*Met.* 6.469–71; *Ars* 1.609–10).
Similarly, Apollo assiduously follows the praecceptor’s teachings on how to seduce a woman and its trajectories in Ars Book 1. In the attempted rape of Daphne by Apollo in the Met., he attempts to make promises, to brag of his powers, to convince her, manipulate her, and then when that fails, he resorts to violence, never once considering her resistance and flight important or as an indicator of her lack of consent, only as an obstacle to his desire (Met. 1.504–557; Ars 1.438–486, 631–710). If we have read the Ars, it comes as no surprise when Tereus and Apollo resort to violence. Although Ovid seemingly advocates for seduction first and then violence as part of the strategy of eros in the Ars (to be examined below), the praecceptor’s depiction of the rape of the Sabines—the first act of rape in the Ars—shows us differently. Ovid’s narrator draws back the curtain and shows us how violence and predation have been ingrained in the game and the strategy of eros from the start. What he claims is the first Roman seduction is actually the first rape. But that is to be expected: the narrators of the Amores and the Ars conceive of eros as an act of violence and domination, and rape is its obvious product.

II. The Narrative and Ideologies of Rape in the Ars Amatoria:

1. The Rape of the Sabines: The First “Seduction”

Ovid’s portrayal of the rape of the Sabines (1.100–132) is his longest exploration and narrative of rape in the Ars, and it forecasts many of the hallmarks that will define the extended scenes of sexualized violence in the Met. and Fasti. The praecceptor amoris tells the story of the rape of the Sabines to provide an exemplum to his students of “seduction” at a theater, one of the many good places in Rome to find women (89–90, 100–102). The mythological and aetiological exempla here and elsewhere in the Ars serve to help his audience generalize about and conceive of the behaviors and psychologies of contemporary Roman women. What for Livy is the aition for the Roman concept and institution of marriage becomes a way to teach “modern romance”
(Watson 2002, 153). Ovid emphasizes the virginity of the maidens (*virginibus* *cupidas inicuuntque manus*, “They hurl their desirous hands at the virgin women,” 116). The narrator compares the women to animals of prey and even labels them *praeda* for the men who lurk in the bushes to abduct them, evoking images of *militia amoris* (*In gradibus sedit populus de caespite factis/ Qualibet hirsutas fronde tegente comas.../ Rex populo *praedae* signa petita dedit* (“The men sit on tiers made from clods of dirt, with foliage, ever which way, covering their shaggy hair...The king gave the sought-after signals for the spoils to his men,” 107–8, 14). The narrator emphasizes that they are *praeda* and also *rapta* in 125 (*Ducuntur raptae, genialis praeda, puellae*, “The raped girls are led off, the marriage spoils”). The women are intensely fearful of the men, like doves would be in the face of eagles, sheep would be in the face of raging wolves, and the men relish that fear—it increases the allure of the women (1.117–20, 126):

> Ut fugiunt aquilas, timidissima turba, columbae,  
> ut fugit invisos agna novella lupos:  
> sic illae timuere viros sine more ruentes;  
> constitit in nulla qui fuit ante color...  
> Et potuit multas ipse decere timor.

The most fearful crowd flees as doves flee eagles, as the little young lamb flees the hostile wolves: thus they feared the men rushing upon them without delay. Color remains in none of the women as it had before...And fear itself was able to make many of them comely.

Interestingly, the narrator focuses on the different fearful reactions of the women (*Nam timor unus erat, facies non una timoris*, “For their fear was from the same source, but it was not one face of fear,” 122). Livy in his account of the rape—an account with which Ovid heavily interacts—tells us how the Sabine women coped with their anger and desolation because of the rapes *as a collective* (1.9.14), but he never individualizes their reactions, a seeming innovation of
the poet’s. The Ovidian praeceptor amoris luxuriates in descriptions of their varying psychological and emotional reactions to the trauma of rape (Pars laniat crines, pars sine mente sedet; Altera maesta silet, frustra vocat altera matrem; Haec queritur, stupt haec; haec manet, illa fugit, “One part of the women tears out their hair, the other sits out of their minds; another is silently mournful, the other calls after her mother in vain: this part complains, the other is astounded; this part remains and that one flees,” 122–4). It becomes clear that the praeceptor amoris, with the use of this exemplum, wants to project the image of women as vulnerable, as weak, as fearful, as there for the taking, and as not in control of their bodies—and they are all the more attractive for it. As mentioned, the purpose of Book 1 of the Ars is to teach men how to seduce women and from the beginning of his advice to men, their teacher equates seduction to violence, rape, and militarism. The exemplum being aetiological in nature is also significant: just as women were praeda for the early Romans, that very domination extends into Ovid’s contemporary Rome. If rape can be the foundation for the first Roman marriage, why could it not also be the foundation for Roman seduction? Labate (2007) explores how Propertius in Elegy 2.16.15–22 uses the rape of the Sabines to take on an unusual moralist position (for an elegiac poet). Romulus’ lustful act, in Propertius’ mind, predicts the lack of fides among men today. Romulus taught Roman men early on to take what is not theirs. Ovid’s use of the myth is not for moralism but to encourage men to take what should be taken before their very eyes, with the implication being, even if the women do not belong to them or are unwilling.

Richlin (1992) has written about the importance of this narrative for understanding how Ovid conceives of and portrays rape, particularly in how his rapists are attracted to fear. Richlin has noticed this in the attempted rape of Daphne (Met. 1.525–32) and the rape of Philomela

---

69 Livy mentions the fear of their parents, watching the abduction of their daughters, as a collective, too (AUC 1.9.13). Later in Livy, as the war is waging between the Sabines and Romans, the abducted women, now Roman wives, still as a collective, intervene with their bodies, standing between their fathers and husbands (AUC 1.13.2).
(6.519–25) as well, and I will extend this analysis to other scenes of sexualized violence and rape in Ovid that Richlin’s article did not include in this light. The rape of the Sabines in the Ars has received the most scholarly interest, however, because of its parallels to Livy, parallels I alluded to above. ⁷⁰ Livy in the 20s B.C.E. wrote extensively about this same rape and two others Ovid himself explores: that of Rhea Silvia and Lucretia. The historian, Ovid’s contemporary, is the only author to rival him in antiquity in the level of detail in his rape scenes, and his scenes of rape, despite being part of the history of Rome, are quite literary in nature, a quality Ovid appreciated in his allusions to Livy in his own depictions of these rapes. Ovid writes about three of the same throughout his corpus: the rapes of Rhea Silvia, the Sabine women, and Lucretia.

But Ovid, even when as detailed as Livy, focuses on many different features than the historian in his depictions, features that align with his unique interests and distinct patterns throughout his corpus. Many scholars, such as Newlands (1995), detect a more obviously erotic tone in Ovid’s depictions of the rape of the Sabines here in the Ars and in the Fasti (2.429–34; 3.195–214) and in his rape of Lucretia (Fasti 2.671–385). ⁷¹ For example, while Livy has no predator-prey imagery in his scenes of rape, Ovid loads his scenes with them. This in a way makes Livy’s portrayals of rape more desexualized than those of Ovid and other authors before them, although one would err to call them completely desexualized. Livy may want to present the motivations of the Romans to be primarily political in nature, but he cannot avoid sexual desire in the story because of how closely sexual desire and political desire are intertwined in Roman thought (Beard 1999). ⁷² The Sabine women represent both growing political power and

---

⁷¹ I will explore the work of Newlands (1995), Hedjuk (2011), and Robinson (2011) in this regard in Chapter Five.
⁷² Cicero’s account, however, in De re publica 2.12–3 is largely desexualized. Cicero primarily discusses Romulus’ political motivations, plans, and the need for marriage for the Roman state to grow. He describes the rape laconically: Consualibus rapi iussit casque in familiarum amplissimarum matrimonii collocavit (“At the Consualia, he ordered the woman to be abducted and settled them into matrimony with the greatest families”).
access to sex. In Livy, the senators premeditate and decide to acquire the most beautiful of the women (Ab urbe condita 1.9.10–12), an established practice in ancient warfare according to a recent talk by Kathy Gaca (2016), Livy here conceding not only political, but sexual motivations for the mass rape. As stated in Chapter One, Greek and Roman authors use the predator and prey imagery to convey a sense of strong sexual desire. It is strange that Livy would not have any imagery of this in the rape of the Sabines because, even as he depicts it, it is very much like a hunt, prearranged signals and all (...signoque dato iuventus Romana ad rapiendas virgines discurrit, “…With a prearranged signal, the Roman youths then ran out in order to take the maidens by force,” AUC 1.9.10). But the rape of Lucretia in Livy (and also Verginia, whose rape Ovid does not tackle in his corpus) stems from uncontrollable lust on the parts of tyrants for chaste and virginal women. Livy perhaps does not need animal imagery to convey violent sexuality: he instead decides to rely on stereotypes about tyrants and their unbridled hungers. Predator-prey imagery, analogies, and similes as explored in Chapter One, are very common in epic poetry in military battles and in love poetry (again showing the connections between war, sex, violence, and rape in Graeco-Roman thought), but not so in history. This can be another explanation for their absence in Livy. The lack of the predator and prey imagery also removes the opportunity to more extensively explore the fear of the rape victims. Livy only briefly shows his audience Lucretia’s fear, and he does so by showing how Sextus forces her to be silent through intimidation and violence (Beard 2014b). The Sabine women do not receive the focalization that Ovid gives them as he depicts their terror at the individual level. In Livy, we only see their flight, he mentions their fear as a collective, and we learn that their new husbands console them after they have been abducted (AUC 1.9.16).
Livy and Ovid once again highlight the sexualization of their accounts of the rape of the Sabines by stressing how integral sight is to the sexual desire of their rapists. By doing so, the ultimate blame for the rape in both Livy and Ovid originates in the bodies and beauty of the raped women. Ovid in his account of the rape of the Sabines documents how the Roman men gaze upon and objectify the Sabine women before they are raped (*Respiciunt, oculisque notant sibi quisque puellam*/*Quam velit*, “They look and each marks the girl he wants with his eyes…,” 109–10) and after (as discussed, the narrator says their fear makes them more attractive, 117–120, 126). The narrator explicitly links the sight of the women to the incitement and inflaming of the sexual desire of Romulus’ men. There is a hint of this type of victim-blaming in Livy’s account when he writes that the more prominent Roman men desired and took the most beautiful women from the group. Elsewhere in Livy, Sextus Tarquinius gazes upon Collatinus’ spectacle of Lucretia’s chastity, and he then immediately desires her (*Ibi Sex. Tarquinium mala libido Lucretiae per vim stuprandae capit; cum forma tum spectata castitas incitat*, “Then, an evil desire to rape Lucretia overcomes Sextus; her beauty and her chastity, having been seen, incite him,” Livy, *AUC* 57.10–11). Ovid mirrors and expands upon this connection between gazing upon Lucretia’s body and the desire for Sextus to rape her in his own account of Lucretia in the *Fasti* (2.755–83). Collatinus, making himself vulnerable to a man and a gaze more powerful than his, not only exposed Lucretia’s chastity, but her body. In these passages of Livy and Ovid, the rapists came, they saw the women, and then, aroused by what they saw, they raped.73

There are further similarities between Ovid and Livy. For example, the historian, in his rape of the Sabines episode, has one of the most characteristic examples of female figures victim-blaming themselves for their own rapes in antiquity. Livy shows the Sabines accepting their rapes and even forgiving their rapists, and has them blame themselves for the violence of

---

73 In Chapter Five, we will continue to explore how Livy’s accounts of rape are far from completely desexualized.
the war between their male relatives, exonerating all-too-typical male militaristic responses to sexual violations (nos causa belli, nos volnerum ac caedium viris ac parentibus sumus, “We are the cause of the war, of the wounds, of the slaughter, for our husbands and fathers,” AUC 1.13.3). The Sabines even ask for the violence of the war to be directed against them because they are nothing without their husbands and fathers (melius peribimus quam sine alteris vestrum viduae aut orbae vivemus, “It is better for us to die than to live without one or the other as you, as widows and as orphans,” AUC 1.13.3). Ovid does not show us the aftermath of the rape of the Sabines until Fasti Book 3. In the Ars, Ovid gives us no indication of the political and military aftermath because his focus is on the erotic elements of the myth and the use of “seduction” to inspire his students (Murgatroyd 2005, 255). It is about the chase and not what comes after.

The story of the rape of the Sabines in the Fasti is narrated by the god Mars, revealed to be a rapist himself, of Rhea Silvia, at the beginning of Book 3. Mars gives us a very compressed version of the Sabine abduction, although he has time to encourage Romulus, one of the sons Rhea Silvia bore him after her rape, to follow in his father’s footsteps as a rapist (3.197). He instead moves on quickly to the subsequent war between the Romans and the Sabines (3.203–4) and the intervention of the women in the war (3.215–228), a suppression that causes

---

74 Narrators in the Fasti are very diverse: there is a cacophony of different voices offering their take on the myths, religious rituals, and aetiologies of Rome. Mars is one of the “informants” (both mortal and divine) Ovid consults (Newlands 1992, 34). Ovid seems to be adopting a more democratic and open approach to religious ideology and didacticism than, for example in the Ars, where the narrator is “self-reliant” and “arrogant” (Newlands 1992, 34).

75 The rape of the Sabines is covered many times in Ovid’s corpus. Murgatroyd (2005, 255) observes that if we take all the passages as a composite, we receive “via segmented narration” the entire story of the lead up to the rape of the Sabines, the process of the rape, and the aftermath, even years later. We see it here in Fasti Book 3, the Ars passage (the only place we see the rape in action), in Fasti Book 2.429ff, which reports the relative infertility of the Sabine women and the need for the Lupercalia (a fertility festival), and moreover, earlier in Fasti Book 2, in what is purportedly extended praise of the emperor Augustus. Ovid compares him to Romulus: the first king of Rome raped the Sabine women, but now Augustus has legislated to protect the chastity of women (tu rapis, hic castas duce se iubet esse maritas, “you rape wives, [Romulus] but Augustus, orders them, under his rule, to be chaste,” 2.139). Here, Ovid directly calls attention to the importance of aition of the rape of the Sabines and the figure of Romulus to Augustan ideology, propaganda, and self-fashioning. For example, Augustus, before he took the name Augustus, considered Romulus as his special cognomen (Suetonius 7.2). See the commentary of Robinson (2011) 138–157 for the controversies surrounding the passage: is Ovid insulting Augustus with such a comparison or supporting his regime? Augustus himself was a wife-snatcher: he demanded Livia, married to Calpurnius Piso, become his wife.
Newlands to label Mars one of the many unreliable interlocuters in the *Fasti* (1995, 42). But in many ways, Ovid, through Mars, picks up where he left off in the *Ars*, a technique common to Ovid throughout his corpus; for example, in the *Met.* 2.833–875, he suppresses the rape of Europa and shows only the events immediately before her rape and her ride atop Jupiter disguised as a bull, but later in the *Fasti* 4.603–620 he shows us her fate clearly.

Miles (1992, 175) notes that Ovid’s/Mars’ suppression of the abduction and rape in this passage likewise suppresses the subjectivity of the women, even as he moves them centerstage, so to speak, in the conflict between their two families and has them initiate “the merging of two peoples” (Murgatroyd 2005, 8). This contrasts with his elaborate descriptions discussed above in the *Ars* of the collective and individual trauma of the Sabines. Even when the women intervene in the war, Miles (1992, 177) argues that we do not hear their own voices or fears, only how they “ventriloquize” the voices of their children. They are only named as mothers (*iamque fere raptae matrum quoque nomen habebant*,” “And now almost all the raped women had the title of mother,” 3.203), and this ventriloquization shows that they are only valuable for what they produce on behalf of their husbands and their fathers. Roman male domination of women is especially manifest here because, as the Sabine women use their progeny to convince their Roman husbands and Sabine fathers to stop the war, Ovid shows, more broadly, how reproduction and women are firmly within the grip and hands of Roman patriarchal structures. In Rome, women are exchanged between men through both rape and marriage (the early Romans under Romulus make the exchange of sexualized violence the source of their marriage customs, thereby conflating the “illegitimate” and “legitimate” exchanges of women), so as to produce

---

76 The unreliability of his narrators, even the divine ones (of which there are many in the *Fasti*), most clearly emerges when they offer multiple aetiologies for religious phenomena and rituals. For example, Janus offers three explanations for why he has two faces in Book 1 (89–145). Newlands (1995) suggests that Ovid problematizes and confuses a notion of stability in Roman religious thought, discourse, time, history, and ideology to contrast Augustus’ moves to unify Roman religion and time itself in the image of his power, himself, and his family.
progeny and more men, ultimately increasing the political and economic power of men.

Ovid is even lacking the touch of Livy who asserts that the intervention of the wives makes them cariores to their husbands (AUC 1.13.6). In Livy and Ovid, the women use their offspring to convince the men to stop fighting, but unlike Ovid, as mentioned above, Livy depicts the women using their own voice as a collective during this intervention, not the ventriloquized voices of their children—although, of course, the Livian Sabines blame themselves for their rapes and wish more violence upon themselves for their menfolk, the ultimate female sacrifice. Keegan (2002) would contend that the silencing of the women in the Fasti is part of how Ovid consistently silences female figures like Philomela (Met. 6.549–62) and how his works reflect Roman patriarchy and its gender norms and overall, participate in ideologies that suppress the voices of women. Miles (1992, 188), on the other hand, reads this passage as critique: Ovid strips away all the “niceties and formalities” to expose the passivity of the women and the violence they have experienced. But, as I have argued, the never-ending depictions of female figures as passive and victimized in Ovid are not and cannot be neutral, no matter their intention.

2. Pasiphae and Deidamia Exempla: Unrapeability

Another important way Ovid depicts rape and sexualized violence in Ars Book 1 is in his narrator’s denial that women can be raped: women always want sex, can be seduced, and like to be forced physically into sex even when they say otherwise, as part of the game of seduction. The narrator, using exempla of wicked and wanton women from mythology, like Pasiphae, to bolster his claim, posits that women are sexually voracious and uncontrollable by nature, much more so than men (Omnia feminea sunt ista libidine mota; acrior est nostra, plusque furoris habet, “All of womankind is moved by that kind of libido: it is fiercer than that of men and it has more fury,” 1.341–2). Women cannot say no to sex, they will not reject men (Ergo age, ne
Therefore, go on, do not hesitate to hope for all women; there is hardly one from the multitude of women, who should say no to you,” 1.343–4). Pasiphae particularly is so sexually voracious that she will break the interspecies taboo (1.286–324), just as Myrrha, Byblis, and Phaedra, the other mythological exempla he cites, break the incest taboo (1.283–6; 338). By depicting the hypersexuality of women in this way, he renders women as unable to be raped, vitiates the entire concept of consent and bodily autonomy, and downplays the violence of the entitlement he teaches his students. The claim that men have tamer sexual urges (341–2) is quite suspect considering the number of times he shows men sexually manipulating and attacking women. On the whole, there is tension between his claims that women are weak and thus should be the sexual prey of men (such as in the rape of the Sabines) and that they are sexually crazed. Which one is it? Both? The praeceptor wants to justify his abuse of them at every turn. They are vulnerable, so take them; they are always lustful, so tame them. In each scenario, the blame for the rape and brutalization the woman experiences lies in the nature of the woman and her body.

His conception of women as irrational, hypersexual beings, moreover, affirms the imagery of men hunting, taming, cultivating women throughout the Ars: women need to be overpowered sexually. The comparisons of women to animals and also to elements of nature in general (first extensively outlined by Eleanor Leach in 1964) enforce ideologies about women and the power women have over them. Equating women with nature (animals, crops and fields, the wilds) and men with civilization (hunting, agriculture, farming, domestication of animals) asserts that men can control women like men have controlled nature and subjected it to civilization, made it into

77 Leach (1964) and Gibson (2003) have gathered the following citations of when the Ars compares women to prey, animals, and crops: women being hunted (1.45–8, 1.253, 263–65, 269–270, 403, 646, 763–6; 2.2.185–92; 3.425–8, 3.591–2, 3.669–70); women compared to domestic animals (1.350, 629–30; 2.99–100, 183, 341, 433–34, 471–2, 481–8); women compared to miscellaneous animals (1.627; 2.147–50, 373–7, 465, 517); women compared to crops and fields (1.90, 349, 360, 399–400, 401, 450, 725, 757; 2.115–16, 322, 342, 351–52, 513, 688; 3.101, 562).
their image, and used it as *materia* for their own advancement (see Chapter One). Men can control nature/Woman if they use *ars* in the ways the *praecceptor* instructs (Myerowitz 1985, 116). Women’s identification with nature is additionally threatening to the order of civilization/Man: their wildness needs to be subdued. As discussed, Ovid asserts that women experience uncontrollable lust more than men and violate fundamental social taboos like those against incest and interspecies relationships (1.280–342). Men can and should control women’s lust—or else (Myerowitz 1985, 119). These very comparisons also have significant implications for the rape and sexualized violence in the *Ars*. The encouragement to brutalize and rape women operates in a poem that persistently objectifies and animalizes women and codes them as weak and vulnerable in comparison to the men who pursue them, and where eros is compared to hunting and farming. This level of dehumanization for women makes the dehumanization of rape the narrator encourages and depicts throughout more palatable and normalized.78

The *praecceptor* advises his students in Book 1 that they should first try seduction (265–634) and emotional manipulation (635–63) and when those strategies do not work, men should use force against women to consummate the relationship to their liking (664–704). For Ovid’s persona, sex is just a matter of persistence and weakening a woman’s resistance. He even advises his students to cry, or at least pretend to cry before the *puellae* to break down their resistance (659–662). Almost immediately after this advice, he begins discussing how women have to be forced into sex no matter what. The *praecceptor* argues that women always want violent sex, which simulates rape, and that is exactly why men must initiate sex. Women will feign coy resistance to sex for their own pleasure as part of a larger game of flirtation, seduction, and lust; and what man will only accept a kiss from a woman when there is so much more? (1.664–676):

*Illa licet non det, non data sume tamen.*

78 Women are also compared to feral animals in the *Ars* to describe the depths of their sexual jealousy (1.373–7).
Although she may not give, take what she has not given. Perhaps she will resist and she will say “wicked man!” but she wants to be conquered in her resistance. However, beware, lest the things taken harm her tender lips badly, lest she may be able to complain of how rough you were. He who took the kisses from the girl, if he will not take more, he deserves to lose those also which have been given. How much was lacking for the full fulfillment of your vow after the kisses? Oh my: that [failure to do more sexually] was gaucheness, not modesty. Some may call it force, but force is pleasing to girls. Whatever woman is violated by a sudden rape, she rejoices, and she considers the wickedness like a gift.

Women will say no when they mean yes; they want force, and he has proof from mythology!

He contends that women act just like Deidamia when Achilles raped her. According to the praeceptor, women will similarly pretend to resist and pretend to be raped, although the sex is actually consensual (Viribus illa quidem victa est, ita credere oportet: Sed voluit vinci viribus illa tamen, “it is thus necessary to think that she was truly won by force, but nevertheless she wanted to be won by force,” 1.699–700). Deidamia even desires the hero (1.701–4):

Saepe “mane!” dixit, cum iam properaret Achilles; fortia nam posita sumpserat arma colo.
Vis ubi nunc illa est? Quid blanda voce moraris auctorem stupri, Deïdamia, tui?

Often, she said, “Stay!” although Achilles was already rushing away; for with her clinging to his neck, he had taken up his strong arms. Where now is that (sexual) coercion? Why do you delay the author of your stuprum, Deidamia, with a coaxing voice?

Women, again, are to blame for the violence done against them—this is what they want from men…according to a man. Richlin (1992, 168), while analyzing this passage, rightly claims that
by prioritizing the male point of view in this scene of rape, the praeceptor renders the “feelings of women consistently unreal.” Ovid tells us this about women, but we never know what women think or feel. We only know what men want to think of Deidamia and the sex she epitomizes.

Furthermore, through Achilles’ use of vis (699, 700, 703) against Deidamia and through her submission to it, he is able to prove, regain, and expose his manhood (Haec illum stupro comperit esse virum, “She discovers that he is a man through stuprum,” 1.698) although he is disguised as a woman. The Romans even etymologically related the word vis to the word vir (Wheeler 1997, 195)—being a man is being violent and the praeceptor amoris claims women love men for it. The clothing of Achilles may have destabilized his gender temporarily, but it did not fundamentally transform it.79 This barely suppressed desire of women to be raped was, moreover, already present in Propertius’ poetry: in 4.4 the infamous Tarpeia begs to be abducted and raped like the Sabine women by Tatius (...At raptae ne sint impune Sabinae: me rape et alterna lege repende uices!, “…Lest the Sabine women were raped with impunity, rape me and pay compensation with an alternate law in turn,” 4.4.57–58).80

The narrator of the Ars, with these assertions about female sexuality, is covering his bases: he previously suggests that women cannot be raped because of their Pasiphae-like hypersexuality (1.286–344) and later in lines 1.664–704, he suggests that men should never consider their unwanted violence against women truly violent and instead view it as part of sexual strategy, which renders resistance to unwanted sex as attractive and like play-acting. It becomes clear that

79 In Statius’ Achilleid, Deidamia knows Achilles is a man dressed as a woman, and Cyrino (1998, 234) persuasively argues that she wants him to act and dress more feminine in order to continue the ruse and also draw him closer to her. Statius, often very intertextual with Ovid, has continued the position that Deidamia welcomes the vis of Achilles. For more on the intertextuality of Statius with Ovid, see Peter Davis (2006) and Chinn (2013).
80 Tara Welch (2005) explores why Tarpeia compares herself to the Sabine women. Tarpeia, because of her love for Tatius, an enemy combatant, wants to show that like the Sabine women, she can combine peace, harmony, and marriage. Marriage is one of the chief ways the Romans united communities and peoples. Tarpeia here makes an almost scandalous comparison: Tarpeia and the Sabine women were often used as sexual foils for one another, even in the Roman forum. The Sabine women helped Rome through their sexuality and Tarpeia betrayed Rome “through unregulated sexuality” and “the ability of women to undermine proper relations between men” (306).
Ovid’s narrator wants to ensure that men will always have excuses for their violence against women. But Ovid concedes there is such a thing as too much violence against women in Book 2 (169–176) and that it renders women mute, depressed, and battered. Desmond (2006, 46) suggests that Ovid instructs his students about how to commit violence, but in moderation and appropriately. Violence against women is a strategy a man must use with care.

Holzberg (1997, 97, 126) advises that we should be careful about what Ovid’s use of the Pasiphae and Deidamia myths ultimately say about his views on women: does not Ovid in the same work show the Sabine women to be reluctant? Similarly, later in Book 3.9–22 he writes that women are inherently chaste and not the promiscuous, lustful creatures like the Pasiphae he presented as a model for all women in Book 1. The praecceptor also contradicts his advice in the rape of the Sabines in Book 2.146–7, when he urges men not to be predators and hunters and to be gentle with their lovers: Odimus accipitrem, quia vivit semper in armis,/Et pavidum solitos in pecus ire lupos (“We despise the hawk, because he lives always in arms and [we despise] the wolves accustomed to going into the fearful herd.”). Are these statements contradictory enough to show that Ovid is not serious in the Ars, that he could be issuing critique of the misogynistic teachings of the poem, that the praecceptor amoris is a failure, that he is incompetent? If we are to take these contradictions about women’s lust or chastity, willingness or resistance more innocuously, they show that Ovid is being playful with his material and suggests that his audience stay alert to possible discrepancies; but if we take them more sinisterly, as I do, these contradictions show that, as argued above, the praecceptor wants to ensure that his students will acquire the puella no matter what. They are not critiques or failures. They show the changes the praecceptor intentionally makes depending on the audience to ingratiate himself to them (what does he say to his male audience versus his female?), his deviousness, and his ruthlessness.
Holzberg concedes that Roman men would not have been expected to have sympathy for women who had been raped (126), and his defense of Ovid here again raises questions about why so many scholars want to believe that Ovid is sympathetic to female figures.

3. Militarism and Sexualized Violence in the *Ars Amatoria*

Ovid, moreover, in the *Ars* often compares men to soldiers who must conquer women (Desmond 2006, 45), an analogy that supports ideologies of violence against women and the domination of them by men. This comparison is most explicit in the narrative of the rape of the Sabines when the narrator addresses Romulus and praises how he bestowed bounty onto his soldiers (*Romule, militibus scisti dare commoda solus*, “Romulus, you alone knew how to give benefits to your soldiers,” 1.131). Ovid even suggests that events like the military triumphs of Augustus and his family are ideal locations for the cultivation of eros, as both the man and woman stare at foreigners, bound in chains and about to meet death (1.215–218). This scene of a captive displayed in a triumph should remind us of *Amores* 1.7. After the narrator strikes his *puella* in *Amores* 1.7, he likens her to a captive foreigner bound in chains and likens himself to a

---

81 Ovid’s allusions to experiences and events in the *Amores* lead some scholars, like Volk (2002) and Sharrock (2005), to claim that we see the same persona and narrator in both the *Amores* and the *Ars*. The praeceptor even says he wrote the *Amores* within the *Ars* 3.343. I agree they are the same (and believe this same narrator can also be found in the *Remedia* and *Medicamina*), but in the *Ars*, this narrator has decided to stylize himself as the praeceptor amoris and that is why I tend to refer to him as such. As we have analyzed previously in this chapter, the nature of narrators in the *Her.* is complex, and the nature of the narrators in the *Met.* and *Fasti* continues to be complex, primarily because of their multiplicity. Many characters speak in these works. The role of narrators in the *Met.* and *Fasti* will be carefully considered when we discuss the portrayal of sexualized violence in those works, especially when rape victims narrate their trauma themselves (one of the central features of the *Her.*).

The *Her.* has no primary narrator and every heroine or hero is the narrator of their own epistle. The narrator constantly shifts, although I argued Ovid is always there. But what about Ovid’s other works? Is he always in control? And is the primary narrator always the same person, like in the *Amores* and the *Ars*? In general, I take the stance that Ovid can breathe life and difference into many different characters, their personae, their narrations, but that he, as character, persona, and narrator, is ultimately the “guiding intelligence” of all his works, to use the words of Wheeler (1999, 70). The primary narrator in the *Amores*, *Ars*, *Remedia*, *Medicamina*, *Met.*, *Fasti*, and exile poetry is poetically self-conscious, knows he is a poet, constantly draws attention to the process of writing poetry, and refers back to his future and past work; and in *Amores*, *Ars*, *Fasti*, and exile poetry the narrator even identifies himself as Naso (Volk 2005, 88). Therefore, it becomes clear that the primary narrator of these works are versions of “Ovid” as a poet, primary narrators taking on distinct poetic requirements and standards depending on the material (elegiac poetry, epic, etiology, and more) (Wheeler 1999, 70). We may see different personae in his work, but not poetae. Ovid even plays with the tensions between his various pieces of poetry and poetic interests. For example, he assures Venus at the beginning of *Fasti* Book 4 that he has not completely forgotten his amatory elegiac origins.
military general. This, as we explored in the section on the *Amores*, is a way to exemplify power dynamics and the erotics of domination in their relationship. After imagining her as a captive, he asserts that the pain she is experiencing and the specific violence he inflicted upon her makes her attractive (49–60). Ovid eroticizes her submission and the violence against her and solidifies the links between sex, violence, and war. Desmond (2006, 45) argues that *Amores* 1.7 can help us to better read the *Ars* and the amatory lessons it gives its students. Because of the echoes of *Amores* 1.7 in the *Ars* triumph scene and how Ovid generally in the didactic poem connects heteroerotics, masculinity, and domination, the foreign slaves walking before the military generals—whom the narrator says young men and women watch together—acts as an exemplum for relations between men and women. Soon the women will face that violence, and be captive, too.

4. *Ars Amatoria* Book 3: Female Sexuality, Sexualized Violence, and Victim-Blaming

In Book 3 of the *Ars* Ovid writes a guide for women, an interesting reversal of the intended audience of his first two books. He even reverses many of the telltale features of eros he reserved for men and women previously. Ovid compares women to predatory animals throughout Book 3, which he did in *Ars* 1 and 2 for men. In one of the most significant examples of such a reversal, Ovid shows Procris, former companion of Diana, in a predatory position in relation to Cephalus, her husband, before he believes she is a wild animal and kills her with his own spear (proving once again how animalized women are in the *Ars*) (3.686ff). She hunts and stalks

---

82 By comparing women to predators in Book 3, Ovid can create and sustain a sense of gender reversal since the *praecceptor* is now writing to help women, instead of men, with *amor*. He makes them the predators because they now are the ones on the prowl, so to speak. But as Gibson (2003) observes, often when men are compared to predatory animals, they are given strategy; but the female predatory animals are not given strategy and are even portrayed as insane, for example in lines 7–8 of Book 3: *Dixerit e multis aliquis “quid virus in angues/Adicis, et rabidae tradis ovile lupae*, “Someone from the multitude of men might have said, ‘Why do you add to the venom of snakes and hand over the sheep to the rabid wolf?’”). This is also the case later on in *Ars* 3.419–22, when a woman is compared to a predatory wolf and the eagle of Zeus. Overall, Ovid compares women to prey and also to fields to be plowed to a much greater extent than he reverses these positions and applies them to men. See footnote 74.
Cephalus in the *locus amoenus* believing he has cheated on her. This reversal predicts many elements of the narratives of female rapists in the *Met.*, such as Salmacis (4.317–88), whose attack on Hermaphroditus we will explore at length in Chapter Four. But these reversals are intended to titillate a predominantly male audience and allow them to indulge in fantasies about the power women have in relation to men. Myerowitz (1985), Richlin (1992), and Gibson (2003) have all effectively shown that despite superficial changes and sympathy with women in Book 3 of the *Ars*, the book is for the male consumption and gaze and is replete with misogyny. Ovid spends a great portion of the book reminding women that their bodies are revolting and suggests various ways to obscure their physical faults for the pleasure of men (3.770–84). The examples of the narrator’s horror of the bodies and bodily functions of women are multitudinous, but one of the most vivid examples is his advice that women must have sex often before they become pregnant and therefore, deformed and ugly. In this particular passage, he uses agricultural imagery to describe how childbirth makes the “field,” or the woman’s vagina, look worn (*continua messe senescit ager*, “the field grows old from continual harvest,” 3.82). Even the story of Procris is misogynistic: it is an example of how she ultimately submits to a man’s sexual power (and how she should have submitted earlier). Desmond (2006, 51) explores how Procris dies with Cephalus crying over her wound, a wound we must see as sexual because it was created with Cephalus’ phallic spear (743–4). Procris should have learned not to distrust her husband and to believe him, despite suspicions. To paraphrase Myerowitz (1985, 109–112), Ovid’s persona (in her mind, again, there is a difference between the persona and implied author) has shown that for men *amor* is the *ars* of conquering women and for women, they must learn the *ars* of conquering themselves, their bodies, and their psyches for the sake of men. The book

---

83 The Procris and Cephalus myth has generated much scholarship and controversy, particularly because of how Ovid represents it differently in the *Ars* and in the *Met.* See particularly Gibson’s 2003 commentary on *Ars* Book 3.
is meant to teach women that they are objects for sexual pleasure and that they should succumb.

Some scholars, like Rimell (2006), have tried to read sympathy in Ovid’s suggestion in Book 3 that women should enjoy sex and should orgasm (Sentiat ex imis venerem resoluta medullis/ Femina, et ex aequo res iuvet illa duos, “May a woman feel desire loosened from her deepest marrow and may this thing aid the two [sexual partners] equally, 3.793–4), which echoes a passage from 2.703–32. In the passage from Ars 2, Ovid argues for mutually gratifying sex between a man and a woman. We must remember that Book 2 focuses on how to puellam tenere (to keep the girl) and making sure she orgasms is part of that aim (Janka 1997, 486). The man during sex, likened here to the heroes Hector and Achilles, should look for the parts of a woman’s body most pleasurable to her and move through sex slowly and carefully for her sake (2.717–20). We expect that Ovid, with Hector and Achilles, would emphasize the virile, sexually dominating man. But Rimell argues that our expectations about the heroes are deflated because of their attention to the females’ sexual pleasure and not just to their own. She believes, connecting this passage to her analysis of hierarchical and relational dynamics between the genders in Ovid, that the passage emphasizes mutual masturbation, pleasure, and sexual agency and hence, relational dynamics (2006, 93–4). For example, the narrator says the male and female partners are the potential leaders in sex, that they are both captains of the “love boat” (so to speak), working toward the ultimate amount of mutual pleasure (2.725–8). Ovid’s use of nautical imagery, like sails (vela), for a woman is significant: usually in Ovid (and didactic literature in general) men are the ones urged to steer ships. 84 But even Rimell (2006, 93–4) concedes that at the conclusion of the passage we have (rushed) penetration (Cum mora non tuta est, totis incumbere remis/ Utile, et admisso subdere calcar equo, “When delay is not safe, it is useful to

84 See Amores 2.9B.7–8, 3.6.23ff; Ars 1.5–8, 771–772, 2.181–2, 514; 3.99–100, 500, 584; Remedia 447–8, 811–12. Moreover, journey, travel, and shipping metaphors and similes are very common in didactic poetry (see Volk 2002).
lean forward on all the oars and subdue the horse [allowed] to a gallop with the heel,” 2.731–2), penetration being something the Romans equated with power and masculinity. Once again, a woman is compared to an animal that a man must tame, even if she has been allowed more freedom than is usual. And since the narrator describes Achilles as tired (lassus) from battle (2.711–2), Rimell writes “equality [between the man and woman] could be an occasional side effect of exhaustion” (94) and not something more permanently embraced.

Rimell (2006) endeavors to argue that the Ars—and much of Ovid’s corpus—is an act of doubling between men and women, of each gender seeing into the world of the other. In her view, neither the man nor the woman ultimately wins in this game of love in the Ars, and Ovid gives men and women the standard characteristics, powers, and behaviors of the other gender to complicate and undermine the hierarchies we usually see between men and women. One of her most cogent examples of Ovid destabilizing gender norms is his assertion that men should use mirrors, even the mirrors of women (Ars 2.215–6). Narcissism is directly associated with women in Ars 1.613ff, and then Ovid encourages men to engage in it despite his earlier arguments that men should not be obsessed with their looks. Mirrors in antiquity were essentially feminine. For example, in Aristophanes’ Thesmophoriazusae a mirror comes to represent woman in line 140, while the sword represents men (a deeply Freudian contrast). This is an interesting point of gender destabilization, but analysis like this, without concessions to how Ovid enforces gender norms, errs. Rimell largely ignores all the examples of sexualized violence and rape in the Ars and how they create an ideology of domination and hierarchy to the detriment of women. Rimell wants to explore the relational, rather than the hierarchical aspects of Ovid’s corpus, but the hierarchical are too intrinsic to ignore. Even in Ars 2.703–32, which urges his male students to pleasure a woman slowly during sex and which seemingly depicts the mutuality of sex between a
man and woman, it is clear that Ovid undermines such mutuality through the passage’s conclusion of rushed male sexual pleasure, an undermining he has consistently enforced throughout the *Ars*. Rimell is right to look for symmetry in his corpus and she does so in many interesting, provocative ways, but an asymmetrical sexuality always emerges in the end.

As for the passage in Book 3 about women’s orgasm (*Sentiat ex imis venerem resoluta medullis/ Femina, et ex aequo res iuvet illa duos*), many scholars, most recently Volk (2010), have noted that Ovid is not being as egalitarian as he seems in 3.793–4; a few lines later, he advises women that they should (pretend to) orgasm from sex to please their male sexual partners and condemns women who cannot feel an orgasm from sex with men (3.796–800):

\[
Tu quoque, cui veneris sensum natura negavit, 
dulcia mendaci gaudia finge sono. 
Infelix, cui torpet hebes locus ille, puella, 
quo pariter debent femina virque frui.
\]

You, also, to whom nature has denied the sensation of an orgasm, pretend (to have) these sweet joys with a faked sound. Unhappy is the girl, for whom that languid place is numb, in which man and woman equally should enjoy.

Here orgasming, or the pretense of it, is a way for women to live up to men’s ideals. This very ideal is yet another example of male entitlement to women’s bodies and sexualities, and such a lesson instructs women to submit to desires of male sexuality. He does not advise sexual freedom for women and once again, reinforces the position throughout the third book of the *Ars* that women should look like this, do that, all so that men can feel pleasure. Women have to suppress their true selves and feelings for the sake of men: they do not get pleasure of their own. Women even have to control how they laugh to please men and their objectifying gazes (3.281–90): they can only open their mouths slightly, laugh softly, and show some of their teeth. Myerowitz (1992, 136) summarizes women making themselves *materia* for men best in an article similar to her 1985 book: “The woman is told to arrange herself for a male spectator, that is, she is told to
objectify her own body and see herself through masculine eyes.” Women need *ars* to ensure that their bodies, emotions, and personality always seem pleasing to men (Myerowitz 1985, 137) and the processes of this concealment and cultivation must be hidden from the man (*Ars* 3.209–18).

*Ars* Book 3 also overtly engages in victim-blaming women for their rapes. This continues the rhetoric we have seen in *Ars* Book 1 when Ovid says that women should be preyed upon because of their vulnerabilities, their hypersexuality, and because they want to be the prey. Ovid outlines how and when women should drink to secure the attention of men. But he condemns women who become too inebriated. He comments that women who drink too much deserve to suffer any sexual contact that befalls them during that state. They should not fall asleep either because who-knows-what could happen while one is sleeping (3.765–8):

_Turpe iacens mulier multo madefacta Lyaeo:_
_digna est concubitus quoslibet illa pati._
_Nec somnis posita tutum succumbere mensa:_
_per somnos fieri multa pudenda solent._

(As for) the woman lying there, made shamefully drunk by too much Bacchus: she deserves to suffer any sexual contact (that befalls her). A woman is not safe to fall asleep, lying under the table. Many shameful things happen during sleep.

This is a typical way to blame a woman for her own sexual abuse and rape: focus on how she has made herself vulnerable to male predation rather than condemn how men decide to prey upon that vulnerability. Feminists who have studied victim-blaming show that women are often discouraged from drinking by wider society to avoid sexualized violence, but men are rarely told that women cannot fully consent to sex when intoxicated (Bourke 2007, Raphael 2013). Moreover, recent studies confirm that men who commit sexual abuse intentionally seek out women who are more vulnerable to emotional and physical coercion and whom people are more likely to blame and disbelieve because of drinking, their sex life, and more (Raphael 2013). Ovid

---

85 Romans traditionally associated women drinking with a lack of chastity. In the early Republic, Dionysius of Halicarnassus reports that a husband had a right to kill his wife for drinking or committing adultery (2.25).
only seldom again focuses on women and drinking in his later corpus to blame women (we see the drinking of the Lotis, the Omphale, and Vesta subject to scrutiny in the Fasti’s “comic” rapes, 1.404, 2.303–59, 6.325), but he primarily focuses on their beauty, body, and appearances as the site and origin of sexualized violence against them. Although this type of victim-blaming is almost unique to the Ars, many features of the didactic poem we have discussed find their ways into the representations of sexualized violence in the Met. and Fasti.

III. Conclusions: Ars Amatoria

In Ovid’s guidebook for “love,” the praecceptor amoris advocates for an “erotics of domination” (to again use the words of Ellen Greene). Rape suffuses the didactic poem, both as a way for the narrator and his students to conceive of their own desires for women and a method for men to employ against women. The narrator first turns to the rape of the Sabines to justify conflating seduction and rape and to eroticize violence. He later defines the Roman military triumph as a context from which to understand sexual relationships and compares men on the prowl in Rome to Roman soldiers, further equating sex and violence. The narrator then turns to the myths of Pasiphae and Deidamia to argue that women cannot be raped because they are simultaneously hypersexual, coy, and (secretly) desirous of rough sex. In the Deidamia myth, in particular, he depicts the rape of Deidamia while claiming that women call normative, heterosexual relations vis, when it is not vis in reality. In the universe of the Ars, Roman women do not even have the right to orgasm for their own pleasure, and they are blamed for the violence they receive from men because they want it and make themselves vulnerable through the use of alcohol and other behaviors. Later in Ovid’s corpus, many of his male characters adopt the ideologies and tactics of the didactic poem in their own coercive pursuits of female figures, such as Apollo with Daphne (Met. 1.473–567) and Tereus with Philomela (6.401–674), showing all
along that the *praeeceptor amoris* was never teaching his students seduction, only violence.
Chapter Three: Metamorphosis in the *Metamorphoses* and the *Fasti*

Before I analyze the rapes in the *Met.* and *Fasti* in Chapters Four and Five, I must establish how the majority of rapes in these works are different from the rapes we have seen previously in the *Her.*, *Amores*, and *Ars* because of the prominent focus on metamorphosis. Transformation is, evidently, a central element in the *Met.*, but admittedly, less so in the *Fasti.* Ovid’s elegiac poem does not explore transformation as prominently as the epic poem, but it still features dozens of tales of transformation largely as a result of its interest in Roman religious aetiology. How does metamorphosis emerge in Ovid’s two lengthiest works and what are its predominant features? And most importantly to my purposes, how is metamorphosis directly linked to the phenomenon of sexualized violence in his works? It is first imperative to comment briefly on the patterns of metamorphosis in Ovid and note that the *Met.* and the *Fasti*’s shared emphases on transformation have different manifestations, and then we will tackle the intimate connections Ovid makes between transformation and rape, gender, femininity, and victim-blaming.

Everett Beek (2015) in her recent dissertation on supernatural transformation in the *Fasti*, outlines a critical distinction between the metamorphoses we see in the *Met.* and in the *Fasti*. She contends that the epic poem more routinely features transformations of people turned into plants, stones, trees, and animals (downward metamorphosis) variously as punishment, as disguise, as salvation, as a response to grief. Everett Beek also observes that in the *Met.* transformation is likely to be punitive, is often a way to escape suffering (sexualized) violence at all, and out of the hundreds of transformations, only about dozen feature apotheosis (elevating metamorphosis).

---

86 If we look at Ovid’s corpus more broadly and abstractly, transformation can be said to define every work both generically and thematically: the transformation of female mythological figures into poets in the *Her.*, the transformation of the elegiac genre in the *Amores* and *Ars*, the transformation of self from lover to enemy in the *Remedia Amoris*, the transformation of Hellenistic myth in the *Met.*, and the transformation of Ovid from Roman poet to exile in the *Tristia* and the *Epistulae ex Ponto*. See Kenney (2002) for his masterful study of Ovid’s transformations at the intertextual and linguistic level throughout his works.
The elegiac poem, on the other hand, only features one animalistic transformation (that of the nymph Callisto into a bear who later experiences another transformation into a constellation, *Fasti* 2.153–192), two punitive transformations (that of Callisto again into a bear and Lara’s mutilation of her tongue at the hands of an angry Jupiter, 2.533–610)\(^87\), and none as a response to grief. The *Fasti* instead displays much more interest in humans or nymphs undergoing apotheosis at the hands of divinities into stars, immortals, or gods after an ordeal of suffering as either compensation for the violence they experience or salvation from further violence or near death. Rape victims like Flora (*Fasti* 5.195–206) or Carna (6.101–182) are apotheosized by their rapists for services rendered, so to speak.\(^88\) Callisto fits both molds of apotheosis since she is rescued from being murdered by her son, but she is rescued by the man who raped her, implying compensation similar to what Lara, Anna Perenna (3.523–710), Proserpina (4.393–620), Flora, and Carna receive. (Europa, whose rape Ovid briefly recounts, experiences no transformation or apotheosis after her rape except pregnancy.) Figures like Romulus, Julius Caesar, and Ino (in 2.475–512, 2.697–710, and 6.473–569, respectively) experience apotheosis as a form of salvation. Consequently, Everett Beek argues that there is a much closer correlation between suffering violence and transformation in the *Fasti* than in the *Met.* since violence nearly always leads to apotheosis. She sees Callisto in the *Met.* and the *Fasti,* a woman punitively transformed and then apotheosized into a constellation to save her from the violence of her son, as combining the predominant features of transformation from the two poems.

In general, Everett Beek is right to conclude that the greater trend in the *Met.* is not apotheosis but humans undergoing vegetative or animalistic transformation. But as a result of the

---

87 Ovid does often understand violence itself, even if not supernatural, as transformative, such as in the story of Marysas and the extreme violence he endures because of his artistic challenge to Apollo (*Met.* 6.382–400).

88 *Amores* 3.5 also features a promise of apotheosis for services to be rendered from Anio to Rhea Silvia: if she will “marry” him, he will turn her into a water nymph who would be honored by all the other water nymphs (63–66).
sheer number of transformative stories in the Met., Everett Beek must acknowledge exceptions to these generalizations. The Met. includes three clear examples of victims of rape who receive compensation for the violence they experienced, such as Perimele, who is transformed into an island and island nymph as compensation after her rape by Achelous and additionally to save her from the impending violence of her father because of the rape (8.547–610). Achelous turns to the help of Neptune to effect this elevation. Furthermore, Ovid features the stories of Mestra (8.843–84), who attains transformative powers after her rape by Neptune, and Caenis, who is turned into the man Caeneus by Neptune (12.146–209). Neptune is the link in all of these examples, whereas in the Fasti many gods participate in these acts. Perimele is a mortal turned into an immortal nymph. Notably, neither Mestra nor Caenis undergo apotheoses like we see with Callisto, Flora, Carna, and others. But Caenis appears to experience an elevation in status despite her lack of immortality because she transforms from woman to man. Mestra’s transformation is more ambiguously elevating. She receives supernatural powers, but her father exploits them for his own gain and she is also constantly under threat of other rapes because of her father’s exploitation.89 The epic poem also includes examples of apotheosis as salvation from near death or further violence, such as those of Hercules (9.211–272), Acis (13.870–897), Virbius (15.476–559), and again Ino (4.512–542) and Julius Caesar (15.745–842) and also apotheosis—a kind not to be found in the Fasti—as purely reward from the gods for achievement, such as that of Aeneas (14.581–608), Romulus (14.805–28), and Hersilia (14.829–51).

While Everett Beek’s analysis is helpful, aspects of it are seriously problematic. First, her
arguments asserting that metamorphosis can stop or save people from further violence or death, as I will demonstrate below, elide the fact that Ovid presents metamorphosis as violence and death and not fully as salvation from it, even for figures who experience apotheosis. She never defines metamorphosis as violence or death, only contending that Ovid creates a causal relationship between them (2015, 20). But it is my view that figures like Daphne, saved from the specific violence of rape by Apollo through her transformation into a laurel tree (Met. 1.545–52), first must undergo the violence of metamorphosis itself to protect their virginity. This reluctance to label metamorphosis as violence consequently leads to Everett Beek not considering how rape and metamorphosis, even apotheosis, both enact similar types of violence upon the female body.

Furthermore, Everett Beek too often vacillates on whether apotheosis is a wholly beneficial act for the people who experience it, particularly for Ovid’s rape victims in the Met. and the Fasti. At first she directly asserts that it brings gains, but chapter after chapter she makes concessions that weaken her initial thesis. My position on this topic is that the negative consequences of apotheosis, especially for female figures, definitively outweigh the gains. Apotheosis for male and female figures in both works, despite superficially being a promotion in status, leads to irrevocable social death and for the rape victims in particular, to positions, that although now immortal or divine, remain permanently representative of their abuse and/or their subordinate status to their rapists. Julius Caesar’s apotheosis is noticeably different from that of Lara or Callisto: Lara is forcibly removed from her community of sister-nymphs by Jupiter and becomes the goddess of silence, a role forever personifying the results of her mutilation by Jupiter and rape by Mercury. For Callisto, turning into a constellation perpetuates many of her earthly sufferings. She again endures the lack of human connection she first experienced after Diana exiled her bands of virgin nymphs and after Juno transformed her into a bear because
Jupiter raped her. She again endures a definitive loss of human agency, especially since even her star shape is that of a bear. She no longer will have any role on earth, even have an animate form, or a community. Callisto is saved from being killed by her son, but her transformation into a bear constellation mirrors her first transformation into a bear because it reinforces the disorder that both rape and metamorphosis bring to the female body (see my analysis below) and because of what it denies her: human community, a human form, and autonomy (Fasti 2.181–192).

Caesar’s transformation is triggered by the violence of his assassination, but his final form or position does not exemplify or perpetuate that initial violence (Fasti 2.697–710). And although Caesar too undergoes (human) social death, he is now simply a god. The female figures in Ovid’s texts do not have the privilege of forgetting, since their rapes and transformations into nymphs, goddesses, and immortals echo the violence of their rapes. Lara is silent as Tacita because of her mutilation and rape, and Callisto is a bear as a constellation because of her rape.

We must also consider that in the Fasti compensatory apotheosis for rape victims perpetually binds some of the female figures to their rapists. Flora, Proserpina, Anna Perenna, and Carna become their rapists’ consorts. (It is not clear whether Callisto becomes a consort of Jove before her punitive transformation into a bear and whether Lara continues to have sex with Mercury after he brings her to the underworld, impregnates her, and she becomes Tacita.) Flora sanctions how Zephyrus is now her husband (Fasti 5.205–6), but with Proserpina, Anna Perenna, and Carna, we never read their approval of having continuous sexual relationships with their abusers. These female figures experience promotions in status, but Ovid’s texts compel us to ask:

---

90 Chiron, when turned into a constellation (Fasti 4.379–414), too, loses any agency over his life like Callisto. Arcas, Callisto’s son, also faces something similar (Fasti 2.189). This places them in a unique position compared to the other apotheosized male figures in the Met. and Fasti such as Hercules, Romulus, and Julius Caesar, who all receive anthropomorphic bodies. All who experience apotheosis, however, experience social death. That is universal within the Fasti and the Met. The Dioscuri (Fasti 5.693–720), Castor and Pollux, are another special case because they become constellations but still have the ability to engage in human affairs and have anthropomorphic bodies. Overall, turning into a constellation presents many difficulties to the “apotheosis-as-beneficial-to-the-apotheosized” model, even if technically elevating. This is a difficulty that Everett Beek amply concedes in her dissertation.
At what cost do they achieve them? Even Everett Beek (2015, 159, 183) finally grants that the whole notion of compensation for rape is problematic because it rests upon the assumption that the violation of rape can somehow be erased with gifts and newfound powers. We also rarely hear the rape victims ask for compensation. It is something, again, given without consent. It might also speak to the rapist’s psychology: does he want to make the rape seem consensual?

Overall, these differences in how transformation manifests in the *Met.* and the *Fasti* do not change or negate the clear connections Ovid makes between metamorphosis, rape, and femininity. As should have already been gathered from my discussion above, Ovid’s emphasis on metamorphosis goes hand in hand with an emphasis on rape because of how many of his female rape victims in these works face transformation, and because most of his characters who undergo transformation are rape victims. In the *Met.*, we continuously see a female sexual assault or rape victim’s transformation into an animal, a piece of vegetation, or an object before or after her attack. And in the *Fasti*, we largely see a rape victim’s social death and loss of humanity because of apotheosis after her rape—although it is more difficult to generalize about the aftermath of sexualized violence in the *Fasti* because it, simply, does not have as many scenes of sexualized violence and because the rapes in the *Fasti*, as Richlin (1992, 168) accurately describes them, are a “mixed bag.” In the *Met.*, Ovid, as a result of the magnitude of the rapes in the text, is able to develop a well-defined pattern wherein even female figures who escape the rape itself are transformed into objects, plants, and trees to protect their virginity, while the female figures who are successfully raped turn into animals, both factions experiencing a loss of human agency. But in the *Fasti*, all the rapes are successful besides three (maybe four)⁹¹, and the three definitively unsuccessful attempted rapes are “comic” in nature, with clear influences from

---

⁹¹ Ovid never plainly reveals that Juturna was raped by Jupiter, only that he attempts it, but it is easy to deduce from the narrative that Jupiter is eventually successful because he eliminates her defender and sister, Lara, as a threat.
Roman mime and the absence of an interest in transformation so much as in humor and the
development of cultic ritual and sacrifice (see Chapter Five). The rapes of Callisto, Lara, Anna
Perenna, Proserpina, Flora, and Carna establish a trend of apotheosis after the rape (as an act of
both a means of protection and compensation), and we only once see an animal transformation
(that of Callisto), which in contrast with the Met is clearly notable. The presence of successful
“historical” rapes in the Fasti, however, such as those of Lucretia (2.685–855), Rhea Silvia (3.1–
48), and the Sabine women (3.167–398) muddy the waters further because they are mortals who
never experience apotheosis (at least in the Fasti itself; there is an implication Rhea Silvia will
be deified in Amores 3.5.63) or a transformation as a result of the violence against them, but
instead experience social and actual death because of their rapes. Rhea Silvia is exiled by her
family and removed from the Vestal Virgins because of her rape by Mars, the Sabines are torn
from their ancestral homes by the Romans who abducted and raped them, and Lucretia commits
suicide because of Sextus. But these stories and others raise questions about metamorphosis and
death, especially for Lucretia: should death in this way likewise be seen as metamorphosis? Is
death akin to metamorphosis? Is rape? Did Lucretia experience a form of transformation through
both? Why do female figures suffer this? Does metamorphosis blame them for rape?

These textual difficulties demonstrate how metamorphosis should problematize the ways in
which we perceive rape and its aftermath. It will be my contention that metamorphosis first,
mirrors the particular violence of rape in its own violence and impact on the body; second,
creates and enforces the structures of gender along with rape; and third, reaffirms the victim-
blaming Ovid’s female figures experience. Many scholars, beyond Everett Beek, such as Barkan

---

92 Everett Beek, although she helps to establish this pattern for my dissertation oddly does not include Anna Perenna
as a woman who receives compensation for her rape. She rather only sees Anna as a figure saved by the river god,
Numinicus, from the violence of Lavinia. Both Callisto and Anna experience the two kinds of apotheosis in the
wake of their rapes. In this way, I will again be deviating from aspects of her analysis in Chapter Five.
(1986) Solodow (1988), and Forbes Irving (1993), have written about the purpose, nature, and portrayal of metamorphosis in Ovid, but in this chapter, unlike those scholars, I want to connect transformation, as a form of violence, more firmly and extensively to the violence of rape. I want to connect it to the research in both Classics and feminism that has been done about gender and rape and their impact on the body and signification on and through the body to metamorphosis, building primarily on suggestions of such analysis found in the previous work of Richlin (1992) on rape in Ovid; Segal (1998) on the body, violence, metamorphosis; and Enterline (2000) on the connections between voice, sexuality, embodiment in Ovid and the Ovidian tradition.

1. Metamorphosis as Violence Akin to Rape

If we are to understand metamorphosis as mirroring the specific violence of rape, we must first understand metamorphosis as a form of violence. But this is not how many within Classics, particularly those studying the role of it in Ovid, view it. Everett Beek (2015, 20) sees a direct correlation between transformation and suffering violence in the Fasti—“violence is generally followed by transformation, and transformation is generally precipitated by violence”—but she makes no argument that metamorphosis is violent. Barkan (1986), Solodow (1988), and Forbes Irving (1993) focus on the product, the aftermath of metamorphosis: what are Ovid’s characters turned into and why? What happens to them in their new bodies? How are the transformations aetiological? Is the transformation a punishment, a relief, escape, a form of transcendence, all of these factors? Barkan and Solodow both emphasize how it is a form of clarification, an essentialization, and literalization of inner qualities. To Barkan and Solodow, this is most obvious with Lycaon, who as a savage, wolf-like tyrant is transformed into a wolf by Jupiter (Met. 1.199–243). Other examples abound: Clytie turns into a sunflower, forever worshipping the god Sol as she did in her human state (Met. 4.234–56). Niobe and Myrrha continue to weep
over their misfortunes in their changed states (*Met.* 6.310–2, 10.500–2). Tissol (1997) believes that Ovid’s pervasive use of metaphor before a transformation in the *Met.* predicts the literalization of that figurative language. How is the central theme of transformation embedded in the language of the epic? For example, Anaxarete, the beloved of Iphis, has a stone heart and then she becomes a stone (*Met.* 14.657–8). Solodow additionally likens metamorphosis to the creation of a work of art. For example, when Deucalion and Pyrrha transform stones into the new members of the human race, the new humans are compared to works of marble.

However, scholars like Feldherr (2002, 2010) have challenged this sense of stability, continuity, and even beauty with metamorphosis: there is a more complex and tragic discontinuity in play. Daphne retains her contempt for Apollo and her nitor (beauty) remains (1.552), but she also changes into something she is not (an immobile tree), just like Callisto. Both nymphs turn into the images that the gods who threatened them want them to be—an unmoving tree Apollo can possess for eternity as a symbol of his power (1.557) and an ugly bear Juno can now exult over. The bear is a hunter like Callisto, but as a bear she feels like prey (2.494–5). Von Glinski (2012) challenges the arguments for literalization through her analysis of simile in the *Met.*, which she argues accounts for the ambiguity in metamorphosis more than metaphor. Like Tissol, she believes the figurative language of the poem is linked with the theme of metamorphosis, but “using metaphor as model reinforces the finality of metamorphosis, mirroring the distortion of the transformed body in the distortion of language. Simile, by contrast, puts two shapes in relation to one another, but leaves their essential identity untouched” (2012, 4). Simile allows us to see the dual nature of the person transformed, the discontinuity of the metamorphosis, and its suffering. In one of von Glinski’s most cogent examples, Actaeon is compared through a simile, in his state of a deer, to a human supplicating (*Met.* 3.240-1).
Feldherr, though, in the end resists the notion that we can say or write anything definitive about metamorphosis in Ovid’s works. It is too diverse a phenomenon with too many varying mechanisms, motivations, and outcomes. He argues that Ovid in the *Met.* and the *Fasti* never “articulates a specific view of what metamorphosis is” (2010, 34). But if we look at the process of metamorphosis, no matter its different purposes or results, it cannot be seen as anything but violence against the human body, and I see this violence as a fundamental and universal. I appreciate the complexities, ambiguities, and even willful mysteries of transformation in Ovid’s texts that scholars like Feldherr have highlighted, but the violence of the act will always loom large in my analysis in this chapter and entire project. What is more, transformation is not only violence in Ovid, but it has important connections with sexualized violence, gender, and victim-blaming. It says something about vulnerability, the body, and femininity.

Richlin (1992), Segal (1998), and Enterline (2000) are three scholars who have defined metamorphosis as violence, particularly in relation to Ovid’s victims of sexual abuse and rape. The majority of Ovid’s rape victims experience the violence of metamorphosis and receive the brunt of its particular form of violence in the *Met.* and *Fasti*, while only two rapists, Salmacis (*Met.* 4. 274–388) and Ajax (*Met.* 13. 382–398), in all of Ovid’s texts ever face any real, violent consequences for their brutality (Salmacis is transformed herself and Ajax is murdered by Minerva). Richlin, Segal, and Enterline all see the *Met.*, in particular, as the study of bodies violated both sexually and through transformation. The act of metamorphosis, as presented by Ovid, is an intensely bodily, physical, and material experience, like rape itself. But, as Richlin (1992, 165) observes, the poet never shows us the rapes themselves in the *Met.* or the *Fasti* and thus, he shifts its implications, symbols, and imagery of its violence onto the metamorphosis, bodily mutilation, and/or death of the victim. Ovid is, of course, not alone in this lack of detail: it
is common for ancient authors depicting rape to only reveal the before and after of the attack (Rhyan 1995, 22). But in Ovid because of the magnitude of rape narratives in his texts, that specific textual silence is deafening. Raval (1998) connects this textual silence around the act of rape in Ovid to the silencing effects that rape has on female figures. Because of rape, metamorphosis, mutilation, and/or death, female figures rarely speak of their trauma. The silence of the text around the act of rape mirrors the silence of its female figures. The text will not show us their rapes and the female figures cannot talk about it themselves.

But Richlin is right to assert that there is not total silence surrounding violence. Even though we never see the rape in Ovid’s texts, we see another act of violence in its place. Its energy, tensions, and disruptions travel elsewhere onto metamorphosis and other types of destructive, bodily change. First, the descriptions of metamorphosis are often coded with sexual language, such as in the transformation of Daphne when her new form is called *mollia* and *tenui*, both elegiac and thus, erotic code words (*mollia cinguntur tenui praecordia libro, Met. 1.550*) (see Segal 1969, 10 for the observation). The transformations become sexualized in other ways as well. For example, in the story of the rape of Callisto in *Met*. Book 2, we do not see Jupiter rape the nymph, but we see, in excruciating and explicit detail, how her body becomes disordered by her transformation into a bear at the hands of Juno, just as the rape would have done to her body earlier (2.476–84). The rape of Philomela by Tereus is two words long, but the description of the Thracian’s mutilation of her tongue (her mouth acting as the surrogate image for her vagina) is dozens of lines long (*Met. 6.549–70*). In the rape of Lucretia in *Fasti* Book 2, we do not see her rape by the tyrant Sextus Tarquinius, but we see his sword and the gaping

---

93 The female figures in the *Amores*, *Met.*, and the *Fasti*, who are given the opportunity to discuss their rapes before metamorphosis, mutilation, and death are Rhea Silvia (*Amores* 3.6.71–8), Leucothoe (*Met.* 4.214–255), Arethusa (5.572–641), Philomela (6.549–70), Alcmena (9.273–333), Dryope (9.324–93), and Flora (*Fasti* 5.183–206). The Muses (*Met.* 5.294–331) are given that opportunity but do not experience any bodily change. In the *Her.*, Briseis (3), Oenone (5), Hermione (8), Helen (17), and Cydippe (21), both briefly and at length, discuss their rapes.
wound in her chest after she commits suicide with that sword, both of which are surrogate images for the phallus and vagina (2.849). It becomes obvious with the Philomela and Lucretia examples that the effect of this displacement is that sex itself becomes violence in Ovid.

Richlin contends that since the body is so prominent in Ovidian texts, we must see violence, and when the bodies of rape victims are so prominent and yet the poet never shows us the rapes themselves, we, as an audience, will have to view a similar type of violence against that body, even if displaced. Metamorphosis becomes that surrogate, sexualized violence, the one that allows us to “see” the violence of rape because it is violence against the body. This displacement of violence is ubiquitous in Ovid, and Richlin’s argument about this displacement will be central to my work. We also must take into account that if metamorphosis is the surrogate act of violence for rape, that metamorphosis fundamentally becomes sexualized and eroticized, embodying the intimate association between sexuality and violence that Alison Keith in her book *Engendering Rome* (2000) has detected throughout Latin epic poetry. Moreover, many of the metamorphoses, acts of (surrogate) violence, that female figures in Ovid undergo are punitive and enacted by other (divine) female figures. Metamorphosis can also be sororophobic violence. The violence of rape is displaced onto other acts and onto other agents, primarily female.

If we focus on the process of transformation, we can likewise appreciate the violence of transformation and how it is analogous to rape because of the bodily boundaries both transformation and rape transgress. Rape is the loss of bodily integrity through the introduction of the phallus, an invasion of the body and its boundaries by a foreign object through penetration. Transformation is the material dissolution of the body, its structures, and borders, a

---

94 Although, as we discussed in Chapter One, rape can be more broadly defined than forcible vaginal penetration with the phallus, Ovid, as far as we can tell from how he depicts it, limits sexualized violence and rape to this more traditionally understood form of rape, except in cases like Salmacis in *Met.* Book 4, a nymph, who attempts to rape a man. Ovid is not explicit about what happens to the female body during rape and displaces the violence of rape into
confusion of what constitutes the body (before it regains some order in its final product). Most of
the time in Ovid, transformation is the permanent loss of human bodily integrity and of what was
once human embodiment (Michel 2010). Ovid makes the connections between metamorphosis
and violence most lucid in the story of the satyr and musician Marysas, mentioned briefly above
(Met. 6.382–400). Marysas’ story is included in an epic on change because he is transformed
through violence, through being skinned alive by Apollo, for daring to challenge the god into an
artistic competition. Hardie suggests that the satyr’s entire body becomes an open wound (2002b,
41), something that we see happen to Cyane after her rape by Pluto (Met. 5.407–39), a wound
which I will argue is a sign of her essential femininity (see below). Interestingly, during his
transformation through violence, Marysas asks Apollo: Quid mihi detrahis? (“Why are you
tearing me from myself?”), the satyr being torn from both his human body and his sense of self
derived through that body. Most characters who are transformed in Ovid come to “live without
[their selves]” (Nagle 1984, 244), and Ovid dramatizes that loss most frequently with scenes
where we witness a character’s inability to use human language such as with Io (Met. 1.622–41),
Callisto (2.466–95), and Actaeon (3.232–252). Philomela suffers both transformation through the
mutilation of her tongue and transformation into an animal, both of which enable her loss of
speech (6.549–70; 653–674). In addition, transformations—like the one of Marysas—occur time
and time again in the Met. as punishment from the gods or as a technique used by the gods to
brutalize others (a technique used only once in the Fasti against Callisto). The gods can use

---

other forms of violence in the aftermath of the rape (such as metamorphosis) and onto phallic symbols and images in
the narrative. But the definition of rape in Ovid that I introduce here is sound (and admittedly, the best we can do)
because of his focus on the attempted forcible introduction of the phallus into the bodies of Lotis, Vesta, and
Omphale in the Fasti and because nearly every rape in Ovid results in a pregnancy. That, of course, does not mean
that nothing else was used or done in the commission of the rape, but this is the most information we have.

95 In the Met. there are only two stories of reverse transformation, that of Io returning to her human shape after she
was made into a cow by Jupiter (1.722–746), and the crew of Ulysses in returning to human shape after they were
made swine by Circe. Macareus even delivers a first-person account of his change to and change back to human
form (14.223–319), one of the only first-person accounts of metamorphosis except for Arethusa in Met. 5.572–641
and Flora in Fasti 5.196–205, and the only first-person account of reverse change.
metamorphosis as a weapon of violence because it is violence. Juno turning Callisto into a bear (2.466–95) and Minerva turning Arachne into a spider (6.129–145) are not just degradations in status (from human to animal), but acts of violence against human embodiment.

It is also my contention that transformation is still violent in Ovid, even when ultimately positive and rewarding in nature, such as with Baucis and Philemon (Met. 8.621–96), who are rewarded with metamorphosis into sacred trees for their service to Jupiter. Transformation is never presented as a wholly positive phenomenon in Ovid’s text and—to reiterate my above arguments—that is particularly because the harm and danger it presents to the human is fundamental. Even for Baucis and Philemon, something violent has to happen to their human bodies for their transformation to come to completion (Skulsky 1981, 48). The same logic should apply to apotheosis, which at first glance does not appear violent. As we discussed above, apotheosis as salvation from violence or as compensation for violence dominates as the major type of metamorphosis in the Fasti—although it is harder to generalize because there are fewer narratives of transformation—while in the Met. we have a larger variety of kinds of metamorphosis, for punishment, for brutalization, in response to grief, to protect one’s virginity, and more. The intent of eliminating or compensating for violence, nonetheless, does not negate what must occur before the apotheosis: a form must be violated and shattered before the new one can be created just as we see occur with the transformations into plants or animals. Apotheosis for figures like Callisto, Lara, Anna Perenna, Proserpina, Flora, and Carna, some female mortals and some female nymphs, elevated into immortals or into goddesses, must be understood as a radical change in their embodiment and what their bodies are capable of (Michel 2010). As the human becomes the plant or the nymph becomes divine, what is annihilated? Ovid makes clear that even in apotheosis something radically destructive happens to human embodiment. In the
Met. Book 14, we learn that Romulus was torn from his mortal body and brought to the heavens (corpus mortale per auras/dilapsum tenues, “His mortal body dissolved in the clear air,” 824–5), and later in Book 15, Jupiter orders Venus to remove Caesar’s soul from his body (hanc animam interea caeso de corpore raptam/faciubar, “Meanwhile, make the soul, snatched away from his murdered body, into a star,” 840–1). Therefore, for the apotheosized female figures above, destruction of sorts of their earlier bodies must transpire for their new immortal or divine forms to emerge. Their rapes serve as the first act of disorder against their bodies and serve as precipitation for the metamorphoses they undergo afterward. For the victims of sexualized violence in Ovid, one act of chaos against the body leads to another: primarily metamorphosis into another form (which is in itself a form of bodily death) and sometimes literal death. Only one woman who experiences apotheosis in Ovid’s texts, Hersilia, the wife of Romulus, does not experience rape as the precipitating factor, although she was formerly a rape victim of Romulus. Moreover, for many of the male figures who apotheosize in Ovid, rape is not the precipitating act of violence for their transformation, but some form of deathly violence, such as an assassination for Caesar. Their bodies, too, face a confusion that precedes the confusion of metamorphosis.

Metamorphosis, especially for rape victims, is never a wholly positive or salutary phenomenon, and at best is shown to be ambiguous, the transformation of Daphne after she “escapes” the attempted rape of Apollo being one of the prime examples of such ambiguity. In her laurel tree form, Apollo sexualizes Daphne, possesses her, and appropriates her as a symbol of his power as a god. He even equates marrying her with owning her as a symbol (at quoniam coniunx mea non potes esse/arbor eris certe, “But since you cannot be my wife, you can certainly be my tree,” 557–8). Ovid highlights Daphne’s reaction to this possession by the god. She moves her branches. But it is unclear whether this is affirmation or downtrodden
acquiescence. Is Daphne content to be symbolically appropriated by Apollo as a tree after he attempted to rape her or merely succumbing to the reality of her new, defenseless, vegetative form (factis modo laurea ramis/ adnuit utque caput visa est agitasse cacumen, “The laurel tree nodded with her newly made branches and she seemed to have stirred the top of her branches like she would a head,” 1.566–7)? Often, the transformation of a rape victim is shown to be actively harmful and violent. In Daphne’s case, her human form is destroyed and she has lost all of her human agency. Daphne asks for her transformation to protect her virginity, asserting her last piece of agency as a woman, but she does so by asking for bodily annihilation (mutando perde figuram, “Destroy my beauty/body by changing [it],” Met. 1.547). And in the Fasti many of the gods who rape apotheosize their rape victims as compensation for the violence to which they subjected them. This can be understood as beneficial. But, to reprise my arguments from earlier, in every case of apotheosis, for male and female figures, there is a destruction of the body and also a resulting social death, which I do not believe we should immediately see as a benefit and which Ovid can present as tragic, such as in the case of Callisto and Chiron (Fasti 5.379–414). More importantly, these acts of compensation, while elevating the woman to a higher status of immortality or divinity, are not entirely beneficial to them because the transformations epitomize and continue their abuse at the hands of their attackers. The metamorphosis is violence itself and then it symbolizes what the precipitating act of violence did to the woman before and during her rape. Carna, a nymph, is turned into the goddess of door hinges by Janus and his consort (Fasti 6.126–7), always in submission to Janus as the god of doors, entrances, and exits, just as she was in submission to him during her rape. Violence for the rape victims endures.

II. Metamorphosis and Rape and Their Aftermaths

Of course, it is too stark a statement to maintain that metamorphosis is solely violence in
Ovid. Metamorphosis, instead, represents a state of “in between,” “in progress,” “in motion” before a final product, and therefore, evokes tense dichotomies (Kuon and Peylet 2009). As a process of bodily transgression and loss, it dissolves the divisions, at a fundamental level, between destruction and creation and thus, life and death. This tense dichotomy is an integral part of the philosophy of metamorphosis in Ovid, a philosophy put into the mouth of the (somewhat comical) Pythagoras in *Met.* Book 15. As Enterline (2000, 55) has observed, Pythagoras’ views in Book 15 on metempsychosis are very similar to Ovid’s on metamorphosis: *omnia mutantur, nihil interit* (“everything changes, nothing dies,” 165). The human body in Ovid dies because of transformation, but an animal or plant body or even a divine body is born in its wake. To Hardie (2002a), metamorphosis is an act that results in both a presence and absence: Daphne is no longer present, but a tree that acts as a reminder of her absence arises in her place. But is Daphne truly gone? Her human consciousness and personality remain intact (*Met.* 1.556). This is the essential paradox of transformation for Ovid: its great births and deaths, absences and presences, creations and destructions in constant motion and even sometimes in stasis. Myrrha in the *Met.* recognizes the dual, unsettled nature of transformation and hopes that metamorphosis can allow her to stay in the limbo between life and death, banished from both realms (*ambobus pellite regnis/ mutataeque mihi vitamque necemque negate*, “Banish me from the kingdoms of life and death; both change me and deny me both,” 10.486–7). Myrrha’s human body has left her, but she gives birth to her son, Adonis, and continues to weep over her incestuous desires and their consequences (10.495–507). She is absent and present. This very paradox of transformation again connects us to the act of rape—rape itself in Ovid is destructive and creative simultaneously, a negative and positive force never resolved.

As I have contended, the *process* of the violence of rape and metamorphosis is similar, but
we must also reckon ourselves with their similar aftermaths. All the rapes in the *Met.* and *Fasti* have an outcome of pregnancy, metamorphosis, and/or death, types of violence against the body that we, the audience see, even if we do not see the rapes themselves. How are all these connected? Rimell (2006) sees paradoxically destructive and generative desire as a driving impetus in Ovid’s corpus, and this paradox is true for rape, even with all its violence since its violence is productive. Particularly in the *Met.*, rape often directly leads to both metamorphosis and pregnancy (a kind of metamorphosis itself; see below). The rape, metamorphosis, the pregnancy can destroy the body, bodily integrity, and even the human form of the female figure, they can tear, dissolve, and rip away the boundaries of the body; but the desire of the rapist, particularly that of a god, leads to a new life (a Greek or Roman god, if he rapes a female figure, always inseminates her). Rape generates new life by impregnation, and metamorphosis often generates new life by beginning a new aetiology despite its devastation. What is more, the new creature or object that comes into existence is often for the benefit of the rapist and his divinity, such as Apollo who appropriates Daphne’s body transformed into laurel for his poetic contests (*Met.* 1.553–67), Pan who appropriates Syrinx’s body transformed into a reed for his music (1.710–12), and Janus who acquires his recently apotheosized divine consort, Carna (*Fasti* 6.125–30). To paraphrase Joshel (1992) in her exploration of the rapes of Lucretia and Verginia in Livy: the rape victim must die (or face a figurative death), but the rapist can thrive.

Metamorphosis dissolves other important divisions such as those between mortal and immortal, nymph and goddess, which I examined above in relation to the apotheosis of figures like Callisto and Carna and in relation to Everett Beek’s 2015 work. It, furthermore, more widely and more notably dissolves the divisions between human and animal and ultimately, nature and

---

96 Theodorakopoulos (1999) suggests that this very dichotomy extends to the narrative movements and sequences of the *Met.*: one instance of transformation usually stops a story and then opens up another.
culture, in particularly Ovid’s *Met*. Transformation for female figures in Ovid’s texts usually transpires after a male figure has attempted to take away their virginity, a radical transition for young girls ritualized throughout Greek and Roman religion (Deschard 2009). Forbes Irving (1993), in his thematic and encyclopedic reading of metamorphosis, determines that in Greek and Roman art, female figures transformed into plants (like Daphne, Syrinx, and Lotis) often are attempting to preserve their virginity, flowers acting as a symbol of that virginity and that female figures transformed into animals (like Io, Callisto, and Philomela) have lost their virginity, the animalization representing the chaos in their sexuality. Forbes Irving’s distinction here is more important in Ovid’s *Met.* than in the *Fasti*, which focuses on apotheosis as its primary form of metamorphosis. And there are prominent exceptions (as there always are in as varied a book as the *Met.*) to this trend of vegetation vs. animal transformation such as Mestra (*Met.* 8.843–84) and Thetis (11.221–65), who change themselves into various animals to protect their virginity. But in any case, female figures becoming animals literalizes the metaphors used throughout Greek and Roman authors, like Hesiod and Semonides, comparing women of all types and ages to animals. Women are not fully human—not like men. Through transformation, female figures come closer to nature (the realm of femininity, the realm of the wilds, the realm without human language, the realm of silence) and move farther away from civilization (the realm of masculinity, the realm of order, the realm of human speech and discourse); their social status as Other is complete and makes their radical alterity from men more evident. Male figures often turn into animals in Ovid (such as Lycaon, Actaeon, and Tereus, *Met.* 1.199–243, 3.165–205, 6.653–674), but a female figure turning into one has a more loaded context and connotation.97

---

97 Of course, as we explored in Chapter One, there is a long tradition of depicting women of various sexual experiences, the virgin, the promiscuous woman, as animals, often particularly feral ones, all the better to represent their Otherness and the disorder they introduce to civilization. For example, young women in Athens, devotees of Artemis, in a pre-marriage and puberty rite, would dress up as bears during the Brauronion. For more on this female
Furthermore, the dissolution of boundaries between *virgo* and *femina* was commonly viewed in a way similar to metamorphosis, as a dissolution of the boundaries between destruction and creation. If she transitioned from *virgo* to (sexually active) *femina* legitimately, she was brought into a new family and forced to renounce her birth family. And whether she transitioned into her sexual role legitimately or illegitimately, a woman, because of this sexual maturation, was often brought into the responsibilities of motherhood. Her old, virginal role is destroyed through sex, but that new sexual role is creative. In fact, the transition from girlhood to womanhood was so radically violent in the eyes of the Greeks and Romans that it was often equated with death.\(^9^8\) The story of Proserpina best epitomizes how ancients viewed this change for a young girl, and it is no coincidence that she shifts from virginity to sexual maturity by rape because of how closely Greeks and Roman equated marriage and rape (Zeitlin 1988). But the destruction of rape for Proserpina has generative effects: Proserpina emerges from death and her return convinces Demeter to revitalize the world’s agriculture after her abandonment of it in mourning for her daughter. While she transforms into the goddess of death, she can return to life.

There is another layer to the destruction/creation dichotomy in Ovid: the bodies in the *Met.* violated by rape, metamorphosis, and death, particularly female bodies, generate poetry and art within the narrative itself and for Ovid as an artist (this is one of the major contentions of Enterline 2000 in work on literary representations of the body from antiquity to modernity). Apollo, Pan, and Orpheus all create art in response to the suffering female bodies. Apollo is the god of poetry who uses Daphne’s newly transformed laurel body (a transformation Daphne has

---

\(^9^8\) Higgonet (1986), in her cross-cultural analysis of sexuality and death documents the enduring trope in Western literature to punish women (such as Dido and Jane Eyre) with death, despair, and misery for even having sex.
prayed for to avoid him raping her) to grace his own poetic achievements, Pan appropriates Syrinx’s new transformed reed body (here again a transformation prayed for to flee his attack) to create his pastoral music, and Orpheus sings poetry on his lyre to honor his deceased wife, Eurydice (Met. 10.1–85), all of which Enterline describes as a persistent fascination with “male poetic animation” (2000, 82). Overall, with these explorations of the tense dichotomies of creation and destruction, of life and death, Ovid shows us that both rape and metamorphosis speak to (the loss of) bodily integrity; the crossing, confusion, and transgression of bodily boundaries; the divisions between virgin girl and sexualized woman and between human and animal; the loss of humanity; and even to the production of art itself.

III. The Feminization of Rape and Metamorphosis

Ovid’s connections between rape and metamorphosis in the Met. and the Fasti also have implications for his representation of gender. Ovid, by showing the body to be penetrable, vulnerable, porous, mutable, disintegrating, and chaotic through the related violence of rape and metamorphosis, essentially feminizes the body and its process of change. He renders female bodies variable, passive, penetrable, and vulnerable when he pervasively shows both their rapes and their subsequent transformations—passivity, penetrability, and vulnerability all stereotypically feminine characteristics in Roman thought. As Carson (1990, 154) states in her analysis of the representation of the female body in ancient myth: “deformation attends [the female body]. She swells, she shrinks, she leaks, she is penetrated, she suffers metamorphosis.” Ovid’s presentation of the raped and transformed body ultimately constitutes a kind of “gendered

---

99 Metamorphosis, as well, can stop the production of the art of mortals and that of lesser divinities, but can simultaneously extend the creativity of the Olympian gods. For example, Arachne, a mortal artist, is turned into a spider where she weaves webs with instinct and not skill, but Minerva through this transformation shows her abilities of creation. Marysas, a woodland satyr, no longer makes music after his body’s mutilation and metamorphosis, but Apollo gives us a macabre sculpture of the satyr’s insides (Theodorakopoulos 1999, 156–159) and even creates music through it (see Feldherr 2010 for an analysis of the musical vocabulary of Apollo’s flaying).
corporeality” (to borrow Grosz’s terminology from her 1994 book on the body and feminism). Metamorphosis becomes a feminized phenomenon, which affects male figures in Ovid’s texts, but metamorphosis coupled with rape amplifies that feminization for female figures.

The permeability of the body that transformation represents would have been associated with femininity in Greek and Roman minds for several fundamental reasons. First, female bodies would have already been seen as inherently permeable (Carson 1990; Suissa 2008, 152). When a man had sex with a woman (consensually or forcibly), the woman was penetrated, showing an intrinsic lack of boundaries to the female body. Moreover, the common result of that sex act—pregnancy—confirms a female body’s lack of boundaries. The phallus and its seed enter her, her body mutates and grows under the pregnancy, and the child leaves her body. In Ovid, a woman is raped, her body penetrated and then the penetrability of her body is compounded by the change of her body through metamorphosis, pregnancy, and/or death. Callisto is raped, she is impregnated, she is transformed into a bear. McAuley (2012, 137), in her recent article on portrayal and motifs of motherhood in Ovid, argues that maternity and femininity “offer a visible, naturally occurring and ubiquitous example of radical corporeal transformations in humans, the primary example of the porousness and instability of the human body.” Female bodies “stand in for the very principle of transformation” (McAuley 2012, 136). Acts of bodily dissolution, like penetration by the phallus, rape, and reproduction, are manifestations of femininity and demonstrate the perilous confusion to existence, integrity, and identity that femininity presents, especially to men. Femininity “itself is disorder, a loss of control, a disruption of boundaries, a dissolution of an ordered and hierarchical world” (Bronfen 1992, 182) and this is exactly why the ancients negatively perceived and also feared femininity. As discussed in Chapter One, to the Greeks and Romans, femininity was a frightening alterity, a
source of chaos that needed to be tamed by men for the safety of male society and civilization. And this feminized chaos, this porousness, this disintegration during the process of metamorphosis, is transpiring within and without the body, the realm of femininity itself.

The body—as an entity and concept—is a site of disorder because of its closeness to femininity. Being a woman in antiquity meant being controlled, tamed, and dominated through the body and male colonization of it by reproduction and male violence against it. But, of course, it is not the body inherently that makes and naturalizes gender, but rather the disciplines, roles, labors, and tasks imposed upon it by systems of power and the acts of enculturating violence it experiences, like rape. Women become women through systems of male dominance (MacKinnon 2005). The body has to be actively and repeatedly made into a sign by dominant powers (Butler 1997), and then the effects of that sign have profound material effects on the body (Wittig 1980; Bartky 1997). Women’s associations with corporeality (and thus immanence and mortality), as opposed to the mind and the soul (transcendence and immortality), can be found in Greek and Roman culture as far back as Aristotle (for example, see Aristotle’s Politics 1254b2–16 and 1277b27). Women were more tethered to their bodies because of their lack of logos, their tendency to be lustful, their reproductive capabilities, their penetrability by the phallus, and more. For Greeks and Romans, the body was one of the primary sites of the “production, display, materiality, and regimentation of gender identity” (Wyke 1998, 3). And if Ovid is interested in the boundaries of the body and the transgression of it, he is interested in the formation, regulation, and maintenance of gender and gender difference, one of the main meanings derived from the body in antiquity and now. One major facet of gender difference was that women could not escape the porousness of their bodies and men, endeavoring to avoid their associations with the body, developed systems, fantasies, mechanisms, and even laws to ensure that they were not
subject to the constraints of the body and the violence it can suffer to the same extent as women.

For example, (upper-class) Roman citizen men, both culturally and legally, were entitled to a sacrosanct “impenetrability” of their bodies (Walters 1997). In Rome, dominant masculinity was not linearly connected to biology and sex, but to a closely-guarded and often precarious social position, which granted a certain subclass of men political, economic, and sexual power and the ability to create structures to perpetuate that power over people in lower, effeminized classes. (Feminists like Mardorossian think this is still very much the case today in the Western world today, 2014.) The impenetrability of Roman males extended from forbidding upper-class citizen men to undergo beatings to male sexuality, and they in turn could be penetrators of non-citizens, women, and slaves, or any effeminized person marked with an intrinsic penetrability (Walters 1997). Upper-class males could be free from violence, while people in the feminine social position, women and slaves, should expect violence, especially of a sexual nature. It becomes clear that masculinity in Rome was largely predicated on subjecting others to power, aggression, and violence (Richlin 2010). One’s masculine position could be weakened if one did not continuously prove it by exercising sexual control over “one’s family, slaves, women, and particularly the self” (Raval 2002). Many feminists, following theorists like Foucault, de Lauretis, and Butler, believe that violence is always sexualized because of how tied the administration and subjection to violence is to gender (see Madorossian 2014, Chapter One). This rings true for Rome. The idea that masculinity meant bodily integrity and exclusion from (sexualized) violence allowed the Romans—and the patriarchal cultures that arose in the wake of Rome—to define categories of self and Other, to define “Man” and “Woman.” Masculinity to the Romans was power, wholeness, order, strength, and exclusion from violence; and femininity was disorder, impotence, dissolution, vulnerability, and subjection to violence.
The belief in the impenetrability of masculinity is epitomized best in Ovid by the story of Caenis/Caeneus (Met. 12.190–536). Caenis is raped by Neptune, the act being a sign of her penetrability and womanhood, and she asks Neptune after her rape to become a man, Caeneus, so she can be impenetrable, so she can escape the material existence of womanhood (‘magnum’ Caenis ait ‘facit haec iniuria votum/ tale pati iam posse nihil; da, femina ne sim, “Caenis says: ‘The wrong you have done me calls for a great prayer that I am no longer able to suffer such a thing again; grant that I not be a woman,’” Met. 12.201–2). Caenis’ body once signified that femininity was equivalent to penetrability, but Caeneus becomes so impenetrable that spears cannot even pierce him. Earlier in the Met., we learn that Neptune gave Mestra after her rape the ability to transform into any shape (8.843–84). While seemingly a gift, and one she uses to avoid the sexual violation to which her father subjects her, it cements the feminization of her body as permanently mutable and vulnerable and replicates the effects of rape on her body, the opposite of what Caeneus asks from the same rapist. But Caeneus mirrors another figure in the epic.

Before we arrive at the story of Caeneus, Ovid tells us of Cyncus (Met. 12.64–145), the son of Neptune, who was impenetrable to dying by the sword and who only died when Achilles strangled him, “discovering an opening, a feminine porousness in his enemy’s body” (Keith 1999, 233). Cyncus then transforms into a swan, another sign of his feminine porousness. Keith (1999) argues that Ovid throughout the Met. problematizes, subverts, and destabilizes masculinity, particularly during his explorations of the genre of epic (Caeneus emerges in the story of the Lapiths and the Centaurs told by Nestor, and Cyncus emerges in the story of the Trojan War). Eventually Caeneus is suffocated to death and faces transformation into a bird, showing that he never escaped femininity despite his wishes (and even though Ovid does not show this in the Met., in Vergil Caeneus has become Caenis in death, lingering in the realm of
Dido and destroyed by her experience of rape, *Aen. 6.448–9*). The stories of both Caeneus and Cyncus epitomize the male fear that their masculinity and impenetrability is an illusion, a fantasy that they have constructed, fears that they have been subject to femininity all along.

Forbes Irving (1993, 157) speculates that the story of Caenis/Caeneus and its focus on the impenetrability of the male body additionally speak to a deep anxiety around death: males’ impenetrability can ensure their immortality. Enterline (2000, 35), building on the foundational theories of de Beauvoir (1949) and Bronfen (1992) that document the longstanding cultural associations in the West of femininity with death, finds the anxiety about mortality as fundamental to the male aversion to the body/femininity. Men do not want a body, they want to transcend it, they do not want to be women, because they do not want to die. Femininity, because it is corporeality, represents the chaos of change, violence, and death. But women are not only penetrable, vulnerable, permeable, unstable themselves, they can threaten men with that very mortality (Carson 1990, 154). In myth, female figures continually bring death to men, like Agave (the maenad who murders her son, *Met. 3.692–733*), like Scylla (both the princess, the daughter of Nisus and the monster who terrorizes Odysseus, *Met. 8.1–151, 14.1–74*), like Pandora (the woman who began all destruction for mankind, *Theogony 560–612*) (Carson 1990, 154). Female figures can create, bring life into the world, but they are also the source of death because they create bodies whose telos is to perish. McAuley (2012) suggests that murderous mothers like Procne (*Met. 6.619–52*), Medea (7.394–7), and Alathea (8.451–514) in the *Met.* represent the anxieties of men about this very paradox: women bring life, but also ultimately bring death. Nevertheless, femininity is attractive in that men sexualize the feminine body and its dissolution through violence like rape. Enterline likens this very repugnance toward and attraction to the feminine body and its penetrability through violence to “the uncanny” (*Das Umheimliche*) in
Freud’s psychoanalytical theories. The uncanny is something or someone men avoid and fear because it presents both their ability to be castrated and to die, but for which they have a strange desire and longing. Metamorphosis, too, as a feminine process, can be said to have a similar uncanny effect on men. Men want to avoid it for themselves and their own bodies, but they impose it on female bodies through their violence against them. Keith (2000, 107) in her exploration of femininity and the genre of epic in Latin poetry best synthesizes these various male anxieties surrounding femininity: being female means having a body, being female means being sexualized and controlled through the body, and being female means to have a body that dies. Femininity threatens the integrity and permanence of the (male) self.

Apotheosis presents some difficulties to Forbes Irving’s and Enterline’s models for male aversions to the body, femininity, penetrability, and thus, mortality. Ovid includes apotheosis as a type of metamorphosis for both his male and female characters, but it has different implications for the two genders. As a form of transformation, it leads directly to immortality and the end of concerns for men about the fallibility, decay, and basic femininity of the human body. But it was my contention earlier that before men like Hercules, Romulus, and Julius Caesar can become immortal, their mortal bodies most undergo a radical transition and a violent destruction. There is still violence against their previous forms before their final divine ones. This very destruction serves as a reminder that they have a body and that they can be subject to violence against it, both hallmarks of femininity. The act of apotheosis thus doubly effeminizes female figures. But the violence male figures undergo to become gods ends after the fact. They are removed from the threats of femininity after they experience its effects (although there is evidence that gods can face violence and injury, such as with Venus, who is injured by the hero Diomedes in Iliad Book 5 and Vulcan, who is disabled by his father). For Ovid’s female characters, as I contended earlier
as well, apotheosis is more problematic because it often serves as a perpetual reminder of the effects of the sexualized violence that precipitated their transformation into nymphs or goddesses, and what is more, ties them forever, through consortship and marriage, to the male figures who raped them. Apotheosis for female figures is still violence akin to rape. Apotheosis takes on feminine characteristics that further engender their experiences as new nymphs or goddesses. Apotheosis, like all metamorphosis, can work to essentialize gender in Ovid’s texts.

Metamorphosis in Ovid shows that impenetrability of the body is not always guaranteed for male figures, that they can be placed into the feminine social position by experiencing its violence. When a male figure is transformed, the bodily integrity and completeness that is the right of his gender dissolves and shows its fantastical foundations. Ovid, with transformation, reminds his male audience that they are embodied, that they are subject to the vagaries of materiality, that they are immanent, that they are mortal, that their bodies can experience violence, that they have bodies. Through the process and impact of metamorphosis, they become like female figures, or, in other words, always subject to materiality and corporeality, a specific form of patriarchal subjection first extensively condemned and analyzed by Simone de Beauvoir in *Le Deuxième Sexe* (1949). The dominant powers like to believe that the “Other” (or “Woman”) is the one trapped and constantly degraded by the body through her closeness to nature, her distance from culture. Ovid, instead, shows that every human being is part of nature and returns to it (Enterline 2000, 33). But even if male figures become effeminized through transformation, metamorphosis for female figures will always be different than it is for male figures in Ovid because, as Richlin (1992) argues, it is surrogate violence for rape (an act primarily against female figures) that the poet did not reveal explicitly to his audience. The rape and the transformation become inextricably linked as forms of violence and to femininity itself.
I suggested above that the rape and subsequent apotheosis of Ovid’s female figures become eternal reminders of their womanhood. The same is true for all metamorphosis. The femininity of both the process of rape and metamorphosis is typified best through Cyane’s story. Cyane, a water nymph, attempting to stop Pluto from abducting and raping Proserpina, is raped in turn by the god as he pierces and tears asunder the bottom of her pool (the pool which is her body) with his royal scepter, his *regale...sceptrum* (a phallic object) and enters the underworld through this newly made aperture, which Ovid likens to a road (*via*) *(icta viam tellus in Tartara fecit/ et pronos currus medio cratere recepit*), “The struck earth made a road into the underworld and received the horses rushing forward in the middle of its basin,” *Met.* 5.423–4). The wound Cyane receives is clearly vaginal, it is gaping, tunnel-like, and it is penetrated. The water nymph was once embodied, but her body dissolves as she mourns her *inconsabile vulnus* from Pluto (436) into nothing but water surrounding and in her pool and its mutilated orifice (425–37). With Cyane and his other female characters, Ovid produces and depicts gender through a focus on female bodies, the violence against them, their destruction. Cyane’s wound helps us to see how Ovid inscribes the female body with the experience of rape. Here, Ovid is literalizing what happens to all rape victims because of their attack, how their bodies become wounded. Moreover, we learn that she is penetrated through rape and through metamorphosis simultaneously: as Pluto forcibly enters her pool to travel to the underworld he not only rapes her like he will Proserpina, but permanently maims and transforms her body. What remains of Cyane is her body and its open wound, a body perpetually defined by her victimhood to rape and metamorphosis. It is also significant that her wound becomes an avenue to the underworld, once again illuminating the connections between sexualized violence, metamorphosis, and/or death in Ovid. Thetis tries to avoid the penetration of the body by rape through metamorphosis (*Met.*
11.221–65), using her feminine penetrability as an advantage, but in many ways her metamorphic abilities predict the rape she suffers by Peleus and show the inherent vulnerability of her body for male and phallic control.

Sexualized violence and rape are inflicted upon a few male figures in Ovid’s texts, like Hermaphroditus, but there is little doubt that such an act against them profoundly effeminizes them. Hermaphroditus’ metamorphosis, as a result of Salmacis’ sexual attack, exemplifies that process of effeminization. After Salmacis begins to try to rape Hermaphroditus, she prays that they never be separated (sexually) and Hermaphroditus, because of this prayer, is left with female genitalia—the object that Salmacis herself has become (Met. 4.370–79). Moreover, while I have previously argued that metamorphosis becomes a sexualized process in Ovid because of its connections to rape and its surrogate relationship with the representation of rape, Hermaphroditus embodies that in the clearest way because the transformation he experiences is purely sexual in nature (Nagle 1984, 252). For Callisto, we see her body torn asunder in metamorphosis, a stand-in for the earlier violence of rape, which too tore her body asunder and thus, rape and metamorphosis become linked sexually. But with Hermaphroditus, Ovid does not displace the violent sexual nature of rape onto the imagery of metamorphosis, he shows us that sexual connection between the two explicitly. And unlike other male figures who are transformed, he is left with a plain reminder of how sexual assault and metamorphosis have rendered him woman-like. To experience both the violence of rape and the violence of metamorphosis in Ovid is to be doubly feminine. A totem of his masculinity is maintained after his attack and transformation, however: in contrast to Salmacis, he keeps his mind, his subjectivity, the favorable part of the body/mind duality (Nugent 1990; Keith 1999, 217). Nugent believes this is what makes Hermaphroditus still essentially male. For a female figure to be raped
and then transformed both act as symbols of her womanhood and make the dissolution of her body by rape more palpable and permanent. Both processes “starkly expose how femininity is constructed” through and with the body (to paraphrase Bordo in her discussion of anorexia, plastic surgery, and hysteria, 1997, 97). They reveal the experience of such violence as one of the essential features of femininity. Hermaphroditus is experiencing something that should be abnormal for a male. Furthermore, the virginity of Ovid’s rape victims (nearly every single one is a virgin, except for notable exceptions like Omphale and Lucretia who are sexually active and like Lotis, a nymph whose sexuality Ovid problematizes and makes ambiguous) renders the nature of their penetrability, the nature of the violence against them, even more abrupt and vivid.

Ovid, in turn, also destabilizes gender through metamorphosis by using it to change the genders of some of his characters, such as Caenis/Caeneus and Iphis (Met. 9.666–797). The body can be a site of disorder around what makes us human and also what makes us male or female. But in both the stories of Caeneus and Iphis, normative masculinity is affirmed and the disorder dissipates: Caenis asks her rapist Neptune to turn her into a man so she can avoid the vulnerability and penetrability of womanhood and she becomes the man and soldier, Caeneus, who can never be penetrated, even by the swords in battle that hope to bring him death, although like all men he faces the femininity of eventual death. And Iphis changes from a woman into a man so that he can consummate his marriage with Ianthe, or in other words, penetrate, his beloved on their wedding night. He cannot truly be Ianthe’s husband without the power attributed to and symbolized by the phallus. In the end, Iphis’ performance of the male gender and being perceived as male was not enough to make her a man (Raval 2002). It should also be noted—to remind us of Everett Beek’s analysis above—that both Iphis and Caenis are elevated in status, from women to men. Metamorphosis violently changes their female bodies to enter the
realms of masculinity, but that metamorphosis is one of the last remnants of their femininity until their deaths, the act that carries all men into the sphere of womanhood. Perhaps, all mortal masculinity is elusive and impermanent. But for the gods since they do not face death, it appears that their masculinity is permanent. The gods who change their genders in Ovid’s text do not experience any permanence of femininity, in death or otherwise: Jupiter (Met. 2.417–440), Sol (4.190–213), and Vertumnus (14.623–697) all change their genders (from male to female) temporarily in order to gain better access to their victims. Their brief forays into femininity in the end only reify their masculinity because through their disguises, they successfully control female figures: Jupiter rapes Callisto, Sol rapes Leucothoe, Vertumnus marries Pomona after he prepares to rape her (Raval 2002). The gendered disorder their disguises may have caused temporarily, vanishes. Cyrino (1998) has similarly argued that when male figures such as Hercules in the Her. and Fasti are shown wearing feminine attire, Ovid thoroughly draws attention to their essential masculinity (while they are alive at any rate).

Transformation is, moreover, an effeminized experience because of what it often produces in the Met. (again, we see a similarity between process and aftermath). In Ovid, male and female figures are turned into animals and also into trees, plants, and other pieces of immobile vegetation and become part of the natural landscape. The return to nature and often the immobility that metamorphosis effects are significantly feminine features. Animals, as we have been discussing, were often associated with women in Greek and Roman thought. These associations of animals with women, to reiterate, also closely relate femininity to the earth and nature. Men, on the other hand, are fully human and represent civilization. They, through hunting and agriculture, control nature just as they control women, who must be tamed like animals and sown like the fields. This is exactly why women are raped by conquering armies in antiquity
(and today): they are equated with the lands and its productivity (Dougherty 1998). Perseus sexually conquers Andromeda and thus, he conquers the land of Ethiopia, the Romans rape the Sabines and Rome expands to include that territory. Both women and the land are materia for men to own and colonize (Keith 2009, 270). Ovid, furthermore, often uses descriptions of the landscape to symbolize the violence a female figure will experience or has experienced.

Proserpina, as she strays from her companions, plucks the flower from the locus amoenus as her virginity will soon be plucked by the god Hades (dum Proserpina luco/ludit et aut violas aut candida lilia carpit...paene simul visa est dilectaque raptaque Diti, “While Proserpina played in the grove and she plucked either violets or white lilies…almost as soon as she was seen, she was loved and taken by the god of the underworld,” Met. 5.391–2, 5). The nymph Pomona’s closed orchard is infiltrated by Vertumnus and her sexual freedom and chastity are lost, the symbolic womb of her garden soon filled literally (vim tamen agrestum metuens pomaria claudit/intus et accessus prohibet refugitque viriles…, “But fearing rustic violence, she closes herself within an orchard and prohibit and shuns the entrance of men,” Met. 14.635–6). What is more, all the female figures who hunt like male figures in the Met. and Fasti try to control natura as male figures do and are brought back into their femininity through violence, rape, metamorphosis, and/or death. Daphne, Syrinx, Callisto, Arethusa, Carna, and more are not allowed to maintain their transgressive gender roles as virginal huntresses and nymphs and how they relate to nature independently of male figures. As they are raped and then more plainly become part of nature and the landscape around them, the rape and the return both remind them that they are female.

The association of women with immobility is not a new concept. Barthes in Fragments d'un discours amoureux (1977) posits that in literature “Man” is often shown to be active and moving, while “Woman” is often shown to be immobile and attached to a place. This is a notion
that de Lauretis (1984) echoes in her masterful work on objectification in which she asserts that women become matter, a part of the background, an unmoving *topos*. Women like Penelope wait at home, fixed spatially, while men like Odysseus go to war, moving through space. If we expand this beyond Barthes’ and de Lauretis’ immediate words and add in a little de Beauvoir and *Le Deuxieme Sexe*, it means that “Man” is transcendent and “Woman” is immanent, that “Man” is Time (something constantly mobile) and “Woman” is Space (something immobile), that men actively create culture and history and women are passively the bearers and markers of it. And if we see culture and history as showcasing the mechanisms of power, particularly that of patriarchy, this contributes to why women experience the violence of rape: “Women become repositories of men’s stories and deeds and as such function as available surfaces upon which the relations that constitute our culture of violence get scripted both physically and metaphorically” (Mardorossian 2014, 57). Julia Kristeva in her influential 1979 essay “*Le temps des femmes*” proposes a theory similar to Barthes, de Beauvoir, and de Lauretis from a Lacanian psychoanalytic perspective. Women are often perceived by men to be outside the Symbolic, or the male system of order, which demands linear time, which creates history, which aims for transcendence, civilization, and immortality. Women instead live within the realms of cyclical, mortal, and destructive time, and they are immanent in respect to their bodies and nature because of their reproductive capabilities. They do not create history, which is transcendent, immortal, and civilizing, but rather they create bodies that are immanent, mortal, and natural. They create bodies that perish—culture is immortal, but children die.

Salzman-Mitchell (2005, 59) cites these principles of feminine immobility from de Beauvoir and the others in her analysis of the vision, the gaze, and objectification in Ovid’s *Met.* Where do we see female figures become immobilized in Ovid, but also male figures? Daphne
(Met. 1.525–52), Leucothoe (Met. 4.215–44), and Clytie (Met 4. 256–73) becoming vegetation rooted to natural spaces mirrors and perpetuates their femininity. Female figures often face sexual attacks in the wild, the locus amoenus, and, like Daphne, many never leave it. We see female figures who once engaged in movement become immobile such as Daphne and Thetis: Daphne is a hunter and runs quickly from Apollo’s predation and then is a stationary tree (Met. 1.553–67). Thetis changes her bodily form rapidly only to be held down and raped by Peleus (11.258–65). Immobilization is closely linked to objectification as well, both before and after sexualized violence. Salzman-Mitchell primarily uses the example of Andromeda to demonstrate this connection. Andromeda, tied to a cliff, becomes a statue for Perseus to gaze upon, an immobile object he will soon control sexually (Met. 4.706–52).

As I have been highlighting, in the Met. the locus amoenus is the typical and most frequent environment for sexualized, sororophobic, transformative, and/or immobilizing violence against female or male figures because it is the realm of femininity (or the state of being subject to violence). Male and female figures experience violence in the locus amoenus and/or become part of its immobile landscape. Just as the land can be entered, penetrated, violated, plucked like flowers, in this environment so can male and especially female bodies. Just as the landscape is immobile, so can people become immobile. Everything within the locus amoenus is materia, vulnerable, immobile, mortal, and can be possessed violently by civilization and masculinity. Once one enters the locus amoenus, one is surrounded by the vulnerability of being natura, being female, being penetrable, being immobile. Female figures experience more violence there because they are feminized, but men are not completely free from such violence. Male figures often prove their masculinity in the locus amoenus through violence against female figures, but it is also often a venue of dangers to their masculinity, as is the case for Actaeon, Narcissus,
Pentheus, Hermaphroditus, Hyacinthus, and Adonis. Actaeon and Pentheus become animalized (respectively turning into a stag and boar) and then torn apart; Hermaphroditus turns into a semivir; and Narcissus, Hyacinthus, and Adonis all become immobile flowers. But all these male figures are youths who thus had a troublesome and deficient relationship with masculinity.

Actaeon, Narcissus, and Hyacinthus are iuvenes (Met. 3.146, 3.352, and 10.196 respectively); not fully viri, Hermaphroditus is a puer (4.315, 320); and Adonis, although identified as both an iuvenis and a vir by the narrator (Met. 10.523), is sexually dominated by Venus, a goddess over a mortal. She herself never calls him a vir, only a iuvenis (10.545). Pentheus identifies himself as a younger man (Met. 3.541), and he also enters the sacred feminine landscape where he is torn apart in women’s clothing (3.692–733). These young males, because of their deficient masculinity, become more feminine as they transform and become assimilated to the landscape. Glaucus, the merman god, is one of the only male figures in Ovid who is associated with the landscape without Ovid indicating other factors that problematize his masculinity, but when he enters the locus amoenus and eats a piece of it, he faces transformation into an animal, animalization and metamorphosis two of the hallmarks of femininity (13.898–968). As Ovid subjects these male characters to feminized bodily processes, he affirms their deficient masculinity and essentializes the femininity that was once more latent within them. There is always the risk that one’s masculinity is not safe out in the wild. Salzman-Mitchell (2005), similar to Enterline (2000) and Keith (2000) and their theories on the gendered implications of transformation, argues that when Ovid shows us men violated, transformed, and turned into animals and immobile vegetation like these male figures in the locus amoenus, Ovid is showing that masculinity and its reputed safety from the violence of change and from becoming part of natura are not guaranteed. He shows that male figures can transform, they can
become rooted to the earth, they can become \textit{materia} and taken out of civilization, they can become like female figures; and ultimately, masculinity is shown to be unstable for mortal men and lesser divine male figures. But Ovid, for himself, at the end of the \textit{Met.} (15.871–79), aims for transcendence from the body, materiality, and space, and therefore freedom from the restraints of femininity. He hopes that his poetry can last through time and that it can “escape corporeal existence” (Farrell 1999, 129) and the immobility of \textit{natura} and femininity. He seeks immortality in the (masculine) propagation of culture and discourse, quite a psychoanalytical and Lacanian drive. Ovid hopes ultimately for the permanence of the masculinity of the cultural artifacts and art he has created over the femininity of his body, although like the male figures he has apotheosized in his texts, he must experience femininity (of death) before he can arrive at such a new form. Before he can leave his body, he must grapple with having one.

Moreover, this very feminization of both rape and metamorphosis could be easily related to Martha Nussbaum’s (1995) theories on the many aspects of objectification, objectification being one of the most fundamental ways women experience violence and dehumanization. If women are just their bodies and \textit{materia}, and not their minds (something which makes one human), this helps to justify and condone violence against them, such as the violence of rape. Objectification not only allows that violence to happen, but shapes and reflects how that violence is felt. Nussbaum lists the following as tools of objectification: instrumentality, denial of autonomy, inertness, fungibility, violability, ownership, and denial of subjectivity. We can see many of these aspects manifest in the rapes and metamorphoses in Ovid, Daphne and Syrinx in the \textit{Met.} being the two most illustrative and encompassing examples for all the tools of objectification. They are transformed into vegetation to escape their rapes and then subsequently become tools to amplify the power of their sexual abusers (instrumentality). They lose their agency, even if they
avoided their rapes (denial of autonomy). They become immobilized and permanently attached to the earth as plants (inertness). Their transformed bodies are figuratively raped by Apollo and Pan when they are appropriated and owned and hence become surrogates for what the gods wanted to do to their female bodies (fungibility and ownership). The gods endeavored to violate the boundaries of Daphne and Syrinx’s anthropomorphic bodies through rape and succeeded in doing so to their transformed ones (violability). And ultimately, when the gods attempted to rape these nymphs and later control their transformed bodies, they denied them their consent, their minds, and their wishes (denial of subjectivity). Even for Ovid’s apotheosized female rape victims, they become the consorts of the male figures who raped them, often without their sanction. Their violability after their rapes persists, they become property, they are stripped of their agency and subjectivity. These many correlations between the layers of objectification, rape, and metamorphosis render their feminization more complex and profound.

Moreover, this very feminization of both rape and metamorphosis could be easily related to Martha Nussbaum’s (1995) theories on the many aspects of objectification, objectification being one of the most fundamental ways women experience violence and dehumanization. If women are just their bodies and materia, and not their minds (something which makes one human), this helps to justify and condone violence against them, such as the violence of rape. Objectification not only allows that violence to happen, but shapes and reflects how that violence is felt. Nussbaum lists the following as tools of objectification: instrumentality, denial of autonomy, inertness, fungibility, violability, ownership, and denial of subjectivity. We can see many of these aspects manifest in the rapes and metamorphoses in Ovid, Daphne and Syrinx in the Met. being the two most illustrative and encompassing examples for all the tools objectification. They are transformed into vegetation to escape their rapes and then subsequently, become tools to
amplify the power of their sexual abusers (instrumentality). They lose their agency, even if they
avoided their rapes (denial of autonomy). They become immobilized and permanently attached
to the earth as plants (inertness). Their transformed bodies are figuratively raped by Apollo and
Pan when they are appropriated and owned and hence, become surrogates for what the gods
wanted to do to their female bodies (fungibility and ownership). The gods endeavored to violate
the boundaries of Daphne and Syrinx’s anthropomorphic bodies through rape and succeeded in
doing so to their transformed ones (violability). And ultimately, when the gods attempted to rape
these nymphs and later control their transformed bodies, they deny them their consent, their
minds, and their wishes (denial of subjectivity). Even for Ovid’s apotheosized female rape
victims, they become the consorts by the male figures who raped them, often without their
sanction. Their violability after their rapes persists, they become property, they are stripped of
their agency and subjectivity. These many correlations between the layers of objectification,
rape, and metamorphosis render their feminization more complex and profound.

IV. The Feminization of the Body and Victim-Blaming

As we have seen, the body is inherently feminine in the eyes of the Greeks and Romans.
The attachment of rape and metamorphosis to femininity intensifies that association. And this
very feminization of the body before, during, and after rape continues with the victim-blaming
we see in the Met. and Fasti. Ovid makes the bodies of female figures synonymous with
penetrability, he makes their bodies open wounds for rape and metamorphosis, he shows their
bodies in a constant state of passivity and dissolution, and thus encodes their bodies with
victimhood, their very embodiment becoming victimhood. This encoding naturalizes rape against
female figures and ascribes to them the culpability for the act. Ovid’s victim-blaming, in effect,
marks the female body as essentially penetrable, alluring, to be targeted, objectified, and
vulnerable, it locates the origin and cause of rape to the female body and the markers of its womanhood—the feminized body intrinsically becoming the site for rape and other bodily and violent transgressions. There is something about female bodies that makes them victims to rape. Being a victim comes to mean being female. And then after rape occurs, the poet once more focuses on the female body and violations of boundaries by transformation, showing that the bodies of rape victims are porous, malleable, and not entitled to integrity. They suffer both types of violations because of the nature of their bodies as female figures, their bodies as wounds. Nearly every female figure we see transformed after her sexual attack or rape received comments on her body (its beauty and appearance) before her rape, such as Daphne (Met. 1.489–90), Io (1.589–90), Callisto (Met. 2.409–16, Fasti 2.160), Philomela (Met. 6.450–60), Flora (Fasti 5.199), and Carna (6.108–10). The victim-blaming of their bodies before their attacks is reflected in the transformation after their attacks: the boundaries of their bodies are penetrated once by sexualized violence, only to be penetrated once more by the violence of transformation. We see again and again that the victims’ bodies are blamed for precipitating the sexual attack, and then the transformation and death of their bodies furthers and materializes that blame. Their bodies and beauty, which Ovid blames for their attacks, become distorted and mutilated. We see that their bodies are lost and destroyed, along with their virginity, their humanity (for those transformed into plants, animals, or gods), integral selves, and more.

This feminization of the body in the Met. and Fasti, along with the intense male gaze of the narrator and the rapists on the bodies of female figures before their attacks, distracts the audience from who is truly responsible. Their bodies, their essential femininity are the source of the rapes, not male aggression. Consent to sex becomes inferred from their bodies rather than male aggression (Bourke 2007, 13). When we focus on a female figure's inner self, something
essential about her, we are masking the wheels, motions, and structure of patriarchal power and its tool: sexualized violence. We turn away from the culprit and the systems and conditions, which support him and subordinate her (Stringer 2014). Femininity is a position that is enforced and created because of sexualized violence; it is not the cause of it. Instead, it is a way to mark female figures and their bodies so that male dominance can be maintained (Madorossian 2014, 5). Ovid further ingrains their position as perpetual victims by rarely showing a female figure resisting her attack, and a woman who does, Philomela, suffers immensely for resistance through mutilation and a continuation of rape at the hands of Tereus (Met 6. 549–70). What is more, metamorphosis, among the other acts of violence the rape victims experience such as mutilation and death, effectively punishes them for their own rapes (especially since so many transformations of the victims in Ovid are explicitly punitive and perpetrated by female agents, which, of course, enmeshes metamorphosis not only in victim-blaming, but sororophobia). Both rape and metamorphosis punish them as females. Gods like Janus attempt to compensate for their violence with apotheosis, but that is their view alone: Carna is now the perpetual subordinate of her rapist (Fasti 6.125–30). In Ovid’s texts, the violence of rape is not enough for these female figures to have suffered. The metamorphosis is in many ways the final step of the dehumanization of sexualized violence: the female figures become materia, animals, givers of birth, parts of nature for male figures to further control. They are always permeable and thus subject to force, manipulation, and violence. Female figures cannot own their own bodies, before or after their attacks. It is the final marker and mirror of their rape.

V. Conclusions: Metamorphosis, Rape, Femininity, and Victim-Blaming

The Met. and the Fasti feature dozens and dozens of victims of sexual abuse and rape who face subsequent violence through metamorphosis, bodily mutilation, and/or death, such as in the
stories of Callisto, Cyane, Philomela, and many others. I have argued in this chapter that rape, metamorphosis, and other similar kinds of violence not only parallel sexualized acts of violence in Ovid’s texts, but are engendered as female experiences. Rape and metamorphosis are both destructive (and also often generative) processes that transgress and dissolve the boundaries and integrities of the (female) body, and they ultimately feminize male figures. Ovid, moreover, so closely links these kinds of violence to femininity, that female bodies in his texts become intrinsically vulnerable, permeable, and protean. As Ovid displays the female body as passive and violated, he fundamentally intensifies and reinforces the victim-blaming his female characters receive from his characters and narrators. Metamorphosis, mutilation, and/or death manifest and mark the female body with that responsibility for violence. Philomela is raped and her experiences with mutilation and metamorphosis show Ovid’s audience the nature of her female body and its responsibility for her victimization. The cause of rape is not male aggression, it is not only a female figure’s beauty or actions, but the female body itself.
Chapter Four: The *Metamorphoses*, the Epicenter of Rape in Ovid’s Corpus

I. Introduction to Sexualized Violence and Rape in the *Metamorphoses*

The *Met.* features the most rape narratives in any Ovidian text or in any text from antiquity with just under fifty instances of both extensive scenes (like that of Callisto, the rape victim of Jupiter) and ones in passing (like that of Liriope, rape victim of Cephisus and mother of Narcissus). Scholars have often attempted to discover how this massive, fast-paced, and constantly fluctuating epic is unified, despite its apparent disorder. Some scholars such as Solodow (1988) declare that such an attempt is a fool’s errand because there is no discernable unity. Crabbe (1981) strives for discerning a narratological order and argues that Book 8 is the center of the epic, which all other books echo, thereby creating a symmetry in the poem. Others try to find order thematically. For example, Hardie (2002a) finds that the poem consistently grapples with the desire to fill a (psychoanalytically-driven) lack, to find a presence when there is an absence, and McAuley (2012) sees the maternal and maternity at the heart of the transformative project. It is impossible to locate one form of unity in the *Met.* and one way in which Ovid imposes order on intentionally cultivated chaos, but one of the ways feminists have found the epic to have unity both structurally and thematically—and the one that is most important for my dissertation—is its emphasis on sexualized violence (and then subsequent transformation). Again and again Ovid shows his characters transformed into vegetation, animals, and more, and a great majority of those transformed are female figures who have faced sexual abuse. Sexual abuse is at the center of Ovidian metamorphosis and its intersections with gender, femininity, and the female body: the first female figure (Daphne) transformed in the epic is a victim of assault. Richlin (1992) has seen rape as a unifying force throughout Ovid, and Segal (1969) has written that the leitmotif of the *locus amoenus* and the more-often-than-not
sexualized violence within that location unifies the *Met.* Pintabone (2002, 260), more fundamentally, believes the poem “is wholly concerned with power: who has it, how it is used, what its effects are;” rape in many ways is one of the most dramatic displays of such power.

The patterns of sexualized violence that Ovid favors and that we have already seen developing in his earlier corpus find elaboration and fuller force and scope in the *Met.* (and later the *Fasti*). And as we have discussed in Chapter Three and immediately above, the poem introduces the additional violence of bodily transformation into those patterns. But there are in fact many rapes in the *Met.* in which we see significant variations to this act from the “norm.” Fulkerson and Stover (2016, 9) in their recent study of the poetics of repetition in the *Met.* (meaning both Ovidian intertextuality and intratextuality) write: “the reader...is consistently challenged through its repetitiveness to find similarity within difference, difference within similarity.” The instances of sexualized violence in the poem all share fundamental characteristics (similarity), but Ovid surprises his readers by introducing intentionally contrived variety into his representations of rape (difference). What does he suppress? What does he expand? How does he echo himself and his stories? James (2016) within the Fulkerson and Stover volume is interested in establishing and exploring patterns of rape to ascertain where and why Ovid upends the expectations of his readers by omitting, delaying, and excluding rape narratives that would have been on the minds of his contemporary readers such as those of Rhea Silvia, the Sabines, Lucretia, and Verginia, all important to Rome’s history and thus, the Augustan regime. She contends that Ovid writes about rape so frequently because of his political milieu in which Romans were reexamining, revitalizing, and recontextualizing traditional myth for Augustan propaganda. But when Ovid arrives at Roman myth in *Met.* Books 13–15, he does not show his audience the rapes, which they anticipated and with which they are most familiar.
“Such an absence amounts to a conspicuous presence, a blank spot in the reader’s experience of the *Met.*” and we do not see these rapes until the *Fasti* (James 2016, 154) affirming interactions between the epic and elegiac texts that we will explore more below and in Chapter Five.

This very magnitude of rape in the *Met.* necessitates that I not write about all of them in this chapter and that I choose the most representative and interesting (admittedly subjective criteria). I have decided to imitate the artist Arachne, who Ovid features in Book 6 and who is one of his artistic avatars, weaving stories of divine rape and metamorphosis on her tapestry in a way that can only be described as impressionistic. Even though I have adopted a more straightforward, linear approach in Chapters Two and Five, I will be more thematically guided here. The order of the books in the epic will matter, but I will jump across books often to bring in connected narratives and characters when necessary, particularly when discussing the extent of Juno’s sororophobia and also that of Diana and Minerva. But to impose some order on my own writing on a text that constantly shifts and mutates before one’s eyes, I will begin with the attempted rape of Daphne by Apollo, the first narrative of sexualized violence and very much the prototypical one, which Ovid calls the *primus amor* (1.452), the first love of the god himself and the first Ovid’s audience experiences in the epic. Throughout this chapter, I will analyze how victim-blaming and sororophobia permeate the *Met.*’s scenes of sexualized violence, even episodes that deviate from the norms Ovid establishes. Juno is rightfully the most conspicuous purveyor of both, but we see the narrator, other goddesses, and even mortal women participating in these phenomena against other women. Victim-blaming and sororophobia as themes also emerge when the female actors in the *Met.*’s narratives refuse to participate, and such stories of resistance will be some of the major players of this chapter’s overall analysis.
II. Selected Episodes of Sexualized Violence, Rape, and Sororophobia in the *Metamorphoses*

1. The Attempted Rape of Daphne by Apollo: *Primus Amor*

There has been much work done on the attempted rape of Daphne by Apollo and it is, in fact, one of the most commented upon narratives in Ovid. With Daphne, we move from Book 1’s focus on cosmogony to mythological narrative (Feeney 1998, 72), and we also move from the epic world into the elegiac—both amatory and aetiological—world, or one replete with generic tensions (Nicoll 1980; Keith 2002; Francese 2004). Apollo has just killed the Python (the aetiology of the Pythian games) and then he experiences his *primus amor* (which leads to the aetiology of the laurel tree) after he is bested by one arrow from Cupid. As with Ovid in *Amores* 1.1 as he attempts to write an epic poem, Cupid, who is described as savagely angry and militaristic (similar to Juno in Vergil), forces Apollo into the amatory elegiac genre by making him love Daphne (Nicoll 1980, 176; Keith 2002, 248). As I touched upon in Chapter Two, there is a constant tension between the genres of epic and elegy precisely because of how thoroughly Romans sexualized violence and romanticized rape. The episode not only speaks to the tensions between elegy and epic and the importance of aetiology in the poem (Anderson 1997), but to the relationship of Olympian gods with lesser immortals and mortals, Ovid’s innovation in myth and interaction with earlier sources, his relationship with the Augustan regime, and more.

I am discussing it here at length, despite its popularity as a subject of scholarship, because it is my view that we should understand the attempted rape of Daphne as *the* prototypical scene of sexualized violence in the *Met.*—it is one of the most extensive, and it has the vast majority of the patterns I listed in the preface and Chapter One that I have discussed in
Ovid’s earlier texts and that we will see throughout the epic and his later works. All the other scenes of rape in the epic mirror, react to, and deviate from it. Later scenes include many of its features, but also omit, compress, and reverse others. My analysis of Daphne’s attempted rape rests on the earlier scholarship of Bömer (1969), Curran (1978), Gregson Davis (1983), Richlin (1992), Anderson (1997), Musgrove (2000), Salzman-Mitchell (2005), and James (2016), who have all analyzed the details of this passage of sexualized violence and what it means for Ovid’s views on sexual abuse more widely, but analysis of the scene benefits from and becomes more expansive by reading it with victim-blaming and sororophobia in mind. Our understanding of how Ovid portrays sexualized violence becomes fuller once we can see how deeply he blames his victims through an emphasis on their bodies and sexualities, how pervasively fundamental this blame is in his scenes of rape, and how this blame is purveyed by female figures.

In fact, this episode is one of the epicenters of Ovid’s victim-blaming and allowed me to see how it was a normalized part of his representation of rape. The poet in this episode directly attributes Daphne’s abuse by Apollo to her beauty, thereby tingeing the many other references to beauty, body, and appearance before an instance of sexualized violence in his corpus with that perspective, especially in the Met. The narrator comments that Daphne will not be able to protect her vow of virginity because of her beauty: *sed te decor iste, quod optas esse vetat* (“But that beauty of yours, forbids what you wish to be,” 1.488–489). Her body is the ultimate determiner of her sexuality, “not lack of desire or consent” (Musgrove 2000, 109). James (2016, 160) reads this line as evidence of the misogynistic belief that a female figure’s body is not hers to control. For my purposes, this declaration illuminates the impact of Ovid’s focus on the bodies of victims before their attacks and how it amounts to situating the *cause* of the rape in the bodies of female

---

100 Beyond victim-blaming and sororophobia, Ovid emphasizes the sexual history of the victim, her beauty, body, clothing, solitude, fear, resistance, the male gaze, and the psychology of the victim and the rapist.
For Daphne, the source of the rape becomes essential to her body, something almost internal, not the external threat of Apollo’s aggressive desire. Ovid’s narratorial comment asserts that consent to sex is inferred from Daphne’s body (and those of other female figures in her situation), rather than the male perpetrator’s actions. Victim-blaming cements a logic that makes female figures more responsible for their experiences of sexualized violence, while rendering male figures less responsible for their violence. The origins and causes of rape are not inherent in male sexualities and aggression, but rather inherent in the female body. Of course, it should be the responsibility of Apollo not to react with violence to Daphne’s beauty. Daphne later in the episode even blames her own body for Apollo’s violence against her and prays for it to be annihilated (and also her virginity protected) through transformation (qua nimium placui, mutando perde figuram, “destroy my body by changing it, the body with which I have pleased too much” 547). Throughout the Met., we rarely find female figures who have a voice before and during their sexual attacks and if they do, they rarely turn the blame toward their attackers, but rather internalize it, often to violent effect. Only Leucothoe (Met. 4.237–9) and Dryope (9.371–9) refuse that blame, although they are still ultimately punished for their rapes.

We learn that Daphne has sworn perpetual virginity to Diana, with the reluctant approval of a father who would have preferred she married (486–7), and she emulates her favorite goddess and her virginal and independent lifestyle passionately (476), enjoying her masculinized activities like hunting and despising marriage.101 But immediately after this vow is where Ovid’s narrator warns his audience and his character that she cannot keep her vow because: sed te decor iste, quod optas esse vetat. She can reject many of her suitors, but she will not be able to reject Apollo, the god recently amorous because of Cupid’s intervention, similar to Amores 1.1. (479–

101 By having Daphne ask for this vow from her father, Ovid here is alluding to many antecedents including that in Sappho 44 where Artemis asks Zeus if she could be a virgin forever and in Callimachus Hymn 3.6 where Artemis asks the same of Zeus. These allusions make her dedication to Diana’s lifestyle stronger and more serious.
Ovid, with this warning, sets up a way to blame Daphne and her body for her own rape. It is her body’s beauty that is the problem, not the male figures who threaten her with violence. Apollo finds her alone, in a forest, reminding us of the *locus amoenus* (490). Daphne begins to flee, understanding her peril, as soon as she sees him (502–503). Fleeing before a rape attempt is ubiquitous in Ovid, but Curran (1978, 240) astutely points out that many female figures additionally wander after their rapes out of punishment and fear, such as with Io (*Met*. 1.722–46), Callisto (2.489–95), and Latona (6.335–47), victims of Jupiter’s *amor* and later Juno’s *ira*. In both the beginning and the aftermath, they are forced into displacement to protect themselves.

Ovid meticulously describes Apollo’s burning attraction to the nymph (490–502). The intensity of his desire is compared to stalks of wheat set ablaze (492–6). He is particularly attracted to Daphne’s freely flowing hair (*spectat inornatos collo pendere capillos*, “he sees her loosened hair hanging on her neck,” 495). In Ovid, a female figure’s hair is often the site of elegiac desire, such as in *Amores* 1.7 or 1.14. but he also imagines what it would be like arranged (*quid si comantur*, 498). Daphne’s loose hair is a symbol of her independence, her perpetual virginity, and her hostility to marriage (*vitta coercebat positos sine lege capillos*, “a *vitta* was binding her hair positioned without law,” 478). Apollo is attracted to that independence, but his envisioning of her hair done like that of a married Roman woman indicates the god’s desire to snatch Daphne’s freedom and possess her as a Roman man would in a marriage. Ovid has even described Apollo’s desire to sleep with Daphne through marital vocabulary: *conubia* (*Phoebus amat visaeque cupit conubia Daphnes*, “Phoebus falls in love and desires to have sex with Daphne, having been seen,” 490). Her hair will have *lex* just like her body and sexuality will under Apollo’s control, especially since the god has substantial associations with law and order.

---

102 There is a pervasive pattern in Ovid of his narrators noting suitors seeking future victims of rape before their attacks. For similar examples, see *Met*. 2.571, 3.353, 4.795, 9.10, 10.315–16, 12.192, 12.414, 13.735, *Her*. 16.104, and *Fasti* 6.108. All are female figures sought by male suitors except Narcissus (3.353) and Cyparissus (10.315–16).
in mythology. As we discussed in Chapter Two, loose hair in Ovid is often a sign of nymphs being free away from the confines of civilization and also of sexual assault, weeping, shame, and mourning. By imagining her hair ordered like a matron’s, Apollo is attempting to imagine taking Daphne, literally and figuratively, out of the wilds of independent, female sexuality into the domestic, civilized sphere of male sexuality. A woman’s virginal state would have been both attractive and threatening to ancient men (Irwin 2005, 13–14). Peneus, her father, tried earlier to domesticate her by wishing she married (481–2) and Apollo, another male, continues in that vein. Throughout Ovid, female figures like Daphne who want to remain virgins are found in the wilds (which we will see with Syrinx and Callisto later in the text), but male figures like Apollo want to rein in their sexuality by tethering them to the oikos/domus, or in other words, to male civilization and sexual control (Westherfield 2006). This rejection of male authority could also be said to make these female figures more vulnerable to male predation (Deacy 1997, 44).

Ovid during this passage, as well, follows Apollo’s voyeuristic indulgence of Daphne’s body, from her fingers to her exposed upper arms to her lips (497–502), and then Apollo imagines what else her clothing is hiding underneath (si qua latent, meliora putat, “If anything is hiding [underneath her clothes], he thinks it better”). He gives Apollo and his audience “the tools to objectify her” (Salzman-Mitchell 2005, 7). We know that Daphne is wearing the traditional clothes of hunting nymphs, which expose her skin (laudat digitosque manusque /brachiaque et nudos media plus parte lacertos, “He praises her fingers and her hands and her arms and her upper arms more than halfway exposed,” 500–1). By bringing Apollo’s intense desire for

103 Inachus, Io’s father, is similarly concerned with the marriage prospects of his daughter and laments that Io can no longer perpetuate his personal patriarchy through Io’s female and human body since she is a cow (1.650–660).
104 Patricia Salzman-Mitchell’s 2005 work on vision, the gaze, and gender in the Met. will be useful to my entire chapter on the epic poem. She explores both more traditional dynamics between male dominance of the gaze over female figures and also how female figures control the gaze themselves in Ovid. She adopts a type of reading, which does not completely deny female figures’ agency or deny that there are restrictions on female figures and their agency over the gaze and their sexualities: it is a feminist reading neither completely “resistant” or “releasing” (22).
Daphne’s body to the foreground in this way, the narrator follows up on his promise that
Daphne’s own body incites and is responsible for her rape. Ovid’s rape scenes luxuriate in the
details of the lead-up to rape, the process of the attack, and its aftermath. One of the most salient
features of Ovid’s depictions of the lead-up to the attack is how patently visual he renders these
scenes and his investment in showing the ways the rapists see their victims and respond sexually
to these visions. The poet, while focalizing what the rapist sees of his victim, describes her
beauty, her clothing, her movements, her manifestations of fear and shame as she flees (see
below), and how these features are an integral part of the rapist’s attraction to her and his
motivations to rape her. For example, when Apollo sees Daphne, he subjects her to the male
gaze, and then the narrator, as mentioned above, says that seeing her lips, for example, is not
enough for the god’s lust (videt oscula, quae non/ est vidisse satis, 500–501).

The emphasis on the male gaze is not just the case for Apollo with Daphne, but for
Jupiter with Callisto (2.417–40) and Tereus with Philomela (6.438–85): these male figures see,
you react, and they want, no matter the stakes. We can find the male gaze in nearly every
extended scene of sexualized violence in Ovid; this is a systematic aspect to how he presents
sexual abuse. The effects of the male gaze are so ingrained in Ovid that when female figures
document their own experiences of sexualized violence, like Arethusa, a nymph, in Met. 5, they
describe their appearance, the movement of their bodies, and the attraction of the rapist to these
visions. When female figures like Arethusa control the gaze on their bodies through narrative
and focalization (which is very rare in Ovid), they cede that control to the male figure’s desires.
Arethusa even thinks that she has made herself readier for her impending attack by Alpheus the
river god because she is fully nude when she is attacked. She says: ardet,/ et quia nuda fui, sum
visa paratior illi (“He burns and because I was naked, I seemed readier to him, 5.602–3). In his
scenes of sexualized violence, Ovid focalizes the desire of male figures almost exclusively, only rarely switching to what female figures see—a visual imbalance is evident. This causes the visions, perspectives, desires, and reactions of male figures to be normalized in his texts and thus, the victim-blaming that the gaze upholds to become normalized, as well.

After we learn of Daphne’s beauty and Apollo’s attraction, we learn that Apollo has “read” Ovid’s earlier poetry. Like the praeceptor amoris persona, the god first tries to seduce Daphne and to use blanditiae, a strongly elegiac concept before he resorts to violence (504ff.). The god says he acts out of amor and that he is concerned for her safety (507), but in actuality he is more concerned with how her flight will affect her appearance. Will she fall and skin her knees and mar the body parts to which he is attracted (ne prona cadas indignave laedi/ crura notent sentes et sim tibi causa doloris!, “...Lest you fall and thorns would mark your legs, undeserving of being injured and I would be the cause of your pain!” 508–9)? But this overlooks how he is the real threat to her body. He declares that he is not a predator, that he will not act like a wolf would to a lamb, that he is not some rustic but the god of Delos, exploiting predator-prey analogies similar to the one we explored in the rape of the Sabines in the Ars 1.117–20 (non insequor hostis/...sic agna lupum, sic cerva leonem,/sic aquilam penna fugiunt trepidante columbae...“I do not follow as an enemy...thus as a lamb flees a wolf, a doe flees a lion, doves flee an eagle on fluttering wing,” 504–507; 512–18). These declarations from Apollo are power plays: all the animals of prey are grammatically feminine and all the predator animals are grammatically masculine, reminding Daphne of the weakness of her gender (Musgrove 2000, 100), and his status as an Olympian god is an inherent threat to her safety. Despite his denial that he is a wolf, it nonetheless positions him as the more dangerous animal in their dynamic. His assurances that he will not harm her belie the threat he poses to her.
We see a similar dynamic in Horace Odes 1.23 when the narrator attempts to assure the young maiden Chloe that he will not prey upon her and her virginal sexuality; he will not, as a predator, chase her like prey. But the fear she expresses toward the narrator’s sexual desire says otherwise about what he is offering to her (Ancona 1994). Both Apollo in this passage and Horace’s narrator think they are engaging in persuasive seduction of a bashful girl, but how does the woman interpret the amatory situation and her safety? Ancona encourages us to consider the female point of view and not prioritize that of the male in “love” poetry: it might not be amor at all. Ancona’s (1994) analysis of the end of Horace Odes 1.9 is similar: where is there violence lurking in the text and how can feminist analysis bring it to light? Daphne is more obviously fearful than the women in these poems of Horace because she is obviously fleeing. Furthermore, as Daphne flees, Apollo’s desire is only more intensely inflamed as the wind propels her robes away from her body and parts of her body are made bare: her resistance is a source of attraction for the god (527–30). Again, Ovid’s narration blames her and her body. Richlin (1992, 168) has questioned scholars who see Ovid’s inclusion of his rape victims’ fear as a sign of sympathy, such as Curran 1978, when so often it is only highlighted in order to further sexualize the female figures and to further prioritize the focalization of the sexual abuser and his attraction.

Eventually, Apollo decides to abandon his seductive speech and become the predator he said he would not be. The narrator likens Apollo to a hound, breathing on the heels of a fleeing hare with his jaws open for a kill (*ut canis in vacuo leporem cum Gallicus arvo/vidit*, “He is like a Gallic hound who sees a rabbit in an empty field,” 532–3). More predator-prey analogies draw the story further into both an elegiac and and also an epic atmosphere. This particular simile is like one in Aen. 12.746–55. Apollo claims that he loves her, but he wants to conquer her like a

---

105 Ancona is relying on Fetterley and her theories on feminist, resistant reading. Ancona believes that we should not always take the male point of view and should instead find the female. What can women tell us about their fears?
hound does a hare. Gregson Davis (1983) has, furthermore, detected that there is often a link between *venatio* and *amor* in the *Met.*, in that the woman pursued is a hunter or that her pursuit is likened to a hunt, both of which we find in this narrative. Davis, like me, finds Daphne a paradigm for every scene of similar sexualized violence later in the *Met.* and sees this trend emerge in the Pan/Syrinx (*Met.* 1.689–721), Jupiter/Callisto (2.401–507), Echo/Narcissus (3.339–510), Alpheus/Arethusa (5.572–641), and Circe/Picus (14.320–96) relationships.

Before Apollo is about to grab her, Daphne calls out to the gods and her father and asks that her beauty be taken away through transformation (544–7). She exercises the only choice available to her to resist rape, “even if that choice is to become a tree” (James 2016, 155). Her transformation symbolizes the violence she would have faced if raped: her physical virginity is maintained, but her body is deformed and obliterated. Ovid will more clearly displace the violence of rape onto transformation in stories such as the rape of Callisto, but this type of displacement is crucial to understanding how Ovid depicts rape, even if never does so literally.

As argued, Daphne blames herself and her own body for Apollo’s attack and never his aggression, and appeals to the gods for transformation (*mutando perde figuram*, “destroy my figure by changing [it],” 545). She is transformed into a laurel tree with the help of her father (548–52), the narrator commenting that the tree maintains her beauty (*remanet nitor unus in illa*, “a certain splendor remains in her”), her possibly most valued feature by both the narrator and Apollo alike (Richlin 1992, 165). This over-prioritization of beauty by the narrator continues when he describes Io transformed into a *bos formosa* (“beautiful cow,” 612). But many of the essential features of Daphne’s body have changed, particularly the laurel tree’s immobility after we saw her human body’s extreme movement in flight (Salzman-Mitchell 2005, 83).
Apollo, however, is not deterred by her change and since she cannot be his *coniunx* (557) as he hoped (echoing his desire for *conubia* earlier), she will be his tree. He completes the rape figuratively by embracing and kissing her transformed body and then appropriating her transformed body as a symbol of his divine power (553–66). James (2016, 172) labels this the first of many symbolic rapes in the *Met*. Daphne tries to resist those kisses and embraces in her new form (*conplexusque suis ramos ut membra lacertis/oscula dat ligno; refugit tamen oscula lignum*, “He embraces the branches as if they were limbs with his upperarms and gives kisses to her bark; her bark nevertheless flees the kisses,” 555–6), but she realizes that her plan of escape has failed and she relinquishes herself to his control with a nod of her trunk, highlighting her all too human sensibilities (*factis modo laurea ramis/ adnuit utque caput visa est agitasse cacumen*, “With her just made branches, the laurel tree nodded and she seemed to have shaken the top of her tree as she would a head,” 566–7). Does Ovid here show Daphne consenting to her figurative rape or her pathetically resigning herself to it? It is clear to me that further resistance for Daphne would have been futile and that her consent has been compromised beyond repair. She ran from him, she lost her human identity to protect herself, and now, in her failure, she has no other means to save herself: her last act of free will is the decision to no longer fight. Ovid articulates this kind of resignation most fully with the rape of Leucothoe by Sol. Leucothoe realizes that she cannot escape Sol and rather than resist, she succumbs to his violence (*at virgo quamvis inopino territa visu/ victa nitore dei posita vim passa querella est*, “although the maiden was terrified by the unexpected vision, having been conquered by the splendor of the god, she suffered his force without protest” *Met*. 4.231–2). But these pathetic acts also work in sinister ways to problematize a female figure’s consent to sexual abuse. Did she want it all along?
Not everyone would agree with my assessment here of Daphne’s failure and Apollo’s victory. Many have speculated whether Daphne is successful in her flight or Apollo in his capture; it is, in fact, one of the central ambiguities of this story. Deschard (2009, 21) believes that Daphne is successful in her escape: she maintains her identity as a virgin and she remains one with the wilds, winning a victory not to have her sexuality brought into the domestic/masculine/civilized sphere, even if she loses her human identity. He writes:

Daphné refuse le chez soi, la maison, l'intérieur, elle est comme en révolte contre la condition féminine qu'on veut lui imposer, elle semble affirmer cette évolution naturelle et humaine comme étrangère a son moi le plus profond, a son identité. La métamorphose lui permet d'être pour l'éternité ce qu'elle est, éclatante, naturelle, vierge et immortelle.

This would be true if Apollo did not figuratively rape her. Even if Daphne maintains her virginity, the god has possessed her, the ultimate goal of his sexual pursuit, and that is shown both by appropriation of her transformed body as a divine symbol and his attempts embrace it. That is in many ways what her nod acknowledges: that she is his. Feldherr (2002, 173) imagines that “bough is just a bough” and there is nothing of her human will left: “perhaps Daphne’s will has been masked completely by her new form, and the attempt to claim her participation in this future as though she were still there marks merely the final stage in her possession.”

But I do not want to overemphasize Apollo’s victory. It is certain he would have preferred literally raping Daphne. Hardie (2002a) in his analysis of this passage from a Lacanian perspective, stresses the implications of Apollo’s figurative rape of the nymph. Daphne’s tree has become a “phallic fetish” (Hardie 2002a, 45). He can possess her, but not enter her. All he can do is pluck her leaves, “the plucking of flowers or picking of fruit is a common image defloweration or marriage, but for Apollo the metaphor cannot translate into the actuality of fulfilled sexual desire” (Hardie 2002a, 46). Apollo in Met. 10.161–219 similarly appropriates the transformed body of Hyacinthus before they can have sex. Both become symbols of what he could have done,
but does not. They are present, but absent. Hardie’s analysis is hugely helpful to my work, but as mentioned in Chapter One, Hardie’s understanding of the theme of rape is at odds with mine and like that of Richlin (1992). According to Hardie, rape is a theme, which constantly repeats in the narrative because of a Lacanian lack, a desire that is unfulfilled, displaced, fluctuating, and reemerging. He rarely uses the words “sexualized violence” to describe interactions like that between Daphne and Apollo. Apollo desires Daphne, he cannot have her because of her transformation, then desires her transformed state, which is an eternal reminder of a desire, unfulfilled. This is insightful and can be used to interpret many scenes of sexual abuse and then transformation, but Hardie fails to define these relationships as ones of abuse, power, and bodily possession, which is essential to understanding and interpreting them.

Ovid did not invent the story of Daphne and Apollo. It will be useful—at least for this narrative—to discuss in more depth Ovid’s influences and how he innovates them, although for subsequent analyses of other narratives I will only briefly bring in comparative evidence. The rape of Daphne as represented by Parthenius 15 has many of the elements that we find in Ovid’s narrative, including her strict virginity, her relationship with Diana, and her preference for masculine activities. But another male figure is said to fall in love with her at first sight, the mortal Leucippus, not Apollo. After we learn about Leucippus in Parthenius, the story begins to strangely mirror and distort the rape of Callisto in Met. 2.401–40. Leucippus disguises himself as a woman, like Jupiter does to Callisto, to become closer to Daphne and even joins her band of nymphs. Daphne cannot tell he is a man and exchanges intimate touching with him. Apollo, jealous of Leucippus, compels Daphne to bathe with all of her maidens in her group, and Leucippus refuses to bath and show himself, as Callisto is reluctant to do with her pregnancy. Daphne and the maidens, angered, impale him with spears, an echo of the Bacchants tearing
Orpheus apart in *Met.* 11.1–66. Later, Apollo attempts to rape her, she flees, and she implores Zeus, not her father, Peneus, to turn her into a laurel tree to protect her virginity. Ovid innovates with elements like Apollo’s and Daphne’s reaction to her transformation and also the relationship he draws between the laurel tree Apollo appropriates and how Augustus has laurel trees in front of his Palatine home. Parthenius’s narrative, most importantly, has no mention of Daphne’s body and appearance and hence, little emphasis on victim-blaming.

Ovid’s rapes additionally draw from a rich tradition of mythology, and the rape of Daphne is reminiscent of other rapes Apollo has committed, including that of Cyrene and Creusa, whose rapes in Pindar’s *Pythian* 9 and Euripides’ *Ion* Kearns (2013) has recently explored in depth. Daphne mirrors Pindar’s description of Cyrene’s masculine interests (such as hunting) and her virginity (9.19–25), and Apollo is as brutal and lustful in Euripides as he is in Ovid, and we see that Creusa appeals to her family and the gods during the act, just as Daphne did before her transformation (*Ion* 887–896). Pindar and Ovid, in their narratives, engage in intense voyeurism, which we do not see in Euripides because Creusa narrates her own rape there. In Pindar, Apollo comes upon Cyrene as she is wrestling a lion and he stares and marvels at her power and strength in the face of the lion (9.30–3). Apollo after seeing this act is intent on taming Cyrene’s masculinity as he attempted to do with Daphne by taking away her virginity, marrying her, and impregnating her. He will take the wild girl who wrestles with lions and bring her into compulsory sexuality. But overall, Ovid differentiates himself from earlier authors like Parthenius, Euripides, and Pindar in the scope of details within his narrative. What is more, no other author has as many rapes in his corpus as Ovid in which to create such literary variety.

2. *Bos Paelex*: The Rape of Io by Jupiter and the Sororophobia of Juno
Ovid encourages us to connect the scenes of rape in his epic and wants us to see repeated patterns. The connections intra- and intertextually among Ovid’s scenes of sexualized violence are deep, intentional, and multilayered. Immediately after the attempted rape of Daphne, he moves from the scene of Daphne’s abuse and its aftermath to the rape of Io by Jupiter through the grief of their fathers, Peneus and Inachus. In Io’s rape (1.587–746), there is additionally the inset story of the attempted rape of Syrinx by Pan (1.689–721). Io’s rape scene is much more compressed than Daphne’s because Jupiter is a cruel and able rapist. He does not allow Io to flee as far as Daphne did from Apollo, the hapless would-be rapist. Nonetheless, despite the scene’s brevity, it contains many elements of the patterns that will help to blame her, which we have previously seen (except Ovid’s lack of detailed description of Io’s attire). We see that Io is alone in the forest and near a river bank, two examples of the locus amoenus (Viderat a patrio redeuntem Iuppiter illam/ flumine, “Jupiter had seen her returning from her father’s river,” 588–9), and Anderson (1997, 206) compares her to female figures such as Rhea Silvia in the Amores 3.5 and Fasti 3.11 who are raped at or near water. She is vulnerable even near the waters of her father. Jupiter comments on her virginity, praises her beauty, objectifies her, and envies her future marriage prospects as he tries to invite her more deeply into the woods (‘…o virgo Iove digna tuoque beatum/ nescio quem factura toro, pete’ dixerat 'umbra/ altorum nemorum…

“Jupiter had said: ‘Maiden, worthy of Jove, and about to make some man blessed in marriage, seek the shade of the high woods [with me],’” 589–91). Jupiter promises to protect her from the sylvan beasts (593). He is not some rustic, earthbound god (plebe deo), but the king of the gods who controls thunder (fulmina) and the scepter (caelestia sceptr) (594–6). Here, again, we see the same lurking threat that Apollo presented to Daphne: he underscores his might and thus, her
vulnerability. Io flees, but she is brutally stopped by Jupiter. He shrouds the scene of his crime with mist, knowing someone above the clouds would not like what she sees (599–600).

Juno, gazing upon the world below, suspects that the mist she sees is peculiar and realizes that her husband is once again dishonoring their marriage by turning to a *paelex*, a pejorative word for “mistress,” “whore,” and even “slut.” Her use of the word *paelex* against Io speaks to a central part of her point of view and characterization. Juno (or the narrator, focalizing the goddess’s resentments against her husband’s rape victims) will call Callisto (2.469), Europa (3.258), Semele (4.422, 547), and Aegina (7.254) *paelices* later in the *Met*. When Ovid repeats the story of Callisto in the *Fasti*, Callisto will be called a *paelex* there, too (2.179). To Juno, all these female figures are adulteresses and not victims. After she sees the cloud, Juno knows that *aut ego fallor/ aut ego laedor* (“Either I am deceived or I am wronged,” 607–608) and she comes down to earth and meets her husband. Jupiter turns Io into a heifer in order to conceal his crime, but Juno tricks her husband into relinquishing Io, transformed, into her care. Jupiter, by handing her over, shows callous disregard for the safety of his rape victim and also for the feelings of his wife, never admitting he was wrong, that he committed rape, or that he even committed adultery. Throughout the entire poem, the god never admits mistakes or faces consequences for his crimes.

Juno then passes Io over to the guardianship of Argus, the hundred-eyed monster, to ensure that she is imprisoned in her animal form indefinitely (621–721). Io, after being objectified by the king of the gods, is under the gaze of a creature who will always see her and also act as proxy for Juno’s gaze. Io cannot escape the trauma of her rape because her body has been radically changed, just as rape did to her body (one form of violence mirroring the other), and she continues to face the violent effects of the gaze on her body to which Jupiter first subjected her before his rape. By deploying Argos to imprison the young nymph, Juno is very
much exercising a phallic power against another female figure, the power of the gaze. With Io’s story, it becomes obvious that we gain more access into the consequences of her transformation than we did with Daphne. Juno’s persistence in keeping Io in her bovine state, while she still has her human intellect and sensibilities intact, forces Io to endure such psychological and physical indignities as drinking muddy water (634), being unable to speak about her predicament with human voice to her family, supplicating a father who does not recognize her with her hooves (635), and being scared of her own reflection, a form of identity disassociation (640).

Even after Argus’ death and her release from her prison, Juno continues to harry the raped Io physically with Furies, gadflies, and other tortures as she makes her a fugitive (Protinus exarsit nec tempora distulit irae/horriferamque oculis animoque obiecit Erinyn/paelicis Argolicae stimulosque in pectore caecos/ condidit et profugam per totum exercuit orbem,

“Immediately she became enraged and she didn’t waste time with her anger. She set a terrifying Fury before the eyes and mind of the Argive slut and buried secret goads in her chest and drove her as a fugitive throughout the entire world,” 724–27). Later, Juno, with Jupiter’s persuasion, begrudgingly allows her husband to restore the nymph to her human form, one of the only reverse transformations in the text. Jupiter promises that he will no longer pursue Io, as he romantically appeals to Juno for the first time in the text (734–7). Jupiter, during this exchange, actually names the nymph as the causa doloris (736), distancing himself from all the blame and giving Juno even more of a reason to blame Io. The father of the gods also exposes more of his victims to Juno’s violence (and of course, his initial victimization) as he specifies that only Io will no longer be a problem for their marriage. Soon, he will rape the nymph Callisto in Met. 2.401–530 and the cycle of violence by him and by Juno will begin anew.106

106 Io’s descendents the Danaids, the archetypal reluctant and murderous brides, will also be subject to sexual abuse.
Juno’s intervention into the aftermath of the rape of Io introduces an important pattern in Ovid’s narrative of rape, which the scene of Apollo’s attempted rape against Daphne does not include, but which is pervasive in the *Met.*: the terrorism of the female gods against female rape victims in the aftermath of sexualized violence, particularly the terrorism of Juno. Pervasively from Books 1 to 9 of the *Met.*, the goddess enacts both physical and psychological violence against her husband’s mortal and immortal rape victims (and even their family members as in the case of Ino, *Met.* 4.416–61), targeting them through punitive transformation, enforced displacement, wandering and even pregnancy, the removal of sanity, and more. Juno’s reactions to rape have received the most attention, but Diana will enact exile, displacement, and death, while Minerva and Circe will enact punitive transformation. Juno’s *ira* in reaction to her husband’s *amor* (so to speak) is a central part of how Ovid represents the aftermath of Jupiter’s rapes, a god who is, according to the vigorously blunt and acute assessment of Janan (2009, 23), a “sexual terrorist, who perpetuates a series of rapes on lesser divinities, nymphs, and mortals that produce multitudes of offspring” and who is a “licentious egoist who imposes his will solely for his own gratification.” Jupiter never fails to rape, and Juno, in turn, never fails to seek misplaced revenge against his female victims, being unwilling or unable to punish the perpetrator. But Diana, Minerva, and Circe—although not as frequently—make their *ira* in response to *amor* central to other narratives of sexualized violence, as well. The goddess Venus will also act as a prominent, divine sororophobic agent in the *Met.*, but in distinct ways from Juno, Diana, Minerva, and Circe: Venus subjects female figures to rape because of her *ira*—she does not respond with *ira* to the aftermath of rape. Curran (1978), Nagle (1984), Janan (2009), and McAuley (2012) have analyzed the almost unceasing and continuously escalating *ira* of Juno at her husband’s rape victims, whom she sees as adulterers, *paelices*, and not as his victims.  

107 Many have understood Juno’s *ira* to be parodies of and inspired by other genres and authors, as well. First her *ira*
Nagle additionally recognizes the similar reactions of Diana, Minerva, and Circe to the female victims of sexual abuse by male gods. Someone must suffer for the insults these goddesses have received: if the male gods cannot suffer, the female rape victims will.

Curran (1978, 226), in his groundbreaking essay on patterns of rape in Ovid, briefly likens Juno in the *Met.* to an enforcer of society’s mores on female sexuality. Nagle (1984) argues that there are clear connections between a god’s *amor*, a goddess’s *ira*, and the destruction of the mortal women and nymphs in their wake. *Amor*, in fact, is nearly always destructive for female figures in the *Met.* and leads to bodily dissolution through transformation. She additionally contends that the *ira* of goddesses in response to *amor* is the more vindictive and lethal in comparison to the male gods. The male gods rarely become angry because of *amor* and never face retribution for *amores*. All the punishment falls onto the bodies of the subordinate women, nymphs, and lesser divinities at the hands of goddesses. Nagle’s article additionally discusses the motivations behind Juno’s *ira* in particular. She asserts that Juno sees Jupiter’s rape victims as a threat because they could replace her as wife to Jupiter and mother to their one child together, Vulcan. Io, Callisto, Semele, Leto, and Alcmene all become pregnant with Jupiter’s progeny and her acts of vengeance never prevent Jupiter from dishonoring and threatening her status as they become increasingly unhinged and deadly. McAuley (2012), understanding motherhood and maternity to be one of the most integral themes in the *Met.*, similarly sees the motivations of Juno’s vengeance as stemming from battles over reproduction. The male gods see

---

can serve as a parody of the wife stock character in New Comedy, a wife always seeking to foil her husband’s dalliances with sex laborers and slaves (Feldherr 2010). For example, the husband and wife in Plautus’ *Casina* are often compared to Jupiter and Juno as Cleostrata tries to stop her husband, Lysidamus, from taking her slave Casina as his concubine. Cleostrata even orders her slave Chalinus to dress in drag and disguise himself as Casina to humiliate her husband, the cross-gender disguise echoing how Jupiter will take on the form of Diana to rape Callisto (2.417–40). The most obvious literary analogue for Ovid’s Juno is Vergil’s Juno, a goddess who is motivated by an *ira* that is sexually and politically based (she hates Rome because it could threaten Carthage, but she hates Troy because of Jupiter’s rape of Ganymede), but in the *Met.*, on the other hand, her *ira* is only sexual (Lovatt 2013, 65).
female bodies as bearers of their seeds, but Juno sees them as threats to her divine and even maternal position in the cosmos (McAuley 2012, 142). Ultimately, to Nagle (1984, 254), there is a clear pattern in the poem: “(1) the gods get what they want, and someone else is likely to get hurt in the process, while (2) goddesses get vengeance—by hurting someone—for not getting what they want.” But Nagle concedes one exception to this rule: the god Apollo reacts with extremely violent *ira* to *amor*, such as when Coronis, his mortal rape victim, rejects him for a male mortal (2.596–611). Still the female figure is destroyed and the male god faces no consequences for his initial violence against her and the violence he later perpetrates. I also believe—in contrast to Nagle—that Mercury reacts with *ira* to thwarted *amor* when he turns Aglauros into stone after she prevents his rape of Herse (2.812–32). Nagle denies that Mercury has such a reaction and instead asserts that Apollo is the only exception to the rule to the many links between gender, anger, and lust in Ovid’s epic (241). But I agree that the goddesses seem to enact most of the violence in the aftermath of sexualized violence, and what is more interesting is that goddesses only punish other female figures, with the exception of Diana and Actaeon (*Met.* 3.165–252) and Latona and the Lycian farmers (6.312–81). Their rage is gendered.

Lastly, Janan (2009), in her exploration of the Theban narratives in Books 3 and 4 of the *Met.*, engages in a Lacanian, psychoanalytic analysis of Juno’s *ira* and its motivations. Juno is suffering from intense melancholia and a feeling of lack. Jupiter, in his never-ending desire for other female figures and in his desire to impregnate other female figures, continually signifies that she is lacking sexually and maternally and that he lacks desire for her. Jupiter can never satisfy his sexual desire and Juno can never satisfy her desire to feel sexually whole with Jupiter and to be enough for him sexually. They should be king and queen, the paradigms of “Man” and “Woman,” sufficient for one another and together, but are not. Juno wants to eliminate her sexual
rivals to fill the lack she suffers. *They* are the source of her problems, and when by eliminating them her lack still remains, she expands her targets to their family members. She kills Semele (3.273–315), but she is unfulfilled, so she kills Athamas, Ino, and Ino’s serving women, who all protect Semele’s progeny, Bacchus (4.416–63). If Juno continues to define and destroy rivals, she does not have to confront her lack, the hole, the void, her empty sexual identity.

All the scholars discussed above have been invaluable to developing my analysis of Juno in the *Met*. But what my analysis does differently than that of other scholars in regard to Juno’s *ira*—and that of other goddesses—is that it contextualizes it within the feminist theories of victim-blaming and sororophobia. Why do angry, violent goddesses have such a prominent role in the aftermath of rape? It is my contention that Juno’s (and Diana’s, Minerva’s, and Circe’s) behavior toward female figures is more than just an expression of *ira*, it is victim-blaming *and* sororophobia, as well. Some of the most violent blame that rape victims receive from characters in the stories is from other female figures: Juno, Diana, and Minerva enact reprisals against female rape victims explicitly because they were raped, while Circe attacks Scylla, a victim of sexual abuse by Glaucus, after the god rejects the witch sexually (*Met*. 14.1–74). (Circe does not punish Scylla *because* she was sexually abused by the god, but still she subjects her to further blame and punishment in the wake of her initial abuse from Glaucus.) Juno and Minerva, as victim-blaming and sororophobic agents, even often blame the victim’s beauty for her rape, like the narrator does with Daphne (*Met*. 1.488–9). What is more, Juno, Diana, and Minerva have been victims of sexual abuse themselves (Juno the victim of Ixion, Diana the victim of Orion, and Minerva the victim of Vulcan) and yet, those experiences do not translate to solidarity with Io, Callisto, Semele, Ino, Leto, Alcmena, Galanthis, Medusa, Arachne, or Chione. This lack of solidarity despite the shared suffering is one of the many tragedies sororophobia stages.
My research, also in contrast to the scholars mentioned above, argues that violent victim-blaming and sororophobia is not limited to the divine in Ovid or to the *Met.*, but can be found more widely in Ovid’s corpus, as we have already seen in my analysis of the *Her.* Mortal women in the *Met.* and elsewhere can victim-blame and commit sororophobia against other mortal women, such as Clytie against Leucothoe (*Met.* 4.190–273) and Lavinia against Anna (*Fasti* 3.601–56), and such sororophobia can be lethal. But victim-blaming and sororophobia in Ovid’s *Met.* and *Fasti* operate in a system where the gods constantly punish mortals and lesser divinities. The relationship between gods and mortals in the *Met.* is fraught and violent. The first bodily transformation we see in the *Met.* is Jupiter changing Lycaon into a wolf for his affront against the king of the gods (1.193–244) and in fact, the very first god-to-human interaction in the poem, again that of Lycaon and Jupiter, is one of punitive transformation and then subsequent and almost universal human destruction. But in the epic, goddesses usually only punish female nymphs, mortals, and lesser divinities for sexualized crimes. Sororophobia most often becomes a gendered form of divine *ira* against other females. Finally, my analysis of victim-blaming and sororophobia in the *Met.* and *Fasti* will prioritize female figures who refuse to participate in these phenomena, most particularly Philomela and Procne (*Met.* 6.571–674), although all of these rebellious female figures suffer for those refusals.

2b. The Attempted Rape of Syrinx by Pan: An Embedded Tale in Io’s Narrative

The narrative of Io’s rape contains the narrative of Syrinx’s attempted rape. As mentioned, Juno ordered Argus, the hundred-eyed cowherd, to guard Io. Jupiter, angry at being kept from his victim, dispatches his son Mercury to take care of Argus. Mercury pretends to be a goatherd visiting Argus (whom the hundred-eyed monster ironically cannot recognize) and entertains Argus with his pipe, an instrument that has recently been created as a result of Pan’s
attempted rape of Syrinx, a nymph, who metamorphosed into the reeds that comprise the pipe. 108 Argus asks how the pipe was first invented (682–4). Mercury then tells the story of Pan and Syrinx, becoming the second internal narrator in the epic after Jupiter, who narrates the story of Lycaon’s barbarity to a council of the gods (1.199–243). Mercury is one of forty internal narrators in the epic and as Rosati (2002, 274) argues, all these narrators allow the main narrative “to reproduce itself in miniature.” Ovid’s narrators will often take on his type of storytelling and his techniques. At a most basic level, Mercury, like Ovid, tells a story of rape very similar to that of Io (Murgatroyd 2005, 621) seeing such a similarity as a joke from Mercury and Ovid: Mercury knows who Io is and how she was raped and transformed. And Mercury by playing the same type of pipes to kidnap a rape victim for his rapist father, abets Jupiter’s control over Io and contributes further to cycles of violence against nymphs and mortals by male gods (Feldherr 2010, 32). We see overall that Mercury is an excellent storyteller (who achieves his somnolent aims against Argus), but he has some different concerns and techniques than Ovid.

Mercury, first and foremost, hopes that the story—since we and Argus have heard all of this before—will bore the monster so profoundly that Argus will close all of his eyes. Once Argus has closed his eyes, Mercury can murder him and kidnap Io without detection, devising a unique strategy for kidnap and murder and using a story of attempted rape to help his father retrieve his rape victim. But Mercury presents a narrative of sexualized violence that deviates from Ovid’s pattern, although much is similar. Syrinx, like Daphne, is devoted to Diana and virginity (694) and because of her devotion, often has to evade the many suitors interested in her (692). Syrinx is almost in every way like Diana and could fool those not looking carefully,

108 In some accounts of the creation of the pipe, Mercury invents it himself. Ovid, here, is playing with aetiological mythology. Mercury was also known for inventing the lyre. See Murgatroyd 2005, 623. Ovid’s sources for the Pan and Syrinx story have not survived, if he had any direct sources and inspiration for this narrative. “Still, Ovid was probably the first to weave her into the larger narrative of Io and Argus” (Anderson 1997, 215).
except that she has a bow of horn and not of gold (697). Pan must have been able to see that difference and as a lesser god, he would have probably never dared to rape Diana, an Olympian.

Pan, like Apollo, does not respect her dedication to virginity and attempts to coerce her into compulsory sexuality. Syrinx is alone in the forest, the locus amoenus, like Daphne (698–9) and what is more, redeuntem is the same word used for Io as she is approached by Jupiter (Redeuntem colle Lycaeo/Pan videt hanc, “Pan sees her returning from the Lycaeon hill”). Because we learn that she carries a bow around with her, Mercury’s narration implies that she is hunting, once more showing the connections Gregson Davis (1983) outlined between venatio et amor, but it is curious that she does not use these weapons against Pan. He easily approaches her since she is alone, like Jupiter with Io and Apollo with Daphne. He even tries to strike up a conversation with her before he attacks (700). He at least wants the pretense of consent, like Apollo (1.504–24) and Jupiter (590–7) before him, both of whom attempted seduction and then resorted to force when rejected. Daphne, Io, and Syrinx all leave their divine pursuers talking as they begin to flee (502–42, 597, 701). Syrinx, realizing that she cannot escape Pan and being by the river Ladon, prays for transformation like Daphne and even becomes vegetation like Daphne, turning into reeds (702–6). When Pan comes to the river he holds onto the reeds instead of her body, showing both how she is absent and present and how, even though she is not literally raped, she will be figuratively raped like Daphne as he appropriates the reeds for his benefit (corpore pro nymphae calamos tenuisse palustres, “he held onto reeds from the marsh, instead of her body,” 706). Pan realizes that the reeds can be used for music after he hovers over the reeds and sighs through them, similar to how Apollo kisses the bark of Daphne (707–8).

There are the many similarities to Daphne, but differences abound. The story is much more compressed than that of Daphne and unlike Daphne, we have little idea of what she looks
like or what she is wearing, except that she dresses like Diana, with her garments exposing much of her body (\textit{ritu quoque cincta Dianae/falleret}, “Syrinx would deceive [you] also with her dress pulled up similar to Diana,” 695–6). In my mind, this is a detail that, although not as explicit as with Daphne, blames Syrinx for her attempted rape by Pan. Her beauty prevents her from honoring her vow, and the emphasis on the male gaze (\textit{Pan videt hanc}) confirms this undertone. Furthermore, we do not know much about either Syrinx’s personality or her fear, and, thus, her fear does not become a source of attraction to the god pursuing her. Her transformation is even swifter than Daphne’s and we do not learn of how it affects her body (Anderson 1997, 216), but the violence of rape is still displaced into the violence of metamorphosis. And although the tale of Syrinx is most similar to that of Daphne, Syrinx is like Io as well, Ovid creating a sense of symmetry between the main and embedded tales. Io runs away from a god, he pursues, she is transformed, and what is more, Io finds salvation at a river (where she is transformed back into a human, 724–33), and Syrinx is saved from rape by a river by unknown supernatural forces (Murgatroyd 2005, 622). Syrinx is most unlike Io because she escapes rape and is permanently changed. No rape victims except Io when transformed return to original form.\footnote{Syrinx even resembles Argus. He, too, transforms into something used by a divinity for her own power, his eyes adding to the decoration of peacock feathers and he dies/transforms in the \textit{locus amoenus} like Syrinx (722–3; Murgatroyd 2005, 623). This is again evidence that Juno is interested in controlling the gaze. She sends Argus to gaze upon Io, but when she loses Argus to Jupiter’s plots, she appropriates his eyes to increase the power of her symbolic bird. Rimell (2006), as well as Janan (2009), has analyzed Juno’s interest in controlling the gaze.}

What is interesting from a narratological perspective is that Mercury does not finish the story himself, but the Ovidian narrator picks up its thread through indirect statement, the only time in ancient literature that a narrator cuts a speaker short and finishes it himself (Murgatroyd 2005, 621). Argus eventually falls asleep and closes all his eyes before Mercury arrives at the end of the story, and Ovid must finish it for the external audience, even if the internal one sleeps. Argus suffers for his repose—Mercury slays him, whisks Io away, and achieves what he
intended with the story. Barchiesi (2002, 184) has written about how internal narrators in the *Met.* rarely attain their goals as storytellers, whether it be for persuasion, seduction, or violence. Moreover, Ovid, by making Argus fall asleep, is making a joke about how this is the third story of rape and transformation in less than three hundred lines (Anderson 1997, 217; Wheeler 1999, 1–2): are we, the implied audience, as bored (to death) as Argus, who has already heard the story of Io? Are Ovid’s patterns of rape already becoming monotonous for his readers?

Many scholars have been concerned with “differential audience response” (Konstan’s term for it) and how Ovid understands those different effects, including Bömer (1969), Konstan (1991), and Rosati (2002). Even if Argus is bored, is everyone in his audience? Does Ovid create enough variety by including an internal narrator like Mercury to whet the interest of his audience? Konstan (1991, 20), in addition, wonders if the implied audience wants to hear the end of the story because of porngraphic desire to see the rape transpire or because we empathize with Syrinx’s plight and hope to see her successfully escape Pan. What is more, many stories of “erotic pursuit” as Nagle (1988) defines it are within embedded narratives, and Nagle believes embedding these stories is an explicit way that Ovid draws readers more deeply into the narrative, a way for his audience to pursue and be seduced by the narrative itself. We will see other examples of this in the stories of the daughter of Minyas (all erotic) in Book 4 and in the stories surrounding the sexualized and sororophobic violence of Circe in Books 13 and 14. 

---

10 His father is an effective storyteller, as well. Mercury compels all of Argus’ eyes to close to murder him, and Jupiter uses his story of Lycaon’s blasphemy to convince the gods of mortal and terrestrial destruction.

11 Rosati has also discussed how the outright cacophony of voices and narrators in the *Met.* creates a disordered narrative. Different narrators can create variety and reflect Ovid’s concerns as artist, but can also lead to the birth of a “shattered truth, a multiplicity of autonomous, relative, and conflicting voices.” See Rosati (2002, 297).

12 McCallum (2016), furthermore, argues, that Ovid creates more variety in his text by using the interaction between Argus and Mercury and the inset story of Syrinx told by Mercury to introduce the pastoral into the *Met.*, while the attempted rape of Daphne introduced the elegiac. This use of generic play not only contributes to the “generic polyphony” of the poem (125), something that scholars have long observed of the epic, but helps to emphasize different elements, motifs, and themes than we see in Daphne. The bucolic is everywhere around Argus and Mercury, while it is not in the story of Daphne. McCallum provides numerous examples, including how
3. The Rape of Callisto by Jupiter in the *Metamorphoses* and Diana’s and Juno’s Sororophobia

Callisto, Jupiter’s second victim in the epic, in many ways faces more brutal predation from both the king of the gods and his wife than Io. As Jupiter is restoring the world after Phaethon’s fiery chariot ride, particularly adding the features of the *locus amoenus* to Arcadia, he comes upon Callisto, who we learn is one of the nymphs in the virginal band of Diana. Jupiter begins to feel the fires of passion in his bones (*accepti caluere sub ossibus ignes*, 410) and through his gaze on her body, observes her clothing, her hair, and even her weapons (412–5):

*Nec erat huius opus lanam mollire trahendo
 nec positu variare comas; ubi fibula vestem,
 vitta coercuerat neglectos alba capillos;
 et modo leve manu iaculum, modo sumpserat arcum,
 miles erat Phoebes...*

It was not customary for Callisto to soften wool by working it or to style her hair into place; a clasp held together her clothing and a white ribbon held back her loose hair; and as the soldier of Diana, she had taken up both a light javelin in her hand and a bow.

All these features of her appearance indicate her commitment to virginity and her rejection of traditional female sexuality and marriage, as does her rejection of traditionally female activities like weaving. Her hair in particular is loose in the way Daphne’s was in *Met*. Book 1 and like Daphne, her devotion to virginity will be ignored and she will be brought into compulsory sexuality and also motherhood by her abuser. As I have argued, these stories of rape in Ovid about how virginal nymphs are brought into sexuality speak to how female figures who have rejected civilization (or in other words, masculinity) and embraced the freedom of *natura* (of Mercury’s use of a syrinx—a pipe that first came into existence as a result of Pan’s sexual abuse of the nymph Syrinx—to tell a story set within Arcadia, the location of Vergil’s *Eclogues*, is a hallmark of the genre in both Theocritus and Vergil. She also notes how variants of the verb *pascor* dominate throughout the poem in these stories, such as in 1.630–1, a widely-used verb in the *Eclogues* (see 1.45). The programmatic entrance into the pastoral world in this story will lead to the pastoral we see later in the epic with figures like Marysas and Polyphemos (31).
femininity) are forced into constraints men have traditionally imposed on female figures.

Callisto’s body is penetrated by rape, by birth, and then ultimately by punitive transformation from the queen of the gods. Everett Beek (2015, 196) rightly says that “the onslaught of violence to [Callisto’s] body, her identity, her life, and indeed her integrity as a person is unrelenting.”

Jupiter finds Callisto alone in a grove after hunting, her solitude described with language evocative of elegiac poetry: *vacantem custode* (422). The grove in which he happens to come upon her has been untouched by people, civilization, and even seasons, the purity of the space reflecting Callisto’s own, but soon the space and her female body, both *materia*, will be violated (2.417–8). Jupiter does not try to woo her as he did with Io, and in order to forestall the fleeing that would inevitably ensue once the nymph saw Jupiter, he disguises himself as Diana to ravish her more easily (425). However, Callisto would have been a rather formidable victim to Jupiter if he chanced upon her at a different time. As we have seen, Ovid bestows her with the epithet, *miles Phoebes* (416). Ovid also brings attention to how heavily armed the nymph was for hunting (414; 419–21). Anderson (1997, 280) notes that it was extremely rare for any female figure to be called a soldier, even a follower of Diana. Sharrock (2015, 168) sees Callisto as a remnant of the warrior women we find in Vergil, like Camilla (*Aen.* 11.532–835). But she argues that “although Ovid does offer warrior women a range of roles, none of them escapes the totalizing masculine gaze, the construction of themselves as Other, or the concomitant humiliation that undermines their attempts to contribute in traditionally masculine areas.” Or in other words, Ovid never allows his warrior women to be free, aggressive, or truly powerful. They will become engendered with proper femininity through male violence like rape or otherwise.

Ovid, within the same lines of bestowing Callisto with her martial epithet, unfortunately informs us that she has disarmed herself as Jupiter was spying on her (419), and he next informs
us she was exhausted from hunting (*Iuppiter ut vidit fessam*, “As Jupiter sees her tired,” 422).

Callisto trusts that she is safe in this grove, a realm of protected femininity, a place untouched. But Jupiter pounces on his warrior victim when she is at her most susceptible. Nonetheless, Callisto still vehemently resists her rape as the ruler of the gods grips her in his arms (434–7):

*Illa quidem contra, quantum modo femina posset (adspiceres utinam, Saturnia, mitior esses), illa quidem pugnat, sed quem superare puella, quisve Iovem poterat?*

She, certainly face to face with him, as much as a woman could—would you have only seen this, Juno, you would be more sympathetic to her—she certainly resists, but whom could a girl overpower, and who could overpower Jupiter?

Ovid questions if a female figure would have ever had much luck resisting at any rate and again illuminates the vast power imbalance between the god and the nymph. What is more, Jupiter, before he enters the idyllic Arcadia, is described as the *omnipotens pater*, a way for Ovid to forecast the abuse of power Jupiter will soon enact (Segal 1999, 407). Ovid makes it clear in these lines that this was not consensual and even calls what Jupiter did a *crimen* (433). But Ovid by drawing attention to her body and appearance, her nubile sexuality, and Jupiter’s pleasure in them, by drawing attention to her solitude, her lack of foresight in casting aside her arrows, gives his audience ammunition to blame her for not doing enough to protect herself and to locate the source of Jupiter’s rape in her behavior and body. In this rape, we also have an interesting, new dynamic of victim-blaming. Jupiter, disguised in his daughter’s form, kisses Callisto passionately and as Ovid writes, not much like a virginal goddess (430–31). Callisto does not draw away from this interaction and willingly accepts the kiss from Jupiter disguised as Diana. Callisto here made herself more sexually available to Jupiter than the victims before her, even if she accepted those affections under false pretenses. She is not only alone and dressed inappropriately, she has—without any resistance—shared intimacy with the god who ultimately rapes her.
After her attack, we gain clear access to Callisto’s post-traumatic stress and how afraid she has become of surroundings she used to know well (*huic odio nemus est et conscientia silva*, “The grave and the familiar forest have become hateful to her,” 438). Callisto in her despair and disorientation even almost forgets to retrieve her weapons (438–9). The arrows, cast aside, demonstrate how vulnerable the rape has made her and how little her training in arms did to protect her from Jupiter. The cast aside arrows also represent her lost virginity (the arrows were once a sign of her commitment to it) and the understanding that her lifestyle amounted to only “masculine pretensions” (Sharrock 2015, 169). The real Diana soon emerges from the woods and she flees from her favorite goddess, thinking that Jupiter may once again be preparing to attack her (443–4). This is the flight we usually see before the rape (Daphne, Syrinx, and Io) and here it was delayed until after the rape (*Met.* 1.525–6, 597, 703–5; Frantantuono 2011, 38). Callisto has too much shame to tell Diana what happened and never does until Diana finds out herself through Callisto’s pregnancy, although there is the implication that the goddess knew Callisto was hiding something. For example, Callisto no longer takes pride in her position as the favorite of Diana, is silent, and blushes often, giving many signs of her wounded chastity (448–52). What is more, Ovid writes that: *poterat sentire Diana/ mille notis culpam: nymphae sensisse feruntur* (“Diana could sense Callisto’s guilt through a thousand signs; the nymphs are said to have sensed it, too,” 451–2). The presence of the real Diana immediately after Callisto’s rape also calls into question if she would have been able to stop her father. How would the hierarchy of the gods been implemented? Would Diana have protected Callisto? Would she have wanted to?

Jupiter’s violence fundamentally changes Callisto’s relationship with Diana and ultimately introduces victim-blaming and sororophobia into the goddess’s relationship with her favorite nymph (Juno, as I have argued above, is not the only perpetrator of such violence). First,
Callisto cannot remain a *miles Phoebes* because she has become sexually mature (Sharrock 2015, 169). Westerhold (2006) in her dissertation notes that often in the *Met.*, the sexual transition from girl to woman means the loss of important and formative female relationships. Proserpina and Ceres have their relationship suffer because of rape, as well (*Met.* 5.425–86). Philomela’s rape and mutilation by Tereus, in contrast, strengthened Philomela and Procne’s sisterhood (*Met.* 6.571–619). Callisto’s transition into sexual maturity and the explicit evidence of it enrages Diana and alienates the goddess from Callisto because she demands perpetual virginity from her followers. Diana discovers Callisto’s loss of virginity by forcing her to strip her clothing while the virginal band was about to bathe in waters sacred to her in the *locus amoenus*. There is indication that her sister nymphs tore the clothing from her, too (460–2). The nymph blushes deeply (*erubuit*, 460) when she realizes she must expose her body to Diana. Whatever Callisto’s actual responsibility for the rape, we see with this detail that she feels deep shame. There are other indications of Callisto’s feelings of culpability. Twice, Ovid calls what happened to her a *crimen*, the first time focalizing Callisto’s perspective (*quam difficile est crimen non prodere vultu!* “How difficult it is not to betray a crime on one’s face!” 447) and the second both Callisto’s and Diana’s (*nudo patuit cum corpore crimen*, “the crime is made clear with her nude body,” 462), demonstrating how Callisto blames herself and how she faces the blame of the goddess. Earlier, from Callisto’s and Diana’s perspective, the narrator calls what happened to her a *culpa* (452). The victim-blaming she receives is both internalized and from external forces. The use of the words *crimen* and *culpa* to portray Callisto’s rape, particularly later in the *Fasti*’s account of the myth, is at the center of debate around Ovid’s sympathy for Callisto (and female figures in his texts more generally) (W.R. Johnson 1996, Murgatroyd 2005, and Robinson 2011). Does Ovid subscribe to the belief that Callisto is responsible? Although these words of guilt,
blame, and shame are primarily used in this story to attribute more responsibility to Callisto from her own focalizations and those of other characters, and although Ovid’s use of *crimen* to describe Jupiter’s violence in 433 condemns the god, the frequency of the words *crimen* and also *culpa* in this narrative to describe Callisto’s rape are suspect to me. They create a framework that biases the audience and leads it to blame the nymph for what she suffered.

Diana’s subsequent behavior deepens that misplaced responsibility. The goddess expels Callisto from her band of nymphs and Ovid here makes explicit the social death and othering from a community that results from rape (464–5). She is expelled from an in-group because she no longer has its unifying characteristic, and Callisto shamefully brought signs of her male sexual contact into the group, a cadre meant only for untouched nymphs (Anderson 1997, 285). By expelling Callisto because she is no longer a virgin, Diana, moreover, blames her alone for her rape and its consequences and not the perpetrator. She commits the first act of sororophobia the nymph endures (when, because of Io, we would have expected Juno to arrive more quickly) and even compels other nymphs to participate in that act (in the *Fasti* version to be explored below, it is clear that Callisto receives the dignity of revealing her pregnancy herself). Ovid portrays the goddess as so fanatical about virginity that she does not even allow Callisto to explain herself. She is pregnant and that is offense enough. Diana’s sororophobia is different from that of Juno because it is not concerned with ascribing the victim’s beauty as the cause of the rape, but it still centers Callisto’s body as the site for punishment. Her sisterhood does not extend to a nymph who has made herself impure and has entered sexuality, even if the circumstances were against her will. Diana’s lack of sisterhood has longer-lasting consequences: once Callisto faces expulsion from Diana’s protection, her blame for her own rape persists because Juno and her sororophobic *ira* and victim-blaming finally enter the stage.
Callisto suffers even more blame from *saeva Juno* than Io (479). Juno decides to target Callisto when she is vulnerable because of her expulsion from Diana’s protection. Juno once again perceives the nymph to be a *paelex* of Jupiter and not his rape victim (469), and the goddess even calls Callisto an *adultera* (471). The queen of the gods is particularly angry that the nymph has given birth to a son, Arcas, flouting her position as the wife and consort of Jove. Through the birth, Callisto has made Juno’s *dedecus* (shame), her failures as the wife and consort of Jove (473), public for all to see. The goddess, as mentioned and as she did with Io, directly blames Callisto’s body for Jupiter’s interest in her (and thus, his attack, although Juno never considers it as such) (*Haud inpune feres: adimam tibi namque figuram,/ qua tibi, quaque places nostro, importuna, marito,* “You will hardly get away with this: for I will take away that beauty from you which was pleasing to you and my husband, insolent girl,” 474–5). Juno ascribes pride in her appearance to Callisto, a pride, which seems to be a fiction of the goddess’s anger and paranoia. The queen of the gods eradicates the very *figura* that she believes caused Jupiter to stray from their marriage by punitively transforming Callisto into a bear (477–84). We thus receive the focus on the mutilation of Callisto’s body during her metamorphosis that we did not receive during her rape, Ovid engaging in his characteristic displacement of the violence of rape to the violence of transformation and thereby equating them (see Chapter Three). By allowing us to view the rape through a punitive transformation, Ovid equates Juno to Jupiter, a rapist. Callisto’s transformation, furthermore, is more monstrous than others we see for rape victims before and after her. Ovid even uses the word *deformis* (481) to describe some of the changes it unleashes upon her body, Raval (1998, 121) arguing that her body first faces deformation

---

113 Juno is also called *saeva* in *Met. 4.547*, 9.199, Ovid taking his cues from *Aen* 1.4. Each time Juno is called this she is committing a sororophobic act: first against Callisto, then against Ino, and then against Galanthis.

114 In Hesiod’s version of myth, found in fragments of the *Astronomia 3*, Artemis is the figure who turns her into a bear and Juno has no involvement in her punishment and in Pseudo-Apollodorus (*Bibliotheka* 3.8.2), Zeus changes her into a bear, like he changed Io into a cow, to hide his actions from his vengeful wife.
through the rape and the transformation continues it. Keegan (2002, 136) believes this type of exaggeration is a result of Callisto’s entrance into many different “deviant categories” for a female figure: she is a vow breaker, she loses her virginity and becomes pregnant outside of a legitimate relationship, she is a rape victim, she violates the sacred, virginal waters of Diana with her sexuality, she is expelled from a community, and she is rejected by a goddess and terrorized by another. As Keegan (2002, 136) rightly says: “it is impossible to accommodate Callisto.” Female figures who are so deviant have to be eliminated, they must suffer and be punished.

Ovid makes it clear that this is not only a monstrous transformation, but has cruel consequences, particularly because Juno traps Callisto’s human mind in an ursine body (mens antiqua manet, “Her old mind remains,” 485).115 She also explicitly loses her ability to speak, the characteristic detail that reminds Ovid’s audience of one the most tragic losses of humanity one can face: the loss of speech (posse loqui eripitur: vox iracunda minaxque/plenaque terroris rauco de gutturre fertur, “Her ability to speak is ripped away from her: her voice angry and threatening and full of terror comes from her hoarse throat,” 483–4). Callisto is also nothing like a bear before she becomes one. Many times in Ovid the transformation reflects the character and/or appearance of the person: the narrator comments that Daphne retains her beauty (Met. 1.552), even if she becomes immobile and therefore different from her former self. There are no such similarities here to Callisto’s former self. The transformation of Callisto instead reflects Juno’s wrath. Callisto is not like a bear internally (or externally), but the bear is what Juno wants her to be. Juno not only deforms the beauty she believes is responsible for her husband’s “adultery,” but she psychologically tortures Callisto by making her into something she is not.

115 This is the same fate Actaeon will face later when he is transformed into a deer by a vengeful Diana after he has seen her naked (mens tantum pristina mansit, “Only his old mind remained,” 3.203).
The nymph attributes her pain to an ungrateful Jupiter who does nothing to help her. Callisto self-blames, but she is the only character to lay some blame at Jupiter’s feet.

Callisto’s transformation is particularly malicious because her son, Arcas, almost kills her in her animalistic state as a hunter himself (496–507).116 This is when Jupiter, in order to prevent an unintentional and matricidal tragedy, finally intervenes and makes both his victim and son into constellations, transforming Callisto’s body with his powers once more, a female figure who has already endured rape, pregnancy, and metamorphosis into a bear. Jupiter essentially elevates Callisto to the divine (facta est dea!, 520) and reverses the punishment Juno found suitable for his paelex. According to Juno, this ascension is an affront to and usurpation of her regal dignity and an immortalization of the illegitimacy of her power (508–30). To avenge herself against Callisto once more and to ensure that she does not lose legitimacy as the queen of the gods, she convinces Tethys and Oceanus to agree that Callisto’s stars can never set below the horizon into the sea and be purified in the waters, thereby ensuring that the nymph is forever defined by and forever endures an impurity to her body and identity that she did not create. Everett Beek (2015, 191) observes that this additionally deepens her Othering and social death because she is “distanced from other constellations.” This particular act also unites Juno and Diana further as sororophobic figures against Callisto: they both forbid the nymph and rape victim from ritual bathing, expelling her from purifying waters. In Callimachus’ version of the myth (fragment 632), the two vengeful goddesses collude much more directly in their punishment of the nymph: Hera asks Artemis to shoot Callisto with her arrows and the goddess agrees.

Ovid’s narrator wondered earlier whether if Juno had seen the rape she might have been more sympathetic to Callisto’s plight (adspiceres utinam, Saturnia, mitior esses, 435) and not

116 This interaction between mother and son mirrors and also reverses the interactions between Pentheus and Agave later in the Met. Callisto recognizes her son, Arcas, but Arcas does not recognize her as an animal (3.692–723).
have terrorized her like she did. It is true that we never see Juno witnessing a rape. She does not see the rape of Io, Callisto, Europa, Semele, Leto, Aegina, or Alcmene. Does Juno not think that rape is a possibility? Does she not understand the vast power dynamics between a god and a nymph or mortal woman and assume consent between them? And an even larger question arises: Can the gods even conceive of what they do to mortals as abuse (rape being one of the many abuses they commit against lesser divinities and mortals) or is it rather their divine right? These questions are perhaps unanswerable, but Ovid shows us a goddess witnessing a rape in his poem: Minerva in Met. 4.793–801 sees the rape of Medusa by Neptune in her temple. The sight of the rape does not generate sympathy for Medusa, and the goddess punishes Medusa for the violation. We could probably safely assume the same of Juno, who never once shows sympathy for Jupiter’s victims in Ovid’s texts, although, in Vergil, Juturna, the rape victim of Jupiter and the sister of the Italian hero Turnus, becomes one of her favorite subordinates and confidants.

3b. Si non formosa fuisset: The Rape of Callisto by Jupiter in the Fasti

Ovid returns to the story of Callisto in the Fasti Book 2, which has the most stories of sexualized violence in the elegiac poem.\textsuperscript{117} The account of Callisto’s rape here is much more compressed than in the Met., but many similarities to and differences from the epic poem emerge. The account opens with greater elaboration on the relationship between Callisto and Diana and we witness the vow of virginity that the nymph made to the goddess (2.157–60). Diana expresses that as long as Diana keeps that virginal vow, she will be the princeps of her band of nymphs, making their close and intimate relationship more explicit than it was in the Met. (Cynthia laudavit, ‘promissa’ que ‘foedera serva, et comitum princeps tu mihi’ dixit ‘eris,’

“Diana praised [Callisto] and said: ‘Keep your promised vows and you will be the first of my

\textsuperscript{117} The rape of the Sabines (passim Books 2 and 3), the attempted rape of Omphale (303–58), the attempted rape of Juturna and the rape of Lara (583–616), and the rape of Lucretia (685–852).
companions,’” 159–60). The vow is similar to one Artemis makes in Callimachus Hymn 3.6 and that Daphne echoed earlier before her sexual abuse by Apollo. Ovid’s narrator echoes the story of Daphne again himself when he comments that Callisto cannot keep her vow of virginity because of her beauty, once more locating the source of rape within her body (foedera servasset, si non formosa fuisset, “If she had not been beautiful, she could have kept her vows,” 161). Right after his statement about her beauty, Callisto is raped, able to resist her mortal suitors, but not her divine one (cavit mortales, de Iove crimen habet, “She avoided mortals, but she receives a crime from Jove,” 162). Ovid here represses the scene of the rape even more so than in the Met., using a euphemism, and there is no emphasis on how Jupiter disguised himself as Diana.

Afterward, we immediately see Diana’s banishment of Callisto and Juno’s fury through punitive transformation. Callisto is expelled from a bath in the locus amoenus, a location we have come to associate with rape, but which Ovid displaces to the scene of her punishment (163–5). She still faces violence in the locus amoenus, but of a different sort, a sororophobic sort. Diana’s behavior, according to W.R. Johnson (1996) and Murgatroyd (2005), is more sympathetic in this episode because we see the basis of her anger: the violation of the vow. Diana even calls Callisto a periura (173). The narrative opens with Callisto taking the vow and her

---

118 Many commentators have read significance into Ovid’s use of princeps to describe Callisto’s status in Diana’s retinue, a term that would have been closely associated with Augustus and his political power. Augustus and Callisto were connected outside of such a term and Ovid’s literature: Suetonius (Augustus 80) reports that the emperor had birthmarks that were shaped like the Ursa Major constellation, Callisto’s final form after her second transformation from star to caterism. But Augustus may be more like Callisto’s rapist Jupiter in the Fasti. At Fasti 2.119–44, Ovid compares Augustus to Jupiter, Augustus ruler of earth and Jupiter of the heavens. In this passage, Augustus is also said to loathe rape and value chastity, but his celestial analogue shows no such respect. Murgatroyd (2005, 93–4) does not view this as an explicit act of subversion or Ovid calling Augustus a rapist, but an “obvious undercutting” of Augustus’ moral program. Dolansky (2016) uses the presence of the word princeps in the Callisto passage to explore what she believes to be Ovid’s wider critique of Augustus in Fasti Book 2. In the Callisto narrative and those of Lara and Lucretia (see Chapter Five), as well, there is an emphasis on ruptured familiar units “in the face of a powerful, external force” (48) who wants to control Callisto’s, Lara’s, and Lucretia’s sexuality. These powerful, external forces are Jupiter, Diana, Juno, Mercury, and Sextus Tarquinius. Callisto is expelled from her nymph sisterhood by Diana and she cannot raise her son because of Juno. Augustus, himself, with his moral legislation and his position as the pater patriae, disrupted the traditional sense of the Roman family. He sought to control the sexuality of his subjects just as Jupiter controls the sexuality of Callisto through rape.
intention to keep it and we see the vow broken. In the Met., Diana is nothing but cruelly fanatical about sexual impurity because the vow that Callisto made to her is implicit. But in both works, the reactions from Diana have the same result: blaming a female figure for her rape, abandoning her while she is pregnant, and making her vulnerable to more violence. Regardless of the prominence of the vow, Diana does not show compassion to Callisto and never makes an effort to presume her innocence.

As for Juno, Ovid once again impugns the queen of the gods for reacting in the way she did because Callisto was taken against her will, just as earlier he reminds Juno that if only she saw what Jupiter did she would have been merciful (quid facis? invito est pectore passa Iovem, “What are you doing? She suffered Jove with an unwilling heart,” 178). But even this exculpation of Callisto’s responsibility does not negate the words of guilt and blame that surround Callisto’s behavior and body, like Ovid’s comment on her vow and the fact that the narration implies she committed a crimen (162), although some have said that this could be Callisto’s focalization like we see in the Met. and not the narrator’s beliefs (see Robinson 2011, 171). To me, the use of the word crimen here and in the Met. episode is too ambiguous for comfort. Overall, Juno’s violence has less of a presence in the Fasti because the nymph’s transformation is described in one line instead of a dozen (laesa furit Iuno, formam mutatque puellae, “The hurt Juno rages and transforms the body of the girl,” 177). In this narrative, the violence of the rape is more suppressed even through the surrogate violence of transformation.

What is more, in this version of Callisto’s fate, we have less access into the aftermath of this transformative violence (only two lines speak to her suffering and her reversal of fortune; ursa per incultos errabat squalida montes/ quae fuerat summo nuper amata Iovi, “The squalid bear was wandering through the uninhabited mountains, she who had been recently loved by
Jove on high,” 181–2), although there is an added insight into Callisto’s state of mind fifteen years after her transformation. How much of Callisto’s humanity has been lost? Is there anything left of the mens antiqua that Ovid discussed in the Met.? Ovid describes Callisto as out of her mind with suffering as she struggles to become a human again in order to interact with her son. She wants to tell him that she is his mother, that she does not want to kill him. But the only communication she can muster is a growl and Arcas is about to kill her (185–6). Ovid here once again draws attention to the silencing, and thus the loss of one of the hallmarks of humanity, that transformation inflicts on a person. In the context of both the Met. and Fasti Callisto narratives, the silencing of characters, especially female figures, takes on prominent positions. Callisto is silenced in the Met. by Juno’s transformation, and we similarly see Corone (566–595) the raven (596–611), Oryichoe (633–75), and Aglauros (812–33) punished for their speech acts against the gods by the gods. In the Fasti, Callisto faces silencing by transformation once more, Lara has her tongue removed for her speech against Jupiter, and Lucretia is silenced through the trauma of rape and suicide. In Chapters Five and Six, I will address in more depth the connections among silencing, femininity, and rape and also Ovid’s own personal connections to silencing.

One other detail differentiates the Fasti narrative from that of the Met. We learn that her constellation-self is constantly running away from her son in fear, a detail absent from the Met. (Arctophylax formam terga sequentis habet, “Then the bear keeper takes the shape of one following her back,” 190). Pathetic details like this one lead W.R. Johnson (1996) and Murgatroyd (2005) to conclude that the Fasti’s narrative of Callisto is more sympathetic, tragic, and solemn than that of the Met. Their arguments center around the more compressed and starkly brutal nature of the elegiac poem’s narrative, which allows less space for “trivializing” (to use Johnson’s word) elements like Jupiter in drag and Juno’s exaggerated and over-the-top anger at
Callisto. But as Robinson points out in his 2011 commentary (169), the *Fasti* narrative does not lack comedy. For example, Callisto takes her vow on the bow and arrows of Diana and says they will be the *testes* of her vow (*quos tangimus arcus,/ este meae testes virginitatis*, “May the bows which I touch, be the witnesses of my virginity,” 157–8). This is a rather blatant use of sexual innuendo. The word *testes* is ubiquitously used to mean testicles in Latin literature and the use of the word here wittily speaks to what will destroy her vow and calls attention to how in the *Met.* “Jupiter-as-Diana was indeed, thus, armed and equipped with *testes*” (Robinson 2011, 169).

Robinson believes that both W.R. Johnson and Murgatroyd overstate the lack of pathos in the *Met.* narrative, as well. We see Callisto’s post-traumatic stress in the *Met.* and the tragic description of her transformation and her immediate reaction to becoming a bear. As I have stated repeatedly, I do not think Ovid is incapable of sympathy, but this kind of inquiry in which we attempt to determine the level of his sympathy ignores some fundamental facts about Ovid’s treatment of female figures in general. In both narratives, we still see violence against female figures in texts that continuously show and most probably take pleasure in violence against female figures. What we see in the *Fasti* is violence that both the narrator and audience can revel in, especially if we take the stance, as Richlin (1992) does, that Ovid’s representations of rape are pornographic. Ovid’s sympathies have been fundamentally compromised—among many other compromises—by that pornographic intent and by his victim-blaming.

Johnson in his article also issues a critique of Richlin’s 1992 analysis, which he believes does not take into account the violence of Juno and Diana. She only shows the violence of male figures against female figures and therefore downplays the propensity and almost egalitarianism of the violence in Ovid: female figures can be even more violent than male figures in Ovid. But Johnson does not account for why female figures commit violence against other female figures:
for the maintenance of patriarchy. Males can rely on females to maintain patriarchy for them as they enjoy its benefits. Ovid himself never accounts for why females commit misogyny against other females, either. It is a trick to exonerate male figures for the violence they perpetrate and the systems they created to support it. We must understand the origins of why marginalized groups commit intra-group violence before we can responsibly analyze its manifestations.

3c. Diana’s Relationship with Chione and Arethusa: Layers of Sisterhood

Callisto is not the only raped female figure Diana punishes in the *Met.* and not the only victim of her sororophobic malice. Later in Book 11, Chione faces Diana’s wrath after she is raped by both Mercury and Apollo. Within her rape, we have many of the characteristics with which we are already well-familiarized, such as Mercury seeing her beauty and immediately lusting after her (305). But the rape is unique in the *Met.* in that one woman is raped in the same night by two different gods, sleeping through both attacks. Apollo decides to wait until night to rape her, but Mercury, impatient, uses his sacred wand to put her to sleep immediately (306–11), attacking her at home, which shows that female figures are vulnerable to predation in both the wilds and in their domestic sphere. Apollo later enters her house disguised as an old woman and rapes her, imitating the deceptive techniques of his father and anticipating Vertumnus disguised in *Met.* 14. After Chione gives birth to two semidivine sons, she insults Diana’s beauty and elevates her own and is slaughtered for it (3020–5). This is not the sororophobia to which we are accustomed. Diana punishes Chione for her vaunting speech against her beauty. This is not punishing or victim-blaming a woman explicitly because she was raped as with Callisto, but because of her offensive speech. Chione is pierced through the tongue (*meritam traecit harundine linguam*, 325), a symbolic form of violence that speaks to her crime against divinity. But this violence against another raped female figure cannot help but echo other sororophobic
violence we have seen because once again a female agentpunishes another female figure, and the male god rapists, Mercury and Apollo, escape with impunity and with male progeny in tow. Within the *Met.*, Ovid never depicts Juno as anything but hostile to other female figures. But Ovid does not make Diana one-dimensionally hostile towards other females. Diana tried to help save the virginity of the nymph Arethusa before the river Alpheus raped her by turning her into a stream herself (5.639–41). Diana is not successful in protecting her nymph from the god’s predation, but her protection of Arethusa allows us to ask interesting questions about Callisto’s narrative. Her intervention here speaks to the hierarchy of the gods and Diana’s power, as an Olympian god, over a river god and her protection of virgins. Callisto does not have a chance to appeal to Diana for help before her attack, something Jupiter ensures by disguising himself as the woman who vowed to protect her if she remained a virgin. And even if Diana was beside Callisto, could Diana have challenged her father? Minerva will similarly have a complex relationship with other female figures, variously saving and brutalizing them.

4. The Rapes of Corone and Nyctimene and Minerva’s Relationship with Victims

*Met.* Book 2 is replete with rape narratives: the rape of Callisto by Jupiter, the attempted rape of Corone by Neptune (569–88), the (possible) rape of Nyctimene by her father Enopeus (589–95), the aftermath of the rape of Coronis by Apollo (596–611), the attempted rape of Herse by Mercury (708–832), and the rape of Europa by Jupiter (833–875). The stories of Corone, Nyctimene, Coronis, and Herse (and also that of her sister, Aglauros) are all stories of sexualized violence intimately woven together and, for my purposes, all relate to Minerva and her sororophobic (and even anti-sororophobic) interactions with other female figures, bringing us the

---

119 Keith (1992) has additionally observed that Book 2 is replete with interconnected narratives of rape victims and other figures who are silenced by more powerful gods, especially for verbally threatening or challenging the might and secrets of the gods. For example, Callisto is punished for being raped by Juno and silenced through transformation, Corone is punished for the information she relayed to Minerva, and Aglauros is turned into stone and silenced for breaking a vow she gave to Minerva. We will explore Keith’s arguments more in Chapter Five.
third member of our primary trifecta—first Juno, then Diana, and now Minvera—of sororophobic goddesses. We first meet Corone, royal princess transformed into a crow by Minerva before her rape by Neptune, as she attempts to warn the raven of Apollo not to make the same mistake she did with Minerva. The crow lost her favor with the goddess because she informed on the daughter of Cecrops, Aglauros, and how she violated Minerva’s trust by opening the secret box containing Erichthonius, a baby with a snake beside him. Erichthonius came into being after Vulcan attempted to rape Minerva when she went to retrieve weapons from him; he ejaculated on her, and his semen, falling from her clothes, fertilized the earth. The raven wants to inform on Coronis, the rape victim of Apollo and her adulterium, although he ultimately does not heed Corone’s advice. There are consequences for relaying such information to the divine: Corone loses her favored position with the goddess and the raven faces physical transformation. Minerva was intent on hiding Erichthonius, the sign of her violated sexuality, and punishes the crow who saw the box and later the woman who opened it, the goddess’s own personal Pandora.

The crow first came into the goddess’s service after Minerva saved her from being raped by Neptune. Corone was a royal virgin who had many suitors (571). In her description of her past experience of sexual abuse, Corone blames herself for her attack and says her beauty was responsible (forma mihi nocuit, “My appearance harmed me,” 572), adopting the typical characteristics of how Ovid narrates rape. She was walking alone, near a shore (the first time we see this iteration of the locus amoenus as a site for rape in the Met.) and Neptune spotted her (573–4). Like Apollo, Neptune tries to use flattery (blandis...verbis, 574), before he uses force (vim parat et sequitur, “He prepares to rape me and follows…” 575), just as the praecceptor amoris recommends to his students. Corone flees and calls out to the gods to help her, like Daphne and Syrinx (fugio...deos hominesque voco, “I flee and I call out to gods and men,” 576–
8). Minerva intervenes and turns her into a crow (579–88) and demonstrates an anti-sororophobic impulse we will not see later. Corone believes that Minerva helped her because of the goddess’s sympathy for virgins (*mota est pro virgine virgo*, “The virgin was moved on behalf of a virgin,” 579). This transformation, however, like other salvatory transformations we see in Ovid, raises questions about how much violence these victims, although still virgins, escape. They face the violence of transformation, their bodies become mutilated, and they lose their humanity.

Corone unhappily turns into a crow, but she is proud that Minerva saved her and she became her helper (589). However, she is saved by Minerva only to be punished for gazing upon her sexual secrets and reproduction with Vulcan and the Ericthonius. When she loses the goddess’s favor, Nyctimene, transformed into an owl by Minerva, supplants her position (589–95). Corone is envious of Nyctimene and declares that she is a depraved woman who has committed the crime of incest, who does not deserve the goddess’s current favor, and who in fact only became an owl because of her wicked crime (*diro facta volucris/crimine*, 589–90).

Corone’s condemnation here has sororophobic undertones: she fails to recognize that Nyctimene could have been raped by her father—Corone immediately assumes that the incest was consensual, which we should doubt without information to the contrary because of the power dynamics between father and daughter (Myrrha in *Met.* 10.356–502 is different—we know of her desire for her father through Orpheus’ narration). What is more, Hyginus (*Fabulae* 204, 253) explicitly labels her a rape victim, which shows that Corone’s version of the myth could be tendentious at best. Corone does not concede the similarities in their backgrounds and how they could both be victims of sexual abuse, something goddesses like Juno, Diana, and Minerva often fail to acknowledge as well in their own violence against female figures. Minerva’s protective behavior of Corone (at least initially) and of Nyctimene establishes her as someone who helps
women escape sexually destructive situations, but later in the *Met.*, her punishment of Aglauros, Medusa, and Arachne evinces her sororophobic, rather than not, tendencies.

5. The Attempted Rape of Herse by Mercury and Aglauros’s Petrification

Herse is the sister of Aglauros, the woman who opened the secret box of Minerva’s reproduction and who will soon be victim to the goddess’s vengeance, a vengeance that, as I will argue, is reminiscent of sororophobia and one that certainly generates it between two literal sisters. Mercury happens upon her in a procession of other young virgins and immediately lusts after her beauty (*tanto virginibus praestantior omnibus Herse...obstipuit forma Iove natus*, “Herse, surpassing all the other virgins by much...the one born from Jove [Mercury] was astounded by her beauty,” 724–6). His passion, compared to a bullet becoming red hot for her, is similar to that of Apollo for Daphne (*non secus exarsit, quam cum Balearica plumbum/funda iacit: volat illud et incandescit eundo*, “He burned with passion not unlike when a Balearic slingshot hurls a lead bullet and it flies and becomes red hot by its movement,” 726–7). Later during the story of Hermaphroditus and Salmacis, Ovid will use comparable language to describe the passion of Salmacis, likening her lust to that of the male sexual abusers in the poem (*Salmacis exarsit: flagrant quoque lumina nymphae*, “Salmacis burned with passion: the eyes of the nymph also go aflame,” 4.347). Ovid then comically details how Mercury prepares to be seen by Herse, and his particular concern with showing off his caduceus (734–5), a way to ensure that she sees his divine credentials. His divine attributes will act as a way to impress her, but also as tools of intimidation to ensure she does not resist him, a tactic Jupiter employed with Io.

We soon learn Mercury is thwarted from his goal by Aglauros (737–51), who demands remuneration for keeping his interest in Herse a secret, not finding it a problem that her sister’s relationship with the god could be one of rape. The daughter of Cecrops has already proved her
covetousness and that she cannot be entrusted with a secret because of her desecration of her vow to Minerva. She wants what is in the box of Minerva, she wants Mercury’s bribes. Mercury is furious at her audacious meddling. But, as mentioned, Mercury is not the only god in this story to be angered by Aglauros and not the only god to punish and torment her. Earlier, Ovid’s readers may have wondered why we only saw Corone punished for her information to Minerva and not Aglauros who opened the box, and Ovid delivers our answer. Minerva finally makes an appearance in Book 2 and ensures that the daughter of Cecrops will suffer. She summons the help of the goddess Invidia (752–86), who harries Aglauros with fabricated visions of her sister’s auspicious marriage with Mercury (809–11). These visions create literal sororophobia between two sisters, with Aglauros trying to stop their fantastical, fortunate marriage from coming to fruition. At first, Aglauros’ intervention into Herse’s and Mercury’s relationship was one of greed and now it is one of ever-consuming envy. When she sees the god attempting to enter her family home, Aglauros blocks his entry (812–32). Mercury, in retaliation, turns Aglauros into stone, with Ovid again dramatizing her loss of speech as she becomes a statue (conata loqui est, “she tried to speak,” 829). Mercury after the transformation does not actually enter Herse’s home and never successfully rapes her. Aglauros, though, now a statue, does receive her final wish, even if that wish was induced by envy and madness: Herse does not marry him.

5b. Minerva and Sororophobia in the Metamorphoses: Aglauros, Medusa, and Arachne

Although Minerva punishes Aglauros, not because she was raped but because she betrayed the goddess and revealed her secrets, her punishment speaks to illicit sexuality in general and its connections with her later anger and violence against Medusa, both of which should make us consider sororophobic echoes. Aglauros, in her curiosity and greed, uncovers the secrets of Minerva’s sexuality, reproduction, body, and history of sexualized violence. She
uncovers something erotic about Minerva, something no virgin goddess should ever have.

Salzmann-Mitchell (2005, 38–40) argues that the daughter of Cecrops has in many ways looked inside the womb of the virgin goddess and seen it full with Erichthonius, a type of knowledge that Minerva must suppress. What is more, Aglauros opens this figurative womb without Minerva’s consent and gazes upon it. The ancients believed that the gaze was both penetrative and violent (Varro, *De Lingua Latina* 6.80). The daughter of Cecrops has penetrated the womb of Minerva with her vision and can even be said to enact a figurative rape. This is perhaps also why Diana later in the *Met.* punishes Actaeon for what he sees of her naked body: even if he does not rape her, his gaze has already penetrated and figuratively raped her virginal body (3.165–252). Minerva, unable to punish the god Vulcan for his earlier attempted rape, now punishes the woman who reveals the existence of that abuse and its offspring. We again see that the male sexual abuser does not suffer for his crimes, but a woman does, one of the most common patterns in sororophobic narratives in Ovid. Vulcan perpetrates the actual sexual abuse, but Aglauros as the figurative embodiment and surrogate of his abuse is the one to suffer Minerva’s wrath. This again indicates that sororophobia most often comes to epitomize and manifest the violence of sexual abuse, and is also a reaction to the hierarchical, patriarchal nature of the divine in Graeco-Roman mythology: Minerva attacks someone subordinate to her. The virgin goddess does not want her history of sexual abuse to be seen, and later when Neptune rapes Medusa in her temple, she once more does not want to see rape. She does not want to be confronted with what femininity means: the prospect of having her sexuality compelled from her by male figures, the prospect of being raped and controlled by male figures. She does not want to be confronted with a reminder of her own vulnerability as one with a female body.
The rape of Medusa is narrated briefly by the hero Perseus (Met. 4. 795–803), who tells her rape as Ovid has and will continue to do so with other rapes later in the poem. He describes her prominent beauty and the desire of suitors for her (clarissima forma/multorumque fuit spes invidiosa procorum, “Medusa was extremely beautiful and she was the envious hope of many suitors, 796–7). Neptune rapes her in the temple of Minerva and the goddess witnesses the attack and afterwards turns away her eyes (hanc pelagi rector templo vitiasse Minervae/dicitur: versa est, “It is said that the ruler of the sea raped her in the temple of Minerva and the goddess averted her eyes,” 800–1). Minerva does not punish Neptune, but instead punitively transforms Medusa’s hair, her most attractive feature, into snakes that can petrify men. The female figure who was once the beautiful spectacle now can turn male figures into statues, spectacles themselves (Lovatt 2013, 83). The rape of Medusa and Minerva’s reaction presents one of the clearest connections between the female body and victim-blaming and one of the clearest examples of sororophobia. The source of Medusa’s beauty must be punished for the sexual impurity in her temple. Minerva here shows that she directly connects Medusa’s hair to Neptune’s attack, just as Ovid earlier connects Daphne’s beauty to her inability to maintain her vow of virginity. Her attractiveness is the problem, not Neptune’s lust for it. The word order of Perseus’ description further and subtly indicates that her forma was the causa of her rape, as well (accipe quaesiti causam. clarissima forma...,” “Accept the answer to your question, [Medusa] once most famous for her beauty,” 796). Moreover, Perseus relates that Minerva had to punish someone for the violation her temple experienced (neve hoc inpune fuisset, “since this could not go unpunished” 801), with the implication being that it just could not be Neptune. Minerva rather engages in sororophobic violence against Medusa. Neptune escapes without a reprisal from the

120 Bömer (1975, 275) suggests that Ovid is the first author to suggest that Medusa became a monster through metamorphosis and rape. It is a simple way to explain why Neptune would rape her.
goddess because of his patriarchal position over Minerva in the hierarchy of the gods, like Vulcan before him. The goddess must attack someone who is more vulnerable and Medusa is more vulnerable, just like Aglauros before her. By brutalizing and transforming Medusa in order to avenge the sanctity of her temple, Minerva ascribes responsibility to Medusa’s body and beauty for the violation her temple suffers. Her transformation also ensures that she can never attract male figures in the future with her beauty and body. The source of the rape, her beauty and not Neptune’s lust, is permanently degraded and made monstrous. She violated Minerva’s temple once and she will not do it twice. Later, Minerva helps Perseus to kill and decapitate Medusa, continuing her violence toward her. As I have argued, transformative violence and lethal violence often act as surrogates for the violence of rape, but Medusa’s decapitation by sword is one of the most analogous images for rape because of the phallic nature of the murder weapon and how that weapon opens an orifice in her body. Perseus then appropriates her head with her still petrifying snakes to increase his power against other men (5.200–49). He is like Apollo and Pan in his appropriation.

The Arachne story is another episode in which it becomes clear that Minerva does not want to face images of rape or to see the consequences of femininity in the face of divine and male sexuality and that her reaction to such a confrontation is sororophobia. During the goddess’s weaving contest with the humbly born but immensely talented and arrogant mortal girl, Arachne depicts scene after scene of caelestia criminal (divine crimes) in front of the virgin goddess (6.131), or, in other words, the pervasive and unending acts of sexualized violence that male gods inflict on women, nymphs, and goddesses, in particular how they do so through animalistic disguise. James (2016, 165), in her exploration of rape in the Met., writes that “Arachne’s tapestry amounts to a repetition of the reader’s experience of [sexualized violence] in
Books 1 through 5.” She tells a woven tale of divine male sexual iniquity and bestial lust, seventeen rapes by Jupiter, Neptune, Apollo, and Dionysus in quick succession (6.103–26), while Minerva tells the tale of her divine triumphs, like her triumph over Neptune for the city of Athens, and the consequences for challenging divine authority, such as the punishments Rhodope and Haemus incurred when they dared to take on the names of gods (70–102). Minerva cannot find technical fault with Arachne’s weaving (129–30), but she must be punished for her temerity against the goddess. Arachne not only beats Minerva in an artistic contest, but she dared to brazenly reveal the true nature of the divine, a dynamic that Harries (1990, 73) has deemed to be “doubly transgressive.” The goddess beats her upon the head with weaving equipment and later, feeling a rare sense pity before Arachne commits suicide out of shame, transforms her into a spider after Arachne condemned animalistic transformation in her tapestry (129–45; Shaw 1995, 141).121 The young girl, now a spider, continues to weave in her new form, but scholars like Rosati (1999, 251) would argue that this transformation is not merciful or benevolent: a spider is an arthropod that creates “art,” but art which means little and which can constantly be destroyed. Nor does a spider create art volitionally or through talented inspirations, but instinctually.

Many have compared the subject matter of Arachne’s tapestry to the Met. itself: an epic united by its pervasive and unending acts of sexualized violence. Her tapestry is a metapoetic comment on Ovid’s interests in both rape and transformation throughout the epic. This renders Arachne a mirror for Ovid as an artist just like, as I argued earlier, many of his internal narrators take on his storytelling techniques. Ovid connects himself to Arachne not only by nature of them being artists per se, but by the materials they choose to represent. (Later in Met. 6.571–86, Philomela will become a similar artist.) Arachne becomes even more like Ovid because she is

121 We have no information from Greek sources about Arachne, but Anderson (1972, 152) speculates that earlier accounts could have made the transformation punishment instead of one that is seemingly merciful.
brutally punished for challenging the goddess in an artistic contest. Like the female figures on her tapestry, she will be overpowered and conquered by the divine, just as Ovid will be by Augustus (a *praesens deus* in Rome) later in his life.¹²² Many scholars have seen Ovid’s connections to brutalized artists in his work as an effort to make a wider comment about his own political and personal context as an artist working in authoritarian and Augustan Rome.

Furthermore, both Minerva’s and Arachne’s tapestries speak to their ultimate fates: the goddess will punish and be triumphant because of her immense power and the mortal girl will face abuse, humiliation, and transformation from the divine. Many other mortals and lesser divinities in the surrounding narratives will face similar fates from the Olympians. The Pierides are transformed into magpies by the Muses for challenging them in an artistic context (5.662–78). Niobe faces the death of all her children and transformation into stone because she dares to boast that she is more fertile than the goddess Latona (6.204–312), and Marysas the satyr (6.382–400) will be skinned alive by Apollo for daring to compete with him in a song and music competition.¹²³ Ovid can be likened to the Pierides because their song concerns the Gigantomachy, which Ovid wrote about in *Amores* 2.1. The episode of Minerva and Arachne is evidently about power, authoritarianism, and the navigation of art under those conditions. But it also reveals something about the nature of sororophobic violence in Ovid and how it extends beyond Juno.

Minerva’s violence against Medusa and Arachne becomes the equivalent of a rapist’s violence, as I have maintained elsewhere. Ovid never shows us the rapes, he only shows us the punitive aftermaths, which are often enacted by female goddesses like Juno, Diana, and Minerva.

¹²³ Other mortals or lesser gods who are punished for challenging or threatening the divine in the *Met.* include Corvus (2.531–65), Cornix (2.569–88), Ocyroe (2.633–75), Battus (2.676–707), Aglauros (2.710–832), Actaeon (3.165–252), the Minyeides (4.31–415), and Chione (11.265–345). Battus lies to Mercury. Corvus, Cornix, Ocyroe, and Aglauros all reveal divine secrets, particularly the sexual secrets of goddesses. Actaeon sexually violates Diana, the Minyeides impugn the divinity of Bacchus, and Chione, in her arrogance, insults the beauty of Diana.
The effect of the suppression of the violence of rape and the prioritization of later violence is that Ovid displaces the power and imagery of the violence of rape onto the transformations and punishments we see from female goddesses. This makes figures like Juno comparable to rapists and in fact, even more brutal. We do not see what Jupiter does to Callisto’s body, but we see what Juno does. We do not see what Neptune does to Medusa’s body, only what Minerva does to her. We only see the mutilation of their bodies through transformation, not rape. The transformations and punishments blame the bodies of rape victims for their own abuse and simultaneously, when they are conducted by goddesses, transfers the responsibility the gods may have had for violence onto female figures. The gods are not violent, the goddesses are. The god’s violence is suppressed and erased in the text, and the violence of the goddess given elaboration.

With Arachne, there is no literal rape within the primary narrative, or the narrative told by the poem’s supernarrator, whom I have pervasively been referring to as “Ovid.” We instead only have depictions of rapes in the secondary narrative of her tapestry, or the narrative told by an embedded narrator, like Arachne, and not the supernarrator, “Ovid.” But Salzman-Mitchell (2005, 138–40) suggests that Minerva’s violence against Arachne takes on masculine qualities and a sexualized nature. Minerva is similar to the male gods Arachne depicts in her tapestry by committing divine abuse against her subordinate. What is more, the goddess’s destruction of Arachne’s tapestry includes the word *rupit* (Salzman-Mitchell 131), from *rumpo*, *rumpere*, often used in Latin literature to describe sexuality, particularly sexual excess and the emission of bodily fluids (Adams 1982, 151). Minerva is also very much identified with the masculine because of her wombless birth. Countless studies have been done to highlight her connections and sympathies with the phallus and phallic power, particularly predicated upon her speech in

---

124 See Chapter Two for its use in *Heroides* 8 and the rape of Hermione.
the *Eumenides* in which she proclaims that she honors the male above all (736–7). And as she breaks Arachne’s tapestry cloth, she can also be seen as rupturing a surrogate symbol for her virginity. Glazebrook (2015) similarly discusses the conflation of the destruction of a woman’s cloth garment as a symbol for the rape of Pamphile, which we do not see in Menander’s *Epitreprontes*. McAuley (2012, 152) contends that Minerva could additionally be reacting to the procreative potential of the many rapes Arachne depicts: these are the progeny that could challenge the divine, much in the same way that Juno reacts to the threatening progeny of Io, Europa, Semele, and Alcmene. Of course, Minerva could have been reminded of her own assault by Vulcan—even she was once abused like these female figures. But she decides to continue the abuse of female figures, a cycle that never stops in the *Met.* and continues into the *Fasti*.

6. *Fert praedam: The Rape of Europa by Jupiter in the Metamorphoses and Fasti*

Juno does not punish Europa, but withholds her punishment for her descendent, Semele, another rape victim of Jupiter (and also unleashes her fury on Semele’s sister, Ino) (*a Tyria collectum paelice transfert* / in *generis socios odium*, “Juno transfers the hate she acquired from Europa, the Tyrian mistress, onto her descendants,” 3.257–8). Just as Jupiter has made his rapes generational, Juno follows suit with her punishments. Ovid does not use any language characteristic of his rape scenes to describe the relationship between Semele and Jupiter and they appear to be in a consensual relationship. The first time we see Semele, she is already pregnant (the first transformation of her body she experiences, the second her death at the hands of Juno’s manipulation) (260). We can additionally see that Semele has more interaction with Jupiter after the “rape” than his previous victims, she bears no ill will toward him, she possibly considers herself the *paelex* of Jupiter, and she continually has sex with the king of the gods. (And that is

125 μήτηρ γάρ οὕτως ἔστιν ἡ μ᾽ ἐγείνατο,/ τὸ δ᾽ ἄρον σείνον πάντα, πλὴν γάμου τυχέξιν/ἀσαντὶ θυμῶ… (“I have no mother who gave birth to me and in all matters, except for marriage, I honor the male with all my heart…”)
all precisely why Juno is able to deceive her and kill the pregnant, mortal woman, 280–5.) We do not see the beginning of their relationship, and therefore we also have no indication of the typical elements we have seen in the rape narratives, like Jupiter finding her, gazing at her beauty, her solitude, her flight, her resistance, and more. But as I argued in Chapter One and in my analysis of Europa, I define any relationship between a god and mortal as inherently nonconsensual because of the dramatic power differential between a god and a mortal. Could Semele ever say no to Jupiter if she so desired? Even if Ovid does not mention the undesirability of the rape and the victim’s resistance, there is an inevitable coercion because of Semele’s and Jupiter’s respective statuses and her lack of control over their sexual relationship. From the scholarship I have read, I am the only one who defines Semele’s relationship with Jupiter as a rape.

Ovid may suppress other aspects of the rape, but he does not deny us the characteristic violence after the rape and Juno’s victim-blaming and sororophobia. Jupiter again does not suffer for what he has done, and a female figure’s body is under attack in the aftermath. Juno’s ira is ever-escalating after Io and Callisto and her perceived failure to truly punish them or restore her honor. Juno here believes she must attack Semele in order to regain her position (262–72) if she is rightly to be called the greatest Juno (ipsam, si maxima Iuno/rite vocor, 263–4). This time she plans to kill Semele for her sexual transgressions and offenses against divine status, particularly for “gloating” about her fertility and about her beauty (manifestaque crimina pleno/fert utero et mater, quod vix mihi contigit...tanta est fiducia formae, “She bears the crime manifest by her full womb, [a right to fertility] which is barely mine...such is the faith in her beauty,” 268–70). Juno reads Semele’s body differently than a rapist would. She gazes upon the woman’s beauty and understands it as the source of the attack, but she is shown to gaze more intently on the pregnant female body than the male gods in the poem and is jealous not only of the sexual attention his
paelices receive but of their fertility in the face of her more limited fertility with Jupiter.

McAuley (2012) suggests Juno’s insecurities around infertility mean something more, that there is an undertone of reproductive competition between the Olympian order and mortal/semi-divine/non-Olympian order. How does Semele’s pregnancy threaten Olympian supremacy? Will her son Bacchus overcome their generation as Jupiter did before with Cronus and Rhea? Niobe’s downfall at the hands of Latona, Apollo, and Diana, mother and her children, in Met. 6. 146–312 is even more relevant to this principle. The threat to divine, reproductive order “is most explicitly articulated—and quashed—in the story of the super-fertile, boastful mother Niobe and her punishment” (McAuley 2012, 141). Juno in the Met. also attempts to stop the pregnancies of two of Jupiter’s other rape victims: Latona (a divine rival) and Alcmena (a mortal rival) and fails (6.313–81, 9.273–323). Her sororophobic violence is intimately tied to her reproductive insecurity, and thus McAuley argues that Juno is capable of seeing the productive side of the female body and not, like rapists, just as something that can be destroyed and invaded (141).

In the Semele narrative, Juno impersonates an old woman, Beroe, and tricks the pregnant mortal into convincing Jupiter to sleep with her like he would with his divine sister and wife (282–6). The queen of the gods, though murderous, will not kill Semele herself—or it is entirely possible she cannot. Juno often punishes the paelices of Jupiter by proxy: Argos with Io, the gods of the sea with Callisto, Jupiter himself with Semele, the Furies with Ino (Met. 4.464–511), and Lucina, another goddess, with Alcmena (9.273–323). Maybe Juno is not as powerful as she believes herself to be or would like to be. Or perhaps in this instance, Juno finds it more poetically just to have Jupiter kill Semele with the (very phallic) embodiment of his male sexuality—his lightning bolts (corpus mortale tumultus non/ tulit aetherios donisque iugalibus arsit, “Her mortal body could not bear the tumult of the lighting and she burned up because of
his sexual gifts,” 308–9). Janan (2009, 100) observes that while Semele wants all of Jupiter’s true masculinity, Juno works to emasculate him by destroying his victims and their progeny. The manner in which Semele dies typifies this extreme power imbalance between gods and mortals, especially concerning sex. (And as we have seen in Chapter Three, rape and death are very often conflated in Greek and Roman thought, rape as death or death as a consequence for rape.) Jupiter is able to foil Juno’s ultimate plan to kill the seed of their union, as well: Jupiter saves the fetus and sows it into his legs to gestate and Bacchus is (twice) born (310–15). When the child Bacchus—the evidence of Semele’s offense—lives, Juno begins to target those who helped him to survive, like Ino, whom Juno terrifies, destroys, and kills in both the Met. 4.416–511 and the Fasti. As Janan (2009) has argued: her rage, desire, and sexual lack can never be satisfied.

7. Collectum odium: The Rape of Semele and Juno’s Sororophobia

Juno does not punish Europa, but withholds her punishment for her descendent, Semele, another rape victim of Jupiter (and also unleashes her fury on Semele’s sister, Ino) (a Tyria collectum paelice transfert/ in generis socios odium, “Juno transfers the hate she acquired from Europa, the Tyrian mistress, onto her descendants,” 3.257–8). Just as Jupiter has made his rapes generational, Juno follows suit with her punishments. Ovid does not use any language characteristic of his rape scenes to describe the relationship between Semele and Jupiter and they appear to be in a consensual relationship. The first time we see Semele, she is already pregnant (the first transformation of her body she experiences, the second her death at the hands of Juno’s manipulation) (260). We can additionally see that Semele has more interaction with Jupiter after the “rape” than his previous victims, she bears no ill will towards him, she possibly considers herself the paelex of Jupiter, and she continually has sex with the king of the gods. (And that is all precisely why Juno is able to deceive her and kill the pregnant, mortal woman, 280–5.) We do
not see the beginning of their relationship, and therefore we also have no indication of the typical elements we have seen in the rape narratives, like Jupiter finding her, gazing at her beauty, her solitude, her flight, her resistance, and more. But as I argued in Chapter One and in my analysis of Europa, I define any relationship between a god and mortal as inherently non-consensual because of the dramatic power differential between a god and a mortal. Could Semele ever say no to Jupiter if she so desired? Even if Ovid does not mention the undesirability of the rape and the victim’s resistance, there is an inevitable coercion because of Semele’s and Jupiter’s respective statuses and her lack of control over their sexual relationship. From the scholarship I have read, I am the only one who defines Semele’s relationship with Jupiter as a rape.

Ovid may suppress other aspects of the rape, but he does not deny us the characteristic violence after the rape and Juno’s victim-blaming and sororophobia. Jupiter again does not suffer for what he has done, and a female figure’s body is under attack in the aftermath. Juno’s ira is ever-escalating after Io and Callisto and her perceived failure to truly punish them or restore her honor. Juno here believes she must attack Semele in order to regain her position (262–72) if she is rightly to be called the greatest Juno (ipsam, si maxima Iuno/rite vocor, 263–4). This time she plans to kill Semele for her sexual transgressions and offenses against divine status, particularly for “gloating” about her fertility and about her beauty (manifestaque crimina pleno/fert utero et mater, quod vix mihi contigit...tanta est fiducia formae, “She bears the crime manifest by her full womb, [a right to fertility] which is barely mine...such is the faith in her beauty,” 268–70). Juno reads Semele’s body differently than a rapist would. She gazes upon the woman’s beauty and understands it as the source of the attack, but she is shown to gaze more intently on the pregnant female body than the male gods in the poem and is jealous not only of the sexual attention his paelices receive but their fertility in the face of her more limited fertility with Jupiter. McAuley
(2012) suggests Juno’s insecurities around infertility mean something more, that there is an undertone of reproductive competition between the Olympian order and mortal/semi-divine/non-Olympian order. How does Semele’s pregnancy threaten Olympian supremacy? Will her son Bacchus overcome their generation as Jupiter did before with Cronus and Rhea? Niobe’s downfall at the hands of Latona, Apollo, and Diana, mother and her children, in *Met.* 6. 146–312 is even more relevant to this principle. The threat to divine, reproductive order “is most explicitly articulated—and quashed—in the story of the super-fertile, boastful mother Niobe and her punishment” (McAuley 2012, 141). Juno in the *Met.* also attempts to stop the pregnancies of two of Jupiter’s other rape victims: Latona (a divine rival) and Alcmena (a mortal rival) and fails (6.313–81, 9.273–323). Her sororophobic violence is intimately tied into her reproductive insecurity and thus, McAuley argues that Juno is capable of seeing the productive side of the female body and not just something that can be destroyed and invaded like rapists (141).

In the Semele narrative, Juno impersonates an old woman, Beroe, and tricks the pregnant mortal into convincing Jupiter to sleep with her like he would with his divine sister and wife (282–86). The queen of the gods, though murderous, will not kill Semele herself—or it is entirely possible she cannot. Juno often punishes the *paelices* of Jupiter by proxy: Argos with Io, the gods of the sea with Callisto, Jupiter himself with Semele, the Furies with Ino (*Met.* 4.464–511) and Lucina, another goddess, with Alcmena (9.273–323). Maybe Juno is not as powerful as she believes herself to be or would like to be. Or perhaps in this instance, Juno finds it more poetically just to have Jupiter kill Semele with the (very phallic) embodiment of his male sexuality—his lightning bolts (*corpus mortale tumultus non/ tuit aetherios donisque iugalibus arsit,* “Her mortal body could not bear the tumult of the lighting and she burned up because of his sexual gifts,” 308–9). Janan (2009, 100) observes that while Semele wants all of Jupiter’s
true masculinity, Juno works to emasculate him by destroying his victims and their progeny. The manner in which Semele dies typifies this extreme power imbalance between gods and mortals, especially concerning sex. (And as we have seen in Chapter Three, rape and death are very often conflated in Greek and Roman thought, rape as death or death as a consequence for rape.) Jupiter is able to foil Juno’s ultimate plan to kill the seed of their union, as well: Jupiter saves the fetus and sows it into his legs to gestate and Bacchus is (twice) born (310–15). When the child Bacchus lives and thus, the evidence of Semele’s offense, Juno begins to target those who helped him to survive, like Ino, whom Juno terrifies, destroys, and kills in both the Met. 4.416–511 and the Fasti. As Janan (2009) has argued: her rage, desire, and sexual lack can never be satisfied.

8. The Last Episodes of Juno’s Sororophobia: Latona and Alcmene

After the destruction of Ino, we do not see Juno’s ira again until Book 6, the book of gods punishing mortals for their arrogance (Arachne, Niobe, Lycian farmers, Marysas). There we encounter Juno again after Apollo and Diana kill all the progeny of arrogant and blindly self-destructive Niobe for the sake of their mother’s honor (146–312). The narrator is unnamed, but tells the story of Latona’s troubles at the hand of the Lycian farmers in response to Niobe’s death at her children’s hands (312–81). But that suffering intimately involves Juno’s sororophobia. Juno terrorizes and forcibly displaces Latona while she is pregnant by Jupiter and after she has given birth to her divine twins (335–8). It is probable that this relationship was one of rape because that is Jupiter’s primary method of sexual contact, but Ovid never labels this a rape, and earlier sources such as Pindar are unclear about the specifics of their relationship. I include Latona’s story here because even if this is not clearly victim-blaming for rape, Juno’s ira is still of a sexual nature, afraid of and enragéd by Latona’s reproduction. As I have argued, rape and sororophobia are often coupled, but it is also not exclusively so: sororophobia can be a
reaction to a number of sexual transgressions from female figures. During her flight, weary and needing a drink of water to continue, Latona bends down next to a stream and Lycian farmers forbid her from taking a drink. She then transforms them into frogs for their lack of compassion. Unlike many of the other victims of sororophobia, she can punish some of the people who torment her. For example, Io can never punish Argos herself. Latona, though, cannot ever punish Juno because of the queen’s position in the divine hierarchy. Latona is additionally different from other victims of sororophobia we have seen so far because she commits a sororophobia-like act herself. Her punishment of Niobe is not victim-blaming for rape, but, like Juno with her, it is sexual in nature because it is a reproductive competition between two female figures.

Juno’s sororophobia emerges again in Book 9 while Alcmena narrates the birth of Hercules to Iole, his former captive, and now the pregnant wife of his son (273–323). Juno, with the collusion of the goddess of childbirth, Lucina, painfully extends Alcmena’s pregnancy as vengeance for her relationship with Jupiter and that relationship’s impending progeny (292–6). The scene of Alcmena’s rape is suppressed, but Jupiter comes to her disguised as her husband, an act of deception that prevents a free exercise of sexual consent. Alcmena laments that Juno can treat her this way because of Jupiter’s ingratitude, like Callisto (ingratumque Iovem, nequeat cum dicere, sentit, “She feels Jupiter is ungrateful, although she cannot say [it aloud], Met. 2.488; nitor, et ingrato facio convicia demens/ vana Iovi, “I struggle and I, out of my mind, make empty reproaches to ungrateful Jove,” 9.302–3). Eventually, Alcmena is able to give birth because of the trickery of her servant, Galanthis. But Galanthis suffers for her support and for laughing and gloating about it. The queen of the gods turns the servant into a weasel, her first punitive, animalistic metamorphosis since turning Callisto into a bear. Ovid alludes to Callisto further when Juno throws Galantis down on the ground and pulls her by the hair as she did with
the nymph (ridentem prensamque ipsis dea saeva capillis/ traxit, “The fierce goddess dragged the laughing girl caught by her hair,” 317–8; Anderson 1997, 439). Again, Juno’s victim-blaming and sororophobia have collateral damage beyond the individual as with Ino. After Alcmena gave birth to Hercules, Juno uncharacteristically does nothing more to punish the paelex and terrorizes her son, the first time Juno’s anger is aimed at a male figure in the Met. Goddesses, in general, tend to direct their anger at other female figures.126


Iole, the audience of Alcmena’s tale, has been the victim of Deianira’s victim-blaming and sororophobia. Deianira in both the Her. and the Met. blames Iole, a prisoner of war of Hercules’ capture of Oechalia, for her abduction and rape by her husband, Heracles (Her. 9. 111–30 and Met. 9.138–51). Deianira, like Juno, condemns Iole as a paelex in the Met. (9.144, 151). In the Her., fantasizing about Iole, whom she has not yet met, Deianira believes that Iole has sexual power over Hercules and even has the audacity to gloat about it (dat vultum populo sublimis ut Hercule victo, “She holds her head high out to the crowd with Hercules having been conquered,” Her. 9.130). She even imagines that Iole is far from a captive at all: her hair is not disordered, her eyes not downcast (nec venit incultis captarum more capillis/ fortunam vultu fassa decente suam, “She does not come in the manner of captive women, with her hair in disarray and acknowledging her fate with an appropriate expression,” Her. 9.126–7). Deianira herself is a victim of sexual assault by the centaur Nessus (Her. 9. 137–44; Met. 9.110–33) and yet has no sympathy for Iole, whom she does not view as a sexual captive of Hercules, but instead as an adulteress who has taken her husband away from her. Met. 9.149–51 displays an even more intense state of desperation for Deianira than in the Her., and she wonders if she

126 There are two other brief instances of Juno’s sororophobia in the Met.: we learn of how she punished Antigone for competing with her sexually on Minerva’s tapestry (6.93–4) and how she punishes an entire island with plague after Aegina is turned into said island as compensation for her rape by Jupiter (7.501–603).
should act like her brother Meleager when his lover Atalanta was threatened and slit the throat of Iole (see *Met.* 8.437ff.). But Deianira’s sororophobia fortunately only amounts to fantasized violence against Iole. In the *Her.* and *Met.*, Deianira only responds to rumors and fantasies of Iole, recalling Procles in the *Ars* Book 3. 885–746, who reacts to whispers of her husband’s infidelity with the goddess Aurora rather than to concrete evidence. Ovid, furthermore, with these sororophobic fantasies from Deianira against Iole, changes Deianira from her most famous depiction by Sophocles’ *Trachiniae*, in which she is sympathetic to Iole and even welcomes her into her home. In the end, Deianira, instead of committing violence against Iole, focuses on regaining Hercules’ love, unintentionally killing him with the poisoned cloth Nessus gave her after she was freed from his assault, a cloth he falsely claimed would help her maintain his love. She commits suicide after the act, and Iole lives, impregnated by Hercules’ son.

Iole, after Alcmena’s story, tells the tale of her half-sister Dryope (324–93). She is an extremely beautiful girl, and because of that beauty she was raped by Apollo (*notissima forma...Dryope, quam virginitate carentem/vimque dei passam Delphos...*, “Dryope was widely known because of her beauty, losing her virginity and suffering the violence of the Delphian god...” 330–2). But she was able to marry a mortal man, without the god’s jealousy, further intervention, or any transformation (333). Nevertheless, Dryope is punitively transformed into a poplar tree for disturbing the peace of Lotis, who evades the rape of Pan by turning into a flower (347–8). Dryope plucks the flower of Lotis’ former body, such plucking most typically a sign of sexual danger in the *Met.* and the (forcible) loss of virginity. In the *Met.*, the *locus amoenus* means danger (both past and present) and any element of the *locus amoenus* could be a transformed victim like Lotis (Hinds 2002, 134). Dryope intends to use the flowers as a way to
entertain her child (342–3), but instead she enacts sexualized violence unknowingly and blood oozes from the flower (344–5), such as in the story of Polydorus in the Aen. Book 3.49.127

Lotis was turned into a flower to protect her virginity from the abuse of the god Priapus, and now Dryope, in a maternal act, has figuratively completed that abuse of her virginity. The blood flows and her virginity, once protected, has gone. Dryope, a rape victim, becomes an unintentional figurative rapist herself and an unwitting participant in sororophobia in a locale most often associated with rape and sororophobic violence. Lotis, too, acts like the sororophobic agent in the poem by punishing a rape victim, one who has, by accident and by proxy, taken on the intentions of her veritable sexual abuser. While Lotis never punishes Priapus, she punishes Dryope. Segal (1969, 138) first made the observation that Dryope is “symbolically reenacting” the violence of Priapus and that Lotis punishes Dryope as surrogate for Priapus, although he never employs the framework of sororophobia. Salzman-Mitchell (2005, 199) echoes Segal and sees Dryope’s plucking as an act of violence similar to rape, although again she does not employ the framework of sororophobia. The Dryope story shows clearly how the violence of male figures leads to violence among female figures, how sororophobic violence—whether intentional or not—acts as surrogate violence for the rape we never see (and which is embedded into the very landscape), and how sororophobic violence even eclipses the initial sexual abuse. As Richlin (1992) has argued, in Ovid’s poetic universe, it appears there is little room for sisterhood among female figures, although, admittedly within this story’s context, Alcmena and Iole, mother and rape victim of Hercules, bond over maternity. And Iole, by telling this story, proves

127 In earlier versions of this myth, such as Nicander (known through Antonius Liberalis’ epitome, number 32), Dryope is not punished by Lotis, but the tree is left in her place when the nymphs decide to make Dryope one of them after the birth of her son, a marker of her former presence and her current absence, similar to how Hardie (2002a) conceives of metamorphosis, as a constant, insoluble state of absence and presence. Anderson (1972, 440) believes that Nicander’s account is so different from Ovid’s that it cannot be understood as an important influence. Ovid instead wanted to connect this closely to Vergil’s Aeneid and elaborate upon Dryope’s metamorphosis and the separation from her family, “a particular interest to the poet,” according to Anderson.
her loyalty to her sister’s memory and the conviction that Dryope did not deserve her fate. Dryope, in Iole’s version of the tale, is able to give a short speech before the bark of her new form completely overwhelms her vocal chords and her capacity for human communication. Her speech declares that this transformation is punishment—one of the only times a character in Ovid does such a thing—and that she is innocent of any crime (Siqua fides miseris, hoc me per numina iuro/non meruisse nefas. Patior sine crimen poenam./ Viximus innocuae, “If there is truth in miseries, I swear by the gods that I did not deserve such a crime. I suffer a penalty without committing a crime. I have lived innocently,” Met. 9.371–3). Dyrope even calls this violence against her a nefas. Rarely do victims of either rape or sororophobia receive an opportunity to condemn that violence, and they never do so without penalty or without suffering further trauma and harm to their bodies, such as Leucothoe and Philomela in Met. Books 4 and 6.

10. The Rapes of Proserpina, Cyane, and Arethusa: The Muses Inspire Their Own Tale

Book 5 of the Met. has the largest secondary narrative in the poem: that of Proserpina’s rape by her uncle Dis and the wandering search of Ceres for her abducted daughter (322–641). Within this secondary narrative, we also encounter the rapes of the nymphs Cyane by the god Dis and Arethusa by the river Alpheus. All three female figures experience transformation: Proserpina metaphorically dies and transitions from girl to woman, Cyane is punitively changed into a pool by Dis, and Diana transforms Arethusa into water in an attempt to save her from the violence of Alpheus. All three stories can, moreover, tell us much about Ovid’s patterns of rape, victim-blaming, and the power of sororophobia. Ovid’s version of the rape of Proserpina has, first and foremost, been the subject of wide scholarly attention because of its narrative complexity (Cahoon 1996 and Wheeler 1999). Ovid introduces an unnamed nymph to tell the story of her sister nymph, Calliope, and the unnamed nymph’s audience is the goddess Minerva.
Sharrock (2002d, 213) notes that muses often inspire and infuse poets with stories, but here they are recounting them themselves. The original purpose of the song by Calliope was a submission for a poetic competition, judged by the Heliconian nymphs, between the Muses and their mortal challengers, the Pierides, who sing of the Gigantomachy. The Muses prove victorious and they punish the mortals for their audacity with transformation into magpies, birds that emptily and garrulously chatter (5.672–88). Minerva, the audience of this story, will soon punish her mortal and artistic challenger, the weaver, Arachne (6.1–145). Calliope increases the complexity of the story by featuring Arethusa as a narrator herself of her own rape by Alpheus.

There has been much interest, as well, in how the muse manipulates the story because of her own biases and need for revenge (Cahoon 1996); or how she manipulates the story in an effort to better entertain her audience of nymphs, who themselves would often be sexually victimized by the gods (P.J. Johnson 1996 and Zissos 1999). The unnamed muse makes no claims to give an accurate account of Calliope’s song and there is no reason to trust she has, opening up the possibility that she has changed the narrative for her Olympian audience. Other scholars have been intrigued by how the story of Calliope reflects the wider concerns of the epic poem including divine punishment of (the art of) mortals, silencing, transformation, divine hierarchy, and sexualized violence (Nagle 1988; P.J. Johnson 2008). Once again, the poem’s internal narrators reflect Ovid’s artistry and his poetic techniques. Ovid, in this narrative, can align himself with both the Muses (the powerful) and the Pierides (the powerless).

The Pierides recount the Gigantomachy, a pervasive theme in the Amores, particularly in Amores 2.1, and the Muses sing of sexualized violence in an epic of rape (to again paraphrase Amy Richlin 1992). But the story of the Pierides is told only tendentiously and with intentional compression by the Muses (300–31). Ovid’s artistic connections with the Muses are given
greater precedence. In the story of Arachne and Minerva, he gives equal prominence to the
storytelling of the goddess and her mortal challenger, and it is apparent that one can find
elements of both the impressionistic Arachne weaving about sexualized violence and
transformation and the controlled Minerva weaving about divine punishment and transformation,
stories Ovid himself has woven through his poem. Ovid thematically aligns himself with many
of the artists/narrators/storytellers in his poems and uses them to make metartistic comments on
the nature of (poetic) creation and his own creative process, but according to scholars such as
Lateiner (1984) and Johnson (2008), he is more like the persecuted, silenced artists (the Pierides
and Arachne) because of his exile at the hand of Augustus (see above and Chapter Six).

I am interested in the complex and paradoxical sympathies of this narrative and what they
mean for Ovid’s depictions of its rapes and the poet’s wider depiction of sororophobia. Cahoon
(1996), who does not analyze sororophobia explicitly in this narrative but rather its attitudes
toward female figures, rape, and power, believes that Calliope is at some level a compassionate
storyteller and at others a vengeful, blinkered one. These contradictory levels of sympathy for the
female figures in this story have important implications for sororophobia. The muse gives voices
to female figures to air their grievances about a mythological world steeped in sexualized
violence. Only rarely in Ovid do female figures like Arethusa narrate their own rapes. The
Muses themselves were even victims of sexual assault and instead of turning on rape victims,
they elevate their voices (284–93). Calliope, moreover, underscores solidarity between female
figures and rape victims, like Cyane and Proserpina (407–39), Arethusa and Ceres (425–86), and
Ceres and Proserpina (passim). In Ovid’s narratorial voice, Echo (Met. 3.359–401), Procne with
her sister Philomela (Met. 6.571–674), Caeneus (formerly the woman Caenis) (Met. 12.429–
534), and Lara (Fasti 2.585–616) all help victims of rape like the female characters in this

128 See page 61 and footnote 93 for examples of other rape victims who discuss their own sexual abuse.
narrative, but the majority of these female figures are punished for their compassion. Such solidarity, with the exception of Arethusa helping Ceres locate her abducted daughter, whether a character or Ovid himself narrates it, is never permanently rewarded or condoned, and never without lasting bodily consequence or penalty. Richlin (1992, 164) sees Ovid forbidding such protective sisterhood to exist freely in his poems as further evidence of his misogyny.

But, as Cahoon contends, Calliope’s sympathies only extend so far. She does not question the hierarchy of the gods and shows figures like Ceres and Proserpina, who are supposed to be sympathetic, using their power to abuse mortals who have wronged them (444–61, 533–50). Ceres, most famously, engages in the intentional impoverishment and destruction of human agriculture because of her grief. The Muses praise the Olympians like Ceres (341–5) and show, without question, the insuperable power of Venus over other Olympians (346–84). Calliope and the Muses also revel in their power over their mortal challengers. Perhaps such sympathy toward female figures was a way to win victory in the competition, a fiction. Cahoon, who believes that Ovid’s use of rape is an effort to critique misogyny and show his own affinity to the plight of female figures as a silenced artist, argues that the cumulative effect of the story is to “identify cruelty, conquest, oppression, and rape...” (1996, 63). Even if Calliope is a narrator compromised by this view of power, Ovid, the supernarrator, is different. As I addressed in Chapter Two when at the beginning of my analysis of the *Ars*, Cahoon (1988, 1990) has issued the most compelling arguments for the position that Ovid is critiquing misogyny rather than condoning and enforcing it. But it has always been my contention that Ovid could still engage in misogyny as he issues critique. This narrative, which he controls, features his characteristic objectification of the female body, locating the female body as the source of sexualized violence, victim-blaming, and sororophobia. The ubiquity of these phenomena has always unsettled me as examples of both
pornographic and misogynistic intent. Ovid can allow Calliope to voice some sympathy toward female figures, but the “cumulative effect” is still misogynistic.

Calliope begins her narrative by rendering Venus responsible for Proserpina’s rape by her uncle Dis (and by consequence, Ceres’ suffering and Cyane’s rape by the king of the underworld). Venus, unable to accept that so many female figures like Minerva and Diana have eluded her power, violently imposes sexuality on Proserpina in order to prevent another escape. She is also unable to accept that she does not have any influence over the king of the underworld, the third realm of the world (371–7). In the Homeric Hymn to Demeter, Zeus orchestrates the rape and Ovid/Calliope transfer that culpability onto Venus. Ovid derived his portrait of Venus here from the Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite in which she is an all-powerful goddess, controlling the male Olympians. With Venus’ orchestration of the rape, Ovid once again makes a female more responsible for violence against other females and Dis becomes an innocent bystander who rapes Proserpina because of Venus’ lust for power. Venus’ intervention is also an interesting kind of sororophobia. She refuses to allow females to remove themselves from sexuality and male control and she forces a young goddess to experience it through explicit violence. Venus shows no compassion for another goddess and thinks only of expanding her power.¹²⁹

P.J. Johnson (1996, 128–130) has twice commented that Venus becomes specifically like an imperator in this narrative.¹³⁰ Ovid has already presented amor as imperium, as militarism, throughout the Amores and Ars and now he makes Venus, the goddess of amor, an explicit agent of that kind of political aggression (Cahoon 1996, 54). Johnson also believes that Venus’ ideological, familial, and religious connections to Augustus makes her an Augustan imperator in

¹²⁹ She was earlier in the poem complicit in the rape of Leucothoe. In order to avenge Sol’s role in the exposure of her affair with Mars, she infects the god with consuming love that led to the mortal’s rape and also death at the hands of her father (4.190–255). I discuss Venus’ intervention in more depth below.
¹³⁰ She repeats, without modification, the same arguments later in her 2008 work on the Met.
particular. She comes to be represented like her descendant, the emperor of Rome. Ovid could be raising subversive questions about how morally and sexually chaste Augustus and his regime are, if he spreads war—war brings sex and Venus. And what is more, although Augustus tried to present his moral legislation as restoring sexual chastity, it imposed compulsory sexuality on upper-class men and women, who, if they did not marry or reproduce would face economic and social sanction. Venus speaks to Cupid of ensuring Dis rapes Proserpina in militaristic terms, encouraging her son Cupid to expand their influence (*potentia*) violently (365–8). She notably urges Cupid to pick up his weapons we saw begin the attempted rape of Daphne, the *sagittae* (*Met*. 1.467–71; Johnson 1996, 126) and to strike Dis and increase her *imperium* of sexuality (371–2). The Venus that we see here is an exaggerated version of Vergil’s Venus who controls Dido for her son’s safety, but the control of a head of state has imperial implications, just as Ovid has already parodied Vergilian Juno. Johnson (1996) argues that Ovid’s depiction of Proserpina’s rape as cruel imperialist expansion is a critique of both sexual and political violence in which the young goddess is merely a pawn. Ovid delivers a critique of both misogyny and political hierarchy through his focus on divine punishment of mortals in the narrative, as well. Johnson never makes it clear, but it appears she would assert that Ovid, through Calliope’s voice, issues some of these critiques and overrides them for others. Calliope never questions or impugns divine authority herself. Johnson perhaps takes the position like Cahoon earlier of a “cumulative effect” on the readers. My stance remains the same: Ovid’s critique of power (which is not implausible to me) uses the tools and weapons of misogyny, and he makes his female characters and narrators participate in misogynistic discourse, logic, and action.

The narrative of the rape of Proserpina only amounts to about twenty lines (385–408), while the rapes of Cyane (409–37) and especially that of Arethusa (572–641), both water
nymphs, achieve more weight in Calliope’s song, which again P.J. Johnson (1996) and Zissos (1999) see as the muse playing to her audience of Heliconian nymph judges. We are introduced to the *locus amoenus*, receiving a more extensive description of its features than we have received so far: there is a deep pool, swan songs, an encircling forest that provides shade, and a glade with flowers (385–92). During the lead-up to the rape, we learn that Proserpina is very young and is plucking flowers and placing them in her breast within her robes (*dum Proserpina luco/ludit et aut violas aut candida lilia carpit,/ dumque puellari studio calathosque sinumque/ inplet…*). While Proserpina plays in the grove and plucks violets or white lilies, and while she fills her basket and her chest with girlish eagerness…, 391–4). Calliope emphasizes the rapidity of the rape. Dis barely saw her and then took her, more brutal than Jupiter with Io (*paene simul visa est dilectaque raptaque Diti:/ usque adeo est properatus amor*, “Almost as soon as she is seen, she is loved and raped by Dis: his love is as headlong as this,” 395–6). The goddess cannot flee and *terrata* (terrified), calls out to her mother (396–7). There is no mention of her beauty before she is raped, but there is still an emphasis on the connection between the male gaze and a violent, sexual reaction as we have seen ubiquitously. The plucking of the flowers and also the tumbling of the flowers from her dress (398–9) during her abduction indicate her loss of virginity and the loss of her girlish pursuits for womanhood. The image of a girl having such zeal for gathering flowers epitomizes her innocence and also her extreme vulnerability to the powerful king of the underworld when he sets his sights on her. Dis plans to take her to the underworld, very explicitly equating the act of rape with the process of death (401–8).

---

131 Hinds (1987, 33) writes this *locus amoenus* is particularly like an amphitheater, with its leaves described like a *velum* (390), the covering for an amphitheater. This recalls the scene of the rape of the Sabines in the *Ars*, and amphitheater-type *loci amoeni* are also at play during Diana’s violence against Actaeon (3.165–205) and the maenads’ violence against Orpheus (11.1–66). Amphitheaters in Ovid’s Rome would have been sites for violence.
Cyane, a nymph and pool in Sicilian *locus amoenus*, endeavors to stop Dis from abducting and committing violence against Proserpina, emerging as one of the few female figures in Ovid’s narrative who engage in a kind of anti-sororophobia. She tries to stop violence against the young goddess, not subject her to more. Cyane proclaims to Dis that Proserpina should be courted and not raped (*roganda,/ non rapienda fuit*, 415–6). She physically puts the anthropomorphic version of her body in the way of his chariots to stop him from abducting Proserpina and entering the underworld (419–420). Dis is enraged by such interference. He smites the earth in her pool with his phallic, imperial sceptre, opening up a wound in the earth, and leading his chariot and his rape victim to the underworld through that wound (420–4):

```latex
...haud ultra tenuit Saturnius iram
terribilesque hortatus equos in gurgitis ima
contortum valido sceptrum regale lacerto
condidit; icta viam tellus in Tartara fecit
et pronos currus medio cratere recepit.
```

The son of Saturn could not hold back his anger, and having urged his terrible horses, he plunged his regal sceptre, with his strong arm, into the depth of Cyane’s pool. The struck earth made a path into Tartarus and received the headlong chariot in its middle.

Dis silences Cyane’s brave speech act, stops her bodily resistance against a more powerful god, removes a witness to his violence, andpunishes her act of solidarity with another female figure. As I argued in Chapter Three, this opening of the earth by his phallic instrument, Dis’ penetration of Cyane’s pool, and the mutilation of her body amount to rape, one that figuratively symbolizes Proserpina’s and acts as the water nymph’s literal one. Hinds (2002, 134) argues that this is the “closest the *Met.* ever comes to describing the physical horror of actual rape.” Cyane becomes another silenced rape victim in a poem of many, and becomes a rape victim like Io and Philomela, who faces mutilation and bodily change to hide the crime (Johnson 1996, 141). What Dis inflicts upon her pool is permanent, a wound that cannot be healed (*inconsolabile vulnus*,...
Proserpina is not only abducted in the *locus amoenus*, but a living element of it replicates and is made to materialize her rape in an act of both figurative and literal sexualized violence.

Cyane’s anthropomorphic body then faces a complete breakdown in the aftermath of her trauma, dissolving fully into water because of her grief (425–35). This is a breakdown that Carson (1990) would see as Cyane becoming more effeminized, more a symbol of womanhood. She was silenced, raped, and mutilated by Dis, all hallmarks of femininity and now she becomes water, *mollis*, forever porous and penetrable like the wound underneath her pool. Rape is the ultimate reminder of one’s inherent femininity, the lack of bodily integrity and boundaries.

Cyane’s rape by the king of the underworld allows us to “see” the rape of Proserpina (Richlin 1992; Segal 1998, 22; and Zissos 1999, 100), the violence of which has been displaced first onto the flower imagery. Ovid uses phallic and vaginal imagery, suggestive imagery like flowers, metamorphosis, and other types of bodily mutilation as surrogates for the violence of rape, but here Cyane’s rape itself acts as a surrogate for Proserpina’s. In fact, we can “see” all the rapes whose literal violence has been suppressed through Cyane’s: her rape makes a wider statement about the suffering and indelible impact of rape on the female body. As Cyane’s *inconsolabile vulnus* never heals, neither does the trauma of rape for her and the other victims in the poem. She and the others perpetually become their rapes, it is the chief definition of their bodies and gender.

This process of “seeing” through Cyane’s rape is confirmed later within the narrative. When Ceres passes by Cyane’s dissolved body/pool in search of her daughter, she finds the *zona* of Proserpina floating in the water, another sign of her lost virginity and Dis’ violence (462–73).

The presence of the *zona* and Cyane’s own raped body indicate what happened to her daughter, and Ceres weeps over the pool of Cyane for her daughter’s suffering (*quam simul agnovit, tamquam tum denique raptam/scisset, inornatos laniavit diva capillos/ et repetita suis percussit*).
pectora palmis, “As soon as she recognized the zona, Ceres finally knew then that her daughter had been raped and the goddess tore at her disheveled hair and repeatedly tore at her chest with her hands,” 471–3). The goddess, like Ovid’s audience, understands what has happened to her daughter through Cyane. The water nymph cannot be an active witness of the rape, using the voice she used to condemn Dis, but only a passive one. Cyane desperately wants to do so (ea ni mutata fuisset,/ omnia narrasset, “If she had not been transformed, she would have told everything to Ceres,” 465–6), but can only show the goddess the zona.

Arethusa emerges twice in the narrative: first to inform Ceres of Proserpina’s whereabouts and then to tell her own story of rape by the river Alpheus, which she wanted to tell to Ceres initially, but deferred until it was more appropriate. Hinds (1987, 33), in his monograph on the rape of Proserpina in both the Met. and the Fasti, has also noted that the story of Arethusa’s rape in many ways repeats that of Proserpina, once again showing how the imagery of her rape has been displaced elsewhere. He also makes the clever observation that Arethusa’s story arises in the conclusion of the story, the same position where in the Homeric Hymn Proserpina’s rape is repeated almost verbatim from the beginning of the poem. Arethusa’s narration of her rape is similar to many rape narratives we have seen, leading Salzman-Mitchell (2005, 179) to assert that Arethusa is a “reader” of Ovid. This is a compelling and valid argument, but we should also understand Arethusa as an example of a female figure internalizing misogyny and who blames herself for her rape, like Daphne has done since the first instance of sexual abuse in the poem (Met. 1.466–567). She “reads” the misogynistic qualities of Ovid’s narration and adopts them, further contributing to the victim-blaming discourse of Ovid’s corpus. Arethusa describes her attractiveness at length, using forma, facies, and formosa all in quick succession (580–2)—although she admits that she derives shame and not pleasure from beauty

132 Hinds (1987) will be an important text for the methodology of my Fasti chapter.
(ego rustica dote/ corporis erubui crimenque placere putavi, “I simply blushed at the gifts of my body and I thought it a crime to be attractive,” 583–4). By defining her body in this way, she lays the foundation for her body as the origin of her rape, that her beauty precipitated her attack. With this type of description, it becomes clear that when female figures like Arethusa control the gaze on their bodies through narrative and focalization, they cede that control to male desires. She enters the locus amoenus alone like many of the rape victims before her, the central feature of which is placid and pellucid water (585–93). These waters do not seem to be concealing any peril. Arethusa can see her feet through the water (592), but for the experienced audience of Ovid, such tranquility and beauty can only forebode violence. These calm waters belong to the river god Alpheus and they begin to become disturbed when she enters the waters naked (594–8).

Arethusa soon faces these once calm waters turning into her rapist, echoing how Dryope violated a piece of the locus amoenus, the flower of Lotis. Alpheus and his body are part of the locus amoenus, where female figures are usually materia in natura, where the imagery of the rapes is displaced onto its features, such as in the plucking of flowers, and where they become part of the landscape because of their rapes, forever effeminized. Later, when Arethusa transforms into water, she, like many other female figures we have seen, becomes natura, an integral feature of the landscape. In Chapter Three, we discussed how male figures in Ovid can be assimilated to the landscape, but their masculinity is often “problematic” to use the term of Salzman-Mitchell, in that it is not wholly formed or deficient in some way. Alpheus is an anomaly because his masculinity is never presented as problematic to the audience: he is mature, aggressive, and powerful. Narcissus, Actaeon, Pentheus, Hermaphroditus, Hyacinthus, and Adonis all have effeminate qualities to them because they are youths, not fully male figures. They then become even more effeminate by being assimilated into the landscape.
As mentioned, Arethusa takes off her clothes and enters the waters naked (*nudaque mergor aquis*, “I am plunged into the water, naked,” 595), making her body even more sexually available to her attacker. Other victims of sexualized violence before her have some of their bodies exposed by their attire, but she is most fully vulnerable. Arethusa even later declares as she flees naked through the forest that she has made herself readier for her impending attack by Alpheus the river god because of her body’s lack of clothing. She says: *ardet,/ et quia nuda fui, sum visa paratior illi* (“He burns and because I was naked, I seemed readier to him,” 602–3). Her story of rape after her flight begins to strongly resemble that of Daphne. Her flight from Alpheus is as protracted as that of Daphne, while figures like Io and Callisto could barely flee. There is the ubiquitous use of predator-prey imagery (e.g., 626–9) and the image of Alpheus breathing at the back of her neck (*ingens/ crinales vittas adflabat anhelitus oris*, “his deep exhalations blow upon the ribbons of my hair,” 5.616–7) is similar to how Apollo does the same to Daphne (*inminet et crinem sparsum cervicibus adflat*, “He is right behind her and blows upon the hair scattered on her neck,” 1.542). Arethusa, like Daphne, calls out to a god to help her transform and avoid his sexualized violence (1.545–52, 5.617–626) and they both use the phrase *fer...opem* to make those appeals (*Met*. 1.545, 5.518). Diana intervenes and first hides the nymph in a cloud and then transforms her into water. Or, perhaps, her sweat dripping because of her fear turned her into water, making her forever an embodiment of fear and her trauma, similar to Cyane. Ovid leaves her transformation very ambiguous. Arethusa’s metamorphosis into water makes her more susceptible to Alpheus’ attacks and he successfully completes the rape by mingling his waters with hers (*sed enim cognoscit amatas/ amnis aquas positoque viri, quod sumpserat, ore/ vertitur in proprias, et se mihi misceat, undas*, “But Alpheus recognizes his lover in the waters of the rivers and puts aside the form of a man that he took on and is changed into his own waters, so
that he may mingle with me,” 636–8). However, unlike many of the victims of sexualized violence who become part of the landscape, Arethusa can still speak, bear witness to her violence, commiserate with Ceres, and support the mother of a young goddess who has faced violence. Even if she does not ultimately save Proserpina from her fate, she is not punished for her solidarity and Ceres shows her compassion by inviting her to speak of her trauma.

Calliope also allows Ceres to condemn the violence her daughter experienced without much consequence and to declare that she does not care if her daughter was raped, only that she return home (quod rapta, feremus,/ dummodo reddat eam!, “I can bear if she was raped as long as he returns her”). Jupiter attempts to mollify Ceres by reminding his sister that Dis (whom she called a rapist, 521) loves their daughter, never calling it rape himself (non hoc iniuria factum,/
verum amor est, “No injury was done, in truth it is love,” 525–6). Ceres is one of the only Olympians in the Met. who calls a rape a rape. As mentioned earlier, Jupiter and Juno never do such a thing. But even though Jupiter is sentimental about his daughter and Dis, he agrees to bring her home if she has not eaten anything while in the underworld (521–32). In the end, Ceres’ solidarity with her daughter is not fully successful because the goddess indeed eats pomegranate seeds. Jupiter thus forces her to remain there at least half the year rather than fully returning to the land of the living with her mother. Ceres must accept the depths of male control of sexuality, and she accepts the compromise of Proserpina’s division of the year between the upper- and underworld (564–71). (Everett Beek 2015, 170 in contrast, sees Ceres as equally controlling of her daughter’s sexuality, unwilling to let her transition into womanhood.)

Proserpina with this compromise now must remain a sexually mature goddess, never again a virginal one. Moreover, the act of eating, which forbids her from fully entering the upper world again, is similar to how she plucked flowers before her rape. She walks through a garden.
and plucks from the landscape (534–7). In the first case, Proserpina predicts the violence against her and in the second she reenacts it. But in each instance, she plucks willingly, even if not cognizant of its consequences. Ovid, through these details, along with the other versions of her rape, problematizes her ultimate consent to the violence Dis committed. Persephone refuses to admit she ate the fruit, which shows her unwillingness and despair, and she even punishes the mortal Ascalaphus, who witnessed her eating the fruit, eliminating witnesses as Dis did with Cyane (538–50). The young goddess plucks both fruits with innocence, but stipulations like that of Jupiter say that she subconsciously wanted Dis, that as she plucks the fruit, she asks for it.

10b. The Rape of Proserpina by Dis in the Fasti

Ovid revisits the story in the Fasti as he discusses the games of Ceres in April. It is once again his longest secondary narrative in the poem. But the story we see in the elegiac poem is a much simpler narrative (without embedding) and says much less about rape. There are no muses, and Cyane and Arethusa are briefly named to indicate geography (Fasti 4.423, 469). They receive no prominence in the story and seem to be there only to remind his audience of the Met. Proserpina after her rape (mostly suppressed as in the Met.) fades into the background and Ceres takes centerstage. But Ovid still includes the common trajectory we see in all the rapes: he describes the young goddess’s body, Dis sees her, and then he has a sexual reaction, defining her body as the cause of the rape (hanc videt et visam patruus velociter aufert/ regnaque caeruleis in sua portat equis, “Her uncle sees her and carries away quickly the one he saw and brings her into his kingdom with his dark horses,” 445–6). The narrator does not label her as beautiful explicitly as in the Met., but she appears sexually available. She wanders alone away from her girlish companions with her feet bare (426). She picks flowers and she desires to place them near her chest, both highly sexualized acts and images (430–44). The description of the flowers she
plucks in the *Fasti* is much more elaborate than in the *Met.*, a homage to the *Homeric Hymn* according to Hinds (1987, 93). It could be because both the *Fasti* and the *Homeric Hymn* do not displace the imagery of the violence of rape elsewhere except upon the flowers themselves. The flowers take the brunt of that displacement, while in the *Met.* we have the flowers, her ripped garment, her *zona*, Cyane, and Arethusa absorbing the violence of Proserpina’s rape. The narrator in the *Fasti* forecasts the girl’s rape by the king of the underworld further by using the word *praeda* for her flowery conquests (433). She will become the plunder of Dis herself.

But with Ceres as the protagonist of the story, the audience still has the anti-sororophobic narrative, of a female defending another female from rape, of a female calling rape what it is, of a female refusing to see her daughter remain with her rapist husband (*praedone marito*, 521) and that he should go unpunished, but ultimately being foiled by male power and customs. Proserpina though, must stay with her rapist forever because she ate while in the underworld, which we do not even see her resist doing as in the *Met.* We also never learn how she feels about having to remain with Dis (Everett Beek 2015, 170–72). In this account, too, Ceres eventually reconciles herself with the loss of her daughter to Dis and the compromise that Jupiter brokers (615–6). Fantham (1998, 205) and Everett Bee (2015, 169–70) argue that the emphasis on Proserpina’s marriage to Dis in both the *Met.* and the *Fasti* speaks to the wider concern in Ovid’s texts and also Roman culture about marriage as compensation for rape. Jupiter excuses what Dis did once again, calling it love and saying it would be a waste to tear apart a legitimate and favorable marriage (597–600). We see marriage and rape linked several times in Ovid: Apollo reveals that he wanted to marry Daphne after her transformation (*Met.* 1.557), the Romans marry the Sabine women after they abducted and raped them (*Fasti* 3.187–228), and most importantly for the context of the *Fasti*, Flora declares that Zephyrus compensated for his rape by marrying
her and that she is satisfied with the status the marriage has brought her (5.195–215). We will discuss Flora more in the next chapter, but it is necessary to note here that her approval of rape condones the use of violence against female figures, shows how female figures internalize male discourse and ideologies concerning rape, and how such compensations negate the need for consent, with gods and men able to retroactively receive it from the victims themselves or those who control their sexuality, like Jupiter with Proserpina. But Everett Beek (2015, 171) sees a major contrast between Proserpina and Flora, in that the “compensation” for Ceres’ daughter seems less: Proserpina becomes the queen of the underworld, trapped there annually, while Flora moves from nymph to Italian goddess who has influence over the Olympians. Flora seems happy, but with Proserpina her happiness is never commented upon directly in either poem.

11. The Rape of Philomela by Tereus and the Sisterly Revenge of Philomela and Procne

The rape of Philomela by Tereus is distinct from many similar narratives in the Met. because it is, one, the first time a mortal rapes another mortal in the poem; two, it intensifies many of the features we have seen in other rapes including objectification, the descriptions of female sexual availability, victim-blaming, and the displacement of the violence of rape; and three, it includes an almost perfectly symmetrical and reciprocal revenge plot orchestrated by two sisters against a rapist, an anti-sororophobic union for which they are ultimately condemned. The story begins after Tereus, a Thracian king, marries the daughter of Pandion, the Athenian princess Procne, who asks Tereus to bring her sister Philomela to Thrace to visit (6.426–50). When the king arrives in Athens, he sees Philomela enter and lusts after her almost immediately. Ovid invites the audience to join in Tereus’ gaze upon her body with an ecce! (6.451), similar to how he invites us to gaze upon Corinna’s body in Amores 1.5.1 (Hardie 2002a, 261). Philomela is beautiful, so beautiful in fact that she is like a nymph (451–4), a narratorial nod to
the rape narratives with which we are more familiar and to the many nymps who have been blamed for their rapes because of their bodies and appearance. Tereus burns with sexual desire for the young princess, Ovid employing a simile here that echoes the description of Apollo’s desire for Daphne (non secus exarsit conspecta virgine Tereus,/ quam si quis canis ignem supponat aristis/ aut frondem positasque cremet faenilibus herbas, “When Tereus saw the young girl, he burned, not unlike if someone puts flames underneath dry grain, or if someone burns leaves or the hay placed in lofts,” 455–7). Tereus’ passion continues to be analogized to fire in the preceding lines, in 460, 465–6, and 480. Philomela’s body like that of Daphne is marked as the source of the eventual violence. The simile here is one of many instances of Ovid alluding to the first instance of sexualized violence against Daphne in the Met. The rape of Philomela is in its own way prototypical because of its exclusively mortal characters and the relative absence of the gods (we only see the Furies in the beginning at Procne’s wedding (430) and presumably the involvement of the gods during the transformation of Procne, Philomela, and Tereus). In Klindienst’s excellent analysis of the rape of Philomela (1991), Tereus is not attracted to her beauty, but to the political potential and power that control over her sexuality holds. If he enters her body, he enters the gates of Athens. I will explore the political connotations of this myth in more depth in Chapter Five when I compare this story to that of Lucretia in the Fasti.

Tereus contemplates what he will do to win the young woman. He first thinks he will act like one of the students in the Ars or the characters in erotic poetry, taking her away from her attendants and nurse, seducing Philomela with gifts (460–1; Ars 1.351–437). But he also contemplates simply abducting and raping her, defending his possession of her like Paris with Helen (aut rapere et saevo raptam defendere bello, “[He is driven to] rape her or defend her, after she was raped, in a savage war,” 464). His rape of Philomela is much more premeditated
than we have seen previously and he is the only rapist in the *Met.* to use the verb *rapere* to describe his own desires and future actions. Tereus knows he will ultimately commit violence and shows no remorse for doing so. The king wins the loyalty and collaboration of Philomela by ventriloquizing the words and desires of Procne for her sister’s visit, trusting him as a surrogate for her loving sister (467–70; Pavlock 1991, 36). He even cries like Procne (471), another rapist following a dictate of the *praecceptor amoris* in the *Ars* to use emotional manipulation against women to attain one’s erotic goals (*Ars* 1.659–663; Gildenhard and Zissos 2007, 25). Philomela works to convince her father to allow her to visit Procne and Thrace, abetting her own rape and leaving herself alone in the hands of her attacker (475–85).

Philomela, similar to Daphne, has a close relationship with her father, which she exploits to achieve a goal he is reluctant to allow (*Met* 1.480–7; Jacobson 1984, 48). Later on, both Daphne and Philomela will call out to their fathers, Daphne in order to escape Apollo’s sexualized violence and Philomela lamenting her fate as she is raped and later mutilated (*Met* 1.545; 6. 525 and 555; Pavlock 1991, 38). Tereus uses this interaction with her father to objectify her more. He sees her kissing and embracing her father, he sees her exposed upper arms and forearms, and he hopes he could be Pandion (*spectat eam Tereus praeventrectatque...esse parens vellet*, “He gazes at Philomela and imagines in anticipation...he wants to be her father,” 478–82). He projects his lustful passions upon her relationship with her father and her body, a projection that Hardie (2002a, 267) sees as evidence of Tereus’ “solipsistic, even narcissistic” desire for the young woman. The Thracian interprets her beauty and her (completely imagined) sexual behavior as signs of her sexual availability. Apollo does the same when he first objectifies Daphne, envisioning different scenarios for her body (1.498–502; Jacobson 1984, 47). Like many of the other female figures in the *Met.*, Philomela and Daphne are *materia*, something for
male figures to project desires upon, to possess. The sexual energy Tereus has invested in this familial interaction speaks to and foretells the incestuous act he himself will later commit.

Tereus waits to rape Philomela until he enters the secluded forests of Thrace, once more aligning Philomela with nymphs and literalizing her once figurative connections to them (in stabula alta trahit, silvis obscura vetustis, “He drags her into high-walled buildings, hidden in an ancient forest,” 520–1). She becomes more like Daphne and he becomes more like Apollo. There is, in fact, throughout the narrative a tension between civilization and the wilds, the domus and the silva (Segal 1999, Westerhold 2006). For Philomela, Procne, and Tereus, both spheres are sites of violence and disorder. For example, Tereus rapes Philomela in the forest, but Procne and Philomela kill Itys in the home. Tereus soon afterward confesses the nefas (fassusque nefas, 524) he is about to commit and rapes his sister-in-law as she calls out to her father and the gods (524–5). Ovid describes Philomela’s fear before and during her rape (522–3), but does not use the characteristic predator-prey analogy until afterward to describe her experience of post-traumatic stress. She is like a lamb, released from the jowls of a wolf, trembling, and she is like a dove, covered in blood, still in fear of the eagle that captured her (527–30). As in most of the predator-prey analogies in Ovid, the animals reflect something about the human they represent. Daphne is fleeing from Apollo as quickly as a hare would flee a Gallic hound (Met. 1.532) and Philomela is wounded like these animals by her rape (Raval 1998, 117). Ovid continues to explore her post-traumatic stress when Philomela enters the home of Tereus after he escapes his captivity and she can feel his presence, becoming pale all over (602–3), his house a nefas.

Philomela speaks out after her rape. We learn that she sees herself as the sexual enemy of her sister. She is a paelex (537), one of the only times Juno is not the one to utter this word
against another woman in the poem. Philomela uses it to blame herself for her rape. But she also condemns her rapist and how he has upset all normative family relations (omnia turbasti; paelex ego facta sororis./ tu geminus coniunx, hostis mihi debita Procn!; “You have confused everything: I am made the mistress of my sister; you are now a twin husband; I must be the enemy of Procn!” 536–7). She declares that the gods will punish him (542–4) and ultimately declares that she will expose what he did to her, an act she defines as nefas like the narrator (nefandos...concubitus) (544–8). Such disclosure of her reality will be her revenge.

But to paraphrase Klindienst (1991), as soon Philomela finds her voice, her truth, Tereus brutally takes it away from her (549–60). Tereus mutilates Philomela and rips out her tongue, depriving her of the voice by which she hopes to uncover his crimes. Like Cyane, she speaks out against rape and suffers greatly for it. Tereus mutilates her like the gods have done to rape victims before Philomela (earlier Tereus was even compared to the eagle of Jupiter, 517) (Pavlock 1991, 39). The scene of her mutilation is grisly, ghoulish, and almost histrionic in its violence, and scholars for years have attempted to understand its tone: Is it macabre or humorous? Mary Beard (2014b) most recently threw up her hands in defeat trying to determine Ovid’s intentions. Richlin (1992, 163) uses the case of Philomela’s mutilation as the prime example of Ovid’s displacement of the rape onto mutilation/metamorphosis/death and also the prime example of Ovid’s narrator and his audience reveling in violence against female figures. She observes that Philomela’s rape receives two lines, but the description of her mutilation

---

133 Only two other women call their sexual rivals paëlices in the Met.: Deianira labels Iole, Hercules’ sexual slave, a paëlex in Met. 9.144 and 151 and Clytie labels her sister Leucothoe, the rape victim of Sol, a paëlex in 4.234.

134 This is an interesting declaration in light of the gods themselves being serial rapists and also the almost complete absence of the gods from the story. However, the Furies are gods present at the very beginning of the story, as they attend the wedding of Procn and Tereus, the only gods to witness it. But Gildenhard and Zissos (2007) contend that after that point, the presence of the Furies is sublimated into other imagery. Tereus’ passion is described with fire analogies, we will see the imagery of Philomela’s tongue becoming like a snake, Philomela herself comes to look like a Fury (657), and Tereus calls on the Furies in his rage over their killing of Itys (660). Philomela and Procn can be said to be mortal surrogates of the Furies themselves, as well, because they are avenging a familial wrong.
receives five times that. Ovid animates the tongue after her mutilation: it trembles, it slithers like a snake, it looks for signs of its mistress (558–60). We do not see Philomela’s rape, but we see an orifice of her body transgressed by a phallic object and destroyed. Richlin (1992, 163) sees this as a surrogate for her defloration through the king’s rape. Marder (1992 160), writing similarly on the effects of Ovid’s displacement of the imagery of rape, observes that the rape of Philomela “does not become either fully figured or fully meaningful until it is repeated by the mutilation that ostensibly functions to cover it up.” And because we do not see the violence of rape, Ovid sexualizes the violence of mutilation, marks it as a source of pleasure. Whatever Ovid’s ( unknowable) intent, this sexualization of violence, to me, clearly crosses the line of misogyny and it can, moreover, speak to the misogyny of the poem’s audience. Fulkerson (2016, 77) argues that this passage of mutilation uncovers the “complicity” of Ovid’s audience: even if they do not enjoy the violence against Philomela, many condone it by continuing to read the epic.

Philomela’s bodily mutilation by Tereus epitomizes what happens to all female figures through rape: the destruction and deformation of the body, the permanent marks it leaves on the body, the marks that prove the penetrability of the female body to male violence, the silencing (Raval 1998, 110–11). Philomela wanted to make her rape public, her rape at first drives her to an articulation rape victims rarely receive, but Tereus forces her to hide her rape and bear a private, inner wound for a year before she reveals it to her sister through her weaving. He silences her voice while he reenacts violence analogous to that of rape. In Ovid, rape silences the vast majority of his victims. It silenced Io, Callisto, Cyane, and others. Violated, transformed bodies, whether they are raped, whether they die, whether they turn into animals, lose human speech. Philomela’s rape and subsequent mutilation makes clear, according to Marder (1992, 160), “that to be raped is also to be deprived of a language with which to speak the rape.”
Enterline (2000) detects a focus throughout the *Met.* on the limits of speech and its connections to violence. Within the Philomela narrative specifically, Enterline (2000, 11) observes that throughout, there is an emphasis on *nefas* (as we have seen above), something that should remain unspoken. Tereus commits the first *nefas* (the rape of his wife’s sister) and commits another by depriving Philomela of her ability to speak and disclose, making her rape literally unspeakable by eliminating her as a witness to and survivor of it. Later, after Philomela has taken her revenge against Tereus with her deeds and not words, she wishes she could speak of her revenge, use words to boast of her victory and joys (*gaudia*) over her rapist and mutilator (659–60).

After her mutilation, Tereus continues to rape Philomela in the forest, something Ovid’s narrator says he cannot bear to believe (*hoc quoque post facinus—vix ausim credere—fertur/ saepe sua lacerum repetisse libidine corpus,* “After this crime against her—I could scarcely dare to believe it—it is said he, in his desire, raped her mutilated body,” 561–2). But within the same incredulous sentence, the narrator describes Philomela as a wounded body. She has become like Cyane even more so, scarred indelibly by the trauma of her rape. Her lacerated tongue epitomizes how vulnerable and open her body is to continued rape by Tereus. While once her beauty was the cause of her rape, now it is the mutilation itself. What is more, during the scene of mutilation, we move all of our attention away from Philomela herself to her tongue, writhing on the ground like an animal. The tongue could represent Philomela herself (Richlin 1992, 163): moving, but speechless, alive, but voiceless. She becomes a tongue, a piece of a body, in lines 562, she is nothing but a body. We lose sense of Philomela’s personhood as Ovid’s narration objectifies her, dehumanizes her, and prioritizes her corporeality and subjection to violence. Ovid not only displaces the violence of rape onto other imagery, he displaces her humanity.
Tereus keeps Philomela prisoner in the wilds, but he returns home and tells Procne that Philomela died (rape is often presented as a form of death) (563–70). Procne holds a funeral for a sister who is very much present. Philomela must find a way to communicate with her in a different, unspoken language. Philomela uses her cleverness (sollertia), creativity, weaving, and artistry to speak to her sister and break her enforced silence (571–80). Salzman-Mitchell (2005, 168) compares Philomela to Arachne, an artist who earlier in Book 6 uses weaving to expose rape by the gods. Like Medusa, as well, Philomela has become an artist specifically after her rape: Medusa turns male figures into statues in her transformed state and Philomela creates a (communicative) tapestry depicting the violence against her to her sister (Rimell 2006, 14–15). But Philomela’s piece is not only a work of art—it is a means of vengeance. Procne looks upon the weaving and is stunned into silence (584–5), unable to give words and explication to the violence her sister has suffered, but she also simultaneously resolves to save her sister and ensure that Tereus is punished, contemplating committing a nefas herself (586). Procne’s silence here highlights one of many symmetries and likenesses between the sisters after Philomela’s rape and mutilation by Tereus. Procne and Philomela have been sexually controlled by the same man’s lust, they will both pretend to be Bacchants to escape the wilds (587–600), they will kill Procne’s son, Itys, together to avenge what Tereus did to Philomela, they will both make Tereus consume his own son, and they will both transform into birds to avoid further violence (617–74).

Klindienst (1991) has a recuperating and feminist reading of Philomela’s use of weaving, a kind of specifically female language. Tereus tried to squelch Philomela’s means of communication and disclosure, but she is able to expose the nefas against her and prove that Tereus does not have a monopoly on the truth. Klindienst writes: “the mythic tale, Tereus’ plot, and Ovid’s own text make clear that dominance can only contain, but never successfully destroy,
the woman’s voice.” What Tereus fails to understand in the wake of her mutilation and rape is that Philomela can still find ways to communicate while alive because of her resilience, intelligence, and talent, and he fails to understand how strong the bonds between sisters can be, even if Procne has entered his family. Klindienst suggests that Tereus fails to recognize this because of how “tenuous the bonds between men may be.” She argues, interested in Levi-Strauss’ theories of women as signs of political and economic exchange between men, that Tereus has broken the legitimate, masculinist systems of exchange, and Philomela and Procne will break down those systems further by killing Itys, the product and desired result of these systems. Men, like Tereus, use women as signs and to communicate (economically, politically, culturally) with one another, to enact violence against one another, never realizing that women have important bonds with each other. The story of Philomela and Procne speaks to male anxieties about female bonds and how they could threaten male power over reproduction.

Klindienst, moreover, contends that Philomela as a broken sign in this male system learns to speak of the suffering it generates. She wants to use Philomela’s weaving as inspiration for female resistance against male power and believes that we can “undo the mythical plot” that makes Philomela and Procne resort to violence for their vengeance” and “refuse to let violence overtake the work of our looms again...we have that power.” Philomela also reveals her rape to her sister and receives support from her, not sexual jealousy or further pain we have come to expect from female figures in Ovid’s corpus, which speaks even more profoundly to female resistance. Procne refuses to punish her sister, to commit literal sororophobia, and she chooses the love of her sister over the love of both her husband and her child. At first, she struggles with nimia pietas (629), too much pietas: does she make herself more loyal to her sister or her son? Ovid shows us the image of Procne spectans ambos, looking at both her sister and her son in the
room and struggling with the choice of sisterhood or her male family. Eventually, Procne decides that choosing Tereus (and thus Itys), in Procne’s mind, would be a nefas in itself. But Ovid’s text ultimately condemns Procne’s support of Philomela because of the violent, transgressive revenge that support embraces. Klindienst’s feminist reappropriation is interesting and vital for the reception and modern understanding of this narrative, but within the text, Procne and Philomela quickly lose their moral high ground. Their sisterhood and resistance become abhorrent.

Ovid first delegitimizes Procne’s revenge plot because of her use of the Bacchic rituals to save her sister, the site of female irrationality and hypersexuality, the site that epitomizes many of the male misogynistic fantasies about the violence of women. They are not even true Bacchants, only pretending to be so to achieve revenge and violence against a man. Many scholars, like McAuley (2012, 145), have also commented that by including the Bacchic rites in this narrative, Ovid likens Procne to Agave, another mother who kills her son in the Met. 3.692–733. Procne does not only kill her son, she tears him apart like Agave did with Pentheus, bringing in the violence of natura, of the wilds into the domestic, civilizing sphere. What is more, both Procne and Philomela become like Tereus in their vengeance against him and their violence against Itys, who they slaughter, tear apart, and cook for Tereus. Itys becomes their target because he resembles Tereus (620–3) and thus, he can be his surrogate. Itys is a means to make Tereus suffer and suffers a nefas similar to one the king committed against Philomela. Procne and Philomela not only become equivalent to each other, but to the rapist and the tyrant who enacted the first crimes. Similarities and reciprocities abound among all three figures.

---

135 McAuley (2012) comments that Procne, by gazing at her son and only seeing the father and not anything of herself, “evokes the reproductive theory in which the mother is merely a vessel or container for the masculine seed and contributes nothing to the child’s form…” McAuley has an interesting broader commentary about mothers, life, and death in the Met. and uses Procne’s murder of Itys to demonstrate Ovid’s interest in a woman’s ability to give life, but also to “dole out death” to children. Female figures bring life, but they also create mortality. Ovid, by focusing on such violence, speaks to the male, misogynistic anxieties around female reproductive capacities.
First, Ovid describes both Tereus’ actions and their actions with the word nefas, their violence mirroring and reciprocating his. Procne even declares that she is prepared to commit any nefas to avenge what happened to her sister (613). All three rejoice in their nefas (Ovid uses the word gaudia in 514, 653, and 658; Raval 1998, 131). Procne, when she saves her sister, is also marked by the verb rapere, like Tereus previously (598). The literal sense here is that she grabs her sister during the Bacchic rites, but the meaning employed earlier in the text, when Tereus imagines raping her (464), looms large (Raval 1998, 127–8). Procne ardet (610) while she watches her sister communicate her story of rape through sign language, just as Tereus flagrat earlier in the story (460), Ovid likening their passion (Larmour 1990, 133–4). Tereus at first, according to Hardie (2002, 286), controls appearance and reality, absence and presence, for example, by telling Procne that Philomela is dead. Later, Procne and Philomela control those factors, Philomela reminding her sister of her presence through her weaving, Procne hiding Philomela and then revealing herself to Tereus (646–60), and creating the seeming absence of Itys when his body is in his father’s. When they first slaughter Itys, Ovid describes them as taking the child to a secluded part of the house, just as Tereus took Philomela to a secluded wood (utque domus altae partem tenuere remotam, “As they reached a remote part of the high house,” 638) (Pavlock 1991, 44; Raval 1998, 128), speaking again to the tensions between the wilds and civilization in the story. Itys cries out to his mother when he is dying, similar to Philomela calling out to her father (640; Lamour 1990, 133–4). Earlier, Itys’ ability to speak serves to remind her that her sister can no longer speak because of Tereus (632–5; Raval 1998, 130).

Their crime against Itys and then Tereus renders the Thracian king’s mouth, a sensitive and sexualized orifice, forcibly penetrated by a family member just as he penetrated Philomela, and the display of Itys’ decapitated head by the sisters is a symbol of Tereus’ castration (658–9),
just as Philomela’s mutilated tongue was a symbol of her deflowering. They not only effeminize him by penetrating him and castrating him, but also by forcing him to become “pregnant” with his own son (Marder 1992, 162). We should also keep in mind that incest and cannibalism are innately mirror forms of violence because of how closely sex and eating were associated in antiquity (Barkan 1986, 103). Furthermore, the rape of Philomela and the slaughter and forced consumption of Itys irreparably confuse normative familial relations through incest and then feminine control of reproduction. Procne and Philomela, ultimately, achieve a perfectly reciprocal vengeance for the rape and mutilation (Gildenhard and Zissos 2007, 31) and through the slaughter of Itys, they commit “mimetic violence” (Segal 1994, 272, inspired by René Girard). They make Tereus feel what Philomela felt. But in contrast to Tereus they render their revenge public and a spectacle, while he attempted to keep Philomela’s rape private. McAuley (2012, 149) writes that the sisters “unconceal all that was supposed to remain inside, repressed, hidden from view,” particularly through their use and display of Itys’ decapitated head.

Finally, Philomela, Procne, and Tereus all transform into birds (a nightingale, a swallow, and a hoopoe, respectively), a visual symbol of their equivalence and equivalent wrongs (653–74). The text continually asks if Procne and Philomela were truly justified in their revenge and their anti-sororophobic mission, and the answer, because of their own nefas’s symmetries with Tereus’ brutalities against women, appears to be a resounding “no.” Sophocles’ earlier tragic text more explicitly condemns the sisters and says their own violence has surpassed that of Tereus. Klindienst’s (1991) article, in its feminist, political, and anthropological exploration of the Philomela story, also explores its later reception by male authors in the Renaissance and she laments that “as literary tradition shows, the end of the story overtakes all that preceded it; the
women are remembered as more violent than the man.” Philomela and Procne are the true villains of the tale in Ovid and also in its subsequent manifestations.

In their transformation, their new bodies reflect elements of their former human bodies and behaviors, Solodow’s 1988 theories about Ovidian metamorphosis as literalization ringing true in this instance (although it, overall, cannot account for all metamorphosis in the poem). Procne and Philomela have red marks on their new wings to signify Itys’ blood and Tereus has a hooked beak to indicate the sword he was carrying, intending to murder the sisters (666–74), the sword, according to Feldherr (2010, 227), acting as a symbol of the phallic power that he would reclaim through their deaths, although he never achieves killing them. Rather, the nightingale and the swallow, aetiologically, become the prey of the hoopoe. There are many other literalizations in the story, which Kaufhold (1997, 70) has thoroughly outline, including how Tereus is compared to an eagle and then becomes a bird, Philomela is compared to a nymph and then raped in the woods, and Tereus says he has become the tomb of his consumed son (665). The sisters’ transformations make literal, as well, their figurative transformations into Bacchants, into each other, into Tereus, and for Philomela specifically, it is another bodily transformation in a series of them: rape, mutilation, and then the loss of the human body. According to Forbes Irving (1993, 112), bird transformations are characteristically for individuals experiencing extreme sexual and/or familial disorder: Scylla in Met. 8.81–151 kills her father and becomes a solitary bird; Nyctimene in Met. 2.589–95 is raped by her father and becomes an owl; Philomela, Procne, and Tereus all become birds because of sexual and familial chaos, to which they have all contributed. In the end, Tereus was about to kill the sisters and continue the cycle of violence, and only the loss of all their humanity stops him from his need for power.\footnote{136}{The cycle of violence continues in Thrace when Boreas, the god of the winds and king of Thrace upon the death of Tereus, rapes Orynthia after her father rejects him as a suitor (675–721). The wind god grabs her with his wings}
12. Caenis/Caeneus and a Curious Case of Anti-Sororophobia

The story of Caenis/Caeneus (12.189–209, 429–535) has most often been used by scholars to comment on Ovid’s representation of gender identity, performativity, and essentialism and the connections between gender and sexualized violence, but it also speaks, like the tale of Philomela and Procne, to the theme of anti-sororophobia and its consequences. Caenis asks her rapist Neptune to transform her into a man (da, femina ne sim, “Grant to me that I am no longer a woman,” 202), taking on the name Caeneus, whose skin and body cannot be penetrated. Caenis no longer wants to be a woman and hence no longer wants to be violated by men. Neptune understood her desire to be a man, to escape the restraints and violence of femininity and not be penetrated, to mean not penetrated by phallic objects like weapons, not just male body parts. Sharrock (2002a, 97) has contrasted Caenis with rape victims like Cyane, who is marked by a permanent penetrability (an inconsolabile vulnus) and who make literal that everlasting wound of rape for other female figures in the poem. Rape, an act that transgresses bodily boundaries, proves they are female, that they are vulnerable. As a man, Caeneus rids himself of such penetrability, one of the most intrinsic elements of femininity, and he resists further male dominance over his body. Through Caenis, we can see how Ovid engenders the human body: masculine bodies are whole and integral, and feminine ones are fractured and porous.

and she fears her fate, Boreas becoming another rapist attracted to her fear. But Orynthia does not suffer any further punishment for her rape: no transformation, no death, one of the only rape victims in Ovid to escape further violence. She becomes his wife and the mother of two sons by Boreas. Although, it should be said that we never learn of her happiness or true consent to her fate. James (2016, 167) argues that even if Orynthia “agreed” to marry him, this was no real choice. Her rape has made her “damaged goods” and Boreas is her only choice.

137 Caenis is similar to Perimele and Mestra who also receive the help of Neptune. Perimele was raped by Achelous (8.547–610) and was about to be murdered by her father when Achelous asks Neptune to turn her into a nymph. Mestra (8.843–83) was Neptune’s rape victim who receives the ability to shape-shift and transform into anything she desires. She appeals to him after her father sells her for sex in an attempt to make money and quell his insatiable hunger and thirst with more food and drink. She, unfortunately, has to constantly use this ability as her father sells her again and again before his death. Mestra’s compensation from her rapist Neptune, in contrast to Caenis, marks her as permanently lacking bodily boundaries. She will continuously experience the violence of transformation, a surrogate for the violence of rape. The constant threat of rape she faces in the aftermath of that transformation mirrors such a lack of bodily integrity and deepens her connections to femininity and its proximity to violence.
Caenis was raped in much the same way we have seen throughout the *Met.*: she was the loveliest virgin (*virgo pulcherrima*, 190) in Thessaly, pursued by many suitors (191–4), Ovid via Nestor’s voice establishing the most characteristic basis for victim-blaming. She was walking alone in the *locus amoenus* when Neptune saw her, and he raped her (195–197). He offers her compensation for his violence and she demands the transformation we have discussed. She, in fact, blames herself so profoundly for her rape that she rejects womanhood and its innate violability. But interestingly, Caenis is not punished for her rape by Neptune and is rewarded, although under my definitions of transformation, she still experiences violence against her body as she transforms into a man. And, of course, we still do not see the violence of rape, only its displacement through the violence of transformation. But Caenis is different because she does not become pregnant, she does not turn into an animal, and she is instead elevated from womanhood to manhood. Caenis (temporarily) gains power, the power of masculinity, from her rape and then as Caeneus, he has the power to effeminize others through penetration by weapons.

Caenis directly declares before her transformation that she refuses to ever suffer rape again (*magnum...facit haec iniuria votum/ tale pati iam posse nihil*, “This injury makes me vow never to be able to endure such a thing again,” 12.201–2) and Neptune helps her honor that refusal, but Caeneus, like all men, never fully escapes femininity and returns to femininity in the poem through his death (and possible transformation). The soldiers opposing Caeneus cannot penetrate him and instead bury and suffocate him under a mountain of trees, although some witnesses claim he transformed into a bird, escaping full destruction and a descent into Tartarus (510–25). In a recent paper at CAMWS, Adams (2014) rightfully observes that Caeneus’ means of death and/or transformation is a “forcible penetration in the earth,” the earth being the realm of femininity, another sign of degraded masculinity. Ovid does not provide us with knowledge
about Caeneus’ descent into the underworld, but in Vergil Caeneus returns to Caenis, revealing her intrinsic femininity and counterfeit masculinity all along (Aen. 6.254).

Understanding how Ovid demonstrates his interest in gender formation and rape through this story is helpful to me (see Chapter Three), but, as mentioned, I wanted to explore Caenis/Caeneus after Philomela because of the story’s emphasis once more on anti-sororophobia, or least something reminiscent of it. Caeneus, while a male, defends Hippodamia, a beautiful virgin, from sexual attack by centaurs at her wedding to Pirithous (210–535). Caeneus, as someone who was once a raped woman, defends another victim from violence. This is not exactly an anti-sororophobic mission because of Caeneus’ gender during the time of his defense of Hippodamia. But it is entirely possible that Caeneus remembers his past experiences when he joins the Greek soldiers against the assault of the centaurs. Caeneus and the other Greek soldiers are successful in squashing the centaurs’ violence, but Caeneus, as mentioned, loses his life in the defense of Hippodamia. Only Arethusa and Ceres, both immortals, escape violence and survive their anti-sororophobic pursuits in Ovid’s corpus. Caeneus becomes like Cyane and Procne before him: he helps women, but suffers for such compassion.

III. Deviations from the Mean: Unique Episodes of Sexual Abuse in the Metamorphoses

1. Narcissus and Echo: Simulacra of Rape and Sororophobia

Ovid sets up patterns of sexualized violence so thoroughly and convincingly that he can often mislead his audience into believing that there will be a rape when there is none. This is most evident during the Echo and Narcissus (3.339–510) and the Vertumnus and Pomona (14.623–97) narratives. By the time the audience has reached the story of Echo and Narcissus in Met. 3, they have already encountered ten stories of sexualized violence, all exhibiting many of the characteristic features we discussed in Apollo’s attempted rape of Daphne, including victim-
blaming and sororophobia. The story of Echo and Narcissus uses these features to build up and ultimately deceive the audience’s expectations for sexualized violence. If we understand the Met. as a pornographic text, as Richlin (1992) does, we could likewise understand these instances of heightened expectation as a way to generate frustrated sexual gratification. Ovid does not provide his audience with the erotic experience of rape, but they know he will again soon. Much work on the Narcissus narrative concerns the nature of the self, subjectivity, the viewing and creation of art, Lacanian psychoanalysis, Lucretian allusions and philosophies of eros, and the (male and artistic) gaze (see Hardie 1988, Elsner 1996, Saltzman-Mitchell 2005, Rimell 2006, and Janan 2009), but it will be useful to analyze this narrative within the larger frameworks of sexualized violence and metamorphosis in Ovid and how it conforms to the patterns I have outlined and how it meaningfully deviates. We do not see rape, but we see violence.

Echo’s passion for Narcissus is described in the same manner as that of Apollo for Daphne, especially in its many references to burning desire (Keith 2002, 254–55 also notes the many elegiac conceits of this desire and the Echo and Narcissus narrative more generally). There is an obvious gender inversion here where Echo takes on the passions and behaviors of male rapists in the poem, and the story can speak to male anxieties surrounding male figures being vulnerable to predation, objection, and dehumanization like female figures (Sharrock 2002c, 282). For the first time in the text, Narcissus, the male hunter, is hunted by a female. Narcissus is a virginal male youth (not for religious devotion like Daphne, but because he is self-centered) and he is alone in the sylvan locus amoenus, hunting, just as Daphne before him (370–74). Echo falls in love at first sight, follows him, and is captivated by his beauty and on fire with passion, elements that usually contribute to the victim-blaming in rape narratives (vidit et incaluit, sequitur vestigia furtim,/ quoque magis sequitur, flamma propiore calescit, “She saw him and
burned with passion, she follows his footsteps secretly, and the more she follows him, the more closely she burned with fire,” 371–2). Echo wants to be able to flatter him like Apollo with Daphne, but she cannot because of her inability to speak first, to be anything but a repository of others’ words (363–80). The mention of Echo’s gaze and lustful reaction to Narcissus infuses his body with the same victim-blaming ideology as the more typical female victims receive throughout the epic. Narcissus runs away from Echo (390), as he runs from the other nymphs who courted him (he has many suitors like Daphne) (353–5), and that is the major difference between him and Daphne, suffering nothing at the hands of Echo. The major difference between Echo and Apollo, on the other hand, is that she does not follow Narcissus or retaliate against his rejection, but instead takes his rejection seriously and dies from grief over it (388–401).

Female figures, like Echo, who aggressively pursue eros are rarely successful. Ovid’s and his narrators’ refusal to show females having healthy sexual desires and sex show how deeply he scorns female sexuality and his lack of sympathy for female figures. He, like many ancient male authors, finds female sexuality devious and dangerous. Pintabone (2002, 273) writes that “female aggressors of the Met. as a group are stunning failures in their attempts to obtain the objects of their desire.” Clytie, Thisbe, Salmacis, Medea, Aurora, Sycella, Byblis, Myrrha, Circe, and Venus all suffer erotic failures in the epic. Sexual desire—at all—for the mortal women and nymphs is always punished (goddesses such as Venus, Circe, Medea, and Aurora escape physical harm). And we see that as Echo fails at eros, she only punishes herself for it. She does not seek vengeance against Narcissus for her failures. But Echo is not the only nymph Narcissus has rejected and others have turned to the goddess Nemesis for retribution, who curses him with a violent self-love (406). Ovid displaces the violence of rape we were anticipating from Echo into the violence of Narcissus’ voracious passion for himself. The youth perishes, wasting away from
love like Echo did earlier (476–510), in another locus amoenus he finds in his flight from the nymph: the reflective pool, untouched by grazing and even the sun, surrounded by trees (similar to ones we have seen in Callisto’s and Proserpina’s narratives) (402–36).

There is a symmetry to the desires of Narcissus and Echo, because they long for something they cannot attain and they both destroy themselves in longing for it; their destruction is internalized, fixated on insatiable sexual desires, a Lacanian lack that consumes them (Janan 2009, 117). They both, too, become part of the landscape, Echo a stone (399) and Narcissus a flower, showing a femininity about them (Salzman-Mitchell 2005, 94). Fulkerson and Stover (2016, 11) in their volume on poetic repetition in Ovid understand the story of Echo and Narcissus as the paragon of such a poetics. As Echo struggles to express her desire, she repeats the inquiring words of Narcissus, just as Ovid poetically repeats the words of his predecessors and himself, but she gives them new meaning (Fulkerson and Stover, 11).

But while there are many symmetries between Echo and Narcissus, there is fundamental, tense, and insoluble opposition between the two that determines their incompatibility. Many scholars, such as Rimell (2006) and Janan (2009), interpret Narcissus’ rejection of Echo earlier in the story as an inability to accept the existence of the Other (as in Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis). Narcissus represents a desire for self/symmetry/sameness/limitations and Echo represents a desire for alterity/difference/the Other/lack of boundaries. Rimell and Janan also see Narcissus and Echo as the Lacanian “Man” and “Woman,” diametrically opposed subject positions that can never be bridged, that generate desire but also “create an impossibility of desire” (Janan 2009, 153). The youth temporarily responds to Echo’s speech, he is astounded (stupet, 381) by it, a word with erotic connotations (Janan 2009, 139; Met. 14.349). Later he is stunned by his own image (adstupet, 418). But he was only in love with his own words when he
heard the echo (Echo), and when he was confronted by the body of an Other, the body of “Woman,” a person separate from himself, he recoils (emoriar, quam sit tibi copia nostri, “I would rather die before what is mine is yours,” 391) (Janan 2009, 139). Narcissus will never be able to move past his desires for himself and hence can never have a love of an Other, and Echo will always have to adopt the desires of Others (Hardie 2002a, 165).

The ultimate activity or passivity of Echo’s passion for Narcissus has, moreover, been under fierce debate in scholarship: does Ovid give or not give her desire agency? Echo takes initiative to pursue Narcissus and approaches him, but do her words take on a life or their own or are they only reflections of Narcissus’ desire for himself? Fulkerson and Stover (2016, 11) argue that “each of her interventions necessarily changes Narcissus’ meaning because her [erotic] intent is wholly different.” Echo cannot be passive, or least as passive as much as we might think. Sharrock (2002a, 101) acknowledges this, but primarily sees Echo as symptomatic of how Ovid represents female figures in general, as simulacra and too often lacking subjectivity. Sharrock (2002c, 282) has relatedly said that the story of Narcissus can speak to male anxieties about emasculation and passivity, but in many ways, the narrative can reinforce male sexual dominance and the degradation of female figures, particularly through Echo’s silence.

The story of Echo is also connected to sororophobia. Echo loses her powers of independent speech after Juno finds out that she prevented the goddess from punishing nymphs who were sexually involved with Jupiter (359–69). With Echo’s help, the nymphs were able to flee Juno, perhaps well aware that she would do nothing to punish Jupiter, only other female immortals. Echo’s motives here are unclear: Is she abetting Jupiter in committing rape, protecting nymphs from Juno’s savage punishment, or both? Does Echo know that it would be

---

138 Juno silences many female figures in the Met. She silenced Callisto in Met. 2.483–4 and will later in the epic silence Semele (3.308–9) and Galanthis (9.320–3) permanently through transformation, mutilation, and/or death.
difficult to stop Jupiter from his never-ending sexual liaisons, but easier to distract Juno? Does she become complicit in one type of violence in order to stem the effects of another, possibly more serious one? Whatever her motives, Echo shows solidarity with other nymphs and protects them from violence, and she suffers for it. Echo distracts Juno in a very gendered way, with speech, and she is deprived of speech like many other female figures in the poem (Sharrock 2002a, 101). Janan (2009, 123) connects Echo to other female figures, like Ino (Met. 4.416–552 and Fasti 6.473–569), who are punished even though they had no sexual contact with Jupiter themselves, but are collateral damage in her quest to eliminate all of her sexual rivals.

2. Pomona and Vertumnus: *Vim parat*?

In the pastoral Vertumnus and Pomona story, we have all the telltale signs of rape, but their interaction ultimately ends in consensual sex and marriage, consummating Pomona’s role as an Italian fertility goddess. The story of Vertumnus and Pomona is the last amatory interaction in the *Met.* and the audience is well aware of the patterns that signal sexualized violence. At the beginning of the narrative, Vertumnus sees Pomona, alone and in a closed, walled garden, armed with a scythe (628). She is beautiful and popular with woodland suitors (typical elements in the poem’s victim-blaming), but she has withdrawn to her orchard (*pomarium*) in her fear of them and their potential to rape her (*vim tamen agrestum metuens pomaria claudit/ intus et accessus prohibit refugitque viriles,* “nevertheless fearing rustic violence, she closes herself in her orchard and prohibits and flees male entrance and access,” 635–6). The god attempts to enter the garden by seducing her and disguising himself as various agricultural figures and even an older woman (643–56), similar to a *lena*, in order to kiss Pomona (much unlike an old woman) (658–9).139

139 A man taking on the role of a *lena* is very evocative of Ovid’s narratorial roles in the *Ars*. Most didactic amatory works were attributed to *lenae* in antiquity (Parker 1992). Ovid taking on a persona usually reserved for a woman and a sex worker in the *Ars* is an interesting piece of gender inversion. Many have commented that the advice Ovid gives to women in Book 3 in the *Ars* is against their interests and their gender (see Gibson’s 2003 commentary),
The god’s transformation into a woman should immediately remind us of the Callisto rape: a solitary nymph armed with a weapon (Pomona has a scythe and Callisto a bow and arrow) and a god who disguises himself as a woman to gain her trust and use gender to gain forbidden intimacy with and proximity to her body. But when Vertumnus’ final disguise fails, he prepares to rape Pomona (*vim parat, 770*), taking on the features of Priapus (a god who is known to rape others in gardens, such as in the Priapic poems 5, 15, 38, and 71, and who attempted to rape Pomona previously before she escaped his advances (640) (Myers 1994, 229). However, in a surprise twist to the narratives we have seen previously, Pomona instead accepts him and they indulge in mutual passion (*sed vi non est opus, inque figura/ capta dei nympha est et mutua vulnera sensit*, “but his use of violence is not necessary, and the nymph is seized by the beauty of the god and she felt the mutual wounds [of desire]” 770–771). It appears that Pomona has been won over by Vertumnus’ good looks, compared to that of the Sun (*qualis ubi oppositas nitidissima solis imago/ evicit nubes nullaque obstante reluxit*, “…Just as when the most glowing likeness of sun conquered the opposing clouds and shone out with no obstacle,” 768–9). There is additionally the implication, supplied from earlier in the narrative and from our knowledge of mythology, that they are married after her acceptance of him and her escape from violence. We think we will read another rape, but instead we find romance and love.

Callisto is perhaps not the only antecedent Ovid wants us to keep in mind and whose example leads us to believe there will be sexualized violence, especially since Daphne was the *primus amor* of the poem and this narrative is the *ultimus ardor* (14.682). Myers (1994) stresses in her work on this narrative that we should connect Vertumnus and Pomona with Daphne and reversing the very advice the *lena* in *Amores* 1.8 gives to Corinna. Ovid does not fully champion women and their perspectives, as *lenae* traditionally do, in his version of the role (Ryan and Perkins 2011, 87).

---

140 In the *Fasti*, Priapus will unsuccessfully try to rape the nymph Lotis (1.425–37) and the goddess Vesta (6.331–44) in *loci amoeni* and in two of Ovid’s so-called “comic rapes.” See my analysis of each scene in Chapter Five.
Apollo: What remains of the Daphne and Apollo narrative in that of Pomona and Vertumnus, and what has changed? How has the narrative of the Italian nymph and god moved from the prototypical? (Myers’ emphasis is also once again a needed reminder that all the rapes within Ovid are linked and must be analyzed as such.) In addition to its pastoral tones, there is a pervasive elegiac atmosphere in the narrative (Vertumnus’ role as the lena, Pomona’s enclosed garden as a variant of the paraclausithyron). Elegy pervades all the rapes because of the tensions between sex and violence, but Ovid first introduces the genre extensively into the poem via the Daphne and Apollo story. Pomona, nonetheless, is different in significant ways from Daphne, and Ovid prepares us for the surprise ending to the narrative, giving us signs that the woodland nymph is open to sex. She allows Vertumnus disguised as pastoral men into her garden, perhaps not fearing them because she believes them to be mortal. She is not as militant a virgin as Daphne and Callisto (Daphne is described as exosa to marriage, 1.480), who swore their virginity to Diana. Her only weapon is not a spear or an arrow, as with Callisto, but a scythe (an instrument of fertility) in a closed garden (a symbol of the womb and reproduction),¹⁴¹ which Vertumnus is attempting to open and penetrate, by seduction, deception, and force. Vertumnus himself enters her garden in his various disguises with various phallic objects. He enters the

¹⁴¹ Littlefield (1965) and Lindheim (2010) have seen historical political implications in the emphasis on Pomona’s enclosed garden. The story of Pomona comes right before the building of Rome’s famous pomarium by Romulus. In many ways, Pomona has created a pomarium analogous to Rome’s pomarium. Littlefield (1965, 471) notes that an Italian fertility goddess and a god who controls the seasons coming together in harmony bodes well for the Roman state. Lindheim argues that Ovid’s poem engages in and also helps to shape discourse in Augustan Rome. She sees Pomona’s wall around her orchard as reflecting the ideology of cartography and fixed and defined boundaries in Augustan Rome, in which the emperor was refounding Rome with his ancestor Romulus’ symbol and image, and she also believes the wall to have implications for Lacanian psychoanalysis and understanding of gender. Pomona’s wall not only demarcates space and geography, but also the borders and boundaries of “Man” and “Woman.” But Vertumnus shows how easily gender can be transgressed through his disguise and also by entering her garden and marrying her through a gender reversal. Overall, Lindheim argues that “the narrative of Vertumnus and Pomona rehearses the major themes of the stories of Roman foundation [by Romulus and Augustus], working through the same impossible search for definition, wholeness and impermeable boundaries, but now metaphorically transposed to an erotic register” (176). Pomona can neither create a stable boundary for her garden nor stable gender boundaries between “Man” and “Woman” (177). Lindheim cites Tarpeia as a related example: the Romans wanted clear boundaries to protect their city from the Sabines, but a woman in her feminine greed, compromised those borders.
garden with an ox-goad in 646 and then a sword and a fishing rod in 651 (Lindheim 1998, 30). Vertumnus opens up her “womb” in a way Pomona seemingly deemed appropriate.

Ovid, with this narrative, is perhaps showing a way to handle chastity, attraction, seduction, and marriage without rape, as Littlefield first suggested in 1965, but it is my contention—in opposition to scholars like W.R. Johnson 1997 and Jones 2001, who support Littlefield—that it would be hard for the audience to forget the real possibility that rape looms in the foreground. This position aligns more with the analyses of Myers (1994), Gentilcore (1995), and James (2016). They do not deny that Pomona is wooed by Vertumnus (who unlike the rapists before him, engages in a complex and considerable wooing process) according to Ovid’s text, but emphasize how close the violence of that seduction is to the surface. This story has received much scholarly attention, but positive readings of some scholars and their overall investment in touting this story as romantic should trouble us. Ambiguity in the text about violence and its sexualization is inherently disconcerting. The presence of such violence must take priority whenever we interpret Ovid’s representation of sex in this narrative and must make us question why such violence is central to purportedly romantic narratives.

The signs of this being a rape narrative are numerous. The audience by Book 14 should recognize the signs of sexualized violence, even if Ovid diffuses them. Pomona is similar to Daphne and Callisto, and Vertumnus, disguised as a *lena*, compares her to Helen and Hippodamia, two famous victims of sexual abuse found elsewhere in Ovid (14.669–70; *Her.* 17; and *Met.* 12.210–535). Before he is ready to rape the nymph, the god is, as mentioned above, likened to Sol, who like Vertumnus disguised himself as a woman to gain better access to his victim, Leucothoe. \(^{142}\) The language Ovid uses to describe Vertumnus like Sol before he attempts

\(^{142}\) The Sun is continuously presented, according to Parry (1964), as a source of “danger, destruction, and violence.” He is a rapist himself and his image is often attached to sexual abuse. Vertumnus is compared to him and also
to rape Pomona is similar to how Ovid describes Sol before he rapes Leuc...r victa nitore dei posita vim passa querella est,” 4.232–3). And if Vertumnus becomes very much like Sol, Pomona becomes like Leuc...cular: was Leuc...r, and then succumbed knowing she could never resist? Janan 1994 (442–5) grapples with this ambiguity, but ultimately she calls it rape. I interpret it as rape no matter how ambiguous Leuc... with Sol is expressed in vocabulary overtly associated with violence such as territa, vim passa est, and querella est, while Ovid never makes Pomona focalize fear. The nymph, in fact, never speaks in the narrative, so her true feelings are, at best, obscure to the audience, while Vertumnus’ are plain. Pomona’s acceptance is intentionally ambiguous in other important ways: capta and vulnera are common terms in elegiac love poetry to describe the extent of one’s suffering under the disease of love. But the diction here could allude to violence and show a relationship with sinister and dark beginnings (Gentilcore 1995, 119). For example, Propertius in 3.8.21 uses the word vulnus to describe bruises he left on his puella’s body. It appears that Ovid attempts to sublimate Vertumnus’ intended violence (vim parat) into mutual desire between a

Salmacis (4.347–9), and during Arethusa’s flight from Alpheus, the sun creates a shadow of her attacker that increases her fear and alerts her to the increasing futility of her flight from the god (5.615).
male god and nymph. Such a sublimation of violence into love and a loving relationship is, of course, an important feature of many ancient marriage myths, narratives, and traditions.

The Vertumnus and Pomona narrative provides us with the opportunity to further explore how inextricably linked seduction, rape, and marriage were in Graeco-Roman thought, which scholars like Zeitlin (1988) have observed in both representational and literary art. Seduction, rape, and marriage all involve compulsion, and rape and marriage traditionally involve possession of a woman by a man. The control and possession of the act of rape is ingrained within the Pomona and Vertumnus story because it is a story of marriage. Ovid connects seduction and rape strongly in the Ars. Many of his sexual abusers in the extended scenes of sexualized violence use the techniques Ovid outlined in the didactic poem, and seduction, rape, and marriage most obviously coalesce in the narrative of the rape of the Sabines featured in the Ars. The aition of Roman marriage is one of rape and the narrator of the Ars sees no contradiction in advising his students to find women at the theater and then telling the story of Rome’s first “seduction” of women at a theater: the rape of the Sabines. Jones (2001, 377) connects Pomona’s story more with Livy’s rape of the Sabines, in which they are won over by male flattery (blanditiae, AUC 1.9.6) as Pomona is won over by the god’s looks. She sees such an allusion as the positive and even romantic intent of this story: the Sabines in Livy are shown to be happy and Pomona will be, too. Jones (377) admits that such associations between marriage and coercion could be “troubling,” but she (and others who condone the violence lurking underneath this story) trivialize how troubling it truly is. Violence is the foundation of Roman sexuality and that is intrinsically very troubling because of how it oppresses women.

We should not fall for how authors like Ovid and Livy gloss over such violence because they themselves do not do much to question such a central tenet in Roman understandings of sex,
sexuality, and gender. Elsewhere in the *Met.*, we can see the connections between seduction, rape, and marriage in Apollo’s attempted rape of Daphne very clearly and linearly. Apollo first tries to seduce Daphne and when that fails he resorts to force, and when he realizes that she has been transformed into a tree, he laments that now they cannot marry (‘*quoniam coniunx mea non potes esse,/ arbor eris certe*’ dixit ‘*mea,*’ “‘since you cannot be my wife,’ he said, ‘you will certainly be my tree’”) 557–558)! Rape and marriage are the same to him, especially when we consider how Ovid describes his desire for rape with *conubia*, a word used often for marriage and also for sexual relations. Such connections among seduction, rape, and marriage arise in the rapes of Proserpina and of Flora in *Fasti* 5. 199–214, who both marry their rapists, the latter claiming to be happy in her marriage because of the elevation of status it brings her.

Gentilcore’s 1995 article provides more insight into sinister aspects of the Pomona and Vertumnus story. She discusses how Ovid and Vertumnus conflate Pomona’s body with the vegetation and the landscape in her garden, a traditionally patriarchal way to represent virginity, femininity, and female sexuality. The garden and its contents are suffused with sexual meaning and significance for both Pomona and Vertumnus. We have already seen that Pomona’s enclosed garden is analogous to her womb and how her sexuality is displaced onto her environment. Her status as a hamadryad gives her both an anthropomorphic body and the body of a tree. Pomona’s name also brings to mind images of *poma*, apples, one of the most evocative symbols of female sexuality in Greek and Roman iconography and writings. In the *Met.* 10.560–637, Venus hands Hippomenes apples to conquer the virginal Atalanta. The story of Cydippe and Acontius in *Her.* 20 and 21 and Catullus 65, which uses a simile telling the story of Cydippe and Acontius, also prominently feature an apple. The apple represents the woman’s virginity and when men possess them, they take that virginity. As a female, Pomona’s sexuality and body can be projected onto
the landscape and vegetation because female bodies and *natura* are *materia* for male figures to dominate. Gentilcore analyzes the progression of Vertumnus’ deceptions to enter Pomona’s garden and how Ovid’s narration and the language Vertumnus uses with the nymph emphasizes control of her landscape and thus, her body. The examples are numerous, but two will suffice: Ovid tells us that Vertumnus in one of his disguises with a ladder on his shoulder, looks like he was about to pluck apples (*lecturum poma putares*, 650). (If he plucks the apples, he controls her sexuality.) He later turns to an elm tree and reminds her that an elm tree is useless when a vine is not grafted to it, but she rather would be a vine without the tree as her mate (664–8). Gentilcore notes that comparing female bodies to agriculture for men to cultivate was a major element of the *Ars* 2.353–72 in the *praeeptor amoris*’s advice to his male students: dominate women in the same ways that civilizing men have dominated nature, women are fallow fields to plough. Such advice is within a didactic poem that advocates for men to dominate women at all costs, even through rape and violence. Vertumnus is another male in Ovid’s corpus to take such ideology from the *Ars* and put it into practice in a narrative of sexual abuse. Although Pomona is not raped, the god is rendering her body like *materia* to be conquered, like many rapists before him. Female bodies like that of Pomona were already part of the landscape; other female figures such as Daphne become part of the landscape after they encounter sexual abuse. In both circumstances, the female’s status as *materia* for males to dominate is further reinforced.

3. The Attempted Rape of Hermaphroditus by Salmacis and Female Sexual Abusers

The biggest variation that Ovid introduces into his patterns of sexualized violence is the female sexual abuser. We see five female sexual abusers in the poem: Echo (analyzed above), Salmacis, Circe, Aurora (7.661–758), and Venus (10.503–99). Salmacis was an infamous

---

143 I will only discuss Salmacis and Circe as female sexual abusers (and not Aurora and Venus) in any depth because they are the more evocative and extensive examples in what I have not already discussed. I will also omit discussion
spring in antiquity, featured in both Virtuvius (2.8.12) and Strabo (14.2.16), which rendered whichever man who entered it, *mollis*, or effeminate. We learn through this narrative the aetiology of this enervating pool and that aetiology rests upon Salmacis’, a nymph’s, sexual assault of the youth Hermaphroditus, the son of Venus and Mercury. With Salmacis as a sexual aggressor, Richli (1992, 166) argues that Ovid draws attention to this change of a rapist’s typical gender in sensational and brutal ways for the entertainment of his audience and to engage in male fantasies about female power (especially when the vast majority of rape victims are females and the vast majority of rapists male). Salmacis is one of the most frightening sexual abusers we see in Ovid, and the poet makes her so in order to underscore her deviation from his more typical abuser. (Echo has already been made comparable to an attempted rapist in the *Met.*, but her aggression becomes internally destructive and not externally so.)

Salmacis is hypersexualized and feminine, idling away her days plucking flowers near her spring (a sign used many times to indicate sexual availability in female figures before they are raped, such as in the rape of Proserpina) (315), brushing her hair (311–12) and wearing translucent, revealing clothing (312). We learn that she is averse to the devotion of the goddess Diana, differentiating herself from the masculine, hunter nymphs we have seen previously with Daphne and Syrinx (302–6). The picking of the flowers, in particular, misleads the audience into believing that, even if she deviates from more typical rape victims, that she will eventually become one of the many abused female figures of the *Met.* (Keith 2009b, 362). But she instead will play the role of the “lustful deity” (Robinson 1999, 218). Her actions, her clothing, her vanity, and her avoidance of Diana all serve to embody her sexual desires.

of male gods raping male figures, like Jupiter and Ganymede, since there is more attention given to the abnormality of female figures as sexual abusers (the rape of Ganymede is a only few lines, 10.155–61).
In this description of her appearance and behavior—unlike the male sexual abusers before her—she faces intense objectification of her body from the narrator. Later, she objectifies her male victim in turn, an important reversal in the control of the gaze, although she is subject to the gaze herself. Salmacis is a female sexual abuser who takes on a power typically bestowed upon male figures, but she is still female and her value derives from her body (Salzman-Mitchell 2005, 34). Joanna Bourke (2007, 212), in her study of modern female abusers, writes that they often are subject to such sexualization by media outlets and others. Even if these female figures adopt male powers and mechanisms, their femininity and their vulnerability to sexualization do not vanish and are instead made essential to how we understand them, view them, and respond to them. What is more, Salmacis is obsessed with gazing at herself in her pool, becoming like Narcissus, her “self-contemplation” a form of narcissism (312; 317–19; Zajko 2009, 191). Her vanity also demonstrates how she inhabits both the feminine and the masculine. She is an abuser, but she acts more typically like a female figure in other ways. Overall, the gaze is directed on Salmacis’ body by the narrative, she directs the gaze at herself, and then at her beloved. Rimell (2006, 27) likens the nymph to a Medusa-figure: a female figure who threatens and harms male figures with her gaze. Salmacis is even said to turn the young demigod into ivory as she gazes upon him, similar to how Medusa turns male figures into statuesque stone (4.332). But, of course, many of the female figures who take on the gaze in Ovid, such as Medusa and Salmacis, are punished, destroyed, and killed (Salzman-Mitchell 2005, 9).

Salmacis spots Hermaphroditus near her pool (the non-anthropomorphic version of her body) and immediately desires him (puerum vidit visumque optavit habere, “she saw the youth and desired to have what was seen” 316). She falls in love at first sight like Apollo (Met. 1.490),

---

144 Lovatt (2013, 303–4) discusses how female figures engaging in masculine activities are often the objects of the male gaze, such as Camilla, the warrior, in Vergil’s Aen. Salmacis has taken on the masculine role of sexual abuser.
Jupiter (1.588), Mercury (2.721–31), and Tereus (6.451–57) and his body once more becomes the cause of her aggression. The sight of the young man alone in the *locus amoenus* (the site being her pool) engenders immediate desire for the nymph (*puerum vidit visumque optavit habere*, “She saw the boy and she desired to have the boy having been seen,” 316), this sort of visual desire fundamental to victim-blaming in Ovid’s narratives of sexualized violence.

Hermaphroditus comes into view while she is plucking flowers, flowers which here do not indicate a loss of female virginity as they do with Proserpina, but instead indicate her lust (315–16). Because of his gender and the gender of his attacker, Hermaphroditus strongly resembles Narcissus and Salmacis, Echo. The nymph’s pool is similar to the one Narcissus never leaves, an ominous sign of the pool’s potential for destruction to young males like Hermaphroditus (Anderson 1997, 441). Narcissus is driven to that pool as he flees from Echo. Both Echo and Salmacis are more sexually mature nymphs attracted to male youths on the cusp of entering full masculinity and who are hunting when they are noticed (Salzman-Mitchell 2005, 52). In other sources, such as Theocritus *Idyll* 5.41, Hermaphroditus is under threat of male mortal and divine predation, but Ovid innovates by making Salmacis, a nymph, his predator.

Like many male rapists in the poem, Salmacis attempts to woo the youth before she decides to use violence against him. In her wooing, the nymph compares the beauty of Hermaphroditus to that of Cupid, echoing how Odysseus compared Nausikaa to Artemis in *Odyssey* 6 (320–29). She is both Odysseus and Circe and Calypso because of her status as a predatory female. After she praises his beauty, she directly propositions him for marriage and sex (*thalamumque ineamus eundem*, “Let us enter into the marriage bed,” 328), an explicitness about her sexual desires the male gods never adopt until they attack the women and nymphs (Nagle 1984, 250). Hermaphroditus blushes, a feminine characteristic, overall making him more
attractive to Salmacis (329–33). After his blush, the youth rejects her advances as she begs him for a sister’s kiss and attempts to forcibly embrace him (334–5). When her hopes for intimacy flounder, she decides to secretly watch him naked when he enters her spring (345). She is the first and only attacker in the *Met.* who must force herself upon her victim twice.

Waters like Salmacis’ look pure, but they again and again are sites for violation like that of Actaeon’s illicit viewing of Diana’s body while she bathes (*Met.* 3.165–205) and Alpheus’ rape of Arethusa as she bathes in his waters. In both Alpheus’ and Salmacis’ narratives, the sexual attacks not only occur in the *locus amoenus*, but pieces of the *locus amoenus* itself come to attack the victims. Salmacis sees Hermaphroditus naked near her spring and then Ovid luxuriously provides his audience with one of the most graphic, unhinged, and lurid descriptions of sexual desire and voyeurism he has ever composed for a male or female, even for a man like Tereus, obsessed by desires, visions, and fantasies of Philomela (Richlin 1992, 165). Her passion for him as she gazes upon his naked body burns like the sun, a passion more intense than we have seen from many of the male figures who receive merely fire to signify their lust (346–9):

*Tum vero placuit, nudaeque cupidine formae Salmacis exarsit; flagrant quoque lumina nymphae, non aliter quam cum puro nitidissimus orbe opposita speculi referitur imagine Phoebus.*

Then Hermaphroditus was truly pleasing, and Salmacis burned with a passion for his naked body; the eyes of the nymph were ablaze, not unlike when the most brilliant sun in the clear sky is reflected in the image of a mirror opposing it.

Everything about Salmacis is still specular, how she views herself in her own pool, her passion. Salmacis’ gaze upon Hermaphroditus is even later called *amens* (351), like Clytie’s for Sol. Her gaze being compared to Phoebus, or Apollo, is also significant and a way for Ovid to once again relate her to the male sexual abusers we have previously encountered in the poem.
Nagle (1984) has observed that when goddesses face sexual rejection in the poem, they characteristically react with *ira* like Circe (see below), but Salmacis’ motives after the youth repudiates her appear to be completely out of her need to satisfy her *amor*. We extensively see her attack on the youth and how she struggles to control his body, the narrator analogizing her to predatory animals (a snake and an octopus) and a fully sentient piece of ivy (361–67). Usually, Ovid locates the violence of the act of rape in a single verb phrase like *rapuit*, the majority of its violence manifesting in the aftermath through transformation (Richlin 1992, 166). But we see her on his body and we see him struggle. Before she dives into the pool, she preemptively shouts *vicimus!* (356), an expression Tereus uses before he rapes Philomela (*Met*. 6.513). The narrator’s comparison of her to a snake echoes the Philomela narrative even more so when Ovid compares the young woman’s mutilated tongue to a slithering snake. But Salmacis is unable to complete the attack because of his physical resistance to her and she begs the gods that they become one body (*ita, di, iubeatis, et istum/nulla dies a me nec me deducat ab isto*, “Gods, grant it so that no day may lead him away from me or me away from him,” 371–2). Her prayer to more powerful gods for transformation is reminiscent of the one of Daphne in *Met*. 1.545–7, but instead of a prayer to separate herself from Hermaphroditus (Daphne does not want Apollo to possess her body, to enter it, become one with it), she wants eternal unity with him (Nagle 1984, 252).145

Salmacis, like Echo, fails to achieve her sexual desire, but she receives her wish to become one with his body. In the process of this union, Hermaphroditus maintains his human form, while Salmacis becomes and is subsumed by his genitalia, rendering him intersex (or in

145 Such desired corporeal unity between two “lovers” (so to speak) evokes the elegiac ideal to become one body (Propertius 2.6.41–7)—and one that Lucretius criticizes as one of the many lamentable diseases of love (4.111ff.). Salmacis’ wish here also perverts the story of Aristophanes in Plato’s *Symposium* (192b5), which suggests that true lovers want to become one body because they were once one (Robinson 1999, 222).
other words, with hybrid combination of both male and female sexual organs) (373–9). The narrator describes their bodies as grafted, a relationship Vertumnus hopes he can achieve with Pomona as his sexual partner (375–6; Nugent 1990, 184). The nymph loses her anthropomorphic form and life and the youth does not. This narrative is one of the only times a rapist faces bodily destruction because of the rapist’s actions in the poem, and it is interestingly a female figure. Because of her loss of her anthropomorphic self, Salmacis becomes even more like Echo. The voiceless nymph, too, loses her body (Salzman-Mitchell 2005, 52). Salmacis, moreover, forces Hermaphroditus to confront the Other, the feminine, but unlike Echo, the water nymph leaves permanent marks of her Otherness on the youth’s male body, marks that make him eternally confront the alterity of femininity. Narcissus, in contrast to Hermaphroditus, is consumed by the Self, not the Other, although his obsession renders him feminine, subject to death, mutable. But Hermaphroditus does not become completely feminine as a result of this transformation. Keith (1999, 117) rightly argues that he maintains his subjectivity, a form of masculinity, as we have discussed in Chapter Three, although he has lost the physical symbol of his masculinity.

Many have interpreted the story of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus as one of the most fertile narratives for psychoanalysis in the poem (Zeitlin 1988 and Nugent 1990), and it is not difficult to see why. Salmacis could be said to have penis envy, the desire to control the phallus, even though she is female. It is ambiguous whether she ever wins the phallus from the youth: she fails to make him forcibly penetrate her, but she does emasculate him by transforming his body. Hermaphroditus, on the other hand, displays castration anxiety in his sexual rejection of Salmacis’ aggressive, emasculating lust and he faces actual castration after Salmacis’ attack and entrance into her waters. Carson (1990) has theorized that water and femininity are connected because of their mollitia. In the nymph’s waters, Hermaphroditus has become mollis, soft,

---

146 Ovid is the first author to make Hermaphroditus become intersex rather than being born so (Groves 2016, 324).
penetrable, womanlike. The adjective *mollis* has been used to describe his body and clothing previously, predictions of his later state (345). The Salmacis and Hermaphroditus episode has also been studied extensively in recent decades with the help of queer theory, particularly by Zajko (2009). Viewing this episode as one which explores the destabilization of gender and sex adds importance to the theme of transformation in the epic as a whole.

Ovid will often destabilize the divisions between human and object, human/anthropomorphic and animal, mortal and immortal, but we only see five people who are transformed or can transform into the opposite sex: Tiresias (3.318–38.), Sithon (4.280), Mestra (8.843–84), Iphis (9.666–797), and Caenis/Caeneus (12.146–209). Hermaphroditus fits uneasily into this category, although his loss of manhood renders him permanently effeminate, a *semivir* (386). An understanding of gender and sex destabilization is important to my work because Ovid’s portrayals of rape, for the most part, solidify an essentialism about what is “Man” and what is “Woman”: man is predator, woman is prey, man is penetrator and woman is the penetrated.\(^{147}\) Although Ovid may sometimes destabilize gender, it is my belief and the belief of James (1997) and Keith (2002) that he predominantly naturalizes gender differences. Nugent (1990, 160) sees such a temporary destabilization in the Salmacis and Hermaphroditus episode, but argues that Ovid is ultimately allegiant to “sexual polarity.” Ovid in the end does not give us some figures who transcend gender, but one, Hermaphroditus, who is a “diminished male” and another, Salmacis, who becomes a passive, feminized object (163). The nymph may have taken on the behaviors of violent masculinity, but she was always still female. Masculinity and femininity continue to be reinforced, even if the figures take on some gender reversals.

**3b. The Rape of Leucothoe by Sol and the Literal Sororophobia of Clytie**

\(^{147}\) But as I mentioned in Chapter One, even if Ovid upholds gender and sexual essentialism in his writing, that does not reflect the lived reality of male and female sexuality in Rome. Roman women and men could conceive of women as active sexual agents. Levin-Richardson and Kamen (2015) explored this agency in the graffiti of Pompeii.
Something we must keep in mind about the Salmacis story is that it is once again a story from internal narrators, this time, the mortal daughters of Minyas. The Minyeides tell stories while they weave, and we learn that they have withdrawn themselves from the rites of the new god Bacchus in Thebes, preferring instead to honor the virginal goddess Minerva. But eventually, like the Pierides (5.661–78), they are punished by a god for their defiance of his powers (4.389–415). They face punishment for not participating in the debauched sexual frenzy of the wine god, but their stories are brimming with sometimes romantic but predominantly illicit and violent sexuality. Scholars, such as Keith (2009b, 367), have noted the “radical gynocentrism” of their stories, which heavily emphasize female sexuality, even if it is deviant like that of Salmacis. The Minyeides avoid Bacchus religiously, but his destructive sexuality and even gender destabilization can be found throughout their tales (Salzman-Mitchell 2005, 160). Thisbe commits suicide and dies because of passion for Pyramus (4.128–166), Venus faces humiliation for her adultery with Mars (167–89), Salmacis loses her identity and body because of her destructive lust for Hermaphroditus (346–88). There is also, in contrast to Salmacis’ position as one of the only female rapists in the poem, a more characteristic rape narrative that prominently features victim-blaming and (literal) sororophobia: that of Leucothoe’s rape by Sol (214–33), which we have discussed previously as an explicit example of Ovid’s consistent problematization of a rape victim’s consent to sex. Like the female artists Arachne (6.103–128) and Philomela (6.571–619), the Minyeides use weaving to tell narratives of rape and more.

Janan (1994), in her analysis of the story of the Minyeides and the stories they tell, observes that the women seem like prudish virgins, showing and reveling in other female figures being punished for their eros. But the erotic imagery in these stories should nuance understandings of their “virtue.” Minerva, the goddess they most honor, herself later in *Met.*
4.801–3 will mutilate Medusa for her rape. But Janan (1994, 429) contends that instead of the sisters being the prudes we believe them to be, “the sisters are opposing having to be sexual beings in the way Bacchus defines.” Their (interest in) sexuality is private, domestic, within fiction and not “publicly channeled” as the god demands (429). Two of the stories focus on public reactions to illicit sexuality: the adultery of Venus and Mars (4.167–189) and the rape of Leucothoe (190–255) (Venus and Mars face temporary humiliation, while Leucothoe faces death). The Minyeides will face consequences for their own version of illicit sexuality, a sexuality against the mandates of a god. Janan, overall, urges us to consider how they are defining sexuality for themselves and engaging in a form of resistance against and critique of male definitions and demands upon female sexuality. Bacchus’ rites might loosen sexual boundaries for female figures, but the loosening of those boundaries are male-defined (Janan 1994, 445). The wine god narrowly demarcates sexual freedom and they find sexual freedom within their artistry. Janan’s analysis speaks to the complexities of this story that move beyond dichotomies starkly opposing Minyeides as asexual and Bacchus as hypersexual. Bacchus, like many sexual abusers in the poem, tries to bring them into a compulsory form of sexuality he controls, but they refuse. Even Venus cannot abide by virginity of other females and compels Dis to rape Proserpina (Met. 5.365–79). But in the Minyeides’ defiance of Bacchus, their stories uphold misogynistic ideologies. The never-ending punishment of erotic female figures in these stories matters, even if some of their characters, like Leucothoe’s father, appear unsympathetic in their persecution of female sexuality. They furthermore provide us with one of the most unhinged sexual abusers in Ovid’s corpus, Salmacis (4.274–388), whose violence and passion are exaggerated and boundless, much more so than that of male sexual abusers we have seen previously. They take on the gaze when they tell the story of Salmacis, a typically male form of
violence against female figures. They also speak about rape and its subsequent victim-blaming in much the same way Ovid does, using language to ascribe responsibility for Leucothoe’s rape to her. Ovid even makes his internal narrators participate in misogyny and sororophobia.

Leucothoe is a beautiful virginal princess (209–11) whom Sol falls in love with through the meddling of Venus, the goddess angry at the sun’s revelation of her affair with the war god (199–213). As with the rape of Proserpina, Ovid makes Venus the essential cause of the rape, not Sol: a female figure is responsible. Leucothoe becomes responsible, as well, first because of her beauty and then her lack of resistance. Sol comes upon the princess at home and like Herse, Leucothoe faces an attack in the *domus*, not in the wilds. (All realms are dangerous to female figures.) He disguises himself as her mother (219), taking on the appearance of a trusted female figure, as Jupiter did with Callisto (*Met*. 2.425), even kissing her like a mother would (222).

We learn that the princess is weaving when her rapist gazes upon her (219–20), like Lucretia later in *Fasti* 2.742–4 (Anderson 1997, 436). Weaving is a tangible sign of her chastity and a sign that perhaps mitigates Ovid’s/Minyeides’ victim-blaming of Leucothoe, especially since the Minyeides themselves weave as a sign of their chastity in the face of Bacchus. Leucothoe is beautiful and alone, but she also projects signs of her sexual unavailability to her rapist through her weaving, one of the most salient images of female chastity. He soon reveals himself to be Sol, not her mother, assuring her of his attraction to her (*mihi, crede, places*, 228). But Leucothoe drops the implements of her weaving in fear, her fear once again making her all the more attractive to the god, a behavior typical of rapists (*pavet illa, metuque/ et colus et fusus digitis cecidere remissis. Ipse timor decuit*…“She trembles and her distaff and spindles fell from her lax fingers. That fear of hers was pleasing…” 228–30). As she drops the implements of her

---

148 Every god, except Apollo with Chione in *Met*. 11.310, who takes on the form of a woman to gain access to their victims steals kisses from their victims: Jupiter (2.431–1), Vertumnus (14.658), and now Sol, a sign of how much they will trample upon trust and bonds between female figures for their own sexual and violent aims.
weaving, of her chastity, the audience knows she will be violated and Ovid successfully displaces the violence of rape onto other imagery (Salzman-Mitchell 2005, 160). Leucothoe does not resist her rape physically or by calling out, but succumbs to her fate, knowing there is little to do, but again the words *victa nitore* calls the elaborate descriptions of her fear into question (*at virgo quamvis inopino territa visu/ victa nitore dei posita vim passa querella est*, 232–3).

The story, moreover, features the sororophobia of Leucothoe’s sister, Clytie. Sol formerly had a sexual relationship with Clytie (which Ovid never defines as non-consensual, though the power dynamics between the mortal and the god suggest otherwise). When Clytie discovers Sol’s rape of her sister, she becomes beside herself with jealousy and decides to take revenge against her sister. This is the second act of literal sororophobia in the *Met.*, with Aglauros and Herse being the first (2.737–832). Procne, however, deviating from the patterns of female violence, later in the poem refuses to commit literal sororophobia against Philomela and aids her sister in her vengeance against the man who has abused them both (6.571–674). With the introduction of Clytie, it becomes clear that Leucothoe faces suffering from two female figures, her sister and Venus, who conspire to destroy other female figures through sex and because of sex. Anderson (1997, 437) argues that Clytie takes on the role typical of Juno in stories of Jupiter’s rapes of lesser immortals and mortals. Clytie even adopts the language Juno uses against her sexual rivals, calling Leucothoe a *paelex* (234), language, which as we discussed, the mortal Deianira also uses to describe Iole later in the *Met.* (9.144, 151). Clytie informs on her sister to her father (235–6), who in his patriarchal rage over the loss of his daughter’s virginity, buries her alive, which is what the father of Perimele intends to do before Achelous intervenes (8.547–610). The punishments from goddesses against female figures in Ovid are often the most violent manifestations of sororophobia, but that is not a hard and fast rule because of mortals
such as Clytie and her collusion against her sister. In the *Fasti* 3.602–55, Lavinia will prove a near-lethal threat to Anna, whom she perceives to be a sexual rival for her husband, Aeneas.

Leucothoe, before her burial, reminds her family that she was raped, but to no avail (‘ille *vim tulit invitae*, “That man raped me against my will,” 238–9), a rare rape victim who does not blame herself. Leucothoe is blamed for her rape by her sister *and* her father, Ovid here, almost uncharacteristically ascribing the violence after the rape to a woman and a man, not a woman alone. Neither her father nor her sister have any interest in determining her consent (Janan 1994, 442), and the lethal violence they enact against Leucothoe once more acts as a surrogate and equivalence for the violence of rape. The Sun does nothing to stop this violence against his rape victim, but transforms her into frankincense before she dies as a late attempt at salvation, a transformation which further carries the story away from his unseen act of sexualized violence against Leucothoe (250). The god, furthermore, completely abandons Clytie in her madness over his sexual rejection, who transforms into a heliotrope (256–73), a flower always moving toward the sun, in many ways the opposite of Daphne, who changes into a plant to escape from a god. Janan (1994, 443) writes that frankincense is also a plant that is always moving toward the Sun: as incense, it is burned and its smokes rises. This is something that the sun intended (‘*tanges tamen aethera*’, “You will nevertheless touch the air,” 251). Leucothoe was raped and transformed after her death and Clytie succumbs to an unquenchable passion and then is transformed, becoming part of the landscape after fading away, like Echo and Narcissus (Anderson 1997, 437). Clytie helps patriarchy and its arbitrarily violent punishment of female sexuality, but she suffers. Both sisters become immobile, become part of *natura*, symbols and reminders of their essential vulnerability and femininity even in their vegetative state (Salzman-Mitchell 2005), but the Sun always draws their attention, the male figure dominant.

Circe is a brutal female sexual abuser like Salmacis. She has the same intensity of desire for her victims as Salmacis and reacts to sexual rejection with (sometimes sexualized and sororophobic) violence, although not explicitly with rape. We come to learn of her abuse first through the highly interconnected stories of Galatea, Polyphemos, Scylla, and Glaucus, all of which Nagle (1988) sees as evidence of Ovid intensely embedding tales of eros told by an internal storyteller, a narrative technique to seduce his audience to enter deeper into the poem. Galatea, a water nymph, tells Scylla the story of Polyphemos’ love for her, which he expresses in a poem very reminiscent of Theocritus 11, an idyll about Polyphemos’ same love for Galatea (13.789–869). But Ovid deviates widely from Theocritus 11 because Galatea, a water nymph, tells us of Polyphemos’ pastoral poetry, when she formally in Theocritus received no subjectivity and we see Polyphemos violent in the ways we would expect based on his most famous turn in the Odyssey Book 9 (Pharrell 1992). When Galatea rejects the poetic courting of the Cyclops, he reacts violently and murders her lover Acis (970–897), and because of Ovid’s opening up of her subjectivity, we have access into her fear. There are many indications that the Cyclops will become Galatea’s rapist (he, for example, takes on the boasting speech of sexual abusers like Apollo and Jupiter, Met. 1.504–24; 589–97; 13.808–30), but the violence he commits is instead against the sexual rival. Once again, this could have been sexual abuse and was not. Ovid also thematically highlights Galatea telling this story to Scylla as a warning against erotic arrogance. Scylla herself is a beautiful nymph with many suitors, and she came to Galatea to tell her own stories of how she evaded them (elusos iuvenum narrabat amores, 737). After Scylla leaves Galatea, Glaucus, the merman, attempts to rape her when he sees her naked upon the shore (similar to Arethusa, another victim of sexual abuse who is attacked while naked and another
instance of Ovid’s characteristic victim-blaming, *Met.* 5.601, 13.900); she escapes largely because of his fishlike anatomy and his inability to chase her on land. And for a time, Scylla experienced attempted rape without subsequent transformation, bodily destruction, or death, but like Dryope previously, the violence that the vast majority of rape victims face—and that we expect—will come to pass.

When his attempt at seduction and rape fails, Glaucus comes to Circe to help him win over Scylla for him with her powers of witchcraft (14.12–24). But Circe instead offers herself to him, in a very forward way, resembling the forwardness of the nymph Salmacis with Hermaphroditus (4.320–8). If he becomes her lover, he can have a lover *and* have vengeance (*spernentem sperne, sequenti/ redde vices, unoque duas ulciscere facto*, “Spurn the one spurning you, repay the one who is pursuing you [Circe], and avenge two things with one deed,” 35–6). Glaucus repudiates her offer and says he will always only love Scylla (37–39). Circe decides that since she cannot physically punish Glaucus as a fellow god, she will punish the nymph Scylla (and thus in the process emotionally terrorize Glaucus) (*indignata dea est et laedere quatenus ipsum/ non poterat*…“The goddess was angered and since she could not harm him…” 40–41). She becomes like Juno, unable to attack the male figure who has wronged her and channels that anger onto a different body, particularly a body that has just narrowly escaped rape by a male figure. And just as in the Galatea story, the primary violence of the narrative is against the sexual rival and not the beloved. Circe attacks Scylla in a particularly sexualized way and perpetuates sexual abuse against another female (Segal 1998, 32), although I have argued that punitive transformations by goddesses in the wake of rape are always sexualized because of the connections Ovid makes between the violence of rape and metamorphosis (see Chapter Three). Circe transforms the nymph’s lower body into monstrous dogs (59–67), eliminating the sexual
part of her body in which Glaucus could (forcibly) penetrate her, meaning that she eliminates her femininity and her desirability to male figures. Circe even perpetrated the attack in a very typical locus amoenus scene at a quiet pool when the sun was highest in the sky (53–4). Galatea almost faced attack in the locus amoenus, Scylla was spotted by Glaucus in the locus amoenus, and Scylla finally experiences violence there. Circe seemed to have hoped that having transformed Scylla in this way would have changed Glaucus’ mind about her sexual advances toward him, but he still rejects her (68–69). She commits sororophobia against Scylla to no erotic avail.  

Circe finds Picus, her other victim in Book 14, in the forest and spies on him while he hunts, making Picus another hunter who is himself hunted erotically. The story (320–434), a (very) embedded tale, is first told by one of Circe’s maids to a companion of Odysseus, who tells the story himself to Aeneas’ companions. Ovid here, as with Salmacis, luxuriously comments on Circe’s voyeuristic desires for Picus. She burns with a passion for him (quae simul ac iuvenem virgultis abdita vidit, obstipuit…flammaque per totas visa est errare medullas, “As soon as she saw the youth, hidden in the thicket, she was stupefied…and flame seemed to wander through her entire marrow, 349–51). Picus is described like many of the female rape victims: he is beautiful (322–3, 373) and pursued by many nymphs within the forest to his great chagrin (326–34). Picus, unlike many of the female rape victims before him, is interested in sex and rejects his admirers for Canens, a nymph he found worthy of his own beauty (335–40). This is what even separates Narcissus from Picus, who is described in a similar way and who is pursued in a similar way by a woman, but only wants sex with himself. Circe offers herself to Picus, while reminding him that she is a goddess, a reminder of her power and a reminder employed often by

---

149 Later, Ovid, adding an innovative psychological element to Homer’s well-known story, has Scylla attack Odysseus, Circe’s former lover, and his companions as a way to avenge what Circe had done to her out of sexual jealousy (70–4). Homer provides no origin story for Scylla and no deeper motives for her barbarity.
male rapists, although interestingly she calls herself supplex, a sign of her femininity even if she has the power to punish and emasculate him through transformation (372–76).

He fiercely rejects her and Circe decides that she can and will punish him (he is a mortal) and ensures he never again sees his wife, Canens (377–85). Ovid shows us how the witch sexually approaches a man hunting—a man obsessed intensely with someone else—which likens her to Echo. But Circe becomes different from the nymph because of her violent response to Picus’ sexual repudiation, while Echo internalizes the erotic suffering Narcissus has caused her (Met. 3.394–401). (Narcissus ultimately faces the retribution of Nemesis because of the curses of other rejected nymphs, making their violence against him indirect, Met. 3.40.) Circe transforms Picus into a woodpecker. This is one of the rare times that a man in the poem is punished for a sexual choice. Unlike with Scylla, Circe does not directly target his wife, Canens, but the nymph frantically pursues her husband, already a woodpecker, eventually withering away in grief, similar to Echo, and melting like Cyane (luctibus extremum tenues liquefacta medullas/tabuit inque leves paulatim evanuit auras, “Having melted because of her weeping, she wasted away in her tender marrow and vanished little by little into thin air,” 14. 431–32; Met. 3.394–401). Ovid once more uses the word medulla to describe the passion of a woman for Picus; earlier a flame travelled through Circe’s marrow when she laid eyes on the youth. But Circe faces no long-term destruction for her loss of Picus, while Canens transforms and perishes.

IV. Conclusions: The Metamorphoses

Any analysis of sexualized violence in the Met. is a considerable and intricate undertaking. The epic often has been at the heart of studies of sexualized violence in Ovid and in antiquity generally because of the teeming magnitude of sexual abuse within its pages. In this chapter, I have established that, despite many different actors, settings, transformations, and
deviations in his narratives of rape, these narratives are united by their manifestations of victim-blaming and sororophobia, by the female figures who suffer their effects, by those who enact them, and by those who reject their mandates. Viewing the *Met.* as an epic of rape, as a work fundamentally about and driven by rape, such as Richlin (1992) does, allows us not only to understand the nature of the work and Ovid’s misogynistic program, but to find a semblance of order amid the poet’s carefully articulated chaos. Through my understanding of victim-blaming and sororophobia as integral parts of his narratives of rape, I have introduced a way to further unify the epic. From Daphne in Book 1 to Pomona in Book 14, female figures are blamed by the narrator for their own rapes; from Io in Book 1 to Scylla in Book 14, female figures are blamed, terrorized, punitively transformed and mutilated by other females; from the divine and mortal worlds, from Cyane to Philomela and Procne, sisterhood between female figures is threatened, delegitimized, and punished by Ovid’s narrators and male characters. In Ovid’s next work to be discussed, the *Fasti,* rape, victim-blaming, and sororophobia are again unifying themes as he reveals how rape is central to the aetiologies of Roman religion, myth, and its founding.
Chapter Five: Sexualized Violence and Rape in the Fasti

I. Introduction to the Fasti and Sexualized Violence

The Fasti, Ovid’s elegiac poem documenting Rome’s religious traditions and festivals from January to June, is another center in Ovid’s representations of rape, although much less so than the Met. There are fifteen extensive scenes of sexualized violence in the Fasti, with a dozen other rape victims mentioned in passing.\(^{150}\) The stories of Rhea Silvia and the Sabines arise variously and with different emphases (2.381–4, 399–404, 429–34, 3.10–40, 195–214). The smaller number of rape narratives in comparison to the Met. makes it more difficult for one to generalize about the Fasti, but Ovid continues with many of the features we have seen previously in his stories of sexualized violence, while also introducing or expanding on patterns, like attempted rapes influenced by Roman comedy and mime and successful rapes ending in apotheosis. The Met. and the Fasti were composed during the same period in Ovid’s career and scholars have noted how similar concerns suffuse both texts. Many themes find their way into the poems in one of Ovid’s most obvious exercises, what Fulkerson and Stover (2015) define as his “poetics of repetition.” Particularly for our purposes, the Fasti includes many of the same rape narratives as the Met., including the rapes of Callisto, Proserpina, and Europa, which we have explored in Chapter Four. The Fasti also responds to the story of Rhea Silvia from the Amores and the Sabines in the Ars. As we have seen, Ovid writes about sexualized violence as a constant exercise in “intratextuality and self-modification” (Fulkerson and Stover 2016).

\(^{150}\) These instances of sexualized violence include: the attempted rape of Lotis by Priapus (1.425–37), the rape of Callisto (2.153–92), the attempted rape of Omphale by Faunus (303–59), the rape of Rhea Silvia by Mars (2.381–84, 399–404, 3.10–40), the rape of the Sabines by the Romans (2.429–34; 3.195–214), the attempted rape of Juturna by Jupiter (2.585–604), the rape of Lara by Mercury (2.611–16), the rape of Lucretia by Sextus Tarquinius (2.761–835), the rape of Anna Perenna by the river Numimicus (523–696), the rape of Proserpina by Dis (4.417–50), the rape of Flora by Zephyrus (5.183–206), the rape of Europa by Jupiter (5.603–20), the rape of Carne by Ianus (6.125–30), and the attempted rape of Vesta by Priapus (6.331–44). The victims mentioned in passing include Philomela (2.628–630), Io/Isis (3.658), the rape of the Pleiades by various gods (4.164–78), Orynthia (5.204), Phoebe and Hilaria (5.693), and Ganymede (6.43). In this chapter we will discuss all of the extensive narratives, except the ones that already appeared in the Amores, Ars, and Met. and hence in my earlier analysis.
Many have commented on the similarities and differences in the rapes found in the *Met.* and *Fasti*, most notably Hinds (1987), P.J. Johnson (1996 and 2008), W.R. Johnson (1996), Zissos (1999), and Murgatroyd (2005), some of whom I discussed above in Chapter Four. Their primarily narratological work, especially that of Murgatroyd, extends my analysis of the overarching patterns—and deviations from them—in Ovid’s depictions of sexualized violence and the blame and punishment the poet’s victims’ experience. For example, Johnson analyzes the impact of a more extended description of the lead-up to Callisto’s rape in the *Met.* and the brutally compressed one in the *Fasti*. He concludes that the *Fasti* narrative is more sympathetic to female figures, although, as seen in Chapter Four, I ultimately disagree with his stance on Ovid’s sympathy for many of his rape victims (and also disagree with Murgatroyd’s echoing W.R. Johnson’s 1996 arguments). Zissos and P.J. Johnson argue that Calliope, as she tells the story of the rape of Proserpina in *Met.* 5.322–641, shapes her narrative to specifically please her audience of female nymphs and thereby makes Cyane and Arethusa, both nymphs, and their rapes unusually prominent in comparison to the rape of Proserpina, the daughter of an Olympian. In the account in the *Fasti*, there are no embedded narratives or different levels of audience.

Murgatroyd, in his book on narratology in the *Fasti*, studied the scenes of rape in the elegiac poem in great depth. He found overarching patterns in how Ovid treats the before, the process, and the aftermath of rape and determined in his analysis how slowly and quickly, with what details included or omitted, Ovid proceeds through each phase of a rape scene. Murgatroyd has defined the following patterns for rapes in the *Fasti*: “prelude, arrival, attraction, vulnerability, preparations, contact, physical approach, overtones, seizure, abduction, flight, appeal, resistance, calming, rape, aftermath, discomfiture, search, detection, revenge, pregnancy, reconciliation, recompense, substitute union, death, and new life” (74). The longer narratives of
rape in the *Fasti* will include many if not most of these features, but depending on the story some features will be emphasized more than others. For example, the rape of Proserpina emphasizes the search pattern more because of the role of Ceres and motherhood. Ultimately, Murgatroyd determines that, unlike in the *Met.*, most of the rapes are successful (eleven, or twelve, of the fifteen in the elegiac poem with all three “comic rapes” exempt), and the narrative spends more time on the before than the aftermath of the rapes (74). In the *Met.*, since it is a book about transformation itself, the aftermath takes on greater importance than in the *Fasti*, although that is not uniformly true because transformation, particularly apotheosis, is an integral element in religious aetiology.

Everett Beek (2015), in her work on supernatural transformation in the elegiac poem and whose arguments we discussed extensively in Chapter Three, nuances Murgatroyd’s position and demonstrates that there is a direct causal relationship between violence like rape and apotheosis in the *Fasti*. Transformation is significant throughout the elegiac poem, but it manifests itself differently. Ovid’s greater focus on the process of transformation in the *Met.* could be a result of the epic’s interest in animalistic and vegetative transformations, which more radically and dramatically change the human/anthropomorphic body in comparison to apotheosis (there is only one animalistic transformation in the *Fasti*, that of Callisto changed into a bear). Murgatroyd and Everett Beek also both illuminate the greater role “recompense” (Murgatroyd’s term) or “compensation” (Everett Beek’s term) in the form of apotheosis plays in the rapes in the *Fasti*. Of the eleven (or twelve) successful rapes featured in the *Fasti*, six end in apotheosis (Callisto’s is not an act of compensation for rape, but an act of salvation). This is a clear trend in the *Fasti*,

---

151 The success of Juturna’s rape by Jupiter is ambiguous (2.583–616). When Lara, her sister, attempts to stop the rape of Juturna, Ovid shifts the focus of the narrative onto Lara and her punitive mutilation by Jupiter and later rape by Mercury. But since Lara’s mutilation and rape eliminate her as a threat to Jupiter’s plans, the narrative suggests that Jupiter eventually succeeds. In Vergil, Juturna is successfully raped by Jupiter (*Aen.* 12.113–60).
while in the *Met.*, Io, Callisto, and Hersilia are the only rape victims who experience (compensatory or salvatory) apotheosis (*Met.* 1.747–64; 2.496–507; 14.829–51), and Mestra and Caenis are the only rape victims who receive another form of compensation for their rapes from the gods (neither are apotheosized) (*Met.* 8.843–84; 12.146–209). I have problematized elsewhere in my dissertation the notion that apotheosis or otherwise could truly be “compensation” for the suffering of the female figures, especially because it renders the female figures subordinate to their rapists and, moreover, reenacts and perpetuates the particular trauma of rape. I will continue to do so in the individual analysis of these rapes below.

Overall, Murgatroyd’s analysis is evidently invaluable for my research, which is attempting something similar across Ovid’s corpus. Murgatroyd, nevertheless, does not identify victim-blaming and sororophobia as an integral part of these patterns. Murgatroyd will be one of my most vital and cited source for this chapter since he is the one scholar to have written about the rapes most extensively in the *Fasti* and as a whole, rather than on individual episodes. But I have serious disagreements with some of his approaches to the text and his arguments about the text. Like Johnson (1996), Murgatroyd also believes that many of the rapes in the *Fasti* are more directly violent because they are more compact in nature than in the *Met.*, and that belief leads Murgatroyd to imply that many of the depictions of rape in the *Fasti* are more sympathetic to female figures than in the *Met.* But, in my mind and as I argued previously in Chapter Four’s analysis of the narrative of Callisto in both works, it is too much of a generalization to come to this conclusion about the *Fasti* when we consider that all rape is violence and that Ovid in the *Fasti* may often just be expressing the violence in a different and blunter way. What we see in the *Fasti* is still violence that both the narrator and audience can revel in, especially if we take the stance as Richlin (1992) does that Ovid’s representations of rape are pornographic.
Murgatroyd even goes so far as to say that the rapes in the *Fasti*, in comparison to elsewhere in Ovid’s corpus, “now involves real cruelty and pain, deep misery and humiliation, and horror, tragedy and even death” (95). Rapes elsewhere in Ovid’s corpus exhibit these effects ubiquitously, as I hope I have demonstrated previously, and that is exactly why I can never find any of Ovid’s rape narratives fundamentally sympathetic to female figures. As a whole, Murgatroyd believes we can never know if Ovid was misogynistic, although he believes there is ample evidence in the *Fasti* to suggest otherwise, such as his more compassionate depictions of the rapes of Callisto, Lucretia, and Lara. But, again, constantly showing female figures abused and raped and unable to resist trauma and destruction is something I am wary about in Ovid. Female figures are always abject in Ovid and we must ask why (Fulkerson 2009; 2016). We can never reconstruct Ovid’s intentions, which is exactly what Murgatroyd is attempting to do, but something we *can* say is that Ovid lived in a patriarchal and misogynistic culture and it would have been difficult to escape that sort of conditioning in Rome. Moreover, as we will discuss below, Ovid undercuts much of the sympathy his rape narratives might display for female figures because of the comedic overtones and generic influences he brings into the attempted rapes of Lotis, Omphale, and Vesta and more subtly into the rapes of Rhea Silvia, Lara, Europa, and Carna. And even if Lucretia’s, Callisto’s, and Lara’s rape are portrayed more sympathetically, it matters that Ovid makes light of rape in other contexts. If Ovid can use rape as a joke, how sympathetic can he be toward female figures? Murgatroyd’s most troublesome claim is that the male rapists in the *Fasti* are crueler and more violent, especially since Ovid has removed much of the “love” from these narratives of rape: only two of the rapes in the *Fasti* end in marriage, that of Proserpina and Flora (95). But I do not subscribe to the position that Apollo is somehow less vicious because he claimed to love Daphne, wanted to marry her, and lamented that he could
not because she transformed to escape him (*Met.* 1.557). Rhetoric like this can undermine the violence and trauma of rape. Murgatroyd, in relation to this claim, says all the rapists, especially Jupiter, Mercury, and Sextus are clearly condemned in the *Fasti.* But this is again trying to reconstruct Ovid’s artistic intentions. Whatever his intentions, Ovid often focalizes from the rapist’s perspective and not the victim’s, focalizations which do not do much to fundamentally question rape and as we have seen, facilitate the victim-blaming of female figures. Even if Ovid has been sympathetic, that sympathy has been amply compromised.

Another noticeable difference between rape in the *Met.* and rape in the *Fasti* is that the aftermath of the rapes less frequently involve the specifically sororophbic type of victim-blaming from other female figures, especially female goddesses. We see sororophobia from (possibly) female nymphs against Juturna, Juno and Diana against Callisto, Juno once more against Ino, and Lavinia against Anna Perenna. Juno has a much less pervasive and overwhelming presence in the *Fasti* than in the *Met.*, Ovid even inviting her to narrate at the beginning of Book 6 (1–100). The ambitious, proud, and vindictive Juno we have come to know in the *Met.* is not entirely absent because of what she does to Callisto (*Fasti* 2.177) and Ino (6.473–569), but she does not punish Juturna for Jupiter’s violent attentions toward her. In the *Fasti*, we primarily see female figures blaming themselves for their rapes, such as Lucretia (2.830) and Flora (5.195–202); and as mentioned in Chapter Three, only Callisto experiences an explicitly punitive transformation, although, to reiterate, it is my position that all metamorphosis, even elevating apotheosis, is violent and therefore implicitly punitive. Metamorphosis is still a means for victim-blaming and terrorizing female figures experiencing rape.

Hinds’ 1987 monograph, as we have seen in Chapter Four, provided many helpful insights into my analysis of Ovid’s account of Proserpina’s rape in the *Met.* and the *Fasti.* His
observations about each account and how they relate to one another were acute, but I have reservations about why Hinds believes differences exist between the two poems as a whole. He attempts to analyze how the differences between the two works and their treatment of this same rape extends beyond Ovid playing with the flexibility of myth or being self-referential; according to Hinds, the differences Ovid creates are, most importantly, making a comment on the predominant and wider generic character of each work. Hinds attempts to prove the thesis of Heinze (1919) who proposed that there is something inherently epic about the rape of Proserpina in the Met. and something inherently elegiac about it in the Fasti. I am not entirely convinced by Hinds or Heinze in this regard, especially since one, they do not attempt to extend their analytical framework thoroughly to other narratives in the Fasti (although it is clear Hinds hopes that others take up his ideas as an analytical framework for engaging with other repeat narratives in the texts) and two, Ovid is slippery generically with intention and to great effect throughout his corpus. I agree with Hinds that it matters greatly that one is in the epic meter and the other in the elegiac meter and that Proserpina’s tale in the Met. is told by Calliope, the epic muse, and that the Fasti account has more mourning and lamentation textually. I agree that certain sections of the poems can take on a more epic or elegiac flavor (although never essentially or permanently). But the more interesting question to me is how Ovid consciously plays with and destabilizes genre while establishing, indicating, and performing generic adherence to his audience. The Fasti account may have more lamentation, but it has many of the epic hallmarks derived from the Homeric Hymn to Demeter, such as how it announces its subject at the beginning of the tale (Hinds 1987, 61). And the generic tensions in the Met. version are evident from the beginning and persist as Venus, someone many would consider an elegiac figure, becomes an epic and violent war-mongerer (5.362–84; Cahoon 1996; P.J. Johnson 1996). The tensions Venus brings
into the story as goddess of love with imperialist, epic ambitions are never resolved fully, particularly because of repeating narratives of rape (sex and violence and hence, elegy and epic). Whatever distinctive sense of genre we receive in one passage may vanish in the next, even vanish in the next line. Yes, the Met. is an epic and the Fasti is elegiac because of meter, but the swift transition between the genres of epic and elegy (and more) fundamentally undermines generic integrity. The same vacillation between epic and elegy can be said of Ovid in most of his corpus and is evident from the very first poem of the Amores when Ovid attempts to write an epic but was stopped by a belligerent Cupid who forces him to write love elegy through epic violence. For the rest of the Amores, the genre of epic is never out of sight, a looming presence that compromises their reputed elegiac foundation and Ovid’s elegiac persona.

Hinds in his 1992 article on the rape of Rhea Silvia in the Fasti, only five years after his monograph, took a more nuanced position that does not expect the poem to resolve its generic tensions neatly and essentially, and is more convincing for it. He examined the ways Ovid vacillates often between both epic and elegy in the Fasti—as Ovid consistently talks about genre convention and expectations in the aetiological elegy, he likewise consistently problematizes genre. The Fasti evinces this tension between epic and elegy pervasively. Ovid worries that the elegiac meter cannot sustain the epic topics at hand (2.3–8) and even his divine interlocutors, such as Juno, scold him for using the elegiac meter for such dignified and weighty subject matter (6.21–2). He also assures Venus at the beginning of Book 4 that he greatly honors and has not abandoned his love elegiac past and poetry to cajole her into becoming an interlocutor in his now aetiological, rather than amatory, elegiac tales (4.1–14); and he encourages Mars in Book 3 that despite his epic demeanor, he can find the erotic and thus become more elegiac (3.1–10). Ovid then tells the story of Mars’ rape of Rhea Silvia (3.11–48), which because of its violence does not
completely abandon the epic genre. Mars through this act makes the *militia amoris* more literal, a symbol of the tensions between epic and elegy. We can see here how the “genre” of rape (so to speak) is problematized, as well, and how this problematization can speak to both the sexual and violent nature of rape. I have previously discussed this conflict between epic and elegy as underlying how Ovid and the Romans conceived of sexuality as a constant battle between eros and violence. Ovid relies on this sexual, violent, and generic conflict to lull Mars, the god of war, into an elegiac text. Mars can still be violent even though he is now placed in an erotic narrative. With these examples and more, it becomes clear that Ovid’s almost universal generic destabilization of epic and elegy has profound effects on how he represents rape and how he presents its themes and motifs, and therefore, it is more pressing to me to explore these contradictions than to try to define his other works as more generically unified and exclusive.

**II. Scenes of Sexualized Violence in the *Fasti***

1. **The Attempted Rape of Lotis by Priapus: The First “Comic” Rape**

   The attempted rape of Lotis by Priapus is the first instance of sexualized violence we see in the *Fasti*. We meet Lotis briefly in the *Met.*, transformed into an eponymous flower so Priapus would not rape her (*Met.* 9.346–48). Dyrope disturbs her resting place, and as punishment for this disturbance, she turns Dryope into a tree, torn away from her child born after her rape by Apollo. In the *Fasti*, Ovid provides us with an extensive narrative of Lotis’ abuse at the hands of Priapus (1.415–40), including many of the features we have already seen elsewhere in Ovid, although she escapes the suffering of transformation in the *Fasti*—or at least she does for now.

---

152 Many scholars have understood these generic conflicts and contradictions in the *Fasti*, and elsewhere in Ovid, to be significant politically. Hinds (1992), Newlands (1995), and Barchiesi (1997) all believe that the *Fasti*’s exploration and problematization of the elegiac genre can speak to political tensions and possible political subversions against Augustus from Ovid in the poem. The various works of these scholars have allowed us to ask how the elegiac genre itself may demonstrate Ovid’s opposition to Augustan ideologies and how it infuses humor, lightheartedness, irreverence, and even dissent into Roman religious discourse, which Augustus was using to legitimize his political position in Rome as the first emperor and his family.
(It is entirely possible Priapus attempts to rape Lotis again and she transforms into a flower to protect herself, just as Daphne turns in the laurel and Syrinx into the reed.) Before the attempted rape, we meet Lotis as she and other nymphs of the forest relax and have an idyllic picnic on beds of grass (1.409–10), evoking images of the *locus amoenus*. Lotis, unlike Daphne or many of the other rape victims, is not labeled a virgin, although we know she eventually transforms into her flower, which in Ovid often indicates protection of one’s virginity (Forbes Irving 1993). Larson (1997), while conducting research on the nymphs surrounding Artemis/Diana, has determined a division between nymphs like Lotis and those like Callisto. Lotis is an independent nymph, worshipped by mortals around her (we see evidence of figures like Dryope gathering flowers for the nymphs before she is punitively transformed by Lotis as a flower, *Met*. 9.337), and these types of nymphs according to Larson have more ambiguous sexual availabilities and tend to be more sexually active (256). The nymphs in Artemis/Diana’s retinue are resolute and determined virgins, like Daphne (*Met*. 1.486–7), Syrinx (694–5), and Callisto (415) (Procis in *Met*. 7.661–865 is a notable exception because she was married to Cephalus, but she remains chaste while with Diana). This is an interesting distinction to make, but it must be stated that in Ovid, nymphs like Lotis (and Seylla, Lara, and Lirope) are consistently raped, and rapists use their independence from more powerful goddesses like Diana to prey upon them. (But, of course, Diana can only protect the nymphs in her circle when physically close to her, and her retinue is continuously targeted by rapists, especially while they dance in a chorus, for example, in Plutarch’s account of Helen’s first abduction by Theseus in *Theseus* 31.) The “sexual availability” of nymphs like Lotis might be nothing more than her greater vulnerability to rape and that is something that Larson unfortunately does not address in her article. Not all the independent nymphs we see are like Salmacis (*Met*. 4.274–388) in Ovid. In fact she is the only
Whatever her sexual status, Ovid describes the appearance of Lotis and all the nymphs in her company, particularly that of their unadorned hair (*Naides effusis aliae sine pectinis usu...aderant...comis*, “Some of the Naiads were present with their hair flowing, without the use of a comb,” 405–6), a prominent feature of a female figure’s sexual attraction as we see with Apollo and Daphne (Met. 1.496) and with Neptune and Medusa (Met. 4.799–811). Lotis and the other nymphs are, in addition, scantily clad and allow glimpses of their bare shoulders and breasts to escape from their loose garments (*altera dissuto pectus aperta sinu/ exserit haec umerum*, “Another, with her robe ripped, reveals her chest and she lays bare her shoulder,” 408–9), parts of the body Daphne reveals as well, especially during her flight from Apollo when the wind resistance exposes her body more to the god’s gaze (Met. 1. 527–30). Ovid advises women in the *Ars* 3.307 to show off their shoulders to men to seduce them, another instance in which we see the *praeeceptor amoris*’s teaching in effect, whether the women are doing so intentionally or unintentionally. To many of Ovid’s readers, bared shoulders would read as a sign of sexual availability. Again, we do not know if the nymphs are dressed in this way because of their commitment to virginity and masculine activities like Daphne and Callisto or if they are sexually active. Ovid never makes that explicit. In the later attempted rapes of Omphale by Faunus and of Vesta by Priapus, the sexual statuses of the female figures are plain to the reader because Omphale and Hercules are abstaining from sex (*Fasti* 2.327–30) and Vesta is a virginal goddess. The satyrs are also following the advice of the *praeeceptor amoris*: they go where the female figures are (*Ante frequens quo sit disce puella loco*, “Learn first in which location a girl is often,” *Ars* 1.50). After Ovid describes their appearance, it becomes obvious that the nymphs are being watched by a captive audience of satyrs (410–15), whose presence is another way to draw
attention to the highly sexualized atmosphere of the scene. Satyrs are typical characters in Greek and Roman myths of sexual revelry (Green 2004, 184), and we learn from the very beginning of the narrative that they are amorous (397). The descriptions of the beauty of the nymphs and their exposed bodies are focalized from the satyrs’ point of view as they admire them. The satyrs are intently objectifying the nymphs and reacting sexually to their appearance, and, therefore, Ovid is once again locating the cause of rape in the female body. The echoes of the advice to women in Ars Book 3 in this scene make the nymphs seem even more open to sex and intentionally tempting. Ovid uses an active verb to describe the nymphs and the passion they created in the satyrs (hinc aliae Satyris incendia mitia praebent, “there some of the women offer amorous passions to the satyrs,” 411), a tactic he has used previously, such as in Amores 2.12, to attribute responsibility to the women: the women are the ones who instigate the desire. It should also be mentioned that Lotis and the other nymphs are intoxicated throughout the day (vina dabat Liber, 403) and fall asleep because they are so intoxicated (nox erat, et vino somnum faciente iacebant “It was night, they were lying down, with wine making sleep,” 421), a state of being that amplifies the blame Lotis receives for her attack. In the Ars Book 3, we discussed how Ovid says women who are drunk and fall asleep deserve any sexual violence they experience from men (3.765–8). These behaviors and appearances supposedly inviting sexualized violence upon the women lead Richlin (1992) and Frazel (2003, 87) to contend that this scene is pornographic in intent: such invitations to sexualized violence and rape is a common pornographic trope.

But Priapus is the one sylvan creature at the gathering (we know of) who acts on his intense desire for the nymphs (Priapus/ omnibus ex illis Lotide captus erat, “Priapus was enamored with Lotis, from all the nymphs,” 415–6). The relationship between the male gaze and desire is very clear here: he sees her and then he wants her (hanc cupit, hanc optat, sola suspirat
in illa, “he desires her, longs for her, sighs only for her,” 417). This account of his desire for Lotis is similar to Apollo with Daphne (1.490) and Salmacis with Hermaphroditus (4.316) in the *Met.* and that which we will see later in the *Fasti* in the rape of Rhea Silvia by Mars (3.21), the rape of Proserpina by Dis (4.445), and the rape of Carina by Janus (6.118–9). Priapus attempts to woo Lotis first as Apollo does with Daphne (*signaque dat nutu sollicitatque,* “he gives her signals with a nod and bothers her,” 418), but *inrisum voltu despicit illa suo* (“she scorns him, laughed at, with a look,” 420). The narrator even labels how she reacts to Priapus as *superbia* (419), suggesting that the violence that follows against her is both the fault of her body and personality. Green (2004, 195) and Frazel (2003, 89) say this comment undermines the sympathy we might have for Lotis, especially because in *Ars* 3.509–11 he scolds women who take too much pride in their appearance. Unlike Apollo, however, Priapus does not immediately resort to force to fulfill his desire, but premeditates his attack and waits until nighttime when Lotis is sleeping and drowsy with wine. This scene reflects a common depiction of satyrs and Priapus on Greek pottery attacking female figures sexually while they sleep.\(^{153}\) According to Richlin (1992, 172), in the *Fasti* we more regularly see instances of sexualized violence when a female figure is sleeping, which we only see with Chione (11.303–10) and Thetis (11.221–65) in the *Met.* In the *Fasti,* we have the attempted rapes of Lotis (1.390–440), Omphale (2.303–56), and Vesta (6.321–44) and the successful rapes of Lucretia (2.685–856) and Rhea Silvia (3.9–25), where all of the victims are asleep when their rapists attack them. Rhea Silvia and Chione are the only ones not disturbed from her sleep during the assault and who do not resist the assaults.

During Priapus’ attack, we learn that we are still within the *locus amoenus,* the central location of violence in Ovid’s narratives of rape, although it is nighttime and not noon (*nox erat…Lotis in herbosa sub acernis ultima ramis… quiievit humo…* “It was night…Lotis slept on...

---

\(^{153}\) For more, see Lissarrague (1990) “The sexual life of satyrs,” in which he explores satiric sexuality on pottery.
the grassy ground, under the maple branches, far away…”421–4). But Green (2004, 196) observes that drunken nights are also an indication of violence in Greek and Roman thought, such as the penetration of the Trojan walls by the Greeks in Vergil (*Aen. 2.265–6*) and the slaughter of the sons of Aegyptus by the Danaids in *Her.* 14.33. Priapus approaches Lotis silently, holding his breath to evade detection (428), and begins to assault her, which Ovid describes with a euphemism (*vota ad sua felici coeperat ire via*, “he happily began to approach his desires”) (1.431–2). In his commentary on *Fasti* 1, Green is very helpful in pointing out the intensely sexual connotations of the vocabulary in this phrase. Vaginas and anuses are frequently conceived of as roads in Latin, including in Catullus 15.18 and *Priapea* 52.5. The verb *eo* can also speak to sexual intercourse, such as Tacitus *Annales* 13.46. Finally, *vota* in the sense of “desires” can be found in *Amores* 1.13.45–6, *Met.* 11.227, and Propertius 1.10.4 and 1.17.4.

But the braying of a nearby donkey interrupts Priapus’ attack (and this is why donkeys are the animals that must be sacrificed to the god—to avenge their wrongs against him), the sylvan gods laugh at him, they see his exposed *obscena pars* erect (437), and humiliated and thwarted, he flees the scene, inverting who usually flees in acts of rape in Ovid and who is punished (1.433–38).154 Although “punished” may be too strong a word: the consequences he faces are minimal in comparison to what female figures experience after their rapes in Ovid such as transformation, death, and psychological warfare from Juno. Later, in his attempted rape of Vesta, Priapus almost faces violence from an angry mob for what he tried against the chaste goddess (*Fasti* 6.343–4). In Ovid, female figures are the ones who typically flee (which Lotis does here), and they are generally *alone* when they flee. The double-flight is a new development in Ovid’s patterns. In many ways, the fact that Priapus attacks her around so many other people

---

154 This scene of public, sexual embarrassment in front of other gods echoes the embarrassment of Aphrodite and Ares, orchestrated by Hephaistos, before the Olympian gods in the *Odyssey* 8.266–366.
shows how brazen he is as a would-be rapist. Again, Richlin (1992) and Frazel (2003, 87) see this narrative as pornographic in nature, and that very nature, as well, allows the reader to finish what Priapus left unfinished. Even if Priapus did not finish the deed, even if he was frustrated, the reader with the information provided could be aroused. The rape is stopped, but the sexuality of the scenes abounds. Ovid builds up anticipation for the sex with verbs like *surgit*, *tetiget*, *gaudet*, *ire via*, which are all used in sexual contexts in Ovid (Green 2004, 197).155 Ovid is playing with his readers’ expectations and their familiarity with his patterns of rape (Murgatroyd 2005, 226–7). We expect rape or some form of sex, and he deflates our expectations with the introduction of new patterns into his narratives of sexualized violence.

The attempted rape of Lotis by Priapus is the first of a series of three similar rapes in the *Fasti*, which have their roots in Roman comedy and mime and are all identified as an *iocus*, a word that has a strong sexual connotation (Fantham 1983, Richlin 1992, and Green 2004)156 and which has direct connections to mimic performance (see Ovid himself use *iocus* to describe mimes in *Tr.* 2.497, 5.183 and 322). Priapus in this scene should inherently evoke the mimic/comic atmosphere because he was often a character in mime (Quintilian 10.1.100), and other mimic elements in these rapes include that not a single word is spoken throughout and that the perpetrator flees, which according to Cicero (*Pro Caelio* 65), was an uninspired way to end a mime (Green 2004, 184; 202). Green additionally comments that rapes at night are common in New Comedy such as in Plautus *Aulularia* 792–5 and Terence *Adelphoe* 470–1.

---

155 See *Amores* 3.7.39, *Ars* 2.692, *Remedia* 778, and later in Ovid’s depiction of the rape of Lucretia in the *Fasti.*
156 Newlands (1995, 45) observes that Ovid also identifies the games of Anna Perenna, the story of Anna Perenna sexually deceiving Mars into thinking he is sleeping with Minerva, and the performances and games of Flora for sex laborers as *ioci*. It is apparent that Ovid uses *iocus* to describe a story or event that is “sexually licentious in nature” (145). For how Ovid associates *ioci* with sexuality and general wantonness elsewhere in his corpus, see: *Her.* 15.48, *Ars* 1.354, 2.724, 3.640, 3.640, 3.796, *Tristia* 2.354, 422, 444.
Bringing in comedy, mime, and even the dramatic into the *Fasti* is a way for Ovid to acknowledge important Roman cult practice: religious ritual in Rome often featured (sexual) theatrical performances, such as in the games of Flora when sex laborers performed for the attendees (our best evidence for this is in Juvenal *Satires* 6.249ff., not in Ovid’s *Fasti* unfortunately). Rape, furthermore, was itself a popular motif in mimes. Richlin (1992, 171) documents how many of the rapes we find in Ovid were performed in front of Roman audiences, like that of Philomela (Juvenal 6.63, 7.92), and how even later in antiquity pantomimes were expected to memorize rape scenes found in Ovid’s *Met.* and other works, especially ones in which a male god would be disguised as a woman to create more surprise and, ultimately, comedy for the audience (Lucian, *On Dancing* 37–61). Ovid, in addition, discusses mime in the *Tr.* 2 (his letter of appeal to the emperor Augustus to move him closer to Rome) as a way to point out that highly explicit and sexual literature still circulates and is enjoyed in Rome and thus, he asks why he must suffer for what he wrote in the *Ars*. With these comments, Ovid implicitly connects his own art to mime and in *Tr.* 1.519–20 the poet reveals that his poems did in fact become mimes and were performed in his lifetime. Richlin (1992) asserts that mimic performances inform Ovid’s writing and additionally speak to the ubiquity and normalization of representations of sexualized violence in Rome and their role in entertainment and pleasure.

Lada-Richards (2013) recent research on mime and pantomime in Ovid has demonstrated that Ovid is not only influenced by the subject matter of mimic performance but also its mechanisms of performance. For example, many of Ovid’s rape victims, like Io and Philomela (*Met.* 1.649–50, 6.609), when they transform must use only gesture to communicate with those around them.

The attempted rape of Lotis by Priapus, Omphale by Faunus (*Fasti* 2.303–58), and Vesta by Priapus (*Fasti* 6.613–48) all include several other characteristic elements that Richlin
identified as well in her 1992 article: “…women providing visual stimuli for the rapists; rustic gods become [visibly] excited; an idyllic party; the woman targeted goes to sleep [at night]; the rustic god approaches stealthily; sudden alarm, discovery, failure, and humiliation” (171). We can see from Richlin’s (1992, 170–2) observations that new patterns have been introduced into Ovid’s rape narratives, most notably the time of day (we move from rapes normally occurring at approximately midday in Ovid to at night in these three rapes), the description of the attacker’s erection (previously we knew how greatly a rapist desired his victim through the narration but now the narrator does more to show, not tell, to say the least), the flight of the rapists instead of their victims in an act of resistance (again an element of mime), and the lack of punishment the victims face after the attack, while the rapists receive temporary public shaming. Only three other rape victims—Rhea Silvia (*Fasti* 3.11–62) (although during her rape by Anio after that of Mars in *Amores* 3.5, the river transforms her into a water nymph), Orithynia (*Met.* 6.675–721), and the Sabine women (*Fasti* 2 and 3 passim)— evade transformation, physical assault, or death after their rapes in the *Met.* and *Fasti*. Flora, who experiences one of the “happier” stories of rape within Ovid because of her seeming acceptance of her rapist as her husband, still faces a form of death as she transforms from nymph to goddess (*Fasti* 5.195-205). Many scholars, like Beard (2014a), believe that rapes that end in marriage, like those of Flora (5.205–6) and Proserpina (4.417–50) in the *Fasti*, would have largely been considered “happy” to the Romans because of the role of rape then marriage in Roman New Comedy (see my discussion in Chapter One).

Many of the features I have recognized previously as characteristic of Ovid’s rape narratives remain intact in these more “comedic” rape scenes: the focus on the female form, objectification, the prominence of the (lack of) sexual history of the victim, and the analysis of

---

157 Lotis and Omphale clearly go to sleep because of their intoxication and revelry. Hejduk argues that Vesta, as a chaste goddess, falls asleep naturally and merely rests (*placidamque capit secura quietem* 6.331) (2011, 21–22), but Ovid raises suspicions about her levels of intoxication: why was she present at a party of nymphs and satyrs?
the rapist’s psychology of attraction. The inclusion of many of these same elements in all of
Ovid’s rapes, both more “comic” and more “solemn,” once again calls into question how
seriously we are to take rape in his corpus and how Ovid views rape as an author: Is he
undermining the cruelty of sexualized violence? Does he sympathize with his female victims or
does he revel in their pain? How does he appropriate the trauma of female figures for laughs?
Humor, wit, and black comedy pervade many of the rapes in Ovid’s corpus (see Kirby 1989 and
Tissol 1997 for humor in Ovid generally), although Ovid makes it more explicit in the Fasti
because of the generic allusions and frameworks of stories like that of Lotis. Apollo being so
self-absorbed in his own rhetoric that Daphne has advanced far ahead of the god in her flight
(Met. 1.525–526), Io hyper-pathetically writing her name with her hoof in the dirt to make her
family recognize her as a cow (Met. 1.649–650), the mutilated tongue of Philomela, in an over-
the-top comparison, becoming a writhing snake that slithers and seeks the body of its former
mistress (Met. 6.555–562): these examples show how Ovid can undercut the brutality of rape
with comedy and verify that, although Ovid is sometimes capable of sympathy for his victims
(something I have never completely denied), that sympathy is not always pure and untempered.

2. The Attempted Rape of Omphale (and Hercules) by Faunus: Hic meus ar dor

The attempted rape of Omphale (and Hercules) shares many of the features of the story of
Lotis and Priapus (nighttime assault during sleep, drunkenness, a highly sexualized atmosphere
because of a Bacchic festival, detection, eventual humiliation, laughter, and failure as the source
of an important Roman religious aetiology), but it becomes unique because of the prominent
themes of gender confusion and reversal in the narrative and ultimately the mistaken identity of
Faunus’ intended victim. Faunus intends to rape Omphale, but instead attacks Hercules. Ovid
with this tale explains the origins of the Lupercalia, a fertility festival in February, particularly its
ritualistic nudity (naked men whip women with goatskins to ensure future fertility and pregnancies). To explain the aetiology of this particular aspect of the festival, Ovid utilizes the story of Hercules’ time of enslavement and coerced transvestism at the hands of the Eastern queen Omphale and their nocturnal interactions with the sylvan god, Faunus, during a Bacchic rite. In this particular narrative, Omphale wears the lion skin of Hercules and he wears her luxurious and Eastern female attire (Fasti 2.319–30). Many scholars, like Fantham (1983, 193) and Robinson (2011, 237–8), have noted that the Bacchic festival adds to the instability of gender in the atmosphere, although the details of what ritual this is exactly and whether Omphale’s and Hercules’ clothing/gender swap is a result of the ritual remain obscure (Robinson 2011, 237–8). This could be a more ritualistic version of the usual humiliation the hero faced under Omphale’s labor, a manifestation in a religious context. Fantham (1983, 196) and Robinson (2011, 238) assert that the particular ritual details of this Bacchic rite do not matter as much to the story as the conceit that Hercules must eventually wear Omphale’s clothes to become the mistaken object of Faunus’ sexual attraction and attack. The purpose is to elucidate an aspect of a Roman fertility festival surrounding Faunus and to comically entertain.

The anticipation and buildup to this sexual blunder suffuses the entire episode and the process of the woodland’s god attack. At first the object of Faunus’ attraction is unclear: he sees both Omphale and Hercules, yearns with desire after having seen one of them, or each of them (utrumque...vidit et incaluit, 2.306–7), and proclaims: hic meus ardor erit, a loaded pun, which can denote “here (hic) will be my passion” or “he (hic) will be my passion.” There is the typical connection between the male gaze and desire, but for whom? Omphale then receives a luxurious description of her highly feminine beauty under Faunus’ male gaze (ibat odoratis umeros perfusa capillis/ Maeonis, aurato conspicienda sinu, “The Maeonian woman [Omphale] went
with perfumed hair spilling on her shoulders, worthy to be looked at because of her golden chest…” 309–10). Though, of course, descriptions like this are a central way the narrator of Ovid’s works victim-blames, its purpose ultimately in this story is to render Faunus’ misdirected attraction even more startling and comical. Hercules, as a surrogate victim of sexualized violence and an easy target for laughs, receives intense focus on his appearance later, when Ovid represents his dressing scene with Omphale’s garments and jewelry, although his male body is hard to hide: ventre minor zona est; tunicarum vincla relaxat,/ ut posset magnas exseruisse manus (“Her belt was too small for his belly; he unfolds the ties of her tunics so that he could thrust out his big hands,” 321–2). Because of the nature of this scene of rape and the comedic goals it seeks to achieve, Ovid must code two people, a man and a woman, as feminine.

But Cyrino (1998, 214) suggests that Hercules’ masculinity is never truly suppressed in this episode—even if it is problematized—because of the narrator’s emphasis on his male physicality (she suggests the same for Achilles in Statius’ *Achilleid* Book 1 as his mother forces him to don the clothes of Sykrian women). We can see his male body. Cyrino (1998, 217) argues, as well, that we must consider how later Hercules dies in a state of feminine dress, in a peplos, killed by his wife Deianira (*Met*. 9.211–72). Hercules, the conventional alpha male in mythology, is consistently subjected to and experiences gender instability throughout his life, with feminine clothing acting as a symbol of that instability, Nicole Loraux (1990, 29) understanding the mythical hero’s struggles with femininity to represent general male anxiety about men’s own failed and compromised masculinities. In the *Fasti* episode, we have a clear image of Hercules as a man struggling to take on the physical symbols of femininity. This struggle with the trappings of femininity is evident in another passage from earlier in Ovid’s corpus. Deianira in her epistle to Hercules in the *Her.* condemns how her husband looks as he wears feminine attire, but she
simultaneously intently underlines his male body under that attire and thus “reinvigorates and
reminds the audience” of Hercules’ masculinity just as Ovid does in the *Fasti* (*Her.* 9, 101–18;
Cyrino 1998, 223). The source of the humor, then, perhaps is that Hercules is so clearly male that
Faunus’ impending sexual mistake becomes even deeper and harder to justify. As we have
discussed previously in Chapters Three and Four, Ovid never permanently destabilizes any of his
characters’ genders (one possible exception being the youth Hermaphroditus, who becomes a
semi-vir, but who keeps his male subjectivity), even if he allows genre, something else he
consistently destabilizes, to persist in its problematization. Ovid has a tendency to confuse
gender, but the confusion never remains permanent or explicit, and gender is ultimately
97) can take on the genders of female figures as a disguise to gain more direct access to their
victims, but they prove their masculinity through the violence they enact against female figures.
Hercules becomes another character who only temporarily exhibits gender confusion. But, of
course, as I argued in Chapter Three, all men must face the femininity of death.

When Faunus enters Omphale’s and Hercules’ sleeping area, we learn that they are
sleeping in two separate beds (they are abstaining from sex for the Bacchic ritual). The first thing
Faunus touches is Hercules’ lion skin on Omphale and he is repulsed and terrified by Omphale
wearing Hercules’ clothes, adding to the comedy of the scene (339–42). He then finds Hercules
wearing Omphale’s clothes and begins to attack whom he believes to be his intended target with
a massive erection like Priapus in *Fasti* 1.437 (*tumidum cornu durius inguen erat*, “His swollen
groin was harder than a horn,” 346). This is an interesting commentary on how much clothing
can signify gender, and thus, sexual vulnerability and penetrability to the power of the phallus in
Roman culture. In the dark and for a desperately lustful god, Hercules merely wearing *velamina*
mollia (344), female clothing, makes him a target of male violence, though the god will face the wrath of Hercules’ male physicality, which we have examined above, within moments. (Again, the hero’s masculinity is threatened temporarily, but never truly abnegated.) When Faunus climbs into bed with the deceptive Hercules, he lifts up Omphale’s garments from Hercules’ body and senses Hercules’ hirsute legs (*densis aspera crura pilis*, “his legs rough with dense hair,” 348). Fantham (1983, 199) connects this image to one of the panels from the House of the Disocuri in Pompeii when a dress is lifted up by a man to reveal the male genitalia of Hermaphroditus. Such images of Hermaphroditus and this story reveal male anxieties about attractions to ambiguously gendered bodies, although we only ever see Faunus’ aroused genitalia, not Hercules’, as he anticipates attacking Omphale.

Hercules stops the woodland god from proceeding any further: he quickly rises up from bed and hurls Faunus to the ground from the bed (350). This contrasts with Lotis’ reaction to flee and speaks further to Hercules’ masculinity, latent no more (435–6). Unlike Priapus, Faunus is not stopped by a donkey, he is stopped by his own mistake (Mugatroyd 2005, 85). Another important feature of the narrative, as Murgatroyd notes, is the reversal in Faunus’ physical position at the beginning of the story and at the end. When we first meet him, he is looking down upon Omphale and Hercules from a higher vantage point (*vidit ab excelso Faunus utrumque iugo*, “He sees each of them from a high ridge,” 306). The height of his gaze additionally indicates to Murgatroyd his “soaring thoughts and vaulting ambitions” (2005, 8). Hercules, at the end of the story, now looks down upon the god as he is on the floor. Faunus’ humiliation is worse than that of Priapus because he is subject to the violence and scorn of mortals (Hercules and Omphale), while Priapus receives the scorn of his divine peers (nymphs and satyrs). But Faunus is not the only one to receive scorn: Ovid tells us of Omphale’s laughter at Hercules
(ridet amatorem Lyda puella suum, 356), who has also been humiliated, his attack by Faunus an indication of the deepening of his femininity under Omphale’s power. Her laughter here could be psychologically complex, as well. Is she laughing because she enjoys Hercules’ humiliation, because Faunus undermines his masculinity like she does? Is her laughter a way to hide how happy she was to escape rape? Temporary gender reversal is what saved her from the attack, but female bodies, as I argued, are essentially marked as vulnerable in Ovid’s texts. Omphale is safe for now, but she is not guaranteed safety from masculine violence and under other circumstances, the rape would have probably been successful. Keegan (2002) believes that Omphale’s laughter is a way for Ovid to trivialize the seriousness of the threat she could have been under if Faunus did not make a mistake: he makes her an accomplice of the fun.

Furthermore, the gender inversion in this episode of sexualized violence has significant generic implications. The story of Hercules’ time with Omphale had become popular with love elegists because of its similarities with the servitium amoris position: Hercules was literally enslaved by a woman (or as Ovid calls her here in this passage, a domina, 305); here we see Hercules carrying Omphale’s parasol like a slave normally would (311). Hejduk (2011, 24) contends that Omphale is even likened to the figure of Elegy herself we see in Amores 3.1, strengthening her status as a domina (ibat odoratis umeros perfusa capillis, 309) compared to venit odoratos Elegia nixa capillos (“Elegy came, her hair perfumed and in a coil,” Amores 3.1.7). Ovid’s narrator in Amores 3.1 wants to turn to the genre of tragedy, but Elegy makes Ovid submit one more time to her wishes, writing one more book of elegiac poetry. Ovid is relying on his audience’s familiarity with Omphale’s place in love elegy and the servitium amoris

---

158 For the servitium amoris trope elegy, see Propertius 3.11.17–20, 4.9.47f., Her. 9.73–80, and Ars 2.217–22. Cyrino’s point about how Hercules’ masculinity is never truly suppressed could also be part of the hero’s appeal to elegists. Yes, Hercules does experience the servitium amoris, but he can still ultimately be a man.

159 Hejduk (2011, 24) also adds: “Like Elegy, whose robe is tenissima (Am. 3.1.9), Omphale’s tunics are tenues (319)—the Latin word perhaps most characteristic of Callimachean poetics.”
rope for this *Fasti* episode, but he also infuses many epic elements into the scene, once again showing how the *Fasti* straddles both the elegiac and epic genres.

The use of epic may be in an effort to intensify Ovid’s presentation of Hercules’ humiliation. Hercules, supposedly a man of epic, who elsewhere in the *Fasti*, battles Cacus (1.543–82) and is a hero for Rome, wears clothing of a woman enslaving him. In this episode, he dons *armilla* instead of *arma* (Robinson 2011, 234). Ovid uses ubiquitous allusions to Vergil’s *Aen.* to create an epic mood, most particularly the scene of Dido and Aeneas’ “marriage” and first sexual encounter in the cave in Book 4. We are in the *locus amoenus* during this scene of sexualized violence as usual, but we are specifically in a cave (*antra subit tafis laqueata et pumice vivo/ garrulus in primo limine rivus erat,* “She entered the cave paneled with tufa and living rock and there was a bubbling stream in the front of the threshold,” 315–16). Ovid makes his intentions to refer to the Dido episode in the *Aen.* clear from the beginning of this scene with the question *quid non amor improbus audet?* (“What does shameless love not dare?” 331), which Hejduk (2011, 24) and Murgatroyd (2005, 112) contend should remind us of part of Dido’s monologue in *Aen.* 4.412: *improve Amor, quid non mortalia pectora cogis!* (“Shameless Love, to what do you not force mortal hearts?”) But who is Dido in this scenario? Is Faunus Dido because he is the one with the doomed passion? Hejduk (2011, 23) draws the connections between Faunus and Dido while making the following clever observation: “Ovid’s episode ends with Faunus groaning, scarcely able to raise himself from the ground after falling off the couch, with the spotlight shining right on him (351–54)...Dido meets her end in a more dignified yet strangely similar way, scarcely able to raise herself from her couch, seeking the light and groaning when she finds it (*Aen.* 4.690–92).” Overall, likening Faunus to Dido makes irreverent use of a tragic love story from Vergil, destabilizes gender and genre simultaneously, adds
another gender inversion into the mix, and heightens the comedy of the passage.

According to King (2006), the gender-bending of this episode is one manifestation of a concern with such inversions throughout all of *Fasti* Book 2. We have transvestism here, and King also suggests that the episode contains actual, not merely mistaken, homoerotic attraction. He observes that Faunus appears not to stop his attack on Hercules even after he notices his hairy legs, indicating an actual, even if subconscious, attraction to the male body. King (2006, 205) takes it as significant that he orders men to be naked during the Lupercalia after this particular humiliation: it is possible it is not only to ensure he does not assault a man again, but also reveals his real attraction to men. We have no idea if Faunus would have continued if Hercules, the light, and the laughter of the mortals, had not stopped him from doing so. Earlier in Book 2.155–160, King (2006, 189–90) notes the unwillingness of Callisto to give up a masculine type of independence for femininity. Callisto, as we discussed in Chapter Four using evidence from King, even likens her bow to a symbolic phallus, using them as *testes* (the witnesses) of her vow (158). And during the narrative of Lucretia’s rape by Sextus, the tyrant takes on many feminine characteristics in his passions for Lucretia (his passions are similar to those of Dido in *Aen.* Books 1 and 4), and Lucretia is described after her death as a *virilis matrona animi* (2.847; King 2006, 220). King, on the whole, believes that Ovid destabilizes gender in *Fasti* Book 2 (even if impermanently) to demonstrate the destabilization of his own gender in exile and under Augustan patriarchy, especially in light of Ovid’s acknowledgment of Augustus as *pater patriae* earlier in Book 2.127 (144). This is an argument similar to the one I will make in Chapter Six about Ovid’s representation of gender and sexualized violence in the exile poetry.

3. *The Rape of Juturna by Jupiter and The Rape of Lara by Mercury: Limits of Sisterhood*
This narrative of rape is unique in Ovid because it features the double rape of sister nymphs, Juturna and Lara, by two different gods, Jupiter and Mercury (like father, like son). Ovid tells this story of double rape to explain the origins of the infernal Tacita/Muta, the goddess of silence (2.571–582). How does she become silent and who was she before? She was once the nymph, Lara (derived from the Greek word λαλέω, “to prattle”), whom Jupiter, like Tereus in the Met. severely punishes with the mutilation and removal of her tongue and ability to speak after she attempts to protect Juturna, her sister, from his predatory advances by informing on him. Mercury, on his father’s order, leading her, silent, to the underworld, rapes Lara and impregnates her with the Lares, the Roman household gods brought from Troy to Italy by the founder of the Roman race, Aeneas.160 Afterward, she transforms into Tacita, the goddess of silence. Like many of the female figures in Ovid, Lara’s origins as a goddess are in rape. Everett Beek (2015), particularly in the third chapter of her dissertation, explores the role of apotheosis for the Fasti’s rape victims and the direct connections Ovid makes between the violence of rape and subsequent divine transformation. Lara is elevated from nymph to the goddess Tacita with her own Roman festival through Mercury (2.533–616), just as the nymph Callisto becomes a constellation through Jupiter (2.153–92), the mortal Anna Perenna becomes a nymph through Numinicus (3.633–644), Proserpina the goddess becomes the queen of the underworld through Hades (4.393–620), Flora becomes the goddess of flowers through Zephyrus (5.195–206), and the nymph Carna becomes the goddess of hinges through Janus (6.101–28). In every case, the female figures are promoted by the male gods who raped them as an act of compensation for the violence they experienced. For Lara, Mercury’s connection as compensating and promoting agent is more ambiguous than in Callisto’s, Flora’s, and Carna’s cases because we do not see

160 Interest in the origins of the Lares would have been of particular concern at this time in Rome because Augustus had recently reorganized the vici (districts) of Rome (increasing them from seven to fourteen), installing sculptures, images, and shrines of the Lares Augusti throughout the vici. For more see Robinson 2011, 370–2.
him perform the act of promotion himself, but it is clear from the narrative that she becomes such a goddess with worshippers and a festival *because* Mercury brought her to the underworld and she gave birth to Mercury’s sons, important Roman gods. Proserpina’s and Anna Perenna’s agents of compensation and promotion are similarly ambiguous, but Proserpina becomes the goddess of death after Pluto abducts her, takes her to underworld, marries her, and Anna Perenna becomes the nymph of the river Numinicus after he pulls her into his waters.

There is something troubling, however, in allowing these to be seen as truly and fully promotions and acts of compensation, which sometimes Everett Beek in fact does. As I explored in Chapter Three, although these female figures move from mortal to immortal or from nymph to divine, their transformations result in their social deaths and result in positions that typify their abuse and their subordinate status to their rapists. We will see that Lara is removed permanently from her community of sister nymphs (and brought to the underworld, intensifying her social death) and after her apotheosis, her new role as Tacita, the goddess of silence, immortalizes the silencing effects of her mutilation and rape and serves as a reminder of what the goals were of those acts of violence by Jupiter and Mercury: to control female speech and to exploit and further enforce the vulnerability of female figures. Lara is now a goddess, but why did she have to pay so high a price? Why do these other female figures in the *Fasti* pay that same one?

Moreover, as far as we know, Ovid is the only author to provide an account of Lara’s rape and transformation into Tacita/Muta. This has led some scholars, like Robinson (2011, 373), to assume it is entirely Ovid’s fiction (many assume the same of the story of Flora, as well; see Fantham 1993, 50–1). At the very least, Ovid is consciously using this story and making Lara prominent to make connections with Echo and Philomela in the *Met.* and Lucretia later in the *Fasti.* And, of course, Ovid intimately ties the story of Lara with that of Juturna, whom Ovid’s
audience would have likely known about from her role as the protector of Turnus in Vergil’s 
Aen. Ovid not only uses Lara as a means for self-referentialism, but as a means to once again 
allude to Vergil. Ovid significantly changes the account of Juturna’s rape by Jupiter from Vergil, 
which will be explored in more depth below. Robinson (2011, 373) believes that Ovid is either 
appealing to a tradition of Juturna earlier than Vergil’s or could be differentiating himself from 
the epic poet while still noticeably (and inevitably) interacting with him.

Ovid begins Tacita/Muta’s origin story with Juturna and Jupiter. Unlike Jupiter’s usual 
*modus operandi* of quick action when he is *immoderato...victus amore* (“conquered by excessive 
love,” 2.585), he pursues and stalks Juturna because she consistently eludes capture (586–7), 
flight being a typical act of resistance to rape for female figures, although it is often ineffective. 
The king of the gods turns to her sister-nymphs to help him ensure that he can fulfill his desire 
for Juturna and that her successful evasions end. He specifically wants help trapping her in one 
place (595–6). In a twist on Ovid’s pattern, instead of Jupiter boasting about his powers and the 
great benefits he will provide to the object of his affection, he relays this braggadocio to her 
sisters, whom he has convened together. He particularly reminds them that he is a god and that 
his *voluptas* will be of great *utilitas* for Juturna (593–4). The chorus of her sister-nymphs agrees 
to help him, making an interesting comment on the complicity of female figures in rape, how 
female figures protect themselves from rape by harming others, groupthink, and also on the 
impossibility of resisting greater powers and the possibility of giving true consent to violence 
(*dixerat; adnuerant nymphae...omnes*, “He had said; all the nymphs had agreed,” 597). Some 
authors, like Everett Beek (2015), are not convinced that the nymphs and Lara are Juturna’s 
blood sisters, but only metaphorically. This could be true for the other nymphs Jupiter convenes, 
but I am convinced that Lara, at least, is Juturna’s blood sister, especially because of the
connections Ovid makes between this story and that of Philomela and Procne. Lara, as I will explain later, also seems to take the place of Turnus in Vergil as the sibling figure in Juturna’s life. This blood relation can also explain why she is the only nymph to defend Juturna.

When Jupiter believes the moment has come to finally capture Juturna, one of the nymphs who previously seemed to agree along with the rest, Lara, tells Juturna to run and informs on Jupiter to Juno (‘effuge’ ait ‘ripas,’ dicta refertque Iovis/ illa etiam Iunonem adiit, miserataque nuptas/ ‘Naida Iuturnam vir tuus’ inquit ‘amat,’ “Lara says, ‘flee the banks’ and relays the word of Jupiter. She also approaches Juno and pitying their marriage, says: ‘Your husband loves the Naiad Juturna,’” 604–6), displaying a spirit of sisterhood to both Juturna and Juno, which Jupiter does not at all appreciate. Jupiter enraged at her meddling and informing, rips out Lara’s tongue (eripit huic linguam, 607–8) and orders Mercury to bring her to the underworld (609–10). Like Arachne, Lara is punished “for the offense of publicizing the sexual transgressions of the gods” (Everett Beek 2015, 135). Lara cannot die because she is an immortal nymph, but she can swim down there, forever silent, an infernal Naiad. Jupiter particularly wants her to be in another location so his plans can proceed with Juturna. Mercury, attracted to her mutilation, her enforced silence, her solitude (dicitur illa duci tum placuisse deo, “it is said then that she pleased the god, who leads [the psychopompus],” 612), rapes her (vim parat, 613)¹ and she becomes pregnant with the twin Lares (fitque gravis geminosque parit…Lares, 615–6). She tries to appeal to Mercury before he rapes her in her silence, but her fate resembles that of Callisto and Io after their rapes: her appeal is to no avail because she has lost her ability to speak and can only pantomime to win his pity and mercy (voltu pro verbis illa precatur,/ et frustra muto nititur ore loqui, “she appeals with her face instead of her words and she struggles in vain to speak with her mute mouth,” 613–4; Lada-Richards 2013). And like many of the rapes in the Fasti, such as that

¹ For other iterations of vim parat, see Met. 2.576, 5.288, 11.240, 14.770.
of Callisto, Mercury’s attack is quite brusque and lean on details. In the wake of her rape, pregnancy, and coerced migration to the underworld, she becomes Tacita.

In this narrative, to reiterate my arguments from above, Ovid not only emphasizes how Lara suffers mutilation and rape, but also social death because of Jupiter and Mercury and her later deification. In relation to this social death, Dolansky (2016, 42) notes that another prominent feature of this story is Ovid’s emphasis on how Jupiter’s lust for Juturna has destroyed several familial units: the bonds between sister-nymphs and the marriage of Jupiter and Juno. Lara’s intervention into Jupiter’s plans attempts to repair both, and Jupiter punishes her mightily for it. As mentioned in Chapter Four during my discussion of the rapes of Callisto in the *Met.* and *Fasti,* Dolansky (2016) argues that Ovid establishes a pattern in *Fasti* Book 2 that highlights and connects the ruptured family relations in the Callisto, Juturna/Lara, and Lucretia rape narratives in order to issue a critique of Augustus’ moral legislation. The moral legislation stripped a Roman patriarch’s ability to discipline the sexual transgressions of his family privately, as was customary under the Republic, and made sexual transgressions a public, national offense. This drastically changed traditional familial relations, the integrity of the patriarchal family, and the power of a *paterfamilias.* Adultery particularly, under Augustus, began to be prosecuted in court rather than resolved within the *domus.* Dolansky, to prove her argument that Ovid is issuing a critique of the emperor and his reforms, points to an abundance of familial imagery and vocabulary in the Callisto (*Fasti* 2.176, 184, 186), the Juturna/Lara (*Fasti* 2.588, 592, 594, 599–600, 603, 605), and the Lucretia (*Fasti* 2.814–16, 821, 829, 832, 836, 847) stories, points to Ovid’s emphasis on how familial units become disordered because of rape, and points to how Ovid has connected Jupiter, throughout his corpus and in *Fasti* Book 2, to Augustus. For example, in a controversial attempt at panegyric, Ovid declares to
Augustus in *Fasti* Book 2: *hoc tu per terras, quod in aethere Iuppiter alto,/nomen habes: hominum tu pater, ille deum* (“You have the name throughout the lands, which Jupiter holds in the high heavens: you are the father of men, Jupiter the father of the gods, 131–2). The connections between Sextus Tarquinius in the rape of Lucretia to Augustus are more implicit, but Ovid’s audience would have seen both figures as autocratic rulers of Rome. Augustus, like Jupiter, Jupiter’s son Mercury, and Sextus Tarquinius, enters family units and disrupts them with sexual chaos, although Augustus claimed his interventions into Roman homes were an effort to protect and purify rather than to disrupt families. Ovid echoes this sentiment when he distinguishes Augustus from Romulus shortly after the connections he makes between Jupiter and Augustus in the passage quoted above. Ovid writes that Romulus rapes women, but Augustus keeps women chaste (*tu rapis, hic castas duce se iubet esse maritas, Fasti* 2.139). Augustus himself, because of his desire to marry Livia, disrupted a family unit, ensuring that Calpurnius Piso’s wife was his own. Caligula, according to Suetonius, connected Romulus and Augustus as “wife-snatchers” he can imitate for his own vices (*Caligula* 21.1).

Dolansky’s analysis helps us to understand how interconnected the stories of rape are in *Fasti* 2 (from both a literary and political perspective), but Lara’s narrative should remind us of others in Ovid’s corpus in both the *Met.* and the *Fasti* because of what it can say about sororophobia, rape, silencing, and (the delegitimization of) resistance to male power. The most obvious comparison to Lara’s story, which I alluded to briefly above, is that of Philomela, who is raped and has her tongue excised by the Thracian tyrant Tereus when she speaks out against his violence (*Met.* 6.549–70). The order of the violence, however, is strikingly different in both narratives: Lara is mutilated and then raped rather than raped then mutilated (and then raped again) as with Philomela. In Philomela’s story, the violence of her first rape by Tereus, which we
do not see, is displaced onto her later mutilation by the Thracian king (Everett Beek 2015, 125). With Lara, her mutilation instead foreshadows the violence of the rape she will experience from Mercury: one orifice is penetrated and maimed without consent only for another orifice to suffer the same. Ovid, at the end of Tacita’s/Lara’s narrative, makes the connections with Philomela (and also Procne) explicit when he lists famous mythological figures who cannot attend Tacita’s festival because of their dysfunctional family relations, and Philomela, Procne, and Tereus are among them: *et soror et Procne Tereusque duabus iniquus* (“either Procne or her sister and Tereus, hostile to them both,” *Fasti* 2.629). (One of Tacita’s roles now as a goddess is to protect living generations of families, 2.617–22.) Ovid will later connect Lucretia’s rape explicitly with the story of Philomela through a similar, mythological allusion. Lucretia, Philomela, and Lara all experience rape, mutilation, familial chaos, silencing, and (figurative and/or literal) death.

For both Lara and Philomela, their tongues become physical symbols of their resistance to male power. Lara has particularly been punished for daring to protect other other females, her actual sister, or in other words, “the punishment for sisterhood” (Richlin 1992, 172). She refuses to take part in Jupiter’s violence like the other nymphs and to commit sororophobia, although it is unclear if the nymphs can do anything else but agree to Jupiter’s demands because of their lower positions. The fact that she is protecting her sister evokes Procne, as well (Robinson 2011, 285). Procne, in Ovid, faces punishment for prioritizing her blood bonds to Philomela over that of marriage bonds and as Dolansky has argued, the stories of Juturna and Lara and Procne and Philomela work to emphasize the rupturing of familial bonds because of outside, violent male forces (2016, 42–3). In addition, Lara’s mutilation is a source of attraction to Mercury, who like Tereus, rapes a maimed female figure. Tereus continues to rape Philomela after he mutilates her without the risk of her testifying to his violence (*Met.* 6.549–70). Both Lara and Philomela
become easier to rape because they cannot resist vocally. And even if Lara and Philomela still have human form after their rapes, they have become animalized by their inability to speak (Richlin 1992, 172). They become like the many anthropomorphic figures who have transformed into animals, such as Io and Callisto, who cannot supplicate after their rapes without a voice.

Lara’s story, moreover, mirrors that of Echo—the nymph who defied a goddess, Juno, with her speech and loses her ability to speak for that defiance. But unlike Lara, it is possible that Echo was complicit with Jupiter, abetting his amatory ambitions with nymphs, ensuring that he was not disturbed by Juno’s prying eyes (Met. 3.362–4). It is also entirely possible that Echo, as we considered in Chapter Four, wanted to protect her sister nymphs from Juno’s sororophobic wrath even if she could not protect them from Jupiter’s sexual aggression: how do lesser immortals like Echo have to accommodate the power of Olympians for their own safety and survival? Whose violence will ultimately be worse: that of Jupiter or Juno? One would almost expect in this Juturna and Lara episode to see Juno’s famous wrath against the paelices of Jupiter, as in the rape of Callisto in the Fasti. Sororophobic violence has become an ingrained part of Ovid’s representations of rapes and their aftermaths, but in this episode Ovid instead focuses on the lasting, negative consequences of female solidarity, a preeminent issue for Philomela and Procne’s myth. The mutilations of Philomela and Lara, in the end, remind the audience of the futility of vocal resistance to male violence. Not one female figure in Ovid resists male power or sororophobic mandates without also suffering painful ramifications.

To bring us back to the Fasti, Lara’s silencing here, as alluded to above, recalls both the silencing of Callisto earlier in Fasti Book 2 (and additionally in Met. Book 2) and forecasts the silencing of Lucretia later in the book, whose lack of voice after her rape and death Brutus and Roman men appropriate to oust the Tarquinian tyrants and begin the Roman Republic (Newlands
1995, 148). Brutus takes the sword out of her body (the phallic symbol of her rape) and becomes the leader of the revolution. It becomes clear how men control speech throughout Fasti Book 2 and elsewhere in Ovid: Jupiter and Tereus remove the voices of Lara and Philomela, Sextus scares it out of Lucretia—and Lucretia’s male relatives do nothing to restore it. It also becomes clear from Lara’s story how fundamental the domination, silencing, and other violence against female figures is to Roman history, politics, culture, and religion. Keegan (2002) contends that the silencing of female figures is one of the foundations of the Fasti and its treatment of gender, that there is an essential masculinism to the text. We have the mutilation and rape of Lara (the mother of the Lares), we have the rape and death of Lucretia (the woman whose suffering began the Republic), we have the rape of Rhea Silvia (the mother of Romulus and Remus), and the rape of the Sabines (the mothers of a growing Roman state). Roman men appropriate the pain of these women and the products of that pain for their political advantage and to create and enforce masculinist structures that exclude and silence women, like the Roman state and government. It is no coincidence that the goddess of silence is a female, based on how Ovid consistently engenders silencing as a feminine state. We will discuss the importance of silencing of women in Ovid in more depth in Chapter Six, as I argue that Ovid likens himself to rape victims to speak to his own silencing by Augustus in exile.

Interestingly, Book 2 of the Met., like Fasti Book 2, is thematically unified through its emphasis on silence either through metamorphosis or punishment for tale-telling and challenges to the divine, a unity Keith (1992) has documented in her monograph The Play of Fiction. We have Callisto silenced through metamorphosis (466–95), Aglauros turned into stone for threatening Mercury (812–33), the crow and the raven punished for relating stories to their enraged divine masters (531–95). But of course, one can find silence everywhere in the Met. and
the *Fasti*. Feeney (1992) explores how the entire *Fasti*, in fact, is dedicated to analyzing circumstances of both permissible speech (fas) and impermissible (nefas). When and how, particularly under the principate of Augustus, can one engage in freedom of speech? During the festival of Anna Perenna and the festival of Floralia, lower classes, particularly female sex laborers, were given a *libertas* and *licentia* rarely enjoyed outside the festivals. But, in turn, Ovid documents stories in the *Fasti*, primarily those of female figures such as Callisto, Lara, and Lucretia, who are silenced through rape, metamorphosis, and/or mutilation or punished for speaking out of turn. It becomes clear, according to Feeney, and also to scholars like Cahoon (1990), Klindienst (1990), de Luce (1993), Newlands (1995), Forbis (1997), and Enterline (2000), that Ovid uses stories like that of Lara as a metaphor for Rome’s current political conditions, the consequences for “using our tongues without restraint” under tyranny, and the personal, political, and artistic repression he faced from Augustus’ power (Feeney 1992, 12).

Ovid’s story of Juturna, furthermore, responds to Vergil’s account of Juturna in *Aen.* Book 12. In Vergil’s story of Juturna, she is turned into a nymph by Jupiter after her rape (12.113–60), an act of compensation like we see throughout the rapes in the *Fasti*. She is the sister of Turnus and uses her powers as a nymph and her close relationship with Juno to protect her brother from Aeneas and the Trojans (12.468–99). Juno in Vergil appears to hold no sororophobic resentment toward Juturna and honors her above all of Jupiter’s other female figures (Juno calls her the *nympha...animo gratissima nostro*, “the nymph most pleasing to my spirit,” 12.142), even if she found what the other female figures did distasteful and indicates that in no way does she believe it was rape (12.142–5). Murgatroyd (2005, 132) contends that Juno favors Juturna so much because she fled him successfully for so long and this might have proved to Juno that she was unwilling to sleep with Jupiter, though, of course, Juno should extend that sympathy even to
female figures who were not as successful at eluding him, understanding his supreme power. In Ovid’s account, Juturna appears to already be a nymph and her relationship with Turnus and Juno is unclear, possibly nonexistent (Turnus even in the “little Aeneid” of the Met. has a very limited and muted presence, 14.445–82). Lara is the prominent sibling figure. Juturna, moreover, as far as we can see in the Fasti, escapes Jupiter, and Lara instead becomes the primary victim of rape in the narrative. Nonetheless, Ovid’s narrative strongly implies that once Mercury has removed Lara as an obstacle, Jupiter will rape Juturna, especially since the other nymphs agreed to help him and Ovid intentionally interacts with Vergil’s account of the aftermath of her rape.

Murgatroyd (2005) argues that Ovid is once again parodying Vergil through genre play, as he did with Omphale and Hercules, by taking what was a tragic story in the Aen. (that of Dido) and making it comic. Juturna consistently evades the all-powerful Jupiter and the god must turn to the nymphs to help him. Murgatroyd finds it particularly significant that Jupiter’s interactions with the nymphs allude to a scene in which Jupiter convenes the Olympians in Aen. 10.1–15, and their nodding echoes that of the gods in 10.113–15 and Juno alone in 12.841. Jupiter is parodied because he is wheedling agreement out of lowly nymphs and not commanding more important gods. I agree with Murgatroyd that Jupiter is made to look rather laughable, but this scene, to me, does not necessarily read as completely comic, although there are elements of humor, because of Juturna’s very vivid unwillingness to be with Jupiter. It is suspect that Murgatroyd does not recognize the female perspective in his analysis of the story’s tone. Juturna’s desperation is clear. Ovid refers to her fleeing three times within thirty lines (588, 596, and 604). Murgatroyd (2005, 226) believes the tone visibly shifts when we arrive at Lara’s mutilation and rape, making this episode a tragicomic one. But the tragic tones were endemic from the beginning, even if Jupiter looks foolish in his pursuit of Juturna. We know that Jupiter is willing to commit violence
against female figures and even if we do not see it in full force with Juturna, we see it with Lara. Ovid could be manipulating the expectations of his audience: Where is the brutal rapist and tyrant we have come to know from the Met. and earlier in the Fasti? But in a few lines, we see that god. Moreover, the message of the entire episode appears fundamentally tragic because it demonstrates the futility of resisting the Olympian gods. The nymphs could very well have been forced into consenting to help Jupiter catch Juturna: What would he have done if they said no? True consent cannot exist if one only has the option to say yes. Lara, bravely, refuses to abide by Jupiter’s power and resists him, only to experience what the nymphs who agreed to help him wanted to avoid for themselves. Then Lara becomes the goddess Tacita, a figure reminding women forever more of the price of resistance. As a goddess she now has the ability to inflict silence upon others and the cycle of violence continues (Everett Beek 2015, 144–6; Fasti 2.571–82). Yes, Lara as Tacita has gained a power, but it is one that continues the violence of her rape. It is, of course, arguable if this would have been a tragedy for Ovid as author and his Roman male audience. Maybe they believed Lara deserved what she suffered.

One final way that Ovid interacts with Vergil is that he presents us with a part of Juturna’s rape narrative that we do not see at all in Vergil. The earlier poet only shows us the aftermath of her rape by Jupiter. What could have happened to Juturna before? Ovid often interacts with earlier textual versions of a rape narrative repeated in different parts of his corpus, filling in the pieces of the story he earlier omitted. For example, in the rape of Europa, he shows us the before in the Met. 2.833–875 and the aftermath in the Fasti 4.603–620. In many ways, Ovid picks up the story from the Met. in the Fasti version. Ovid here is providing a kind of prequel to Vergil (since it does not have a one to one relationship) and it is worth noting what themes and character moments Ovid fails to include in his version of Juturna’s (and Lara’s) story in
comparison to the earlier poet. For example, in *Aen.* 12. 878–84, Juturna denounces her rape and how it has harmed her. This is not an opportunity Ovid provides to Juturna or Lara because Juturna drops out of the narrative and Lara becomes Tacita/Muta, forever made to perform her silence for Romans. As Ovid shifts to Lara’s story and silences Lara permanently, he denies two female figures subjectivity and the right to condemn their abuses. The Vergilian Juturna, even if in Ovid Jupiter says he will be of *utilitas* to her, loathes what Jupiter did to her and also his present of immortality because now she cannot go with her brother to the underworld and must mourn him eternally. There was no *utilitas* at all. She proclaims: *haec pro virginitate repoint?* (“This is how Jupiter repays me for the loss of my virginity?” 878). Jupiter not only took away her virginity and her honor, he took away her right to mourn as she sees fit.

**4. The Rape of Lucretia by Sextus Tarquinius: The Ovidian Matron**

The rape of Lucretia is the longest narrative of rape in the *Fasti* and one of the longest in Ovid’s corpus. As with the rape of the Sabines in the *Ars* and in the *Fasti,* much of the scholarly interest in the narrative revolves around its intersections with Livy’s account of it in *Ab urbe condita* 1.57–9. Ovid is obviously interacting with Livy throughout the episode; for example, they are the only accounts of Lucretia’s rape and subsequent death to include the competition assessing the virtue of the wives of the Roman men fighting in Ardea (*Fasti* 2.725–61; Livy *AUC* 1.57). Understanding Livy’s influence should be a prominent aspect of any analysis of this episode because Ovid intended it that way, but I want to attempt to approach this episode by underscoring—as much as possible—Ovid’s representation of Lucretia’s rape in the context of how he represents sexualized violence in general. How is this again an expression of his systematic patterns, while also reacting to Livy? How does this narrative link with what came before it in the *Fasti* Book 2 and elsewhere in Ovid’s corpus, particularly with the rapes of Lara
and Philomela? Ovid includes many of the elements that speak to his particular concerns as an artist who frequently portrays sexualized violence and rape and in the process, he creates his own canonical account of Lucretia and differentiates himself from the historian.

First, Ovid, as with many of his narratives of rape, introduces both elegiac and epic generic characteristics and tropes into the narrative: it is often a way for him to create tension between eros and violence, as we discussed in the rapes of Rhea Silvia, Apollo, and more. Newlands (1995), Hejduk (2011), and Robinson (2011) before me have observed the elegiac atmosphere of this narrative, and Robinson (2011) and Hejduk (2011) have in particular explored the conflict between the elegiac and the epic and I want to highlight some of their analysis here. This entire Ovidian episode, as in Livy, is framed by a military, or epic, context. The men of Rome are fighting a war in Ardea and they arrive onto the scene of Collatinus’ house like soldiers doing reconnaissance on the enemy (*inde cito passu petitur Lucretia*, “Thence, Lucretia is sought on swift foot,” *Fasti* 2.740), although in reality it is a competition of machismo: who can prove he has the most sexual power over his wife? But the elegiac context becomes apparent in Ovid almost immediately. When we see Lucretia she is the paragon of the matron, weaving into the night (the traditional sign of female virtue and economy in epic, with figures like Andromache and Penelope), but her weaving is described with elegiac code words (*mollis...exiguum...tenui*, 740–4). During this scene of male voyeurism, we also see that Lucretia is passionately in love with her husband. Ovid writes that she stops her weaving to give her first and only long speech in the narrative, much earlier than in Livy (Lucretia does not speak in Livy until her confession before her relatives). She proclaims how much she longs for Collatinus and hates how the war has separated them, reminiscent of Arethusa in Propertius 4.3, a woman who pines for her soldier husband (Wyke 1987, 157–61). When she thinks of Collatinus fighting with a sword, she faints,
feels like she is dying, and feels a chill in her breast (mens abit, et morior, quotiens pungantis imago/ me subit, et gelidum pectora frigus habet, 753–4).

After her speech, the wool falls from her lap, foreshadowing her future loss of chastity and showing a kind of sexual availability to those watching her (755–6). Lucretia calling her husband temerarius (“reckless,” 751), which Penelope and Laodamia say about their husbands at war in the Her 1.41 and 13.91, and also calling him dominus (745), which is used to describe elegiac male lovers in several places in Ovid including Amores 3.7.11 and Her. 8.8, moreover add to the elegiac atmosphere. Robinson (2011, 473) observes that this is the fantasy woman Propertius (3.6) and Tibullus (1.3) so desired in their elegiac texts: a sexually fervent Roman matron. It is tellingly erotic that Lucretia here calls attention to the feelings in her chest and her overall bodily sensations as she longs for her husband and as we will explore, this sexual energy, along with the wool falling from her lap, will be one of the foundations upon which Ovid victim-blames Lucretia. They both indicate openness to sexuality, which Ovid in the past has depicted through features like a woman’s attire and how much of her body it exposes. The wool is a more abstract indicator. In Livy, we have no sense of Lucretia’s passionate feelings for her husband, only of her feminine virtue in comparison to the Etruscan wives who have been cavorting.

The narrator comments that her weeping and her lowering her head into her hands were quite attractive (along with her face) (hoc ipsum decuit: lacrimae decuere pudicam,/ et facies animo dignaque parque fuit, “This gesture was attractive: her tears befit the chaste woman and her face was worthy of her soul and equal to her,” 757–8). These features are also considered alluring in elegiac poetry. For example, Ovid mentions weeping as attractive in Amores 2.4.11 and the lowered gaze as attractive in Ars 1.533 and Amores 2.5.43. The elegiac

---

162 This image is similar to Catullus 65.18–23, when the apple rolls out of Cydippe’s lap, and most similar to when Leucothoe, surprised by Sol before her rape, drops the implements of weaving from her lap (Met. 4.229).
context continues even after her rape by Sextus, when the narrator calls Lucretia *puella* (810). But Hejduk (2011, 25) urges us to remember that throughout this scene, the Roman matron is given “epic seriousness” because of how closely connected she is to Andromache in the *Iliad*, who weaves for her husband and drops her weaving tools when she discovers Hector’s death (κωκυτοῦ δ’ ἥκουσε καὶ οἴμωγῆς ἀπὸ πύργου:/ τῆς δ’ ἐλελίχθη γυῖα, χαμαι δὲ οἱ ἐκπεσε κερκίς, “She heard the wailing [of Hecuba and Priam] and groaning from the wall: her limbs reeled and she dropped the weaving shuttle to the ground,” 22.447–8). Her abandonment of her weaving represents the demise of her relationship with Hector and how because of his death, she will become sexually available to whichever Greek man enslaves her (as we discussed in Chapter Two). In the *Iliad*, we learn from Agamemnon that female slaves both weave and sleep with their masters (1.28–30). Hejduk additionally observes that the narrator “delivers an epic-sounding comment as Lucretia prepares for her own destruction” by offering *xenia* to Sextus (2011, 25). The narrator writes in *Fasti* 2.789: *quantum animis erroris inest* (“How much error there is in minds”), which is similar to *heu, vatum ignarae mentes* (“Alas, the ignorant mind of the prophets”) in *Aen.* 4.65, referring to the prophecies Dido receives about her future and her inevitable destruction. As in the attempted rape of Omphale/Hercules, many of the direct allusions to Vergil from Ovid center around the Dido narrative, possibly because of the rich generic variety of *Aen.* Book 4: a tragic, elegiac, and epic piece of poetry all at once.

One of the clearest signs of both the elegiac and epic context is the inclusion of the *militia amoris* trope in which Sextus Tarquinius represents himself as a soldier preparing for the battle of rape and connects how he invaded Gabii with his plan to invade Lucretia’s bed (779–83):

\[
\text{Ardet et iniusti stimulis agitatus amoris} \\
\text{comparat indigno vimque dolumque toro.} \\
\]

“Exitus in dubio est: audebimus ultima!” dixit, 
“Viderit! audentes forsque deusque iuvat.”
Sextus burns with passion and disturbed by the goads of a wicked love, he prepares violence and trickery against a wedding bed that did not deserve it. He said: ‘The outcome is in doubt. But we will dare for the most extreme. Let Lucretia lay her eyes on me! God and fate help those who dare. I captured Gabii by daring, as well.

Just as he can penetrate the walls of Gabii, he can penetrate Lucretia, Sextus relying here on a typical conflation in Greek and Roman literature between the gates/doors/walls of a city and a woman’s body, which Ovid also explores in Amores 1.9. The militia amoris here is taken to its logical conclusion by Sextus, rape being the manifestation of both eros and violence.

Murgatroyd, in his discussion of the militia amoris in the episode, observes that before Sextus rapes her, Ovid calls him a hostis to Lucretia three times (7.287, 790, 805) and after he rapes her, Sextus is called a victor in 2.811, diction that deepens the connections Ovid is making to the militaristic violence and the elegiac trope. But Murgatroyd asserts that this is one of the most extreme examples of militia amoris in Ovid’s corpus and that it never reaches a violent state in the Amores or elsewhere. Murgatroyd (2005, 169) writes one of the ways in which Ovid condemns Sextus (Murgatroyd believes that his account of Lucretia’s rape, like that of Callisto and Lara, is portrayed sympathetically) is through how the prince “perverted and debased…normal love” and the elegiac code. But this ignores poems like Amores 1.7 (analyzed in Chapter Two) where violence against women is sexualized all the while Ovid compares himself to a soldier during a scene of triumph. In fact, the militia amoris in Ovid is not “harmless” or even metaphorical, but has material, violent consequences for the women in his poetry; and as Ovid later in his corpus applies these militaristic images and vocabulary to scenes of rape such as the rape of the Sabines in the Ars and here with the rape of Lucretia, the violence lurking beneath the militia amoris trope becomes lucid. Moreover, I must note that a more implicit kind of militia amoris is present in Livy: the historian does not have Sextus speak of it
plainly. But the military context of Sextus’ rape of Lucretia is clear and as in Ovid, Sextus has successfully invaded Gabii (*AUC* 1.54) and thus, can successfully invade the home, bed, and body of this Roman matron. Livy describes what Sextus did to Lucretia after the fact in military terms and vocabulary (for example, *quo terrore cum vicisset obstinatam pudicitiam*, “With which fear he had conquered the stubborn chastity of Lucretia,” *AUC* 1.58.5), demonstrating, like Ovid, a blurring of the lines between eros and violence that is essential to the *militia amoris*.

Furthermore, Ovid’s extensive description of Sextus’ desire for Lucretia and greater emphasis on the connections between the male gaze and sexual desire, renders Ovid’s account of the rape of Lucretia more obviously erotic, and thus, elegiac (Newlands 1995, Murgatroyd 2005, Robinson 2011). That is not to say, however, that Ovid’s account is *essentially* elegiac (a stance Hinds 1987 may take), or that Livy is not concerned with the male gaze and how looking upon the female body foments the passion of men to rape. He is the author who first introduces the shared voyeurism of the competition of the wives into the myth of Lucretia and shows that Sextus’ desire stems from what he saw of Lucretia’s *forma* and *castitas* (*cum forma tum spectata castitas incitat*, *AUC* 1.57.11) and thus, locates the origin of the rape in the matron’s body. He sees Lucretia and then he rapes her. In Livy as well, the tyranny of the Tarquins is overthrown because of the public display of Lucretia’s dead body after her rape, a body with the gaping wound in her chest from the sword (*elatum domo Lucretiae corpus in forum deferunt concientque miraculo, ut fit, rei novae atque indignitate homines*, “They bear the body of Lucretia, taken from her home into the forum and people gather, as it happens, because of the strangeness and heinousness of the crime,” *AUC* 1.59.3). This wound in Livy becomes the surrogate image for Sextus’ phallic invasion of her vagina (Klindienst 1990, 67) and it is an image we will see in Ovid (and discuss below), too. But Ovid’s description of Lucretia’s
appearance and attractive qualities and Sextus’ male gaze upon her body and passion in response is dozens of lines longer (755–83). First, we see the matron’s body dismembered piece by piece in Ovid as Sextus burns with passion for her (761–4):

\begin{verbatim}
Interea iuvenis furiales regius ignes
   concipit et caeco raptus amore fuit.
Forma placet niveusque color flavique capilli,
   quique aderat nulla factus ab arte decor…
\end{verbatim}

Meanwhile, the young king catches fire furiously and snatched away by a blind passion, he raves. Lucretia’s beauty pleases him and her snow-white color and her blond hair and that grace of hers, present, made from no art.

Livy’s account only informs us that she is beautiful, but we do not know why that is the case. But the Ovidian Sextus, as in Livy, is also attracted to her qualities of virtue (\textit{verba placent et vox, et quod corrumpere non est}, “Her words and voice were pleasing and the fact that she cannot be corrupted,” 765). Keegan (2002) likens this objectifying dismemberment not only to what we see in Ovid’s scenes of sexualized violence, but also particularly to \textit{Amores} 1.5 in which, as we have seen, the narrator extensively lists every attractive feature of Corinna’s body. Such an extensive description of a female figure’s beauty, the man’s sexual reaction to it, and thus, the locating of the origins of the rape in a female figure’s body, has been seen time and again in Ovid, such as in the narrative of Apollo’s attempted rape of Daphne and as we will see below, in Tereus’ rape of Philomela. These are all vital elements of victim-blaming.

Ovid shows that Sextus’ desire for Lucretia is all-consuming: it is compared to fires (as seen in 761) and to a surge of water which continually churns because of winds (775–6). Ovid uses such an analogy to indicate that his passion for her is consistently renewed. That is because Sextus thinks about Lucretia constantly, often recalling the features of her appearance (771–4):

\begin{verbatim}
    *sic sedit, sic culta fuit, sic stamina nevit,
        iniectae collo sic iacuere comae,
    hos habuit voltus, haec illi verba fuerunt,
\end{verbatim}
hic color, haec facies, hic decor oris erat.’

“...It was the way she was sitting, it was the way she was dressed, it was the way she weaved, it was the way her hair fell upon her neck, she had this look, she had these words, she had this color, she had that form, she had that lovely face.”

The anaphorae of sic and the demonstrative pronouns intensify the impression Ovid creates of his obsessive thoughts (Kenney 2002, 52). Interestingly, Sextus’ passion alludes obviously to the passion of Dido for Aeneas. For example, Dido, too, experiences furens...ignis in Aen. 1.660–1. The passions of both the Carthaginian queen and the Roman prince are ones of inordinateness, overflowing, consumption, all characteristics of femininity (see Chapters One and Three). Such a connection to femininity is a typical sign of a tyrant’s excess in ancient Greek and Roman literature. To King (2006), Sextus’ femininity is another sign of how Ovid highlights and destabilizes gender in Fasti Book 2 in order to comment on the gender of men under the rule of Augustus and even Augustus himself. Is Augustus like Sextus? Have Roman men become like him, too? Has tyranny feminized both the emperor and his subjects? But, in the end, Sextus upholds his essential masculinity by brutally threatening and raping Lucretia.

Livy’s representation of Sextus’ lust makes it clear and is an essential element of the historian’s story (he refers to Sextus’ mala libido in AUC 1.57.10, that he was amore ardens in 1.58.2, and again to his libido in 1.58.5). Langlands (2006, 93), in her study of pudicitia (which can be roughly translated to a form of chastity that both Roman men and women can have), argues that in Livy’s account, Sextus becomes the embodiment of libido itself and Lucretia the embodiment of pudicitia. But Livy does not delve into Sextus’ desire as thoroughly as Ovid. The poet’s extensive description of Sextus’ passion could also speak to Ovid’s greater interest in sexual psychology. The audience can more thoroughly understand why Sextus desires Lucretia, beyond his political motivations to reclaim his tyrannical control of masculinity from his rival, 

163 Sextus’ passion continues to recall that of Dido in 1.673f., 1.688, 4.66, 4.68f, and 4.101 (Robinson 2011, 484).
Collatinus. This greater interest in psychology is reflected in how Ovid stages the narrative and its characters. From the time Ovid describes Sextus’ desire for Lucretia until she summons her male relatives, the entire focus of the narrative is on the tyrant and the matron, “so the brutal act of rape has undiluted impact on the audience” (Murgatroyd 2005, 158–9). There are not even servants attending to Lucretia and Collatinus’ home as there are in Livy (*AUC* 1.58.1).

Klindienst (1990, 60) argues, relying on Girard’s 1982 theories on scapegoating, that Livy is more evidently concerned with showing how Sextus rapes Lucretia as a way to politically neutralize Collatinus rather than because of actual desire, to have Lucretia act as a surrogate victim for male political rivalry, to ultimately make her a scapegoat for what is essentially a masculine competition. Lucretia’s husband has proved himself to be manlier because of the publicly witnessed virtue of his wife, and that is something that a tyrant like Sextus cannot endure: he must be the manliest of men (or else he is a woman like his subjects) and he must remedy his humiliation (Klindienst 1990, 60). Ovid, of course, understands the political importance of this backfired attempt at neutralization because he, too, ends his story of Lucretia with the founding of the Republic and the overthrowing of tyranny, with Lucretia’s rape, death, and publicly displayed body being the central spectacle and symbol for such a revolution. In both authors, men enact and appropriate the trauma of a raped woman to achieve their political ends (Klindienst 1990, Joshel 1992, Newlands 1995). Sextus endeavors to ensure his supremacy through the violation of the body of Lucretia, and the Republicans display her body to create their own power. But Ovid’s prominent emphasis on Lucretia’s physical appearance and Sextus’ desire proves to many scholars like Newlands (1995), Murgatroyd (2005), and Robinson (2011) that he renders this rape like many of the others in his corpus: more erotic than political. Klindienst (1990), on the other hand, believes that the long, erotic, and psychological
descriptions of desire in Ovid obfuscate the political motivations foundational to this story—the political ones are, in fact, driving the sexual passion of Sextus. Beard (1999) similarly comments that his desire for power is intimately entwined with his desire for Lucretia’s body. Ovid may provide us with a more wide-ranging coverage of Sextus’ sexual psychology, but Klindienst’s work helps us to clearly see that such an emphasis on the nature of Sextus’ desire only makes the political impetuses for the attack in his account more difficult, but not impossible, to uncover.

Ovid’s thorough documentation of Lucretia’s attractions and Sextus’ subsequent passion once again manifest his characteristic victim-blaming. The cause and origin of the rape is situated within a female figure’s body and now also Lucretia’s display of virtue. Sextus describes the pleasing aspects of her appearance and behavior (771–4)—and immediately after the narrator reveals Sextus’ intense desire for her and violence against her to the audience (775–6). There is a direct and causal link between Lucretia’s body, seeing her body, and her rape. And as Ovid focuses more on Lucretia’s beauty and Sextus’ desire for her, he, more than Livy, deeply victim-blames Lucretia for what she experiences. While the historian victim-blames her because he implies the same trajectory in rape scenes that Ovid often does (Sextus saw her, desired her, and raped her), the longer the description of her beauty and Sextus’ passion, the more responsible Lucretia is for her own rape. King (2006, 212–4) suggests that Sextus becomes more attracted to Lucretia in Ovid because she shows she is capable of intense passion for her husband. King writes that her “libidinal energy for her husband” helps Sextus to believe he is fulfilling a sexual fantasy Lucretia craves. For example, she imagines Collatinus holding a sword and Sextus brings one to commission his rape. This is similar to how Tereus, another tyrant, in Met. 6.478–85 projected his own desires onto the actions and body of Philomela as she embraced her father. It is also noteworthy that Ovid draws attention to the wool descending from the matron’s lap and as
Newlands (1995, 148) observes, her marriage bed before her rape (et venit in thalamos…tuos, “Sextus came into your marriage bed, [Lucretia],” 794), both details highlighting Lucretia’s sexuality and labelling her as a sexual being to the audience. Ovid’s narrator in effect victim-blames Lucretia for her beauty, her virtue, her sexuality, and her passion for her husband.

However, while in Livy Lucretia attaches profound importance to her innocent mind and the blame it does not deserve, despite her violated body (corpus est tantum violatum, animus insons, “Only my body is violated, but my mind is innocent,” AUC 1.58.8), Ovid shows no interest in Lucretia making such a clear distinction to her family. Ovid, by the end of his narrative, has already made Lucretia’s lack of consent plain to his audience through his extensive descriptions of her fear of rape (particularly in 797–803), so such a distinction may not be necessary for his audience. The poet, above all, emphasizes the matron’s muteness and inability to make grand statements to her family and his readers (see discussion of Fasti 2.826ff. below), although his Lucretia briefly declares that she could never forgive herself, once again demonstrating the characteristic self-blame of Ovid’s rape victims (‘quam…veniam vos datis, ipsa nego,’ “The favor which you give to me, I deny to myself,” 2.830).

Lucretia’s consent might be of greater importance in Livy, because in contrast to the poet, the historian only mentions her fear of violence once when he calls her a pavida…mulier (AUC 1.58.2). Livian Lucretia’s distinction between her mind and body could also have wider socio-political origins according to Moses (1993), who does not explore Ovid’s account in depth. Moses explores how determining female sexual consent and intent became particularly important during the Augustan Principate because of Augustus’ moral legislation, which regulated sexuality and outlawed acts of adultery and wanted to determine if women committed stuprum (in this case, adultery) knowingly or with bad faith (dolus malus) (Digest 48.5.13). Nevertheless,
this interest in such concern over Lucretia’s willingness (or a lack of it) arises not only in Livy’s, but also in Ovid’s narrative, especially because Sextus desperately wishes for Lucretia to commit adultery with him (Robinson 2011, 489; AUC 1.58.2; Fasti 2.805), all the better to prove his masculinity and in turn, the failed masculinity of Collatinus. Sextus wants the matron to have adulterous intent, the dolus malus Moses observes. In both accounts, Lucretia does not stop resisting until Sextus threatens her with a narrative of adultery she cannot bear (he warns her that he will kill her and a slave and leave them in flagrante). Lucretia in Livy is seemingly more motivated by fear of shame than the fear of violent rape and death (Ubi obstinatam videbat et ne mortis quidem metu inclinari, addit ad metum dedecus…Quo terrore…vicisset obstinatam pudicitiam “When he saw that she was obstinate and that she would not be moved by fear of death, he adds fear to shame…with this threat [of shame], he had conquered her stubborn chastity,” AUC 1.58.3). Later it becomes evident that the Livian Lucretia succumbs to Sextus because she needs to control the narrative of her virtue and must remain alive, at least temporarily, to do so (Klindienst 1990, 60). Ovid, following Livy, includes that she fears being known as an adulterer and submits to Sextus in the same way (succubuit famae victa puella metu, “She gave in, conquered by fear of shame,” 810), but one can easily make the case that her fear of rape is stronger than her fear of infamy in Ovid, especially because of how vividly and extensively he portrays the latter fear compared to the historian (797–803).

In this narrative, Ovid also includes one of his characteristic analogies of a rapist to a predator animal and the victim of sexualized violence to an animal of prey. Here Sextus is compared to a wolf and Lucretia to a lamb (sed tremit, ut quondam stabulis deprensa relictis parva sub infesto cum iacet agna lupo, “But she trembled, like when a little lamb, snatched away, with the folds having been left behind, lies under a hostile wolf,” 799–800), comparisons
which by now have become commonplace in Ovid’s corpus, particularly the likening of
victimized women to trembling lambs (Met.1.505, Met. 5.627–7, Ars 1.118, and also in the
Philomela episode which I will analyze in more depth below). What is more, these very similes
contribute to the dual epic and elegiac atmosphere we have explored in this episode because of
how often they are used in an amatory context in Ovid and also because they have their origins in
epic (see Chapter One). Earlier in Chapter Two, I observed that Livy does not include any of
these analogies in his scenes of rape and argued that Ovid features them as a way to better
explore the psychology of both sexual desire and fear. The use of these analogies in his account
of the rape of Lucretia is another example of his deeper interest in psychology than Livy.

Later, Ovid’s narrator dilates even more so on Lucretia’s fear with a string of rhetorical
questions that help the readers to imagine the matron’s frantic thoughts and desire to escape
(801–4) (although we, unfortunately, never have direct access into her subjectivity):

\[
\begin{align*}
Quid \ faciat? & Pugnet? \ vincetur \ femina \ pugnans. \\
Clamet? & at \ in \ dextra, \ quem \ vetet, \ ensis \ erat. \\
Effugiat? & positis \ urgentur \ pectora \ palmis, \\
& tunc \ primum \ externa \ pectora \ tacta \ manu. \\
\end{align*}
\]

What could Lucretia do? Could she resist? A woman, resisting in a fight, will be
conquered. Should she shout, but in his right hand, was a sword to prohibit her from
shouting. Should she flee? Her chest is squeezed down with his hands placed upon it, her
chest for the first time touched by the hand of stranger.

The narrator desperately weighs Lucretia’s options and confirms what we have seen attested time
and time again in Ovid’s corpus: vincetur femina pugnans. Most of the victims of sexual abuse in
Ovid are successfully raped and their resistance is futile, and even if they do elude rape, they still
face severe bodily trauma through transformation, a loss of humanity, and physical, even if not
sexual, appropriation by their attempted rapist. Sextus a few lines later, confirms Lucretia’s
thoughts, reminding the matron: nil agis (“there is nothing you can do,” 807). As in Livy, Sextus
has a weapon, he is a man, and is willing to kill her and a slave to defame her reputation (807–9). Overall, fear, weeping, and shame come to define Ovid’s version of Lucretia after her rape (819ff.), a scared woman who cannot finish relating her traumatic experience to her male relatives (quaeque potest, narrat. restabant ultima: flevit, et matronales erubuere genae, “She tells them whatever she can. The end remained: but she wept and her matronly cheeks reddened,” 826–7) or look her family in the eyes (non oculos...sustulit illa suos, 824). Livy’s Lucretia is much more decisive and only weeps momentarily before her highly rhetorical, symbolic, and galvanizing speech (AUC 1.58.7). Lucretia remains in many ways like the lamb to which Ovid likens her, although Ovid calls her the animi matrona virilis (845).

The Ovidian Lucretia narrative, furthermore, prominently features another common element found in Ovid’s rapes: a lack of explicitness about the rape itself—we once more only see the before and the after. As we have seen and as Richlin (1992) and Marder (1992) have argued, the violence and reality of the rape is displaced elsewhere in Ovid, primarily into the punishments of mutilation, transformation, and/or death. We do not have a transformation in this narrative, but we do have a mutilation/death by sword with a gaping wound. It is clear in this narrative that Ovid, like Livy before him, displaces the before and after of the rape onto the phallic and vaginal imagery that suffuse the story. First, Ovid tells his audience that Sextus enters the penetralia of Collatinus’ house, its deepest, innermost parts (Fasti 2.785; Dolansky 2016, 45). This description of Sextus’ movements in the home is a way for Ovid to anticipate what Sextus will do to Lucretia’s body. The sanctity ofLucretia’s body against such a penetration protects and represents the sanctity of Collatinus’ home—when Sextus penetrates the heart of the house, the sexual violation has begun (Dolansky 2016, 53). Women’s sexuality is inherently porous, and thus the domus of their fathers and husbands are subject to the same
porousness, home and body the site of “sexual pollution” (Carson 1990, 159). Sextus completes
the violation when he enters Lucretia’s body, her vagina in many ways representing the limen
(boundary, door, entrance) of her husband’s domus (Joplin 1992). Ovid, more so than Livy,
emphasizes both the violation of space and Lucretia’s body. In Livy, on the other hand, we know
Sextus has entered Collatinus’ house under the pretense of xenia, but the setting is sparser (AUC
1.58.1–2). The phallic imagery and the displacement of the rape continues, in both authors, when
Sextus unsheathes his sword and threatens Lucretia with it, but we never see the penetration of
her body (AUC 1.58.2, Fasti 2.793). The violation of the penetration emerges in other ways. For
example, Lucretia stabs herself in the chest with Sextus’ sword, re-creating what the tyrant did
earlier with his phallus (AUC 1.58.12, Fasti 2.831). Livy and Ovid then both home in on the
bleeding, open wound in her chest, re-creating the impact of the rape on the matron’s vagina
(AUC 1.58.12, 1.59.1, 1.59.4; Fasti 2.849). The historian and the poet, by using the sword and
the wound as a surrogate for the phallus and the violated body, equate rape with death (see
below). The wound that represents Lucretia’s rape is the wound that kills her. She becomes like
the nymph Cyane in Met. 5.409–24, torn asunder forever by the violence of rape.

As Brutus takes the sword out of her body (AUC 1.59.1), he now holds the phallus and
thus, patriarchal power over women just as Sextus was trying to regain the phallus and
patriarchal power by raping Lucretia. Brutus will now wield that sword to render the patriarchal
control of women more egalitarian and more predicated on fraternal, homosocial bonds (a
phenomenon that Melissa Matthes’ 2000 book argues is the basis of Republican governments
such as those in Rome and in France after the French Revolution) than the Tarquins, the tyrants,
before him. And this is exactly why in the historian’s account, Brutus passes the sword to the
other men present at Lucretia’s death (AUC 1.59.2): they will control patriarchy together and not
the tyrants alone. Under tyranny, men lose the rights to their personal patriarchies since tyrants like Sextus can confuse and transgress the boundaries of the public and private, and, thus the boundaries of normative masculinity and femininity: their homes, their families, and the women within them have become public and they can enter the private homes and women of other men. Tyrants like Sextus can fundamentally threaten the sexual power of other men. Dolansky (2016) understands the rape of Lucretia as a critique of Augustus’ interventions into the Roman family and household through his moral legislation. He made what was once privately disciplined by the *paterfamilias*—adultery and other sexual transgressions—public. Augustus, too, like a tyrant, has blurred the lines between the public and private in Rome; he has entered the sacred space of the Roman *domus* and stripped men of their patriarchal power. Augustus, like Sextus Tarquinius, has introduced sexual disorder into the Roman *domus*. Sextus Tarquinius does so in an effort to validate his masculinity, and so does Augustus, to prove his status as the *pater patriae*.

Women in this configuration are attacked because they are in the vulnerable, liminal spaces between men, the buffer zones of violence (Klindienst 1990, 53–4). The real violence in Lucretia’s rape is intended against the man Collatinus, all Roman men under tyranny, not a woman, not women (although that is much clearer in Livy than in Ovid; as argued, the poet is more obviously interested in the psychology of desire than in a more explicit examination of politics). And Brutus must show Roman men proof of that violation. In both Livy and Ovid, Lucretia’s wound is shown to the masses of Roman men (*AUC* 1.59.3; *volnus inane patet*, “the hollow wound lies open,” *Fasti* 2.849). Lucretia while alive and her wound after her death are objectified, displayed, made a spectacle by men for their own political purposes, with her body ultimately exploited by Republican men to symbolize the violation of tyranny against their male power and to start a new government for a wider population of men (Donaldson 1982). Sextus
already exploited her in an effort to solidify his masculine power over his subjects.

In this story, as Jeshel (1992) first argued in the “The Body Female and the Body Politic” and which Matthes (2000) later adopts as a central tenet for her own work, there is both the literal rape of Lucretia by Sextus and also the figurative rape of the male body politic by tyranny. Women are the ones with the open, vulnerable bodies to violate (and again, the mind/body duality arises). From a psychoanalytic perspective, women’s bodies are often understood as a void, a blank slate, and thus “Lucretia’s corpse becomes a mirror into which men gaze and see themselves” (Matthes 2000, 36–38). With her wounded body as a mirror, Roman men see how tyranny has emasculated them, their homes, their country. Lucretia is subjected to and made into a spectacle during the competition, while Sextus longs for her in Ovid, and when the citizens of Rome see the wound of rape so that men can see their manhood and prove that they are men. Women’s bodies in patriarchal societies represent and take on all the meanings of culture, power, and differences between men, and then they must die for it (Klindienst 1990, 154).

Ovid, additionally, makes his depiction of Lucretia’s rape unique because of the wider context of *Fasti* 2 and the direct connections he makes to previous stories of rape within the book. Of course, Livy does the same within the context of his history: all the rapes we see in Book 1 of *AUC* are connected. Lucretia, like Rhea Silvia and the Sabines before her, at the most fundamental level, generate major transitions in Roman history (the birth of the founders of Rome, Rome’s first war, the end of the monarchy) and then are never to be seen again. For Ovid’s second book in the *Fasti*, Lucretia’s story is the climax of many narratives of sexualized violence, rape, female silencing, and mutilation. The Lucretia episode connects to the attempted rape of Omphale and also Lotis from *Fasti* 1 because of the prominent nighttime assaults of Priapus (1.421), Faunus (2.430), and Sextus, at a time of day that in every other instance in the
Fasti signals a comedic rape, an interesting tonal contradiction (*nox erat et tota lumina nulla domo*, “It was night and there was no light in the entire house, 792). But Ovid’s Lucretia narrative connects more seriously to the rapes of Callisto and Lara because of Ovid’s focus on the matron’s silence and silencing during the rape and after. Callisto is silenced through Juno’s transformation and in both the *Met.* and *Fasti* narrative, Ovid emphasizes her loss of speech and hence her humanity (*Met* 2. 481–5; *Fasti* 2.185–6). Jupiter removes Lara’s tongue and thus her voice because of her resistance to male power and aversion to participating in violence against other female figures, and then Lara loses the ability to vocally resist her own encounter with male power and sexualized violence from Mercury. The nymph’s susceptibility to violence, mutilation, rape, and also transformation is a sign of her femininity. Moreover, as we mentioned above and will examine in Chapter Six, Ovid’s interest in silencing in general relates to his own experience in exile as a silenced poet and how he will represent his own gender.

Lucretia, too, loses her voice through male violence (and then later will eternally silence herself in reaction to her rape through suicide). In Ovid, as in Livy, Sextus first silences Lucretia through fear (*illa nihil: neque enim vocem viresque loquendi/aut aliquid toto pectore mentis habet*, “She says nothing, she does not have her voice nor the power of speaking or anything of her reason in her entire chest,” *Fasti* 2.797–8; ‘*tace, Lucretia, ’ inquit; ‘Sextus Tarquinius sum; ferrum in manu est; moriere, si emiseris vocem,’ “Quiet, Lucretia, I am Sextus Tarquinius; there is a sword in my hand; you will die if you raise your voice” *AUC* 1.58.2). But it is a fear we understand more profoundly because of Ovid’s analogies of Lucretia to a trembling lamb and the narrator’s comments on terrified thought processes during her rape. The matron’s fear continues after her rape, showing a realistic portrait of the psychological trauma of rape victims, something we see with Callisto (*Met*. 2.441–6) and Philomela (*Met*. 6.525–30), similarly shocked and
When the matron summons her relatives, we learn from Ovid’s narrator that she sits without a word for a long time, crying from shame (*illa diu reticet pudibundaque celat amictu/ora: fluunt lacrimae more perennis aquae,* “She sits silently for a long time and feeling ashamed, hides her face with her cloak: tears flow in the custom of a running stream,” 819–20) and that she attempts to speak three times before she can bear to explain at least part of what happened (*ter conata loqui ter destitit,* “Three times she tried to speak and three times she stopped…,” 823). She does not want to recount her trauma and resents that she has to perform it, feeling that such a performance is gratifying to Sextus (*hoc quoque Tarquinio debemimus? eloquar,* “*inquit,* ‘eloquar infelix dedecus ipsa meum?,’ “*Must I owe my [story] to Tarquin, too?’ she says. ‘Should I, unlucky, speak of my shame?’” 825–6). As already observed, the Roman matron stops before she arrives at the end of her story, Ovid’s Lucretia forever barred from the opportunity to narrate the realities of her own rape to her family and the reading audience.

In contrast to Ovid, the Livian Lucretia—speaking for the first time in the narrative—forcefully declares what has happened and demands an oath for revenge against him from her male relatives (*AUC* 1.58.8). Lucretia in Livy exposes exactly what the tyrant did: *vestigia viri alieni, Collatine, in lecto sunt tuo* (“The traces of another man, Collatinus, are in your bed,” *AUC* 1.58.7). Livy’s Lucretia is deprived of her ability to speak by Sextus only to regain it eloquently before the permanent silence of death. It is a (temporary) rebellion against the fate of effeminized silence to stay alive to construct her own narrative. The Livian Lucretia explicitly foments the beginnings of revolution and as Matthes (2000, 38) states: “her rape becomes generative on her own terms.” Moreover, her speech before her suicide reveals that Lucretia is conscious of her legacy and wants to make herself the paradigm of the honor of women. She fears the social ramifications of her rape upon other Roman women. She does not want to be the pretext for
unchaste women to betray their husbands (nec ulla deinde inpudica Lucretiae exemplo vivet, “and no wanton woman will live because of the example of Lucretia,” AUC 1.58.10)—ultimately, the Livian Lucretia understands the symbolic power of her actions and body and that she will achieve revenge even if she cannot enjoy it. Ovid’s Lucretia foments no rebellion, does not condemn other women, and is primarily concerned with her personal feelings of guilt and shame. She cannot accept her family’s pardon and she commits suicide purely to rid herself of shame, not to avenge what Sextus made her suffer. Newlands (1995, 152) argues that Lucretia’s immediate motives for suicide are personal, not political, but Ovid has Lucretia possibly agree to Brutus’ plans while she lay dying, blinking and nodding faintly, although it is entirely possible she was merely in the process of losing all consciousness (illa iacens ad verba oculos sine lumine movit/ visaque concussa dicta probare coma, “Lying on the ground, she moves her eyes to the words without light in them and seems to approve the speech with her hair, stirred,” 845–6). The revenge she achieves against Sextus is not intentional. This ambiguous consent (visaque) parallels when Daphne seems to be assenting to Apollo’s appropriation of her body as symbol, exactly what Lucretia will become for Brutus and other Roman men (factis modo laurea ramis/ adnuit utque caput visa est agitasse cacumen, “The laurel, with her branches just formed, nods and seemed to have shaken the top of her tree like a head [would]” Met 1. 566–7).

But in both Livy and Ovid, Lucretia only regains her voice temporarily—despite her different speeches and motivations—and then dooms herself to the ultimate silence of death. In both narratives, Lucretia makes the social death she experienced as she lost her matronly virtue permanent. Her suicide has other implications for the study of rape. As we explored in Chapter Three, rape is often equated to the loss of humanity (which, to Ovid usually means the loss of human speech and silence) and to death. Rape, a lack of humanity (or animalization), and even
mortality, were all closely connected to femininity in antiquity. Both Livy and Ovid in their stories of Lucretia enforce the association of rape with silencing and death and continue to engender rape, silencing, and death as female. Ovid does so very explicitly because when he recounts how and when Lucretia first loses her voice out of fear of Sextus, he juxtaposes the words *vocem* and *viresque* (797). *Vis* is a word thought to be (although not actually) etymologically related to *vir* and is a word often associated with men and male violence, and thus, Newlands (1995, 151) asserts, Lucretia’s silence becomes gender-coded. And in the cases of Lara and Lucretia, to restate my above arguments, these stories demonstrate that female silence, death, and rape are essential to Roman history, religion, and patriarchy and that men control speech and with that control, suppress the speech of women to maintain their own power. Jupiter determines if Lara can keep her voice, Mercury rapes Lara while she is silent and she gives birth to the Lares, Sextus silences Lucretia to rape her, while Brutus appropriates her spoken, psychological, and physical trauma to overthrow the Etruscan kings and dominates the end of her story with his own speech in both accounts. Lucretia is now forever silent, but her dead body “can speak volumes” for male anger (Matthes 2000, 28).

Furthermore, as is typically the case in Ovid, Lucretia’s rape becomes generative—here, politically—for the benefit of men. This is true for Livy and all the founding rapes of Rome: Rhea Silvia’s rape brings the founders of Rome into the world, the Sabine women populate Rome’s first city, Lucretia’s rape gives birth to the Republic. As Lucretia is raped and dies, something for men is born (Joshel 1992, 128). Rape in Ovid often creates something: a new plant, a new species, a son, but those creations are often controlled by men ultimately, such as Daphne’s laurel tree. Lucretia dies so she does not introduce another tyrant into the world through illicit pregnancy, confuse the sanctity of Collatinus’ household, and ensure social death
for Collatinus among other men, but her reproductive capabilities are displaced into a political act that benefits all Roman men: she gives birth to the Republic and she proves her ultimate fecundity as a woman (Matthes 2000, 27–29). But having rape and its publicly displayed wound be at the center of the founding of the Republic also means that the possibility and the specter of that violence never fades away: it will continue to be productive and hence, why Livy features the attempted rape of Verginia in AUC 3.44–58 during the struggle between the tyrannical decemviri and the plebes. Lucretia’s rape is the wound at the center of the Republic men can only try to forget or hide, but it will always return (Matthes 2000, 157–8).

To end this section on the rape of Lucretia, I want to explore how the rape of Philomela in Met. Book 6 includes many of the thematic concerns found in Ovid’s Lucretia. Most scholars agree that the rape of Lucretia intensely reflects that of Philomela, Klindienst (1991), Newlands (1988, 1995), and Robinson (2011) being the scholars who have most comprehensively explored and fleshed out the connections between the two episodes. Ovid even confirms the associations between the stories himself at the end of his Lucretia passage: the narrator hears a swallow and he alludes to Procris and Tereus, closing out the Lucretia narrative (Fasti 2.853–6). The rape of Philomela contains elements of the militia amoris and hence once again exposes the tensions between the epic and elegiac genres. Tereus likens his sexual victory over Philomela to a military victory, exclaiming: Vicimus (Met 6. 515; Robinson 2011, 484). We additionally have similar predator-prey imagery, as mentioned above. Both Philomela and Lucretia are compared to trembling lambs and their rapists are compared to predators of the canine family (illa tremit velut agna pavens, quae saucia cani/ ore excussa lupi nondum sibi tuta videtur, “Philomela trembles like a wounded, frightened lamb, who, cast out of the mouth of a dog, does not consider herself safe,” Met. 6.527–8 versus sed tremit, ut quondam stabulis deprensa relictis/ parva sub infesto
cum iacet agna lupo, “But she trembled, as when a little lamb, snatched away, with the folds having been left behind, lies under a hostile wolf,” Fasti 2.799–800). In the two episodes of rape there is a vivid focus on the male gaze and the objectification of women and an exploration of almost neurotic male sexual desire, the severity of both men’s lust compared to natural forces of fire for Tereus and Sextus and the ocean for Sextus, too (Met. 6.455–60; Fasti 2.761–4; Newlands 1988, 40). And because of such attention paid to the male gaze and the beauty of the women, there is victim-blaming of both Philomela and Lucretia; their bodies are responsible for inciting desire of Tereus and Sextus and hence, the unquenchable need to possess and control the women sexually. Ovid in both episodes explores post-traumatic stress, showing his keen interest not just in the male psychology of desire, but of female fear and suffering (Met. 6.527–30; Fasti 2.814ff.). We also see the use of displaced phallic and vaginal imagery to symbolize the violence of the rape. We do not witness the rape of Philomela, but we witness the entirety of the mutilation of her tongue by Tereus after she vows to condemn him publically, one of the most ghastly scenes of violence in all of Ovid (Met. 6.549–60). This scene demonstrates how female figures are punished for speaking out against male violence, but it also works to re-create what happened to Philomela during her rape, which Richlin (1992, 170–2) and Marder (1992) argues is a way for Ovid to displace the violence of rape onto other acts of violence and a way to cement the connections between sex and violence. Tereus enters a bodily, vaginal orifice with a phallic object (his sword, ensis) and dismembers its center, a symbolic breaking of the hymen. Both Sextus and Tereus even vagin[i]s ens[e]s libera[n]t (“free their swords from their shafts,” Met. 6.551; Fasti 2.793), and then they used their swords to enact violence against the female body, Ovid making the displacement in both texts explicitly and explicitly similar.

Of course, the removal of Philomela’s ability to speak and her tongue evokes the silencing
of female figures through and because of rape. In both the Philomela and Lucretia episodes, Ovid associates rape with silence and even bodily death (Philomela eventually transforms into a bird along with her sister and Tereus). Ovid symbolizes the symbolic and literal deaths they both face by comparing them to women in mourning in the immediate aftermaths of their rapes (*Met*. 6.531–2; *Fasti* 2.813–4; Pavlock 1991, 41). They differ in how they handle and undergo silencing. Philomela, unlike Lucretia in Ovid, however, is silent only immediately after her rape but recovers enough mettle and fury to deliver a blistering speech of revenge against Tereus, making her much more like the Livian Lucretia. Ovid’s Lucretia never truly regains her voice and is defined by her silence. But Tereus, failing to silence Philomela with her rape, enforces her permanent silence with disfigurement, her rape first exposing her essential femininity and then her silencing and its method (akin to the initial violence of rape) ensuring it again. Philomela then continues to be raped by Tereus and faces further physical transformation, another sign and proof of her gender and its vulnerability. Like Lucretia’s chest wound, Philomela’s maimed tongue permanently marks her body as violated, even when she is another species.

Klindienst’s analysis of the Lucretia (1990) and Philomela (1991) episode connects them through a feminist understanding of anthropology and of women as political and economic tools exploited by men to secure, maintain, and disrupt power. Relying on the work of Claude Lévi-Strauss, Mary Douglas, and Luce Irigaray, she understands, like many feminists before her, that women and their chastity are traditionally used as symbols of exchange between men, and with both Lucretia and Philomela, the legitimate exchange of marriage has broken down through rape. Women, raped, become symbols of how tenuous the relationships between men truly are and how these relationships do not stop violence, but only attempt to limit it. Procne, Philomela’s sister, was exchanged properly with Tereus, but he later refuses to abide by these structures when
he sees Philomela. Lucretia has already been exchanged between men, but Sextus violates that previous agreement. Klindienst believes that Ovid’s accounts of Philomela and Lucretia and their emphasis on ardent sexual desire hide the true motives behind Tereus’ and Sextus’ actions: political anxieties and ambitions between ruling men. Tereus, the barbarian king of Thrace (who was twice called a tyrant by Ovid, in *Met.* 6.549 and 581), has politically neutralized the king of Athens, Pandion, with the theft and rape of Philomela, and Sextus attempts to neutralize his cousin Collatinus, who could threaten his power within the tyranny through a respected display of masculinity. They displace their lust for political power upon the bodies of women and sexualize their political drives. Tereus’ and Sextus’ transgressions of cultural values as tyrants against other men is symbolized by their attacks on women, *materia* once again for masculinist systems. Klindienst (1990, 53), while speaking on Lucretia, argues that “[women] are not victims of sexual desire, but victims of a mimetic desire that circulates among rival males and vents itself on the unlucky female who occupies the most critical space between them and therefore, the most vulnerable position.” Women are the sites and signs of cultural power between men and for men and if a man attacks a woman sexually, he is ultimately attacking her husband/father. Procne at first is given to Tereus to ensure that Thrace, even if not stated explicitly between the men, does not attack the city walls of Athens. Instead of Athens, Tereus will penetrate the hymen of a woman representing her father’s political power in his city. In this way, Athens can be protected from Tereus’ violence against the walls of Athens. As Klindienst says: “The virgin’s hymen must not be ruptured except in some manner that reflects and ensures the health of the existing political hierarchy.” But when Tereus steals Philomela, a valuable virgin, and breaks down the systems to exchange women, he is attacking Pandion’s ability to protect himself from other cities and to sexually control the women in his family. Sextus, by raping Lucretia, indicates
to Collatinus that he has no right to economic or political power even in his own home, and he reminds Collatinus that he is next in line for absolute, patriarchal power in Rome. Ovid focuses more on psychology, but the political and even the anthropological are on his mind.

5. The Rape of Anna Perenna by Numicius and Anna Perenna’s Sororophobia

The story of Anna Perenna’s origins and her festival is one of the most widely commented upon passages in the Fasti for its political implications and also because of its parodic and intertextual relationship with Vergil. Anna Perenna, according to Ovid, could be two, distinct people: Dido’s sister Anna, transformed into a nymph after her rape by the river Numicius or an old woman who made bread for the rebelling men during the first secessio plebis in 494 B.C.E. and who, after she was transformed into a goddess, famously tricked Mars into believing he could sleep with Minerva by disguising herself as the virgin goddess (Fasti 3.680–97). As Ovid offers two alternatives for the beginnings and history of the festival, this is another example of the poet destabilizing and complicating Roman religion in the Fasti. Whatever the origins, Anna Perenna’s festival is now celebrated on the Ides of March, the day of Julius Caesar’s assassination. But Ovid only remembers to discuss Caesar’s assassination and does so only briefly, after the goddess Vesta, who becomes a thoroughly Augustan deity in the Fasti as we explore below, reminds him (it is as if Augustan religious propaganda reminds him of what is more appropriate to honor and discuss at length) (697ff.). Ovid largely ignoring the murder of the father of the emperor in favor of a goddess with a festival popular among the lower classes (523–4), which was known for its encouragement of libertas and licentia in speech among the lower classes and sex laborers (see Feeney 1992), and which was known for open sexuality and ribald humor (525–526, 695–7), raises the suspicions of many scholars, particularly vis-à-vis the

---

164 Anna Perenna in this scene evokes the images of male gods disguising themselves to more easily have access to their sexual targets, like Jupiter in the rape of Callisto (Met. 2.417–40) and Sol in the rape of Leucothoe (4.214–55).
Ovidian anti-Augustus question. Why is Ovid prioritizing this festival over the death of Caesar and what would it say to Augustus? At the very least, Ovid is too flippant for comfort in this passage, for myself and perhaps his own audience, even if Anna Perenna, the one who was Dido’s sister and the queen of Carthage, has Caesarean connections through Aeneas.

This passage’s links with Vergil’s Aen. are almost all-consuming and have dominated the literary scholarship on the episode. Nearly every line of the description of Anna’s flight from Carthage to Italy and her interactions with Aeneas allude to the earlier epic (see Murgatroyd 2005, 121–31 for a detailed analysis of such echoes). Ovid is in many ways continuing where Vergil left the story of Anna, filling in information Vergil did not include in the Aen. in the Fasti, just as he did with Juturna (2.583–616). Ovid also makes explicit parallels with the stories of Dido and Aeneas. Anna becomes like her sister and Aeneas himself, driven out of her land by hostile men (here, the African princes led by Iarbas and her brother Pygmalion) and searching for a new home. She even visits the underworld to see her sister. And Aeneas becomes like Dido, welcoming a wandering figure and (possibly) showing a sexual interest in the wandering figure, all the while piquing the jealousy of his now wife, Lavinia. In effect, Ovid renders Anna the great epic hero, a side character in Vergil, while Aeneas stands more on the periphery to her story (Barchiesi 1997, 21; Murgatroyd 2005, 166). But in Anna’s wanderings, she faces a gendered form of violence that many women in elegy and epic have faced: sexualized violence and sororophobia, two aspects of the story that have never received recognition.

A covetous and paranoid Lavinia, who suspects that Aeneas had an affair and is having an affair with Anna—a love connection found in some traditions according to Servius on Aen. 4.682—plots to kill Anna and even die in the process (furialiter odio/ et parat insidias et cupit utla mori, “She hates like a fury and prepares plots [against Anna] and wants to die avenged,”
Murgatroyd (2005, 121) suggests that Aeneas, in an attempt to have Anna accepted into the household, seems to conflate Anna with Dido (*consumpsī naufragus huius opes./ orta Tyro est, regnum Libyca possedit in ora,* “When I was shipwrecked, I consumed her resources. She is of Tyrian descent and she rules a kingdom on the Libyan shore,” 630–1), which ultimately makes Lavinia even more suspicious: she is the generous queen Aeneas loved, rather than just her sister. The Anna who encouraged her sister to marry Aeneas is thought to be sleeping with Aeneas. Anna escapes their Latin home after Dido, as a ghost, warns her to flee (640–1), an obvious echo of Hector warning Aeneas to flee Troy during the Greek sacking of the city (*Aen.* 2.254–97). Lavinia’s plot against Anna is again an example of sororophobia—a woman intending to enact violence against another woman—but different than those I have analyzed previously because it is not in direct reaction to a victim of sexualized violence, but comes solely from unproven jealousy (Juno knows that Jupiter has slept with and impregnated the women, nymphs, and goddesses she tortures). But despite these differences, Anna steps into the persecutor figure Juno often occupies. Intriguingly, Aeneas even asks Lavinia to treat Anna like she would a sister: *quam precor ut carae more sororis ames* (“How I pray that you love her like a dear sister,” 632). Lavinia’s deadly and sororophobic suspicion of Anna, rather than in the aftermath of sexualized violence, leads Anna into the grip of Numicius, a river and her rapist, similar to how the goddess Venus, in her need for revenge and power, prepares the conditions of the rapes of Leucothoe by Sol (*Met.* 4.190–7) and Proserpina by Dis (5.365–84).

As Anna flees from Lavinia, the narrator describes her torn and loose clothing and how her fear is like that of a doe fleeing a wolf (*cumque metu rapitur tunica velata recincta,/ currit ut auditis territa damma lupis,* “She is seized with fear, wearing a loose tunic, she runs like a doe does, scared after she heard wolves,” 645–6). Lavinia takes on one of the features typical of a
rapist in Ovid, that of a wolf predator (usually reserved for violent men like Tereus and Sextus, Met. 6.529 and Fasti 2.800), and Anna looks like many victims in the wake of their attacks, particularly like Rhea Silvia raped beside the bank of a river by Mars (Fasti 3.15). Most sororophobic agents in Ovid become associated with rape because of the connections the poet makes between the violence of rape and the violence of sororophobia, particularly metamorphosis. Juno mutilates the body of Callisto as she transforms her into a bear just as Jupiter did earlier when he raped her. And because of the associations with the images with scenes of sexualized violence, Anna’s fear and appearance also foreshadow her rape by the river in the immediate lines: *corniger hanc tumidis rapuisse Numicius undis/ creditur et stagnis occuluisse suis*, “The horned Numicius is believed to have taken her in his swelling water and hid her in his pools,” 647–8). The use of the word *rapuisse* makes what Numicius does to Anna clear to the reader, although her rape is more implicit than that to which we are accustomed. Anna then becomes a nymph of the river after she drowns (*sum nympha Numici, 653*), elevated in divine status. Anna’s apotheosis (as mentioned in Chapter Three) appears both as one intending to prevent further violence against her—she is protected from Lavinia’s schemes and is saved from drowning—but because of the rape, as an act of compensation. Flora will be compensated similarly, but more explicitly, for her rape by the wind Zephyrus in Fasti Book 5.

### 6. The Rape of Flora by Zephyrus and the “Benefits” of Sexualized Violence

Flora is the Italian goddess of flowers and springtime, formerly the nymph Chloris, and is one of Ovid’s many divine informants in the Fasti, such as Janus, Mars, Venus, the Muses, and Juno. She appears to have no precedent in any other author before Ovid and thus as Everett Beek (2015, 148) wryly comments, “Ovid is alone responsible for the atrocious misogynistic narrative that follows.” The narrator summons Flora for her festival on the second of June and invites her
to speak about her origin story, and like many of the female figures before her, particularly
nymphs, she was a victim of sexualized violence at the hands of a god, Zephyrus, the god of the
western wind. She briefly and straightforwardly recounts the lead up to her rape by the god, her
beauty, how he saw her and desired her, her solitude within the *locus amoenus*, and how her
resistance was futile, all part of Ovid’s patterns of rape in the *Fasti* and elsewhere (5.199–202):

> *quae fuerit mihi forma, grave est narrare modestae*
> *sed generum matri repperit illa deum.*
> *Ver erat, errabam: Zephyrus conspexit, abibam.*
> *insequitur, fugio: fortior ille fuit…*

It is difficult for me, modest, to tell of what beauty I had, but that beauty found a god as a
son-in-law for my mother. It was spring, I was wandering: Zephyrus saw me, I ran. He
follows, I flee. But he was stronger than me…

But in the aftermath of the rape, Flora announces that she has no complaints against Zephyrus
because he made her his wife and an Italian goddess as compensation for what he did (*vim tamen*
*emendat dando mihi nomina nuptae,/ inque meo non est ulla querella toro…atque ait ‘arbitrium*
*tu, dea, floris habe,’ ‘But he paid me back for the violence by giving to me the name of wife and
there is nothing to condemn in my marriage bed…and he says ‘You will have power over
flowers, goddess ’’* 205–6; 212). Compared to the other rapes with apotheosis as compensation
we have seen previously (Callisto, Lara, Anna Perenna, and Proserpina; Carna will soon follow
in Book 6), Flora unequivocally states that her apotheosis was just that: Zephyrus raped her and
he paid her back for it, a causal, transactional relationship between them. She even compares
what Zephyrus did to what Boreas did to Orithyia in *Met.* 6.675–721, another rape that does not
end in tragedy for the woman (*et dederat fratri Boreas ius omne rapinae/ ausus Erecthea praemia ferre domo,* “Boreas gave to his brother the full right of rape, having dared to carry off
the prize from the Erecthean home [Orithyia],” 203–4). Hejduk (2011, 20) remarks that Flora’s
description of her rape is strangely succinct, much more so than any of the others in the *Fasti* and
particularly in the *Met.* (although all of the rapes on Arachne’s tapestry are told in two lines or less). The use of changing tenses in Flora’s account of the rape from imperfect to imperfect to present to imperfect again works to emphasize its rapidity and confusion (Kenney 2002, 52). The brevity of many of the rape narratives in the *Fasti*, especially that of Callisto in comparison to the one we see in the *Met.*, has led scholars such as Johnson (1996) and Murgatroyd (2005) to assert that these rapes are portrayed more sympathetically than the longer narratives in Ovid’s *Met.* because they more bluntly expose the violence of the act and leave little room for narrative elements that distract us from the violence. I have challenged this argument above in the introductory section of this chapter: rape is still violence against female figures and it should make us curious as to why Ovid routinely and pervasively portrays female figures as victims.

Flora instead of elaborating on her rape itself, luxuriates in describing the advantages she wrought from her coerced union with Zephyrus. Nagle (1988) suggests that many narrators in the *Met.* engage in a form of narrative seduction with the audience, drawing them more deeply into embedded stories of “erotic pursuit” (an unfortunate umbrella term she uses for both seduction and sexualized violence, although most of her examples are never merely seduction). Nagle compellingly finds links between tales of rape in Ovid’s *Met.* and the presence of embedded narratives and narrators. For example, the tale of Salmacis is told by one of the Minyeides, Alchithoë (*Met.* 4.274–88), and Arethusa (5.572–641) tells her own story of rape to Ceres in a thrice embedded narrative told by an unnamed muse. Flora could be participating in something similar in the *Fasti*: she recounts her rape as a way to narratively seduce the audience and encourage them to pursue her story and follow it until the end. She lures them into her story with eros, and then she can elaborate on other aspects of her story besides that of her rape. We learn from Flora that she becomes a goddess with an important Italian spring festival, she gains
extensive powers, turning humans she favors into flowers (221–8), and even has close relationships with other gods and clout over them, primarily Juno, whom she helped give birth to Mars parthenogenetically in her anger over Jupiter’s birthing of Minerva without the reproductive capabilities of woman—a rare moment of female solidarity in Ovid (229–58).

Flora is the only female figure in the Fasti to recount her own experiences of sexualized violence and Ovid rarely has female figures in his corpus do so. And here, we see a female figure condone what happened and locate the cause of her rape in her own body and beauty (*quaes fuerit mihi forma*). It seems that, like Dworkin argued in *Intercourse* (1987), Flora has internalized the discourse and ideologies of patriarchal power: she is the one responsible for the violence against her and what is more, her rape has reaped only benefits for her. It is telling that when female figures deliver the stories of their own rapes it is to blame themselves, such as Rhea Silvia in *Amores* 3.5.77–8 and Arethusa in *Met.* 5.601–2, and here the victim even forgives the rape. It becomes clear that Flora and others can tell their stories of rape because they align themselves with patriarchal ideals (Everett Beek 2015, 154–5). These types of stories are not accidents. Everett Beek (2015, 150–154), moreover, wants us to think more deeply about Flora’s motivations for telling the story in the way she does. Her sanitizing and forgiving story of rape could be a very elaborate defense mechanism and this could explain why, like Ovid’s narrator, she does not show us any of the violence. She could very well have no other choice but to marry Zephyrus and take his compensation because she has been permanently sullied by rape and thus forbidden from a respectable marriage (see Evans Grubbs 1989, 61–4 on abduction marriages; James 2016, 167). Flora knows she is completely dependent on Zephyrus’ affection and favor and thus, “has an interest in projecting an image of a happy marriage to strengthen her authority”

---

165 See page 62 and footnote 93 for the list of female figures who, even briefly, discuss their own experiences with sexualized violence. Out of nearly a hundred instances of sexual abuse in Ovid, only a dozen female figures do so.
(Everett Beek 2015, 150). It is worth noting, as well, that her festival had a lewd reputation, particularly because of the involvement of sex laborers in its celebrations. Creating an image of herself as a respectably married wife could combat such a reputation (Barchiesi 1997, 190–1).

Another important question arises: does Flora truly receive only benefits in the wake of her trauma? She experiences a death of sorts as she is transformed from a nymph into a goddess, showing that she still experiences what most female figures do after their rapes in Ovid (transformation, pregnancy, and/or death), but the rape, as Ovid has Flora present it, leads directly to Flora’s increased power, contentment, pride, and influence over other divinities. The benefits of the rapist’s “compensation” are much ambiguous elsewhere in Ovid. With Lara, her apotheosis is not given such saccharine treatment and we do not see Lara particularly happy as Tacita, nor do we learn if she ever approved of what Jupiter and Mercury did. With Anna Perenna, we hear nothing more from her story after her apotheosis into a river nymph. Proserpina, Callisto, and Carna similarly have no opportunity to speak about their new positions. I have outlined in Chapter Three how their apotheoses have clear detriments because of how they reinforce the control of their rapists over them, their lives, their homes, and forms.

Flora’s happiness with her husband and the powers he granted her, no matter how Ovid presents it, is built upon the sanitized and misogynistic fantasy we see in Roman comedy—rape is acceptable as long as it ends in marriage. The women in comedy rarely confirm their own happiness since the perspective and voices of men dominate. But Ovid in this passage gives more weight to the fantasy because a female figure participates in it. Rape, according to Flora—again the only female figure to recount her own rape in the Fasti—is not harrowing and traumatizing, but rather is something that can be told matter-of-factly and without much emotion, and even something that can be excused if the outcome is lucky. She is clear that she was resistant, that it
was rape, but that it does not matter considering her life as it is now. In Ovid, where are the voices of female figures who cannot forgive? When the voices of those female figures are found, they are quickly silenced. Philomela, Lucretia, Cyane, and Lara suffer for their resistance against sexualized violence and lose their voices, their humanity, their bodies, and more.

7. The Rape of Carna by Janus: The Comeuppance for Resistance

In the rape of Carna, Janus, the god of entrances, exits, beginnings, endings, and door(ways), returns to the narrative of the Fasti. He was a central figure in Book 1, but instead of Ovid’s paternal, talkative informant, he is a brutal rapist. Ovid tells the story of how Carna becomes the goddess of door hinges after her rape by Janus and once again, her divine origin story rests upon her rape by a god and his attempts at compensation for his violence. Ovid makes Carna similar to one of his most famous victims of sexual assault: Daphne. Carna, too, is a nymph pursued by many for her beauty (nequiquam multis saepe petita procis, “in vain she is sought often by many suitors,” Fasti 6.107 versus multi illam petiere, illa aversata petentes/inpatiens, “many men sought her, but she impatiently turned those seeking away,” Met. 1.478–9), but who is more interested in masculine pursuits (rura sequi iaculisque feras agitare solebat,/nodosasque cava tendere Valle plagas, “She is accustomed to pursue the country and to pursue wild animals and to spread knotty nets in the wide valley,” 108–9 versus silvarum latebris captivarumque ferarum/exuviis gaudens, “Daphne, rejoicing in the hiding places of the forests and the spoils of wild animals…” Met. 1.475–6). Carna is the only other “hunting type” nymph except for Callisto in the Fasti 2.155–60, showing how the intimate connections between hunting and erotic pursuit that Gregson Davis proposed in his 1983 monograph are much less prominent than in the rapes of the Met. Carna is similar to Daphne, as well, because she was closely associated with Diana, some even confusing her for the goddess (Phoebi tamen esse sororem/
credebant, “Nevertheless [many] believe she is the sister of Phoebus,” 111–112 vs. innuptaeque aemula Phoebes, “The rival of unmarried Diana,” Met. 1.475). But Carna, unlike Daphne, has a more fleshed out relationship with her male suitors beyond her eventual abuser. We know only that Daphne rejects her many suitors and then we are much more expansively introduced to her relationship with her last suitor, Apollo, before her death/transformation into a laurel tree. But Carna, on the other hand, deceives her suitors into believing she wants to have sex with them in a more private place (‘haec loca lucis habent nimis, et cum luce pudoris;/ si secreta magis ducis in antra, sequor,’ “These locations have too much light, with light there is too much shame; if you lead me into more secrets caves, I will follow,” 115–6) only to ultimately hide from them (latet et nullo est invenienda modo, “She hides and could not be found in any way.” 118).

Janus, one of these suitors, falls for Carna in the same way many rapists in Ovid do: the god sees her, desires her, and tries to seduce her (viderat hanc Ianus, visaeque cupidine captus/ ad duram verbis mollibus usus erat, “Janus had seen her, and captured by a desire for the one having been seen, he used seductive words against the hard girl,” 118–9). The use of the word dura here brings us into the elegiac context: she is not the female figure determined to escape rape, but the one who is “hard to get.” But when she attempts to play the same trick on Janus she played on her other suitors, it is to no avail. Janus has eyes in the front and back of his head and he detects her ruse and rapes her, which Ovid expresses with a euphemism (nam te sub rupe latentem/ occupat amplexu, speque potitus, “For he captures you hiding under a cliff with his embrace, having taking possession of his hope, 125–6). After her rape—as mentioned above—Janus, the god of doors, makes her a goddess of hinges. Janus is as explicit as Flora about the

166 Of course, if Carna is similar to Daphne, she is similar to many other nymphs in Ovid’s corpus who experience sexualized violence. As I argued in Chapter Four, Daphne’s narrative is in many ways the prototypical representation of sexualized violence in Ovid’s corpus, the one which all others mimic and against which all others react. Carna, for example, is similar to Syrinx, who has many woodland suitors (692–94), prefers masculine activities such as hunting (695–98), and is often confused with the goddess Diana, her favored goddess (695–98).
causal relationship between his violence against her and the need for compensation (‘ius pro concubitu nostro tibi cardinis esto:/ hoc pretium positae virginitatis habe,’ “In recompense for our union, may the power of hinges be yours: have this price for your lost virginity,” 127–8). He unites them forever in purpose and powers (Barchiesi 1997, 240) and makes Carna forever subordinate. As Everett Beek (2015, 164) observes in her analysis of the rape, her power depends completely on his since hinges have no value without a door. We never know if she enjoys such a coerced union, as we do with Flora. At any rate, by making her subordinate, Ovid, with his last rape and compensation story, shows us that apotheosis for Carna perpetuates the trauma of rape.

This narrative of rape, although short, is an interesting addition to the many dozens of rape episodes in Ovid because Carna had found a way to protect herself against male aggression. Instead of fleeing, she led her suitors into thinking that she would have sex with them, all the while giving herself time to hide, a move reminiscent of Penelope’s weaving trick with the suitors in the Odyssey. Carna successfully evades several potential rapes as she protects her independence and virginity, although she is foiled by a more powerful suitor. Murgatroyd (2005, 74) interprets her tricks as primarily “teasing” and “mischievous” and includes the rape of Carna as one of the “comic” rapes in the Fasti. It is entirely possible Ovid presents a nymph who has come to enjoy eluding her suitors and he understands her rape as a funny reversal and comeuppance for a dura puella who thought she got the best of amorous men, similar to the glee the praeceptor amoris of the Ars may feel against women and their failures. The narrator even directly addresses Carna and calls her actions foolish, furthering the lack of sympathy his audience may have for Carna: stulta! videt Ianus quae post sua terga gerantur./ nil agis, et latebras respicit ille tuas (“Foolish girl! Janus sees what is happening behind his back. You can do nothing and he catches sight of your hiding places,” 123–4). Everett Beek (2015, 164) argues
that Ovid’s apostrophe here is an uncharacteristic condemnation of a victim of rape (she believes he is ultimately sympathetic toward female figures in his texts). I see this as very characteristic and yet another example of how Ovid victim-blames the female figures in his works: Carna is beautiful, she allures men, she teases men. This apostrophe is similar to how the narrator of the *Met.* condemns Narcissus, whom he called *credule* when he cannot bear to look away from his own reflection (*credule, quid frustra simulacra fugacia captas*, “Foolish one, why do you again and again seek the fleeing image in vain?” *Met.* 4.342). Everett Beek (2015, 164) writes of this connection: “In both cases, the narrator urges the character to recognize an erotic inevitability…the narrator calls attention to the character’s foolishness, willful blindness, and inability to predict the consequences of his or her actions.” Narcissus will never be able to join with himself sexually and Carna will never be able to evade suitors, especially those like Janus.

I am not one to often apologize for Ovid’s lack of sympathy toward female figures, but Ovid’s *stulta* apostrophe to Carna before her rape does not have to indicate condemnation from the narrator entirely. It could suggest that the narrator here also views her attack by Janus as resulting from a tragic sense of hubris, and even complacency. She did not predict the strength of her enemy or his special powers. What is more, we see the nymph Juturna, earlier in the *Fasti*, continuously evade and, like Carna, eventually get caught by a more powerful god. Murgatroyd argues that Juturna’s narrative is comic in tone, too. But Carna’s deception reads, to me, more like a sexual self-preservation mechanism than as a funny trick. Juturna and Carna both find ways to escape male violence and rape, but only temporarily. Their stories are tragic especially because they fail like so many of the female figures before and after them in Ovid.

### 8. The Attempted Rape of Vesta by Priapus: The Last Scene of Sexual Abuse in Ovid

This narrative of sexualized violence (the last one in the *Fasti*) intentionally echoes the
earlier attempted rape of Lotis by Priapus in 1.395–440. There are many easily noticeable similarities between the two episodes. Ovid presents the story as a iocus (Fasti 6.320); we again have a drunken gathering of satyrs and nymphs (which somehow a virginal goddess is attending, 321–4), and the setting for the rape is nighttime after a party (in multo nox est pervigilata mero, “The night was watched through in much wine,” 325). What is more, Priapus finds Vesta alone and asleep on the ground like he does with Lotis (Vesta iacet placidamque capit secura quietem, “Vesta lies down and without care, has a peaceful rest,” 330), Ovid uses a euphemism to describe his intended violence, similar to one in 1.431–2 (ibat, ut inciperet, “he was going to begin,” 341), a nearby donkey brought by Silenus intervenes to stop the rape (both stories’ purpose is to document why certain gods require donkey sacrifice) (339–40), and a crowd gathers to witness what Priapus did (343–4). But this episode also has striking differences. The Vesta episode clearly displays how Ovid creates variety in his representations of rape and how he deviates from patterns he just recently established in the Fasti’s comic rapes.

The first difference is that Priapus does not have a target in mind as he does in the Lotis episode and also the Omphale one for Faunus.167 Newlands (1995, 135) writes that he “randomizes” his desire for sex, searching among nymphs and goddesses, and Vesta is the first vulnerable female figure he finds, later claiming he had no idea it was the goddess (333–6):

\begin{quote}
At ruber hortorum custos nymphasque deasque captat et errantes fertque refertque pedes aspicit et Vestam: dubium, nymphamne putarit an scierit Vestam, scisse sed ipse negat.
\end{quote}

But the red guardian of gardens seeks nymphs and goddesses again and again and he takes his wandering feet, back and forth. And then he sees Vesta: it is unknown whether he thought she was a nymph or knew it was Vesta, but he denies he knew it was she.

With Lotis, he first approaches her to seduce her and then rapes her when his efforts at seduction

167 But as we discussed above in my analysis of the Omphale episode, Ovid in order to generate humor in the episode, makes ambiguous whether Hercules or Omphale was the intended target of Faunus’ desire (2.306–7).
fail (1.419–20); here, Priapus makes no such proposals before he resorts to force (Murgatroyd 2005, 87). There is no description of Vesta’s appearance or a detailed description of Priapus reacting with lust to her appearance or even his colossal phallus, although we know that he spem capit obscenam (“he conceived of an obscene hope,” 337). Perhaps it would have been too profane of Ovid’s narration to luxuriate in the beauty of a virginal goddess under the male gaze and to show the instrument of Priapus’ attack. The donkey this time is honorifically sacrificed by the goddess for the animal’s service to her (Fasti 6.345) rather than sacrificed for punishment as Priapus required in Fasti 1.439–40. Finally, although Ovid says that this story is an iocus like many of the other failed rapes in the Fasti, there is no laughter from the crowd, only condemnation and the possibility of violence (convolat omnis/ turba, per infestas effugit ille manus, “The whole crowd rushes together and that god flees through hostile hands,” 343–4). The audience could have already found dark humor in such a chaste goddess possibly being inebriated at a party of known lechers (the narrator never says so explicitly, but Murgatroyd 2005, 86 thinks the context strongly insinuates she is) and subjected to an attack by such a wanton god, but Ovid at the end perhaps chastens his audience and reminds them of the appropriate response to a goddess like Vesta (Newlands 1995, 136). And despite not having as much fodder to victim-blame Vesta, there are still several of the characteristic elements: she is among very sexualized guests, she is alone, she is sleeping, and she is probably intoxicated.

The similarities between the two scenes of attempted rapes by Priapus have led some scholars like Fantham (1983, 209) to assert that the Vesta episode is an artistic failure, lacks inspiration, and is a feeble attempt at comedic relief. Fantham is also assuming that the Fasti we have would have been considered unfinished by Ovid, even if he edited it from exile. But Ovid’s edits from exile, such as his address to Germanicus in Fasti 1.3, prove to me that the Fasti is as
finished as it can be while still lacking the second half of the calendar year. Later scholars, on the other hand, have argued for the value of this passage, with which I agree. Frazel (2003) and Murgatroyd (2005) find value in the differences from the Lotis episode alone that the Vesta narrative presents. Murgatroyd (2005, 86) is particularly interested in how the audience would respond to such an intentional piece of intertextuality, to Priapus’ consistent stupidity, and to the heightened irreverence of the scene because of the “risk” Ovid is taking in showing an assault on such a goddess so close to Augustus and his regime (the emperor, for example, had built a shrine to Vesta on the Palatine near his home, something we will examine below). Newlands has most successfully integrated this episode in the wider concerns and Vesta’s position in Fasti Book 6. First, this episode acknowledges Vesta’s significance and worship among the lower classes and explains why millers sacrifice a donkey to Vesta in honor of her granting bread to the men barricaded on the capitol by the Gauls and their invasion of Rome in 391 B.C.E. (Fasti 6. 345ff.; Newlands 1995, 125). The episode also once again manifests the tensions between elegy and epic that we see throughout the aetiological poem (1995, 136). The first story the audience sees of Vesta is her attempted rape. Here, Ovid illuminates the “amatory roots” of elegy before launching into more “epic, nationalistic” and even more serious stories about the goddess. Furthermore, Newlands observes that Vesta is actually very ambiguous sexually: she is a virgin goddess, but her inner temple guards a sacred phallus (Pliny Naturalis Historia 28.39). Her attempted rape brings out the conflicts between both the goddess’s reputed asexuality and her protection of the sacred phallus for the safety of the Roman city and empire.

Priapus’ attempted rape of Vesta is later paralleled by the successful metaphorical rape of Vesta by Metellus as he saves the original and supremely sacred Trojan image of Vesta—the one

---

168 I discuss this in more depth in the next chapter, but the communis opinio is that the Fasti was heavily edited from exile, although the Met. is much more controversial. See Fantham 1985, 1998 and Green 2004, 15–25.
brought to Italy from Troy by Aeneas—from being engulfed in flames. Newlands (1995), Barchiesi (1997), and Littlewood (2006) have all identified the erotic charge of this episode. We learn that *Vesta arsit* (Vesta burned), a clear sign of elegiac desire (437–8) (Newlands 1995, 138; Barchiesi 1997, 208). Metellus enters the inner part of the temple to save the image of Vesta and he tells the Vestal Virgins they do not have the *vires* (strength) (442) to save the image of the goddess from the temple; and he apologizes for entering as a man (*vir intrabo non adeunda viro*, “I will enter as a man a place that should not be entered by a man,” 450) (Newlands 1995, 138; Barchiesi 1997, 208). The narrator and Metellus provide us with many reminders of masculinity, such as Metellus identifying himself as a man and the juxtaposition of *vis* and *vir*, words routinely correlated by the Romans and Ovid (see discussion of Achilles’ episode in *Ars* in Chapter Two). Moreover, the verbs the narrator and Metellus use to describe his presence in the temple are ones of sexual penetration (*intrabo* and later *irrupit*, 453) (Littlewood 2006, 137). Vesta, a *rapta dea* (an abducted goddess [453], later approves of what Metellus did [Barchiesi 1997, 208]). The Vestals, the human representatives of the goddess, even fall on their knees before Metellus, which can indicate sexual submission (*dubitare videbat/et pavidas posito procubuisse genu*, “He saw that they were hesitant and they had fallen down, scared, on fallen knee,” 442–3) (Newlands 1995, 138 relying on Onian’s *Origins of European Thought*, 174–87), and their hair is also loose and unbound, a common sign of sexual availability (*attonitae flebant demisso crine ministrae*, “Her priestesses, shocked, wail with their hair down,” 441). Vesta’s fire is the symbolic hearth and home of the city of Rome itself, the seat of protected Roman femininity. Vesta cannot lose her virginity or the entire city is threatened. She must remain impenetrable sexually so Rome can. As she guards the phallus, she protects the patriarchal power of Rome itself. Understanding what Vesta and her worship represent symbolically for the
Romans helps to explain how Metellus entering her temple, as a man, amounts to metaphorical penetration/rape and also why Augustus brought an image of Vesta close to his own *domus* (*Fasti* 6.455–60; Littlewood 137; 140–141). Doing so indicates to Rome that his home is now the center of Rome and her safety. The impenetrability of his household is essential. He also now controls the phallus, or the patriarchal power, as its *pater patriae*.169

**III. Conclusions: The *Fasti***

Explorations of the *Fasti* often concern finding its intertextual connections with the *Met.*—and rightfully so. The *Fasti* shares many themes with the *Met.* in its emphasis on mythology, religion, the relationship of the divine and mortal, aetiology, transformation, and Roman history. The epic and elegiac texts also, like the majority of Ovid’s corpus, share an interest in sexualized violence. The narratives of sexualized violence within the elegiac poem consistently recall, evoke, and mimic those in the epic. Most fundamentally, the *Fasti* includes many of the same rapes as the *Met.* There is, moreover, an emphasis on the connections among rape, transformation, and silencing (within Book 2 alone, Callisto, Lara, and Lucretia all face silencing and bodily change in highly linked narratives of rape). But there are new trends in the *Fasti* that I have explored throughout this chapter, including the explicit introduction of the generic elements of comedy and mime into the attempted rapes of Lotis, Omphale, and Vesta. (Comedy and mime found their way into the *Met.* more implicitly; for example, Juno, again and again resembles the stereotypical jealous wife in ancient comedy.) We also see more focus on “compensation” for rape through apotheosis, such as after the abuse of Callisto, Anna Perenna, Proserpina, Flora, and Carna. Victim-blaming manifests itself repeatedly, but there are notably fewer manifestations of sororophobia than in the *Met.*, primarily because of Juno’s lesser role in the aftermath of these

---

169 The emperor’s connections to Vesta also rely on his duties as the *pontifex maximus* and his ancestry from Aeneas, who as mentioned above, brought over Vesta’s image to Rome (for more see Littlewood 2006: 140–1).
rapes. But Juno and Diana’s sororophobia emerges in the *Fasti’s* account of the rape of Callisto as she faces both banishment and metamorphosis because of her rape; Lavinia tries to kill Anna Perenna; nymphs become complicit in sororophobia against Juturna, although Lara refuses to abet the abuse of her sister and suffers greatly for her solidarity and bravery. Another interesting feature of the rapes in the *Fasti* is the prominent role of generic tension between the genres of epic and elegy (although Ovid writes most often in the elegiac meter, epic suffuses his corpus). I have argued that this tension is endemic to all scenes of rape in Ovid because of the consistent conflation of eros and violence by the poet himself and in wider Roman sexual norms. But this very generic tension in the stories of Omphale and Lucretia in *Fasti* Book 2 is particularly salient and elaborate. Never again after the *Fasti* does Ovid have any extensive narratives of rape, but the imagery, motifs, and implications of sexualized violence reemerge in Ovid’s exploration of his own experiences with trauma in the exile poetry.
Chapter Six: Images of Sexualized Violence in Ovid’s Exile Poetry

Most scholars who study rape across Ovid’s corpus end their analysis at the Fasti. But the exile poetry presents interesting pathways into the persistence of the imagery, themes, and significance of sexualized violence in Ovid’s poetry. After Ovid was exiled by Augustus in 8 C.E. to Tomis on the Black Sea for what the poet defines as a *carmen et error*, he continued to write poetry—five books of the *Tristia* (*Tr.*.) and three books of the *Epistulae Ex Ponto* (*Epistulae*)—in order to chronicle his exile and also to appeal to those in Rome who could help him return. In the exile poetry, Ovid, admittedly, does not have any extended narratives of rape and only very briefly—especially in comparison to what we have seen in the *Met.* and *Fasti*—mentions mythological victims of rape, such as in *Tr.* 2, his long epistle to Augustus, when he discusses the lewdness and eros of Greek and Roman literary history, all in an effort to exonerate the *Ars* of any crime against Augustan morality. Nevertheless, sexualized violence has a prevalent undertone in these texts. Ovid brings in imagery he consistently associated with scenes of amatory pursuit, sexualized violence, and rape previously in his corpus by including several comparisons of his fear of Augustus and his divine anger (like that of Jupiter) to the relationship between animal predators and their prey. He similarly compares himself to characters who have experienced sexualized violence in texts thematically through an emphasis on silencing, violence against the body, and metamorphosis and also more explicitly, such as when he compares himself to Callisto. I will first discuss the inclusion of predator-prey analogies and then, by making connections to the work of scholars such as de Luce (1993) and Newlands (1996), discuss the wider implications of Ovid problematizing the presentation of his gender and of the poet connecting himself to female figures, femininity, and rape victims to understand his exile.

Ovid fears Augustus and his fury just as prey fear their predator. In the very first piece of
exile poetry (Tr. 1.1), Ovid personifies his new book of poetry and imagines it traveling to Rome, particularly to the house of Augustus on the Palatine. The gods in the structures of the Palatine, as in the house of Augustus, can be merciful, but Ovid says: *timeo qui nocuere deos* (“I fear those gods who have done harm,” 74). His fear of divine anger is like that of a dove and a sheep severely wounded by a hawk and wolf (75–8):

*Terretur minimo pennae stridore columba,*
*unguibus, accipiter, saucia facta tuis*
*nec procul a stabulis audet discedere, siqua excussa est avidi dentibus agna lupi.*

Hawk: the dove is terrified by the slightest whistling of her wing, after she was wounded by your talons, nor does any lamb dare to leave far from her fold after she has been cast out from the teeth of a hungry wolf.

Ovid in this passage reinforces the portrayal of his fear, vigilance, weakness, and vulnerability in the face of Augustus’ power by rendering both the animals female. Ovid expresses similar sentiments in *Epistulae* 2.2: he again discusses the anger of Augustus and the consequences of confronting it. But here he knows that he must face that anger to achieve his goal of being moved to a city closer to Rome, even if he has offended a god, even if angering a god again is not safe, and even if he is fearful. Ovid declares he must take a risk (31–8):

*Confugit interdum templi violator ad aram,*
*nec petere offensi numinis horret opem.*
*Dixerit hoc aliquis tutum non esse. fatemur.*
*Sed non per placidas it mea puppis aquas.*
*Tuta petant alii: fortuna miserrima tuta est,*
*nam timor eventus deterioris a best.*
*Qui rapitur praeceps torrenti fluminis unda porrigit ad spinas duraque saxa manus,*
*accipitremque timens pennis trepidantibus ales*
*audet ad humanos fessa venire sinus,*
*nec se vicino dubitat committere tecto,*
*quaes fugit infestos territa cerva canes.*

Sometimes the violator of a god seeks refuge at the altar of a temple and does not fear to seek the help of the god. Some will have said that this is not safe and I concede that, but
my ship does not go through calm waters. Let other people seek what is safe: the most deeply miserable fortune is safe because it lacks the fear of an outcome much worse. The one who is captured headlong by the raging current of a river extends his hands to grab at thorns and rocks, and the bird who fears the hawk with shaking wings dares, exhausted, to come to the embrace of humans, and the doe, who is terrified and fleeing the hostile hounds, does not hesitate to entrust herself to the house nearby.

Again, the poet compares himself to female animals at risk from predators. The fleeing prey hopes to escape the dangers of the predator by exposing herself to a lesser danger. Ovid, like the animals exposing themselves to further peril, has no other recourse. The last example of these predator-prey analogies in the exile poetry is in Epistulae 2.7. Ovid discusses his general and constant state of anxiety, with the implication—as usual in his exile poetry—that it is caused by Augustus, his silence, and his unwillingness to move him away from Tomis (7–14):

Da veniam, quaeso, nimioque ignosce timori.
Tranquillas etiam naufragus horret aquas.
Qui semel est laesus fallaci piscis ab hamo,
onnibus unca cibus aera subesse putat.
Saepe canem longe visum fugit agna lupumque
credit, et ipsa suam nescia vitat opem.
Membra reformidant mollem quoque saucia tactum,
vanaque sollicitis incutit umbra metum.

Forgive me, please, and excuse my excessive dread. Even the shipwrecked man fears tranquil waters. The fish that was once hurt by the hook, thinks that barbed bronze is in all his food, often the sheep flees the dog seen from afar, believing it to be a wolf and avoids the one being who can provide her protection. Thus, my wounded limbs fear the slight touch and the empty shadow instills terror into the anxious.

Ovid, as in many parts of the exile poetry, suffuses his texts with recurring imagery such as the personification of his poems, the buildings in Rome, tears, laments, the sparse and dreary scenery of Tomis. (Such recurring imagery is, moreover, a hallmark of the *Her.* and its lovelorn laments; see Chapter Two and below). The animals of prey included here are typical of Ovid and he does not often deviate from these patterns. For example, two of his most memorable uses of predator and prey analogies in scenes of sexualized violence occur in the rape of the Sabines in the *Ars*
1.117–8 (*Ut fugiunt aquilas, timidissima turba, columbae*./ *Ut fugit invisos agna novella lupos*, “Just as doves, a most fearful crowd, flee eagles, just as the new-born sheep flees the hostile wolves”) and in the attempted rape of Daphne in the *Met*.1.505–6 (*sic agna lupum, sic cerva leonem/sic aquilam penna fugiunt trepidante columbae*, “Thus the sheep flees the wolf, thus the deer the lion, thus the doves on trembling wing flee the eagle”): these scenes feature the same animals that appear in the passages of the exile poetry under discussion.

**I. Ovid’s Exploration of Gender, Femininity, Destabilization, and Myth**

Because of the almost normalized presence of these analogies in scenes of sexualized violence in Ovid’s texts—they do not appear in Ovid previously outside of erotic contexts—their inclusion in the exile poetry to epitomize Ovid’s fear and relationship with Augustus is very telling and should make us ask why he conceptualizes his fear in this way. It is my contention that by continuing these patterns of sexualized violence in his exile poetry, even without any extensive narratives of such, Ovid links his vulnerability in the face of Augustus’ power over his life and literature to that of victims of sexual abuse, who are primarily female figures in his texts. With these analogies, Ovid can deepen the presentation of his victimhood and even femininity and the pity he expects from his readers. Understanding the exile poetry as an exploration of femininity, gender, and gendered suffering is a well-established perspective in Ovidian studies. Many scholars before me have commented on Ovid’s feminine position in the exile poetry, primarily because of the many textual and thematic connections with the female laments of the *Her.* and how Ovid explores the nature of the voice, silencing, abjection, distance, abandonment, and ultimately femininity (de Luce 1993, Forbis 1997, Rosenmeyer 1997, Spentzou 2005). Self-reference, allusion, and a fascination with exploring, transgressing, and creating new genres have always been cornerstones in Ovid’s style, but what is significant about his connections between
the *Her.* and the exile poetry is that what the heroines experience in the fictional and
mythological stories have become reality for Ovid.\footnote{Although that is not to say that Ovid does not fictionalize elements of his exile poetry and create an exilic persona; *Epistulae* 3.3, which recounts a visit from Cupid, is particularly fantastical. Reality will always be slippery in Ovid’s poetry, even with poetry we are supposed to perceive as “real.” Ovid turns to fiction and myth to represent his suffering and this fundamentally shows us that “Ovid” in these collections is still a poetic persona, even if the distance between reality and fiction is less stark here than in his other works. Ovid is a man who conceives of himself as a poet, conceives of himself through poetry, and wants us to conceive a poetic version of himself. But Ovid several times gives the impression that the exilic persona is closest to his “real” self such as in *Tr.* 2.353–6 and 3.1.15–22. For more on Ovid’s personae and his self-representation, see Volk 2002 and 2005.} Both the *Her.* and the exile poetry tell the
story of unrequited love and both Ovid and his heroines turn to writing “in a moment of crisis” in
an attempt to both resolve it and mourn it (Claassen 1998, 113).\footnote{Claassen (2008, 130) interestingly notices that the following words appear again and again in the *Her.* and the exile poetry: *desero, desiderium, diversus, extremus, ultimus, procul, longe, peregrinus, profugus.*} What is more, as Rosenmeyer (1997) outlines, Ovid is separated from the city and people he loves, he has been abandoned in
many senses of the word, and he turns to poetic epistles, with difficulty and with many tears, to
convince the person who causes that distance to allow him to return, although, in the end,
Augustus never responds to his pleas or allows him to return (33–34, 36, 37-38, 41–42). Ovid’s
continuous focus on his own weeping and tears (*Tr.* 5.1.135, *Epistulae* 1.2.27–34) can even be
said to take on the elements of *l’écriture féminine,* which Spentzou (2003) found in the *Her.*, a
type of writing first explored by Hélène Cixous (1975) that is intimately in touch with the female
body and its materiality. In the epilogue of the *Met.* 15.871–9, Ovid attempts to deny that he has a
body and declares that he can transcend the material restraints of femininity by achieving
immortality (see Chapter Three), but Ovid in the exile poetry makes the materiality of his body
conspicuous. But, of course, Ovid is not fully like the heroines of his earliest poetic collection.
Barchiesi (2001) and Spentzou (2005) argue that the heroines were silent before they turned to
their epistles, made silent by androcentrism in mythology, but then through poetry, they find a
voice (even if that voice, as I argued in Chapter Two, reinforces stereotypes about femininity).

“Ohvid writes back to the world he thinks he knows and belongs to. Most of the heroines, address
a world in which they never occupied a central, and but instead often marginal, position” (Spentzou 2005, 328). Ovid uses his exile poetry to ensure he stays central in Rome. The poetic epistles can be empowering for the heroines, but poetic epistles for Ovid only serve as a reminder for the power he once had. Again and again in the exile poetry, we learn it is hard to for Ovid to see himself as empowered at all as his hopes for return deteriorate. 172

These prior perspectives on the role of femininity and gender destabilization in Ovid’s exile poetry are essential to my own, but my argument in this chapter makes further connections to Ovid’s representation of gender. It is clear that Ovid has taken on many of the characteristics of femininity he presented in the *Her.* in the exile poetry. He has been abandoned and laments like a female figure because of it, he is subject to the materiality of the body. But the presence of the predator-prey analogies and as we will see, his more direct self-comparisons to rape victims, demonstrate that Ovid relates his exilic suffering to other gendered and female experiences, such as that of rape. How does Ovid’s relationship with femininity extend into a relationship with metamorphosis, silencing, and sexualized violence? How has Ovid become as vulnerable as his rape victims? To what rape victims does he compare himself? In what ways does he portray empathy towards rape victims? And how does such empathy once more destabilize his gender?

The belief that Ovid relates to the suffering of female figures is why feminist scholars like Cahoon (1990), Klindienst (1991), Feeney (1992), Newlands (1995), and Enterline (2000) maintain that his narratives of sexualized violence offer a critique of this violence against female figures instead of engaging in misogyny. Although, it must be said again—to echo Richlin (1992)—that I do not believe that these personal connections exonerate him of the misogyny he displays and enforces. Critique and engaging in misogyny are not mutually exclusive terrains.

172 Silence is most certainly not power for the female figures of the *Her.*, but could be a source of power for Ovid in exile: Spentzou intriguingly contends that by never revealing the cause of his exile by Augustus, Ovid does not allow Augustus to dictate the narrative of what happened (2005, 336–7).
The connections Ovid makes to rape victims show his feelings of entitlement to use the voice, bodies, and stories of female figures for the exploration of his own gender and its destabilization in time of personal crisis. As Ovid appropriates the experiences of female figures, he only supports how women in his society have no right to a voice (see de Lauretis 1987, 44–5). Ovid has become more like female figures in his victimization by Augustan power, but that does not mean his essential outlook on misogyny and femininity have changed. Nevertheless, his personal connections to rape victims are central to understanding his portrayal of rape at large.

According to these scholars and Newlands particularly, as Ovid explores rape, he condemns the hierarchies of Augustan Rome, which have emasculated men. Augustus made himself the patriarch of Rome, the *pater patriae*, thereby undermining the patriarchal power of other Roman men. Ovid is then doubly emasculated by exile at the hands of Augustus. In predator-prey analogies in the exile poetry, we see that Ovid, like rape victims, fears for his life, is vulnerable, and is terrorized and dominated by someone more powerful. But the similarities with rape victims are more extensive than the analogies: Ovid is silenced and transformed by his exile. Cahoon, Klindienst, Feeney, Newlands, Enterline and also de Luce (1993) see associations between Ovid and female figures like Cyane, Philomela, Lara, and Lucretia, who are not only brutally raped, compared to prey hunted by predators, but explicitly shown to be silenced by their abusers, just as Ovid (and Roman men) have been silenced by Augustus. Forbis (1997, 252–4) intriguingly observes—unlike others writing on this topic—that Ovid connects himself to another silenced rape victim, Dyrope, in *Tr.* 1.3. Both Ovid and Dryope claim that they have committed no crime (*patior sine criminé poenam*, “I suffer a penalty without a crime,” 9.372), Ovid’s wife and Iole, Dryope’s sister, and the narrator in *Met.* Book 9, have difficulty in speaking because of their tears (*Tr.* 1.3.42; *Met.* 9.328–9), and Ovid speaks until the moment of
his departure from Rome while Dryope speaks until the bark of the poplar tree, her new form, closes upon her mouth (Tr. 1.3.69; Met. 9.371–91). Forbis argues that, as a whole, both Tr. 1.3 and Dryope show the significance of speech for building relationships and for maintaining one’s human identity. Comparing himself to female rape victims is an element of his general strategy in the exile of conceiving of his circumstances through myth (Williams 1994, Claassen 1998, 2008, Ingleheart 2011). Elsewhere, for example, he compares himself to Odysseus in exile (Tr. 1.5) and to Jason sailing to the East with the Argonauts (Tr. 1.4).

Ovid wants us to see explicit connections between his exilic self, the Met. (and his literature at large), and the characters and themes within the epic. At the beginning of the collection, he declares that his exilic suffering should be understood to be as metamorphosis, likening what he experiences in exile to events of the Met. (his mando dicas, inter mutata referri/fortunae vultum corpora posse meae, “I demand that you [speaking to his book of poetry] tell them that the aspect of my own fate should be understood in reference to the bodies transformed,” Tr. 1.1.119–20). In Tr. 1.7.11, Ovid even proclaims that the Met. is a maior imago of his exilic self. Later in same epistle, he explains how the Met. has become a maimed text because he did not finish it and tried to destroy it in a fire, like Alathea did to the firebrand keeping Meleager alive (the imagery of a woman and her child evoking additional themes of femininity and motherhood), although he did not succeed. He compares the text to his body parts, calling them his viscera (20). His text, the maior imago of him, is his body. By comparing the Met. to his body, Ovid is relying on the analogies elegiac poets often make between the text and the female body (Wyke 2002), deepening his relationship to femininity more so (being subject to the body and violence against it is, as I argued in Chapter Three, a hallmark of femininity and Ovid’s representation of it in his texts). Ovid declares likewise in Tr. 1.73–4 that

173 See my analysis below of the connections between Dryope, Actaeon, and Ovid and the presentation of his error.
exile has left his body maimed and torn asunder. His text, like his body, is maimed because of exile, his actual body has been maimed because of exile, in both cases drawing attention to the materiality of his body and its vulnerability to violence. Many of the figures in the *Met.* (and the *Fasti,* as well) have their bodies maimed and violated through violence and/or metamorphosis and more, female figures and rape victims most particularly and consistently. The inclusion of predator-prey analogies in the exile poetry has the same effect as the comparisons Ovid makes between himself and his poetry’s rape victims and the silencing and violence they face: the poet appropriating and wielding femininity as a way to understand and depict his own suffering.

Ovid, in the eyes of Cahoon, Klindienst, de Luce, Newlands, and Enterline, makes such comparisons and uses the gendered suffering of female figures and female rape victims in the *Met.* and *Fasti* to discuss his own disempowerment (especially if we assume the position that both works were heavily edited in exile, despite all his protestations of them being “unfinished”)¹⁷⁴ and Forbis and again de Luce and Enterline believe the same of the exile poetry.¹⁷⁵ King’s 2006 analysis (see Chapter Five) of Ovid’s exploration of gender reversals and

---

¹⁷⁴ Ovid himself says that the *Met.* and the *Fasti* were not finished before he was banished to Tomis (*Tr.* 1.2.33–40; *Tr.* 1.7; *Tr.* 2). Did history preserve the unedited copies or did he circulate “finished” copies from exile? Of course, the notion of finished with the *Fasti* is more complex because we only have six months of the year. King (2006, 13) even suggests that Ovid intentionally left the *Fasti* “unfinished” in regards to length of a year to convey the depths of his “symbolic and literary castration” as he “lost control over his literary and political circumstances.” Engaging in a Lacanian analysis of the *Fasti,* King contends that Ovid’s Symbolic has become fragmented and torn and thus, effeminized, Woman representing in Lacan the opposite of unity and structure.

But to return to exilic revisions of the six books we have, the vast majority of scholars believe the *Fasti* to have been revised in exile, particularly because of the focus on Germanicus, rather than Augustus, in the first book, a political and military figure who became increasingly important after the *princeps*’ death in 14 C.E. (see Fantham 1985, 1998 and Green 2004, 15–25). Although I believe that the *Met.* was revised in exile, there is less scholarly consensus about the *Met.*’s exilic fate. The following points have convinced me: exile, as Harrison (2007, 134–8) argues, is a major theme within the *Met.* (such as the exile of Io, Cadmus, and Peleus in *Met.* 1, 3, and 11 respectively) and Ovid, as we have seen, explicitly compares his exilic self to figures in the epic like Dryope and Philomela, most importantly comparing his error to that of Actaeon, a man punished by an avenging god because he saw what he should not. At the very least, many scholars accept that the coda of the *Met.* (lines 15.871–9) as edited from exile because of the coda’s similar emphasis on Jupiter’s anger (a surrogate for that of Augustus) and how it can imperil the immortality of Ovid’s poetic achievements (Kovacs 1987, 463–5 and Ingleheart 2011, 5). Hinds (1985) was one of the first works to start to shift the conversation around Ovid’s post-exilic additions to the *Met.*

¹⁷⁵ Hejduk (2009) similarly asserts that Ovid uses the story of how animals were first sacrificed in the *Fasti* (1.343–456) to speak of his own situation and the causes of his exile by Augustus. Birds, in this account of animal sacrifice,
transgr Because of the almost normalized presence of these analogies in scenes of sexualized violence in Ovid’s texts—they do not appear in Ovid previously outside of erotic contexts—their inclusion in the exile poetry to epitomize Ovid’s fear and relationship with Augustus is very telling and should make us ask why he conceptualizes his fear in this way. It is my contention that by continuing these patterns of sexualized violence in his exile poetry, even without any extensive narratives of such, Ovid links his vulnerability in the face of Augustus’ power over his life and literature to that of victims of sexual abuse, who are primarily female figures in his texts. With these analogies, Ovid can deepen the presentation of his victimhood and even femininity and the pity he expects from his readers. Understanding the exile poetry as an exploration of femininity, gender, and gendered suffering is a well-established perspective in Ovidian studies. Many scholars before me have commented on Ovid’s feminine position in the exile poetry, primarily because of the many textual and thematic connections with the female laments of the *Her* and how Ovid explores the nature of the voice, silencing, abjection, distance, abandonment, and ultimately femininity (de Luce 1993, Forbis 1997, Rosenmeyer 1997, Spentzou 2005). Self-reference, allusion, and a fascination with exploring, transgressing, and creating new genres have always been cornerstones of Ovid’s style, but what is significant about his connections between the *Her* and the exile poetry is that what the heroines experience in the fictional and mythological stories have become reality for Ovid. Both the *Her* and the exile poetry tell the story of unrequited love and both Ovid and his heroines turn to writing “in a moment of crisis” in

---

are presented as “singers who come too close to the gods” (54). Hejduk argues this should remind us of how Ovid portrays his relationship with Augustus, often likened to a god, particularly Jupiter (see below).

176 Although that is not to say that Ovid does not fictionalize elements of his exile poetry and create an exilic persona; *Epistulae* 3.3, which recounts a visit from Cupid, is particularly fantastical. Reality will always be slippery in Ovid’s poetry, even with poetry we are supposed to perceive as “real.” Ovid turns to fiction and myth to represent his suffering, and this fundamentally shows us that “Ovid” in these collections is still a poetic persona, even if the distance between reality and fiction is less stark here than in his other works. Ovid is a man who conceives of himself as a poet, conceives of himself through poetry, and wants us to conceive a poetic version of himself. But Ovid several times gives the impression that the exilic persona is closest to his “real” self such as in *Tr*. 2.353–6 and 3.1.15–22. For more on Ovid’s personae and his self-representation, see Volk 2002 and 2005.
an attempt to both resolve it and mourn it (Claassen 1998, 113). What is more, as Rosenmeyer (1997) outlines, Ovid is separated from the city and people he loves, he has been abandoned in many senses of the word, and he turns to poetic epistles, with difficulty and with many tears, to convince the person who causes that distance to allow him to return, although, in the end, Augustus never responds to his pleas or allows him to return (33–34, 36, 37-38, 41–42). Ovid’s continuous focus on his own weeping and tears (Tr. 5.1.135, Epistulae 1.2.27–34) can even be said to take on the elements of l’écriture féminine, which Spentzou (2003) found in the Her., a type of writing first explored by Hélène Cixous (1975) that is intimately in touch with the female body and its materiality. In the epilogue of the Met. 15.871–9, Ovid attempts to deny that he has a body and declares that he can transcend the material restraints of femininity by achieving immortality (see Chapter Three), but Ovid in the exile poetry makes the materiality of his body conspicuous. But, of course, Ovid is not fully like the heroines of his earliest poetic collection. Barchiesi (2001) and Spentzou (2005) argue that the heroines were silent before they turned to their epistles, made silent by androcentrism in mythology; but then through poetry, they find a voice (even if that voice, as I argued in Chapter Two, reinforces stereotypes about femininity). “Ovid writes back to the world he thinks he knows and belongs to. Most of the heroines, address a world in which they never occupied a central, and but instead often marginal, position” (Spentzou 2005, 328). Ovid uses his exile poetry to ensure he stays central in Rome. The poetic epistles can be empowering for the heroines, but poetic epistles for Ovid only serve as a reminder for the power he once had. Again and again in the exile poetry, we learn it is hard for

---

177 Claassen (2008, 130) interestingly notices that the following words appear again and again in the Her. and the exile poetry: desero, desiderium, diversus, extremus, ultimus, procul, longe, peregrinus, profugus.
Ovid to see himself as empowered at all as his hopes for return deteriorate.\textsuperscript{178}

These prior perspectives on the role of femininity and gender destabilization in Ovid’s exile poetry are essential to my own, but my argument in this chapter makes further connections to Ovid’s representation of gender. It is clear that Ovid has taken on many of the characteristics of femininity he presented in the \textit{Her.} in the exile poetry. He has been abandoned and laments like a female figure because of it, he is subject to the materiality of the body. But the presence of the predator-prey analogies and as we will see, his more direct self-comparisons to rape victims, demonstrate that Ovid relates his exilic suffering to other gendered and female experiences, such as that of rape. How does Ovid’s relationship with femininity extend into a relationship with metamorphosis, silencing, and sexualized violence? How has Ovid become as vulnerable as his rape victims? To what rape victims does he compare himself? In what ways does he portray empathy toward rape victims? And how does such empathy once more destabilize his gender?

The belief that Ovid relates to the suffering of female figures is why feminist scholars like Cahoon (1990), Klindienst (1991), Feeney (1992), Newlands (1995), and Enterline (2000) maintain that his narratives of sexualized violence offer a critique of this violence against female figures instead of engaging in misogyny. Although, it must be said again—to echo Richlin (1992)—that I do not believe that these personal connections exonerate him of the misogyny he displays and enforces. Critique and engaging in misogyny are not mutually exclusive terrains. The connections Ovid makes to rape victims show his feelings of entitlement to use the voice, bodies, and stories of female figures for the exploration of his own gender and its destabilization in time of personal crisis. As Ovid appropriates the experiences of female figures, he only supports how women in his society have no right to a voice (see de Lauretis 1987, 44–5). Ovid

\textsuperscript{178} Silence is most certainly not power for the female figures of the \textit{Her.}, but could be a source of power for Ovid in exile: Spentzou intriguingly contends that by never revealing the cause of his exile by Augustus, Ovid does not allow Augustus to dictate the narrative of what happened (2005, 336–7).
has become more like female figures in his victimization by Augustan power, but that does not mean his essential outlook on misogyny and femininity have changed. Nevertheless, his personal connections to rape victims are central to understanding his portrayal of rape at large.

According to these scholars and Newlands particularly, as Ovid explores rape, he condemns the hierarchies of Augustan Rome, which have emasculated men. Augustus made himself the patriarch of Rome, the *pater patriae*, thereby undermining the patriarchal power of other Roman men. Ovid is then doubly emasculated by exile at the hands of Augustus. In predator-prey analogies in the exile poetry, we see that Ovid, like rape victims, fears for his life, is vulnerable, and is terrorized and dominated by someone more powerful. But the similarities with rape victims are more extensive than the analogies: Ovid is silenced and transformed by his exile. Cahoon, Klindienst, Feeney, Newlands, Enterline and also de Luce (1993) see associations between Ovid and female figures like Cyane, Philomela, Lara, and Lucretia, who are not only brutally raped compared to prey hunted by predators, but explicitly shown to be silenced by their abusers, just as Ovid (and Roman men) have been silenced by Augustus. Forbis (1997, 252–4) intriguingly observes—unlike others writing on this topic—that Ovid connects himself to another silenced rape victim, Dryope, in *Tr.* 1.3. Both Ovid and Dryope claim that they have committed no crime (*pator sine crimine poenam*, “I suffer a penalty without a crime,” 9.372); Ovid’s wife and Iole, Dryope’s sister, and the narrator in *Met.* Book 9, have difficulty in speaking because of their tears (*Tr.* 1.3.42; *Met.* 9.328–9); and Ovid speaks until the moment of his departure from Rome, while Dryope speaks until the bark of the poplar tree, her new form, closes upon her mouth (*Tr.* 1.3.69; *Met.* 9.371–91). Forbis argues that, as a whole, both *Tr.* 1.3 and Dryope show the significance of speech for building relationships and for maintaining one’s
human identity. Comparing himself to female rape victims is an element of his general strategy in the exile of conceiving of his circumstances through myth (Williams 1994, Claassen 1998, 2008, Ingleheart 2011). Elsewhere, for example, he compares himself to Odysseus in exile (Tr. 1.5) and to Jason sailing to the East with the Argonauts (Tr. 1.4).

Ovid wants us to see explicit connections between his exilic self, the Met. (and his literature at large), and the characters and themes within the epic. At the beginning of the collection, he declares that his exilic suffering should be understood to be as metamorphosis, likening what he experiences in exile to events of the Met. (his mando dicas, inter mutata referri/fortunae vultum corpora posse meae, “I demand that you [speaking to his book of poetry] tell them that the aspect of my own fate should be understood in reference to the bodies transformed,” Tr. 1.1.119–20). In Tr. 1.7.11, Ovid even proclaims that the Met. is a maior imago of his exilic self. Later in the same epistle, he explains how the Met. has become a maimed text because he did not finish it and tried to destroy it in a fire, like Alathea did to the firebrand keeping Meleager alive (the imagery of a woman and her child evoking additional themes of femininity and motherhood), although he did not succeed. He compares the text to his body parts, calling them his viscera (20). His text, the maior imago of him, is his body. By comparing the Met. to his body, Ovid is relying on the analogies elegiac poets often make between the text and the female body (Wyke 2002), deepening his relationship to femininity more so (being subject to the body and violence against it is, as I argued in Chapter Three, a hallmark of femininity and Ovid’s representation of it in his texts). Ovid declares likewise in Tr. 1.73–4 that exile has left his body maimed and torn asunder. His text, like his body, is maimed because of exile, his actual body has been maimed because of exile, both cases drawing attention to the materiality of his body and its vulnerability to violence. Many of the figures in the Met. (and the

---

179 See my analysis below of the connections between Dryope, Actaeon, and Ovid and the presentation of his error.
Fasti, as well) have their bodies maimed and violated through violence and/or metamorphosis and more, female figures and rape victims most particularly and consistently. The inclusion of predator-prey analogies in the exile poetry has the same effect as the comparisons Ovid makes between himself and his poetry’s rape victims and the silencing and violence they face: the poet appropriating and wielding femininity as a way to understand and depict his own suffering.

Ovid, in the eyes of Cahoon, Klindienst, de Luce, Newlands, and Enterline, makes such comparisons and uses the gendered suffering of female figures and female rape victims in the Met. and Fasti to discuss his own disempowerment (especially if we assume the position that both works were heavily edited in exile, despite all his protestations of them being “unfinished”), and Forbis and again de Luce and Enterline believe the same of the exile poetry. King’s 2006 analysis (see Chapter Five) of Ovid’s exploration of gender reversals and transgressions in the Fasti, such as the story of Omphale and Hercules and the exploration of Sextus’ effeminized, tyrannical passion for Lucretia, posits something similar to the scholars

---

180 Ovid himself says that the Met. and the Fasti were not finished before he was banished to Tomis (Tr. 1.2.33–40; Tr. 1.7; Tr. 2). Did history preserve the unedited copies or did he circulate “finished” copies from exile? Of course, the notion of finished copies with the Fasti is more complex because we only have six months of the year. King (2006, 13) even suggests that Ovid intentionally left the Fasti “unfinished” in regard to length of a year to convey the depths of his “symbolic and literary castration” as he “lost control over his literary and political circumstances.” Engaging in a Lacanian analysis of the Fasti, King contends that Ovid’s Symbolic has become fragmented and torn and thus, effeminized, Woman representing in Lacan the opposite of unity and structure.

But to return to exilic revisions of the six books we have, the vast majority of scholars believe the Fasti to have been revised in exile, particularly because of the focus on Germanicus, rather than Augustus, in the first book, a political and military figure who became increasingly important after the princeps’ death in 14 C.E. (see Fantham 1985, 1998 and Green 2004, 15–25). Although I believe that the Met. was revised in exile, there is less scholarly consensus about the Met.’s exilic fate. The following points have convinced me: exile, as Harrison (2007, 134–8) argues, is a major theme within the Met. (such as the exile of Io, Cadmus, and Peleus in Met. 1, 3, and 11, respectively), and Ovid, as we have seen, explicitly compares his exilic self to figures in the epic like Dryope and Philomela, most importantly comparing his error to that of Actaeon, a man punished by an avenging god because he saw what he should not. At the very least, many scholars accept that the coda of the Met. (lines 15.871–9) was edited from exile because of the coda’s similar emphasis on Jupiter’s anger (a surrogate for that of Augustus) and how it can imperil the immortality of Ovid’s poetic achievements (Kovacs 1987, 463–5 and Ingleheart 2011, 5). Hinds (1985) was one of the first works to start to shift the conversation around Ovid’s post-exilic additions to the Met.

181 Hejduk (2009) similarly asserts that Ovid uses the story of how animals were first sacrificed in the Fasti (1.343–456) to speak of his own situation and the causes of his exile by Augustus. Birds, in this account of animal sacrifice, are presented as “singers who come too close to the gods” (54). Hejduk argues this should remind us of how Ovid portrays his relationship with Augustus, often likened to a god, particularly Jupiter (see below).
above about Ovid’s portrayal and understanding of his own gender in exile. King argues that Ovid destabilizes gender in the *Fasti* to express the violence wrought against his masculinity under Augustus. Ultimately, Cahoon, Feeney, Klindienst, de Luce, Newlands, Forbis, Enterline, and King help us to understand the political and personal implications in Ovid’s focus on the gender, the silencing of, and the violence against female figures and how these stories of violence against the body, rape, and the loss of speech all act as metaphors for Ovid’s own exile and more broadly, the political conditions for Roman men, like Ovid, under tyranny. Ovid, though, does not explore the plight of female figures in order challenge the oppression of women in antiquity, but only to understand how Roman men have become powerless like women.

The connections Ovid makes between his silenced characters and his own silence are especially conspicuous and pervasive and something I should expand upon more to establish Ovid’s concerns with femininity. As we have seen in this chapter and in Chapters Four and Five, silence, voicelessness, and the subsequent loss of humanity are major concerns in the *Met.* and *Fasti*. Ovid is very interested in delving into the limits of the human voice and human speech (Enterline 2000) and has devoted whole books of his works (i.e., *Met*. Book 2 and *Fasti* Book 2) to exploring the nature of silencing (Keith 1994). Feeney (1992) has argued that one of the *Fasti*’s chief concerns is to explore the notions and conditions of both permissible speech (*fās*) and impermissible (*nefas*) under the Augustan regime, particularly through the poem’s stories on the silencing of female figures through mutilation, transformation, and rape and the punishment of female figures for their speech before or after their rapes. Ovid variously shows how both male and female figures in his texts, most prominently artists, who challenge the power of the gods face eternal silence through mutilation, metamorphosis into an animal, or death such as Actaeon (*Met*. 3.165–252), Minyeides (4.31–415), Pierides (5.294–331), Arachne (6.1–145),
Niobe (6.146–381), Marysas (6.382–400), Philomela (6.401–674), and Chione (11.265–345). Many scholars like Leach (1974), Lateiner (1984), Keith (1992), and P.J. Johnson (2008) believe Ovid makes analogies between himself and other artistic figures in his poetry because of the context of power, tyranny, and possible brutality in which they create art. Ovid made art under the Augustan regime and is punished for it by Augustus with displacement from Rome and with silencing; and figures like Arachne make art very similar to that of Ovid (see Chapter Four) as a challenge to the goddess Minerva, and she is punished for it with silencing and metamorphosis. The above-mentioned scholars have asked how Ovid depicts the interactions between art and power and the consequences for creating art in the face of authoritarian power. But I am more concerned with what Ovid’s understanding of himself through myth, his focus on silencing, and his relationship with Augustus say about the nature of femininity, gender, and sexualized violence in his texts.

However, most of the people Ovid labels as silenced by brutality or by metamorphosis and whose silencing he most memorably and extensively explores, are female figures. One only has to consider Philomela’s episode or that of Lara, in which their tongues are violently plucked from their mouths (Met. 6.549–60; Fasti 2.607–8), a fate men avoid in the Met. and the Fasti. The silencing of female figures in these two works receives more lines than the silencing of male figures, and female figures outnumber men three-to-one in episodes of silencing (de Luce 1993). Many rape victims can be said to be silenced in Ovid’s texts because of the perceived challenge their fertility presents to the status of the goddess Juno, infamously struggling to be fecund with her brother and husband, like Callisto (Met. 2.417–530; Fasti 2.152–92), Semele (Met. 3.353–15), and Alcmena (9.273–323); these rape victims challenge her power. De Luce even observes that few female speakers in the Met. are not raped and brutalized and/or eventually silenced.
Even the voluble and divine Muses who dominate the speech of Met. Book 5 faced sexual abuse in the epic poem (250–93). Galatea alone, in Book 13, tells her story of Polyphemos’ aggressive courting of her without facing direct physical violence in the poem, although her lover Acis is brutalized (738–88). Nestor (Met. 12.146–628) and Ulysses (13.123–381) can talk (and talk) about their past accomplishments and more in the epic poem without much consequence.

Ovid’s exilic self is comparably voiceless in many ways and displays his intense anxieties about the fading power of his poetic and political voice (Enterline 2000). His poetry does not achieve its goal of return to Rome or at least, movement from Tomis to a city closer to Rome; he can only speak with letters to those in Rome and not his actual voice (Epistulae 2.6); he is losing his ability to speak Latin among a barbarian people (in Epistulae 4.13 he even informs us that he wrote a poem in the Getic language); and Ovid’s ability to speak and to write poetry is being controlled by the imperial powers of Augustus (Forbis 1997, 247). This is one of the hallmarks of tyranny: tyrants derive their power from the control and suppression of others’ discourse and speech. Tereus uses his power over Philomela’s voice and attempts to stay in power after she attempts to expose his rape through her speech (Klindienst 1991).

And it is not surprising, based on Ovid’s corpus, that these self-comparisons to rape victims would in turn place Augustus in the position of a rapist, or more generally, the position of violence. Ovid has made very explicit connections between Jupiter and Apollo (serial rapists) and Augustus in the Met. One has to look no further than Ovid’s comparison of Jupiter and Augustus during Jupiter’s council of the gods (Met. 1.163–243) and Ovid’s comparison between Apollo and Augustus after the attempted rape of Daphne. Ovid in this Met. passage relates Augustus to Jupiter and the other gods to Roman senators. He connects Augustus to Jupiter several times in increasingly conspicuous ways: he calls Jupiter the Magnus Tonans, the Great
Thunderer in order to refer to the temple Augustus built for Jupiter Tonans in 22 B.C.E. (Suetonius 29.9) (Met. 1. 170); the narrator says that he would not hesitate to call the Milky Way the Palatine of the heavens (Palatia caeli, 175–6), the Palatine being the residence of Augustus; he compares the anger of Jupiter and the other gods to Lycaon’s behavior regarding the fury over Caesar’s assassination (199–203); and finally, he makes the most overt link: he directly addresses Augustus as he compares him to Jupiter and says: nec tibi grata minus pietas, Auguste, tuorum/ quam fuit illa Iovi (“Augustus, the loyalty of your subjects was less pleasing to you than the loyalty of Jupiter’s subjects was to him,” 204–5). He similarly relates Augustus to Apollo, particularly by calling attention to Augustus’ house and his presence on the Palatine. Apollo, predicting the future, speaks of Augustus’ house, directly names Augustus, and declares that laurel trees will stand in front of his home to display how Apollo protects him (postibus Augustis eadem fidissima custos/ ante fores stabis 562–3). The creation of the laurel tree and its use as a symbol of Apollo’s power was the direct result of the god’s attempted sexual assault of Daphne: she escapes his rape through the transformation of her human body, and because Apollo could not sexually possess her, he appropriates her transformed body as his symbol.

In the exile poetry, Ovid continues these connections by regularly characterizing Augustus’ anger as divine and equivalent to that of Jupiter. Ovid in the Tristia “programmatically and insistently” (to use the words of Ingleheart 2011, 5) compares Augustus to Jupiter wielding thunderbolts. For example, in Tr. 1.1.69–72 Ovid writes that he has been struck by a thunderbolt (venit in hoc...fulmen...caput), a power usually in the hands of Jupiter, from the mount of the Palatine Hill in Rome and says that he has angered the gods of the Palatine, with the strong suggestion that one of them is Augustus and that Augustus is like Jupiter. Other examples of this specific comparison can be found in Tr. 1.3.11–12 and 2.33–4. Many scholars, such as Otis
(1970), Lündstrom (1980), Müller (1987), Feeney (1992), and Fulkerson (2006), see the relationship Ovid creates between Augustus and cruel gods as the poet subversively commenting on the nature of tyranny and the abuses of power and hierarchy under it.

But Augustus is not only in a position of power in Ovid’s exile poetry—the poet makes himself and Augustus more similar than one would first assume. Hardie (1995), O’Gorman (1997), Habinek (1998), and Feldherr (2010) have been interested in how Ovid, the poet, aligns himself with Augustus, the princeps, throughout his corpus. In the Amores, Ovid uses imperial symbols to characterize his relationship with the puella, such as the triumph (1.2) used exclusively by Augustus’ family after the fall of the Republic. One of the most telling examples of Ovid’s alignment with the princeps is when Ovid relates Augustus and his family’s quest for divine immortality with his poetic one. He, like Aeneas, Romulus, Caesar, and Augustus, seeks to forever be on the lips of posterity: 

\[
\text{quaque patet domitis Romana potentia terris,/}
\text{ore legar populi, perque omnia saecula fama,/}
\text{siquid habent veri vatum praesagia, vivam (\text{"Wherever the power of Rome expands in the conquered land, I will be mentioned on the lips of mankind and in my fame I will live throughout all the ages, if the predictions of bards are true," Met. 15.877–79).}
\]

Ovid, in the exile poetry, makes himself resemble the princeps because of the gender destabilization they both experience within it. First, Ovid situates Augustus in the position of the puella in love elegy: Augustus is like the woman who will not open the door for the exclusus amator, since he will not allow Ovid to return to Rome, a literary and thematic connection to love elegy that was first extensively explored by Nagle (1980).\(^\text{182}\) Janan (2009, 85) says that Augustus even becomes the “consummate object of desire” for Ovid. In the typical elegiac worldview, even if Augustus has been likened to a woman, he holds onto the power in the relationship because he enslaves the amator through the servitium amoris. Ovid, however,

\(^\text{182}\) For some of the most famous examples of the exclusus amator see Propertius 1.16 and Ovid 1.6.
repeatedly exposes the *servitium amoris* as a ruse in his own elegiac poetry (see my discussion in Chapter Two) and shows that the male *amator* is truly in control of the relationship through his use of violence. Gender and power are complex in Ovid’s elegiac poetry, as well as in his exile poetry. Augustus is in the role of rapist, but also the *puella*. Ovid is the victim, but also the *amator*. The poet vacillates between a position of power and of weakness. This relates to Forbis’ (1997) position on the contradictory tensions inherent in one of the central themes of the exile poetry: Ovid is silenced in many ways, but he still writes poetry. He is afraid of his own death, but he knows that his poetry, the testament to his voice, will survive (*Tr.* 3.378–9). Ovid has not completely lost the confidence in his ability to transcend the material for the immortal that we see in the prologue of the *Met*. Femininity does not conquer all of his masculinity. I have argued elsewhere in my dissertation that Ovid never permanently destabilizes the gender of his male or female characters, but rather essentializes and naturalizes the genders. In his exile poetry, he presents his own gender in crisis because of his connections to the gendered experiences of female figures like silencing and rape. But the fact that he can write poetry, poetry that will transcend the materiality of his body, speaks to his essential, even if threatened, masculinity.

The destabilization of Ovid’s and the emperor’s gender manifests also in Ovid’s use of mythological exempla. Ovid frequently compares himself to Callisto, referring to her constellation in the *Tr.* a half a dozen times (1.3.48, 1.4.1, 1.11.15, 2.1.190; 3.4b.47, 3.11.8). Her constellation to Ovid epitomizes the icy conditions of his current, enforced location on the freezing, barren Black Sea and its extremity from Rome. Callisto’s rape by Jupiter is portrayed in both the *Met.* (2.401–530) and the *Fasti* (2.152–92), and we know from Ovid that she becomes a constellation (Ursa Major) in the aftermath of her rape. But beyond Callisto’s associations with the North, Ovid references Callisto in order to draw connections between their suffering just as
he draws connections between himself and the fear of rape victims. The predator-prey analogies and comparisons like this to rape victims are two sides of the same coin: Ovid using feminine experiences as metaphors and symbols for the poetic representation of his pain in exile.

Callisto is appropriate for him for many reasons: she is a rape victim of Jupiter (a surrogate for Augustus), she is shunned by Diana (a god central to Augustus’ propaganda because of her relationship with Apollo), and Callisto’s silencing when she is transformed into a bear without human speech is an integral part of the Met. narrative and a major source of its tragic nature, as I contended in Chapter Four. Like many of Ovid’s rape victims, Callisto is dehumanized by her rape, she is transformed into an animal, and then loses her voice, just as Ovid said of himself in Tr. 1.3 and 1.7. Claassen (2008, 168) even observes that Ovid never directly names her once in the exile poetry—she is only named in reference to her male relatives and to geography—which again reflects the dehumanization she faces through rape. What is more, Augustus himself was known to have a birthmark shaped like Ursa Major (Suetonius 80). Ovid’s references to Callisto speak to his exilic suffering, but also remind his audience who is the cause of his exile and that “both Ovid and emperor share in the characteristics of the oppressed maiden” (Claassen 2008, 168). It becomes clear that both the poet and the princeps can be the maiden Callisto, the stereotypical woman in elegiac poetry, and overall, be in the feminine position.

II. Ovid, Actaeon, Augustus, and Diana

Ovid’s famous comparison of himself to Actaeon in his exilic epistle to Augustus (Tr. 2.103–10) is a matter we should examine at length in this chapter for many reasons: its connections to other stories of rape in his texts, its comments on the nature of silencing, its portrayal of a kind of gender destabilization and Ovid’s gender, its understanding of poet and princeps and the shifting and mutable power between them, and most importantly, because of the
sexual violation of Diana by Actaeon found in the narrative itself. The comparison is as follows:

Cur aliquid vidi? Cur noxia lumina feci?
Cur imprudenti cognita culpa mihi?
Inscius Actaeon vidit sine veste Dianam:
Praeda fuit canibus non minus ille suis.
Scilicet in superis etiam fortuna luenda est,
 nec veniam laeso numine casus habet.

Why did I see anything? Why did I make my eyes guilty? Why have I learned, thoughtlessly, about a fault? Unknowing Actaeon saw Diana with her clothing on: he nevertheless became meat for his own hounds. It is clear that among the gods accident must be avenged and mischance does not have an excuse after a deity has been harmed.

In this passage, the poet claims that, like Actaeon in the Met. 3.165–205, he saw something he was not supposed to, something of the divine (and maybe even sexual), and he is suffering punishment for it from Augustus, here likened to the goddess Diana. Later Ovid extends this analogy when he declares he only committed an error and not a scelus/crimen (Tr.2.207–253), a distinction he makes all in an effort to convince the princeps to show him mercy and move him closer to Rome. This distinction is, moreover, a central tenet of Ovid’s depiction of Actaeon in the Met. and something Dryope likewise claims as she faces punitive metamorphosis from the nymph Lotis (at bene si quaeras, Fortunae crimen in illo,/ non scelus invenies: quod enim scelus error habebat?, 3.141–2, “But if you seek out the cause, you will find in this a crime of accident, not an intentional crime; because how could an error be a crime?” compared to patior sine crime poenam, “I suffer penalty without a crime,” 9.372). In this passage, Ovid laments the tradition that gods, like Diana and Augustus (the emperor here takes on the position of god because of Ovid’s comparison of him to an enraged Diana), feel the need to avenge mortal mistakes and accidents to protect their dignity. It was only an error, not a scelus!

Ovid’s self-comparison to Actaeon has been well explored by many scholars to comment on the nature of Ovid’s error, how crimes of sight pervade the Theban drama in Met. 3 (such as
those of Narcissus (402–510), Tiresias (316–38), and Pentheus (692–733), all of whom are
punished for looking upon forbidden sexuality), Ovid’s use of tragedy in his corpus, Ovid’s post-
exilic revisions of the *Met.*, and much more (Williams 2002, Ingleheart 2006, and Rimell
2006). For our purposes, it is also important to note that Actaeon is one of the many
metamorphosed who Ovid explicitly demonstrates loses his facility of human speech because of
a god and his transformation into an animal (*Met.* 3.200–4), a silencing, which, as we have
explored above, has implications for Ovid’s life after Augustus exiled him and censored his
poetry. The myths of Actaeon and Callisto are intimately connected, as well. Actaeon, like
Callisto before him in the *Met.*, is a being acutely aware of his silencing/loss of humanity (*mens
antiqua manet*, 2.485 compared to *mens tantum pristina mansit*, 3.203). Their human faculties
remain trapped in their animal bodies: Callisto suffers such a fate for fifteen years (before she is
ultimately transformed into a silent, inhuman constellation), and Actaeon dies aware that his own
hounds are mauling and eating him alive. This could very well be a metaphor for Ovid’s
situation in Tomis. He has been metamorphosed by his exile (*Tr.* 1.1.119–20), but he still
remembers who he was in Rome. Williams (2002, 379) extends this line of thought further and
says that Actaeon and Ovid experience a “linguistic isolation”: Actaeon attempts to call out to
his hunting dogs to reveal himself while he is a stag (*Actaeon ego sum: dominum cognoscite
vestrum!*, “I am Actaeon: recognize your master,” *Met.* 3.230), and Ovid claims he can no longer
properly express himself in Latin because of his distance from Rome, its poetic Latinate culture,

---

183 The Actaeon myth additionally connects to other figures who are punished for revealing or stumbling upon
carefully guarded divine secrets in the *Met.*, including Corvus (2.531–65), Corinx (2.569–88), Ocyroe (2.633–75),
Battus (2.676–707), and Aglauros (2.710–832). This emphasis in Book 2 forecasts Actaeon’s tragedy in *Met.* Book
3. Actaeon’s story is most particularly connected to that of Pentheus, Actaeon’s cousin and king of Thebes. He is
later punished in Book 3 for a similar crime: illicitly looking upon (mortal) women in sexualized contexts.
But, as mentioned above, there are other layers to Ovid’s self-representation and his representation of Augustus through the Actaeon myth. We must remember that the young hunter unintentionally sexually violated the goddess Diana with his gaze, whom we should view as associated with Augustus: she is both connected to Augustus through Apollo and by Ovid’s lament in *Tr.* 2. 103–10. And during the *Met.* narrative, the goddess is drawn very clearly into an anachronistic Roman context. Many commentators have observed that Diana, before she bathes, is likened to a Roman matron with her attendants (Anderson 1997, 357; *Met.* 3.163–70). The analogy made here, therefore, once again destabilizes gender and gender roles in the exile poetry. Ovid, as he describes his *error*, is not comparing himself to a victim of sexual violation or a woman, but instead to a man and someone who has sexually violated. On the other hand, when he discusses his suffering, he is Dryope, a woman. He is like prey fleeing a predator, Actaeon himself becoming prey when Diana transforms him into a stag and he must endeavor to run from his own dogs. This particular correlation, furthermore, casts Augustus into similarly knottily linked roles: he becomes a female figure, just as he is the powerful *puella* barring Ovid from entering the doors of Rome, and a victim where he was previously the rapist like Jupiter. But Diana is still violent and violently reclaims her power. The emperor is once more an enraged, avenging god like Jupiter, but now female (compare *Tr.* 2.108 to 1.5.84: *laeso numine* to *laesi…ira dei*). Salzman-Mitchell (2005) argues that Actaeon, like Narcissus and Pentheus, displays a “problematic masculinity”: in the *Met.* we are accustomed to seeing male figures and their gaze overpower female figures, but in the Actaeon myth we do not (and this all could be attributed to his age; he is described as an *iuvenis* just like Narcissus and Pentheus, *Met.* 3.146, 352, 541). What is more, according to Salzman-Mitchell, this “problematic masculinity” could
represent many Roman men under Augustan rule: Augustus is *pater patriae*, the ultimate patriarch, *a praesens deus* and thus, his masculinity is supreme over all.

Also, understanding what Actaeon did as a sexual violation is crucial to analyzing Ovid’s comparison. I am not suggesting that this speaks to what Ovid saw to upset Augustus, but it illuminates an intriguing facet to how Ovid portrays sexual abuse and its victims in his corpus and what he believes about his own *error* and his victimhood at the hands of Augustus. He again situates his exilic life and suffering in a mythological exemplum about sex and its dangers as he did previously with Dryope and Callisto. And he asks: what does a sexual (or otherwise) violation do to a person, especially one with power, and how should it be punished, even if the violation is enacted unintentionally? Before we answer that question, we should address the issue of intentionality in the Actaeon and Diana story and the reality of what he does to the goddess.

As we have discussed, Ovid is clear that he believes what Actaeon did to Diana was not malicious: it was an *error*, not a *scelus*, just as Ovid committed only an *error* against Augustus. But Heath (1991) and Salzman-Mitchell (2005, 49–53), working with hints of analysis first introduced by Segal (1969), have noted that Ovid with the Actaeon and Diana story creates an atmosphere that is typical of those where sexual assaults and rapes have transpired in his corpus. There is an undercurrent of sexualized violence in the text that is hard to ignore, but one Heath argues that Ovid wants his audience and Diana to misread. The goddess overreacts to this undertone like many of Ovid’s readers would have, too, already well-trained in the patterns of his texts. She impulsively misreads the clues before her in an epic that is teeming with sexualized violence. Diana knows that she has to protect her sexuality and body from voyeurism. That is why in the Callisto story, Diana while she is bathing seeks refuge from potential onlookers (*Met.* 2.458–9). Heath writes: “It is clear that this overwhelming fear of sexual attack creates an
atmosphere in which the only possible response to unexpected events is one of terror, hostility, and suspicion” (237). He and Salzman-Mitchell note many aspects of the atmosphere in the Actaeon story, which we have seen in other stories of rape: Actaeon is hunting, there is blood everywhere, and it is noon in a *locus amoenus* (*Met* 3.143–5); he comes upon an enclosed female space representing virginity (155–64); and Diana, tired from the hunt (163), puts aside her clothing and the appurtenances of the hunt, exactly like Callisto did before her rape by Jupiter, and Actaeon does the same (*Met*. 2.419–21; 3.147–53). Ovid lavishly describes Diana’s disrobing ritual before she enters her bath, in which every aspect of her body and appearance is highlighted under the gaze of the narrator (a gaze soon transferred to Actaeon’s perspective), most particularly the arrangement of her hair, a common site of male sexual desire (163–70). And, though Ovid follows the tradition from Callimachus *Hymn* 5 that Athena cites to justify her similar yet much less gruesome punishment of Tiresias (107–115)—that the goddess must punish him merely for seeing her naked body—competing traditions (like the one we see in Nonnus Dionysius 5.287 and Hyginus 180) about Actaeon hubristically lusting after and attacking Diana could have influenced his audience and their expectations about the story. And these alternate stories leave their traces. Salzman-Mitchell (2005, 49), while analyzing the many erotic signifiers in the text, asks a pointed question of the episode: if Diana were not a goddess, but rather a mortal huntress or a nymph, would Actaeon have attempted to rape a nymph when he saw her naked? It is clear that we have many of the literary markers here that we find in rape narratives that could mark Actaeon as a rapist, such as his hunting (as we have seen continuously, hunting and erotic pursuit are intimately linked throughout Ovid’s texts). Heath (1991, 240), in contrast, believes that Actaeon would have been the victim of sexual assault, not Diana, if the circumstances were different because of how aligned he is with Callisto: their
hunting, their solitude, how they are silenced, their persecution at the hands of Diana. The nature of violence is at first ambiguous; in many ways Actaeon could be either the predator or the victim. All that is clear, because of the presence of these characteristic markers found in scenes of rape, is that there will be violence. Ovid does not upend that audience expectation completely.

This story is yet again another instance, just as with Narcissus (Met. 3.339–510) and Pomona (Met. 14.623–771) (for my analysis of both narratives, see Chapter Four), of Ovid leading us to believe there will be a rape because of how well he established patterns of sexualized violence in his texts, but there is ultimately not one (or at least not exactly). Diana is sexually violated by Actaeon, even if unintentionally. He does not attempt to pursue her or assault her, but he violates the integrity of her virginity by seeing her naked body. In these misleading scenes, where we come to expect a rape and do not receive one, Ovid still gives his audience violence. For example, in the Narcissus episode, Echo does not rape Narcissus although we are led to believe she will. But the familiar patterns are still a prelude to the upcoming violence: Echo experiences violence when her body deteriorates (Met. 3.393–401) and Narcissus as well when he starves himself (474–510). What is interesting in the Actaeon and Diana narrative is that, although both the hunter and the goddess experience violence (especially since, as we have explored throughout, the gaze and sexualized violence are so closely connected in Ovid and in Roman thought), the non-sexualized violence Actaeon suffers is presented to the audience as objectively far worse: the loss of his humanity and then death by his own hounds, one of the only times in the Met., “divine power trumps the male gaze” (Lovatt 2013, 178).184

184 As mentioned above, Pentheus, Actaeon’s cousin, suffers a similar fate (3.692–733). Both men experience gender reversals and reversals in status when in the wild and away from the civilization of men—they become victims of the hunt when they are at first the hunters (Forbes Irving 1993, 87). Actaeon is more literally a hunter than his cousin, but Pentheus is likened to a hunter throughout the Bacchae before he is torn apart. Actaeon has his own dogs turn on him and Pentheus has his own mother turn on him (she believes herself to be a lioness attacking a boar) (3.715). He even tries to prevent his aunt from attacking him by reminding her of what happened to her son (3.719–21). Both of them also face punishment and violence after spying on and gazing upon the sacred religious rites and
So, according to Ovid, how does and how should Diana, as a goddess, react to this sexual violation? No matter the (un)intentionality, Diana feels that her virginity and divine dignity have been irreparably harmed, and the narrator of the *Met.* through the voice of another implies that she had the right to regain and protect them through her punishment of Actaeon (*Rumor in ambiguo est; alii violentior aequo/ visa dea est, alii laudant dignamque severa/ virginitate,* “The common talk took both sides: the goddess seemed altogether too violent for some, but others praise her for being proud and severe about her virginity,” 253–5), a sentiment echoed in *Tr.* 2. 103–110. But the story in the *Met.* strongly implies in turn that Diana overreacts and is too violent, a position found in Ovid’s primary source for his story, Callimachus (Williams 1994, 176). Athena in Callimachus *Hymn* 5 (107–115) says she must punish Tiresias after he sees her bathing and naked because of sacred divine law and the protection her virginity, but she then rewards him with the gift of prophecy. The narrator of the Callimachus hymn says that blindness, at any rate, is better than Actaeon’s fate, a fate which the devoured hunter’s relatives would have preferred for him (107–110). Actaeon, thus, becomes a persecuted and tragic figure at the hands of an excessively punitive god (just as Arachne is at the hands of Athena in *Met.* 6.129–145 and the human race is at the hands of Jupiter in *Met.* 1.244–312). Ovid is like Actaeon because he, too, has been punished as if he committed a *scelus.* Augustus, like Diana, has gone too far. Ovid in *Tr.* is not endeavoring to deny Augustus a right to punish, but just to punish in the way he did.

What is important here is that both the hunter and Diana experience violence (albeit, a broadly defined version of it). This speaks to how Ovid frames his relationship with Augustus. Ovid consistently concedes in *Tristia* 2 that Augustus has been wronged (see particularly 77–
Augustus, like Diana, was violated and then he reacted with violence. Janan (2009, 85) argues that in the myth, Diana and Actaeon are “almost doubles for each other.” Fundamentally, they are both hunters who suffer violence in the locus amoenus. If Actaeon and Diana are doubles for one another, then the poet once again becomes like the princeps, although Diana/Augustus demonstrates who holds the power to be more harmful. There is little contest between her and Actaeon. The man in this narrative does not plan his violation of a goddess—the male figure has little power, but the female figure is immensely powerful—and the one who violated someone sexually is the one who is punished. These elements constitute drastic reversals in the patterns of Ovid’s narratives of sexualized violence and show that Ovid late in his career can innovate a theme he has explored consistently, although with varied vigor, since the Her.

III. Conclusions: The Exile Poetry

In this chapter, I hope to have shown when and how Ovid uses imagery in his exile poetry that is most heavily associated with rape, such as that of predator and prey, and when and how he likens himself to rape victims (and in the case of Actaeon, victims of violence at the hands of a vengeful god who has been sexually violated). I have argued that the prominence and patterns of sexualized violence persist in the last pieces of Ovid’s corpus as he grapples with personal tragedy and as he likens himself and his suffering to male and female figures in mythology in an effort to understand his situation and also to elevate and mythologize his exile (Williams 1994, Claassen 1998, 2008, Ingleheart 2011). He compares himself to men such as Odysseus and Jason and to female figures and rape victims such as Callisto and Dryope, ultimately problematizing

185 Ingleheart (2006), however, shows that while Ovid often works to connect himself to the princeps in his exile poetry, he, moreover, emphasizes the differences between them: Ovid sees something and is punished because of it, “whereas Augustus has both failed to see everything [all the eros in literature he extols and admires like Vergil], despite his claims to see the whole world, and also has corrupted others with inappropriate [sexual] sights” (83). For example, Augustus enjoys the performance of salacious mimes (Tr. 2. 497–516 vs. Suetonius 43–5) and he and his family own very sexual pieces of art in their own homes (Tr. 2.521–8).
his gender. While he is a poet like a man—and he goes on a voyage like a man to distant lands—he uses his poetry to show his suffering is like that of a female figure. These analogies to female figures in particular illustrate that even when he writes autobiographical poetry (or something he wants us to believe is autobiographical), the emphasis throughout his corpus on rape saturates his very sense of self and his conception and performance of his own suffering. Spentzou (2005, 336) argues that Ovid’s use of such mythological exempla should lead us to consider another aspect of his self-representation and destabilization of gender: Ovid may say he is like Odysseus, but he then says that he is *adsuetus studiis mollibus* (*Tr.* 1.5.74), or more accustomed to quiet or soft pursuits. It also locates his life in elegy (*mollis*) rather than in epic (Williams 1994, 113). Is he like epic Odysseus, or is he more like the women in the elegiac *Her.*? Is he the wandering hero, or is he the lamenting female figure seeking a lost love? These tensions between genres epitomize the tensions between masculinity and femininity. We can extend this line of inquiry to the rape victims Ovid uses in his exempla and the connections he makes to his own life and pain: is he more like Odysseus, or Callisto? At the end of his life and career and during a time of great suffering, does Ovid align himself more with women and their experiences?
Afterword:

My dissertation makes two major contributions to Ovidian and classical scholarship. It, first, includes an expansive analysis of sexual abuse and its recurring patterns of representation throughout Ovid’s corpus. Most scholars focus on the *Metamorphoses* and/or the *Fasti*, some occasionally on the *Amores* and the *Ars Amatoria*. Very few scholars have briefly analyzed the role of sexualized violence and rape in the *Heroides* and in the exile poetry. The project, second, helps to deepen and extend our understanding of rape in Ovid through my contention that Ovid, his narrators, and his characters indeed participate in victim-blaming and sororophobia and that these phenomena—the first time they have been explored in his texts or in other ancient authors—should be seen as fundamental elements of Ovid’s countless scenes of sexualized violence. Feminist readings of Ovid, like my own that apply modern theories to his texts, allow us to better understand his poetry and our own contemporary relationship with his work. Such readings, moreover, allow us to catch a glimpse into the literary and ideological origins of certain strains of misogyny and their continuing power and influence over our reality and world.

Although I have argued for a continuity of patterns across Ovid’s corpus, most prominently the inclusion of victim-blaming and sororophobia from Ovid’s narrators and characters—some of whom refuse to participate in these phenomena and suffer enormously for it—there are unique manifestations of and concerns for sexualized violence and rape in each work. In the *Her.*, female figures, in a concentrated way, prominently discuss their own experiences of sexual abuse, when such access to feminine subjectivity is more widely dispersed across his other poems. The *Amores* and the *Ars* offer representations of contemporary Roman women and mythological figures (often used as exempla for the narrator’s amatory experiences) and their encounters with sexualized violence. Each poem also highlights ideologies that work to
uphold misogyny and rape, such as the glorification of militarism and notions about the hypersexuality of women. The Met. and the Fasti problematize rape by subjecting its victims not only to the violence of rape but to the violence of metamorphosis, experiences that Ovid consistently engenders as feminine. Metamorphosis, moreover, further materializes the experience of victim-blaming for the female characters in his poems and locates the source of the rape directly in the bodies of the victims. The body was the site of their original violation of rape and then of the violation of metamorphosis. The Met., despite my wider focus on Ovid’s output, is the epicenter of sexualized violence and rape in Ovid. Most scholars, justifiably, when analyzing sexualized violence in Ovid, turn immediately to his only epic, a sprawling, shape-shifting poem of rape. The characteristics of sexualized violence Ovid explored in his earlier works are expanded upon…and expanded upon. The extent of these patterns—and the deviations from them—is staggering. One of the most drastic deviations from these patterns that Ovid embraces is the female figures, such as Salmacis and Circe, who sexually abuse male figures. The Fasti continues and responds to the representations of rape elsewhere in Ovid’s corpus, especially the Met., but it more heavily emphasizes the role of apotheosis (or mortal and lesser divine rape victims turned into immortals or gods), the role of remuneration by male gods in the aftermath of rape (in the form of apotheosis), and the infusion of comedy and mime in the scenes of Lotis’s, Omphale’s, and Vesta’s sexual abuse. The black humor pervading these scenes is one reason out of many to doubt the sincerity of Ovid’s sympathy for female figures. Finally, in Ovid’s exile poetry, representations of rape become personal and real, a way for Ovid to understand and portray his own suffering and his unwilling relationship with femininity. Like a female figure, he mourns, he weeps, he faces abuse, silencing, transformation, and (poetic) death.
Ovid’s corpus is unique because of how thoroughly sexualized violence and rape pervade his texts (and that is exactly why we see discrete textual and thematic patterns emerge). He provides an extraordinary level of detail of the process of sexualized violence within one narrative of rape, and his audience feels the long-term effects of those details being repeated and compounded throughout many scenes and many texts. Ovid, in fact, writes about rape more than anyone in antiquity, particularly its aftermath (post-traumatic stress, self-blame, further violence such as metamorphosis and/or death), and he most fully participates in blaming his rape victims and subjecting them to sororophobia—but he is not alone, and as mentioned several times in my dissertation, there are precedents for victim-blaming and sororophobia elsewhere. My work can help to open up fuller avenues of research into how other ancient authors represent rape, victim-blaming, and sororophobia. In Chapters One, Two, and Five, we learned that the majority of ancient authors who also write about rape, such as Pindar, Herodotus, Euripides, and Livy—even if they do not write about the lead-up to and the effects of sexualized violence as extensively as Ovid—locate the source of sexual abuse in a female figure’s body, beauty, and appearance.

Sororophobia has a ubiquitous presence in ancient literature, as well. Rape, victim-blaming, and sororophobia are often inextricably linked in Ovid because of whom the poet renders the most prominent and frequent punishers of female figures in his works after they have faced sexual abuse. The same is true for other ancient authors (although often sororophobia can arise in cases of sexual jealousy alone, such as in Propertius 4.8 with Cynthia, the primary puella in the first three books of his elegiac poetry, violently attacking his new lover). The conquered women, about to be enslaved and raped by Greek men, in Euripides’ tragedy Trojan Women blame Helen, a probable rape victim of Paris, for their suffering and hope she perishes. Clytemnestra in every version of the myth of her husband’s return, murders Cassandra, the rape
victim of her husband Agamemnon. Propertius in 3.15 includes the myth of Antiope who persecutes Dirce, a victim of divine rape by Jupiter, because of Antiope’s belief that Dirce became pregnant by her husband instead of the god. A fuller project, relying on my research, would not only document where other ancient authors explore rape, victim-blaming, and sororophobia, but also account for why these authors include these phenomena, what effect they had on their own audiences and our own, and whether ancient authors beyond Ovid helped and continue to create misogynistic discourse and ideology through such inclusions.

Ovid’s texts, because of their significant role in the Western canon and the ubiquity of violence against female figures within his poetry, which I and many other feminist classicists have documented and exposed, are central to contemporary (classical) feminist responses to representations of rape and central to the role of feminism and feminist pedagogy. Should he be removed from the classroom? What does it mean for us to read an author who victim-blames so many of his female characters and subjects them to sororophobia, violent phenomena that continue to oppress women and sustain patriarchy today? Can his writings be used to resist and better fathom that violence or do his writings ultimately uphold it? Overall, I hope that my dissertation can be one of many projects that help readers—students and scholars alike—more responsibly engage with his materials and urge us to more deeply appreciate Ovid’s importance and what the beauty and value we continue to find in his misogyny, says about our own.
Bibliography


——. 2002b. “Ovid and Early Imperial Literature.” In Hardie, 34–45.


Kempadoo, Kamala, and Jo Doezea, eds. 1998. *Global Sex Workers: Rights, Resistance, and*


Nair, Yasmin. 2014. “The Ideal Neoliberal Subject is the Subject of Trauma.” The Hypocrite Reader 43.


Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.


———. 1998. “Ovid's Metamorphic Bodies: Art, Gender and Violence in the
Metamorphoses.” *Arion* 5: 9–41.


Suzuki, Mihoto. 2007. “Rewriting the Odyssey in the Twenty-First Century: Mary Zimmerman’s Odyssey and Margaret Atwood’s Penelopiad.” In College Literature 34.2, 263–278.


Watson, Patricia. 2002. “Praecepta amoris—Ovid's Didactic Elegy.” In Brill’s Companion to


