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It is entitled: Oculi Sunt in Amore Duces: the Use of Mental Image in Latin Love Poetry

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Oculi Sunt in Amore Duces:
The Use of Mental Image in Latin Love Poetry

A dissertation submitted to the
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Abstract

Propertius tells us that the eyes are our guides in love. Both he and Ovid enjoin lovers to keep silent about their love affairs. I explore the ability of poetry to make our ears and our eyes guides, and, more importantly, to connect seeing and saying, *videre* and *narrare*. The ability of words to spur a reader or listener to form mental images was long recognized by Roman and Greek rhetoricians. This project takes stock for the first time of how poets, three Roman love poets, in this case, applied vivid description and other rhetorical devices to spur their readers to form mental images of the love they read. All three poets reflect on the role played by a reader’s mental imaging in poetry in general and love poetry in particular. In my discussion of Catullus, I examine how the poet uses his control of the reader’s perspective to include or exclude him from his love affair, and to show that his love for Lesbia was something unique and worth concealing from the visual scrutiny of the outside world. The chapter on Propertius reevaluates what exactly constitutes the *tempérament visuel* that scholars have so often attributed to the poet. In my discussion of Ovid I examine three different ends to which he employs the language of vision and his reader’s mental imaging in the *Amores*, *Ars Amatoria*, and *Metamorphoses*. In the *Metamorphoses* Ovid makes explicit what Catullus and Propertius had implied about the power of words: their power to create images in the reader’s mind allows the reader to become a viewer, to peep into the private world of another through the window of the text. As I show throughout the dissertation, all three poets hold that telling (*narrare*), the purview of the poet, trumps seeing (*videre*), the realm of the visual artist.
# Abstract

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1.1 Introduction and Goals of Dissertation

Viewing and the gaze played important roles in Roman social, political, and literary culture. From the amphitheater, to an elite man’s comportment in the Forum, to the opulent displays of art within the confines of wealthy villas, and even the very layout of those villas, which direct a visitor’s gaze within the house, Roman culture was keenly interested in seeing and being seen. Recent work on Roman literature, particularly poetry, has demonstrated that even within text, vision and the gaze were important issues. This is especially true in the amatory texts of the late Republican and Augustan periods where, as in their Greek predecessors, the eyes are conduits for love, and the possession of an objectifying gaze is an important aspect of the gender dynamics at work within the poem. In this dissertation I study an unexplored aspect of visuality in Roman love poetry, focusing on the creation of mental images in the mind of the reader, the techniques used to accomplish this, and the reasons behind a poet’s use of his reader’s mental imaging. In addition to the reader’s formation of mental images induced by the text, this dissertation takes stock of poets’ use of the language of vision (words of seeing, references to the eyes, etc.), and the play of narratorial viewpoints within their poems. Although many other Latin authors of prose and verse also employ the devices examined in this dissertation, I focus only on the poetry of Catullus, Propertius, and Ovid. These three have been singled out because they

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1 In recent years, the study of Roman visual culture has expanded greatly. See e.g. Coleman 1990; Bergmann and Kondoleon 1999; Benediktson 2000; Elsner 2000; Goldhill 2001b; Fredrick 2002; also Leach 1988, 7; Segal 1994, 257-58; and Morales 2004, 8-35. The strong emphasis on visuality attributed to Roman culture does not necessarily imply that the Romans were consequently less aural or tactile, however.

2 Throughout, I use mental image and visualization interchangeably to denote the product of forming an image in the mind’s eye, and their verbal counterparts to denote the producing of the image. When I use the term vision, the physical act of seeing is generally meant rather than any social abstraction of political or aesthetic ideology.

3 Virgil’s use of vision in the *Aeneid* has been studied in a recent book by Smith (2005). Vasaly (1993) has examined Cicero’s use of mental imaging and the emotional resonance of imagined places.
use viewing and mental imaging in distinct ways, and because they all draw special attention to
their use of vision and highlight the role it plays in their individual styles of poetry.⁴

In the case of Catullus, I attempt to show that the poet uses visual cues and his reader’s
mental imaging to present a view of his new “romantic” conception of love, and to heighten the
emotional response to and understanding of that new type of love and its subsequent betrayal by
Lesbia. In discussing Propertius, whose propensity to use imagistic language derived from
contemporary visual art has often been noted, I examine his use of vision and visualization as a
means of exploring the link between love and poetry. First I study his use of imagistic language
and readerly imaging as a means of fostering the impression that Cynthia was a “real” mistress
beyond her existence as textual construct, and how he portrays her as textual entity to be
expressed visually. Second, I focus on Propertius’ own reception of other amatory texts and on
his own mental imaging, and the close connection he draws between word and image in the area
of poetic influence. Finally, my discussion of Ovid will range through his major amatory works,
the Amores and the Ars Amatoria, and then several (generally erotic) tales of the Metamorphoses
to show how he problematizes the use of mental images in love poetry.⁵ It will be seen that he
eventually turns his text into a sort of mirror, reflecting the reader’s image back to himself and
causing him to reflect on the combination of text, love, and image that Ovid has submerged as an
undercurrent in all his amatory poetry. In the case of all three poets, mental imaging is used to

⁴ Catullus, of course, stands out from the other two as neither an Augustan nor an elegist. Not only is he important
because of his impact on Latin personal and amatory poetry, but his use of readerly mental imaging and his program
of visuality are strongly evidenced in his poetry. His influence on the other two poets, Propertius in particular,
warrants his inclusion with the elegists. Tibullus and Horace could have been included in this list of Augustan
amatory poets as well, but their poetry is not, in my opinion, as strongly visual as that of Catullus, Propertius, and
Ovid, nor do they focus as much attention on viewing as their fellow love poets. Sutherland, however, has written
several articles (1995, 1997, 2003) which explore similar connections of vision, love, and author-audience
interaction in the poetry of Horace, and comes to conclusions similar to mine. She writes, “Vision in literature was
without question an issue with which the ancient authors and critics were already concerned” and feels that, in Odes
2.5, the external audience would participate in the addressee’s visual experience (1997, 26-27).
⁵ Although we are not dealing specifically with questions of genre, Conte has interestingly formulated a similar
proposition along generic lines: “Ovid’s poetry tries to look at elegy instead of looking with the eyes of elegy”
(1994, 46).
increase the emotional response of the reader as well as the persuasive force of the text, and also the perception of the “reality” or concreteness of the events described in the poems.

The potential results of readerly mental imaging are manifold. Visualization can make fanciful or bizarre objects imagined in the mind of the speaker more comprehensible to the listener. It can also provide the reader with a sense of control over the text, especially as regards his ability to imagine spatial relations. Mental imaging can promote a sort of voyeuristic interest in the reader, luring him into imagining what the narrator sees, filling in details not included in the text. In doing so, the reader more fully identifies with the character whose perceptions he is taking on as his own, and thus incorporates himself more fully into the text. Also, a reader who supplements omitted details from his own store of preexisting fantasies or memories brings a part of himself to the experience of reading, thus making the event more personal. Mental imaging positions the reader within the text, compelling the reader to visualize events from a particular point of view. Ancient rhetorical ideas of visually conveyed pathos and modern psychological concepts of the connection between mental imaging and emotions will be discussed below as they relate to poets’ use of mental imaging and vision.

In this chapter I briefly survey modern literary critical approaches to the subject of readerly mental imaging which hold, to a large extent, an opinion of mental imaging entirely different from that held by the Greco-Roman rhetoricians and philosophers, who are also

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6 Esrock 1994, 194. Dio Chrysostom holds that enargeia allows the mind to tolerate unreal subjects, although he does so in the context of a paragone between the verbal and visual arts (12.55-83).

7 As can be seen from the numerous attempts to give form to the Shield of Achilles, or lay out a plan for any of Pliny’s several villas.

8 Esrock 1994, pp. 194. Ovid Am. 1.5 is a neat example of this particular possibility, and, as will be discussed below, Ovid highlights this aspect of the text by the playful exclusion of the reader- voyeur from the actual sexual climax of the text. Zanker (2004) has examined this and similar methods of reader integration in the context of Hellenistic poetry. Similarly, Krieger has argued that enargeia can cause a confusion of subjectivity between poet and reader, when vivid detail captures the reader in such a way that he identifies with the poet rather than an external spectator viewing a scene. He writes that we are called on “to identify ourselves with the poet in participating similarly (or rather identically) in the described experience” (1992, 94).
discussed below. Whereas mental imaging stimulated by verbal cues was taken as a given by the ancients, modern literary critical theory often goes so far as to deny that mental imaging is even possible. This suspicion of a reader’s visualization is not, however, generally held by Classicists, who in recent decades have widely embraced the study of Greek and Roman visual culture as it intersects with literary culture, especially the area of ekphrasis.\footnote{Most recently, an entire edition of Classical Philology (2007 volume 102) has been dedicated to the subject of ekphrasis. This issue’s extensive bibliography on the subject (124-135) is particularly useful.} We will also approach mental imaging from the standpoint of modern psychology, especially cognitive and social pscyholoogy, which can often be seen to support the techniques taught by ancient rhetoricians and their practice by poets. This chapter will help illuminate the processes by which the reader’s emotional experience of the text, the text’s persuasive content, as well as the perception of the “reality” of the text’s content, are all increased by the poet’s use of \textit{enargeia} and visual language, which in turn spurs a reader’s mental imaging. It will also be seen how visual texts address the reader-viewer by incorporating him into the text or by directing his response to the text.\footnote{An approach applied to landscape painting and textual descriptions of landscape in the Augustan period by Leach (1988).} The application of these devices will be examined in subsequent chapters.

\section*{1.2 Modern Criticism and Theory}

Until the twentieth century, in keeping with the ancient theories summarized below, mental images were regarded as necessary for thought and language, since they provided a link between the physical world and the immaterial intellect.\footnote{E.g. Clark 1922, 19: “Homer realizes the situation by sensory images; he makes the reader see the white foam, and hear the wind howl through torn sails.” Contrast I. A. Richards’ (whose works were influential on early New Criticism) sentiments: “visualisers…are exposed to a special danger” (1929, 224). I argue the contrary of this latter proposition, holding instead that visualization is important for understanding Catullus, Propertius, and Ovid more} Even in the early twentieth century mental imaging was considered a normal readerly reaction to the text.\footnote{Esrock 1994, 2.} Some current theories of
reading, however, do not identify visualization as a scholarly, or even an educated, response to a
text, with some thinkers relegating visualization to a childhood phase before the maturation of
abstract, symbolic reasoning, and others deeming mental images make-believe “confusions” to
be dealt with by philosophers.\textsuperscript{13} With their emphasis on linguistic constructions of text, critical
movements like Structuralism, Formalism, and New Criticism provided little room for discussion
of mental imaging caused by reading.\textsuperscript{14} A reader’s individual response to a text is also shunned
by New Criticism in particular. French theory and philosophy of the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century was also
largely skeptical of or outright hostile to the privileging of vision in theoretical, philosophical,
and religious discourse.\textsuperscript{15} Anglo-American reception of French theory in the 1960s and 70s
raised similar suspicions of vision and mental imaging. By the close of the twentieth century, the
disparagement of vision could be deployed almost blithely, as by Jameson in the opening words
of his \textit{Signatures of the Visible}: “The visible is \textit{essentially} pornographic, which is to say that it
has its end in rapt, mindless fascination….\textsuperscript{16} As will be seen throughout this dissertation, the
use of visualization and visuality in Roman poetry is far from “rapt” and “mindless”; in fact it
often spurs the reader to increased interaction with the text via his mental imaging. Similarly,

\textsuperscript{13} Bachelard 1969, 102; Furbank holds that the “poverty” of true detail in mental image is tied to their being “make
believe” (1970, 14 and 16).

\textsuperscript{14} Given the linguistic emphasis of modern critical theories, I think it also possible that moderns often tend to
overlook the possibility that ancient, non-literate or pre-literate societies possessed faculties of visualization far
greater than our own, which have been dulled by a reliance on writing. See Yates 1966, 4. Leach notes that
\textit{enargeia} might be construed “as a token of their [the Roman’s] fuller acculturation of the concept of visual
imagination” (1988, 7).

\textsuperscript{15} See Jay 1993. This is not to imply that there is a monolithic antiocularcentric discourse in either French thought
or modern literary criticism, only that the privileging of vision as the keenest sense and the acceptance of mental
imaging as an acceptable form of textual response have been downgraded or removed entirely from their traditional
place at the head of critical or philosophic thought. Merleau-Ponty is a notable exception to this tendency in French
thought. Indeed, his thoughts on perception, in particular the tactility of vision, might be fruitfully applied to Ovid,
who seems to link vision and touch (as e.g. \textit{Am.} 1.5.19: \textit{quaes vidi tetigique lacertos}) more frequently than
Propertius and Catullus. Merleau-Ponty’s idea of the \textit{voyant visible}, a character whose decisions are based on visual
perception and who engages with the world visually, has been applied to the \textit{Aeneid} by Smith (2005).

\textsuperscript{16} Jameson 1990, 1 (emphasis original).
recent studies of Roman wall painting and landscape demonstrate that its viewer’s involvement with the object is far from mindless.\textsuperscript{17}

In addition to literary criticism and philosophy, cognitive psychology has provided a new avenue to approach mental imaging, in particular investigating cues by which images are formed and the degree to which individuals are able to visualize. The emotional content of a stimulus affects both the duration of the mental image formed in the mind and its latency time (the time which is required to call the image to mind after receiving a stimulus). More powerful or dynamic images increase the duration of imaging, and the emotional quality of the image affects latency, with positive stimuli allowing more rapid image formation.\textsuperscript{18} In the early days of cognitive psychology, James proposed that what defines a mental representation as a memory as opposed to imagination is not actually an aspect of the representation itself, but rather the ‘emotion of belief’ bound to that representation.\textsuperscript{19} Koehler has shown that people who engage in imagining a possibility later express greater confidence in the truth of this possibility.\textsuperscript{20} Mental images can be constructed from two different perspectives, first-person or third-person, and the wording used to elicit beliefs about what actually occurred in a memory can implicitly suggest how the visual memory of that event should be focused.\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{17} See Elsner 2007, 28-33 (especially 290) and Leach 1988, 323.
\textsuperscript{18} Cocude 1988, 217-18.
\textsuperscript{19} James 1950, 652.
\textsuperscript{20} Koehler 1991. See also Garry et al. 1996.
\textsuperscript{21} Libby 2003. See also Nigro and Neisser 1983. Libby’s experiment largely confirms James’ theory noted above, and suggests that the ‘emotion of belief’ adheres more strongly to imaginary representations of the past viewed from the same perspective as the one which represents the real occurrence of events (2003, 1080). If we turn to Catullus, we can see him manipulating perspective to elicit different reactions from the reader: in some poems he writes to make the reader view an event from his own first-person perspective to heighten the ‘emotion of belief’ of his version of events (e.g. cc. 2 and 51), while in others he wants to exclude the reader, relegating his perspective to the third person (e.g. cc. 5 and 7). We see Catullus pointing to his use of such a technique in c. 45 with its closing question, “who has ever seen…?”.
When speaking of mental imaging, I do not imply a focus on just ‘pictorial texts’, simple
descriptions of landscape, objects, etc.\textsuperscript{22} In fact the large majority of the texts surveyed here are
not descriptions at all; rather, I examine other stylistic devices used to spur visualization in the
reader.\textsuperscript{23} Although several rhetorical devices are examined below, other—often simple—
methods such as the inclusion of erotic material or a direct call to visual action (e.g. \textit{ecce}) are
common means of encouraging readerly imaging. Further, what I call the language of vision,
explicit references to seeing and the eyes (such as the presence of \textit{ocellis} in the opening lines of
Propertius or Ovid’s \textit{vidi ego} at \textit{Amores} 2.12.25), calls the reader’s attention to viewing which
takes place within the poem. Words of fairness, brightness, and conspicuous coloration also
serve to stimulate mental imaging and highlight visual appreciation as a textual element.\textsuperscript{24} We
see here the literary application of the concepts of vividness and salience as defined by social
psychology. Vivid stimuli tend to be bright and clear (e.g. a parrot). Unlike vividness, which is
innate to an object, salience is context-dependent.\textsuperscript{25} A stimulus which is not necessarily vivid
can be salient if it stands out from its context: a single dark brown circle on a field of lighter
brown circles, for example. Stimuli can be both vivid and salient. A vivid stimulus is one which
is emotionally interesting, concrete and image-provoking, as well as proximate in a sensory,
temporal, or spatial sense.\textsuperscript{26} Both draw an observer’s attention automatically and involuntarily.\textsuperscript{27}
To take one example from the poets, let us turn briefly to Catullus c. 11. The final image of a
lone flower at the edge of a field is both vivid and salient: the reader’s attention is drawn to it

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{22} As Esrock puts it, “To suggest that texts can encourage visualization is not to imply that the mere description of
landscapes and persons will promote imaging” (1994, 183).
\textsuperscript{23} Indeed, there are times when description is not even needed to spur visual interest. In \textit{Odes} 2.5 Horace gives no
physical description of Lalage, but still convinces us that she is beautiful and worth pursuing simply because we
observe her and talk about her. She is not watched because she is attractive, but attractive because she is watched,
and all without any physical details (Sutherland 1997, 41).
\textsuperscript{24} Sutherland 2003, 65.
\textsuperscript{25} Kardes 2002, 37.
\textsuperscript{26} Nisbett and Ross 1980, 45.
\textsuperscript{27} Kisielus and Sternthal 1984; Greenwald and Leavitt 1984.
\end{flushright}
both because of its vividness and because of its position at the end of the poem. Note here that one of these elements (the vividness of the flower) is inherent in the image itself, while the other is entirely poetic (the position of the image in the text); mental imaging and purely literary elements work in concert to increase an image’s effectiveness at conveying meaning. The mental image the reader forms from the simile is also salient because the flower stands alone in an otherwise empty field. The emotional resonance carried by this single image is striking and clear.

Even without engaging in true (one might say rhetorical) ekphrasis, implicit or explicit references to works of visual art can also create mental images in the reader’s mind, even if the reader is not familiar with the particular artwork described, or the work of art is archetypal rather than specific. I do not agree with Benediktson who, in his criteria for identifying pictorial passages in the Amores, holds that injection of external, non-pictorial or non-descriptive elements (e.g. the personality of the author or persona or humor), interferes with a reader’s mental imaging.28 On the contrary, the injection of such elements, especially humor, calls the reader’s attention to the particular passage and the image it conjures in the mind. In the case of Ovid, I would go so far as to say that deliberately calling attention to a passage that is intended to cause visualization by use of narratorial interjection is an essential part of his poetic technique. Throughout this dissertation I take a wider view of readerly visualization and examine the devices poets use to create mental images and the uses to which they put these images.

Although I do not purposely undertake gendered readings of the poets, it is interesting to note that, according to the work of Kosslyn and Jolicoeur, males, have on average, a slightly

28 Benediktson 1985, 112-13. He also argues that pictorial passages should be portrayed as motionless in order to enhance the effect. Again, this is clearly not the case in Ovid, especially in the Metamorphoses, where images are in constant states of change. (Indeed, the sheer number of artworks from the Renaissance to the modern period which have as their subject scenes from the Metamorphoses strongly weighs against any of Benediktson’s criteria hindering image formation.) Propertius perhaps has a “painterly” sensibility, but Ovid’s is rather more “directorly”.

higher tendency to use mental imagery in reading than females. If this is the case, the expectation of the predominantly male audience’s use of mental imaging by Roman poets, coupled with rhetorical training that emphasizes the use of mental imagery, suggests that mental imaging may be a useful device for approaching a male reader, especially when the content is erotic. This naturally raises the question of women readers of love poetry written by men. Would a woman reading Ovid or Propertius be affected as strongly by cues to mental imaging within the text, and would this in turn affect her ability to understand the text fully? Could Lesbia, if she ever read Catullus’ poetry, have missed nuances in the text because of an innately lower tendency to form mental images? While such questions are highly speculative, it is nevertheless interesting to note that male poets writing for an audience comprised mainly of male readers used techniques of visualization to which male readers are naturally more susceptible.

1.3 Ancient Criticism and Theory

In this section I examine the fundamental question which underpins this study: how does a text make reception via visualization possible? My primary focus is a number of rhetorical treatises of the Hellenistic and Roman period, primarily from the 3rd c. BC through the 1st c. AD. I will discuss how the various rhetoricians treat vivid description and consequent readerly

29 Kosslyn and Jolicoeur 1980, 170.
30 This of course begs the question of the female poets of antiquity. Sappho is extremely imagistic, and Nossis, for example, uses ekphrasis, to produce “a unique perspective, that of a woman looking at other women” (Gutzwiller 1998, 75). The expansion of this project’s methods into areas of gender could be fruitful in an attempt to understand how Greek and Roman women might have looked at one another through the lens of poetry, and how their perspective differs from that of male poets (whether looking at women or other men), especially because of women’s presumed lack of rhetorical training with its emphasis on inducing visualization. Do female poets aim for readerly imaging the same way as male poets, and does a female reader visualize as readily as her male counterpart when confronted with a text like Sappho’s or Nossis’? These questions are further compounded since the erotic nature of the poetry of Sappho, for example, is not clearly understood as truly homoerotic or simply homosocial.
31 Both Propertius and Ovid mention female readers of elegy (Prop. 3.3.20; Am. 2.1.5, 2.17.28-29). James writes, “[E]legy anticipates, even requires, that part of its reading audience be female…Half the fun, and half the point, of elegy is lost otherwise” (2003, 7). While elegy allows for, or perhaps even expects, female readership, the implied reader of elegy nevertheless seems male.
visualization, and their impact on a text's persuasive and emotive power. They offer, I think, a relatively coherent ancient theory of the power of words to create images in the mind of a reader or listener and the ability of these images to help persuade an audience or transfer an emotional state onto that audience.

In a dismissal reminiscent of the devaluation of vision’s place in literature, modern criticism has tended to sever rhetoric from poetry in the Romantic and post-Romantic periods. As with the denigration of visualization as a mode of literary interpretation, we must set aside the current compartmentalization of rhetoric and poetry when speaking of ancient poetry, and Roman poetry in particular. Visualization and rhetoric are inextricably tied to poetry in Roman thought and practice, and to deny their complimentarity for the sake of modern critical ideas is to miss an essential key to understanding Roman poetry. We will see that areas where persuasive and emotive technique overlap in rhetoric and poetry often tend to be spots of common mental imaging techniques.

1.3.1 **enargeia, phantasia and ekphrasis**

I preface the discussion of visualization in ancient theory by terms. Although true ekphrasis, a set-piece description of an artwork, scene, or person which stands apart from the larger narrative structure of a text, is occasionally found in the poets studied in this dissertation, its appearance is more the exception than the rule. *Enargeia* or vividness, however, is common to all the poets in question and found throughout their works. The use of vivid description

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32 Similar devices to those espoused by rhetoricians are seen at work in historical writing as well. Walker (1993) provides a thorough study of the combination of *enargeia* and spectatorship in Greek historiography. In particular, he focuses on the role of spectators written into historical narratives as a means of enhancing the ‘visibility’ of the larger narrative scene and as an implicit comment on the processes of reading and representation. Thucydides’ use of this device is often tied to the arousing of emotion in the reader.

33 Although a rather coherent idea of the methods and uses of visualization can be gleaned from the rhetoricians, the terminology used, especially in the Latin texts, is far from unanimous, and individual writers, Aristotle and Quintilian in particular, sometimes provide internally contradictory statements about mental imaging.
allows the speaker to create the impression of sight by using concrete, detailed description. The aim is to cause the listener to envision a person, scene, or event in the mind’s eye and render it more immediate and affecting.\textsuperscript{34}

In his discussion of \textit{enargeia} and \textit{phantasia}, which he classifies as ‘visualization’, Gordon Williams argues that, “It is not strictly the visual element that matters,” but rather the emotional impact that these devices elicit in the listener.\textsuperscript{35} While he is assuredly correct in asserting that it is the emotional impact (or persuasion) that matters to the speaker, this ignores the fact that the rhetoricians—and consequently the poets—understood that visualization was, in fact, among the best ways to spur emotion in the listener, which is borne out by modern psychological experiments, as demonstrated above. In emphasizing the desired emotional impact of visualization, Williams downplays its status as a communicative strategy. The emotional impact should not be separated from the communicative aspect: visualization is a way to transfer emotion from the speaker to the listener. Below I will discuss what the rhetoricians say about the power of visual language, and examination of Catullus, Propertius, and Ovid will show how each one applied these lessons. After looking at the theory, \textit{enargeia} (and \textit{phantasia}) will be seen in practice in poetry, and the different ends to which it can be deployed will be considered.

\textbf{1.3.2 Summary of \textit{enargeia} in rhetorical treatises}

This section does not propose to serve as an exhaustive catalogue of the occurrence of \textit{enargeia} in the various rhetorical handbooks or as a history of the development and use of

\textsuperscript{34} Vasaly 1993, 20.
\textsuperscript{35} Williams 1968, 670.
The rhetoricians surveyed here provide a foundation for the discussion of the use of vivid description and visualization in Roman love poetry, although I admit there are obvious deficiencies of employing rhetorical treatises to describe poetic technique. I aim only at a cursory survey of the discussions of *enargeia* and *phantasia* most pertinent to the topic of this dissertation. The relationship between rhetorical theory and poetic practice will be examined below.

As is usual for discussions of rhetoric, we begin with Aristotle. In his discussion of metaphor, he says that "neat phrases" (τὰ ἀστεῖα) come both from metaphor and from expression that appeals to the mind's eye (τῶ πρὸ ὀμμάτων ποιεῖν). Aristotle defines "set before the eyes" as words signifying actuality, ὅσα ἐνεργοῦντα σημαίνει. This actuality, which Aristotle illustrates with examples of activity and real things, is contrasted with metaphor. According to Aristotle, Homer's popularity is due to his skill at creating actuality, that is, energetic descriptions which appeal to the mind’s eye. Expressions appealing to the mind's eye are those which have as their point of reference real objects, and, in particular, real objects in motion. These appeals to the mind's eye are essential to creating catchy phrases which are essential tools of the orator. Although Aristotle is not speaking of *enargeia*, vividness, but rather *energeia*, activity, it is important to note that he mentions the appeal to the mind's eye, a formulation which is at the heart of the common definition of *enargeia*, and proceeds to define it as signifying actuality.

Moving to Demetrius, we find in his discussion of the plain style a more systematic study of *enargeia* with an emphasis on detail of description (ἀκρίβολογία) and the ability of repetition

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36 For a more exhaustive investigation, see Zanker 1981. Vasaly 1993, 89-104 provides a thorough treatment directed toward Roman rhetoric.
37 *Rh.* 3.11.1.
38 *Rh.* 3.11.3.
(διλογία) to increase enargeia.39 Repetition in turn is able to increase the emotional impact of a passage, as Demetrius illustrates by citing a passage from Ctesias.40 This same Ctesias is deemed an "artist of enargeia" (ἐναργείας δημιουργός) who forces his reader to share in his characters' anguish (εἰς ἄγωνίαν ἐμβαλὼν καὶ τὸν ἀκούοντα).41 Enargeia also comes from the inclusion of circumstantial detail (ἐκ τοῦ τὰ παρεπόμενα τοῖς πράγμασι λέγειν).42 Although Demetrius does not stress the ability of words to create mental images in the reader's mind (or even acknowledge it), enargeia is linked to the stirring of emotion in the listener.

Longinus notes that phantasiae, "image production" (εἰδωλοποιία), produce weight, grandeur, and urgency. As described by Longinus, these phantasiae are ideas which have the important aspect of being productive of language (τὸ ὑπόσχον ἐννόημα γενετικῶν λόγου παριστάμενον).43 The term has come to describe passages, however, where the poet or orator, inspired by strong emotion or a sort of divinely-inspired frenzy, seems to see what is described and brings that image before the eyes of the audience (ὕπ' ἐνθουσιασμοῦ καὶ πάθους βλέπειν δοκῆς καὶ ὑπ' ὅψιν τιθῆς τοῖς ἀκούονται). Although a distinction is drawn between the use of phantasia in prose and poetry, with the former using phantasia to create enargeia and the latter ekplexis, both aim at what is emotional (τὸ παθητικῶν).44 In oratory phantasia is used to inject excitement (ἐναγώνια) and emotion (ἐμπαθῆ) into speeches, and when combined with factual argumentation, it can not only convince an audience, but dominate them (δουλοῦται).45

39 Eloc. 209-211. Note Catullus' repetition of the demonstrative ille in the opening lines of c. 51.
40 Eloc. 213-215.
41 Eloc. 216.
42 Eloc. 217. Amores 1.5 dwells for eight lines (almost a full third of its length) on circumstantial detail, the temperature, the lighting of the room, and the room itself, before launching into a vivid—visual, rather—expose of Corinna's nude body. This circumstantial detail is a main component in the production of what Barthes calls the 'reality effect' of a text (1986b).
43 de Subl. 15.1.
44 This aim at the emotional (τὸ παθητικῶν) is, however, supplemented by Kayser; the aim at the excited (τὸ συγκεκριμένον) is present in the text.
45 de Subl. 15.9.
Writing roughly contemporaneously with the poets examined in this dissertation, Dionysius of Halicarnassus provides an important snapshot of rhetorical theory in the Augustan period, albeit from a Greek perspective. In his essay on Lysias, Dionysius claims his style had "lots of *enargeia*", which he defines as a power to appeal to the senses through his descriptions (ὅπο τὰς σκηνάς ἔγονα τὰ λεγόμενα).46 Dionysius broadens the sensory appeal of *enargeia* from the simply visual mentioned by Aristotle, although he focuses on the visual when he notes the effects of *enargeia* on the audience. When listening to Lysias, no one would be so dull as to not think that he could see (ὁρᾶν) the actions taking place and feel himself meeting the characters face-to-face (ὡσερ παρουσίαν οἶς ἀν ὁ ῥήτωρ ἔισαγη προσώπως ὑμιλεῖν). His command of *enargeia* stems from his attention to circumstantial detail (ἐκ τῆς τῶν παρακολουθοῦντων λήψεως). So great is his power of description that listeners will require no further evidence of likely actions, feelings, thoughts, or words of the various characters in his speeches.47 Tangentially related to the discussion of *enargeia* is another quality of Lysias that Dionysius finds pleasing, his skill at *ethopoeia*; the characters of Lysias' speeches are lacking in neither substance nor vitality.48 Although Dionysius does not explicitly connect Lysias' skill with *enargeia* and characterization, the two devices seem to be tied together not only by their sequential treatment, but also by the presence of skill at characterization in the discussion of *enargeia*. We can therefore infer that *enargeia* and the clear presentation of characters as ‘real’ are linked.

Although the Latin rhetorical treatises—the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, Cicero, and Quintilian—I turn to now are based on Hellenistic Greek sources, they do offer a unique

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46 Lys. 7.
47 We see a poetic manifestation of this same skill in Catullus, for example, where the vivid presentation of his love and hate gives the reader such a strong impression of the case, that there seems at first to be no need to wonder as to the truth of Catullus’ version of events.
48 Lys. 8.
amplification of the importance of *enargeia* in oratory, as well as a strong visual flavor that distinguishes them from their Greek counterparts. One problem with the Latin sources is the abundance of different terms—*evidentia, repraesentatio, sub oculos subiectio, hypotyposis*—to describe what seem to be, in practice, facets of the same concept, *enargeia* (although its treatment in the Greek sources is not necessarily much more unified). Nevertheless, the treatment of the subject, regardless of the term applied, in the Latin rhetorical writers is relatively consistent and tends to emphasize the visual aspect of *enargeia*.

To begin, let us look at Rome’s first extended rhetorical work, the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*. Among the ten figures of diction, the author includes *descriptio*, a figure employing the clear and lucid exposition of the consequences of an act (*rerum consequentium…perspicuam et dilucidam…expositionem*).\(^49\) *Descriptio* can arouse indignation or pity when consequences are set forth clearly (*perspicua*) and briefly. Another figure, *similtudo*, comparison, receives an extensive treatment, although we examine only its use in creating a mental image of the business at hand (*ante oculos ponendi negotii causa*) by noting a detailed parallel to the matter.\(^50\) By using the figure and embellishing both elements, the former element is highlighted and is set before the eyes of all (*sub aspectus omnium rem subiecit*). Deploying *similtudo* is made easier by frequently setting before the eyes (*frequenter ponere ante oculos*) a litany of elements that can be used for clarification.\(^51\) In the extended discussion of this single figure, there is great emphasis placed on the *ante oculos ponere* formula, and that the comparison is to be laid on thick by using all conceivable—real or imaginary—images. Both figures, *descriptio* and *similtudo*, incorporate the mind’s eye as well as description rich in circumstantial detail as a means of highlighting the matter under discussion. Another mode of description, *effictio* or

\(^{49}\) ad Her. 4.51.

\(^{50}\) ad Her. 4.60.

\(^{51}\) ad Her. 4.61.
portrayal, consists of painting with words (*effingitur verbis*) an individual with enough detail to allow the listener recognition of the individual's bodily form (*forma quoad satis sit ad intellegendum*).\(^{52}\) The author notes the device is not only useful, but graceful (*venustatem*) if done briefly and clearly (*breviter et dilucide*).\(^{53}\)

The final figure discussed in the *Rhetorica*, and the last topic before its conclusion, is the figure that is most clearly linked with *enargeia*. *Demonstratio* consists of describing an event in words so that it seems to happen before the audience's very eyes.\(^{54}\) Its definition is worth citing in full: *demonstratio est cum ita verbis res exprimitur ut geri negotium et res ante oculos esse videatur*. Not only is the *ante oculos* formula repeated, but more importantly we find that the events themselves are enacted in the audience's mind.\(^{55}\) *Demonstratio* is created by including all detail prior to, contemporaneous with, or after the business at hand (*quaes ante et post et in ipsa*); consequences and attendant circumstances (*rebus consequentibus aut circum instantibus*) must be clung to closely. The effect of *demonstratio* lies in amplifying a matter (*in amplificanda re*) or appealing to pity (*commiseranda re*) by laying out the whole incident and placing it before our eyes.\(^{56}\)

Although not part of the figures of diction described in later chapters of the *Rhetorica*, the author's system of memorization is worth a brief examination for its heavy reliance on mental imaging. The author distinguishes two types of memory, one naturally occurring and the other a product of *ars*. The latter type is divided into two elements, backgrounds (*lo ci*) and images

\(^{52}\) *ad Her.* 4.63.
\(^{53}\) The parallels of *venustas* and brevity mentioned by the author of the *Rhetorica* with Neoteric poetic style and that of Catullus, in particular, are noteworthy.\(^{54}\) *ad Her.* 4.68.
\(^{55}\) A generation or two after the writing of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, Dionysius' description of Lysias' skill with *enargeia* provides the same result: the events of the affair transpire before the audience-turned-eyewitness.\(^{56}\) *ad Her.* 4.68-69.
(imaginēs) of the object to be remembered. Backgrounds are likened to wax tablets or papyrus, and images to letters imprinted on them, allowing the memories to be "read" as if from a script. The author devotes considerable space to discussing the proper selection of backgrounds and the disposition of images in them before noting that, if a person lacks life experience from which to draw backgrounds, imagination (cogitatio) can fill the gap. Cogitatio is able to create any region whatsoever (quamvis regionem potest amplecti), and through it the speaker can create a region for himself and obtain a serviceable set of backgrounds. A discussion of a theory of images follows, divided into images to hold subject-matter (rerum similitudines) and those to hold the likenesses of words (verborum similitudines). To express a word as a mental image requires more ingenuity than simple subject-matter. In his example of a visual mnemonic for the line "iam domum itionem reges Atridae parant", the author suggests containing the first four words in an image of "Domitius being flogged by the Marci Reges" (an incident we know nothing about); the final two words are to be memorized via images of famous tragic actors of the day dressed for the roles of Agamemnon and Menelaus. Although the mental gymnastics required are extensive, it is worth noting that the author believes that words themselves can be memorized in the form of images for memorization before being recalled via a speech act. We see that events can be stored as images to be recalled as language; in both cases there is a free transference between image and word.

In his discussion of metaphor in the de Oratore Cicero attempts to understand why metaphor provides a listener with more pleasure than a word used in its proper sense. He posits

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57 ad Her. 3.29.
58 ad Her. 3.30. The likening of the accessing of images from loci to reading suggests an implicit connection between the verbal and the visual, specifically that the mental distribution of loci is analogous to writing. The idea of the mind as capable of receiving impressions via perception or imagination like wax from a seal is found elsewhere in Pl. Tht. 191c-d, Arist. Mem. 450a31, Theophr. de Sensu 52, Sex. Emp. Math. 7.228.
59 ad Her. 3.32.
60 ad Her. 3.33.
61 ad Her. 3.34.
several reasons that listeners prefer metaphor: among them, that a single word can suggest a sort of picture (simile) of the whole, and that every metaphor, provided it is a good one, appeals directly to the sense—especially sight, which is the keenest (ad sensum ipsos admovetur, maxime oculorum, qui est sensus acerrimus). Metaphors relying on sight, unlike the other senses, are far more vivid (multo acrior) and almost place within the sight of the mind objects which are not actually visible to the eye (quae ponunt paene in conspectu animi quae cernere et videre non possumus). In discussing the incalculable supply of figures of speech and thought available to the orator, Cicero recommends frequent use of metaphor. For actual argumentation he states that a great impression can be made on the audience by dwelling on a single point (commoratio una in re), by providing a clear presentation of events, which is almost visual (illustris explanatio rerumque quasi gerantur sub aspectum paene subiectio).

Quintilian spreads discussion of enargeia and related concepts throughout his rhetorical treatise. In the context of methods to make narrative grand and attractive, Quintilian rates evidentia, which he equates with the Greek enargeia, as an important virtue of narrative. He defines the role of evidentia in narrative as useful when the truth of a case needs not only to be understood, but in a way presented to the eye (cum quid veri non dicendum sed quodammodo etiam ostendum est). Here Quintilian makes an important distinction between mere words and the greater veracity attributed to sight; a claim of truth is stronger when shown than when said. He proceeds, however, to file this fact under perspicuitas, lucidity, which he defends against claims that it may actually harm a case if deployed incorrectly. Even if someone desires to

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62 de Orat. 3.160-61.  
63 de Orat. 3.202.  
64 Inst. 4.2.63-64.  
65 This echoes exactly the advice of Catullus' interlocutor to the door in c. 67, who tells the portal that in order to prove its claims of innocence, it cannot just say it is innocent, but must make the audience feel and see it to be so: non istuc satis est uno te dicere verbo, sed facere ut quivis sentiat et videat (vv. 15-16).
present false statements as true, they still need to make their narrative as vivid as possible (quam evidentissima). Further along in his discussion of narrative, Quintilian notes that a large contribution can be made to the effort if true facts are combined with a picture of the scene (rerum imago). The effect of rerum imago stems from the image's ability to place the audience at the scene of the event itself, which, by extension from the function of evidentia above, allows them to judge visually the veracity of the claim, and therefore more accurately.

Enargeia reappears in Quintilian's discussion of emotion and techniques for increasing the pathos of an oration in Book 6. The ability to rouse emotion in others is dependent on the ability to be roused by emotions oneself; a speaker’s failure to experience these emotions leads to empty imitation (ridicula imitatio). This lesson in emotion is reduced to the premise adficiamur antequam adficere conemur. In order to make proper use of emotion, the orator must first form phantasiae, which Quintilian terms visiones. Visiones allow the images of absent things to be presented to the mind in such a way that the speaker seems to actually see them. Although visiones are equated with daydreams (somnia quaedam vigilantium) or the thoughts of an idle mind (otia animorum), the orator can control them and make them easily happen on command (quod quidem nobis volentibus facile continget). Idle fancy that is a vice in others can be made useful by the orator. Quintilian provides an example of using phantasia to imagine a crime scene, capping the example with a poignant rhetorical question: non ferientem, non

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66 Inst. 4.2.123.
67 He writes, multum confert adiecta veris credibilis rerum imago, quae velut in rem praesentem perducere audientis videtur....
69 …per quas imagines rerum absentium ita repraesentantur animo ut eas cernere oculis ac praesentes habere videamur (Inst. 6.2.29).  
70 This fact might be fruitfully applied to better understanding the much-discussed otium stanza of Catullus 51. Is it perhaps a comment on the power of a vivid daydream not channeled towards socially acceptable ends like oratory, but instead frittered away on love?
The passive voice that usually accompanies the verb \textit{videre} in discussions of \textit{visio} and \textit{evidentia} is replaced by the active. Using \textit{phantasia} to envision the scene allows him not just to seem to see, but to actually see the murder taking place. The result of this \textit{visio} is \textit{enargeia}, termed \textit{inlustratio} or \textit{evidentia} by Cicero, which Quintilian here describes as a quality that makes the speaker seem to be exhibiting something rather than simply saying it (\textit{non tam dicere videtur quam ostendere}). By placing the audience in the role of eyewitness present at the scene, emotion follows (\textit{adfectus...sequentur}).

The rousing of emotion is tied to Quintilian's discussion of the middle style in oratory, which aims at stirring emotion in the audience or persuading it. One method of stirring emotion, in particular pity (\textit{lacrimas movemus}), in the audience is the presentation of physical evidence—bloody knives and clothes, bone fragments, or wounds. Some orators also present graphic pictures of the crime (a technique Quintilian does not condone), or employ the emotive portrayal of circumstances that arouse pathos, which is within the purview of the second, or middle, style. Such techniques make a great impression because they confront the audience's minds directly with the facts at hand.

Quintilian provides his fullest discussion of \textit{enargeia} in Book 8 where he ranks it among literary ornaments. \textit{Evidentia}, he says, is more than simple vividness (\textit{plus est})

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\textsuperscript{71} \textit{Inst.} 6.2.30-31.
\textsuperscript{72} \textit{Inst.} 6.2.32. This definition is consistent with that presented at 4.2.63.
\textsuperscript{73} \textit{Inst.} 12.10.59.
\textsuperscript{74} \textit{Inst.} 6.1.30-34.
\textsuperscript{75} \textit{Inst.} 6.2.19-20. Quintilian disapproves of the latter technique, the use of actual pictures, because only a fool could think there is more power in a mute picture of a crime than in the orator's own vivid depiction of the event (\textit{quae enim est actoris infantia qui mutam illam effigiem magis quam orationem pro se putet locuturam?} 6.1.32). Indeed, a mute picture of a wounded flower—a set of bloody clothes for Catullus' injured love, as it were—would have far less emotive power than Catullus' simile at the end of c. 11, which, as will be discussed below, is a crucial moment in the \textit{liber Catulli} to fully present his case for the wrong Lesbia has done him (i.e. the \textit{non bona dicta} to be delivered by Furius and Aurelius), and to allow the audience, along with himself, to pass judgment on her.
\textsuperscript{76} He continues to call it by both \textit{enargeia} and \textit{evidentia}, but notes the alternate term \textit{repraesentatio} (8.3.61). In the following book he makes passing reference to \textit{evidentia}, noting that Cicero had called it \textit{sub oculos subiectio} and
evidentia...quam perspicuitas), however, because it puts itself on display (se quodammodo ostendit). A speech should be delivered in such a way that it is seen, not just heard (ut cerni videatur). If a speech goes no further than the ears (usque ad aures valet), it fails to obtain total domination over the audience (plene dominatur) and the listener feels he is being told a story, rather than made to decide on a matter he has seen first-hand (narrari credit, non exprimi et oculis mentis ostendi). Notably, this is the first time that Quintilian uses the phrase "mind's eye", rather than simply implying that the mind has a sort of vision.

Quintilian lays out the most important subdivisions of enargeia, the first of which is a sort of all-encompassing verbal scene-painting (tota rerum imago quodammodo verbis depingitur). In support, he provides a "picture" from the Aeneid, which he says is no less vivid to the listener than to a spectator actually present (faciem ita ostendunt ut non clarior futura fuerit spectantibus). If this "word painting" is executed skillfully (as in an example from Cicero's In Verrem), the listener will fill in unspoken details as well. Furthermore, the more detailed the description (the second type of enargeia Quintilian lays out), the greater the emotional impact will be. In providing the most detailed description possible, it will also be
legitimate to invent things of the kind that usually occur during such an event. The inclusion of attendant circumstances also improves clarity.  

Quintilian’s discussions of rhetorical devices that induce mental imaging raise important issues of temporality and spatiality which are key differences between the Sister Arts, especially as espoused by Lessing, who thinks that poetry is composed of arbitrary sequential signs that can only be perceived over time, whereas painting is made up of simultaneous natural signs (i.e. images) that are perceived in a single instant.  

Quintilian’s use of *sub oculos subiectio* in Book 9 presents two important suggestions: that the matter at hand be shown not as completed and static (*non gesta indicatur sed ut sit gesta ostenditur*), but rather as in the process of being done; and that it be shown not as a whole, but through its parts (*nec universa sed per partis*). The mental images that result from visual language are cinematic: they exist both temporally and spatially. Quintilian’s instruction can be fruitfully applied to the texts of Catullus and Ovid, in particular. Catullus’ affair is represented exactly as Quintilian prescribes: in process, never as a static image of love, but rather constantly changing as the reader moves through the collection with its shifts between beginning, middle, and end. Moving from the macrostructure of Catullus’ collection, we can see Ovid’s small-scale application of the *per partis* injunction in *Amores* 1.5

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80 *Inst.* 8.3.70.

81 Frank responded to Lessing’s definition (which was based on 18th c. theories of reading and seeing) by expanding the limitations to include a “spatial” dimension in a reader’s response to verbal signifiers (1945, 5-66). This “spatial form” is a narrative intended to be perceived “spatially” rather than sequentially. Smitten and Daghistaniy note that Frank’s theory “implies the creation of an effect in the reader’s mind, and thus ‘spatial form’ include[s] not only objective features of narrative structure but also subjective processes of aesthetic perception” (1981, 13). Frank’s theory has not met the approval of all, though. Steiner holds that ‘spatial’ really only means atemporal (1981, 37-39); Mitchell denies the existence of space in literature, and notes the “antipictorial, antivisual, antispatial” trend in Western literary theory discussed above (1989, 91). Quintilian and the other rhetoricians, however, in their discussions of techniques and *ars memoriae*, do not imply the creation of an effect in the reader’s mind, but instead take it as a given, and instruct the speaker how to take advantage of his contact with his listeners’ minds. Wetlaufer writes that “the essential salient feature of the concept of spatial prose lies in the realm of reception, as an intended effect upon a reader, and in what I see as the dialectic between author, reader and text” (2003, 14 emphasis original). The ancients were already aware of this dialectic—in poetry as well as prose—as we can see in the injunction *si vis me flere, dolendum est / primum ipsi tibi* (Hor., *Ars* 102-103).

where Corinna’s body is described bit by bit, like a movie camera moving from top to bottom.

The idea of showing an image in the process of becoming, rather than simply being, is also fundamental to the *Metamorphoses* where we see, for example, Ovid straining to describe Daphne’s transformation to a tree as a process rather than an end product. Throughout this dissertation I will examine the love poetry of the three poets as products of the variety of *sub oculos subiectio* described by Quintilian, as visual narratives, which take place over time, but which also exist as ‘real’, as scenes made concrete by the power of the mind’s eye, making the reader a spectator at the event itself.

We can extrapolate the process of an orator’s use of *enargeia/evidentia* detailed above and briefly summarize it thus: the speaker calls an image from memory, where it has been stored; the deft orator creates an emotional response in himself from this image; the orator, through *enargeia/evidentia* and other devices, stimulates the creation of corresponding images in the mind of the listener; these images cause an emotional response in the listener, persuade him, or both.

Having concluded a brief survey of rhetorical thought on *enargeia* from the periods around the careers of the poets we studied in this dissertation, some common themes can be summarized before seeing how these theories can be applied to the works of Catullus, Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid. Throughout the Latin rhetorical works emphasis is placed on vivid description with the aim of making the events described seem to be actually taking place for the audience and, more importantly, that they be able to visualize those events in their mind’s eye (*oculi mentis, paene in conspectu animi*). Vivid description is convincing description, and can stir the emotions of an audience; both Longinus and Quintilian note the use of *phantasia* to stir

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83 Here we should bear in mind the lessons of the *ars memoriae* in which space is created in the mind and moved through by the speaker.
emotion in the speaker himself, which is then transferred to the audience through *enargeia* or *evidentia*. *Enargeia* and repetition also lead to the amplification of a thing, making it seem to be of greater importance to the audience. By visually presenting a scene to the audience—showing instead of simply telling—they are made to feel as if they are present at the scene itself. Their quasi-presence at the event increases the veracity of the speaker’s claims (even if they are false), and helps to create a ‘reality effect’, which makes the scene described more concrete. The plethora of terms associated with description shows us that rhetoricians understood the importance of vivid description, but were unsure of precisely how to define it. What they did know, however, is that vivid description had the power to help persuade an audience, and that it could serve as a means of transferring emotions from the speaker to the listener. Despite a lack of clear definition, the effect of *enargeia/evidentia* is clear, it causes the listener to picture what is described verbally in his mind’s eye.

### 1.3.3 Is *enargeia* truly visual or simply vivid description?

The discussion of *enargeia* in the rhetorical treatises raises a question of obvious importance for this dissertation: does the device imply simply vivid description, or description that spurs visualization in the listener? Although there seems to have been no fully developed definition of *enargeia* (let alone its numerous Latin equivalents), there does seem to be an emphasis in the Latin sources and Roman-era Greek sources on the actual production of visualization, rather than simple vivid description for the sake of clarity.

Unlike later sources, Demetrius does not seem to incline so far toward visualization. In his description of the plain style, the section which contains his discussion of *enargeia*, he says that the most important aspect of the style is clarity of diction, μάλιστα δὲ σαφῆ χρή τήν λέξιν
His first factors for securing τὸ σαφὲς are entirely non-visual: the use of common words, connectives, epanalepsis, and avoidance of ambiguities and dependent constructions, to name a few. The closest Demetrius comes to suggesting that enargeia is productive of visualization is in his discussion of the inclusion of circumstantial detail. He cites Hippocrates' blush at Protagoras 312a and notes that this description is quite vivid, as is clear to all:

ἐναργεστατὸν ἐστι, παντὶ δῆλον.\(^{85}\) Absent from his discussion of enargeia are any references to the eyes or vocabulary which strongly appeals to vision, both of which are clearly evidenced in other rhetorical treatises. Demetrius does, however, describe Ctesias as an "artist" of enargeia (ἐναργείας δημιουργός).\(^{86}\) While this choice of words may have overtones of the visual, suggesting word-painting, it does not provide any clear sign that Demetrius expects enargeia to produce anything other than the clarity required of the plain style. Finally, he concludes his discussion of enargeia by noting that κακοφωνία and onomatopoeia produce enargeia, claiming that mimesis is necessarily vivid: πᾶς δὲ μίμησις ἐναργής τι ἔχει.\(^{87}\) Here we move into the realm of the purely aural, which further suggests that enargeia was, in Demetrius' view, vividness for the sake of clarity, rather than for the production of mental images in the listener, and that it was created by a host of effects, verbal, aural, and visual.

The Roman and Roman-era Greek sources, on the other hand, give a much clearer indication of visualization as a goal of enargeia. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, as mentioned above, claims that enargeia turns the reader into an eyewitness of the events described, τὰ δῆλούμενα ὄραν.\(^{88}\) He also claims that Lysias appealed his audience's senses, ὑπὸ τὰς

\(^{84}\) Eloc. 191.
\(^{85}\) Eloc. 217.
\(^{86}\) Eloc. 215.
\(^{87}\) Eloc. 219-220.
\(^{88}\) Lys. 7.
Dionysius notes the appeal to the senses, but specifies the power of *enargeia* to make the listener into a viewer.

The author of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* makes these same claims, that the matters at hand are placed before the mind's eye, and uses vocabulary tied to vision even more frequently. He describes the effects of *descriptio* as making the consequences of an action *perspicuam et dilucidam* and defines characterization, *effictio*, as *effingitur verbis*.\(^{89}\) In the case of the former adjectives, both can mean not just clear or conspicuous, but also transparent as jewels or mirrors.\(^{90}\) Further, the definition of *demonstratio*, the closest figure to *enargeia* mentioned in the *Rhetorica*, employs the traditional definition of the matter being described appearing *prope...ante oculos*.\(^{91}\) With comparisons ranging from painting to the clarity of jewels and overt reference made to the eyes, the author of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* rather clearly links the Latin rhetorical figures approximating *enargeia* to language productive of mental images, rather than simply vivid language.

Similarly visual vocabulary abounds in Quintilian's discussion of *enargeia*. In discussing the use of narrative in courtroom speeches, Quintilian notes the contribution of combining fact and a believable picture of the scene (*credibilis rerum imago*), and that its effect will be that the audience thinks itself present at the event (*velut in rem praesentem perducere audientis*).\(^{92}\) As a prefatory statement to his discussion of *enargeia/evidentia*, Quintilian counts the device as a form of *ornamentum*. Important for the distinction between vividness and visuality, Quintilian separates ornament from that which is simply lucid or probable (*ornatum est quod perspicuo ac

\(^{89}\) *ad Her.* 4.51, 63.

\(^{90}\) Although outside the scope of this brief summary, I think this particular point of comparison between *enargeia* and its Latin equivalents and jewels or mirrors warrants further scrutiny. In both cases a scene is to be viewed, and one not just vivid, but visual, although both are "seen" through a distorting filter, whether it be a jewel or the medium of language. Quintilian, however, draws a distinction between ornament and that which is simply perspicuous (see below, n. 93).

\(^{91}\) *ad Her.* 4.69.

\(^{92}\) *Inst.* 4.2.123.

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probabili plus est), and as a form of ornament, evidentia is more than just clarity (plus est...quam perspicuitas). Enargeia is therefore a device which goes beyond simply presenting a clear and vivid argument, but one that actually creates an image of the scene for the listener to visualize. Moreover, he notes that a speech has failed in obtaining total mastery of its listeners if it goes no further than the ears and does not display the facts of the case to the mind's eye (oculis mentis ostendi). The language of painting (efficitur, exprimere facies) also demonstrates that the orator's words were meant to stimulate mental imaging.

Cicero's Academica contains a discussion of knowledge and sense perception that is worth noting. In the dialogue, Lucullus argues that it is possible to arrive at true knowledge by means of sense information because we are able to distinguish visa vera from visa falsa. Cicero, however, argues that false sensory impressions are often indistinguishable from the true (e.g. a dreamer cannot tell that his dreams are not 'real'). From this point of view, the impressions created by enargeia would be classified as false impressions, comparable to dreams and the imagination. If we follow this line of argumentation, we can perhaps assume that verbally created images, just like dreams or hallucinations, could be indistinguishable from the 'real' as regards the impressions they leave on the mind, and therefore also in their accessibility to memory and emotion. Even if one does not follow this supposition to its end—that false sensory impressions like mental images could somehow be equated with actual sensory impressions, and therefore a reader can be made to think the mental images induced while reading are real—the discussion in the Academica does suggest that the line between real sense

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93 Inst. 8.3.61.
94 Inst. 8.3.62.
95 Inst. 8.3.66.
96 Ac. 2.90.
97 Vasaly 1993, 94.
impressions and imagined impressions was blurry, and perhaps able to be transgressed by devices like *enargeia/evidentia*.

Given the preponderance, especially in Latin rhetorical works, of language clearly tied to the visual and *enargeia*'s traditional definition of placing events before the listener's eyes, I feel it is safe to assume that when the rhetoricians spoke of *enargeia* or its Latin analogues, they understood it to have a power greater than simple vividness, but rather one which caused a listener to visualize the events described.\(^98\)

**1.3.4 The use of *enargeia* in poetry vs. rhetoric**

The survey of rhetorical treatises above raises an important question which has been lurking behind the scenes of this discussion: whether or not the theories laid out in rhetorical treatises are applicable to poetry. Is it sound practice to employ Cicero or Quintilian to discuss Catullus or Ovid? On this topic Longinus notes a generic distinction, saying that *phantasia* is used differently in prose and in poetry. Poetic *phantasia* aims at \(\varkappa\pi\lambda\xi\), the captivation or enthralment of the audience, whereas in prose its purpose is to create *enargeia* through words (\(\varepsilon\nu\\lambda\gamma\omega\iota\\varepsilon\\nu\acute{a}\rho\gamma\varepsilon\iota\alpha\)). Both, however, strive for emotion and excitement or a sort of

\(^{98}\) Vasaly notes an “extraordinary degree of correspondence between words and images” assumed in ancient theories of *enargeia* (1993, 98). She goes even farther to suggest that, because the rhetorical theorists are almost entirely silent about the emotional resonance of words qua words, separated from their ability to cause mental imaging, words in description are irrelevant except for their ability to create a mental picture of the object described. This perhaps overstates the case; just because the theorists do not note the potential resonance of words separated from any potential visual component, does not mean it did not exist. It would be hard to imagine Cicero’s audience not understanding the emotional or moral facet of *bonus*, for example, despite the fact that it lacks a visual component. Further, with the more thorough editing and publication of the fragments of Philodemus’ literary criticism, light has been shed on the importance of sound and euphony in Hellenistic poetic criticism. In *On Poems* Philodemus discusses the role of sound in poetry, and the debate over the value of euphony in judging the quality of a poem. He disagrees with a group he calls the *kritikoi*, among them Crates of Mallos, who hold that what makes a poem good is its sound, rather than its content. Philodemus himself argues that language must not be considered apart from its meaning; he also claims that the mere sound (\(\nu\chi\omega\iota\)) doesn’t provide any pleasure, and that the only acoustic feature that does provide pleasure is rhythm. Although the texts are very fragmentary, and Philodemus’ extremely polemical style often makes interpretation difficult, *On Poems* reveals other threads within Hellenistic literary criticism which do not emphasize vision. See especially Janko’s edition of *On Poems* (2000) and Asmis (2004) for an overview of the euphonist debate.
sympathetic emotion (τὸ τε <παθητικὸν> ἐπιζητοῦσι καὶ τὸ συγκεκινημένον). In trying to understand Longinus' judgment of the different aims of phantasia in prose and poetry, it is worth examining the type of poetry he is discussing. The example he cites for poetic phantasia's aim at ekplexis is from Euripides' Orestes and, in particular, the gripping scene where Orestes is chased by Furies. In this passage, Longinus says that the poet himself saw the Furies (ὁ ποιητὴς αὐτὸς εἴδεν) and, using the power of his description, compels the audience almost to see what he had visualized in his own mind's eye (ὁ δὲ ἐφαντάσθη μικροῦ δείν θεάσασθαι καὶ τοὺς ἀκούοντας ἴμαγκασεν). However, the personal poetry with which this dissertation is concerned falls outside the scope of Longinus' "sublime". His conclusion at the end of the excursus on ekplexis is that the effect of phantasia in poetry is often one of exaggeration (τὸ πιστὸν ὑπεραιροῦσαν) belonging to the world of myth (μυθικωτέραν ἔχει τὴν ὑπερέκπτωσιν), whereas the most perfect effect of visualization in oratory is reality and truth (τῆς δὲ ῥητορικῆς φαντασίας καλλιστὸν ἀεὶ τὸ ἐμπρακτὸν καὶ ἐνάληθες). The examples of phantasia in poetry Longinus draws on, however, are all from tragedy. Love elegy is a far cry from tragedy and its personal nature far removed from the world of fable. I would argue that one of the goals of Roman love poetry is closer to Longinus' goal for oratory—the portrayal of reality and truth through enargeia—than to his goal of poetic ekplexis as seen in tragedy, and I will return to this argument throughout this dissertation. Elegists, like orators, want to give the scenes they create believability, a reality, so that the audience will be immersed in that world. Like Longinus' tragic example, however, elegiac poets also seek a sort of enthrallment of the audience: they want to fix the audience's

99 Subl. 15.1. It must be noted, however, that the important (for our purposes) παθητικόν is supplemented by Kayser.
100 Subl. 15.2.
101 Subl. 15.8.
mental gaze on their world of love, cause them to examine it more intently, and be affected by its emotional content. Mental imaging for the elegist spans Longinus’ two categories, providing a ring of truth to the love affair as well as helping to bridge the subjectivities of author and reader, allowing both to be moved, συγκεκιμένον (noting the full force of the prefix συν-). Whether or not Longinus would agree, I think it safe to apply principles from rhetorical treatises to poetry, especially when that poetry is Roman.

That elite Roman men were trained in oratory is taken as a matter of course.¹⁰² That these same poets, trained as boys for a career in oratory, employed in their poetry what they had learned in their rhetorical instruction can be briefly demonstrated by noting several examples. In his *Controversiae*, Seneca claims to have seen Ovid declaiming *controversiae* at the school of Arellius Fuscus and discusses Ovid's rhetorical penchant at some length.¹⁰³ Seneca held Ovid to be a good declamer and skilled at *controversiae*, although he preferred to declaim *suasoriae*.

The rhetorical nature of Ovid's poetry is often noted: McKeown has gone so far as to call the *Amores* an eroticized declamatio; the *Heroides* have elsewhere been likened to *suasoriae*.¹⁰⁴ Although Ovid's particular rhetorical inclination is not necessarily taken up as fully by his fellow elegists, these other poets were nonetheless similarly educated in rhetoric.

Although this striking example from Ovid's youth may seem particular to Ovid himself and his clear penchant for rhetoric, the Augustans as a whole are rather more rhetorical than meets the eye. In the case of Virgil, the traces of rhetorical inventio and elocutio can be seen in

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¹⁰² See especially Webb (1997, 345-352) for a summary of the connections between a poet's rhetorical education and his poetry. For the life and career of Catullus, Granarolo argues that, though he was not an orator by occupation like his friend Calvus, Catullus was nevertheless surrounded in both his youth and his poetic career by a "true climate of rhetoric" (1979, 41). Less convincingly, he argues that Catullus' choice of Sappho as a poetic model was due as much to his rhetorical education, which might cite Sappho (e.g. *de Sibyl. 10.2* and Arist. *Rhet. 1367a10*), as it was to his Neoteric Alexandrianism (1979, 42). This ignores the fact that rhetoricians and theorists were fond of drawing examples from "classic" texts, whether or not their authors were rhetorically trained or not (e.g. Homer).

¹⁰³ *Con. 2.2.8-12.*

¹⁰⁴ McKeown 1987 v. 1, 69; see also Otis 1966, *passim.*
both the *Georgics* and the *Aeneid*. In the former, note the comparison of the city life with country life, and in the latter, the use of appeals to pity as well as the plausible narration of details to hold the Trojan audience's attention in Sinon's speech at *Aeneid* 2.69-194. This speech is reported, however, and interrupted occasionally by Aeneas' input about audience reaction, which "increases the reader's impression of Sinon's persuasive arts and ensures that his speech, like the others, remains firmly anchored in its narrative context". Propertius, too, deploys rhetorical tactics when arguing against seafaring in 3.7, and his attempt to convince Cynthia to forewear beauty aids is particularly rhetorical. Horace's own injunction in the *Ars Poetica* of *si vis me flere, dolendum est / primum ipsi tibi* (vv. 102-3) can be linked closely to Quintilian's insistence that an orator first move himself before moving his audience (6.2.27-8).

Cicero makes an argument—one particularly compelling for the subject at hand—that the poet is nearly the equal of the orator in the use of rhetorical ornament: *est enim finitimus oratori poeta, numeris astrictior paulo, verborum autem licentia liberior, multis vero ornandi generibus socius, ac paene par*. The use of vivid description is classified, according to Quintilian, as a form of *ornamentum*, and is employed, in Cicero's view, as deftly by poets as orators. To range even farther from the Augustan period, Maximus of Tyre goes so far as to claim that rhetorical teaching could provide all the skill necessary to compose poetry except for the meter.
In short, even before the full-blown rhetorical poetry of the Latin Silver Age, Roman poetry was closely linked to rhetorical theory by shared devices and critical language. Although I would not go so far as to say that rhetoric can be used to explain every instance of Roman poets’ use of imagery and visualization, the two disciplines are highly complementary in technique and often agree in the terms in which that technique is described, and practitioners of one art are like trained in the other as well, or are even practitioners of both.

1.4 Conclusion

The use of readerly mental imaging and a language of vision by Catullus, Propertius and Ovid as a means to increase the emotional and intellectual response to their poetry is grounded in their understanding of rhetorical theory, as well as borne out by modern psychology. Contrary to a dominant vein of modern literary critical thought, the use of mental imaging by poets increases the intellectual involvement of the reader in understanding the text, rather than detracting from that understanding. The greater mental effort of responding to verbal enargeia (rather than simply responding to pictorial verisimilitude) causes the reader of an enar跟着ic text to invest more time and thought in responding to the text and understanding it. Visual literature draws the reader into the poem both emotionally and intellectually.

To conclude, let us look forward in time from the Augustan period to the fuller development of ekphrasis and theories of phantasia in the later Empire. In his dramatic ekphrasis of a painting of hunters, Philostratus cries out, “I was duped by the painting into thinking they were not painted, but actually existing and moving and loving—at any rate, I tease them as if they could hear, and think I hear some response….” Although Philostratus is

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111 See Leach 1988, 7 and 352; Esrock 1994, 193.
112 Imag. 1.28.2.
talking specifically about being deceived by a naturalistic painting (which may never have existed in the first place), what we see here is a literary representation of the visual analogue of the ‘reality effect’ which enargetic literature aims for: to make the reader think that the characters he reads are actual people with whom we can almost interact, as Dionysius’ description of Lysias’ skill at *enargeia* suggests.\(^{113}\)  Achilles Tatius stands at the end of the erotic road we chart, when he notes that sometimes a look is as good as sex, before putting this theory into practice in his novel in his description of a painting of Andromeda bound as an indulgence of his readers’ sexual fantasy.\(^ {114}\) What we see expressed by Achilles is similar to what we will see in our examination of Ovid: that the shared erotic experience of the amatory text—both the involvement of the poet and reader in the love represented in the text, and the text’s function as a means to create a bridge between the emotions of author and audience—is conveyed through visual language.\(^ {115}\) This is seen in Catullus in poems like 6 and 55 where the poet wants to share in the erotic dealings of his friends—to become a *particeps amoris*—and does so by expressing himself through poetry that encourages readerly mental imaging. This dissertation explores the use of visual language to bridge the gap between reader and author, to make the reader believe that the elegiac lives we read are “real”, and to make us also feel the emotion expressed by the poet as if we were ourselves participants in the poems.

\(^{113}\) *Lys.* 7.

\(^{114}\) Ach. Tat. 1.9.3-5 and 3.7.1-6. Achilles is also particularly fond of noting the power of vision to arouse erotic feeling by noting the link between vision and a penetrating touch in both intromissive and extramissive theories of sight. See Bartsch 2000, 75 with nn. 46-47, and Goldhill 2002.

\(^{115}\) Fitzgerald (1995) discusses the erotics of the relationship between Catullus, his reader, and the text, and Catullus’ use of positionality to create this relationship.
2.1 Introduction

In recent decades Catullan scholarship has come to find a middle ground between Kroll’s Romantic urwüchsig Naturbursch and the pedantic Neoteric for whom sentiment is secondary to technique. While a keen technician, Catullus' ability to express intense immediacy of experience coupled with a self-awareness that allows him to stand apart from that experience has been recognized by a number of commentators. In the current vein of Catullan scholarship, however, the role of the audience in Catullus' poetry and his interaction with them through the text has begun to play a larger role. Catullan scholarship has examined how the poet deals with his Hellenistic predecessors, his metrics and word choice, the historical “truth” of his affair with Lesbia, the arrangement of poems within the collection, and even how he positions the reader as a sexually receptive partner.

Gaisser begins her thoughtful 2002 article by quoting Yeats' "The Scholars", in which the Yeats contrasts the stuffy and respectable world of the scholar with that of the Catullus they study, ending with the pointed question "Did their Catullus walk that way?". Yeats' Catullus is, by implication, the opposite of these balding scholars and the epitome of the Romantic Catullus in the era before the rise of the Neoteric Catullus. Gaisser's first hypothesis is that "…Catullus presents a persona of himself that is so vivid, sympathetic, and realistic that it persuades his readers to believe in its sincerity and to empathize and identify with it—or rather to identify it with themselves. Catullus' readers…tend to paint their pictures of Catullus as self-portraits." Her observation is keen, but leaves one to wonder how, exactly, Catullus presents himself in such a vivid and sympathetic manner. Still further, are readers' pictures of Catullus

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116 Kroll 1923, vii.
120 Gaisser 2002, 274.
entirely self-portraits? Why have scholars changed Catullus’ “image” so radically from freewheeling Romantic to bland technician to something in between? To what extent do we as readers have control over the image we form of Catullus? Is this portrait entirely dependent on us, or does Catullus subtly guide our brush, so to speak? This chapter will examine just how Catullus "paints a picture" of himself and his world through the manipulation of the reader's visualization and the vantage points from which Catullus allows them to see into his poetic world.

Quinn credits Catullus with the invention of poetry that seems to be overheard, claiming that the late Republican period spawned a new type of poetry whose success depended on the skill with which the writer created the illusion of the audience as intruder, overhearing a private correspondence between friends. Quinn credits Catullus with the invention of poetry that seems to be overheard, claiming that the late Republican period spawned a new type of poetry whose success depended on the skill with which the writer created the illusion of the audience as intruder, overhearing a private correspondence between friends.121 Fitzgerald, however, points out that criticism has largely focused on the illusion of overhearing rather than the relation of overhearing: "But overhearing is not only an illusion, it is also a relationship. It disposes us, as intruders, to say apologetic things…and it tends to affect the speech of the speaker, who is aware of the possibility of being overheard. The overheard speaker is both vulnerable to the possibility of giving something away and endowed with the power to tantalize the listener; Catullus…makes a great deal of this ambiguous relation to the reader." Fitzgerald, however, points out that criticism has largely focused on the illusion of overhearing rather than the relation of overhearing: "But overhearing is not only an illusion, it is also a relationship. It disposes us, as intruders, to say apologetic things…and it tends to affect the speech of the speaker, who is aware of the possibility of being overheard. The overheard speaker is both vulnerable to the possibility of giving something away and endowed with the power to tantalize the listener; Catullus…makes a great deal of this ambiguous relation to the reader."122

Catullus does make a great deal of such an ambiguous relationship with his reader, but not simply as regards overhearing. In this chapter we will examine the visual analogue of overhearing, overseeing, and how Catullus creates the vividness and the illusion of reality that are the hallmarks of his poetry via manipulation of the reader-turned-viewer's gaze. We will see how spatial (inside and outside) and visual (viewer and viewed) positionality forces the reader into a sympathetic position with Catullus, primarily as he moves into and out of his relationship with Lesbia and confronts the romantic relationships of his friends and enemies. I will show that

121 Quinn 1982, 89.
122 Fitzgerald 1995, 4-5.
the reader, via cues in the poems, is given a viewpoint either inside or outside of Catullus' relationships, just as Catullus finds himself either inside or outside of his own relationships. For example, readers act as curiosi along with Catullus as he pries into his friends' affairs, but are forced to observe the boundaries set by him in his own affair. Throughout, I will examine how Catullus sets the reader up to oversee—via the formation of mental images—his erotic world, as well as that of his friends. The privilege of access or a shared exclusion help to form a relationship between reader and poet which is partially responsible for the sense of compelling immediacy so often attributed to his poetry.

Catullus' poetry, however, feels all the more personal precisely because of what we are not allowed to see: Catullus does not allow the reader complete, intimate access to his new type of "romantic" love. It seems all the more novel and intimate because we are largely excluded from its most intimate details. This new type of love, which the poet himself struggles to verbalize in poem 72's sed pater ut gnatos diligit et generos, is highlighted all the more by its stark contrast with the complete access Catullus provides us to the intimate details of his friends' liaisons or Lesbia's sexual escapades after their breakup. In the course of this chapter I will also examine Catullus'—the poet's—observations on the reader-as-spectator and the poet's use of and reaction to Hellenistic models of sentimentality and his expression of a new type of "romantic" love through the use of overseeing.

This chapter presents a series of readings not necessarily intended to replace other, traditional readings, but to recognize a hitherto unacknowledged (though not entirely unnoticed) theme, and to shed more light on Catullan poetic technique and his interaction with the reader. By examining these techniques, I hope to move toward a better understanding of Catullus' poetry, particularly the amatory poems. The primary focus of this chapter is the polymetric
poems, in particular the so-called Lesbia cycle, though other poems from the _liber Catulli_ will be examined to a greater or lesser degree.

The theme that is the subject of this chapter has been noticed from time to time, but never recognized as recurring topic spread throughout the poet's work. The importance of privacy and the exclusion of the world (especially the world of public life) to Catullus' poetry and in particular his love poems has been noted by many scholars, especially those concerned with the novelty of his treatment of love. Rankin observes that Catullus employs his poetry to build fences around his love and that the poet has a fundamentally different view of love that involves an intense privacy.\(^{123}\) He astutely notes that, "There was no reason why Lesbia or anybody else should have agreed with Catullus' theory of the bond between lovers."\(^{124}\) This raises the question of whether Catullus' use of viewing was employed to put his audience in a position from which they would be more disposed to agree with his idea of private, "romantic" love, to which the answer is, as I hope to demonstrate, yes. Greene makes several keen observations regarding Catullus' use of viewing and the audience's involvement therein, and applies them to the question of gender and power relationships.\(^{125}\) Fitzgerald's work on positionality, as we have already seen, has laid the foundation for this chapter, although the view taken here eschews the overtly sexualized positionality wherein the reader becomes the receptive partner. Both Greene and Fitzgerald have recognized the importance of viewing in the Catullan corpus, but both focus their attentions narrowly on sex and power relationships. While both dynamics are certainly important to Catullus' program, they are not the sole dynamic at work in the poems, as such studies often forget. The focus here is _love_ poetry and, more broadly, _personal_ poetry. Viewing is integral to both and not simply an expression of power.

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\(^{123}\) Rankin 1975, 68.
\(^{124}\) Rankin, 1975, 72.
\(^{125}\) Greene 1998, 1-36.
Although this is not the place to discuss the Catullan textual tradition, it is necessary to make some statement pertaining to this contentious issue of his criticism. I largely follow Skinner in understanding that poems 1-60 comprised a unified *libellus*, perhaps circulating under the title of *Passer*.\(^{126}\) Poems 1-51 in particular show a unity of theme and an organization elaborate enough to deny happenstance arrangement, and I argue below that the collection proper ends with c. 51, with the remaining nine poems perhaps forming a supplement added to the collection of polymetric poems. I think we will also see that some of the evidence to be presented in this chapter will serve to reinforce this view of an authorial arrangement of cc. 1-51 by demonstrating how Catullus uses *overseeing* and visualization to link various poems and create responsion between them.

2.2 The Catullan male gaze; Lesbia through Catullus' eyes (cc. 2, 3, 51)

We begin by examining three poems which frame the *Passer*, the opening companion pieces addressed to Lesbia's pet sparrow, and the return to the beginning of the book at its end, c. 51. Here I explore the peculiarity of the Catullan male gaze, which is more than just the typical desiring male gaze, but is also a frightened and jealous gaze when forced to a position apart from

\(^{126}\) Skinner 1981. Skinner (1988) also argues for Catullan ordering of the entire *liber Catulli* (see also the first chapter of Quinn 1972b, pp. 9-53). Hubbard 1983, on the other hand, argues that not only does the current *liber Catulli* comprise a collection of various *libelli*, arranged probably by a posthumous editor, but also that the *libellus* referred to in c. 1 is specifically cc. 1-14. Although the former assertion might stand, the latter is too radical, and the connections examined in this chapter strongly argue against this view. See especially nn. 1 and 2 in Hubbard 1983 for a survey of scholarship on the arrangement of Catullus' poems, along with that presented in Beck's introduction (1996, 9-40). Miller (1994, 106) provides a compelling argument of a sort of dialogic relationship between poems, though at times the argument is rather more theoretical than practical; I return to this interpretation in the discussion of c. 11. More recently, Skinner (2003) has focused attention on the elegiacs, their ordering and their connection to the other two major sections of the *liber Catulli*; her introduction is particularly informative. Connections of theme run through all three distinct sections of the *liber Catulli* (the polymetric poems, the long poems, and the elegiacs). In the end, we need not adopt the entirely uncritical assumption of Catullan arrangement taken by Wilamowitz—"wer's nicht merkt, tant pis pour lui" (1913, 292)—or, on the other hand, Schmidt's woeful claim that the book is "ein wüstes Chaos" (1914, 278). Catullus' hand can be seen in the arrangement of the poems, especially in the collection of polymetric poems, despite the presence of lacunae or textual disturbances.
Lesbia. Further, we will look at Lesbia through Catullus' eyes, his fixation on her eyes, and her effect on his eyes.

2.2.1 (cc. 2, 3)

The liber Catulli (excluding the dedication to Nepos) opens with a poem of Catullus watching Lesbia as she plays with a pet bird.\(^{127}\) The image is indelible, and variations of it appear in modern visual art, from adorning the cover of undergraduate Catullus texts to Sir Edward John Poynter's "Lesbia and her Sparrow" (1907, Fig. 1), or two Catullus-themed paintings by Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema (Figs. 2 and 3).\(^ {128}\) What is it about cc. 2 and 3 that has caused many different readers across time to visually represent the poems' content in a similar fashion? Even if we do not assume the setting of the poem is Catullus physically in Lesbia's chamber, watching her play with the bird to his exclusion (and frustration), the poem's address to the bird is insistently visual due to the details of location and action: the bird is in her lap, she offers her fingertip to it, it bites her, his lady love is "radiant" (vv. 1-5). If he is not watching the scene firsthand, it is nevertheless a scene imagined or remembered in detail. The simple but vivid images contained in both passer poems allow them to be easily visualized. Their ease of

\(^{127}\) The interpretation of these poems is much discussed and has been a subject of wide-ranging speculation since 1536, when Poliziano's suggested that the passer is an obscene metaphor, based on a presumed obscene understanding of the poem dating as far back as Martial (11.6). The bibliography on this subject is extensive. See e.g. Genovese 1974, Giangrande 1975, Jocelyn 1980, Nadeau 1980, and Jones 1998. Although I think the extended metaphor required for the obscene interpretation is not typical of Catullan practice, and the lack of a clear obscene reading in c. 3 weigh against Poliziano's interpretation, I do think that c. 2 is undeniably erotic. Lesbia uses the sparrow to stave off the fire of passion (gravis ardor, v. 8), and Catullus, by extension, would wish to use the sparrow to stave off his own amorous feelings for Lesbia (v. 9), which, ironically, are made all the more fierce because she ignores him, leaving him only a watcher on the margins, rather than in physical contact with her. Catullus' male gaze is certainly desirous of Lesbia, but more importantly, jealous of the sparrow because it has reduced him to the role of spectator of rather than participant in love (cf. 55.22).

\(^ {128}\) See the line drawing on the cover of Garrison's A Student's Catullus (1995). The illustration is taken from the drawings by Zhenya Gay that accompanied Horace Gregory's The Poems of Catullus (1931). Alma-Tadema's paintings on cc. 2 and 3 are "Catullus at Lesbia's Right Side" (1865) and "Lesbia" (1866). In similar fashion, the cover of a recent high school edition of Catullus by Bender and Forsyth (2005) is illustrated with a 5th c. BC relief of a girl holding two pigeons. Although very much predating Catullus, the editors felt it appropriate to illustrate their edition of Catullus with an image of a girl holding birds, clearly drawn from cc. 2 and 3.
visualization as well as their position at the head of the eponymous collection has made the two poems a fitting visual representation of the love affair recorded in the collection.\textsuperscript{129}

Unlike his Hellenistic predecessors or Roman successors Tibullus, Propertius, and Ovid, for whom the erotic gaze was something slightly different, Catullus' gaze is a complex and shifting mixture of desire and fear. He foregrounds the importance of sight for his conception of love and love poetry in the very first poems of the collection, makes it the capstone of the "final" poem on his love with Lesbia, c. 11, and reevaluates his stance throughout the collection. From beginning to "end", Catullus' love affair with Lesbia has a strong visual component which impacts the way we read and understand the poetry about his love.

Many of the visual aspects of Catullus' poetry are similar to those found in Roman wall-painting. A strikingly similar scene to that presented in c. 2 is known from the late Republican villa at Farnesina, dating to the closing decades of the first century BC.\textsuperscript{130} The villa's antechamber was decorated with numerous figural scenes, in particular three erotic scenes and two scenes of a lone woman in her chamber. The latter two paintings, found on the right wall, show a woman seated in a chair playing with a rabbit seated in her lap (Fig. 4).\textsuperscript{131} A herm stands opposite the woman with its face pointed downward toward her lap. The upper register of the antechamber also contains three pinakes of erotic scenes, two of which flank the scenes of the woman and her rabbit. On the left is a woman sitting on a lectus while a man reclines to her right (Fig. 5).\textsuperscript{132} She looks down while he looks into her eyes, and rests his arm in her lap. A

\textsuperscript{129} That some readers react visually to poetry by creating their own representations of what they read shows the extent to which texts that address the mind’s eye can affect the reader. Just as a visual image can be responded to textually (e.g. through ekphrasis), a text can be responded to visually (e.g. through the paintings of Poynter and Alma-Tadema). Reacting to a text by producing another form of representation shows a greater connection between reader and author.

\textsuperscript{130} The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin dates the villa's construction and its paintings to 19 BC as a gift to Agrippa (1987, 4).

\textsuperscript{131} Museo Nazionale Romano inv. 1188, illustrated in Bragantini and de Vos 1982, pl. 87-88.

\textsuperscript{132} Museo Nazionale Romano inv. 1188, illustrated in Bragantini and de Vos 1982, pl. 85.
female attendant stands watching the scene off to the left. To the right of the rabbit scenes is another couple on a lectus (Fig. 6). Here the woman reclines in the man's arms, facing him. She wraps her arm around his neck and approaches for a kiss. A nude slave boy stands immediately to the couple's right and averts his eyes from the scene. On the left wall of the antechamber is a third erotic scene of a couple with their backs to the viewer (Fig. 7). The woman reclines on a lectus while a man, nude above the waist, sits to her right. The two hold hands and look at one another. Three female attendants flank the couple: on the right two girls stand close together and watch the couple with the rearmost girl looking out toward the viewer. On the couple's left a third girl pours from an amphora into a krater standing on a table near the couch.

Also reminiscent of c. 2 are two paintings in the upper register of cubiculum E of the same house: a winged Eros reaches out to catch a bird (Fig. 9). On the left side of the chamber is an erotic pinax depicting a seated couple wearing garlands. The man embraces the woman as she inclines her head upward to kiss him (Fig. 10). In the register beneath this pinax, moreover, is a representation of Selene, whose presence as an aid to lovers will be discussed further below (Fig. 11). The three paintings on the left side of the wall portray images that will play important roles in cc. 2-11: erotic scenes of couples kissing, Eros with a bird and the personification of the moon as companion to lovers involved in furtivi amores.

133 Museo Nazionale Romano inv. 1188, illustrated in Bragantini and de Vos 1982, pl. 86.
134 Museo Nazionale Romano inv. 1128, illustrated in Bragantini and de Vos 1982, pl. 40. Almost exactly the same scene is depicted in a mosaic (Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, inv. AS II 9) from the Villa at Centocelle (20 BC – 20 AD) in Rome (Fig. 8). Here a man with a bare chest sits on a bed, facing a clothed woman who reclines with her back toward the viewer. The two lock eyes while a female attendant to the right quite obviously stares at the couple, her hand on the bed. Another female attendant on the left pours from an amphora into a vessel perched on an odd stand in the shape of a leg. The mosaicist has added a statue of a goddess in the upper left hand corner of the mosaic. It seems clear that both painter and mosaicist used a common model for their respective pieces (Clarke 1998, 97). Note how the mosaicist has also made the attendant on the right lean in to peer at the seated couple.
135 Museo Nazionale Romano inv. 1174, illustrated in Bragantini and de Vos 1982, pl. 174; see also Grüner 2004, 214. (Fig. 6.)
136 Museo Nazionale Romano inv. 1174, illustrated in Bragantini and de Vos 1982, pl. 172. (Fig. 7.)
137 Museo Nazionale Romano inv. 1174, illustrated in Bragantini and de Vos 1982, pl. 170. (Fig. 8.)
Returning to the text, the very first impression the reader of the *liber Catulli* receives of the poet is that he is a watcher: he is set apart from his unnamed mistress and is jealous—to the point of emotional, and potentially sexual, frustration—of the pet who has usurped his position as plaything. Poem 2 is written in such a way that it invites us to form a mental image of the scene: Catullus finds himself forced into the position of spectator of his lover, and subsequently writes poetry that places the reader also in position of a spectator of his love. Moreover, variations on the opening scene of the poetic book are known from Roman wall-paintings slightly postdating Catullus' time. Like a viewer of one of those paintings, Catullus stands and watches as his mistress entertains herself with her pet, without even the hint that she sees him or that his gaze is mutual. Our first impression of Catullus is just that, an impression, a *phantasia*, reinforced by detailed visual language and clear parallels in contemporary visual art.

The following poem, c. 3, repeats and emphasizes the visuality of c. 2 in a humorously pointed manner. The poem begins as a "mock" dirge for the sparrow we have just met in the previous poem, using a common formula for hymns and dirges, and seems to be almost entirely non-visual, with the exception of a brief description of the bird's activities in life at vv. 8-10. It is not until the final two lines of the poem that we step out of the dirge and realize that the dramatic situation of the poem is Catullus' observation of Lesbia's swollen, red eyes, emphasized by the doubly applied diminutive *turgiduli ocelli* (v. 18). Not only is the sudden realization of the true dramatic situation designed to be shocking, but also the unexpected shift of focus from the deceased pet to Lesbia. The new focus on Lesbia is the first in a series of "surprise endings" that we will examine in this chapter (cc. 3, 37, 45, 67, and, to an extent, 11). Although the technique is one common in epigram, Catullus' use of it in non-epigrammatic poems warrants examination. The uses focused on here place a strong emphasis on visual information or

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138 See above nn. 131-137.
visualization. The last impression a reader takes from c. 3 is of Lesbia's eyes and the unexpected and climactic shift from the subject of the dirge to the mourning *puella*. In the preceding poem we were moved to form a mental image of Lesbia playing with her sparrow from the perspective of Catullus. In c. 3 we again end with a view of Lesbia—this time specifically her eyes—from Catullus' perspective, and this time reinforced by its surprise appearance and its final position in the poem.\(^{139}\) The ending of c. 3 drastically changes our understanding of the dramatic situation, shifting it from simple mock dirge for a pet to Catullus watching (or visualizing) Lesbia as she grieves for that pet.

2.2.2 (c. 51)

From looking at the opening poems of the *Passer* we look to its end, poem 51. This poem has generated a copious amount of scholarship because it provides a rare glimpse at the "translation" of a Greek poem into Latin. The homage to Sappho is programmatic for Catullus: the very pseudonym chosen for his mistress alludes to Sappho, and he refers to Lesbia elsewhere as his *Sapphica puella* (35.16). Poem 51 is as much reflective of Sappho, however, as it is of Catullus, and I will show how Catullus manipulates Sappho's treatment of the scene to reflect his own feelings and, in particular, his view of Lesbia.

As a prefatory note, I do not agree with the view, exemplified by Wilkinson, that c. 51 is the first poem Catullus sent to Clodia, a free translation of Sappho, intended as a "feeler".\(^{140}\) I think this reading is too literal an understanding of the poem as well as the poetic book as a whole; this is not to deny a biographical, "real", event in the relationship that lies at the heart of

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\(^{139}\) Lesbia's eyes are mentioned earlier in the poem in v. 5, although the use there is like the common formula of swearing by one's eyes (cf. Pl. *Mil.* 984, Ter. *Ad.* 903, Catul. 14.1, Ov. *Am.* 3.3.14). Although this use is not particularly marked, and quite appropriate for a dirge, it is nevertheless notable that Catullus makes reference to Lesbia's eyes twice in a short poem.

\(^{140}\) Wilkinson in the discussion section of Bayet 1956, 47.
the poem, but such a reading is out of step with the context of the poetic book. As I discuss at length in the examination of c. 11, below, the *Passer* is an overview, a series of views, of Catullus' affair with Lesbia (and his life in general). Poem 11, the end of the "Lesbia Cycle", is a retrospective, while poem 51, the end of the *Passer*, is prospective, giving the reader the first tentative views of Lesbia through Catullus' eyes, and a view of Catullus himself as he watches Lesbia.

*Ille mi par esse deo videtur,*
*ille, si fas est, superare divos,*
*qui sedens adversus identidem te spectat et audit*  
*dulce ridentem, misero quod omnis eripit sensus mihi: nam simul te,*  
*Lesbia, aspexi, nihil est super mi  
******lingua sed torpet, tenuis sub artus*  
*flamma demanat, sonitu suopte tintinant aures, gemina teguntur lumina nocte.*  
*Otium, Catulle, tibi molestum est:*  
*otio exsultas nimiumque gestis:*  
*otium et reges prius et beatas perdidit urbes.*

That man seems to me to be a god's equal, he—if it can be said—surpasses the gods, he the one who, sitting opposite you, again and again gazes at you and listens to you sweetly laughing. Such a thing just rips away all my senses—wretch that I am. Because since first I looked at you, Lesbia, there is nothing left of my…. instead my tongue is sluggish, a subtle flame runs down through my limbs, my ears ring, the lights of my eyes are covered by a twin darkness. Over much leisure is a bane to you, Catullus: you revel in your leisure and are overly eager: leisure has ere now ruined both kings and wealthy cities.
Poem 51 is, in my opinion, the final poem of the *Passer*, despite the presence of several more poems before the start of the long poems. If we set aside the dedicatory poem to Cornelius Nepos we find the *Passer* neatly framed by poems 2 and 51, which share a marked similarity in theme. In both poems Catullus finds himself on the outside looking in as Lesbia enjoys the company of someone else. In poem 2 Catullus has been supplanted by Lesbia's pet bird, but the scene we read is either being imagined by the poet or witnessed firsthand as she ignores him for her sparrow. In poem 51, however, we explicitly find Catullus looking (*aspexi*, v. 7) at Lesbia from the position of the outsider. Skinner sees c. 51 as the end of a sequence beginning with c. 45, a sequence which "recapitulate[s] a number of themes originally introduced in the opening section of the *libellus*" by using both parallels and antitheses from earlier passages. As noted above, c. 51 recalls Catullus positioned apart from Lesbia. The distantly "objective" treatment of love in c. 45, which begins this closing sequence, however, is far different from the personal and intense involvement seen in the Lesbia poems. The position of a Juventius poem between the travel or official business poems cc. 47 and 49 creates a dichotomy of Catullus' private world surrounded by the public world he operates in, recalling cc. 5-7. This very same dichotomy reappears in the final lines of c. 51 where the world of *otium* that Catullus desires to supplant his elite *negotium* turns out to be a world that will only cause him consternation. Naturally, this requires that the vexing final stanza of c. 51 be an integral part of the poem and not part of another, now lost, poem that has become attached to the end of c. 51. The assumption of detachment from and the loss of another poem is argued against by the simple fact that c. 51 is

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141 Several commentators have posited a posthumous supplement to this original book of polymetric poems. Such a theory explains odd and fragmentary poems between the end of the *Passer* and the beginning of the long poems as studies or incomplete poems in Catullus' papers. Poems 52 and 56, topical jokes, were perhaps circulated among friends but not published; cc. 55 recapitulates themes from cc. 6, 7, and 45 and has become disconnected from 58, 58b, etc. Skinner 1981, 77-88 discusses this closing sequence of the *Passer* at length. See also Kroll 1924, 225-246, and Segal 1968b, 307 n. 1, where he suggests c. 51 is an epilogue to the book.

142 Skinner 1981, 76.
integrally linked, thematically, verbally, and metrically, to c. 11. Although the stanza on *otium*
seems difficult to understand, these difficulties of interpretation are far less serious than the
difficulty of assuming a third, lost poem in Sapphic meter.\(^{143}\)

Poem 51, though often termed a simple "translation" of Sappho, modifies its Greek
predecessor in several respects worth mentioning.\(^{144}\) In the opening lines Catullus provides a
greater degree of specificity by substituting *par…deo* for the generalizing plural ἰς θεωσιν.\(^{145}\)
The Sapphic phrase ἀδιν ψωνείσας ὑπακούει καὶ γελαίσας ἰμέρονον (vv. 3-5) is modified to
place emphasis on the personal object *te* (i.e. Lesbia) as opposed to the Sapphic phrasing, which
elides the viewed object in lieu of a focus on the object's characteristics (talking and laughing).
In a further change of emphasis, Catullus shifts the poem's focus more toward the unnamed man
by the twofold repetition of *ille*. The demonstrative is used here in its fully deictic sense,
lending vividness and specificity to the referent: he may not have a name, but he is being pointed
out to the reader. Further, the use of repetition, *dilogia*, increases the *enargeia*, vividness, of the
statement, according to Demetrius.\(^{146}\) The description of attendant circumstance—Lesbia's
sweet laughing, his sitting opposite her, watching and listening—also increases *enargeia*.\(^{147}\) The
combination of *dilogia* and *enargeia* derived from the increased specificity of the Catullan

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\(^{143}\) It is also worth noting that one of the few times Catullus actually finds pleasure in his desired world of *otium* is in
the poem immediately preceding, c. 50. Equally noteworthy is that this rare positive assessment of *otium* comes in
the context of Catullus and Calvus' *ludus poeticus*. When Catullus does find pleasure in his leisure, it is while
writing poetry. Even this judgment is not entirely positive, however, since the second part of the poem (after the
game has concluded) leaves Catullus suffering from separation pains. Poem 50 also lends itself to the theme of this
dissertation: phrased as a verse epistle to Calvus, the reader is placed again in the position of the third party
eavesdropper, who is neither Calvus nor Catullus. The scene, though a discussion of an afternoon of poetry writing,
has clearly erotic overtones, and we get the impression that the activity of poetry writing is likened to a shared erotic
experience between the two men. The experience is both private and pseudo-erotic, and, though the reader is an
uninvited participant, he becomes a *particeps* in the experience through the poem. See Fitzgerald 1995, pp. 36-37
and especially 112. Compare the sentiment in the final line of c. 55, discussed below.

\(^{144}\) The two poems, c. 51 and Sappho fr. 31 have been extensively compared. See especially Wormell 1966, Wills


\(^{146}\) *Eloc.* 211-12; emotional impact can also result from *enargeia* (214).

\(^{147}\) *Eloc.* 217.
version over the Sapphic model makes the picture of the scene more vivid and increases its emotional content. It allows us a glimpse at Lesbia through Catullus' eyes and the emotional turmoil she can cause in him.

While the demonstrative is paralleled in the Greek, the addition of *identidem* lends a certain deliberate quality to the Catullan version: not only is he enjoying her company instead of Catullus, but he is entirely monopolizing that company. The use of such a deliberately prosaic word in a context of high emotion (as in c. 11) is striking, and should cause the reader to pause and reconsider the stanza. Catullus' *ille* is not only the person who is forcing Catullus into the position of outside, third-party observation of Lesbia, but he is also a foil to Catullus' emotional turmoil at the very sight of Lesbia. Although it is granted that Catullus is here a desiring male viewer, he is also very much a jealous and frightened viewer. The repetition of *ille* and its emphatic positioning in the first two lines changes the emphasis from the Sapphic original, laying the stress not on the desired woman, but the presence of another man. The inclusion of the second verse, which has no analogue in Sappho fr. 31 again focuses attentions on "that man", rather than on Lesbia; this time he does not just equal the gods, but surpasses them, much to Catullus' chagrin. Indeed, the use of *superare* necessarily introduces rivalry into the poem, where Sappho had included none, emphasizing instead *her* perceptions and erotic experience.148

The fact that he falls to pieces, entirely loses his faculties (*omnis / eripit sensus mihi*), while *ille* is able to sit unmoved opposite Lesbia, watching her and listening to her, is shocking in light of Catullus' normal assertiveness. Elsewhere he has no problem shouting down his enemies, and is certainly not at a loss for words in expressing his love for Lesbia in c. 5, or commanding his friends to divulge their dalliances so that he can write poetry about them. There seems to be no malice directed toward *ille*, but rather a feeling that he is awesome in the full sense of the word.

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148 Greene 1999b, 4.
He is like a god in his ability to withstand the melting, sense-depriving effects of Lesbia's presence (vv. 6-12) that beset Catullus when he looks at her, but is also unconquerable, unmovable, and able to entirely hold Lesbia's attention (emphasized by *identidem*). The man is like the tiny sparrow of c. 2 who can monopolize Lesbia's attention, forcing Catullus to become simply an observer. The addition of jealousy of the visual fortitude of *ille* warrants particular attention: Catullus is compared unfavorably to another man who is able to maintain his wits while interacting with Lesbia. While Catullus is elsewhere in control, his loss of control (underscored by his jealousy at the man who can maintain control) at the sight of Lesbia again highlights the importance of vision in Catullus' own erotic experience. Indeed, already have been relegated to observation alone, the loss of vision has an even greater impact on Catullus.

Also important for our purposes is what Catullus has added to his "translation"—the verb *spectat*. Not only is the man listening to Lesbia's laugh, but he is actively watching her while doing so. Catullus, on the other hand, when he shifts the focus entirely to Lesbia, uses the verb *aspexi* "catch sight of" rather than the simple *spectare* "to gaze at" used of the other man's watching. While derived from separate but related words, Catullus' looking employs the prefix *ad-*,-, lending both a flavor of intensity and directionality to his looking. Moreover, *aspicere* is sometimes used of viewing someone or something as present via the mind's eye. Catullus is noting that his viewing of Lesbia is not simply a sensory activity, but a mental one as well; he has totally apprehended her, with his eyes as well as his mind. This total mental apprehension is what seizes his faculties, not simply the mere sight of her.

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149 The play on the man's godlike power and Catullus' own blindness in Lesbia's presence (*gemina teguntur / lumina nocte*) is like various mythological stories of mortals being struck blind or smitten at the sight of a god. In particular, see the story of Teiresias in Callimachus *Hymn* 5. For a poet so visually attuned as Catullus, being blinded by the object of his desire must be particularly frightening. Unlike so many of the gazes in Hellenistic erotic epigram, Catullus' gaze has become a conduit for fear as much as for *eros*.

150 S.v. *aspicere* 4a and 8 in the *OLD*. 
Poem 51, the closing poem of Catullus' book of polymetric poems, is in some ways a companion piece to c. 11, a connection we will explore later, and in other ways a companion piece to the collection's opening poem, c. 2. In light of this latter poem, we find that Catullus begins and ends the collection with poems that separate him from his beloved Lesbia and place him in the role of a spectator jealously watching her company being monopolized by another man or, humorously, by a tiny sparrow. Both poems record Catullus' feelings as he watches the scene: he wishes the sparrow could give him the same relief it gives Lesbia, and he stands in awe of the man who can calmly engage Lesbia in conversation, while he falls to pieces at the mere sight of her. In both cases the eyes are a conduit for jealousy and fear—of exclusion and loss of senses—as well as for the more typical flame of love (2.9, 51.9-10). The first and last view of Catullus presented to the reader of the *Passer* is one of excluded watcher; the theme of erotic overseeing quite literally surrounds Catullus' book of poetry. The first instance compels the reader to be aware of the theme, while the last reminds the reader of its importance to Catullus' conception of love and its expression through poetry.

### 2.3 An external view of a happy couple? (c. 45)

Departing from the previously surveyed poems in which Catullus was personally involved, and turn to a poem that sticks out like a sore thumb in the course of *Passer*. Poem 45, which provides a rare view of love analyzed from a non-subjective position. Whereas cc. 2, 3, and 51 all provide views of Lesbia from Catullus' own perspective, c. 45 is not even written to include as narrator the Catullus persona, but, as I think, rather the poet Catullus. This poem affords a glimpse of how Catullus, in this case truly an outsider, might view the romance of another.

*Acmen Septimius suos amores*
tenens in gremio 'mea' inquit 'Acme, ni te perdite amo atque amare porro omnes sum assidue paratus annos, quantum qui pote plurimum perire, solus in Libya Indiague tosta caesio veniam obvius leoni.'
Hoc ut dixit, Amor sinistra ut ante dextra sternuit approbationem.
At Acme leviter caput reflectens et dulcis pueri ebrios ocellos illo purpureo ore suaviata, 'sic' inquit 'mea vita Septimile, huic uni domino usque serviamus, ut multo mihi maior acriorque ignis molibus ardet in medullis.'
Hoc ut dixit, Amor sinistra ut ante dextra sternuit approbationem.
Nunc ab auspicio bono profecti mutuis animis amant amantur.
Unam Septimius misellus Acmen mavult quam Syrias Britanniasque: uno in Septimio fidelis Acme facit delicias libidinesque.
Quis ullos homines beatiores vidi, quis Venerem auspiciatorem?

Septimius, holding his love Acme in his lap said, "My dear Acme, if I do not love you desperately and am not prepared in the future to love you all my years as much and as distractedly as the most distracted of lovers may I encounter in Libya or sunburned India a green-eyed lion alone."
When he said this, Love sneezed his approval on the left as before on the right.
And Acme, gently turning her head toward him, kissed her sweet lover's drunken eyes with those rosy lips of hers and said, "So, my life, my little Septimius, may we completely serve this one master, as the fire burns in my soft marrow more greatly and fiercely for me than for you."
When she said this, Love sneezed his approval on the left as before on the right.
Now, having set forth from this good omen, with one heart do they love and are loved.
Poor little Septimius prefers Acme to entire Syrias and Britains; in Septimius alone faithful Acme takes her fill of love and pleasure.
Who has ever seen people more blessed? Who has ever seen a more fortunate love?
The poem is structured as a romantic vignette of twenty-four lines narrated by a distant and unknown narrator before closing with a sudden narratorial intrusion at vv. 25-26 that asks the reader about the scene they have unwittingly been watching. Catullus plays with tropes of love poetry, creating a love poem to excess. Septimius' active and masculine declaration revolves around unfathomable expanses of time (*porro, assidue, omnes annos*) and space (*Libya Indiaque*). Acme's love serves as a foil for Septimius': she turns her love inward (*in medullis*) and associates it with life (*mea vita*), whereas he had associated it with death (*perdite, perire, caesio leoni*); she speaks in specifics (*huic uni*) as opposed to his generalizations. The drunken eyes, rosy lips and diminutives are all the stuff of love poetry. There is no outward sign that the couple is anything but happy, and this simple fact has proved a great bother to scholars attempting to put their finger on the intangible "irony" of the poem, used as they are, to Catullus' less saccharine treatments of love elsewhere in the collection.

To strengthen the sense that c. 45 is providing the reader with an image of a truly happy couple, I think Catullus hearkens to the tradition of Hellenistic visual art. Edmunds has linked the erotic vignette of Mars and Venus at *De Rerum Natura* 1.29-40 to a pictorial tradition of a male lover languishing in the lap of his lady which stretches from the Hellenistic period. He notes that the position of Mars in Venus' lap described by Lucretius is an erotic schema

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151 Compare Catullus' own loss of numerical and spatial restraint in cc. 5, 7 and 11.
153 The schema of Acme in Septimius' lap is obviously different than the pictorial and poetic schema of the male lover in the woman's lap presented in Lucretius, but the tone of all versions, Catullus, Lucretius, and the pictorial are similar. Scenes of Venus in Mars' lap are well attested from Pompeian wall painting and other finds (see especially *LIMC* entries 376-384). Of particular note is a silver cup from the House of Menander, dated to the mid-1st c. BC (see Painter 1997, pll. 5-6). On one side of the cup, Mars reclines facing Venus, who is nude from the waist up. A winged Eros stands to their right (Fig. 12). On the other side of the cup, Mars reclines with his right arm held over his head while Venus sits on the bed disrobing; a winged Eros sits to their left, his head twisted back toward the couple (Fig. 13). This cup, dated to a period roughly contemporaneous with Catullus’ life, depicts two scenes of Mars and Venus, flanked, one on the left and one on the right, by Erotes. Multiple Pompeian paintings from the Neronian and Vespasianic period reiterate the schema of Venus reclining in Mars' lap while two or more Erotes flank the couple. See in particular paintings from the *tablinum* in the House of Meleager (Naples National Museum 9256; Fig. 14) and from the *tablinum* in the House of Mars and Venus (Naples National Museum 9248).
unparalleled in Latin literature aside from Propertius 3.4.15 and *Aeneid* 8.387-406 (itself an allusion to Lucretius). Edwards holds that the image used by Lucretius was one common in Hellenistic painting, recognizable to the reader, and was perhaps even a painting owned by Memmius, the poem's dedicatee. In addition to the simple physical arrangement of the characters, Lucretius' language is designed to recall the visual image. While I do not think Catullus refers to a specific work of art, he does hint at an iconographic schema probably known to his readers, perhaps from several different artistic media. Further linking the two passages is Lucretius’ call at v. 28 for Venus to give his verses *aeternum leporem*. *Lepor* is of course a Catullan buzzword, but also used rather specifically in c. 16 to suggest a sort of sauciness capable of exciting a sexual itch in the reader. Both poets refer to their poetry's ability to excite feelings in readers who are potentially indifferent. Catullus’ phrasing of the final lines, "who has ever seen a luckier couple", returns us forcefully to the mental image conjured up in the initial description of Acme languishing in Septimius' arms, and to the weight of the visual and literary tradition surrounding this image of Mars and Venus. In this way the poem begins and ends on a note of the visual as regards the Hellenistic romantic tradition, and the whole poem calls to mind a series of visual representations known from a period roughly contemporaneous to Catullus through the later 1st c. AD. By linking the description of the couple to the tradition of Hellenistic (and Roman) painting, and in particular images of the divine couple of Mars and Venus, Catullus further suggests that Septimius and Acme may actually have a love like one of Olympus' happier (if adulterous) couples.

Moreover, the structure of the poem is like that of an amoebaean song contest, with both lovers swearing their oaths in responding seven-line stanzas. Both lovers are equal in their oath-

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taking, and even Amor, who responds to each of the oaths in turn, gives equal approbation to each lover through his sneezes. Rather than victory, we see mutuality. Taken at face value, the poem provides nothing more than a romantic vignette of lovers' oaths in a mutual and reciprocal exchange, each one approved by Love himself.

But do we understand the couple to be truly happy? What of the "irony" that is claimed by scholars, but never satisfactorily identified? I argue that we may understand this poem as if Catullus were contemplating a painting of an idealized love scene which has been given voice. Its oddity in the collection, as well as the intangible irony lends a tone of surreality to the poem. By extension, and by listening in earnest to the questioning which ends the poem, we can glean from c. 45 what Catullus' real love with Lesbia is not. In his interpretation of c. 45 Khan makes a statement pertinent to the topic at hand, if perhaps unintentionally:

"Catullus is not a romancier recording the love life of the pair. He merely wishes to sketch an amusing picture of an exchange of oaths between lovers. He turns our attention away from any extra-poetic distractions,—such as their identities,—to the poem itself. This is the window through which the view is to be had;...it is high time we paid attention to the view itself."157

Although Khan is certainly correct in our need to leave biographical considerations aside for the course of this poem, Catullus is doing more in c. 45 than painting an amusing sketch of two lovers. The phrasing with which Khan describes the need to look deeper into the poem itself is of note: "the window through which the view is to be had." Whether intending to do so or not, he has hit upon an important fact: Catullus quite literally uses this poem as a window onto the imagined—pictorial—scene of the two lovers' oaths, and draws attention to this fact in the final two lines of the poem. We should take Khan up on his advice and look through the window of poem 45.

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156 Giving voice to a piece of visual art is a technique used to great effect in c. 64. See here Laird 1993.
157 Khan 1968, 6 (emphasis original).
Although the larger structure of the poem resembles an amoebaean song, thus recalling, among others, the pastoral of Theocritus, the most direct extant model for the exchange of lovers' oaths is Callimachus *AP* 5.6 (= 11 *HE* = 25 Pf.). The Callimachean model, however, is a false swearing of oaths, which serves to increase the perceived irony of c. 45. If the poem that may have been Catullus' chief model concerns false oaths, how are we to understand the oaths sworn by Septimius and Acme? Catullus underscores this question by his hearkening to the amoebaean contests of pastoral, which present themselves to be judged. Singleton writes, "Since it is a contest, amoebaean verse may permit the presence of an umpire; this too we have in poem xlv. It is, of course, Amor…." While the poem is not, *pace* Singleton, a true amoebaean contest, he is correct in asserting that the poem presents an *internal* judge, Amor, who gives judgment—whether positive or negative—with his sneezes. But this overlooks the *external* judge of the contest, the reader, singled out by the questions in the final two lines of the poem. The reader, who has been watching the whole scene (*vidit*, v. 26), is called not only to judge the two declarations, but also to decide whether or not Amor himself has approved of these speeches, making their love *auspicatior*. The scholarly gnashing of teeth over Amor's sneezes and whether they signify good or bad auspices misses the point: Amor is not the final judge of whether the couple's love is blessed, the reader is, and is explicitly placed in this role by the narrator's questioning at the end of the poem. We are allowed final judgment over both the oaths and Love’s sneezes, and our external judgment is brought into focus in the final lines of the poem. In these lines Catullus openly raises the question that has underpinned the poems discussed above:

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158 See also Callimachus *AP* 12.134 (= 13 *HE* = 43 Pf.), which openly asks the reader-interlocutor if he sees the telltale signs of lovesickness on a partygoer (*εἰδές*). We will examine this epigram in the context of c. 6. See Theocritus *Id.* 5 and 6 for examples of amoebaean song.

159 This theme is forcefully reiterated in cc. 70 and 72, where Catullus reflects on Lesbia’s false oath. When we read this poem, knowing that Lesbia has elsewhere sworn falsely, just like Callignotus in Callimachus’ poem, we might revise our judgment of the happiness of Septimius and Acme, if we have understood the sneeze-omens as good.

160 Singleton 1971, 185.
how do we look at the love of others? The absence of the clearly defined Catullus persona, which otherwise dominates the collection, and the incongruous, seemingly objective treatment of love hints at a statement by Catullus the poet. We read for twenty-four lines before suddenly being confronted by the narrator, at which point we understand that the narrator himself is in the position of a viewer, observing the couple. The poignant question that closes the poem reminds us that we have been watching the scene along with him. The position of the question at the end of the poem deliberately leaves the reader to reflect on the connection in love poetry between narrator and reader, saying and seeing.

The closing question reflects not only on words' ability to conjure images, but also on poetry's connection to visual art. In the context of the liber Catulli, the reader might assume Catullus is attempting to contrast the saccharine vignette of Acme and Septimius with the more stark reality of his own love affair, conducted on and off in the pages of the poems read up until this point, using a common reference point from the sphere of visual art to strengthen his case. Unlike Lucretius' Mars and Venus, and the many other divine or heroic couples depicted in the manner of Septimius and Acme, these two are neither gods nor heroes, but mortals whose love is necessarily less blessed than that of immortals. When contrasted with the love of Catullus, it seems to remind us that, while idyllic landscapes and tales of amorous happiness can be found in visual art, they are unreal.

At this point it is worthwhile to make a brief excursus into Catullus' potential connections to earlier Hellenistic erotic poets, in particular Meleager and Catullus' rough contemporary, Philodemus. Although precise dating is impossible, it is not implausible that Philodemus was a slightly older contemporary to Catullus, with whose work Catullus may have been familiar.\textsuperscript{161} Although Catullus was surely acquainted with the work of his various Hellenistic predecessors,\textsuperscript{161}

\textsuperscript{161} Sider 1997, 24.
he stands between sets of amatory conventions, neither entirely in the Greek tradition nor in the
full-fledged Latin elegiac tradition. Catullus also sits apart from the world of archaic elegy
where the poet-lover positions himself as a didaskalos, knowing that his poetry is invested with a
power either erotic or iambic.¹⁶² Unlike his Latin successors, however, Catullus bears no trace of
the artificial poet-lover whose existence is probably more a poetic trope than an actual lifestyle
lived by the poet. Catullus lies between the "pathetic lover" of Meleager (as e.g. cc. 2, 8, 11, 51)
and the Philodemean lover who knows how to strike back when wronged (e.g. cc. 11, 37, 42,
58).¹⁶³ To relate all this to c. 45: the vignette of a quaint amorous scene, familiar from visual art,
is permeated by an intangible irony, and is punctuated at its end by a narratorial intervention with
a pointed questioning of whether or not the couple is actually as happy as they seem. But are we
to understand this questioning as earnest or rhetorical? This ambiguity is part of the crux of the
poem: as we read the poem, which is itself like a painting, the poet asks us our conclusion of
what we have just "seen". Do we understand the love of Septimius and Acme to be like that of
any of a number of paintings of Mars and Venus, a true picture of idyllic happiness? Or do we
understand c. 45 within the context of the Passer, and therefore seriously question if the couple
can truly be happy, or whether their oaths are even true?

By posing the question in such ambiguous terms, we see Catullus attempting to place
himself within the tradition of amatory poetry, or rather outside the tradition of amatory poetry,
inspecting it like a painting on a wall, asking himself if such a scene can ever truly come to pass.
The intervention of the narrator also leads the reader to question Catullus' own stance as a love
poet. By placing this idyllic and distinctly Hellenistic picture of love at an important position at
the end of the Passer where it stands out as decidedly incongruous with any other treatment of

¹⁶² Morelli 2003, 188.
¹⁶³ Compare also the threatening sentiment of c. 42 to Philodemus AP 5.107 (= 5 GP = 23 Sider with notes ad loc.).
love in the book, Catullus shows exactly what his love is not.\textsuperscript{164} The poem plays on conventions and images from the tradition and reinforces its difference by the concluding statement which forces the reader to question what they have just seen.

Catullan scholarship has already come to the conclusion that poem 45 is one of the poet's more complex poems, and here I have added a new interpretation. Catullus the poet sets a scene of two lovers before the reader's mental gaze and calls attention to that fact. Not only is the reader left to contemplate the relationship between saying and seeing, but he is also confronted with the probable recognition that the scene before him recalls tropes from both Hellenistic poetry and visual arts. By asking the reader to confront the imagined scene as if were a painting on a wall, the narrator places the reader in the role of distant observer, like the stars of c. 7. In this instance, the reader for once observes not the love of Catullus, but love in a more general sense. By removing the subjective Catullus from the poem, the reader is less inclined to observe with a preconceived \textit{invidia} born out of his poetic treatment of his relationship with Lesbia. Septimius and Acme are not to be seen as stand-ins for Catullus and Lesbia, but a couple depicted in a stereotypical love affair, and the reader is asked to judge objectively whether theirs is actually a \textit{Venus auspiciator}.

Nevertheless, the weight of the Hellenistic tradition stands largely opposed to Catullus' own treatment of love; though his technique can be decidedly Alexandrian, the kind of love he espouses is entirely different and unique. Because the poem is unlike anything else in the collection, the reader should be wary that something is afoot—an underlying fact which I think contributes to the inability of modern scholarship to pin down the "irony" of the poem: the reader knows something is different, but what exactly that is is artfully hidden. Catullus leaves all of

\textsuperscript{164} Skinner (1981, 76-7) holds that cc. 45-51 form the closing sequence of the original book, \textit{Passer}, and as such, both poems have an important place in the overall structure of the poetic book.
these questions for the reader to ponder with the closing injunction to consider what has just been seen. By extension we must then consider the difficulty of interpreting what is seen, namely the happiness of a relationship viewed from the outside looking in.

2.4 Catullus privatus vs. Catullus curiosus (cc. 5/7, 6/55)

In this section I examine a set of poems in which Catullus attempts to shield his love from the view of the outside world and another in which he eagerly pries into the love affairs of his friends, primarily to turn them into poetic material for publication. What does Catullus accomplish by simultaneously warding off curiositas and being himself a curiosus? How does Catullus distinguish his love for Lesbia, unique as he felt it was, from more typical Greco-Roman conceptions of love? How does Catullus use speech—in particular poetry—to open up the possibility of seeing?

2.4.1 (cc. 5 and 7)

To preface the discussion I argue that cc. 5-7 should be read as a triptych whose arrangement carries additional meaning: two kiss poems concerned with obfuscating accurate knowledge surround a poem of Catullus ferreting out details of his friend's current liaison. In cc. 5 and 7, Catullus jealously guards his relationship against invidia; the Catullus who watches Lesbia from an outsider’s perspective in cc. 2 and 3 wants to ensure no indiscriminate outsider shares his insider’s view of love. Poems 6 and 55, however, show Catullus eager to catch a view into someone else's relationship for his own satisfaction both as voyeuristic friend and curious poet. Undercurrents of speech, especially poetic speech, and its connection to seeing pervade poems 5-7.
That cc. 5 and 7 are companion poems is clear from their shared theme and language. The same cannot be said for poem 6, which stands out between the two clearly related poems. This is precisely the point, however, of which we should take special note: c. 6 is highlighted because of its inconcinnity with the two poems that surround it. It is, as Wray writes, "arguably the single most striking and aesthetically jarring instance of juxtaposition in the entire collection." Poems 5 and 7 share not only theme and language, but also the threats posed by the outside world; in c. 6, from Flavius' perspective, the same can be said of the threat posed by Catullus' poetic invasion of his love affair. The three poems, read in order, express a coherent theme of visual penetration and its verbal ramifications. Poem 5 contains a visual threat (*invidere* v. 12) and hints at an oral threat (*rumores*, v. 2), and poem 7 a clear oral threat (*mala fascinare lingua* v. 12). Poem 6 enacts exactly what cc. 5 and 7 ward off: Catullus probes his friend's relationship, noting the visual signs of his dissipation, and proceeds to disseminate that information verbally. In the triptych of cc. 5-7 we find a *Catullus curiosus* framed by a *Catullus privatus*.

Let us examine poems 5 and 7 as a unit before turning to poem 6, which we will analyze along with a poem of similar theme, c. 55.

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Vivamus, mea Lesbia, atque amemus,
rumoresque senum severiorum
omnes unius aestimemus assis!
Soles occidere et redire possunt;
nobis cum semel occidit brevis lux,
nox est perpetua et una dormienda.
Da mi basia mille, deinde centum,
dein mille altera, dein secunda centum,
Deinde usque altera mille, deinde centum.
Dein, cum millia multa fecerimus,
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165 Wray 2001, 152.
166 Both threats perhaps constitute the same type of harmful "magic", as *invidere* is what a *malus* would do if he obtained precise information about the couple's kissing (Dickie 1993, 15-16).
167 Whether or not Catullus is "serious" in his reproach of Flavius and his déclassé girlfriend (i.e. it could be considered *mala fascinare lingua*) is the subject of some—ultimately fruitless—speculation. See, e.g., Morgan 1977, and Nielsen 1984.
conturbabimus illa, ne sciamus,
aut ne quis malus invidere possit,
cum tantum sciat esse basiorum.

Let us live, my dear Lesbia, and let us love,
and value all the murmuring of overly
grouchy old men at a single penny!
Suns can set and rise again;
but when once the short daylight has set for us,
night is unending and to be slept once and for all.
Give me a thousand kisses, then a hundred,
then another thousand, then a second hundred,
then another thousand, then a hundred,
Then, when we've made many thousands of kisses,
we'll throw them all into confusion, so that even we
do not know, and so that some troublemaker cannot
give us the evil eye when he's figured out
the number of our kisses.

Poem 5, while perhaps not as refined in technique as Poem 7, introduces several important
concepts around which the triptych revolves. Note that in c. 5 the first threat encountered by the
couple is an oral threat, *rumores*, deriving from one of the typical antagonist characters of
Roman comedy, the old man.\(^{168}\) Despite the early aversion to the mutterings of old men,
Catullus does not see the threat posed by them as as great as that posed by the *malus* of v. 12.
After ruminating on mortality and a literal profusion of kisses, the poem closes with another
threat to the couple's happiness: *ne quis malus invidere possit* (v. 12). Here I think we must
understand a double significance in the verb *invidere*: its common meaning of envy, and, more
importantly, its meaning with respect to its derivation from *videre*, to see. Grimm notes the
couple's need for visual control over their number of kisses and Catullus' clear emphasis of this

\(^{168}\) While the *senes* of New Comedy may be opposed to the youthful protagonist, there is no evidence that connects
old age itself to malicious inquisitiveness. Aristotle says, however, that the old are wont to be jealous of the young
because the young aspire to possess what the old have (*Rh.* 1388a21-3); Catullus clearly does not think that the old
are possessed of the kind of love he espouses. See here, to an extent, Wray 2001.
point in the last two lines of the poem. He is correct in claiming that, for Catullus, mental
knowledge of the number (as reckoned for the reader in vv. 7-9) is innocuous so long as visual
evidence is not provided to the *malus*. The poem begins on a note of verbal threat and ends on
one of visual threat to the couple's happiness which is in turn set against the mental knowledge
provided to the reader.

Ironically, however, part of Catullus' defense against invidia is betrayed by the poem itself. By verbalizing the number of kisses, Catullus allows the reader an accurate count: 3300. Catullus and Lesbia will throw that number into confusion to avoid the *malus* seeing and envying (here the essentialness of *videre* to *invidere*), but for the reader, Catullus has already provided an accurate accounting of the number. Catullus can prevent visual examination of the number (by simply not providing any imagistic language), but he has admitted oral examination by writing the number into his poetry, thus also giving it the fixity of text. His poem offers visual protection against an internal viewing audience (the *malus*), but the poem itself allows specific knowledge by the external reading audience.

The theme of kiss-counting and the potentially intrusive vision of *curiosi* as well as the reader is reprised with variation in poem 7.

Quaeris, quot mihi basiationes
tuae, Lesbia, sint satis superque:
quam magnus numeros Libysae harenae
lasarpiciferis iacet Cyrenis
oraculum Iovis inter aestuosi
et Batti veteris sacrum sepulcrum;
aut quam sidera multa, cum tacet nox,
furtivos hominum vident amores:
tam te basia multa basiare
vesano satis et super Catullo est,

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169  Grimm 1963, 19. The failure of visual control that necessitates the *conturbabimus* is underscored by the transition from day to night at vv. 5-6. The loss of visual control is therefore equated with death, which may hint at an earlier sense of fatalism about the relationship than that seen in c. 7.

170 The kiss-counting of c. 5 is analogous to the enumeration of *futationes* in c. 32.8 and elsewhere in Philodemus (*AP* 11.30 = 27 *GP* = 19 *Sider*), Propertius (2.22.23) and Ovid (*Am*. 3.7.23-24), and kisses in Aselepiades (*AP* 5.181.11 = 25 *HE*).
You ask, Lesbia, how many of your kissifications are enough—and more than enough—for me: as many as the great quantity of Libyan sand that lies in silphium-bearing Cyrene between the sweltering oracle of Jove and the sacred tomb of ancient Battus; or as many as the myriad stars, who when night is quiet, observe the secret love affairs of mortals: to kiss you *that* many kisses is enough and more than enough for crazy Catullus, kisses which busybodies can neither count up nor curse with a nasty tongue.

Poem 7 begins as an imagined response by Catullus to a question of Lesbia's. Quinn's comment, cited above, about Catullan poetry providing the illusion of overhearing a private conversation is evident here: the reader begins the poem in the position of a third party, neither the *mihi* of the speaker nor the addressee *Lesbia*. The subject matter introduced in the opening line is not the stuff of public conversation, but a matter between lovers in private.

Although the reader is an implied third-person interloper, the poem provides an explicit witness, the silent night and the stars of vv. 7-8. The celestial witnesses stand in contrast to the *curiosi* of c. 5 and Catullus himself in c. 6; they observe the ill-concealed affairs of men without the threat of *invidia* presented by the human busybodies at the end of the poem. Though seemingly distant and impartial observers, the Hellenistic antecedents to the trope lead one to believe that Catullus sees the stars and the night as an ally, rather than a potential threat.\(^{171}\) In the Greek tradition non-human witnesses are either invited by the poet or are employed as

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\(^{171}\) Asclepiades (*AP* 5.164 = 13 *HE*) calls Night to witness his lover's infidelity. Meleager (*AP* 5.165 = 51 *HE*) does the same, specifically naming Night as κώμης σιώπησεν and bidding her extinguish his lover's lamp. Meleager (*AP* 5.166 = 52 *HE*) also complains to Night that he cannot sleep for fear that his lover has jilted him (though a lamp is still his helper, vv. 7-8). Philodemus calls on Selene to watch him in the embrace of Kallistion and specifically notes that there is no ill-will toward her if she watches (*AP* 5.123 = 9 *GP* = 14 *Sider*).
witnesses to infidelity, while other human witnesses are often specifically shut out (e.g. Asclepiades AP 5.164.1 = 13 HE and Philodemus AP 5.4.3-4 = 1 GP = 7 Sider).

The stars and night serve as an analogue to the reader-as-witness implied in the opening lines of the poem. Like the reader, they watch the affairs of men, which are supposed to remain secret, but unlike the reader they are presumably unable to pass judgment on either the *furtivos amores* they watch or on the poetry in which those affairs are recorded. Of the stars in c. 7 Segal writes,

"The stars not only see men's loves, but provide a commentary...on their futile efforts at concealment. So lucidly can the poet contemplate his own condition that for a moment he puts himself in the stars' place and looks on the agitations of human loves, his own among them, with the telescopic detachment of a heavenly body." 172

Catullus the poet is aware of the futility of concealing love affairs that have become the subject of love poetry. Once circulated to an audience, all the affairs of men become observable and judgable.173 Though the poem began with an overheard conversation in the first and second persons, it ends with third-person witnesses and judges: the stars and sky see the affair along with the audience who potentially sit in judgment of it (*curiosi...mala fascinare lingua*). At this point Catullus slides from the first person (*mihi*) to the third person (*vesano Catullo*). The witnesses mentioned only serve to highlight the distance from which our observation takes place.174 The heavens, the audience, and even Catullus himself observe the loves of men from a distance born of both the imagery used as well as the distancing effect of the shift from the first person to the third.

There is also a distinct difference between the *curiosi* of c. 5 and those of c. 7. The inability of the *curiosi* in c. 7 to quantify the kisses of the lovers is not caused, as it is in c. 5, by

172 Segal 1968a, 296.
173 Though the audience may be placed in the position of the stars "listening with bated breath to Catullus telling of his erotic life", they are not omniscient, knowing only what the poet decides to tell them, "representing the very impossibility of ever hearing the whole thing" (Fitzgerald 1995, 54-5).
174 As Commager notes, "The stars, the measure of the infinitude of Catullus' love, are at the same time remote" (1965, 85).
the action of the lovers (conturbabimus, v. 11), but because they are "unable to appreciate kisses associated with Callimachus and furtivus amor." The qualities of venustas, sal, and lepor are central to both Catullan poetics and to Catullus' choice of friends. Further, the essential fact that differentiates Lesbia from other women is her possession of these charms (e.g. c. 86). Lesbia is worthy of the full depth of Catullus' love because of these qualities, which overlap with the qualities of Catullus' poetry. Women who do not possess these qualities (e.g. Ipsitilla, Ameana, Quintia) do not warrant his respect, let alone his love. By extension, readers who do not understand these qualities cannot understand his poetry, and therefore the love he writes in his poetry. A lack of literary acumen prevents outsiders from fully grasping Catullus' love, expressed as it is in terms of prior poetic tradition and in this case, Callimachus. If the reader is savvy enough to understand Catullus' poetry, he knows the Hellenistic erotic tradition which stands behind it and the tropes used therein, and thus can see how Catullus has used them toward his own ends in his poetry. The reader who does not understand the complex allusions and intertextuality of the liber Catulli (in particular the Passer) will miss a layer of Catullus' love, which he is not only struggling to define for himself in his poems, but to express to those of his readers with enough sal, lepor and venustas to understand his program of love poetry. As I will show in the discussion of c. 67, poetry is the key to accessing visually and therefore understanding fully Catullus' love.

175 Arkins 1979, 635.
176 Similar interpretative misunderstanding underlies c. 16.
177 Esrock (1994, 193) notes that visualization helps make a fictional world concrete, and that readers who visualize generally spend more time with a literary text and then for the purposes of comprehension: "Similarly, when the reader is taking the time to visualize and is thus spending more time with the text, he or she is more likely to contemplate affectively intriguing and disturbing aspects of the text." A reader of Catullus who is willing to spend the time to understand the poem (note 67.17: nemo quaerit nec scire laborat) will more likely form mental images of that world, which Catullus expects, with his often imagistic language, and thus is allowed to see into Catullus' erotic world and come to a fuller understanding of it and the emotion Catullus shows therein.
Poem 7, in contrast to poem 5, is particularly visual and provides several opportunities for the reader to form mental images. Although c. 5 ends on two distinctly visual notes, the threat of *invidia* and Catullus’ ironic granting of accurate kiss-counting to the external reading audience but not to the internal viewing audience, it is not a very imagistic poem.\\footnote{Unless one follows Levy (1941, 222-24) in understanding the counting image to be that of an abacus, there is very little in the poem that would lead to mental image formation. Pack rejects the abacus image, but substitutes an image of complex finger counting. Interestingly, in rejecting Levy's conclusion, he asks, "How are we to visualize the scene?", and proceeds to mention a possible mental image of his own, Catullus alone in his study with an abacus (1956, 47-48). Scholarly exchanges such as these show readerly mental imaging at work, and demonstrate just how it can involve the reader in supplementing the text in an attempt to understand or interpret it.}

Poem 7, on the other hand, is a poem of specific details, but unknowable numbers: the uncountable sands are the deserts of Libya, and more specifically Cyrene (itself qualified as *lasarpiciferis*), a known and knowable place to an ancient reader. At an even greater level of detail, Catullus locates the sands to be counted between the temple of Zeus Ammon at Siwa, a famous landmark in the Greco-Roman world, and the tomb of Battus, a real place located in the center of Cyrene.\\footnote{Battus was worshipped as a hero at his tomb, before the palace in Cyrene, apart from the tombs of the other kings (so Pindar P. 5.94-98, and not v. 125 as claimed by Fordyce 1973 and Quinn 1996, *ad loc.*). Syndikus astutely notes the imagism of this passage, and that Catullus' aim is to form mental images, both for himself and for his reader: "…durch ihr Medium hatte er die Wüste, die er niemals gesehen hatte, vor dem inneren Auge, und er sprach zu Lesern, bei denen es ebenso war" (1984, 101). The motivation he attributes to Catullus for these mental images is a sort of homage to his poetic predecessor(s) via the language of poetry, rather than a desire to create a specific geographic image, however.}

The other uncountable number is the stars in the sky; uncountable, indeed, but an image known to all mankind. Even the *curiosi* that present the threat of oral cursing quite likely convey a visual overtone.\\footnote{The *TLL* (*s.v. curiosus de rebus*) lists a number of uses which specifically refer to the eyes as agents of *curiositas*. The number of uses attributed to the eyes as agents of *curiositas* is slightly higher than that attributed to the ears.} Whereas c. 5 provides specific numbers and few images, c. 7 offers specific images and uncountable numbers. The images provided in c. 7 are taken from the Hellenistic tradition which forms the background of Neoteric poetry. This poem, despite being intensely personal, offers itself to be judged from afar. Those who can judge it appropriately understand the tradition to which it belongs. The images we form provide the key to accessing a crucial aspect
of Catullus’ personality. If we see beyond what they are to where they come from and what they represent, we are possessed of sal and lepor, and are thus worthy of his confidence.

The two poems, when read as an opposing pair, may also reveal a certain negative curiositas already existing within the relationship itself, a Lesbia curiosa, as it were. If c. 5 allows the malus of v. 12 to be identified with the senes severiores of v. 2, we can see a comparable symmetry in c. 7: Lesbia and her apparently unfavorable question stand at the beginning of the poem, which closes with the curiosi of v. 11. If this equation is accepted, Lesbia is cast in the role of curiosa and is, by extension, mala. This, when coupled with the seemingly exasperated tone with which she asked "Quot basiationes?" and the self-critical tone of vesano Catullo, seems to draw a line between the couple in, whereas c. 5 drew a circle of protection around them. I would suggest that the alignment of Lesbia with the external world of someone who would ask how many kisses are enough, coupled with her implied connection to visual intrusion, foreshadows the end of the relationship and her eventual exclusion from Catullus' private world, as exemplified by c. 11.

An exception that highlights Catullus’ deliberate defense of his new type of love from visual scrutiny is found in c. 32. Both poems attempt to shut out the external world from the couple's love to ward off accurate knowledge as a route for invidia. Poem 32, on the other hand, does exactly the opposite, providing the specific number novem continuas fututiones (v. 8). In the brief compass of c. 32 we see the relationship with Ipsitilla as entirely sexual, the type of relationship a Roman man would have with a meretrix. Further, the mildly graphic detail of pertundo tunicamque palliumque should be contrasted with the near total lack of any physical

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181 Wray 2001, 151.
182 Her exclusion here is expressed in visual terms: nec meum respectet, ut ante, amorem (11.21).
183 Aveline 1994 sees the novem fututiones as allusions to Hes. Th. 56-7 and Philodemus (AP 11.30 = 27 GP = 19 Sider). While certainly probable, this explanation does not preclude the interpretation presented here.
184 That she is in fact a prostitute is suggested by ne quis liminis obseret tabellam (v. 5).
detail provided about his relationship with Lesbia. 185 Catullus' ability to speak with sexual explicitness about Ipsitilla stands in stark contrast to his inability to mention—rather his refusal to mention—any such detail about his relationship with Lesbia (much to the chagrin of Furius and Aurelius, as c. 16 lets us know). If the harmful magic (invidia, mala fascinare lingua) warded off in cc. 5 and 7 relies on specific knowledge for power, Catullus clearly has no problem with providing potential curiosi with specific knowledge of his relationship with Ipsitilla. 186 It is the fact that his relationship with her is not different and not something to be jealously guarded as special and unique that sets his treatment of Lesbia in relief as something new and different.

2.4.2 (cc. 6 and 55)

Within the frame of poems 5 and 7, both of which eschew visual penetration by curiosi, we find entirely the opposite position, Catullus himself acting as a curiosus, subjecting his friend's romance to visual scrutiny and poetic praise.

Flavi, delicias tuas Catullo,
i sint illepidae atque inelegantes,
velles dicere nec tacere posses.
Verum nescio quid febriculosi
scorti diligis: hoc pudet fateri.
Nam te non viduas iacere noctes
nequiquam tacitum cubile clamat
sertis ac Syrio fragrans olivo,
pulvinusque peraeque et hic et ille
attritus, tremulique quassa lecti
argutatio inambulatioque.
Nam nil stupra valet—nihil—tacere. 187
Cur? Non tam latera ecfututa pandas,
iu tu quid facias ineptiarum.
Quare, quidquid habes boni malique,

185 I mean only those poems that are specifically set within the context of their relationship and, in particular, within the so-called Lesbia cycle, which of course stand in stark contrast to cc. 11, 37, 58.
186 For harmful magic in the context of cc. 5 and 7, see Dickie 1993, Cairns 1973.
187 The first half of the line is problematic. V reads inista prevale; Mynors simply obelizes the phrase; Kroll and Quinn print nil stupra valet after Haupt, following Scaliger; Bardon prints nil ista valet after Lachmann; Skutch reads nil perstare valet; Ellis reads nil verpa valet; Eisenhut reads nil ista pudet. The punctuation is mine.
Flavius, you ought to want to divulge
your girlfriend to Catullus and ought to be
unable to keep quiet about it unless
she lacks requisite charm and refinement.
You must be taken with some sort of
Disease-ridden tramp: you're ashamed to fess up.
For your vainly silent bed cries out that
you're not spending nights all by your lonesome,
since it smells of garlands and Syrian perfume,
and both sides of your mattress are all rumpled,
and your rickety bed's creaking and wandering
about the room when it's shaken.
For it's no use—none at all—to keep quiet about your affair.
Why? You wouldn't be showing off sides
so thoroughly fucked-out unless you were
up to some déclassé monkey-business.
So whatever you've got going on, good or bad
tell me. I want to shout you and your affair
to the heavens with my refined verse.

Poem 6, in both its structure and arrangement within the *libellus*, is a play of antitheses.
The poem itself is structured as an antithesis between speech and silence. The opening line of
the poem provides the triad of speaker, object, and audience (*Flavi, delicias tuas* and *Catullo*),
and this same group is reintroduced at the end of the poem object, speaker, audience (*quidquid,
habes/dic, nobis*, vv. 15-16). Each time Flavius attempts to remain silent about his affair (vv. 3, 12), Catullus enjoins him to tell of it (vv. 3, 16), and his silence is set against the evidence
produced by the non-human witnesses to the affair: the bedroom shouts, the perfume wafts, the
flattened mattress shows, the bed creaks, and Flavius' own body visually betrays his secret.

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188 Skinner 1983, 141.
189 Catullus' Hellenistic predecessors provide several parallels for non-human witnesses or confidants, in particular
lamps, to love affairs. Philodemus (*AP 5.4 = 1 GP = 7 Sider*) calls the lamp the silent confidant (v. 1) as he orders a
slave-girl to leave the room before love-making; he notes that Love wants no living witness (v. 4). Philodemus (or
Meleager) calls the lamp a confidant of oaths and calls upon the lamp to spy on his lover in the arms of another (*AP
5.8 = 69 HE = 36 Sider*). Meleager (*AP 5.152 = 34 HE*) calls for a mosquito to bring his lover to him; entrusts his
lover to a lamp (*AP 5.166 = 52 HE*); and knows he has been jilted by a girl because of her appearance and calls her
*publica* (*πάγκων*) (*AP 5.175 = 70 HE*). This last poem seems to be a very direct model for the evidence against
Flavius in c. 6. Asclepiades enumerates kisses that were witnessed by a bed (*κλίνη μάρτυς*) (*AP 5.181 = 25 HE*).
From within the vain attempts at silence comes the evidence that betrays the existence of Flavius' deliciae.

This same structure reveals another antithesis also central to cc. 5 and 7, the contrast between inside and outside, public and private space. The contrast is drawn even more clearly in poem 6 and is integral to the poem's structure. At the center of the poem, opened and closed by a line-initial nam, is a description of Flavius' bedroom. The seemingly private space of Flavius' bedroom is surrounded by a space populated by Catullus himself, searching for information about his friend's affair. Flavius' interaction with this exterior world is the same in both sections, tacere (vv. 3, 12). Catullus' friend is attempting to keep his private life from spilling over into the other world, which will become public if Catullus succeeds in writing a poem about the affair. But the situation is more complex than a private center surrounded by and opposed to public knowledge. The private center betrays Flavius: the accoutrements of his own bedroom reveal the presence of his deliciae. Moreover, as soon as Flavius is moved into the exterior world again, he is told matter-of-factly that he is betraying himself: cur? non tam latera ecfututa pandas (v. 13). In his private, interior space, his deeds go unnoticed, but in the public world, others can see the visual evidence of his private dissipation. Although he may say nothing to the outside world, visual evidence allows Catullus to put two and two together.

Hedylus (AP 5.199 = 2 HE) writes a dedicatory epigram in which a girl's dedication of her sandals and brassier (specifically dripping with perfume, as in c. 6.8) are witnesses (ματρύπια) to her love-making. Importantly, Callimachus, explicitly invoked in c. 7, provides a clear precedent for the final betrayal of Flavius by his own body. In AP 12.134 (= 13 HE = 43 Pf.) Callimachus presents an imagined dialogue at a dinner party about a third party who is clearly in love, as evidenced by his sighing and the falling petals of his garland. Further, in AP 12.71 (= 12 HE = 30 Pf.) Callimachus notes that Cleonicus shows he has been seized with love for Euxitheus by his skin-and-bones appearance; he observes that Cleonicus had been eyeing the boy up with both eyes (v. 6).

190 Wray 2001, 153.
191 While the exact text of v. 12 is garbled, there is little disagreement that the line begins with nam and ends with nihil tacere.
192 Compare Callimachus AP 12.134 (= 13 HE = 43 Pf) and Asclepiades AP 12.135 (= 18 HE).
Perhaps Flavius' bedroom is not as private as he may have thought, for, even if we exclude the evidence presented by his possessions, we find poetry at the end of the poem. The final two lines reveal Catullus' game: Flavius' dalliance is indeed *illepidae atque inelegantes*, as the middle, "private" section of the poem has revealed, and Catullus implies that he can turn even these feverish fumblings into their opposite, *lepidus versus*. We are left to conclude that we have unknowingly witnessed Catullus do just that, write an elegant poem about his friend's inelegant love affair, all for our enjoyment. Throughout the poem Catullus makes it clear that Flavius' silence is useless (*nec tacere posses, nequiquam tacitum, nihil tacere*), and we determined this is the case because he and his affair are to become—or rather, already are—the subject of a love poem that will inevitably be made public.

Examining the poet's use of grammatical person shows him reinforcing points he has made with his choice of subject, his choice of structure, and his choice of arrangement of the poem within the poetic book. The poem begins with Catullus remanded to the third person, only to shift suddenly into the first person at the poem's end. Until that point the only participants had been the second-person Flavius and several third-person entities, Catullus and the bedroom accoutrements. When we reach the final lines of the poem, "Catullus" reappears in the first person as the locutor whose discourse objects are Flavius and his affair, *te ac tuos amores* (v. 16). As soon as the subject shifts to the first person, we find that the topic has turned away from the actual romance to its poetic reproduction. The reader may understand that the first person subject of *volo* is in fact Catullus the poet, rather than the Catullus persona who is the friend of

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193 The poem's tight construction, clever structural antithesis (which reflects its thematic antithesis), and rich allusion all make this poem, in my opinion, one of Catullus' most *lepidus* hendecasyllables.
Flavius and who desired to be the recipient of Flavius' confidence in the opening line.\textsuperscript{194} At the end of the poem we return to the format of the "overheard conversation". This is not without irony, since Catullus has made it clear that the content of their "conversation" is actually the subject of \textit{lepidus versus} which he is shouting to the heavens for all to hear. Moreover, his verse is replete with descriptions and language that provoke the reader to form mental images of the visual signs of Flavius' \textit{illepidus amor}.

Looking outward from Flavius' bedroom we see a larger structure of public/private antitheses appear when c. 6 is placed within the frame of poems 5 and 7. Like the opening and closing refusals of Flavius to divulge information to Catullus, cc. 5 and 7 draw a line between public and private and attempt to prevent information regarding the specifics of a love affair from crossing into the public sphere—or, more accurately, to prevent the public sphere from intruding upon the private. In poem 6 Catullus, though a friend to Flavius and acting presumably without malice, represents the threat of the outside world to the interior world of romance.\textsuperscript{195} In the face of this threat Flavius maintains a vain silence, which Catullus penetrates with poetry by using an inversion of a Hellenistic trope: rather than serve as his confidants, his bedroom objects inform against him.\textsuperscript{196} The bedroom scene of poem 6 serves as an analogue to the similar scenes

\textsuperscript{194} See Evrard-Gillis 1977, 122. Although taken from a different context, Kidd's statement seems here quite poignant: "Catullus the \textit{doctus poeta} is capable of detaching himself from Catullus the lover, and so he can be the observed and the observer at one and the same time, simultaneously involved and detached" (1963, 300).

\textsuperscript{195} I think we are to understand c. 6 as a gentle mockery of a friend who has taken up with a girlfriend who is not up to Catullus' standards. Her description as lacking in charm is a counterbalance to the charm that Catullus' poetry possesses, an opposition that he makes explicit in the closing lines of the poem with \textit{lepido versu}. The poem lacks the vitriol that characterizes Catullus' invective poetry against, for example, Clodia and Furius and Aurelius. While the relationship may be déclassé, Catullus writes about a similar relationship that he has with Ipistilla (one can only assume the hyperbolic \textit{novem continuas fututiones} of c. 32 would causes Catullus' bedchamber to look as disheveled as Flavius'). Although Catullus would expose his friend's relationship, uncouth as it may be, to public scrutiny, it is not out of malice or \textit{invidia} as the actions of the \textit{malus} of c. 5 or the \textit{curiosi} of c. 7 are presumed to be. Nevertheless, one can imagine that Flavius (if he existed) himself would be nonplussed at his relationship becoming the subject of a poetic joke disseminated to the Roman readership, thus underscoring the ability with which Catullus attempts to conceal his relationship while simultaneously revealing that of his friend.

\textsuperscript{196} Adding even more irony to this fact is that, in Hellenistic erotic epigram, these very bedroom objects become accomplices to the affair. See Philodemus \textit{AP} 5.4 (= \textit{1 GP} = 7 Sider), Asclepiades \textit{AP} 5.7 (= 9 HE), Meleager or
we never see in poems 5 and 7 (and this lack is underscored in turn in c. 16). That we see right into Flavius' bedroom in a poem so incongruous with either of the poems that surround it highlights our intrusion (along with Catullus) into Flavius' privacy all the more. Word choice makes this invasion all the clearer: "the bedroom shouts that you (te), Flavius, do not lie alone at night". The clamat of the bedroom is so forceful that it sets Flavius before us in the second person, lying in his bed with his uncouth company (vv. 6-7).\textsuperscript{197} I suggest that the language describing Flavius' bedroom, though referring to sound and smell (excepting the rumpled cushion), deliberately provokes the reader to form a mental image of Flavius, either in flagrante or in the aftermath of love-making. Catullus calls attention to the sounds of v. 11, peculiarly expressed by the presumed Catullan neologism argutatio and the otherwise uncommon inambulatio. Not only are the words marked by their rarity or novelty, but by onomatopoeia: the sound of a squeaking bed immediately conjures a mental image of sexual antics. Moreover, when Flavius is forced to testify against himself, he literally lays his crime bare, pandas (v. 13). It is this act of visual self-incrimination that, I think, itself creates a mental image in Catullus' mind: the signs of sex on Flavius' flanks cause Catullus to imagine the sounds, smells—and by extension, sights—of vv. 6-11.\textsuperscript{198} Catullus, in turn, helps the reader form a mental image of

\textsuperscript{197}Similarly Nielsen (1984, 106) holds that clamat and iacere make the imagined scene all the more vivid for the reader. This is contra Luck (1966, 280), who argues that the creaking, disheveled bed is evidence that Catullus is in Flavius' bedroom after he has engaged in his sexual antics. While Catullus is certainly invading Flavius' private space, I find this interpretation too literal when viewed in the context of three poems whose focus is the ability of poetry to penetrate or defend privacy through its capacity to create or deny mental imaging.

\textsuperscript{198}For sights, note in particular the fully deictic force of the et hic et ille used to describe the bed cushions (v. 9). Flavius' bed, moreover, is described as tremulus, which has a particularly visual flavor, complementing the sonorousness of v. 11. Catullus uses this adjective six times elsewhere: note particularly c. 17.13 of arms rocking a baby, and especially c. 68.142 of a decrepit father, which is followed shortly by talk of his night of stolen love-making, furtiva...munuscula (v. 145), with Lesbia in a house fragrantem Assyrio...odore (v. 144). The same details that pervade both c. 6 and c. 7, poems with diametrically opposed themes, are united in a flash of erotic description involving Lesbia unique in the collection. Note too that Lesbia is here stolen from the gremium of her husband (v. 146), the same place where the obstructing passer plays with his mistress in c. 3 and where the impious father of c. 67 leaves his mark on his own son.
Flavius via his poetry. *Catullus curiosus* is quite happy to share with his reader the same voyeuristic access he himself desires, quite in contrast to the deliberate hiding of love that *Catullus privatus* engages in, at times almost setting up a poetic test of his readers' worthiness to obtain visual access to his love via mental images. How can Catullus enact the very same invasion of privacy he seeks to avoid in the surrounding poems? Simple: Catullus' love, in contrast to Flavius', is *lepidus, elegans*, and, more importantly, is expressed poetically. Flavius' love is so dissipated that he shows the signs on his own person as well as his bedroom. Catullus, on the other hand, uses his own fevered love to block out prying eyes by protecting himself and Lesbia with the sheer number of kisses. Moreover, poem 7 makes it clear that, while intense, Catullus' love is refined, since he uses poetry (and the inability of the *curiosi* to understand that poetry) as a defense against intrusion.

The contrasting complements of poems 5/7 and 6 go beyond the surface differences of obfuscation and curiosity, however. Read against the frame of cc. 5 and 7, 6 reveals a stunning reversal: in cc. 5 and 7 Catullus is actually showing his *deliciae* to the reader, whereas in c. 6 we see Flavius attempting to conceal his blatant *deliciae*. Further, whereas Catullus' own *deliciae* are *elegantes* and *lepidae*, Flavius' poorly concealed romance is *illepidae atque inelegantes* (v. 2). Poem 6 puts the futility of concealing a relationship at center stage. Flavius' obstinate silence in the face of such clear evidence is used as an example by Catullus—and used simultaneously for poetic material. Sandwiched between two poems whose mode of interaction with the reader is a mixture of hiding and revealing, c. 6 brings these two issues to the fore all the more forcefully. Poem 6, therefore, enacts the very same type of observation that poems 5 and 7 simultaneously ward off and invite. All three poems dangle secrets before the reader (a

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199 Fitzgerald 1995, 54.
number in cc. 5 and 7 and a name in c. 6), and the *invidia* of c. 5 and the *fascinatio* of c. 7 are what Catullus himself performs (to a degree) in the central poem, 6.200

Poem 55 recapitulates the theme of the concerned friend seen in c. 6. The second-person address of the poem places us again within the mode of the "overheard conversation" (perhaps an intercepted communication), but we also find ourselves in the middle of overseeing. True, Camerius is never found, but I think the poem is easily understood as viewed from the perspective of a third party watching Catullus rush around the city, providing us with a virtual guidebook of his travels. Catullus tells us the specific locations he has visited (vv. 3-6), which any reader familiar with Roman topography would be able to visualize, whom he has interrogated, complete with physical description derived from actual autopsy (*femellas omnes…quas vultu vidi…sereno*, vv. 7-8), and even his humorous encounter with a bare-chested prostitute, *roseis papillis* and all. The clearly laid out itinerary and cast of characters of Catullus' circuit contrasts with Camerius' *tenebrae* (v. 2), just as Flavius' *tacere* was countered by Catullus' *vocare* in c. 6. We may never see Camerius *in flagrante*, as we may have envisioned Flavius, but we do read a distinctly visual poem about *Catullus curiosus* on the hunt for information. While poem 6 played with antitheses of speech and silence, Camerius' absence prevents a similar play here. Nevertheless, Catullus makes repeated use of a language of disclosure (with four instances in two lines, even): *demonstres, dic, ede audacter, committe, crede luci* (vv. 2, 15-16). Both *demonstres* and *crede luci* have a distinctly visual feeling to them to complement the verbal *dic*; *ede* is ambiguous and could apply to the verbal, visual, or even written presentation of information.

The poem closes with two odd statements that merit examination. First, the sentiment expressed in vv. 18-20 that to get the full benefit of a love affair, Camerius must talk about it to

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200 Wray 2001, 159.
his friend flies in the face of later elegiac sentiment. Both Propertius (2.25.29-32) and Ovid (*Ars* 2.608) hold that divulging one's love affairs is to be avoided, with the latter also claiming that the *loquax* has no place in the mysteries of Venus. Second, the poem's last line presents an even stranger proposition: Catullus himself wants to be a participant in Camerius' love affair.\(^{201}\)

Catullus here moves beyond simply acting as a *curiosus* as we see in c. 6 and seemingly toward a sentiment seen later in Propertius 1.10. How are we to understand this notion of an outside party being a *particeps* in the romance of another? I think two different, though not mutually exclusive, interpretations present themselves, all of which have already appeared in our examination of cc. 5-7. Poem 55, when viewed alongside cc. 6 and 32 reinforces the feeling that Catullus' relationship with Lesbia is to be understood as different from the typical romance a Roman elite man would have with either a prostitute or a *demimondaine*. Catullus has no qualms about seeking details of his friends' relationships, nor providing the reading audience with details of his own run-of-the-mill relationship, but he balks at letting any information about his relationship with Lesbia slip out, and goes so far as to deliberately obfuscate it. Secondly, by extension from his own desire to be a *particeps* in another's romance, Catullus underscores the reader's implicit participation in the affair he is reading. Just as Catullus, along with the stars and the reader, was a witness to the *furtivos amores* of men in c. 7, and interviewed other witnesses about Flavius' love in c. 6, he now wants to be not only a witness, but also considered a full participant in his friend's new romance.\(^{202}\) Note the different tones of cc. 2 and 55: in the former,

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\(^{201}\) In the final line Fordyce reads *dum nostri sis particeps amoris* as if Catullus is saying, "Well, fine, so long as you are still a participant in my love affairs." I think this misses the point that Catullus has been actively pursuing Camerius all over the city in an effort to find information about his affair. Why would he suddenly give up the pursuit and resign himself to the fact that at least his friend will still hear about his own affairs? It fits with neither the context of the poem nor does it sit well when compared to c. 6.

\(^{202}\) This eagerness and desire for participation contrasts sharply with Callimachus' treatment of his acquaintances' affairs in his epigrams. Although Callimachus is cool and detached and Catullus eager, both use visual cues to relate their position: Callimachus specifically asks his imagined interlocutor at *AP* 12.134.2 (= 13 *HE* 43 Pf.) “ἐἰς ἀξίνα;”, and Catullus visually notes Flavius' affair with *pandas*, and tells Camerius specifically what he saw (*vidi*) in his
Catullus is annoyed at being downgraded from *particeps* to *spectator*, but in the latter he is resigned to that position as better than no contact at all (*dum...sim particeps*, v. 22).

The eager Catullus and the *Camerius loquax* he desires to find remind us of the closing lines of c. 6, where Catullus claims he wants to write poetry about his friend's relationship for all the world to read. Catullus had urged Camerius to provide him with information about the relationship in words with strong visual overtones (*demonstres, crede luci*) and finally enjoins Camerius to be talkative (*dic, loquax*) about his affair. Visual demonstration leads to verbal demonstration and, if we follow the logic of c. 6, to the writing of love poetry. For whatever reason, though, Camerius, like Flavius, is not talking, and, because of his total absence, is not showing, either. While Flavius attempted to remain silent, visual clues betrayed him; Catullus has no clues about Camerius' new affair. In c. 55 Catullus has taken the themes introduced in c. 6 and pushed them farther. Flavius' stubborn silence was unable to prevent him from writing poetry about his affair; Camerius' affair provides a greater challenge because of a total lack of information. But this has not prevented Catullus from writing a poem about Camerius, just as silence had not kept him from a poem about Flavius. The poem we read, however, is less about Camerius than about *Catullus curiosus*. This Catullus is making a show not only of his relentless hunt for information, but also of his "writing love". Writing love for Catullus requires visualization such as presented in c. 6, and even the process itself is visual as the poet describes in detail his itinerary and the witnesses questioned in his quest to write the love of Camerius.

*2.5 Catullus demonstrans, Lesbia publica* (cc. 37, 11)
The Catullus examined in this section is far different from the persona who both desires his own privacy but is also determined to scent out his friends' secret romances. Above we examined poems focused on Catullus while he was involved in his relationship with Lesbia; here we examine poems set after the couple's separation. It will be argued that in this group of poems Catullus forces Lesbia into the mold of a common prostitute by making her *publica*, in contrast to the private and sexually temperate picture of her during their relationship. She is portrayed as *publica* both to the numerous Roman men who have sexual access to her, and as *publica* to the reader as well, as Catullus creates graphic—but imaginary—scenes of her sexual activities in his poetry.

2.5.1 (c. 37)

Three poems (cc. 37, 58, and 72) involving Lesbia and her sexual excesses clearly demonstrate her availability to any and every Roman man. I think Catullus portrays Lesbia metaphorically as a prostitute not simply for purposes of invective, but to show her as both promiscuous and *publica*, and consequently open to the scrutiny of observers as well as opening her to the gaze of his imagination and poetry (and therefore the audience's as well). Further, Catullus sets her in opposition to himself as a *privatus* and to their former status as shielded from observation by *curiosi*.

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Salax taberna vosque contubernales,
a pilleatis nona fratribus pila,
solis putatis esse mentulas vobis,
solis licere, quidquid est puellarum,
confuere et putare ceteros hircos?
An, continenter quod sedetis insulsi
centum an ducenti, non putatis ausurum
me una ducentos irrumare sessores?
Atqui putate: namque totus vobis
frontem tabernae sopionibus scribam.
Puella nam mi, quae meo sinu fugit,
amata tantum quantum amabitur nulla,
pro qua mihi sunt magna bella pugnata,
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consedit istic. Hanc boni beatique
omnes amatis, et quidem, quod indignum est,
omnes pusilli et semitarii moechi;
tu praeter omnes une de capillatis,
cuniculosae Celtiberiae fili,
Egnati. Opaca quem bonum facit barba
et dens Hibera defricatus urina.

House of ill repute and you, its habitués,
nine doors down from the temple of the capped brothers,
do you think that you're the only ones with dicks?
Do you think you're the only ones allowed to join in fucking
all the girls and consider the rest of us to be
unsophisticated boors? Or do you think that
just because you dumbasses are sitting lined up
a hundred or two hundred deep, that I wouldn't
dare to mouth-fuck all two hundred of you
sitting there in one fell swoop?
Go ahead and think that, because I'm going to put
my dick's stamp all over the face of the place.
For the girl who fled my embrace,
was loved as much as no girl will ever be loved,
for whose sake I fought great wars,
has gone and set up shop there. Now all you
men of wealth and stature "love" her, and,
what's even worse, every two-bit back-alley
adulterer; and above all you, you singular
example of the long-haired dandies of
bunny-filled Spain, Egnatius, whom a black beard
makes classy—and those teeth scrubbed
white with Spanish piss.

Although the woman referred to in this poem is not specifically named Lesbia, her treatment in
vv. 11-13 echoes the terms used of Lesbia in happier poems. What we see in this poem,
therefore, is a markedly different portrait of the Lesbia from earlier poems. No longer is Catullus
defending their relationship from visual penetration, but he is actively forcing her into the role of
a prostitute with the consequent visual demarcation of members of the profession.203 While we
get the impression that the salax taberna of the opening line is a place with a bad reputation, a
brothel most likely, Catullus makes Lesbia's presence there as a prostitute explicit: consedit istic

203 Here Catullus only makes her visually available. Prostitutes (and perhaps adulteresses) were made to wear the
male toga as a mark of their infamia. See especially Vout (1996, 215-16) and also Parker (1992, 164-66). Infames
were socially inferior and therefore open to visual penetration.
(v. 14). In colloquial usage *considere* denotes the activity of a prostitute. Furthermore, she not only takes up with *boni beatique omnes amantis*, but with *omnes pusilli et semitarii moechi* (v. 14-16). Lesbia's lovers are no longer only the men of Roman elite society, like Catullus, but any and all comers, even the poor. This fact is reinforced by the repetition of the line-initial *omnes* in vv. 15-16. In verse 5, I understand *confutuere* as not simply an intensive form of *futuere* (as Quinn does, 1996, 203), "to fuck until the job's done", but in the full communal sense of the prefix. When coupled with the references to Lesbia's sexual promiscuity listed above, as well as the military-communal metaphor of *contubernales* from the first verse, such a reading seems logical: it is a further reflection of just how *publica* Lesbia has become when every *contubernalis* has had his turn with her.

The surprise ending of c. 37 recalls a similar visual device introduced in c. 3, where the sight of Lesbia’s eyes is suddenly introduced, radically altering the poem’s dramatic setting. Here Catullus carries on for sixteen lines about the tavern's low patrons and Lesbia's promiscuity before finally focusing on one of those patrons whom he especially despises, Egnatius. In four lines, Catullus provides three physical details of this particular *moechus*: he is long-haired, has a black beard, and a smile pearly white from his daily urine mouthwash (attacked in similar fashion in c. 39). A poem which had until the very end been concerned with portraying Lesbia as *publica* because of her promiscuity concludes with a caricature of one of her lovers. Specific physical details are scarce in the *liber Catulli*, and the contexts in which they appear warrant scrutiny. There are two portraits of Egnatius and one of Aemilius (cc. 37, 39, 97), two portraits...
of women (or perhaps a single woman) whose beauty is unfavorably compared to Lesbia's (cc. 41, 43), another surprise ending complete with the physical description of a moechus in c. 67, and the ekphrasis of Ariadne in c. 64. I hold that all of these cases are marked in some way or another: c. 67, discussed elsewhere, is marked as different from other poems in the liber; the ekphrasis of c. 64 is much-discussed and, while quite remarkable, is not examined in this chapter; the other portraits share the fact of their negativity.

Are we, however, to deem Egnatius unattractive? We are told that he is of the long-haired Spaniards and has a particularly dark beard (opaca barba), and this beard makes him attractive (bonum). The compliment is back-handed, of course. That he is a mere provincial is emphasized by the pejorative cuniculosae; his long hair is not so much dandy as barbaric; his beard is not so much black as "shade-giving", meaning unruly. Neither long hair nor beards were fashionable among Roman males in this period. The last line provides the final confirmation: he brushes his teeth with his own urine. That we are to construe Egnatius' description as negative is made clear in the other set of physical descriptions of Ameana and another woman (who may likely be Ameana again); both are clearly marked as inferior in beauty to Lesbia. The extremely graphic portrait of Aemilius in c. 97 further highlights this unique element of Catullan poetics: physical descriptions are almost invariably negative. By putting a face—quite literally—on Egnatius, Catullus shows his readers exactly whom he dislikes, and the portrait's pointed placement at the end of the poem puts us on the lookout, so to speak, for similar portraits in the liber. The portrait of Egnatius has another function: it provides an avenue

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206 Capillatus is frequently used to describe foreigners or barbarians, as well as slaves, slave-boys in particular; when applied to Roman males, it hearkens to an earlier age of stern morality and is often coupled with some adjective denoting whiteness. Opacus is an adjective commonly applied positively or neutrally to locations (i.e. "shady", "sheltered", "retired"), but rarely used of physical descriptions and then generally negatively. See OLD and TLL s.v. opacus.

207 Cleland, Davies and Llewellyn-Jones 2007, 86.

208 Compare also c. 86, a negative assessment of Quintia's beauty. Catullus' disapproval, however, does not hinge on her physical attributes, but her lack of venustas and sal.
for invidia from both Catullus and the reader. By writing a description of Egnatius and allowing the reader to form a mental image, we are able to look at him with the evil eye. In this way Catullus supplements biographical details that cannot be known by the majority of his readers with specific visual details. Readers geographically or temporally removed from the "real" Egnatius are provided knowledge of him through mental imaging and the fact that he is apparently foremost among Lesbia's train of adulterers.²⁰⁹

In c. 37 we see two separate, but complementary, aspects of Catullus' use of viewing and description that combine to underline his negative portrayal of Lesbia. Her actions make her publica, accessible—sexually and visually—to all, and certainly no longer deserving of the visual protection offered to her in cc. 5 and 7. The negative sentiment about a well-circulated lover is expressed pointedly by Callimachus in AP 12.43 (= 2 HE = 28 Pf.), where he claims he dislikes a lover who has been passed around (περίφοιτον ἐρωμένον) and, importantly, that he hates all things public (πάντα τὰ δημόσια). The Lesbia Catullus reveals in c. 37 is both of these: publica by both her exposure to visual scrutiny and her choice of base lovers, and well-circulated by the sheer number of the lovers standing in queue. Her choice of Egnatius as lover confirms this, and Catullus provides us a portrait of this new lover. A physical description in the liber Catulli is almost always negative, and the portrait of Egnatius occupies the final lines of the poem and constitutes a joke at his expense. Egnatius is no vir bonus, just another pusillus et semitarius moechus, a new low even for Lesbia. Poem 37 is an extended visual attack on Lesbia, both by putting her on display as sexually wonton and painting a degrading portrait of one of her new lovers.

²⁰⁹ I would add that c. 37 is particularly filmic. The poem first establishes setting, giving a specific physical location for the tavern and proceeds to a "wide shot" of hundreds of men lined up before "zooming in" for a close-up of a particular individual.
In these three post-separation poems (cc. 37, 58, 72) we see Lesbia portrayed explicitly or implicitly as indiscriminate in her choice of lovers, even taken to the hyperbolic end of being likened to a common prostitute with a line of customers stretching down the street. She takes not only the rich customers, but also the poor and the common as well, and plies her trade in public spaces. In all cases, she is by extension *publica*, not only sexually available to any man regardless of status (he need not even be a *Remi nepos*, as the provincial Egnatius shows us), but visually available to the reader's imagination. No longer does Catullus seek to keep *invidia* from Lesbia, but he actively invites the possibility of *invidia* by making her visually accessible and describing her activities in the most base of terms, as degrading and the equivalent of a prostitute's trade.210

### 2.5.2 Visual separation as final separation (c. 11)

This offering of Lesbia and her sexual excesses to the visual scrutiny of the reader is combined in c. 11—appropriately the presumable moment of the couple's "final" separation—with the defensive eschewal of visual penetration seen in cc. 5 and 7. This section examines the final poem of the initial "Lesbia Cycle", one of the most imagistic in the *liber Catulli*, and especially the closing image of the wounded flower at meadow's edge, which, I hope to show, is perhaps the most salient image of the collection and is itself a representation of that collection and its mode of poetically "showing" love.

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210 Here I mean *invidia* not so much in the sense of evil magic cast out of jealousy at another's good fortune, but in the more general sense of the "evil eye".
aequora Nilus,
sive trans altas gradietur Alpes,
Caesaris visens monimenta magni,
Gallicum Rhenum horribilesque ulti-
mosque Britanos—
omnia haec, quaecumque feret voluntas
caelitum, temptare simul parati,
pauca nuntiate meae puellae
non bona dicta:
cum suis vivat valeatque moechis,
quos simul complexa tenet trecentos,
nullum amans vere, sed identidem omnium
ilia rumpens;
nec meum respectet, ut ante, amorem,
quii illius culpa cecidit velut prati
ultimi flos, praetereunte postquam
tactus aratro est.

Furius and Aurelius, ye companions of Catullus—
whether he shall penetrate the territory of distant India,
where the shore by far resounding eastern
wave is pounded,
or to Hyrcania or soft Araby,
or the Sagae or the arrow-shooting Parthians,
or the water which the seven-mouthed
Nile dyes,
or whether he cross the lofty Alps
on a visit to the monuments of mighty Caesar,
the Gallic Rhine and the fearsome
far-flung Britains—
Oh my friends, prepared to undergo with me
the aforesaid and whatever else heaven has in store,
take a brief message to my girl,
and not a nice one.
Let her live and flourish with her paramours,
three hundred of whom she holds in her embrace at once,
loving not a one completely, but over and over again
breaking the hips of them all:
let her not look back upon my love as before,
my love which through her fault has dropped just like a flower
at meadow's edge, when touched
by passing plow.

The poem falls neatly into two sections, a fanciful travelogue addressed to Furius and Aurelius,
and the break-up message they are to deliver to Lesbia. Contrary to c. 7, a poem of happier times
which is also rich in exotic detail, c. 11 begins with Catullus in the third person (comites Catulli,
v. 1) and ends with a sudden introduction of the first person (meum...amorem, v. 21). This switch from a third-person point of view to the first is seen in c. 6, however, and the two poems (cc. 6 and 11) share a similar theme of the publication of love affairs, though the treatment of Flavius is far gentler than the scathing treatment Lesbia receives. The viewing positions within the poem change dramatically from beginning to end. In the travelogue section, we see the third person Catullus going as a visitor to see the monimenta of Caesar's conquests (v. 10), but at the end of the poem the newly apparent first person finds himself imagining a scene of Lesbia simultaneously embracing her three hundred new lovers. Moreover, this first person speaker who points out Lesbia's sexual excesses has as the second part of his injunction a command that she no longer look at his love (meum respectet...amorem, v. 21). He bids her not to look at his love, but simultaneously makes her sexuality a spectacle for his own imagination as well as the reader's. By forbidding Lesbia to look at his love while showing the reader the spectacle of her corrupt love, Catullus affords the reader a special position. The reader becomes the ultimate examiner, able to see Lesbia in her entirety, just like the stars of poem 7 view the furtivos amores of mankind, meaning both the actual romances and the poetry based upon those romances. While the reader sits in the position of spectator, the poet sits in the ultimately powerful position of the demonstrator. The reader may be able to judge what they have seen, but they are unable to see anything beyond what they have been shown by the poet.

211 Well before v. 21 Catullus uses the first-person possessive adjective in v. 15, meae puellae. Given the context of this first use and its contrast with the second use, I see the two as radically different. The use at v. 15 is simply sarcastic and stands opposed to the lines that immediately follow, which reveal that Lesbia is also the puella of "three hundred" other men. The meum of v. 21 is something else entirely, used as it is of Catullus' love, which as we have seen numerous times before, is seen as something different from the love of others, whether it be that of his friends or of the scads of Lesbia's new "customers".
212 Compare the intra-city travelogue of c. 55 with its specific descriptions of Roman locations, which recall the specific sensory details of c. 11's travelogue: the sounds of vv. 3-4, the molles Easterners of v. 5, the Parthian archers and their unique mode of combat, the Nile which is coloring the sea, and finally the concretization of these images into monimenta to be seen by a traveler.
Yet, despite the poet's position as demonstrator and arbiter of what is revealed and what is not, he is still a delicate flower vulnerable to outside forces. The strong statement that Lesbia should no longer look back at "my" (i.e. Catullus') love serves as a bridge to the flower simile which follows immediately upon his injunction. The imagined sexual outrages of Lesbia and the stark image of the flower show a shift to (or a return to) a metaphoric world which shows Catullus' imagined world set apart from Lesbia's sordid reality. If we compare c. 11 to cc. 5 and 7, we find that Catullus not only points out the faults of Lesbia, but also attempts to defend his love from her invidious look as well. She, like the busybodies of cc. 5 and 7, is no longer worthy of visual access to Catullus' true love, and like them needs to be deprived of access, lest she bring invidia. At this point, I think, Lesbia is likened by association to the very people she was differentiated from during the relationship. The vivid picture of her indiscriminate sexual excess Catullus paints in cc. 11, 37, 58 (and echoed in 72) is in stark contrast to the Lesbia elegans we presume Catullus fell in love with (confirmed by the favorable comparison in c. 86): by taking on hundreds of lovers in a great confututio she becomes little different from Flavius' febriculosum scortum or Ipsitilla—no different than any other meretrix. With this downgrading, she becomes open to visual access like a prostitute forced to wear men's clothing to mark her off as infamis.

Not only is she open to scrutiny, but her glance, in Catullus' mind, carries the potential for invidia, thus warranting the injunction nec meum respectet amorem. The seeds of Lesbia curiosa in c. 7, discussed above, combined with the frequent visual overtones of the words curiositas and curiosus show Lesbia's look as potentially invidious. The injunction of v. 21 is literal and figurative: she is not to look at him or his poetry, replete as it is with visual expressions of love, because she is no longer worthy of understanding it, just as the curiosi of c.
7 are denied access by their inability to understand that poetry. Whereas they could not understand the Neoteric complexities, she cannot understand the emotional complexities, the *foedus aeternum*; the two aspects of poetics and emotion are integrally bound in the *liber Catulli*, and to understand only one of them is to misunderstand the whole.\textsuperscript{214}

On a macrostructural level the play of lines of sight and positionality has a crucial juncture in c. 11, the "last" poem of the so-called Lesbia Cycle, the poem that shows the final, if long-expected (in the scant span of ten poems!), end of the relationship. When situated within the larger context of the *Passer* the relationship of cc. 5-7, 11, and 2, 3 and 51 reveals three approaches to viewing corresponding to three phases of the affair. The beginning—situated at the beginning and end of the physical book—has Catullus in the position of watcher, watching Lesbia engaged with someone or something else; the very sight causes Catullus consternation. The middle of the affair, placed early, shows Catullus attempting to ward off any intrusive sight that might harm the relationship. The traumatic end of the affair places Catullus in the role of *demonstrator*, placing the sexual excesses of Lesbia before the eyes of any and all comers (i.e. readers), just like she has made herself sexually available to any Roman man. That the course of the affair becomes a catalogue of modes of viewing in turn helps the audience read the poems. Injected immediately into the affair, we note that Catullus jealously watches and then quickly takes care to prevent us from seeing certain aspects of his love. The shift from a point near the beginning of the affair at c. 2 to the end of the affair at c. 11 and subsequent displays of Lesbia's faults as well as the bold, imagistic descriptions of Catullus' shattered love causes the reader to hate Lesbia for harming Catullus' delicate flower. Finally, the close of the *libellus*, whose subject matter has meandered widely, hinges upon a return to the beginning of the affair which had receded into the background, reappearing occasionally in angry outbursts or reminiscences

\textsuperscript{214} See, again, c. 16.
from happier times. The beginning of the affair—and the end of the *Passer*—revolves around
the poet as viewer in the position of an outsider, and a viewer whose viewing overtakes his other
senses.

Let us examine the images Catullus uses in this poem and their implications for
understanding the *liber Catulli* as a whole. The imagistic travelogue section is itself an exercise
of Catullus' imagination: he makes an erratic and fanciful journey, the final stop of which is the
Gallic and German *monimenta* of Caesar. Catullus expects us to be forming mental images of
his journey, just as he is, as evidenced by his use of *visens*, implying motion with the final aim of
viewing. Catullus' travel, however, is entirely in the mind's eye. This fact leads one to
reexamine the second vivid image of the poem, that of Lesbia embracing her three hundred
lovers and, in particular, her *omnia / ilia rumpens*, a graphic image reinforced by the prosaic
but effective *identidem*.\(^{215}\) The imagined world tour of vv. 2-12 gives way to another mental
image held by Catullus. Both imagined scenes are marked by strong hyperbole and a lack of
spatial and numerical restraint, which calls Catullus' assessment of Lesbia's behavior into
question. We see similar lack of restraint in cc. 5 and 7 and Catullus' resultant diagnosis of
*vesania*.\(^{216}\) Poem 11, the end of the Lesbia Cycle, is the culmination of this transgression of
restraint, and I think we are left to concur with the diagnosis of *vesania*. If we have read the
Lesbia Cycle "properly", we may find ourselves questioning Catullus' later indictments of her
promiscuity.

The shift to the final image of the field and its lone flower is radically different than the
opening travelogue because of its bare simplicity. The exotic images of conquest, which most

\(^{215}\) The only other usage of *identidem* in the Catullan corpus is, of course, c. 51, which is also the only other poem in
Sapphics, and, as was discussed above, the "first" poem of the collection hinging on the viewing the lover viewing
the beloved.

\(^{216}\) Compare Septimius' wild declarations in c. 45.
Romans would know only from stories, contrast sharply with the mundane image of a field, an image familiar to any Roman. That the image of the field and the flower is extremely concrete and in no way fanciful makes its place as the last image of the poem all the more poignant. It is this simple and stark image that Lesbia herself is enjoined not to look (back) upon. If Catullus' love is a flower damaged by a passing plow at the edge of a meadow, and Lesbia is, by extension, the plow, I think we are to understand *respectet* quite literally in the sense of "not look back at" as she walks past guiding the plow. What is the love that she is not supposed to look back upon? The field and the flower of the *liber Catulli* (or perhaps the *Passer*, specifically), in whose pages are contained the poetic recording of Catullus' attempts to "show his love". The field, like Catullus' emotions, has been laid bare: as a metaphor for his love, it has been torn open by Lesbia, and as a metaphor for his book, Catullus himself has done the exposing. For Lesbia passing with the plow, there is something tangible that she not look back at, the love that Catullus has *shown* through his poetry.

The metaphor of the book is specified in the *non bona dicta* which Furius and Aurelius are to carry to Lesbia. The "nasty words" they are to announce are actually mental images: Lesbia's monstrous, Scylla-like sexuality that knows no numerical restraint, and her plow-like destruction of Catullus' love. What Furius and Aurelius bring to her is, metaphorically speaking, the poetic book itself, which is both a verbal and a visual record of Catullus' love and Lesbia's treachery. That Furius and Aurelius are the friends chosen to bring Lesbia something so precious to Catullus as the very essence of his love in these *non bona dicta* (cf. his desire to regain his tablets in c. 42) is itself ironic. As we learn just a few poems later, both are consummate misreaders of Catullus' poetry, who are thus unable to fathom his love.\(^{217}\) Here, however, they...

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\(^{217}\) The collocation of mis-reader as messenger of poetry warrants further scrutiny, but is outside the realm of the current study. I would, however, point out a comparison between the "ideal reader" of Catullus, discussed above at
have no interpretive power of their own, but are simply to deliver a message dictated by Catullus. The *non bona dicta* are synonymous with *non bona visa*, the monstrous sex of Lesbia and the wounded flower of Catullus.

The "Lesbia Cycle" has been understood to be a sort of "affair in brief" at the opening of the book to give the reader a sense of what is to come.\(^{218}\) Although this summary stands at the head of the poetic book, I think it is perhaps best understood as a true retrospective, emphasized by the injunction *nec respectet*. The short group of poems gives the reader a set of instructions on reading Catullus' love visually. We learn that he is jealous when forced to watch his mistress from the outside. He is anxious to defend his own love from visual scrutiny, but also to see and show the details of his friends' love. Those who cannot or will not understand his love are deemed unworthy of looking at the visual expression of love lest they bring *invidia*. The competent reader of Catullus can understand this "instruction manual" and continue on through the book with a greater understanding and a realization that many of the poems that follow reinforce the "instructions" from the Lesbia Cycle.\(^{219}\)

So, with his most striking and poignant image, Catullus ends not only the eleventh poem of the collection, but essentially the collection itself. We know in the end that Catullus is that lone flower, wounded at the edge of the field which we know to be a metaphor for his love and for his poetry, and that Lesbia was the cruel plow that crushed his flower and laid his love bare

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\(^{218}\) A point understood since 1870 by Westphal (5). For the "Lesbia Cycle" as narrative "prologue", see particularly Barwick 1958 and Schmidt 1973.

\(^{219}\) Miller astutely notes that each poem causes the reader to look back on the preceding poems: "As the reader moves forward, she is relentlessly tracing her steps back, reading each poem as a commentary on the others (1994, 70)."
for all but her to see. All this is shown within the first ten poems of the collection, allowing us to read the remainder with, so to speak, fresh eyes, and to see more clearly how Catullus wants us to view his love.

2.6 Catullus poeta, a window onto love (c. 67)

The final poem examined here is, like c. 45, a subject of much scholarly debate because of textual issues and difficulties of interpreting what seems to be a deliberately obscure poem. When over-interpreted, as is often the case with this particular poem, these difficulties can seem insurmountable. Forsyth goes so far as to claim that c. 67 cannot be intelligible because Catullus intended for it to be understood only by a very specific audience; it "was not meant to be a 'public' work". Whether or not we moderns understand the biographical references, the poem still conveys meaning, and a meaning that I think has been largely overlooked. To return to Khan's observation, it is time for scholarship to look through the window—or door—that Catullus has provided.

O dulci iucunda viro, iucunda parenti,
salve, teque bona Iuppiter auctet ope,
iamua, quam Balbo dicunt servisse benigne
olim, cum sedes ipse senex tenuit,
quamque ferunt rursus gnato servisse maligne,
postquam est porrecto facta marita sene.  

5

Dic agendum nobis, quare mutata feraris
in dominum veterem deseruisse fidem.

'Non (ita Caecilio placeam, cui tradita nunc sum)
culpa mea est, quamquam dicitur esse mea
nec peccatum a me quisquam pote dicere quicquam:
verum est ius populi iamua quicque facit,
quia, quacumque aliquid reperitur non bene factum,
ad me omnes clamant: iamua, culpa tua est.'

Non istuc satis est uno te dicere verbo.
Sed facere ut quivis sentiat et videat.

'Qui possum? Nemo quaerit nec scire laborat?'
Nos volumus: nobis dicere ne dubita.

Non illam vir prior attigerit,
primum igitur, virgo quod fertur tradita nobis,
 falsum est. Non illam vir prior attigerit.  

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220 Forsyth 1986, 374.
languidior tenera cui pendens sicula beta.
Numquam se mediam sustulit ad tunicam;
sed pater illius gnati violasse cubile
dicitur et miseram conscelerasse domum,
sive quod impia mens caeco flagrabat amore,
seu quod iners sterili semine natus erat,
ut quaerendum unde <unde> foret nerviosius illud,
quod posset zonam solvere virgineam.'
'Atqui non solum hoc dicit se cognitum habere
Brixia Cyneca supposita speculae,
flavus quam molli praecurrit flumine Mella,
Brixia matronae mater amata meae,
sed de Postumio et Corneli narrat amore,
cum quibus illa malum fecit adulterium.'
Dixerit hic aliquid: quid? Tu istaec, ianua, nosti,
cui numquam domini limine abesse licet,
nec populum auscultare, sed hic suffixa tigillo
tantum operire soles aut aperire domum?
Saepe illam audivi furtiva voce loquentem
solam cum ancillis haec sua flagitia,
nomine dicentem quos diximus, upote quae mi
asperaret nec linguam esse nec auriculam.
Praeterea adebat quondam, quem dicere nolo
nomine, ne tollat rubra supercilia.
Longus homo est, magnas cui lites intulit olim
Falsum mendaci ventre puerperium.'

To you, dear to a beloved husband, dear to a beloved father
greetings, and may Jupiter bless you with good fortune,
you…door, whom people say served Balbus well
once upon a time, when the old man himself was householder,
though on the other hand (so they say) served the son poorly,
after the boy got married once daddy was dead.
Speak up. You need to explain why you're said
to have changed and broken faith with your old master.
'It's not (may I thus please Caecilius, whom I am currently serving)
my fault, though it is said to be my fault,
nor can anyone say anything improper was done by me.
It's true what they say: blame the door for everything,
whenever some misdeed is discovered,
Everyone shouts at me, "Door, it's your fault!'"
That's not enough that you just flat-out deny it:
you need to make sure that people feel it and see it for real.
'But how can I do that? No one asks me or bothers to know.'
Well we want to know; don't hesitate to tell us.
'OK, then. First off, the story that she was given over to us a virgin
is a lie. Truly her previous husband did not touched her,
whose drooping prick was limper than a soft beetroot
and he could never get it up as far as his undershirt;
but it's said that daddy raided his son's bedroom
and brought crime upon his unhappy home,
either because his impious mind was ablaze with
blind passion, or because the boy was impotent by nature
with his sterile seed; that is to say that from somewhere,
somehow something stiffer had to be
found to loosen her chastity belt.'
You tell a tale of a man distinguished by his wonderful piety
…who'd piss in his very own son's lap!
'And yet she says not just this, but knows also,
Brixia, that is, situated below Cycnus' watchtower,
past which the golden Mella flows with gentle wave,
Brixia, much-loved mother of the "lady of the house",
but also tells tales of affairs with Cornelius and Postumius,
with both of whom she had a nasty affair.
Here someone might say this: "Door, how can you know this
when you're never able to leave your master's threshold,
and can't hear gossip, but stuck under the lintel,
you can only open and shut the house."
Well, I often heard her speaking in low tones
alone with her maids, about her indiscretions,
naming the names I told you, in as much as she
didn't expect me to have either a mouth or ears.
Moreover, she mentioned a certain someone, whom
I'd rather not call by name, lest he raise his red eyebrows.
He's a tall fellow who once was involved in a big lawsuit,
a case of false childbirth with a lying womb.'

A summary is worthwhile, given the poem’s varied interpretations: the wife was not a virgin
when she arrived, but her husband could not have deflowered her; everyone says that his own
father did it, and she herself confesses multiple affairs to her slaves.\(^{221}\) While the poem's
language seems deliberately convoluted, to imagine more than a single father and a single son
and a single wife inhabiting the world of the poem is to over-think the poem; there need be no
"riddle".\(^{222}\) The poem itself is a simple one, both humorous and shocking: the interlocutor
carries on with an elaborate two-line address before we finally realize the grammatically
feminine "person" he is talking to is in fact a house door. The door is an important character in
love poetry, though it usually is the passive recipient of a lover's tears or anger, and serves as a
barrier to accessing his mistress.\(^{223}\) Contrary to tradition, however, Catullus turns the door not

\(^{221}\) After Giangrande 1970, especially p. 95 n. 35.
\(^{222}\) As Copley (1949) would have it.
\(^{223}\) For the role of the door in amatory poetry, see Copley 1956, 47-51.
into a barrier preventing access to the household, but into a means of revealing the misadventures of the householders.224

It is on this fact that my interpretation hinges. Rather than arguing for or against an inevitably insoluble biographical interpretation to determine the intelligibility of poem 67, I would argue that the main thrust of the poem is poetic, contained in the very fact that a house door is revealing secrets of the house to a passerby, who in turn serves as the narrator of a revelatory poem.225 Under such an interpretation, whether or not we can identify the characters in the poem with historical personages is irrelevant: we, the readers, are all in on the joke of the door divulging private information.226 The door and its good or bad service to the householder serves as a symbol for personal poetry of the type Catullus is writing, wherein he proposes (or at least purports) to reveal the story of a love affair he was involved in, as well as to lampoon in iambic fashion his rivals, amatory and political. Despite markedly ambiguous language and elusive biographical references, Catullus is providing his "outside" readers with meaning as much as he is denying it to them.

The key to unlocking the door is provided in the "conversation" between the interlocutor and the door. After the door laments that it is always blamed for information leaks, the interlocutor makes a crucial statement: "Your simple denial [that it's your fault] is not enough: you need to make people feel it—make them see it" (sentiat et videat, vv. 15-16).227 True perception relies on vision, or in this case, visualization. The door replies that this is the very

224 Compare Propertius 1.16, but note that at vv. 9-12 the door laments that it is unable to protect its mistress from rumors (from the outside), whereas Catullus' door only provides confirmation of rumors to an outsider, while the source of those rumors is the mistress within (67.41-3).
225 I think the poem does have a biographical kernel, as noted by the specific references to Brixia, a city within Catullus' provincial sphere, and by the specific physical description at the end of the poem, which is examined below. I argue only that the poem does not need to be biographical, and that Catullus has packaged an additional level of meaning which helps to explain his poetic program. Indeed, if one understands that the characters are "real", the poem's statement becomes all the more forceful and a demonstration of the point it is expressing.
226 Many scholars see one form of a joke or another as central to the poem: see especially Murgatroyd 1989.
227 Videat is emphasized because it closes the couplet.
problem: no one actually asks the truth behind the matter or will go to the effort of understanding (scire laborat, v. 17). To this the interlocutor replies that we want to know, that we will go to the effort (nos volumus, v. 18). Here I think we must understand in nos and nobis neither the "royal we", nor that the scene presents the interlocutor (Catullus) standing before the house door with a group of friends (revelers perhaps?), but rather that Catullus is turning outward, gesturing to us, his reading audience and incorporating us into his poem (as he did in c. 45, another very marked case). The door's complaint is best directed to listeners who know its plight, listeners who have either been writing poems hinging on visually accessing or denying private (erotic) information, or reading them.

After bidding the door speak and going through the effort—listening to the door and seeing across its threshold into the private lives of others—the interlocutor's response is narras (v. 29). Catullus makes the connection between videre and narrare that is explored throughout this dissertation. The door, a barrier between public and private and a means of both auditory and visual exclusion, disregards its function and stands wide open to tell the audience the sordid tale of one family's sexual intrigues. The door has narrated (dic, narras) a tale with the expressed purpose of making naysayers see (videat) that it is not at fault. Catullus also calls attention to the door's disclosure by putting a question in the mouth of a straw man at vv. 37-40. The straw man asks how an immobile door can possibly know all this. Not only does the poet draw attention to his use of the symbol of the door, but he explicitly states that the door's function is to open and shut the house, to provide or deny access (v. 40). The lady's indiscretions are revealed because she underestimated the door's faculties, not expecting it to have ears or mouth (vv. 43-4). One does not expect a door to hear and tell. Poetry, on the other hand, can
tell, and thus show, what goes on within the presumed privacy of a house or to further spread
gossip that is already circulating about the town (vv. 31-6).

The door's fluent revelation of private information in the closing section of the poem (vv. 31-48) stands in contrast to its initial recalcitrance in disclosing any information, at which point the narrator has to "convince" the door to talk (nobis dicere ne dubita, v. 18). The door also self-consciously notes that doors are always blamed when information leaks out of a house (vv. 10-14). The interlocutor is seeking confirmation of the adulterous acts the lady within is rumored to have committed. The ferunt of v. 5 informs the reader that the rumors are already circulating: the door has failed in its task and the misdeeds of the house have leaked out. The door's story provides a window into the interior of the household that affords a true view of what is happening within. The town's gossip circulates via the traditional rumor mill, but a poetic account of that gossip solidifies it by purporting to allow a view across the boundaries of public and private. This latter fact is reinforced by the physical description that ends the poem (vv. 45-48). As discussed above in the description of Egnatius, when Catullus provides specific physical details, they are almost always negative and are emphasized by their positioning at the end of a poem or by their contrast with a known positive figure like Lesbia. The door is forced to tell what it knows and through its final speech act creates a mental image of a particular moechus.

The door's reluctance to reveal private information is an illusion, however, since the poet is the one doing the revealing using the door as a mouthpiece. This is a part of the crux of the matter: the poem is a statement by Catullus about the revelatory nature of his poetry with the door serving as a symbol for his poetry as a whole and its ability to serve as a window for the reader into the affairs of others. The poem calls for the reader to look at the frame of the window Khan enjoined modern scholarship to look through. On the other side of that window is personal
material, loves and hates and sorrows. Poem 67 calls attention to the frame, the door that gives access to the juicy information within, exactly the type of information that Catullus has revealed elsewhere in the book via his poetry.

2.7 Conclusion

What views of Catullus can the reader see through the window of his poetry? Three different views present themselves to the reader: Catullus watching, Catullus showing and Catullus attempting to prevent others from seeing. Throughout, Catullus connects his poetic telling with poetic seeing, to the point where the two often become indistinguishable. The opening poem of the collection places Catullus in the role of watcher, excluded from his lover's company, which spurs him to jealousy at his inability to use the sparrow as Lesbia does to relieve his passion. The collection ends on a similar note at c. 51, but at a time prior to its beginning. Here Catullus is again reduced to watcher, in awe of the god-like man who is able to watch and listen to his beloved, while Catullus is reduced to senselessness. His total sense deprivation at the sight of Lesbia is a cause for fear. In both cases, Catullus' desiring gaze is coupled with jealousy and fear when he is forced to the position of outsider.

When Catullus is in Lesbia's company, however, he presents similar jealousy and fear as regards the gazes of outsiders. As a particeps he takes pains to ward off invidia at their happiness. But in his desire to cut off routes for invidia, Catullus provides his readers with an exact count of the number of kisses he attempts to conceal from outside viewers. The reader is allowed information that is denied to the poem's internal viewer. This same reader is made an external viewer in the companion piece, c. 7, by way of poetic allusion: the key to a fuller understanding—and thus a complete view—of Catullus' love, is understanding Catullus' poetry.
Catullus does not just view his own love, though, but the love of his friends, and is even able to step back and contemplate the possibility of idyllic happiness for lovers in a manner reminiscent of both visual art and poetry. In both cases, the essential link between his viewing—imagining his friend's sexual antics or contemplating lovers as if they were depicted in a painting—is poetry, whether it be showing his friend's *illepidus amor* through his *lepidus versus*, or hearkening to the tradition of amatory poetry before him.

At the end of his affair, what Catullus shows his reader is a visual analogue to the written *Passer*: the image of the plowed field and the injured flower at the edge of that field, damaged by the passing plow that is Lesbia. The *lepidus libellus* dedicated to Nepos contains a strong element of the visual as an aid to Catullus' expression of his new conception of love and poetry. A reader who understands the visual component will have a fuller understanding of the poetry, and thus a true understanding of Catullus' love. Because of Lesbia's inability to understand Catullus' *foedus aeternum*, she is denied visual access to his recording of their love with the injunction *nec meum respectet, ut ante, amorem*. Despite being a *Sapphica puella* and therefore able to understand his poetry, she does not meet the second criterion of understanding Catullus, the ability to view his specific conception of love.

Throughout the *Passer*, and throughout the *liber Catulli*, the poet reveals the necessity of mental imaging for the understanding of his poetry, whether it be as he stands at the reader's side, contemplating a painting, or openly calling attention to a door which allows—invites, even—access to a private, interior world, rather than denying access. For the reader who is willing to exert the effort to know, Catullus' poetry will act as a window to a private world, letting the reader see and feel what happens inside.
3.1 Introduction

Propertius has long been recognized as a poet with a particularly visual penchant. While many studies have served to shed light on Propertius’ visual tendencies, they are frequently reduced to biographical fallacy to explain them. Indeed, many scholars are so intent on finding real paintings behind Propertius’ poetic images that some seem to have forgotten the fact that the gaze appears twice in the first four lines of the Monobiblos with no reference to painting whatsoever. These cases of biographical fallacy generally hold that Propertius was surrounded (as any cosmopolitan Roman likely was) by works of public and private art, and this was a major contribution to his particularly imagistic poetry. As demonstrated in the previous chapters, there is little reason to speculate as to what kind of art Propertius did or did not see in his daily life, when the spurs to his particular brand of visual poetry can be found in rhetorical theory as well as previous poetic tradition. It seems quite possible that Propertius did have a personal taste for description which echoed contemporary art—and his visual inclination is indeed different from either Catullus’ or Ovid’s—but this is far from the only possible source of his tendency. Of the numerous studies which investigate Propertius’ visual inclinations, one

228 For an early example of this observation, see Birt 1895. Although not the first to note the fact, Boucher’s study was the first in-depth study of Propertius’ tempérament visuel, which is tied not only to themes of love, as Boucher notes, but of beauty (both that of Cynthia and artwork), passion, and the glory of Rome herself (1965, especially pp. 41-64). Hubbard notes “the usefulness of approaching Propertius without keeping one’s eyes shut to painting” (2001, 166). Papanghelis holds that “Propertian mythology is more of an art gallery than a typological system of universal import”, lending “form, colour and texture” to the characters of the elegies (1987, 5). Kölmel, however, has warned against attempting to find one-to-one correspondences between Propertian descriptions and actual paintings, except where one can determine “echt ‘malerische’ Absichten” (1957, 47).

229 The differences in visual temperament of Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid have often been noted. Luck writes, “Both Ovid and Propertius share an interest in works of art (statues, painting) which is hardly noticeable in Tibullus” (1969, 124). Papanghelis echoes these sentiments: “Tibullus, on the other hand, less visual to my mind than Ovid, betrays none of Propertius’ ocular avidity” (1987, 208). Closer to the topic of this dissertation, Guillemin has shown that both Propertius and Tibullus create emotive settings for their elegy, one through pastoral scenes, and the other through mythological scenes derived from pictorial art (1950). Tibullus, who is not treated in this dissertation, is less disposed to exempla drawn from myth (and consequently visual art) than either Propertius or Ovid, and is arguably less inclined to visuality than either of his fellow elegists. He does, however, employ the same techniques we outlined in our introduction, and it is painting with too broad a stroke to deny any visuality to Tibullus. His particular usages, especially as found in love magic and the use of deception in love (e.g. 1.2.55-60), will be the subject of a later study. The distinction between Propertius and Ovid made in our introduction is best defined as one

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in particular deserves further comment. In his examination of Propertius’ “imagist” poetics, Benediktson has gone so far as to suggest that Propertius attempts the application of techniques of painting to writing.\(^{230}\) This thought is intriguing, given the interconnection of word and mental image as seen in rhetorical theory. Although Benediktson does not follow through with this particular line of thought, I hope to show that Propertius attempts to apply the techniques of painting to his poetry. This is particularly evident in elegy 2.12. By making a poetic representation of a visual representation of Love, Propertius corrects the visual through his poetry to suit his particular love. A one-to-one transposition from image to text is difficult, if not impossible, as he shows with his personal correction of Love’s depiction in 2.12. The poetic version of the image is necessary to make it properly correspond to the self. Whereas Catullus’ use of mental image tends to strive for inclusion or exclusion, revelation or concealment, Propertius’ unique use strives to encapsulate striking images in words.\(^{231}\)

In a move similar to that of my analysis of Catullus c. 45, Lee has suggested that it may be fruitful “to analyse the poems as artistic constructions, as though they were paintings, demonstrate their finer points and bring out their essential qualities.”\(^{232}\) Although Lee’s suggestion is to be applied to all the elegists, it is noteworthy that the analysis of love elegy—the poetry of Propertius in particular—is frequently tied to painting. What is it about love elegy that has caused so many scholars to resort to terms of painting and landscape to analyze these

\(^{230}\) Benediktson 1989, 114. He also holds that Propertius’ imagism was a reaction against the classical principles of his contemporaries. This is not the case, as I attempt to show throughout this dissertation: his contemporaries and predecessors use similar techniques.

\(^{231}\) Ovid, as will be discussed later, aims to capture motion and to demonstrate to his reader the very means by which he uses his poetry to show.

\(^{232}\) Lee 1960, 519 (emphasis mine).
poems? Williams, who thinks there is a need to separate Propertius’ vivid language (“conceptual not pictorial”) from visualization (“This is manipulation of words, without the interference of the mind’s eye.”), I hold that this vivid language, *enargeia*, should be intimately linked to a reader’s visualization. Indeed, how can the two be separated, when *enargeia* and visualization go hand-in-hand in rhetorical theory? Propertius’ emphasis of his own ocular avidity and his visual captivity to Cynthia as well as his use of *enargeia* compel the reader to visualize not only his mythological exempla, which are so strongly tied to visual art, but also the details of his affair with Cynthia. Especially in the case of Propertius’ frequent use of mythological exempla, many of which do happen to be subjects of painting, it is little wonder that critics have often resorted to analogies to painting to explain the poems. This tendency, spurred by Propertius’ vivid language and emphasis on his own viewing, easily bleeds over to analysis of other poems which contain no mythological references and no clear pictorial analogues. In final estimation, there is little denying that Propertius does have a certain painterly sensibility to his writing, but there is also no need to reduce this painterly sensibility to mere

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233 A newer line of questioning has appeared in recent years, focusing on Propertius’ use of poetic devices like ekphrasis, and themes from his Hellenistic and Roman predecessors. Welch’s study of Propertius’ Roman cityscape, while largely outside the purview this chapter, notes that the discourse of art and words that underlies ekphrasis becomes a discourse of lived reality in the face of Propertius’ real Roman topography (2005, 6). Although I do not treat Book 4 at any length, it is important to note that this discourse of lived reality operates throughout Propertius’ elegies, especially in the Monobiblos. In a 1984 article on elegies 2.31 and 2.32, Hubbard provides a thoughtful examination of Propertius’ use of ekphrasis as a means to explore his own thoughts on visual engagement with the subject of love. Hubbard’s article also treats the ekphrasis of the temple of Apollo in 2.31 as a reflection on poetry. Breed (2003) expands the discussion of Propertius’ use of ekphrasis to elegy 1.3 and relates it to Catullus c. 64. This connection between ekphrasis and Cynthia is explored at length below.

234 Williams 1968, 393. His judgment is indicative of both a reaction against the insistence that Propertius was unqualifiedly *un visuel* (typified by Boucher’s work several years prior to Williams’), and of general trends in literary criticism which put considerations of the linguistic construction of text above all others. Williams is not wrong to question how much of Propertius’ “imagistic” language is actually tied to the visual, but to read Propertius without attention to his mind’s eye as well as our own misses an important aspect of his poetic program.

235 Benediktson has posed a question which stands in the background of this chapter: How did Propertius himself view the process of mental perception, and how did it influence his poetics (1989, 103)? Although he strays perhaps too far into speculations of Propertius’ philosophical leanings, he rightly notes that “Propertius appears to create in his poetry the image as though, as described by Lucretius, it were the most effective way to stimulate his reader’s thought processes (1989, 105).” As shown earlier, it is not just Lucretius who teaches that mental image is an excellent way to reach an audience on the deepest level, but also rhetoricians. Catullus notes this fact in c. 67, that a reader who is visually engaged with a text is also more mentally engaged with it.
painting, while glossing over his use of visualization throughout the elegies. As will be discussed further, below, Propertius repeatedly attempts to find analogy between paintings of amatory subjects and his own elegiac program. The correspondences he does find are not one-to-one, however, and verbal art triumphs over visual in his implicit paragone.

Propertius does indeed give pride of place to the eyes by framing the first line of the Monobiblos with Cynthia and his own eyes, and noting elsewhere that the eyes are our guides in love (oculi sunt in amore duces, 2.15.12). But a sensitivity to art is far from all that Propertius’ visual penchant implies, as the two preceding examples reveal. What is the full extent of Propertius’ visual sensibility beyond poetic images reminiscent of painted mythological scenes, which have been the focus of much scholarship about Propertius’ visuality? Do paintings form the background of his mythological scenes simply because he was a connoisseur of art? Certainly not. Recent trends in Propertian scholarship reveal a move from a focus on visualizing concrete objects (e.g. paintings) to visualizing conceptual objects (e.g. the subjects of ekphrasis). We will extend the boundaries of the study of Propertius’ visual tendencies and show that, far from any biographical interest in visual art, his use of vision and mental imaging is in keeping with the tradition of Catullus and Ovid—and perhaps also Gallus, as I hope to show—as well as his Hellenistic predecessors, particularly Meleager and Philodemus. Further, I focus on the text as it interacts with its verbally created images rather than offering a simple mimesis of “real” images. While Propertius may have had a particular fascination with scenes derived from contemporary visual art, this does not account for his visual tendencies in non-mythological contexts, which are revealed in the very first line of the Monobiblos. By looking at the visualized products of Propertius’ inner world, his phantasia, instead of whether he may or may
not have taken a particular mythological exemplum from contemporary art, we will approach Propertius’ *tempérament visuel* on his own terms, poetry.

In this chapter I look at two views of love and poetry that can be discerned by reading Propertius’ poetry with any eye to visuality and his use of mental imaging. In the first, Cynthia as *scripta puella* and the combination of her threefold status as textual object, love object, and viewed object are examined. We will see how Propertius’ *tempérament visuel* translates into a sort of visual captivity to his own creation, and how this captivity, which traps the poet in the role of Argus, forces him always to watch Cynthia, but never to touch her, thus preventing him from being truly successful in love. Cynthia’s nature as textual object which can be beheld in the mind’s eye but never touched because of her fundamental unreality is a refrain for the lover in the Monobiblos. The second view looks to the figure of Gallus, the sometimes poet, sometimes soldier figure whose identity has troubled scholars for decades. In understanding him to be Cornelius Gallus, I will show that the connection between several of these disparate Galluses is one of viewing and poetry, specifically poetic influence. Propertius uses his own mind’s eye to approach Gallus’ love poetry, and thus situates himself as a sort of voyeur to his predecessor’s love affairs, while simultaneously demonstrating the visual aspect of the shared erotics of text. Elegy 1.10 shows mental imaging as a reaction to love poetry through the figure of Propertius himself. This poem allows the reader intimate access to Propertius: we see through *his* mind’s eye as he reads. What we see through his eyes may be instructive in understanding his poetry in general, and the Monobiblos in particular. In addition to exploring aspects of textual influence and his own mental imaging with respect to Gallus’ poetry, Propertius writes more broadly of connections between text and visualization, particularly in his second book of elegies.
In addition to these two main avenues of approach, we may also distinguish between differences in the ends to which Propertius employs visualization throughout his four books of elegies, particularly between the Monobiblos and the second book, which are the focus of this chapter. In the Monobiblos Propertius deploys in earnest the rhetorical and poetic strategies discussed in Chapter 1 with a view to foregrounding the realist strategies that operate in love elegy. While not doing so in an overt—one might say Ovidian—manner, he highlights conflicts between the realism of elegy and the fundamental unreality of mental images derived from text. Rather than enacting visualization as in the Monobiblos, the second book of elegies provides a sort of theoretical discussion of the use of mental image in elegy, ekphrasis, and connections between art, text, and love. In 2.12 Propertius examines love as painting of Amor wherein the artist has managed to give physical form to a creation of his imagination. Elegy 2.31(and 32) also begins with an ekphrasis of Apollo’s temple, which had delayed a rendezvous with Cynthia. When joined, the two poems explore connections of poetry, visual art, and love through the medium of ekphrasis. The penultimate poem of Book 3 reprises questions of Cynthia’s textuality and the limits of realism, perhaps as a farewell to love elegy before turning to the aetiological and Roman elegies—and consequently to description of concrete and knowable objects—of the next book. Even in this last book, which is discussed only in passing, Propertius revisits themes of visualization and elegy from earlier books. By paying attention to the tenor of Propertius’ use of visualization in each of the four books, frequently asked questions of the relation of the four books to each other and to the arc of Propertius’ poetic development may be illuminated.

3.2: Viewing Poetry
This section explores the connection between Propertius’ *tempérament visuel* and its expression in his elegiac fantasy. By “viewing poetry” I mean Propertius’ own visual interaction with the elegiac world he has created in his poetry. Cynthia is given physical and psychological characteristics that suggest her existence as an actual mistress outside of the world of the text, qualities that make her “more real”. I examine how Propertius uses visual language to enhance the reader’s perception of the reality of his elegiac world. We will see that, not only is the reader to be persuaded to believe in the text’s fundamental reality, but also that text’s poet-lover (Propertius, as it were) is himself moved by the same strategies. We begin by examining the poet-lover’s visual captivity to his own textual creation in elegy 1.1, which distinguishes Propertius’ program from Catullus’. Next, we look for clues to Cynthia’s essential unreality that Propertius leaves in elegy 1.3. Throughout this section I will focus on “viewing poetry” as Propertius’ visualization of his own elegiac texts. He struggles with a mistress who is vividly realized in his mind’s eye, but who is nevertheless a figment of his imagination. Cynthia remains a powerful force whose gaze grips the poet’s emotions and addles his mind with love’s sickness. The love with which she infects him, moreover, turns his active male gaze passive, and once seized by Cynthia’s eyes, he becomes her subject, no longer living his life according to his own plan.

236 Wyke 1987, 47. She qualifies her argument, however, by claiming that realist strategies are not present in Propertius’ second book of elegies, where there are few historical personages, and even fewer named addressees. This is true only to an extent, as will be shown throughout this chapter. While the Monobiblos is certainly the book which is the most realistic in that it describes an affair with a purportedly real mistress, the second book uses Cynthia as a springboard for musings on the visual expression of love and love poetry, rather than staging her as a mistress at the center of Propertius’ elegiac love-world. One of the benefits of approaching the text of Propertius with an eye to his use of visualization is that these techniques occur throughout the various books, although applied differently. There is no need to treat the Monobiblos as a separate entity to be contrasted with the second, third, or fourth books. Instead we can see how the poet applies the same technique to different ends in a single poetic collection, or even within a single book of poetry. I suggest supplementing Wyke’s idea of the *scripita puella* with, in the particular case of Propertius, a *visa puella*. As I will show throughout this chapter, but especially in the discussion of poems from the Monobiblos, an essential aspect of Propertius’ *tempérament visuel* is the interaction between the love affair within the text and the reader’s visualization of that affair. As my discussion will show, 1.10 enjoins the reader to read like Propertius—with the mind’s eye.
3.2.1: Visual Captivity to the *scripta puella* (1.1)

Our study of Propertius’ visual poetry begins at the beginning, with his programmatic first elegy. Eyes anchor the opening line of the collection, ensuring that vision should be at the forefront of the reader’s mind in approaching Propertius’ poems, especially those pertaining to Cynthia, for the two are inextricably joined from the outset.

*Cynthia prima suis miserum me cepit ocellis,
contactum nullis ante cupidinibus.*

tum mihi constantis deiectum lumina fastus
et caput impositis pressit Amor pedibus,
donec me docuit castas odisse puellas
improbus, et nullo vivere consilio.
et mihi iam toto furor hic non deficit anno,
cum tamen adversos cogor habere deos.

*Milanion nullos fugiendo, Tulle, labores
saevitiam durae contudit Iasidos.*

*nam modo Partheniis amens errabat in antris,*

<…………………………………..>

<et modo………………………………………….>

*ibat et hirsutas ille videre feras;*

*ille etiam Hylaei percussus vulnere rami
saucius Arcadiis rupibus ingemuit.*

*ergo velocem potuit domuisse puellam:*

*tantum in amore preces et bene facta valent.*

*in me tardus Amor non [n]ullas cogitat artis,*

*nec meminit notas, ut prius, ire vias.*

*at vos, deductae quibus est fallacia lunae*

*et labor in magicis sacra piare focis,*

*en agendum dominae mentem convertite nostrae,*

*et facite illa meo palleat ore magis!*

*tunc ego crediderim vobis et sidera et umbras*

*posse Cythinaeis ducere carminibus.*

*et vos, qui sero lapsum revocatis amici,*

*quaerite non sani pectoris auxilia.*

*fortiter et ferrum saevo s patiemur et ignes,*

*tit modo libertas quae velit ira loqui.*

*ferte per extremas gentes et forte per undas*

*qua non ulla meum femina norit iter.*

*vos remanete quibus facili deus annuit aure,*

*sitis et in tuto semper amore pares.*

*nam me nostra Venus noctes exercet amaras,*

*et nullo vacuus tempore defit Amor.*

*hoc, moneo, vitate malum: sua quemque moretur cura, neque assueto mutet amore locum.*

*quod si quis monitis tardas adverterit auris,*

*heu, refert quanto verba dolore mea!*

*Cynthia was the first to ensnare me with her eyes, wretch that I am, never before infected by love.*

*Then Love cast down my looks of stubborn pride.*
and pressed my head beneath his feet, until he taught me to hate chaste girls, wicked fellow he is, and to live with no sense at all. Poor me, for now this madness has lasted a whole year, while I am compelled to have the gods against me. Milanion, by avoiding no toils, my dear Tullus, Blunted the cruelty of harsh Atalanta. For now he wandered distraught in Parthenian glens, <and now……………………………………………..>
he would go frequently to see hairy beasts; he was even struck by a wound from Hylaeus’ club, and, wounded, groaned atop Arcadian rocks. Thus was he able to tame the swift-footed girl: such is the power devotion and service have in love. But in my case, slow-witted Love devises no plans, and does not remember to tread, as before, well-known paths. But you, whose practice it is to lure the moon down from the sky by witchcraft and to propitiate spirits over magic fire, come and change the mind of my mistress and ensure that she turn paler than my own cheek! Then I should believe you able to summon ghosts and stars with your Thessalian spells. Or else you, my friends, who too late recall the fallen, seek help for your sick heart. Bravely shall I endure the knife and savage fire, if only there were freedom to say what my anger really wishes. Carry me through distant lands and across the waves, where no woman may know my path. Stay home, all you to whom the god has nodded with easy ear, and may you ever be partner in a love safe and sound. For my love tests me night after bitter night, and idle Love is never lacking at any time. Avoid this sickness, I warn you: let each one occupy himself with his sweetheart, and change not beds from a love to which he has grown accustomed. But if anyone turn deaf ears to my warnings, oh, with so much pain he’ll recall my words!

Two different gazes set the stage for Propertius’ elegiac program. Cynthia’s dominating
gaze and Propertius’ defeated eyes foreground the striking reversal of roles in their relationship. What is elided in this snapshot is the presumable path which led to this moment: Propertius looked at Cynthia, masculine and confident with his constantis lumina fastus, and Cynthia looked back, with devastating effect. Her gaze was the stronger of the two, and had several important effects on his psyche. Firstly, her melting glance infected him with Love, whose
influence, as we see in the following couplet, is even more deleterious to the lover.237 Once touched by Love, the god stands with his boot on Propertius’ neck, forcing his face to the ground, denying him an active gaze. Cynthia has looked at him, and it is he who has been defeated, all the more so because his male gaze has been deactivated by Love. Although once confident—arrogant, even—in the power of his own gaze, the lover has been disarmed by a woman’s glance. His dismay at the situation is reinforced by the prominent placement of miserum in the opening line, seeking the reader’s sympathy.238 The lover’s misery stands in sharp contrast to his prior visual dominance, his “looks of pride”, and his former bodily integrity (contactum nullis cupidinibus). Even if we resist and do not feel sorry for him, we nonetheless note the novelty of the position in which Propertius has placed himself. He has been captured by a woman’s glance, which is itself not a new idea, but when coupled with the deactivation of his own gaze, the lover becomes truly miser. Because he is so pathetic and unable to control his gaze, Propertius turns it inward to a world of fantasy and myth. In this inner world mythological lovers find the success that Propertius cannot. Here he can seek to regain control by producing images through poetry—by writing ekphrasis. As we will see below, however, even in this interior space, his gaze can be captured and pacified by the very images he has created: Cynthia the disobedient ekphrasis in 1.3 and the temple of Apollo in 2.31/32. Even though they cannot “look back”, they captivate him. This fact, I think, is a key to understanding Propertius’ tempérament visuel: his poetry frequently expresses his susceptibility to visual stimulation, whether through actual sense perception or through mental imaging. Indeed, “seeing” manifests itself physically, especially through stupefaction and paralysis—or, more aptly, something akin

237 Here I think we must understand contactus in its full medical sense.
238 The boldness of Propertius’ total submission is reinforced by the “very bold” application of a genitive of description to a body part in the phrase constantis lumina fastus (Heyworth 2007, 3).
to *ekplexis*. Propertius’ ultimate reaction to these situations is to respond with his own poetic creation.

The opening line of 1.1 points not only to Cynthia’s ability to physically and emotionally affect Propertius with her gaze, but also to the poetic tradition from which her gaze is taken. The first line is as much about the lover’s own gaze as it is about poetic influence, in this case, Meleagrian and Catullan models for Propertius’ poetry. That the opening lines allude to Meleager (*AP* 12.101.1-4 = 103 *HE*) is a commonplace of Propertian commentaries. Unfortunately, the particular connections between Meleager and Propertius cannot be dwelt on for any length of time here, but a brief note of this important and strategically placed allusion to Meleager must be made. What commentators elide in their too-short references to Meleager is the true extent to which the amatory poetic programs (if we can call Meleager’s such) of the two poets overlap. One particular point of overlap which has gone unnoticed is the treatment of vision and the gaze in both poets. Although Meleager’s pederastic poems involving Myiscus are the clearest parallels to the effects of Cynthia’s gaze in 1.1.1 (in these poems we find the constant refrain of the dangerous nature of his glance), the poems of the fifth book of the *Palatine Anthology* contain many references to witnesses and confidants, particularly lamps, which are echoed throughout Propertius’ collection. Furthermore, we look forward to the appearance of a related Philodemean intertext—which also revolves around eyes, the gaze, and voyeuristic interlopers—in 1.3. The opening lines of the collection show a lover who has suffered a twofold visual defeat: he, the man, has been captured by the active gaze of a woman; and Amor has added insult to injury, forcing his eyes to the ground, thus deactivating his gaze.

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239 The allusion is usually brushed aside with a single sentence by commentators, who simply point out the allusion, or deem it an “imitation”. Rothstein’s comments ad loc. are perhaps the most expansive and thoughtful.
In this visual contest preliminary to the poem, the male lover has been bested, his body and mind captured by Cynthia’s glance, and his face pushed to the ground under Love’s heel. Like Meleager, Propertius is at the mercy of his lover’s eyes. The allusion in 1.3 to Philodemus (AP 5.123 = 9 GP = 14 Sider) confirms Propertius’ visual passivity and his kinship to Meleager. The moon, borrowed from Philodemus, which wakes Cynthia in 1.3, reinforces Propertius’ lack of an effective gaze. He was able to stare at Cynthia—like Argus at Io—without waking her and without acting on his sexual intention. The moon, on the other hand, wakes Cynthia with the slightest touch of her eye-beams. As in 1.1, we see that Propertius’ gaze is ineffectual. The Meleagrian lover, when put in competition with his Philodemean counterpart, remains passive as both a lover and a viewer. The gaze and the role of the eyes have profoundly different roles in the poetry of Meleager and Philodemus; the latter’s use of these themes is far more “active” in contrast to Meleager’s l’Eros patetico ed inoffensivo.\footnote{To use Morelli’s terminology (2003, 190).} This first verse is densely packed with themes which reappear throughout this chapter. Whereas in the first line Cynthia is introduced as a mistress with a baleful gaze, we should contrast other occurrences of her eyes as a recurring aspect of her beauty in 2.3.14 and 2.12.23. It is in this first verse alone that love, poetic influence, and the mistress-as-textual-construct with a fixating gaze are found combined. Still, the power of Cynthia’s eyes to capture Propertius is a notion that will be echoed several times as the poet is held motionless by other beautiful objects.

Although the opening lines of the poem align Propertius with Meleager’s brand of love poetry, this particular treatment of viewing sets him at odds with Catullus’ program. Like Propertius’ elegies, Catullus’ Lesbia poems begin with a look. Though less explicit than Propertius’ twofold mention of eyes in the first four lines of his collection, Catullus introduces us to his affair by placing himself in the role of watcher, jealously looking at Lesbia as she
entertains herself with her passcr. Importantly, although Catullus looks at Lesbia in cc. 2 and 3, she does not look back. Unlike Cynthia, who lays Propertius low with her glance, Lesbia does not even acknowledge Catullus as he watches her. Propertius begins with a deactivated and emasculated gaze, while Catullus begins with a jealous one, which has been reduced to looking in from the outside. We get an inkling that Lesbia’s gaze may have had a similar destructive potential to Cynthia’s, had she actually deployed it against Catullus. In c. 51 we see Catullus’ jealous gaze again, but this time tempered by admiration of his rival’s ability to endure looking directly at Lesbia, an act which strikes Catullus dumb. Throughout the Lesbia poems we see an impulse toward controlling the gazes of the reader and characters within the narrative. Poems 5-7 highlight the control Catullus seeks over who has access to his own relationship, and the access he has to his friends’ relationships. Poem 11 is the ultimate expression of this control: Catullus demands that Lesbia no longer look back at his love. Propertius cannot control his own gaze, let alone demand that Cynthia look or not look. Unlike Catullus’ more Philodemean lover who “knows how to bite back”, as it were, Propertius’ love is in a fully Meleagran mode, in the visual thrall of his lover.

In addition to the poem’s focus on the eyes and their function as pathways for love to invade and control the heart and mind (as well as serving as loci of poetic influence), the address to Tullus at v. 9 highlights Propertius’ awareness of his audience. In this programmatic first poem Propertius points to the importance of viewing in understanding of his poetry, but, more particularly, to the audience’s visual participation in his poem through mental imaging. The inclusion of Tullus in the opening line of the Milanion exemplum inserts the reader into a crucial juncture in the poem, the revelation of Gallus as one of Propertius’ models. Just as Propertius hearkens to his reader with the call to Tullus, Propertius places himself in this very same role of
reader of love poetry in 1.10, which explicitly mingles readership, mental imaging, and poetic influence.

The suggestion that 1.1.9-18 alludes to no longer extant poetry of Gallus was put forth long ago by Skutsch because of similarities with Ecl. 10.50-69.242 It has been argued that Propertius and Vergil give reason to suppose that Gallus used either Milanion or Acontius, or both, in a famous but now lost exemplum.243 If the Milanion exemplum is in fact an allusion to an exemplum used by Gallus, Propertius simultaneously hearkens to Gallus and stands apart from him.244 Propertius’ love has made him so passive that he cannot follow the notas vias (v. 18) that led Milanion to amatory success and, to judge from Vergil, Gallus to amatory relief. Does this perhaps imply a greater visual engagement with the scripta puella, a type of poetry that depends on visualization to help ensure the “reality” of the mistress who exists in a world of elegy—a world governed by poetic tropes and with generic rules for a lover’s behavior—as compared to a more historically “real” mistress like Lesbia? Does Propertius seek to separate the new, more fully articulated and codified genre of love elegy, from earlier experiments in amatory poetry by Catullus and Gallus?

Let us provisionally accept an allusion to Gallus and his treatment by Vergil in Propertius’ Milanion exemplum. At its simplest, the Milanion myth underscores the demented (furor, v. 7) Propertius’ failure to tame a heartless mistress while the equally demented (amens, v. 11) Milanion tamed his. Despite the presumed lacuna of two verses between vv. 11 and 12,

242 Skutsch 1901, 2-27; Skutsch 1906, 155-90. The mention of Partheniis...antris (v. 11) alone lends much credence to the thought that Propertius alludes to Gallus, who was famously the recipient of Parthenius’ Erotica Pathemata. For Gallus and Parthenius, see most recently Biraud, Voisin and Zucker, eds. 2008, esp. pp. 19-22, and Delbey 2008. Booth holds that Propertius, in his Milanion exemplum, is attempting to “correct” Gallus and criticize his poetics (2001a, 72). I agree with her in seeing in the Milanion exemplum a sort of gentle criticism of Gallus’ belief that he could comfort himself through poetry (as implied by Ecl. 10.50-51).
243 Ross (1975, 63) thinks Milanion was the only mythological exemplum. Rosen and Farrell (1986) argue that both Milanion and Acontius were written about by Gallus.
244 Heyworth 2007, 8.
the reading of *ibat...videre feras* remains the most acceptable reading of this corrupt line.\(^{245}\) Our interpretation of the vexed *videre* will perhaps allay some concerns about the reading.\(^{246}\) In the exemplum of Milanion, I think we are to understand an allusion to Gallus’ own version of the myth, and in particular his attempts to deal with his love for Lycoris as seen in *Ecl.* 10. Gallus is not Milanion himself, but a representative of a second, less active, type of lover, while Propertius presents a third and even more passive type, forced off the *notas vias* of his predecessors. Propertius advises Tullus to avoid this situation altogether because he has been unable to take Milanion’s—or even Gallus’—path. Milanion, by enduring labors, eventually tamed Atalanta (or at least won her heart) by actually “going to see” the beasts face to face. For his part, in *Ecl.* 10 Gallus ran off to the woods to comfort himself with his poetry and his ability to visualize himself leading a masculine *vita activa* of hunting beasts (*mihi…videor…ire*). The progression from Milanion to Gallus moves from a heroic “going and seeing” to a poetic “imagining oneself going and seeing”, from an active endurance of trials to an imagined one. Neither of these solutions works for Propertius, however, as the concluding warning to Tullus suggests: *hoc, moneo, vitare malum* (1.1.35). Whereas Gallus may have been able to soothe himself with manly fantasy, Propertius’ male gaze is entirely undone by the onslaught of Cynthia and Amor. Unable to actively gaze, Propertius turns his eyes inward to his phantasia. Unlike Gallus, however, even in his own mind, his gaze is emasculated. Cynthia remains in control and

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\(^{245}\) The likely contents of the lacuna are seen in Ovid *Ars* 2.185-92, which describes Milanion’s endurance of Atalanta’s trials before finally winning her hand. Despite various attempts at correction without positing a lacuna, Housman’s note that the *modo*, if understood as “at one time”, of v. 11 must be accompanied by a second *modo* (Housman 1972, 42-44). The alternating *modo* is picked up by Ovid’s *saepe…saepe…saepe*. See especially Heyworth 2007, pp. 6-7 for a summary of the various textual problems of this passage and their proposed solutions (or lack thereof).

\(^{246}\) The final infinitive with *ibat* is defensible in light of the similar construction in *processerat…quaerere* (1.20.23-24). Interpreting *videre* as an infinitive of purpose implying that Milanion attended Atalanta on hunting expeditions is in keeping with the dictates of the story here and in Ovid *Ars* 2.191. In *Ecl.* 10, though, Gallus wanders the woods to distract himself from his love, not as a form of lover’s servitude. Propertius himself acts like Vergil’s Gallus in elegy 1.18.
Propertius finds no peace in his inner world. Indeed, his torment worsens as he imagines not a palliative hunting trip (or something equally active), but Cynthia off in Baiae well out of his sight and surrounded by men (1.11). As seen in the opening lines of the poem, Propertius’ eyes are entirely in the thrall of Cynthia. Even in his mind’s eye—a place of refuge for Gallus—he is haunted by Cynthia, her cruelty, and imagined infidelities. Whereas Milanion was man enough to actually go and see his quarry (and in doing so to win Atalanta), and Gallus to imagine himself doing so to assuage his heart, Propertius is so enthralled, so miser, that not even the latter will save him. Avoiding this debilitating love entirely is the only recommendation he can provide his addressee.

The important contrast between Propertius Milanion and Vergil’s Gallus lies in the former’s active expression ibat…videre (v. 12) versus the latter’s middle-passive videor…/ ire (Ecl. 10.58-59). In contrast to Gallus, Milanion actually goes to “see” the beasts of the forest: as Booth puts it, “Milanion at least really ‘went to see’, while Gallus only ever ‘saw himself going’. A pattern emerges which we will further trace in our discussion of 1.3: Gallus was an unsuccessful lover (indigno…amore, Ecl. 10.10) because he only imagined himself going to “see” the beasts; Milanion is a successful lover because he actually went to “see” the beasts. Although not as successful in love as Milanion, Gallus was nonetheless able to use to his poetry to soothe himself. Gallus may be no Milanion, but he is not so wretched as Propertius. To differentiate himself from the notas vias of Gallus’ elegy, Propertius contrasts his own misery with Milanion’s eventual success and Gallus’ relief. Within the context of 1.1 and the rest of the Monobiblos we see that Propertius is more like Gallus than Milanion, or more like Meleager than Philodemus. The difference between the unsuccessful poet-lovers is that they only “think about going to see” or are held in thrall by the eyes, active male gaze deactivated, whereas the

247 Booth 2001a, 72.
successful mythological hero actually “goes to see”\textsuperscript{248} As the end of 1.1 and other poems in the Monobiblos suggest, Propertius knows that vividly realized love poetry is no release from love.

In concluding the discussion of Propertius’ programmatic first elegy, I mimic Propertius’ poem and lay out my own program for approaching his poetry. The following themes introduced in this dense elegy will reappear throughout this chapter: visual captivity to something beautiful (whether Cynthia or an artwork); pride of place given to the eyes in matters of love; the attendance of poetry and poetic influence upon matters visual; and the close-woven mesh of poetic theory, love, and mental image.

3.2.2: Cynthia as Visual Artifact (1.3)

We turn now to one of the most discussed poems in the Propertian corpus. As can be determined from any number of studies on this poem, elegy 1.3 is one of the few sure instances where Kölmel’s “echt ‘malerische’ Absichten” are likely to be found. Although one might wonder what sort of painterly intentions Propertius might have had, several of his mythological exempla are the subject of extant wall paintings\textsuperscript{249} Our study of 1.3 looks beyond the connections between the paintings of these heroines and Propertius’ references to them, instead focusing on three major aspects of the poem: Cynthia’s status as a speaking artwork as an extension of her status as \textit{scripta puella}, Propertius’ description of himself as Argus, and the

\textsuperscript{248} Note here the contrast between the pictorial representations of the Ariadne and Andromeda myths in 1.3 and Propertius’ own plight. In two of the three mythological scenes, a god or hero successfully loved the sleeping heroine. The drunken lover, in contrast, is unable to find the same success with his own \textit{puella} as his exempla did with theirs. Successful lovers for Propertius are myths: Milanion, Theseus, Perseus. Poet-lovers like Propertius and Gallus lack the fortitude to do what needs to be done to win the day. With his gaze forced down and turned inward to a world of myth and imagination, Propertius finds exempla to follow in love. Unlike his mythological counterparts, he never finds true success, even in his world of erotic fantasy. The lack of success—of obtaining activity in love—experienced by Propertius is paradoxical. By turning inward, he should find success in his own fantasy, yet he ends up in a position similar to Gallus. The reason for this, the unreality of the poetic mistress as confronted in 1.3, is discussed next.

\textsuperscript{249} Note particularly the “Baccante addormentata” from the Casa del Citarista in Pompeii, illustrated in Maiuri 1957, pp. 90-91 (Fig. 16). Particularly in keeping with the narrative of 1.3, see also the “Il bacio del satiro” and the “Pan discopre una baccante” illustrated in Rizzo 1929, pll. 113 and 115 (Fig. 17).
well-trodden question of the conflict between the poem’s “ideal” and “real” Cynthias.

Throughout this section I will expand on Curran’s observation of 1.3 that Propertius is not only the creator of his world, but an actor in it as well.250

Qualis Thesea iacuit cedente carina
languida desertis Cnosia litoribus;
qualis et accubuit primo Cepheia somno,
libia iam duris cotibus, Andromede;
nec minus assiduis Edonis fessa choreis
qualis in herboso concidit Apidano:
talis visa mihi mollem spirare quietem
Cynthia non certis nixa caput manibus,
ebra cum multo traherem vestigia Baccho,
et quaterent sera nocte facem pueri.

hanc ego, nondum etiam sensus deperditus omnis,
molliter impresso conor adire toro;
et quamvis duplici correptum ardore iuberent
hac Amor hac Liber, durus uterque deus,
subiectio leviter positam temptare lacerto
osculaque admota sumere et arma manu,
non tamen ausus eram dominae turbare quietem,
expertae metuens iurgia saevitiae;

sed sic intentis haerebam fixus ocellis,
Argus ut ignotis cornibus Inachidos,
et modo solvebam nostra de fronte corollas
ponebamque tuis, Cynthia, temporibus;
et modo gaudebam lapsos formare capillos;
nunc furtiva cavos poma dabam manibus
omnia quae ingrato largibar munera somno,
munera de prono saepe voluta sinu;
et quotiens raro duxti suspiria motu,
obstupui vano credulus auspicio,
ne qua tibi insolitos portarent visa timores,
neve quis invitam cogeret esse suam:
donec diversas praecurrens luna fenestras,
luna moraturis sedula luminibus,
compositos levibus radiis patefecit ocellos.
sic ait in mollis fixa toro cubitum:
‘tandem te nostro referens iniuria lecto
alterius clausis expulit e foribus?
namque ubi longa meae consumpsi tempora noctis,
languidus exactis, ei mihi, sideribus?
o utinam talis producas, improbe, noctes,
me miseram qualis semper habere iubes!
nam modo purpureo fallebam stamine somnum,
rursus et Orphee carmine, fessa, lyrae;
terredum leviter mecum deserta querebar
externo longas saepe in amore moras:
dum me iucundis lapsam Sopor impulit alis.
illa fuit lacrimis ultima cura meis.’

250 Curran 1966, 196.
Like the girl from Cnossus as she lay languishing
on deserted shores as Theseus’ ship sped away;
like too Cepheus’ daughter, Andromeda, as she rested
in first slumber on her release from the rugged cliff;
no less like the Bacchant, tired from incessant dances
when she collapses on a grassy bank of the Apidanus:
just so did she seem to me to breathe a gentle repose,
Cynthia, her head pillowed on wavering hands,
when I dragged my footsteps, heavy with too much wine, home,
and my slaves were shaking torches in the wee hours of night.
Not yet lost in all my senses, her
I tried to approach, gently resting on the bed;
and, although seized by a double passion—
here Love and here Drink, harsh gods both—
bid me try her as she lay, my arm placed gently under her,
and to steal kisses as my hand moved upward.
Yet I did not dare to disturb my lady’s repose,
fearing the reproach of a savagery I knew well;
but thus I clung to her, fixed with eyes intent,
just like Argus intent upon the strange horns of Io.
And now I loosed the garlands from my own brow
and placed them on your temples, Cynthia;
and now I rejoiced at piling up your fallen locks;
now I kept giving furtive fruits to your hollow palms:
but all these gifts I lavished on ungrateful sleep,
gifts which often rolled down from your lap;
and when you stirred a shallow breath from time to time,
I stopped in my tracks, believing in some false omen,
afraid lest some dream bring your unaccustomed terrors,
and someone compel you to be his against your will.
After some time the moon, hurrying past your parted shutters,
the moon, overzealous with eyes eager to linger,
opened your closed eyes with her gentle beams.
Thus she spoke, elbow propped on her soft touch:
‘Did another’s scorn return you to our bed at last,
did she drive you off from her barred doors?
For where have you spent the long hours of the night, rightfully mine,
you who come, ah me, spent, with the stars driven from the sky?
Would that you would spend nights like these, you bastard,
Such as you always compel poor me to endure!
For now I was staving off sleep by spinning crimson thread,
and again, though tired, with the strain of Orpheus’ lyre;
sometimes I complained softly to myself in my desertion
that waiting is often long in love outside the bonds of marriage:
until Sleep overcame me, tired, with his pleasing wings.
That was the last concern of my tears.’
Several important studies have focused on the tension between reality and the idealization of the lover and mistress in 1.3. This tension can be seen as an outgrowth of Propertius’ inward-turned gaze, the result of the limitation of his active gaze by Cynthia and Amor. His face turned to the ground and his heart captivated by Cynthia’s own glance, the now visually passive lover turns his gaze within, to his mind’s eye. Within his creative phantasia he can create a perfect mistress, one like the mythological heroines of contemporary painting, asleep and vulnerable to his power, as if he were a god or hero—and, most importantly, with her eyes closed, unable to capture him as in 1.1.1. This vividly realized creative fantasy will not have the desired effect of putting Cynthia back under his control, however. Idealized fantasy and reality remain in conflict. We see more of this tension between fantasy and reality in the fact that Propertius manipulates Cynthia not only as if she were a statue to be bedecked with garlands, but also as an ekphrasis, a literary representation of a work of visual art. My approach is to examine Cynthia’s representation as artwork—as she is likened to works of visual art and also her own status as a product of literary art—and Propertius’ use of this fact to explore reality through fantasy, or, more aptly, phantasia. Unlike a still life, however, Cynthia springs to life at the end of the poem; Propertius’ use of ekphrasis and enargeia allows his phantasia seemingly to come to life.

The introduction of Cynthia at vv. 7-8 warrants further thought. After three mythological comparisons—all of which offer no context—presumably drawn from visual art of a type known...
to the reader, Cynthia is revealed, quite literally, to be the point of comparison. We should note
the double meaning of visa mihi as both “seemed” and “was seen”. Cynthia seems to be of the
sort (talis) as the preceding heroines depicted in painting, but in the world of the poem she was
in fact seen to be breathing, her head resting precariously on her hands. With a single word of
seeing, the poet plays a game: she is seen in repose by the lover, to whom she seems to be like a
heroine depicted in visual art. At this crucial juncture in the poem where we learn what the
poem is actually about, we find multiple layers of meaning densely packed into the word visa,
which help to explicate the previous three exempla. The actual mistress was seen physically by
the lover, but she seemed to his imagination like works of art conjured in his mind’s eye. All of
this belies the fact that the whole scene is imagined to begin with, a construct of Propertius’
elegiac poetry which is itself directed to the reader’s imagination. Propertius’ “painterly
sensibility” is complemented by his poetic sensibility, which is inclined to aim at a reader’s
visualization. Cynthia is simultaneously seen to be alive (she breathes), and seems to be like a
living artwork.253

This combination of artistic sensibilities is best seen in Propertius’ fashioning of Cynthia
as a visual artwork as well as a scripta puella, which becomes the centerpiece of his elegiac
reality. The mythological heroines whose description opens the poem have a static quality about
them because they are all recumbent.254 This static quality in turn makes their association with
paintings all the easier: like paintings, they are permanent and immutable. As noted above,
Cynthia seems to be like them (talis visa mihi), but appearances can be deceiving. Immediately
we see that the depiction of Cynthia is different than that of the mythical heroines: she is
breathing and her head rests precariously on her hands (non certis…manibus). The instability of

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253 The inclusion of Cynthia’s being seen/seeming to breathe reminds one of the ekphrastic technique of claiming
that artwork seems to be alive.
her head and the movement of her body as she breathes gives her a vitality lacking in the unmoving mythological heroines. Just as in the structure of the poem where she serves as bridge between an “ideal” mythological world and the “real” lover’s world, so too does Cynthia mediate between visual art and literary art.

In a play of this mediation that seems to have gone unnoticed by commentators, there is a slippage between art-world and real-world, between lover and loved object. Cynthia presents an imminent threat of movement: she breathes, her head totters, her hair slips into her face, her lap seems to toss the lover’s gifts to the ground of its own accord. So realistically is Cynthia-as-artwork depicted that she is always on the point of moving and becoming real. But her imminent transformation from immobile statue to real woman (these frequent small motions clearly foreshadow her awakening at the end of the poem) has the opposite effect on Propertius. With every little tremor of her body, he becomes motionless for fear of waking her (et quotiens raro duxi suspira motu, / obstupi, vv. 27-28). With a look back to the opening line of the collection, Propertius reverses the agency of his amatory captivity. Unlike 1.1.1 where Cynthia captures him with her eyes, at 1.3.19 Propertius’ own eyes emphatically fix him in place (intentis haerebam fixus ocellis). Half of the words in the hexameter express fixity, a fixity that is internally generated. Unlike the first line of the Monobiblos where Propertius is the object of Cynthia’s action, here he is an active subject, but the outcome is the same: he is her visual captive. It is only in repose, when Cynthia’s dominating eyes are closed, that Propertius becomes at least a semblance of an active lover. Despite the deactivation of her gaze through sleep, the male lover remains unable to take definitive action. Though he wants to ravish her, he is afraid to do so. Interestingly, what he fears are her words, her iurgia (1.3.18). When awake, he is subject both to her visual and verbal domination. Like a sleeping heroine of painting, she
has neither eyes nor voice to harm him. Despite this fact, the next line shows us that he is in her sway: *intentis haerebam fixus ocellis* (1.3.1.9). Even with her eyes closed, she still maintains a fixing hold over him. In the midst of his ultimate male fantasy (i.e. stumbling upon a defenseless sleeping beauty) Propertius remains *miser*, both afraid of how she will upbraid him, and still visually captivated. He can gaze while she sleeps, but he is still not in control.

In a further twist of the interplay of vision and reality/fantasy, the three sleeping mythological heroines are contrasted with the sleeping Cynthia. While the three sleep, they have no power to captivate Propertius with their eyes as Cynthia did in 1.1.1. Moreover, all three are open to sexual depredation, unable to resist the heroes and god who come to take them after they awake. Like them, Cynthia is asleep, but unlike them, she is neither sexually vulnerable to Propertius, as we discover in vv. 20-30, nor does she lose her power to visually captivate him simply because she is asleep. The mythological heroines of wall painting are sexually vulnerable, but the “real” mistress of Propertian elegy is paradoxically untouchable by the very man who gives her life because she lives, can move, slough off his gifts, and upbraid him for his lateness. The lover tries to make her like the heroines of art by arranging her as if she were a still life in vv. 21-26, but fails because of the very fact that she is not a visual artwork. This moment of the failure of visual art becomes the moment of greatest triumph for Propertius’ realist poetry: Cynthia is more alive than the paintings she resembles, so alive that she denies the artist the ability to arrange her as he will. Ironically, however, it spells his own amatory defeat within his poem.

As soon as Propertius becomes motionless because his own eyes are intent on the sleeping beauty, the pentameter introduces the simile of Argus gazing at Io. It is important to note that, like the sleeping bacchant and Ariadne, the pair of Argus and Io were the subject of
Roman wall painting. Argus is, of course, the ultimate watcher, covered in eyes and eternally awake. But Argus is no lover, and is forced to gaze forever at his beautiful charge, Io, until his death. Not only does Argus exemplify a guard watching his charge, but also a viewer viewing art. With his visual fixation at v. 19 and again at v. 28, Propertius becomes a figure in his own artwork like Argus in a wall painting, fixed and forever gazing at Cynthia/Io with no opportunity to touch her. He has artfully staged himself as actor and director in the show of 1.3, as a figure in his own painting, and even as a consummate viewer of art himself.

Not only does Propertius attempt to make 1.3 a sort of elegiac love affair in miniature—with all the necessary failures of both realism and love—but he also attempts to use the *scripta puella* as a sort of mediator between the worlds of visual art and literary art. In doing so, he points toward what I think is an essential feature of amatory elegy: the poet’s creation of a realistic—but necessarily artificial—lover’s world through the use of *enargeia* and related techniques. To emphasize Cynthia’s role as mediator between the Sister Arts, Propertius employs in 1.3 the rhetorical mediator between the Sister Arts, ekphrasis. In his excellent article on the use of ekphrasis in 1.3, Breed raises an important question which underlies our entire study: is the comparison of Cynthia to artwork a fundamental part of elegy’s self-definition?

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255 See *LIMC* V.1 Io III.1.36-38 and especially III.4.45-51 (illustrated in V.2 pp. 446-47). A painting from the house of Meleager in Pompeii is particularly interesting: it depicts a standing Argus regarding his charge, while a seated Io looks back over her shoulder into the eyes of her guard, perhaps suggesting some mutual feeling (Fig. 15).

256 It seems likely that the Argus simile is also intended to convey a bit of melodramatic foreshadowing. Argus ends up dying while doing his duty of watching (or, more specifically, he is killed when he stops watching for the first time). Furthermore, the “painting” which precedes the introduction of Cynthia-as-artwork is a bacchant; peaceful in repose, but deadly to men when awake. The bacchant is recalled by Cynthia’s *Orpheae...lyrae* in v. 42 when Propertius is in the midst of his violent (or at least unpleasant) undoing; Cynthia-as-bacchant had tried to soothe herself with Orphic song, but after she awakens from her statue-like slumber, she attacks the hapless lover. Of course, this is what Propertius wants us to believe, that he is the victim of her cruel temper, like Orpheus rent apart by maenads. It seems, to me at least, that her lament in vv. 35-36 is a more accurate representation of the “facts” of the evening. He was out carousing—and likely cheating—while she remained at home, waiting. The well chosen image of the bacchant in vv. 5-6 and her “rejection” of his love gifts help to disguise his own fault in the poem’s unhappy conclusion.

257 Breed 2003, 46.

258 Breed 2003, 38.
Elegy 1.3 exposes mimetic strategies which raise questions about the nature of the reality to which elegy gives its readers access. As I have suggested throughout, the visual construction of elegiac reality through devices such as *enargeia*, which helps readers visualize the poet’s love and feel themselves a participant or eye witness, is an essential component of the elegiac programs of Propertius and Ovid, and was fundamental to Catullus’ poetic conception of love. While the comparison of the mistress to visual art is not, in my mind, fundamental to Catullus and Ovid (or Tibullus, for that matter), it is very important to Propertius. While Propertius may have a “painterly” sensibility, the others do not necessarily portray their women as “artwork” per se, but rather visual artifacts of text. I feel that visual art was, however, a convenient way for Propertius to conceptualize mental imaging in poetry.\(^{259}\) We turn now to examine how Propertius explores this analogy through his use of ekphrasis in 1.3.

In understanding 1.3 as an ekphrasis of Cynthia we must first look back to one of the poem’s major intertexts, Catullus c. 64. Elegy 1.3 begins with the heroine of c. 64, Ariadne. In both poems Ariadne is a figure from artwork, in one, embroidery and in the other, painting. From this discussion, we can see that Cynthia is a “disobedient” ekphrasis, to use Laird’s terminology.\(^{260}\) Propertius’ Ariadne recalls not just her expression in Roman wall painting, but also in Catullus’ famous ekphrasis. Opening his elegy with Ariadne set in no context causes the reader to be open to all possible representations, whether from the visual or poetic traditions. The poem strives for an extreme mimetic fidelity of Cynthia as a real woman. She has all the parts of a woman, head, hands, temples, hair, eyes, and elbows (vv. 8, 22, 23, 33, 34). But more

\(259\) Here rhetorical sources provide clear comparisons of “word painting” through *enargeia* as discussed in chapter 1. See the author of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*’s definition of character portrayal, *effictio*, as *effingitur verbis* (4.63), or Quintilian’s *tota rerum imago quodammodo verbis depingitur* (Inst. 8.3.63).

\(260\) Laird distinguishes “disobedient” ekphrasis as one which contains elements of temporality, sound, and movement, which are traditionally suppressed in ekphrasis (1993, 19). In the particular case of Catullus c. 64 and Propertius 1.3, direct speech within the ekphrasis distinguishes it from “obedient” ekphrasis.
than just her physical components, she breathes (vv. 7 and 27), she dreams (v. 29), and, importantly, she has mass, a body Propertius could slip his arm under, feel, and prod (though he does not). In this imagined world, Propertius himself has mass, leaving an impression on the bed as he leans in to try Cynthia (*impresso...toro*, v. 12). Unlike the pictorial representations of Ariadne, Andromache, and the bacchant which open the poem, Cynthia has actual substance beyond paint on plaster or panel. With this detail, Propertius helps to reify his mistress: she can have an actual impact on the world around her, giving physical resistance to his touch, tossing his gifts to the ground, nodding on uncertain hands, etc.

But simultaneously the lover betrays the poet’s realism by being unable to touch his apparently substantial mistress. Even though compelled by drink and lust, he refrains from taking her in his arms and kissing her (vv. 13-16) out of fear of disturbing her *quies*, the very quality that makes her more like a work of art, an Ariadne or a bacchant, than a woman, and which keeps her bewitching eyes closed. Instead he stares at her—while himself fixed like a statue—before vainly attempting to arrange her like a still life. Again the lover tries to approach her, but is again frozen, this time because he is *vano credulus auspicio* (v. 28). The tone of this phrase has gone unremarked by commentators; *credulus* is pejorative, and not, I think, as a sort of lover’s afterthought (“Coward, why didn’t you take advantage of her?”), but as a poetic comment. He could not touch her because she is not real, but is rather the product of mental image induced by his own poetry. He is *credulus* enough to believe that he could somehow have tactile contact with his fantasy, and that fact warrants the pejorative tone. His credulity is reinforced by the *vanum auspicium* that stayed his hand. The need for the reader to believe in something false becomes a trope of ekphrasis such as a viewer of the shield of Aeneas believing
(credas) that he sees the Cyclades swimming or mountains clashing (Aen. 8.691-93). As seen in Chapter 1, an ekphrasis can aim for ekplexis, and this is exactly what it achieves in Propertius 1.3: haerebam fixus and obstupui (vv. 19, 28). So successful is Propertius’ mimetic fantasy that he thinks the visualized Cynthia is a real woman, down to her ability to impact the world around her. But any attempt on his part to touch her ends in failure. The lover is stupefied by the very thauma he has created with his ekphrasis, not unlike Narcissus by his own reflection. Once again he is like Argus, who stares endlessly at the thauma of Io, marked as such by her ignotis cornibus (v. 20).

The final element of his disobedient ekphrasis is giving voice to Cynthia, a move that should be the ultimate in realist representation. The ability to speak is associated with personhood and identity. Unfortunately for the lover, when Cynthia speaks, becomes a “real” woman, she harangues him for his lateness, and denies him the sexual gratification he had been eager for. His failure as a lover is complete when the scripta puella is given voice. With the lover’s failure, the poet reminds his reader of the inability to touch an insubstantial lover who exists only in the mind’s eye. Furthermore, I think Propertius points to an essential aspect of the paragone between art and text: visual art fails to give its subject voice and temporality, but text fails to give its subject spatiality. True to form, his poetry was able to give Cynthia voice (allowing her also a temporal narrative of her night spent without Propertius), but she still remains fundamentally insubstantial and intangible, no matter how mimetic his realist poetry is. In writing her as “disobedient”, I think we see more than a fortuitous convergence of modern scholarly language with Propertius’ own practice. In his aim for realism, Propertius creates a Cynthia who is necessarily “disobedient” to reality because she is fundamentally unreal, a scripta

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261 Breed 2003, 44-45.
puella rather than a poetic representation of an actual historical personage. Understood as a sort of metapoetic statement, he raises the shadow of believing in something false that lurks in the background of the genre by deploying ekphrasis to describe his mistress. Propertius points to himself as someone credulus enough to try and touch what was not real, a poetic construct. In the end, his disobedient ekphrasis can say enough to scold him, but can never touch him and allow him true success in love.

Before concluding some questions of textual interpretation and an important intertext for 1.3, Philodemus AP 5.123 (= 9 GP = 14 Sider) must be examined. The arrival of the moon in vv. 31-33 has consternated commentators because of its admittedly difficult language, particularly the interpretation of the diversas fenestras, the moon’s action of praecurrens (the usually accepted reading), and her description as sedula. On the first point, it has become commonly accepted that the meaning is “parted shutters”; it is difficult to envision the more lexically correct “windows on opposite walls” in the reality of Roman architecture, where, if there were any windows in the room at all, they were usually few and arranged sequentially on a single wall.263 Praecurrere in its typical sense of “race ahead of” or “anticipate” is clearly not the sense required by the context.264 Propertius 1.8.19 (felici praevecta Ceraunia remo) provides a similar use of a praev- compound as a transitive verb denoting something passing something else.265 I see no reason to think it necessary to expect “penetrating” or “shining through” (as some per-compound, with Λ offering the variant percurrens), when the following pentameter’s lumina

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263 Over a century ago Postgate came to the correct conclusion, that Propertius is referring to opened shutters, contrasting Horace’s iunctas...fenestras at Carm. 1.25.1 (1892, 12). Richardson understands the moon as passing through windows on opposite walls (2006, 155). See also Heyworth (2007, 19-20).

264 Praecurrere for praeecurrere is unattested, and the latter is not attested before the fourth century (Wimmel 1967, 73).

265 Wimmel 1967, 73 n. 7 also notes Propertius 4.4.7 (hunc Tatius fontem vallo praecingit acerno), Verg. G. 3.180 (aut Alphea rotis praelabi flamina Pisae) and Aen. 6.705 (Lethaeumque domos placidas qui praenatat annem). Although the parallels are indeed not exact, Booth seems to exercise excessive caution in noting the lack of other instances of “a praev- compound referring to aerial progress past a structure on the ground (2001b, 540 n. 23).”
obviates such a meaning. While *lumina* in the sense of light rays certainly do pass through the open window, *lumina* in the sense of eyes make the moon a voyeur watching from outside the windows as she passes. The description of the moon as *sedula* is ambiguous, since the word can imply a positive degree of attentiveness (“dutiful”), or a negative one (“meddlesome”). Shackleton-Bailey and Lyne hold that *sedula* “most obviously” refers to the moon sticking to her timetable. The context gives no reason to think that *sedula* can mean “attentive” to some unspecified duty. As will be seen below, the moon’s description as *sedula* portrays her as a busybody who ruins Propertius’ nocturnal fun. *Pace* Shackleton-Bailey, who finds the “active wish or purpose” to be lacking in grammatical merit, the meaning of “willing to linger” seems most suited to the use of the participle *moraturis*. Shackleton-Bailey’s interpretation of the future participle as an apodosis (“which would else have lingered”) of an implied *si sedula non fuisset* glides over any negative connotation of *sedula* and the moon’s active role (*patefecit*) in waking Cynthia, much to Propertius’ detriment.

Having concluded this brief discussion of textual matters in this particularly crucial passage of 1.3, we turn to the intertext, Philodemus *AP* 5.123 (= 9 *GP* = 14 Sider), through which Propertius plays with the trope of the stellar witness which was treated earlier in the

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266 Heyworth proposes and rejects *diversas per lucens luna fenestras* (2007, 20).
267 I suggest that the juxtaposition of *lumina* and *ocellis* in vv. 32-33 is meant to recall the similar juxtaposition in 1.1.1-4. The *lumina* of the moon are active, able to wake Cynthia, in the way that Propertius’ own eyes may once have been active before Amor forced his haughty gaze to the ground. The diminutive *ocelli* often characterize Cynthia’s bewitching eyes. While the passive lover sat staring ineffectually, the moon’s active gaze opens Cynthia’s eyes almost immediately, thus turning the course of the poem. After this point, the lover goes from quasi-active watcher and artist to passive recipient of Cynthia’s scolding. With the opening of her eyes, she becomes the dominant partner, just as she was when this all began in the first line of the Monobiblos. As I will argue below, casting the moon as a voyeur who unintentionally spoils Propertius’ own gazing is an essential facet of the play with the Philodemean intertext.
269 Shackleton-Bailey 1956, 13 n. 36. Baker adds, rightly, I think, “I have for some time favored the idea that v. 32 extends the τόπος of the moon as ἐπίσκοπος to introduce a moon whose ‘eyes’ are as much taken with contemplation of Cynthia as are the *ocelli* of the Argus-figure Propertius at vv. 19-20 (1980, 248).” Both the moon’s description as *sedula* and the future participle point toward the fact that we are to understand the moon as eager to watch the sleeping Cynthia, just like Propertius himself.
discussion of Catullus c. 7. The connection to Philodemus’ epigram was noted long ago by Rothstein. Later commentators simply point to AP 5.123 or make no mention of it at all.271 Booth’s recent article on the subject goes a long way toward explicating Propertius’ manipulation of Philodemus’ epigram, though it stops short of a full interpretation of Propertius’ moon.272 Booth holds that the allusion is a statement by Propertius that romantic trysting under the moonlight is an impossibility. I think this conclusion is out of sorts with both the poem and the elegiac tradition. Instead, I will show that Propertius deftly uses Philodemus’ moon to reinforce the figure of Argus in the poem, where he becomes an emblem for the failure of the elegiac lover.273

Several important aspects of Philodemus’ epigram need to be recalled: the moon is called a lover of nighttime revels; she is bid to illuminate the poet’s mistress; no ill will is directed at the moon for watching the lovers embracing; the moon counts the couple as happy. In 1.3 the moon has none of her Philodemean epithets (δίκερως, φιλοπόννυχε), and her presence is not sought by the lover. Instead of Philodemus’ kindly stellar confidant and ally providing gently filtered illumination for a night of sexual revels, Propertius’ moon is more an officious busybody who lingers uninvited outside the window. Rather than a confidant, she becomes a voyeur (like Propertius himself) watching the sleeping Cynthia.274 Whereas even Propertius’ actual physical

270 Rothstein 1920, ad loc. Even earlier, Hetzberg noted that the moon was more or less personified (1843, 141). The personification of the moon—in this case as a voyeur—is an important aspect of the passage which will be discussed below.
271 See Enk 1946, Camps 1961 and Fedeli 1980. Both Lyne and Baker note the reference to Philodemus, but examine the matter no further than noting that Propertius has employed the moon in a rather different manner than Philodemus (Lyne 1970, 74; Baker 1980, 246). Benediktson goes farther, saying that 1.3 “leaves little doubt that Propertius read and was influenced by Philodemus’ poetry (1989, 111).”
272 She proves that the intertext is on firm ground by noting that the epanalepsis of luna...luna (1.3.31-2) is a direct echo of φαίνε...φαίνε at AP 5.123.1-2. The phrases share the same prosody and the same sedes (Booth 2001b, 539). See also Heyworth 2007, 19. Booth also suggests that Propertius plays on the derivation of fenestra from phainein by surrounding the fenestras with luna.
273 Booth 2001b, 544.
274 It is interesting to note that Philodemus specifically calls the moon’s viewing “spying”, κατοπτρεῖν (AP 5.123.4), whereas Propertius makes no such specification, even though his moon is acting—in a rather negative
contact (playing dress-up with Cynthia) does not wake the sleeping mistress, allowing Propertius to continue his artistic arrangement, the moon’s gaze becomes intrusive when she wakes Cynthia, spoiling Propertius’ fantasy (both of rape and of Cynthia as artwork). Not only is the moon acting entirely unlike her Philodemean counterpart, but Propertius himself also fails to live up to his Hellenistic precedent: he doesn’t “get the girl”, but is instead harangued. At the end of the poem, Propertius is not at all happy, as the lovers of AP 5.123 are. Unlike earlier occurrences of heavenly and inanimate witnesses, Propertius’ moon is not an ally, but a rival.

With the moon staged as voyeur outside Cynthia’s window, the poem has resolved into a sort of contest of gazes, not unlike that between Propertius and Cynthia/Amor in 1.1. Propertius has been gazing at Cynthia since his arrival in her bedchamber, imagining her as a series of mythological heroines known from Roman wall painting. With the moon’s sudden arrival, however, we find a rival watcher. Immediately preceding the moon’s arrival, Propertius imagines Cynthia dreaming of rape: another man—this one doubly imaginary—has beaten Propertius to the sexual punch. Propertius has already been relegated to the role of watcher while an imaginary rival has his way with Cynthia, and the moon’s appearance only reinforces Propertius’ inability to consummate his elegiac love. The moon, a natural ally of lovers in Hellenistic epigram, and in Philodemus in particular, is a rival watcher. With the touch of her soft rays streaming through the open window, the moon awakens Cynthia.275 The moonbeams

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275 I think it possible that Propertius is deliberately playing with the double meaning of lumina as both light rays and eyes to toy with extramissive theories of vision: the moon’s eye-beams actually touch Cynthia as part of the process of sense perception, rousing her in the process. Unlike Propertius, whose gaze is ineffectual, the moon succeeds in touching Cynthia through the use of her lumina. Furthermore, I think we must also recall the mythological discovery by Selene of the sleeping Endymion; rather than putting Cynthia in a perpetual sleep (which would allow Propertius to remain in the role of Argus or viewer in an art gallery), the moon wakes her, ruining his ability to watch and fantasize. These lines may also contain an allusion to an epigram of Meleager (AP 5.165 = 51 HE) in which the poet prays to Night that the lamp, which is illuminating Heliodora’s affair with another, be lulled to sleep,
vie for Cynthia’s attention and win: the beams have elicited a response from the statuesque mistress, while Propertius’ gifts of flowers and fruit were spurned and tossed to the ground. The fact that the awakened Cynthia proceeds to henpeck him only exacerbates his visual defeats.

Earlier in the poem Propertius was relegated to the role of Argus, and here again we see that he is ineffectual in actual tactile contact with his mistress (she shrugs off his gifts), whereas the moon, who was Philodemus’ ally, has woken the angry Cynthia by playing directly to her eyes (patefecit ocellos). Even as a watcher, Propertius is impotent, and as a poet Propertius has failed to live up to the sexual success of his predecessor, Philodemus.

To conclude the discussion of elegy 1.3, I point to a decades-old insight of Curran:

“The one and only thing Argus does is watch; his task consists not of real action but merely of endless observation of Io, awake and asleep. In spite of the constant proximity, indeed intimacy, the relationship between Argus and Io is nothing but one long, unreciprocal confrontation of watcher and watched, nothing but the mere process of gazing and being gazed at.”

Is this perhaps one of the key points of Propertian elegy as expressed in the Monobiblos? As we have seen so clearly in elegy 1.3, Propertius is a watcher, but nothing else—unlike Ovid, who, as will be discussed later, is both a watcher and a toucher. Despite the fact that the poet has created a Cynthia who has substance, the elegiac lover is consigned to the role of Argus, the eternal watcher who is granted no actual contact with his charge. Although substantial to the poet, she remains intangible to the lover. Looking forward in the collection, let us also note another gift that the poet has given his scripta puella: beauty which leads to her falsa fiducia in it (3.24.1). Both cases point to a fundamental paradox of elegiac “reality”: the vividness and realist strategies with which Propertius depicts his love-life lead to deception (not unlike the makeup that he admonishes Cynthia not to wear in 1.2). Enargeia may serve to make the scene more real and in turn Heliodora’s new lover, who will become like a second Endymion. Again, Propertius’ moon is unlike her predecessors: instead of causing the lover to sleep as she caused Endymion to sleep, she wakes Cynthia up, changing Propertius’ lover from peaceful artwork to angry woman. From lover’s ally in earlier tradition, the moon becomes Propertius’ rival.

276 Curran 1966, 203 (emphasis mine).
to the reader, to make him an almost-witness to the events, and may also help to make the reader
feel the emotions expressed in the text more forcefully, but in the end all that is left is mental
image. No matter how vividly reckoned, the mental image remains intangible. Like his own
readers, Propertius is left a perpetual watcher of his own mental image, never to realize physical
consummation with his own creation (decidedly unlike Ovid’s Pygmalion). Propertius stages
this essential elegiac failure in 1.3 by deliberately casting himself in the role of Argus, who is
unlike other active agents from mythology depicted, so far as we can tell, in actual visual art.
Though perhaps more vivid to the reader than pictorial art because of its direct approach to the
mind, the mental image created by the poet remains insubstantial and unreal.

3.3 Viewing the Poet

Having examined the ways in which Propertius constructs his mistress as an artwork and
interacts with her as a visual artifact of his poetic text, we turn to see how Propertius interacts
with the poetry of his predecessor Gallus, the traditional founder of Latin love elegy. Having
seen how he views his own poetry, we can see how he views the poetry of others. Propertius’
reaction to the poetry of Gallus is quite like his reaction to his own poetry: it has the power to
captivate him by appealing to his mind’s eye. Although Propertius expresses his visual
interaction with Gallus’ poetry, he sets his own program against Gallus’ as something new and
different, and distinctly visual. Propertius theorizes about his own style of poetry which is
strongly inclined to the visual, as will be seen in the second part of this section. Whereas we saw
Propertius interact with his own poetry in his mind’s eye in our discussions of 1.1 and 1.3, we
will find that he approaches the connections between the Sister Arts more broadly in our
discussions of 2.12, and 2.31/2.
3.3.1 Seeing Influence: Reading the Poetry of Gallus (1.10)

Cornelius Gallus is one of the most tantalizing figures in the history of Latin literature. Although we are fairly well informed about his historical biography, we know unfortunately little about his poetry, which is held to have been the first example of a fully developed Latin amatory elegy. Until 1979 only a single line of Gallus’ poetry was known. Even before the discovery of the handful of lines attributed to Gallus in a papyrus from Qasr Ibrim, Ross’ ingenious reconstruction of Gallus’ poetry through his reception by Vergil and Propertius had raised skepticism every since its publication.277 Indeed, it is hard to find Ross’ argumentation anything but circular, and the discovery of the fragments attributed to Gallus has caused many of Ross’ speculations to be rejected. Although Ross’ conclusions about Gallan poetics are perhaps overreaching, his rejection of many common arguments against identifying Cornelius Gallus with the Gallus(es) of the Monobiblos was an important step forward in Propertian scholarship.

Almost one quarter of the poems in the Monobiblos feature a character named Gallus. Elegies 1.5, 1.10, and 1.13 all involve some sort of relationship between Gallus, Propertius, and a woman (Cynthia in 5 and unnamed women in 10 and 13). All three poems imply that this Gallus is a poet-lover like Propertius, both rival and friend. Galluses who are less clearly poets appear in 1.20 and 1.21. The Gallus of 1.20 is exhorted not to take his lover for granted, thus at least aligning him with a sort of elegiac lover’s world.278 The Gallus in 1.21 might readily be aligned with the soldier persona of the historical Gallus. The Gallus of the Monobiblos is notoriously inconsistent, and scholars attempting to identify Propertius’ Gallus with the historical Cornelius

277 See especially Zetzel 1977 who criticizes Ross for accepting uncritically the receptions of Gallus found in Propertius and Vergil.
278 Further, I think the poem’s focus on Hylas places the advice to Gallus more firmly in the realm of elegy, which, for Propertius, is very frequently linked to mythology.
Gallus often resort to excluding certain Gallus poems which do not fit the preconceived idea of “Gallus.” Indeed, several major commentaries on Propertius reject outright the identification of Propertius’ Gallus with the historical Cornelius Gallus. Ross’ reconstruction of Gallus’ poetic career through the poetry of Vergil and Propertius led him to conclude that the Gallus of the Monobiblos was the same as the historical Cornelius Gallus. More recently, discussion has turned from the identification of Propertius’ Gallus with the historical Gallus to Gallus as a symbol. As Pincus rightly notes, attempts to pin down the different Galluses mistakenly seek concreteness and factual consistency. Here I accept the identification of Propertius’ Gallus and the historical Cornelius Gallus qua poet. The connection that can generally be seen in the Monobiblos is one of poetic influence and Propertius’ reaction to his predecessor’s amatory poetry. Although I do not explore the thematic connection fully here, there are visual links which connect 1.5, 1.10, 1.13, and 1.21. The focus of this section is primarily 1.10, and secondarily 1.18, a poem which, while not explicitly referencing Gallus, is linked to his elegies, as has been argued above.

O iucunda quies, primo cum testis amori
affueram vestris conscius in lacrimis!
o noctem meminisse mihi iucunda voluptas,
o quotiens vos illa vocanda meis,
cum te complexa morientem, Galle, puella
vidimus et longa ducere verba mora!
quamvis labentis premeret mihi somnus ocellos
et mediis caelo Luna ruberet equis,
non tamen a vestro potui secedere lusu:
tantus in alternis vocibus ardor erat.
sed quoniam non es veritus concredere nobis,
accipe commissae munera laetitiae:
non solum vestros didici reticere dolores,
est quiddam in nobis maius, amice, fide.
possum ego diversos iterum coniugere amantis

279 Butler and Barber (1933, 161) and Camps (1961, 57) reject the possibility. Hubbard (2001, 25) thinks the identification very unlikely.
280 Ross’ (1975, 84) conclusion has been bolstered more recently by Thomas (1979), King (1980), and Cairns (1983). Nevertheless, this move to identify the two Galluses as the same has met with resistance (e.g. Fedeli 1980).
et dominae tardas possum aperire fores;
et possum alterius curas sanare recentis,
nec levis in verbis est medicina meis.
Cynthia me docuit semper quaecumque petenda
quaeque cavenda forent: non nihil egit Amor.
tu cave ne tristi cupias pugnare puellae,
nev superba loqui, neve tacere diu;
neu, si quid petiit, ingrata fronte negaris,
nev tibi pro vano verba benigna cadant.
irritata venit, quando contemnitur illa,
nec meminit iustas ponere laesa minas:
at quo sis humilis magis et subjectus amori,
hoc magis effectu saepe frurare bono.
is poterit felix una remanere puella,
qui numquam vacuo pectore liber erit.

Oh wonderful night, when I was present as witness
to your first moment of love, a spectator to your tears!
Oh what a delightful pleasure it is for me to remember that night!
Oh, a night to be invoked so often in my prayers,
when I saw you languishing in your girl’s embrace,
and drawing out each word with long delay!

Though sleep pressed upon my drooping eyes
and the Moon blushed, her team in mid course,
still I could not step away from your dalliance:
such passion there was in your alternating words!

But since you did not hesitate to confide in me,
accept my reward for your shared joy:
not only have I learned to keep quiet about your pangs;
there is something greater in my discretion.

I can join once again separated lovers,
and I can open your mistress’ reluctant doors,
and I can cure another’s fresh wounds of love,
and the medicine in my verses is not slight.

Cynthia taught me what everyone must seek
and must avoid; Love has taught me no mean skill.
Beware lest you seek to quarrel with a girl when she’s sad,
or speak proudly, or keep silent for too long;
or, if she asks for something, refuse her with unpleasant expression,
nor let kind words fall on you in vain.
She will turn indignant when she is spurned,
and, when hurt, pays no mind to discarding justified threats.

But the meeker you are and the more subservient to love,
the more often you will enjoy good result.
Happy is the one able to remain with one girl alone,
who never will be carefree in his empty heart.

A literal reading of this poem places Propertius in the role of a voyeur watching his friend
Gallus in the embrace of some unnamed mistress. Indeed, the use of testis, affueram, and
vidimus lend credence to the interpretation that Propertius is present, watching the love scene
unfold before his very eyes. Reading Propertius as a peeping tom begs the question of a scenario
that explains such a role. Is Propertius peeping through the keyhole, as it were (so Skutsch’s skeptical “durchs Schlüsselloch”); or is he somehow an invited guest of an exhibitionist Gallus (which, to judge by Catullus’ friends in cc. 6 and 55 is unlikely); or do we instead imagine the two at a dinner party that has run into the wee hours of the night (so Richardson ad loc.); or some other dramatic setting entirely? While there is certainly nothing to prohibit any of these interpretations, upon closer analysis, all of them are lacking in some respect. The difficulty of the literal interpretation has been acknowledged for over a century now, and has been countered (or supplemented) by a figurative reading that understands the context of the poem to be Propertius’ late-night reading of Gallus’ amatory verse. Skutsch long ago suggested the figurative interpretation of the poem as an instance of reading Gallus’ poetry.283 Benjamin effectively reformulated Skutsch’s interpretation of the poem, and came strikingly close to the reading I propose here. She writes, “The scene can easily and naturally be imagined as one in which Propertius, late at night, has read Gallus’ love poetry, written so vividly that he can experience the reality of Gallus’ love.”284 Similar interpretations have been offered by Ross, Cairns, and Sharrock.285 As with many other issues of the interpretation of 1.10, the beauty is that the poem easily allows a variety of interpretation, literal and figurative. Additionally, Camps has likened 1.10 to Catullus c. 45.286 While I agree that the two poems share some aspects, my reading of c. 45, as discussed in Chapter 2, is at odds with Camps’ reading. In a twist on the literal reading of the poem, Oliensis suggests that testis capitalizes on a genital pun, which is particularly apparent because of the juxtaposition of testis and amor in the context of

283 Skutsch 1906, 144-46.
284 Benjamin 1965, 178.
285 Ross 1975, 83-84; Cairns 1983, 101 n. 73; Sharrock 1990, 570. The figurative reading helps to explain the vexed phrase alternis vocibus: O’Hara has suggested the phrase implies amoebae verse, and Sharrock elegiac verse (O’Hara 1989; Sharrock 1990). Although amoebae verse cannot be ruled out entirely, the case for the alternae voces referring to elegy—both in its alternating distich and lovers’ conversation—is far stronger.
286 Camps 1961, 67-68.
Gallus (i.e. a priest of Cybele). This punning is quaint and not outside the realm of possibility, but the speaker-as-talking-testicle interpretation falls flat in the second half of the poem. Were Ovid the poet instead of Propertius, the reading would be more palatable, but such punning—even though in keeping with the play of voices often found in epigram and elegy—is simply not in keeping with Propertius’ style. In contrast to others we accept both the literal and figurative readings of 1.10 as simultaneously active. The poem stages Propertius as a reader of Gallus’ amatory poetry, and as a voyeur, present at the scene, spying on Gallus in the throes of passion. The complimentarity of the two readings points to a fundamental aspect of Propertius’ program, and to the wider world of Latin amatory elegy: reading love poetry is akin to being a voyeur of someone else’s love affair. By forming mental images as we read, we view the events of the text, generally from the position of an outsider.

The opening of 1.10 weighs heavily in the favor of understanding the poem as an actual instance of voyeurism. Propertius’ identification of himself as testis and conscius recalls the epithets given to inanimate objects like lamps and couches, and stellar witnesses like the moon and stars, all of which are commonly cited as witnesses to a poet’s lovemaking in both Hellenistic epigram and the poetry of Catullus and Propertius. The use of affueram as well as the suggestion that he can hear their lovers’ conversation in v.10 unequivocally situates Propertius as present at love scene. Details of time and setting (v. 8) and Propertius’ own fatigue (v. 7) lend an air of reality to the thought of Propertius watching his friend Gallus in the arms of his lover. Verses 11-29, however, turn attention away from Propertius the voyeur to Propertius the love

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288 Recall that Catullus explicitly forces the reader into a third party perspective, and goes to great lengths to show his control over our vantage point.
poet.289 Here he makes references to various generic tropes: the paraclausithyron (v. 16), love
poetry as a solace for the lovelorn poet (vv. 17-18), the mercurial nature of the elegiac mistress
and servitium amoris (vv. 21-28), the devotion to a single woman (v. 30). Elegy 1.10 subtly
combines “real” erotic pursuits with poetic erotic pursuits: the line between Gallus’ sexual lusus
and his poetic lusus becomes entirely blurred, as we can see from Propertius’ own reaction.
Reading Gallus’ poetry creates such a vivid image in Propertius’ mind that he envisions himself
as present at the scene. His response to reading is an erotic sleeplessness similar to Catullus’ in
c. 50. But his response is also poetic: he writes a poem with Gallus as addressee and proceeds to
give him love advice drawn from his own stock of elegiac tropes.290 The vividness of Gallus’
poetry allows Propertius to be simultaneously an eyewitness (testis) and a reader. To judge from
Propertius’ reaction to Gallus’ poetry, the elder poet accomplishes with his language many of the
feas of audience manipulation discussed by the rhetoricians. The reader is turned into a viewer
(testis, vidimus, vv. 1 and 6); is made to be almost present at the event (affueram, v. 2); is moved
by the emotion of the scene conceived by the author’s phantasia with resultant reaction akin to
ekplexis (non tamen a vestro potui secedere lusu: / tantus in alternis vocibus ardor erat vv. 9-
10). From this elegy we can draw several important conclusions about reader-text interaction
applicable certainly to the poetry of Propertius, but I think also more widely applicable to elegy.
Enargeia helps to blur the line between reader and viewer: Propertius is simultaneously a voyeur

289 Even before the shift in tone at v. 11, Propertius suggests that poetry is the true concern of 1.10. The lusus of v. 9
is brilliantly ambivalent: not only does it refer to Gallus’ dalliance, but it strongly recalls Catullus c. 50 and the
ludus poeticus played by Catullus and Calvus. Catullus’ game also calls to mind the erotic agrupnia that affected
him after the pair’s day of poetry writing, a sleeplessness which Propertius himself suffers from in 1.10. Note in
particular Catullus’ nec sommus tegeter quiete ocellos (50.10) and Propertius’ quamvis labentis premeret mihi
sommus ocellos (1.10.7). Catullus’ cure for his sleeplessness—neum dolorem—is the poem he sends Calvus
(50.17), which echoes Propertius’ terms for Gallus’ own love pangs, vestros dolores (1.10.13).
290 Elegy 1.13 provides an interesting reprise of the poetic dialogue taking place in 1.10. In the later elegy, Gallus
seems to have succumbed to a type of love whose symptoms can best be described as elegiac. Gallus’ novus error
(1.13.35) seems to imply that he has begun writing a more generically elegiac type of elegy, the type which
Propertius described in 1.10.15-29).
and a reader of love poetry. The power of mental image is felt as strongly, if not more so, as vision itself; although Propertius’ eyes are heavy, his mind’s eye remains captive to the mental image provided by Gallus’ poetry.291

We will now briefly look at a subject of some discussion in the criticism of 1.10: the *alternae voces* of v. 10. Discussion of this phrase has focused on attempting to determine what type of poetry Propertius was reading, either amoebaeian pastoral or elegiac distichs.292 In keeping with the semantic ambiguity that is an important facet of our interpretation of 1.10, I posit that the *alternae voces* refer not only to the type of poetry that Propertius is reading (probably elegy, rather than amoebaeian), but also to the existence of Gallus and his mistress as speaking pictures, visual emblems of the *enargeia* at work in Gallus’ poetry which holds Propertius spellbound. If we understand the poem figuratively as Propertius reading the poetry of Gallus, then the lovers of 1.10 are necessarily mental images with the capacity for speech. We have seen Propertius involve himself with speaking pictures before: the ekphrasis of Cynthia in 1.3 shows Propertius’ own attempt to give his mistress voice—and therefore an existence as a “real” woman outside of the text. Further, our earlier discussion of Catullus’ Septimius and Acme posits a very similar scene. Whereas Catullus uses the speaking picture of a couple to ask the reader to think about the intersection of poetry, love, and (mental) image, Propertius modifies this slightly by making himself simultaneously the reader-viewer entranced by the amatory poetry of another *and* the author of his own poetic response. The narrator of c. 45 stands apart from the scene while Propertius immerses himself in the scene as a participant.293 It is also interesting to note that, although Propertius emphasizes the passion contained in the *alternae

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291 This may be unique to Propertius, a facet of his *tempérament visuel.*
292 See in particular O’Hara 1989 and Sharrock 1990.
293 Note how Catullus similarly figures his reader as an outsider, sometimes more and sometimes less objective, whereas our position in relation to Propertius is often closer, or at least not explicitly limited to the third person.
voces, he makes no attempt to repeat or imitate those voices by quoting their words, as Catullus does in c. 45. Indeed, he does just the opposite, assuring Gallus that he has learned to keep quiet about his friend’s erotic suffering (vestros didici reticere dolores, v. 13).294

The two main readings of 1.10, one literal and one figurative, both have obvious merit. But if 1.10 is understood figuratively as an instance of reading, we must ask why Propertius chose to couch his textual encounter with Gallus in terms of voyeurism. This question is an overarching theme of this dissertation: enargetic language seeks to make a reading experience as close to a viewing experience as possible by appealing to the mind’s eye of the reader. What we see in Propertius’ reaction to the amatory poetry of Gallus is precisely what we would expect from the understanding of the rhetorical works surveyed in Chapter 1. While reading Gallus’ poetry Propertius forms mental images of Gallus and his mistress; he not only hears their pillow talk (not unlike we ourselves hear in Catullus c. 45), but envisions them in their lover’s embrace. As neither Gallus nor the mistress, Propertius is necessarily a third-party interloper in the

294 Propertius also notes that he can offer Gallus something greater than his confidence, his elegiac love advice. The assertion of fides to a friend, likely in an amatory context, in 1.10.14 can be compared to Catullus c. 102. Elegy 1.10 recapitulates many themes found in our discussion of Catullus. In addition to the presence of a testis to erotic activity, the focus on erotic speech is also a concern of c. 6. Further, to judge by the affueram of v. 2 and the frequent second-person addresses to Gallus, Propertius has become a particeps in Gallus’ affair, a status Catullus resigns himself to in c. 55. Although not directly connected to Gallus, elegy 1.18 has as a clear intertext Ecl. 10. Propertius’ advice to Gallus in 1.10 that he not be silent for too long (neve tacere diu, v. 22) is reminiscent of Propertius’ questioning whether his silence is the cause of Cynthia’s anger with him in 1.18.18. If we can connect 1.18 to Gallus (though the connection is perhaps not as firm as Ross would have it), we find that, in another poem pertaining to Gallus’ poetry, Propertius raises issues of textual production (inscribing Cynthia’s name on the trees), privacy (deserta loca et taciturna querenti, v. 1), and witnesses (vos eritis testes, v. 19). Both elegies involve the ability of testes to keep silent about either a love scene or a lover’s confession; however in both cases, the love affairs are the subject of poetry, and are therefore public. Pincus notes that Propertius’ twist on a bucolic conceit in 1.18 has nature mimic not emotions, but words, and thus transforms his Eclogue-like poem into an exploration of love as well as textuality and literary influence (2004, 183). I would add that Propertius is also playing with another Hellenistic conceit, the presence of inanimate witnesses in erotic settings. Unlike 1.3 where the moon, a traditional ally of the lover, betrays Propertius, the trees and mute rocks of 1.18 seem to keep faith with the lover, offering him an isolated place to complain about Cynthia. Similarly, Propertius, himself as testis and conscius to Gallus’ love in 1.10, maintains his faith and keeps silent (didici reticere dolores), in fact never reproducing the voice of Gallus in any of the several poems which concern him (though 1.21 does present us with a sort of speaking epitaph). But do the testes of 1.18 actually keep their faith? Indeed they do not, since the rocks and trees actually reproduce Propertius’ speech (or written word): resonent mihi ‘Cynthia’ silvae (v. 31). Whereas Propertius never told us the content of Gallus’ alternae voces which were so filled with ardor, the inanimate witnesses to Propertius’ confession have reproduced the content of his speech act, “Cynthia”, even though they are dumb.

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romance, and because he approaches the poetry through visualization, he becomes a voyeur. But he is no ordinary peeping tom: because he is a reader of amatory poetry, he has been given access to the private goings-on of Gallus’ love life. He has become the *particeps amoris* that Catullus sought to be in c. 55 and actualized himself as by writing of Flavius’ liaison in c. 6. As a *particeps*, granted access to private information made public through poetry, Propertius allows himself the use of terms like *amicus* to describe Gallus, and offers him his own love advice.295 This metaphorical reading of 1.10 provides a clear enactment of the principles we have been examining. The poetry of Gallus enacts Quintilian’s statement of the power of *enargeia: velut in rem praesentem perducere audientis*.296 Propertius envisions the scene Gallus describes in his mind’s eye and feels the emotion which Gallus first conceived in his own mind. Gallus’ *phantasia* is transferred to Propertius’ mind through devices like *enargeia*, and the poetry has an even greater emotional impact on Propertius—though tired, he cannot stop reading—because it makes Propertius an almost-eyewitness to the scene. Although his physical sight is failing, the emotion of the poem is so compelling that his mind’s eye remains open. The preceding discussion of 1.10, when read in conjunction with 1.3, suggests that, to Propertius’ *tempérament visuel* at least, love poetry is as much a visual experience as it is a reading experience; reading love poetry and being a voyeur are similar.

**3.3.2 Love Poetry as Artwork (2.12, 2.31/2)**

In previous sections of this chapter it has been shown that Propertius is often captivated by his interactions with texts that address his mind’s eye. In 1.3 Propertius becomes motionless

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295 Here there is no need to indulge in biographical fallacy in questioning whether Propertius and Gallus were actually friends. The access given to the poet’s private life through his public text grants the reader a certain privilege to consider himself an intimate of the poet.

296 *Inst.* 4.2.123.
like the still life with which he equates Cynthia, and in 1.10 he is held sleepless in the grip of Gallus’ erotic elegy. In this section I will explore a parallel theme: Propertius’ interaction with and reaction to visual art. We will see that Propertius’ reaction to visual art is similar to his reaction to visual texts: he becomes transfixed and motionless in his contemplation. This chapter steps outside the Monobiblos to the second book of elegies to examine two ekphrases, the description of the newly constructed temple of Apollo in 2.31, and a description of a painting of Amor in 2.12 wherein the artist has captured the true essence of the god. As seen in the discussion of 1.3, Propertius uses the device of ekphrasis to mediate between visual and verbal art and to explore the connection between the two. By more clearly understanding elegy 2.31/32 in particular, I think it possible to come to a more precise definition of exactly what Propertius’ tempérament visuel is. We will find that the close bond between love and a visualized text which characterized 1.3 and 1.10 is similar to the bond between love and visual art—and its expression through text—that Propertius lays out in 2.12 and 2.31/32. Finally, I hope to show that the second book of elegies can be seen as a sort of “theoretical” examination of the principles enacted in the poems of the Monobiblos.297

We look first at an elegy—or elegies—whose text is not without issues, 2.31/32. The poems (or poem) are joined in O and separated only in the Itali; the separation of the two poems has stubbornly remained in most editions of Propertius, despite its lack of manuscript authority.298 Indeed, as Hubbard notes, the division of the poem may be seen as an outgrowth of editorial analyticism that is widespread in Book 2, as a glance through Fedeli’s Tuebner edition

297 Wyke notes that the realist strategies which pervaded the first book of elegies largely disappear in the second, where there are almost no historical personages (and, indeed, almost no named addresses), and a general lack of occasion for enunciation, which makes it hard to create an extra-textual reality (1987, 47-48). The second book leaves Elegiac Man without a world to act in.

298 Richardson (2006) is a notable exception, and prints a continuous text. Heyworth’s 2007 Oxford edition straddles the fence, printing the text of the two poems continuously, but calling them still 31 and 32.
or Barber’s Oxford suggests. In addition to the overall separation or union of the poems, 32 is itself plagued with transposed lines, the corrections for which are numerous and will not be discussed here in detail. In general, it is supposed that at least vv. 1-2 of 32 have been transposed and belong after v. 10, although whether 32 begins with vv. 3-10 or vv. 7-10 is in question. The separation of the poems is explained because of the transposition of lines at the beginning of what is now 2.32. The homoearchon of *cum videt* and *qui videt* (vv. 9 and 1) and the repetition of *lumina* in vv. 10 and 2 helps to explain the transposition of the lines which led to the displacement of 32.7-8, which form the logical bridge between the two sections of the poem. Although editions of Propertius continue to separate the two poems, commentators often argue for some connection between them. In addition to the fact that the two poems are joined in the best MSS, connections of theme and internal logic suggest that the two poems are indeed one. If 2.31 is separated, it becomes not only oddly brief (though Perreius and Pucci thought the end of the poem lost), but almost a bit of art for art’s sake: the ekphrasis of the temple of Apollo becomes an entity connected to nothing. As we have seen elsewhere in this chapter, and will discuss further below, Propertius does not write about actual works of art for their own sake.

Regardless of the elegy’s uncertain text, it is generally agreed that a thematic and logical

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299 Hubbard 1984, 281.

300 Camps maintains the division, but sees a thematic connection, deeming 2.31 to be “preliminary” (1967, 207). Luck is “convinced” that the two poems belong together, and agrees with Hetzel on the ordering of the lines of 2.32 as 7-10, 1-6, 11, 12, etc. (1979, 86). Heyworth argues that the transposition of 32.7-10, which is the bridge between 31 and 32, led to the separation; he is not convinced, however, that 31 starts at v. 1 and continues to the end of poem 32, implying that 31/32 actually ends at approximately 32.18 (2007, 246). Although the poem admittedly drags on following v. 18 and the catalogue of mythological exempla is a bit excessive, there is no need to assume the entirety of 2.32 is not original to the poem. The connection of the portion of the poem after v. 18 and what comes before is one of seeing and telling which is one of the major themes of this dissertation. Propertius begins with an ekphrasis—the verbalization of an act of seeing—and moves to the danger to men posed by Cynthia’s beauty, and, moreover, how she flees from his sight to commit sexual indiscretions; ill repute, *famae* and *rumor* (i.e. verbalization again and subjects linked with viewing in Catullus), befalls Cynthia both because of being seen by others and not being seen by Propertius. Both the temple and Cynthia are beautiful, and the beauty of both engenders some form of speech act.

301 Hubbard correctly notes, “Propertian ekphrasis always serves an exemplificatory or symbolic function within the context of an argument (1984, 282).”
relationship exists between the two poems or the two parts of the unified poem. If the two are in fact separate poems, they nevertheless form a diptych. The text presented below is provisional, largely following Heyworth’s Oxford text, with some changes. Throughout this section I maintain the traditional split numeration of the poems as 2.31 and 2.32 for the sake of convenience.

Quaeris cur veniam tibi tardior? aurea Phoebi porticus a magno Caesare aperta fuit. tota erat in spatium\footnote{Heyworth admirably demonstrates the viability of \textit{in spatium} in favor of \textit{in speciem} (2007, 247). I would add that not only does the Ovidian parallel adduced (\textit{hesterna vidi spatiantem luce puellam / illa quae Danai porticus agmen habet. Am. 2.2.3-4}) recommend this reading, but also the fact that we are reading an ekphrasis which moves through the space of the temple precinct. We will see below that, as Propertius moves through the space of the temple, the description of the artworks contained within changes as well.) Poenis digesta columnis, inter quas Danai feminá turba senis. hic equidem Phoebæ visus mihi pulchrior ipso, marmoreus tacita carmen hiare lyra; atque aram circum steterant armenta Myronis, quattuor. artificis vivida signa, boves; tum medium claro surgebát marmore templum, vel patria Phoebæ carius Ortygia. in quo Solis erat supra fastigia currus, et valvae Libyci nobile dentis opus: altera dejectos Parnasi vertice Gallos, altera maerebat funera Tantalidos. deinde inter matrem deus ipsē interque sororem Pythius in longa carmina veste sonat. hoc utinam spatiere loco, quodcumque vacabis, Cynthia! sed tibi me credere turba vetat cum videt accensis devotae turba vetat. quis videt, is peccat: quis te non viderit ergo, non cupiet: facti lumina crimen habent. nam quid Praeneste in dubias, o Cynthia, sortes, quid petis Aeaæ moenia Telegoni? cur ita te Herculeum deportant esseda Tibur? Appia cur totiens te Via Lanuvium, seilicet umbrosis sordet Pompeia columnis porticus, aulaeis nobilis Attaliciis, et creber platanis pariter surgentibus ordo, flumina sopito quaeque Marone cadunt, et sonitus nymphis tota crepitantibus urbe cum subito Triton ore refundit aquam. falleris: ista tui furtum via monstrat amoris; non urbem, demens, lumina nostra fugis. nil agis; insidias in me componis inanes; tendis iners docto retia nota mihi. sed de me minus est; famae iactura pudicae tanta tibi miserae, quanta meretur, erit.

2.31.1

2.32.7

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nuper enim de te nostras manavit ad aures
rumor, et in tota non bonus urbe fuit.

sed tu non debes inimicae attendere linguae:
semper formosis fabula poena fuit.

non tua deprenso damnata est fama veneno;
testis eris puras, Phoebe, manere manus.

sin autem longo nox una aut altera lusu
consumpta est, non me crimina parva movent.

Tyndaris externo patriam mutavit amore,
et sine decreto viva reducta domum est.

ipsa Venus, quamvis corrupta libidine Martis,
non minus in caelo semper honesta fuit.

quamvis Ida deam pastorem dicat amasse
atque inter pecudes accubuisse deam,
hoc et Hamadryadum spectavit turba sororum
Silenique senes et pater ipse chori,
cum quibus Idaeo legisti poma sub antro
supposita excipiens, Nai, caduca manu.

an quisquam in tanto stuprorum examine quaerit
‘cur haec tam dives? quis dedit? unde dedit?
haec eadem iam ante illam impune et Lesbia fecit:
quae sequitur certe est invidiosa minus.

qui quaerit Tatium veterem durosque Sabinos,
hic posuit nostra nuper in urbe pedem.

tu prius et fluctus poteris siccare marinos
altaque mortali deligere astra manu
quam facere ut nostrae nolint peccare puellae:
hic mos Saturno regna tenente fuit,
et dum Deucalionis aquae fluxere per orbem;
at post antiquas Deucalionis aquas,
dic mihi, quis potuit lectum servare pudicum?
qua dea cum solo vivere sola deo?
uxorem quondam magni Minois, ut aiunt,
corrupit torvi candida forma bovis;
nec minus aerato Danae circumdata muro
non potuit magno casta negare Iovi.
quod si tu Graias, si tu es imitata Latinas,
semper vive meo libera iudicio.

You ask why I’m arriving a bit late? The golden portico
of Apollo has been unveiled by mighty Caesar.
The whole place had been designated a promenade with Punic columns
between which was the womanish crowd of old Danaus’ daughters.
Here it seemed to me, at any rate, prettier than Phoebus himself—
the statue did—seemed to mouth a tune on silent lyre.

And then ’round the altar stood Myron’s herd,
four cows, the artist’s living statues.

Then in the middle of the complex rose a temple of bright marble,
even more dear to Phoebus than Ortygia, his own homeland.
On its pediment stood the chariot of the Sun,
and its doors, a noteworthy work of Libyan ivory:
one door lamented the Gauls cast down from the peak of Parnassus,
while the other mourned the deaths of Niobe’s brood.

And then between his mother and his sister, the god himself,
Pythius, garbed in long robes, sings his songs.
Would that you would wander here, if you had but time,
   Cynthia! But the throng of men forbids me to trust you
when they see you hurrying as devotee with your kindled torches
to the grove, and carrying lights for the goddess Trivia.
He who sees you, sins carnally; and so, he who sees you not,
will not desire you: the eyes hold guilt of the deed.
So why do you seek, my Cynthia, Praeneste to consult dubious oracles,
   why the walls of Aeaean Telegonus?
Why, in truth, does your coach carry you to Herculean Tibur?
   Why so often by the Appian Way to Lanuvium?
Evidently Pompey’s portico is not good enough with its
shaded colonnade rich with brocaded tapestries,
and the crowded line of plane trees rising evenly,
   and the streams that gush down out of sleeping Maron,
and the sound of water plashing about the whole fountain
when Triton suddenly spews water from his lips.
You are mistaken. These excursions point to a secret love affair of yours:
   it’s not the city, fool, but my eyes you flee!
You accomplish nothing. You lay fruitless snares against me;
you, the novice, stretch nets known to me, the expert.
But it matters less to me: the loss of your good reputation
will be as much harm for you as you deserve, poor fool.
For recently rumor spoke ill of you to my ears,
   and all over town the talk was not at all good.
But you ought not yield to an unfriendly tongue:
   wild talk has always been the punishment of pretty women.
Your reputation will not be damaged by a charge of poisoning:
you will be a witness, Phoebus, to see that her hands are pure.
If however a night or two has been spent in extended dalliance,
these peccadilloes do not bother me.
Tyndareus’ daughter exchanged her homeland for a foreign affair,
   and was returned home alive and without condemnation.
Venus herself, although tainted with passion for Mars,
   was of no less repute in heaven,
and though Ida tells that she loved a shepherd,
   and bedded him, though a goddess, among the flocks;
this scene a crowd of her sister hamadryads witnessed,
   and old silens, and the father of the band himself,
with whom ye Naiads were gathering apples in the vales of Ida,
catching them as they fell with waiting hands.
Does anyone even ask in such a swarm of debauchery
   ‘Why is she so rich? Who gave? Whence did he give?’
Oh Rome of our day, so much more fortunate
   if only one girl acts against custom!
These very same things Lesbia already did before her, and with impunity;
   the one who follows her is surely less to blame.
Whoever expects to find the Tatius of old and the stern Sabines,
   he hasn’t set foot in our city recently.
Sooner you’ll be able to dry the waves of the sea,
   and pluck lofty stars with your mortal hand,
than make sure that our girls are unwilling to sin carnally:
   this was the fashion when Saturn held sway.
But when Deucalion’s floodwaters swept over the world,
   and even after Deucalion’s ancient floods,
tell me, who was able to keep his bed chaste?
What goddess could live with one god alone?
Once upon a time, as they say, the wife of mighty Minos
did the snowy beauty of a grim bull seduce;
Danaë, though shut up within a bronze wall,
was unable to deny mighty Jupiter.
But if you live in imitation of Greek and Roman women,
then live forever free, by my judgment.

By understanding the two poems as one, themes explored elsewhere in this chapter reappear in combination: vision, art, text, and love.303

An important aspect of the ekphrasis of Apollo’s temple is the constant focus on the life-like quality of the art contained within. Although the vivacity of the figures depicted in an artwork is a commonplace of ekphrasis, Propertius uses the trope rather differently. As the poet moves through the temple precinct describing the statues he sees, they become progressively more life-like until, when he reaches the cult statue itself, the boundary between simply life-like and actually living has been entirely erased. Propertius begins by describing the sculpted Danaids as a femina turba (2.31.4). He returns to use this same word to describe a group of real people, the crowds before which Cynthia parades her “religiosity” (2.32.8). The tension of reality versus representation persists as Propertius moves through the temple complex (here reading in spatium for in speciem in v. 3).304 The inclusion of Myron’s famous cows raises the issue of ultimate artistic verisimilitude, as the host of Hellenistic epigrams describing his sculpture clearly shows. Propertius deems the statues artificis vivida signa.305 First let us recall the earlier qualification of the vivacity of Apollo’s statue, equidem visus mihi. The line equivocates on two levels: at the level of the the simple lexical and grammatical subjectivity of

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303 Hubbard is certainly correct in claiming that 2.31/32 “systematically explores the nature of vision as a mediating faculty in both love and art”, although my own conclusions about the poem are rather different than his (1984, 281).
304 Similarly, Welch notes that the phrase Poenis digesta columnis (2.31.3) enacts the intercolumniation of the portico (2005, 91). The architectural space is represented in the poetic space, both in the physical text itself, and in the mind’s eye of the reader reacting to this feature.
305 To get the full impact of Propertius’ statement I think we must punctuate the line “quattuor, artificis vivida signa, boves”, and not “quattuor artificis, vivida signa, boves”. Goold and Richardson employ the latter punctuation; Heyworth suggests the former; Camps does not punctuate the line at all.
equidem and mihi, and at that of the reader’s interpretive level of the apo koinou use of visus with both pulchrior ipso and hiare. There the statue “seemed, at any rate, to me”. With Myron’s cows, however, the artwork becomes all the more real. The cows are vivida signa; their lifelike depiction is unqualified and Propertius further blurs the distinction between what they are (signa) and what they are like (vivida). The phrasing is important: “the cows, living statues/symbols of the artist”. There is no need to qualify the cows as living, because they already live; the weight of the ekphrastic epigrammatic tradition allows that. The cows are living statues with none of the qualifying “as ifś” or “almostś” that often accompany this sort of statement in ekphrasis. Furthermore, the use of signa deepens the semiotic ambiguity: the word denotes both “statue” and “symbol” or “sign”. As Propertius moves through his ekphrasis and through the imagined space of the temple, the works of art contained within become more like their real counterparts.306 Whereas the first statue seemed more beautiful than the god and seemed to sing (in vain: tacita lyra), the cows do not seem, they are. Nevertheless, they are still vivida and not yet entirely viva.

Propertius refocuses our mind’s eye with a bit of spatial information, our arrival at the temple, located in the middle of the complex (v. 9). Note also that, in addition to this spatial detail, he also includes the psychologically vivid claro marmore; words expressing whiteness and brightness are more vivid to the mind’s eye. I think it important that Propertius is here clarifying, quite literally, our mental image of the place, for at this point we pass to artistic representations which are no longer qualified as artistic representations, but which are the actual things they represent and therefore no longer mimetic. We begin the final steps into the temple with the inlaid doors which actively mourn the subject matter depicted on them (maerebat, v.

306 We should here recall 1.3 in which Cynthia fluctuates between statue or still life, real mistress, and intangible textual entity envisioned in the mind’s eye. First she looks like a painting, then moves like a real woman, but nevertheless remains intangible to the lover.
14). The *deinde* which begins v. 15 carries us through the doors and into the temple. Our perambulation which began around the portico has led us to the external statue of Apollo, to the altar surrounded by Myron’s herd, to the temple itself in the middle of the complex. At the temple, Propertius leads our gaze from the roof which bears the chariot of the Sun, to the doors, first one then the other, and finally into the temple itself. We end the ekphrasis proper at the cult statue of Apollo. But nowhere in the final couplet of 2.31 is there mention of any statue. Instead we find the god himself—*deus ipse*—flanked by his mother and sister (also not denoted as statues) within the *cella*. Not only is *this* one truly the god, but he actually accomplishes a key function of Apollo: he sings his poems (*carmina sonat*)—unlike the earlier statue which *seemed* to sing, but struck no chord on its silent lyre. Indeed, this whole place is dearer to the god himself than Ortygia. While Augustus’ new temple remains a *templum claro marmore*, it becomes the home to the actual god, and not an image of the god, as v. 15 makes explicit.

In his ekphrasis of the new temple complex Propertius toys not with artistic verisimilitude, but with poetically created reality. The statues of the Danaids that line the portico are qualified as a *turba*, a word which elsewhere Propertius uses of human crowds. The first Apollo we encounter is subjectively similar to the actual Apollo, but we know that he is still an artwork (*marmoreus*), and, moreover, he fails to sing, even though he seems to. Next, the cows

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307 The fact that the activity of the doors is mourning the scenes depicted on them suggests the power of *enargeia*. The stories depicted are so graphically depicted that the personified doors feel the emotion of the scene and weep. Propertius doubles the impact of the image. Not only are the inanimate doors themselves brought to life by his poetry, but they are moved to mourn the scenes they depict like a juror might weep at hearing a speech. Propertius’ poetic version of the doors is not simply evocative of emotion, but in fact enacts the emotion itself. Doors cannot mourn, but poetic representations of doors can.

308 The temple contained statues of Latona and Diana by Cephisodotus and Timotheus, respectively, as described by Pliny (*Nat. 36.24* and 32), and Apollo. The temple complex itself is mentioned by Horace (*Carm. 1.31*), Velleius Paterculus (*2.81.3*), Cassius Dio (*53.1.3*), and Suetonius (*Aug. 29*). The commentary of Butler and Barber is particularly useful here (1933, 247-48). Oddly, Rothstein believes the final couplet to describe a pedimental sculpture group (1920, 413-14). The required shift from the roof to the doors and back up to the roof is perplexing. Rothstein reasons this retrograde motion away by claiming that the doors were the more compelling image. Despite Rothstein’s claims, I think it clear that the final couplet describes the cult statue(s) described by Pliny within the temple itself.
of Myron become as real as possible for a statue to be; they are *vivida signa*, but we are reminded again that they are the product of human art, not nature (*artificis*). Here Propertius plays with the word *signa*, which retains its meaning of “statues”, but also points to its denotation of “symbols” or “signs”. It is hard not to imagine that Propertius wants us to understand not just “symbols”, but “written symbols”. The cows, as part of his ekphrasis, are indeed living writing, as they are given life in our own phantasia. Like the verisimilar statues, however, the living writing must still be qualified as a product of the hands of the artist, in this case Propertius. At the end of our tour of the temple complex we leave all qualifications aside and find *deus ipse*, made all the more real because he is flanked by his mother and sister, and clad in a long robe.  

Not only is this Apollo grammatically the god himself, but he does just what the god of poetry is supposed to do, sing songs. Unlike the almost-Phoebus of vv. 5-6, this one actually sings (*carmina sonat*, v. 16). Propertius’ ekphrasis becomes a venue for the poet to explore the boundaries of art and reality. The progression of increasing reality culminates after all vestiges of visual art have been sloughed off. What remains is poetry. That the final word of the ekphrasis is *sonat* should show us Propertius’ intent: the *Phoebus marmoreus* cannot sing, and Myron’s herd, no matter how lifelike, is still the craftsman’s product. The god himself sings through the poet, not the plastic artist. Only in the words of Propertius’ ekphrasis can Pythius come to life and sing.  

By privileging artifice (poetic artifice, poetic vision, and poetic work) Propertius uses his ekphrastic device to explore the boundaries between art and reality. The final word of the ekphrasis is *sonat* should show us Propertius’ intent: the *Phoebus marmoreus* cannot sing, and Myron’s herd, no matter how lifelike, is still the craftsman’s product. The god himself sings through the poet, not the plastic artist. Only in the words of Propertius’ ekphrasis can Pythius come to life and sing.  

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309 The details of his accompanying family and his clothing are an excellent example of the kind of seemingly inconsequential details which help create a sense of the text’s reality, according to Barthes’ “reality effect”.  
310 Hubbard suggests that, “The implication may be that the same perceptual dynamics which apply to vision (and visual art) also apply to sound (and auditory art)...it is not unreasonable to suppose that the whole ekphrasis of 2.31 may be designed as an introduction to reflection on the nature of poetic vision and the poetic work in the following part of the text (2.32)” (1984, 289-90). I do not believe that Hubbard here uses the phrase “poetic vision” entirely in the same way as it is used in this dissertation. Not only do I think this is a key factor in this particular poem, but that 2.31/32 is a rumination on this very topic, which Propertius has broached in other poems, though less systematically and deliberately.  
311 An observation by Welch is worth mention here: whether or not the reader has seen the temple, Propertius’ ekphrastic tour of it suggests a new way of viewing and interpreting the monument, from which Augustus’ palace,
in particular) above reality by ending with the singing *deus ipse*, Propertius returns to ideas he explored in the amatory context of 1.3. There he demonstrated the utmost realism of his poetic artifice: he is able to create a woman who has mass and voice. Yet because she is realistic and not real, she remains intangible and therefore his love for her is destined for failure. When Propertius’ poetic realism is focused on the material representation of poetry, however, we see success: he is able to move from a statue that seems subjectively like the god, to the god himself who objectively proves that he is Apollo by singing. Interestingly, Propertius succeeds where visual art is concerned, but fails where love is concerned.

At the transition between the “sections” 2.31 and 2.32, however, we must recall that the purpose of Propertius’ ekphrasis (here truly a narrative digression) is to explain his lateness to Cynthia. Propertius dwells on describing the temple as he himself dwelled on viewing it, and, just as he moved through the complex in amazement, his ekphrasis moves our mind’s eye through the physical space of the precinct with clear spatial and temporal markers (*in spatium, inter quas, hic, tum medium, in quo, deinde*). The description is a digression from Propertius’ excuse for his delay, and this delay is itself important. Just like Propertius was captivated by Cynthia’s eyes in 1.1, or held motionless by imagining Cynthia’s dream in 1.3, or kept sleepless by Gallus’ poetry in 1.10, the poet is held captive by admiration of the temple’s visual artwork. We have repeatedly seen that Propertius’ reaction to visualized text or to a visual object itself

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the archaizing statues of Hercules, Perseus, and Victory, the library, and statues of Augustus with Apollo’s attributes have all been omitted (2005, 92). By entirely ignoring the elephant in the room, so to speak, and emphasizing instead the vivacity of the images in and on the temple, Propertius invites the reader to see the temple as a celebration of the beauty of visual art, and, I would add, literary art. Whereas in the fourth book of elegies Propertius will turn to Roman aetiological elegies, perhaps under some constraint from Maecenas or the regime, at the close of this book, Propertius ignores the political aspects of the new temple, and instead uses the building as a means to explore the connection between visual and literary art embodied in the temple itself. The use of the ekphrasis of the temple complex as a means of representing the connection of poetry and art may be compared to several ekphrastic epigrams of Nossis. Gutzwiller has suggested that seven epigrams of Nossis (3-9 HE) which describe dedications by or portraits of women in a temple of Aphrodite are exemplary of her collection of epigrams (1998, 82). The emphasis on verisimilitude in the paintings and the feminine voice of the internal narrator and the compiler points to Nossis’ offering of a view of her friends through her eyes (Gutzwiller 1998, 84). The ekphrasis of a painting of Love, discussed below, similarly shows us a view of love through Propertius’ own eyes.
(and, as we have just seen, the line between the two, text and object, is often blurred) is close to ekplexis.\textsuperscript{312}

But Propertius does not use 2.31 simply to reflect the blurred line between poetry and reality, and to actually enact ekplexis by delaying the reader’s progress through the amatory narrative portion of the poem (in this case 2.32). The first section of ekphrasis sets the stage for further reflection on the connection of words and images, but, more importantly, the connection of those two ideas to love. In the second, narrative, portion of the poem, verses 17-24 in particular, Propertius shows that reputation is based on visual information. Cynthia comports herself in such a way that her affairs are visible not just to the crowd of men who watch her involved in her religious rituals, but to Propertius himself, though she flees his gaze. The play of terms of hiding and revealing is noteworthy: her frequent out-of-town trips point out (monstrat) her secret love affair (tui furtum...amoris) as well as the fact that she is deliberately flying from Propertius’ observation (lumina nostra fugis). Her attempts to attain visual privacy for her secret affairs only point out her secret—not unlike Flavius’ vain attempts to hide his amor illepidus from Catullus were betrayed visually by his own body in c. 6. But the visual discovery of Cynthia’s indiscretion is compounded by verbal revelation. Rumor has already revealed Cynthia’s affair to Propertius, and in no uncertain terms (nostras maledixit ad aures). The connection here to Catullus is particularly strong. Recall that in both kiss-poems, the argument for privacy hinged on the connection between visual violation of privacy with resultant verbal cursing of the couple’s happiness (rumores...unius aestimemus assis and ne quis malus invidere possit in c. 5; quae nec pernumerare curiosi / possint nec mala fascinare lingua in c. 7).

\textsuperscript{312} Gutzwiller (forthcoming) discusses the phases of ekplexis. In particular, we see Propertius suffer from paralysis (fixus and obstipui, 1.3.19 and 28, and his tardiness in 2.31/32)—akin to Mitchell’s “Medusa effect”—at the sight of beautiful “artworks” (1994, 78-80). In the case of the temple, instead of reacting with silent wonder, he responds with his own verbal art, an ekphrasis describing what he has seen, and which places poetic art above plastic art.
Propertius has both visually detected Cynthia’s affair and has heard of it through the rumor mill. Interestingly, he implies a contrast between the verbal and visual consequences of her discovery: she will lose more reputation to public rumor than to his personal visual detection (vv. 21-22).

The connection grows more complicated, however, in the subsequent section; here again we find the connection of seeing and telling and their integral connection in love poetry. Verses 25-40 introduce a discussion of woman’s reputation couched in terms of poetry. The gnomic assertion *semper formosis fabula poena fuit* (v. 26) which opens the discussion of reputation can, I think, be seen to echo in the opening injunction of 3.24, *falsast ista tuae, mulier, fiducia formae*. Both statements are concerned with the beauty of women, and both poems with the circulation of a woman’s reputation. In 3.24 Propertius regrets that it was his poetry which made Cynthia famous for beauty, and in 2.31/32 he warns her that ill repute tends to befall beautiful women. In both cases, a woman’s beauty is connected not just to her reputation, but to the poetic dissemination of that reputation. Interestingly, it is 3.24 where Propertius states his intention to break from Cynthia, and therefore, more importantly, to break with writing love elegy which Cynthia symbolizes. In Propertius’ “theoretical” reflection on the connection between love, viewing, and poetry (i.e. 2.31/32) it is the reputation that follows beauty that shifts his thoughts toward his own love elegy; in 3.24, though, he notes his separation from love elegy by reminding Cynthia that her beauty is false, since he has created it, along with her reputation, through his poetry.

That this section of the elegy is focused on the intersection of love poetry, reputation, and visual revelation or secrecy is reinforced by the reintroduction of Phoebus at v. 28. The god’s return to the poem is a forceful one: *testis eris puras, Phoebe, manere manus*. Not only does the vocative bring the god vividly into the poem, but the position of his role as testis at the beginning
of the line emphatically reminds us that the poem is interested in the role of sight not only in the formation of reputation, but, as we will see below from the exemplum of Venus and Anchises, in love as well. As if the incarnation of Apollo as Phoebus was not enough to bring his role in poetry to mind, the fact that we have earlier seen him with lyre in hand (2.31.6) should make it abundantly clear that Propertius’ concern for Cynthia’s reputation is poetic. The use of Apollo as a witness to Cynthia’s innocence of blood crimes should cause us to focus as much, if not more so, on the witness to crimes Cynthia has not committed. We should note that Propertius does not consider it an unforgivable crime that Cynthia has spent a night or two involved in *longo lusu* (v. 29). The connection again to Catullus is pointed: Phoebus, who exemplifies the emotional distance and non-judgmental vision of celestial witnesses in Catullus c. 7 will testify that Cynthia has committed no crime other than *lusus*.313 This *lusus* is the same ambiguous eroto-poetic dalliance that drives Catullus to sleepless distraction in c. 50 and Propertius too in 1.10. Sex, poetry, and witnesses all combine as the poem moves into the world of myth that Propertius so often uses as a source of exempla.

Propertius moves from *rumor* (v. 24) and *fama* (v. 21), words which here signify the “real” world of a woman’s reputation, in the preceding section to the use of *fabula* (v. 26).314

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313 The strong connection to the poetry of Catullus in this important section of 2.31/32 is made abundantly clear when Lesbia herself makes an appearance in v. 45 as the epitome of Cynthia’s contemporaries—both as *demimondaines* and elegiac mistresses.

314 Hubbard sees this shift in terminology as important to the poem’s interpretation (1984, 291-93). He argues that the united elegy 2.31/32 shows a move from aesthetic vision (2.31.1-16) to passionate vision (2.32.1-2, 9-10) to judgmental vision (2.32.2, 17-18) and finally to non-judgmental vision (2.32.28, 37-60). The transitions between modes of viewing are bridged by hearing. The various forms of reputation show that Propertius recognizes that perceptions can be prejudiced and incorrect. While Hubbard’s thesis is quite applicable, I argue also that the connection between the poem’s focus on viewing and on reputation is the essential question of the connection between *videre* and *narrare* that is explored throughout this dissertation, and that in this elegy Propertius is deliberately exploring such a connection. Not only do the use of an ekphrasis which culminates in poetry and the repeated appearance of Apollo show that Propertius is foregrounding poetry itself, but also the shift from *rumor* and *fama* to *fabula*. *Fabula*, the world of narrative and myth, is the stuff of poetry. That Propertius in particular would shift to mythological exempla to drive home his point is not surprising. The discussion of Cynthia’s reputation and its susceptibility to *rumor* is also the subject of 2.18b, which is itself a reprise of the admonition not to wear makeup in 1.2. Although there is no room to discuss this short elegy at any length, it, like many of the other elegies in the
The shift is significant in view of the various mythological exempla which Propertius adduces to make his case. In this world of fable, Phoebus will give Cynthia the fairest hearing and testify to her relative innocence. In the world of myth, the visual revelation of sexual indiscretion carries few consequences as Propertius shows in the examples of Helen and Venus’ affairs with Mars and Anchises. Although the particular expression of the Helen myth in 2.32 is used for little other than showing that Helen’s person went unharmed despite her awful reputation, a glance back to an earlier elegy, 2.15 should raise eyebrows and remind the reader that oculi sunt in amore duces. Elegy 2.15 is replete with many of the themes examined throughout this dissertation: Propertius addresses heavenly and inanimate witnesses to his lovemaking (the night, the bed, a lamp); he plays a game of hiding and revealing Cynthia’s naked body with the reader, just as she toyed with him on that night; he discusses their lovemaking in tantalizingly ambiguous terms; he explicitly privileges the eyes as the erotic organs par excellence (non iuvat in caeco Venerem corrumpere motu: / si nescis, oculi sunt in amore duces, vv. 11-12).

Nevertheless, here we look only at the depiction of Helen in 2.15 as it may be recalled by the briefer mention of the heroine in 2.32. As a whole, Book 2 is packed with images and exempla derived from epic, especially the Iliad and the Odyssey. Helen herself, however, is rarely found in the midst of the myriad other Homeric references, which might be considered odd given the amatory nature of Propertius’ poetry in general, and Cynthia’s wandering heart in particular. Aside from the aforementioned appearances in 2.15 and 2.32, she is mentioned only at 2.3.29-44. Given the relative absence of Helen in Propertius’ second book, despite the frequency of

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second book (or in Book “2b”), repeats and combines themes and ideas from the Monobiblos, implicitly showing that Propertius is quite concerned with the intersections of seeing and telling and visual deception and reputation as it concerns his program of amatory poetry.

315 This passage too is noteworthy, since Helen’s beauty is here deemed a worthy cause of death and war, and, implicitly, a subject of painting, especially that which has as its model the painter’s own mistress, and which the painter exhibits to others (ostendet, v. 43). Cynthia is just such a woman, as Propertius says: he has made her the subject of his verbal images. This poem provides perhaps Propertius’ most direct analogizing of his poetry with
other Homeric references, and the fact that the most proximate reference to Helen is an act of voyeurism, I think it likely that we are to recall the voyeuristic image of the nude Helen in 2.15—a poem describing Propertius’ own lovemaking—when she is mentioned in passing in 2.32.31-32.

If, while reading 2.32.31-32, we recall the image in 2.15 of Paris’ spying Helen naked as she rises from Menelaus’ bed, all the mythological exempla of the poem’s fabula-section revolve around instances of voyeurism. The recounting of Venus’ affair with Anchises provides an explicit scene of voyeurism as the goddess sleeps with the shepherd. Their love is witnessed by a crowd of dryads (Hamadryadum spectavit turba sororum, v. 37) as well as a whole host of woodland spirits. I would also argue that the first image of Venus, her affair with Mars, is similarly an image of voyeurism. When set next to an episode in which Venus is explicitly watched by a throng of divine witnesses, it is difficult not to recall a similar episode in the relationship of Mars and Venus, the netting of the couple in flagrante by Vulcan, and his staging of their discomfiture as a spectacle for the Olympian gods (Od. 8.266-369). Furthermore, Mars and Venus were common subjects of visual representation in multiple media. Not only was their capture and display the subject of reliefs on several marble sarcophagi, but their lovemaking was the subject of wall paintings as well as silver relief and gem carving. We should note also the possibility that paintings and depictions just such as these, Mars and Venus, and Helen and Paris, are the archetypical subjects of the obscenae tabellae, against which Propertius inveighs in 2.6.27. Having shifted into the realm of myth and fable from the “real” world of a painting: si quis vult fama tabulas anteire vetustas, / hic dominam exemplo ponat in arte meam (vv. 41-42). Note also the incorporation of reputation (fama, in this case) to the mix of painting and poetry.

316 See especially the Ares/Mars entry in LIMC II.1 at II.Q.346-389.
317 Richardson argues that these paintings are not in fact genuinely pornographic, but instead illustrations of love affairs, particularly those of gods or heroes, in which heroines appear nude, and which cause the adultery to be seen as romantic and admirable (2006, 228). Richardson specifically adduces Mars and Venus as an example.
woman’s reputation carried by *fama* and *rumor*, Propertius links Cynthia’s sexual indiscretions to the peccadilloes of Helen and Venus. Both are depicted nude in contemporary visual art and Propertius’ own poetry, and both are viewed *in flagrante*, Helen by Paris in 2.15 and Venus by the crowd of onlookers in 2.32. Cynthia’s verbally maligned reputation (*maledixit*) is repeatedly linked to a voyeuristic visual apprehension of her sexual indiscretions. Her affairs are known to Propertius and the rumor mill not because she flaunts her tarted-up beauty in procession before a crowd of men, but because she is the subject of poetry. In the same breath that he describes sex with Cynthia, Propertius likens her to Helen rising nude from the bed of Menelaus while Paris watches (2.15). Cynthia will be forgiven her *parva crimina* because Venus suffered no lasting damage from her affair with Mars, despite being netted and subjected to the gaze of the other gods (an episode which Propertius himself refers to in 3.8.7, another poem dealing with lamplight quarrels of a different sort from those in 2.15).318 Propertius lightly judges the *fabula* of Cynthia’s affairs on the testimony of Phoebus, who injects both poetry and a non-judgmental vision which characterizes celestial witnesses. At the end of 2.31/32, which has become a rumination on the subjects of vision, love, and poetry, we see that Propertius forgives Cynthia’s *amores* because they, like the loves of Helen and Venus, are the subject of narrative poetry which can be visualized, and which Propertius analogizes to painting. They are visually accessible and thus publicly accessible (in stark contrast to Catullus’ public/private distinction as regards Lesbia). Propertius leaves his lover’s indignation aside and substitutes it for a sort of aesthetic judgment with which he had earlier examined the artwork in the temple of Apollo. Cynthia and the temple are judged by the same visual standards, as both become in this poem visual images constructed through Propertius’ poetry.

318 Similarly, see Ovid’s extended story of the capture of Mars and Venus in *Ars* 2.561-600. Note particularly how the exemplum is introduced: *fabula narratur toto notissima caelo* (v. 561).
This interpretation of 2.31/32 reinforces conclusions made elsewhere in this chapter. The opening line of the poem once again shows that Propertius is captivated by visual art in a manner similar to his enthrallment by visualized amatory text in 1.1, 1.3, and 1.10. In all of these cases, and in 2.31/32, we see that viewing, whether in the mind’s eye or in reality, has a direct impact on Propertius’ love and love poetry. The eyes are not just guides in love, but in the writing of love as well. Here I return to an earlier suggestion that Propertius sees visual art as an analogue for his poetic program of visualized elegy. Elegy 2.31/32 reveals that, while Propertius understands there is no direct, one-to-one correspondence between visual art and text (demonstrated in particular by the subjective and perhaps equivocating equidem visus mihi of v.5 or the ambiguity of visa mihi in 1.3.7), he is eager to explore that relationship in several poems and across book divisions.

His means of exploration is ekphrasis. In 2.31/32 Propertius introduces his meditation on art, text, and love with an ekphrasis of the temple of Apollo, a structure that literally embodies poetry, both with the singing deus ipse (specifically Apollo citharoedus) who is the culmination of the ekphrasis, and with the temple’s unmentioned, but nevertheless present library. The visual component of the temple is so striking that it forces Propertius to delay his rendezvous with Cynthia to meditate on the connection between art and text. After contemplating the literal prefiguration of art and text, the temple of Apollo, he turns to examine the connection between seeing and telling that pervades the love poetry examined in this dissertation. The poem known generally as 2.32 is replete with references to viewing and avoidance of the gaze, as well as discussion of a woman’s good or ill repute, garnered largely from how she is viewed (literally and figuratively) by society. In the case of Cynthia, she tries to avoid Propertius’ watchful eye for the purposes of engaging in parva crimina. But of course she cannot escape the gaze of his
mind’s eye. As can be seen in 1.11, when Cynthia takes her leave of Propertius, he imagines her with other men. As a poem which falls very near the end of the second book of elegies, we might also take note of a message implicit in the opening line of 2.31: Cynthia is not the only thing that can hold Propertius visually captive. Real art, especially that which is vividly rendered (artificis vivida signa), can hold his attention, and even keep him from a rendezvous with his mistress. This suggests that the elegiac mistress of the Monobiblos can be supplanted by other concerns pervades Propertius’ second book. It is only fitting that he closes the book by showing his potential for visual involvement with things other than Cynthia. The presence in the second book of visual objects other than Cynthia should prepare us for a break with her in the coming books. Propertius closes the third book of elegies (3.24) by reminding Cynthia that her beauty and fame are granted her by his poetry; she should put aside her falsa fiducia in her own beauty, since it is conveyed by his words. Finally, in the fourth book of elegies, Propertius’ visual attention has largely turned to what the ekphrasis of 2.31 foreshadowed: the physical and conceptual space of Rome, especially as a product of the new Augustan regime.

319 I digress to discuss a thesis put forth long ago by Lachmann in his 1816 edition of Propertius that our current Book 2 is in fact two separate books; his thesis has found a number of defenders. Most of the arguments for and against Lachmann’s thesis are helpfully reviewed by Lyne (1998b), who argues that 2.10 and 2.11 are a single poem which closed the proposed Book 2a. Skutsch (1975) provides a brief defense of Lachmann’s idea, while Heyworth (1995) also argues for Lachmann in exacting detail, holding that 2.10 closed Book 2a and 2.13 opened 2b (agreeing with Richmond 1928). Hubbard repeats the thesis briefly (2001, 41-42), and Butler and Barber hesitantly lay out the facts of the case in their commentary (1933, xxviii-xxxv). Williams (1968, 481) briefly argues against Lachmann, as does Camps (1967); Wyke’s (1987) seminal article on the elegiae puella implicitly argues against the division of Book 2. Lyne (1998a) argues that elegy 2.12 is in fact the introductory elegy of Propertius’ original third book of poems. If this is the case, then the proximity of 2.31/32 to the end of Book 2b, which began with the ekphrasis of Amor in 2.12, provides a book strongly framed by the connection of seeing, telling, and love as expressed through the medium of ekphrasis. This framing argues for Lyne’s thesis, and suggests an attractive avenue for future study of the question of the division of Book 2, and the interpretation of the proposed Book 2b.

320 Recall a similar theme in the second poem of the Monobiblos: Propertius chides Cynthia for her physical adornment, but his criticism is couched in poetic terms (note especially the tenuis Coa veste of v. 2 and the focus on Cynthia’s poetic abilities which close the poem in vv. 27-30). Cf. 2.1.6 where the same phrase is clearly used in reference to poetry.

321 On this topic, see especially Welch 2005.
We now look to a second ekphrasis where Propertius focuses his attention more fully on the visual representation of love and love poetry, elegy 2.12, a poem which has been numbered among Propertius’ best and most lyrical elegies. Interpretation, however, has generally resorted to finding parallels, pictorial or verbal, for the description of Amor, or to explaining why Propertius has chosen to visualize Amor in such a way. I will place the ekphrasis in the potential context of an introductory poem of a new book of elegies, and note further that this poem is complementary to 2.31/32 in Propertius’ testing of the boundaries of the visual and the literary—and staking his own position between the two. In the end, we will see that 2.12 presents a rather clear programmatic statement, a verbal representation of Propertius’ particular brand of love poetry.

Quicumque ille fuit, puerum qui pinxit Amorem,
nonne putas miras hunc habuisse manus?
is primum vidit sine sensu vivere amantes
et levibus curis magna perire bona.
idem non frustra ventosas addidit alas,
fecit et humano corde volare deum:
scilicet alterna quoniam iactamur in unda
nostaque non ullis permanent aura locis.
et merito hamatis manus est armata sagittis
et pharetra ex umero Cnosia utroque iacet:
ante ferit quoniam cernimus hostem,
nec quisquam ex illo vulnere sanus abit.
in me tela manent, manet et puerilis imago:
sed certe pennas perdidit ille suas;
evolat heu nostro quoniam de pectore nusquam,
assiduusque meo sanguine bella gerit.
quid tibi iucundum est siccis habitare medullis?
si pudor est, alio traice tela tua!
intactos isto satius temptare veneno:
non ego, sed tenuis vapulat umbra mea.
quam si perdideris, quis erit qui talia cantet.
(haec mea Musa levis gloria magna tua est).
qui caput et digitos et lumina nigra puellae
et canat ut solet molliter ire pedes?

Whoever the man was, the one who painted Love as a boy,
don’t you think he had marvelous hands?
He was the first to see that lovers live senselessly
and destroy great estates with trifling cares.
This same painter added blustery wings—not at all in vain—
and made the god flit about in the human heart,

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and our breezes never hold steady from the same quarter. And rightly too is his hand armed with barbed arrows, and a Cretan quiver hangs from his shoulders, since he strikes while we feel safe, before we discern our foe, and from his wound no one departs unscathed. In me still remain his barbs; so too his depiction as a boy: but he has certainly lost his wings, since nowhere from my heart does he fly away, but constantly wages war, my blood the price. What pleasure is it for you to dwell in my bloodless marrow? If you’ve any shame, boy, shoot your arrows elsewhere! It is better to attack those hitherto free of your poison: it’s not me, but my slight ghost you give a beating to. If you destroy that, who will there be to sing such themes (this slender Muse of mine is your great glory), who will sing of my girl’s face, her hands, her dark eyes, and how softly fall her footsteps?

The poem falls neatly into two halves, the first dealing with the accuracy of a painter’s rendition of Amor (vv. 1-12), and the second with Propertius’ personal dealings with the god (vv. 13-24). The first section is properly an ekphrasis of a painting of Love as a boy, a type common to various media of visual art since the Hellenistic period. Additionally, the ekphrasis of this particular subject fits neatly into a tradition based in the rhetorical schools, which had students argue for or against the appropriateness of the depiction of Amor as a winged boy archer.322 Although Quintilian is our most direct evidence for this exercise, evidence from New Comedy suggests that the tradition is a long one.323 Scholarship on 2.12 has held that Propertius’ poem is a reaction to this tradition because of the tenacity with which he clings to his heart.324 While it is reasonable to assume that Propertius was aware of the debate, especially as found in schools of oratory, I want to highlight the often overlooked point that Propertius is quite specifically giving his own idiosyncratic version of a pictorialized Love. Propertius finds no fault in the painted archetype, and his “correction” to the painting is entirely personal: in me. Unlike the comic and rhetorical reactions to this type of painting which hold that the painter is generally incorrect,

322 Quintilian describes this particular exercise at Inst. 2.4.26.
323 Eubulus (apud Ath. 13.562c-d = Kock ii.41) has a character in a comedy claim that the painter of such an image was ignorant of love. For why is the god depicted as winged since he is neither light nor easy to be rid of?
Propertius’ reaction holds that the painter is, in general, correct in his depiction, but in his specific case, Love is acting differently.

A few points in the poem warrant direct discussion. First, and perhaps rather obviously, note that the painter whom Propertius praises was the first to see lovers acting senselessly (is primum vidit, v. 3). While it may seem simplistic, the fact that the painter visually apprehended the emotional effects of love is brought into relief when the poem moves to Propertius’ particular pathology. Despite the fact that the painter is more or less forgotten after v. 12 and we move to the subject of poetry, Propertius notes specifically that the picture remains (manet et puerilis imago, v. 13). The painter saw the effects of love, and logically translated them into visual image. Propertius the poet sees the effect of love on himself (in me manet imago), and translates this into a verbal image: the very subject he laments that he will be unable to sing (canat, v. 24) if Amor kills him is the visual image of his mistress (caput et digitos et lumina nigra puellae, v. 23). We include Lyne’s pointed observation of the move Propertius makes at the transition between visual and verbal art: “The essential and concrete point to grasp (as Camps and others do not) is that Propertius is still thinking of painters and painting (note the word imago).” Lyne is quite correct, and this is a point that I have made repeatedly in the discussion of Propertius. Whether or not the poet had some particular painting in mind (more likely an archetype than a specific painting), the analogy that emerges from Propertius’ thoughts on love is

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325 The shift from painting to poetry is repeatedly signaled in the second half of the poem, at vv. 21-24 in particular. Propertius argues that if Amor kills him, there will be no one left to sing about love (talia cantet), and that his elegiac Muse (Musa levis) provides for Love’s greater glory (v. 22). The poet lauds his lover’s beauty in song (cantat, v. 23-24), and in particular her light gait, molliter ire pedes (v. 24). This final image in particular artfully combines a distinct visual image with a great poetic resonance. In addition to the reference to Catullus 68.70, the phrase molliter ire pedes very specifically refers to elegy. Similar metrical puns are made at Propertius 3.1.1-2, Ovid Am. 1.1.4, 30 and 3.1.8 (both of which are specific references to Ovid’s elegiac program), and Tibullus 2.5.111-12. Mollis is a vox propria of elegy (see especially Propertius 2.1.1-2). See also Wyke 1987, 56. Laird notes that the increasing difficulty of visualization as the poem progresses points to a necessary shift to poetry, which is capable of expressing thoughts which cannot be executed in visual media (1996, 82).

326 Lyne 1998a, 170.
between painting and poetry. Just as the visual artist saw the effects of love and translated them into a pictorial image, so too does Propertius see the effect of love on himself, but instead he offers a verbal account of the painter’s image, and adds his own verbal image of the mistress. As soon as the move has been made to poetry at v. 13, painting and poetry become intertwined, and the poem culminates in a poignant visual image which is itself a *vox propria* for love elegy. The poem begins with a painted (*pinxit*) image of a personified Love, and ends with a verbal (*cantat*) image of the lover’s physical features. Note also a certain parallelism in the expression of the two modes of artistic production, which suggests that Propertius is equating himself, to a degree, with the painter: *quicumque ille fuit, puerum qui pinxit Amorem* (v. 1) and *quam si perdidideris, quis erit qui talia cantet* (v. 21). The two modes of image production, visual and verbal, frame this crucial poem, whose theme is echoed again, but with variation, in 2.31/32.

In the end, it is poetry that wins out as the superior (and perhaps corrective) device for the expression and exploration of love and its effects on individuals, just as we saw in 2.31/32 where, only when all material trappings (e.g. *marmoreus*) are removed, can Apollo actually sing, rather than just seem to sing. While Propertius says the painter of 2.12 depicted love flitting about in the human heart (*humano corde volare*), it is in fact his verbalization that makes an image, which is otherwise difficult or impossible to depict pictorially, accessible to the mind’s eye. This vexed phrase in particular, *humano corde*, shows that this is the case. As has been observed rather banally by some commentators, it is difficult to imagine a painting in which love is depicted as flying in or into the heart. Rather than emend the phrase or fault Propertius’ description, we should realize that this is an enactment of Propertius’ visual poetics. In the case where Propertius is describing a painting of a known type, in which Amor is depicted armed and not flying about *humano corde* (which is admittedly difficult to represent pictorially), he has
used a simple phrase to show the reader the power of word over image. In our mind’s eye, we can take that canonical painted Cupid and imagine him flitting from heart to heart, or causing the heart to beat faster as he crashes about inside. Propertius has brought a painting to life by appealing to the mind’s eye. Not only does he appeal to the mind’s eye, but to Amor himself, when he apostrophizes him at v. 17. A painting cannot speak, and speaking to a painting is likely an unrewarding endeavor; but a poem can speak, and the reader, if not Amor, can respond.\textsuperscript{327} Poetry in both 2.12 and 2.31/32 allows silent works of art to become fully \textit{vivida signa}, to speak or sing, to be open to address with the possibility of response. Elegy 2.12 is not necessarily corrective of the archetypical image of the winged boy Amor, but rather specifying. For him, the \textit{image} of Love as depicted on a wall or \textit{pinax} remains true, but in his particular case, it is animated by the power of his verse, which provides for Love’s greater glory, here by giving a physical description of the mistress.

My discussion of 2.12 concludes by briefly responding to Skutsch, who has argued on the evidence of 2.12 and 1.3 that Propertius “is not at all \textit{visuel}, but entirely verbal.”\textsuperscript{328} It must be admitted that Skutsch’s statement is in reaction to the tradition, arising largely from Boucher’s work, that labeled Propertius \textit{un visuel} without really explaining what exactly was meant by the term. Further, Skutsch is correct in claiming that Propertius is “entirely verbal” because of the simple fact that he is a poet, not a painter. He fails, however, to grasp the inextricable bond of word and image in Propertius’ poetry. He writes, with not a little sarcasm, \textit{“Humano corde} in 6 has caused much perplexity. How can a painting show Amor flying in or into a human heart?...The pictorial impossibility of a large heart and a little Amor flying in or into it does not

\textsuperscript{327} Recall Catullus c. 45. He has made a love scene, which seems akin to contemporary painting, speak, and has allowed Amor to judge the lovers’ oaths with his sneezes. Also, the audience is directly engaged by the narrator in thinking about the painting, the representation of happy lovers, and the validity of Amor’s judgment.

\textsuperscript{328} Skutsch 1973, 317.
impinge upon the *visuel* at all.”329 The crux of the argument against Propertius’ visuality is based on a comically rigid literal understanding of both the painting and the poem. Instead of realizing the simple fact that 2.12 is an ekphrasis, and that part of the point of the poem is the disconnect between verbal and visual images in Propertius’ specific case (though the two are still connected, as seen in 1.10 and 2.31/32), Skutsch goes to great lengths of philologizing to adduce a statement of Apollodorus cited in Cornutus in order to presume that Propertius has both read this very passage and misunderstood it or deliberately changed it for inclusion in 2.12. He continues his argument against Propertius’ *tempérament visuel* by overly problematizing the grammatically challenging but easily understood phrase *umero…utroque*. For Skutsch, these two passages and the supposed inconsistency of a Cynthia who pillows her head on her hands but who later has hands capable of receiving gifts in 1.3 (vv. 8 and 24) “clearly demonstrate that Propertius’ inspiration is verbal rather than visual…It is obviously true that Propertius here or there describes something which he has seen, for instance the temple of Apollo in 2.31. But if I am not mistaken, his description of what he has seen is poor.”330 Again, a painfully literal understanding of ekphrasis is apparent in this line of argumentation. It is misunderstanding such as this, coupled with the vagueness of the idea of what Propertius’ *tempérament visuel* actually is, which has hindered a fuller understanding of Propertius’ elegiac program and its keen interest in exploring the connections between word and image, especially as they intersect in love poetry. It is precisely the point that Propertius is *both* visual and verbal, as he repeatedly demonstrates. For Propertius, the eyes are our guides in love, and he seeks to discover just how it is that a poet can enact the eyes’ guidance in words.

329 Skutsch 1973, 323.
330 Skutsch 1973, 323.
3.4 Conclusion

The examination of Propertius’ use of visualization in his elegy presented in this chapter shows that his thoughts followed two separate, but often convergent, paths, one of praxis, and one of theory. In the Monobiblos he shows the audience not only his own example of a poetic love affair which appeals to the mind’s eye of the reader, but also his own reactions to this sort of love told by others. In 1.3 Propertius’ poet-lover confronts the fundamental unreality of his mistress, whom he can portray any way he likes, and who can talk on her own, but whom he can never touch because she is insubstantial mental image. In 1.10 we find the opposite position, with Propertius staged as a reader of Gallus’ erotic poetry. Although a reader and not author as in 1.3, his reaction is similar in both cases: he is held motionless by the beauty and emotion of the scenes he visualizes. Propertius’ experience with vividly realized text, especially when used in ekphrasis, is *ekplexis*. Like the rhetoricians suggest, *enargeia* allows the poet to become a witness, to be almost present at the scene described. Elegy 1.3 shows the limit of this “almost present”, though. No matter how vivid his mental image of Cynthia is, she remains untouchable. His gifts and adornments are rejected by her body as if she were a ghost, and he fears that he will wake her if he touches her. So terrified is he of ruining his visual fantasy, that he becomes like a statue himself, immobile. Another uninvited watcher, the moon, ruins Propertius’ moment of art viewership by using her own eyes to play directly to Cynthia’s. One watcher, who should, by weight of tradition, have been his ally, spoils the view for another watcher by bringing the mistress to life. The idealized mistress-as-artwork becomes the “real” mistress-as-nag. Interestingly, when Propertius is remanded to the role of reader in 1.10, his own watching in no way spoils Gallus’ dalliance the way the moon spoiled Propertius’. Even though he moves to give Gallus erotic advice in the second half of 1.10, the voyeuristic Propertius remains at a
distance, the distance between his mind’s eye and Gallus’ erotic “reality”, unseen and unheard by
the couple. A watcher outside the text—that is, the reader—is unable to disturb the lovers in the
text, while an internal watcher such as the moon has the ability to throw idealized (and pictorial)
love into disruptive motion.331

Our exploration of Propertius’ attempts to analogize his verbal art with contemporary and
traditional visual art leads to a more precise definition of his tempérament visuel: love elegy, for
Propertius, becomes a sort of visual object, or at least a concept that can be expressed visually.
The scripta puella, the emblem of his elegiac love, is twice admonished not to conceal her
beauty with material adornment (1.2 and 2.1). At the end of the third book of elegies, Propertius
signals his move away from love elegy to a program of Roman and aetiological elegy by
reminding Cynthia that her beauty is not even skin-deep, but is only so deep as his poetry makes
it. In the final book of elegies, though love is a secondary thought, Propertius provides a
concrete example of this concept of elegy-as-visual-object.332 In elegy 4.9, which recounts the
origins of women’s exclusion from the Ara Maxima, Propertius subtly likens elegiac discourse to
a set of clothes. Hercules, in his recounting of his previously unheroic work, his servitude to
Omphale, pays particular attention to his clothes and their contrast to his physical features and
traditional garb. He exchanges his Herculea clava (4.9.39) for a Lydus colus (4.9.48) in an
attempt to gain entry to the fountain. The hero thinks that, because he once dressed as a woman,
he can have things both ways: he can remain a man, but enter the shrine of the Bona Dea for a
drink as a woman. Hercules expects his internal audience (the women in the shrine) to believe
that, by simply changing his clothes he can change from epic hero to elegiac woman. Debrouhn

331 Recall here the earlier discussion of Catullus c. 7, a nexus of celestial, non-judgmental, witnesses, and astute
readers who understand Catullus’ particular brand of poetic love.
332 Debrouhn asks that, if Cynthia is a character in, and characteristic of Propertian elegy, should not the other
characters of Book 4 “define and reflect their own discourse in a similar metaphorical fashion” (1994, 41).
writes, “He acts as if the wardrobe itself, which is a verbal wardrobe as well as a ‘real’ one, holds the power to change the identity of the wearer, or at least convince the audience.” His attempt fails, and the priestesses are far from convinced by his elegiac drag show. Hercules can dress up like an elegiac woman and call himself an \textit{apta puella}, but the audience (internal and external) always sees through the visual deception. In 4.9 Propertius likens elegy to a set of clothes which can be donned to give a poem the semblance of another genre. The reader knows better. Although Hercules appears outwardly like elegy, his bristling chest shows that inwardly, he is like epic. The reading audience sees right through visual disguise. As noted earlier, the poet intimates a similar idea in 1.2 and 2.1 where he warns the \textit{scripta puella}—a girl actually suited to Propertius’ genre, unlike Hercules—that she should not conceal her true beauty with physical, and visual, trappings. Elegy 2.12 similarly expresses the “true” visual representation of Love as he strikes Propertius, which is different than the traditional painting (and rhetorical exercise) since, in his case, as an elegiac lover, Love never flees. There, although the poet focuses heavily on his own poetry as a response to Love’s affliction, he notes that the visual image still holds true, though with a few personal alterations: \textit{in me manet imago}. These various instances in which Propertius represents Elegy as a sort of visual object, a painting or a set of clothes which can be donned from time to time (often as a means of deception, amatory or generic), looks forward to Ovid’s contest between Elegy and Tragedy in the \textit{Amores}, where both types of poetry are personified, and Elegy quite literally takes on physical features that mimic her metrical and generic peculiarities.

\footnote{Debrohun 1994, 49.}
\footnote{In 2.1 in particular, we should note the exact confluence of clothing as poetic trapping: \textit{sive illam Cois fulgentem incedere cerno, / totum de Coa veste volumen erit} (vv. 5-6). This statement makes one wonder if the poetry book (\textit{volumen}) is about Cynthia’s Coan dress, or made from it. The reference to Philetas further reinforces the elegy-as-clothing analogy.}
In final estimation, we see that, for Propertius, the doctrine of *oculi sunt in amore duces* is strongly borne out. In “reality”, the eyes are the strongest erotic organ, able to be struck by love, causing any number of physical side effects as we see highlighted in 1.1, especially in the allusion to Meleager’s brand of erotic epigram. In love poetry, their power is no less diminished, and perhaps even increased, as Propertius is able to give a correct version of his personal passion through song, but not painting (as in 2.12), or he is able to actualize a singing Apollo only once all semblance of visual art has been removed (as in 2.31/32). Nevertheless, as demonstrated by his experiments in the Monobiblos, even visually realized love poetry does not have the ability to supplant real love, as the lover remains intangible, though emotionally—and visually—potent.
4.1 Introduction

Lying on the psychologist’s couch of modern criticism, Ovid is a poet best diagnosed with multiple personality disorder. The first half of twentieth century was generally dismissive, at best, of Ovid as a poet, and unfriendly at worst. After riding a wave of readerly appreciation in the Aetas Ovidiana, Ovid’s popularity sat at low tide for almost two hundred years. Ovid was, as Wilkinson puts it, “out of fashion.”335 His reassessment of Ovid and Ovidian criticism heralded a new era of interest, which erupted with the bimilleniarium of the poet’s birth in 1958. The second half of the twentieth century has seen an impressive surge not only in Ovidian studies, but also in the sheer variety of interpretations of his work. The poet has become a particular poster child of postmodern criticism. In the words of Hofmann and Lasdun, “There are many reasons for Ovid’s renewed appeal. Such qualities as his mischief and cleverness, his deliberate use of shock—not always relished in the past—are contemporary values.”336

In this chapter I explore a link between Ovid’s multiple personalities, threads of visuality which run throughout his corpus. Indeed, to navigate the Labyrinth of Ovid’s poems one needs a long thread able to run from beginning to end. Although the thread followed does stretch from the Amores to the exilic poetry, I have chosen to limit our Labyrinth to a more manageable size. The focus here is the Amores, the Ars Amatoria, and various scenes, often erotic, from the Metamorphoses.337 These three works in particular foreground issues of viewing and visualization, especially in erotic contexts, very early in each poem. In the very first introduction of the mistress in the Amores, we are enjoined to look at her and undress her with our eyes along with the narrator (1.5.9, 17, 23). In addition to its focus on the gaze in love, the Ars early on

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335 Wilkinson 1955, xiii.
336 Hofman and Lasdun 1995, xi.
337 While this dissertation emphasizes vision and visualization largely as an issue of readership and author-audience interaction, my broader interpretation of Ovid and his corpus is heavily influenced by matters of vision and visualization.
employs one of Ovid’s more famous extended exempla, the rape of the Sabines (Ars 1.101-134), where the Roman men’s selection of victims is based on sight (vv. 109-10). The creation of the world, the ur-metamorphosis of the Metamorphoses, climaxes in the creation of man, who is made by the great artificer to gaze skyward, as opposed to other beasts who gaze at the ground (1.84-86). The opening of Propertius’ collection with the eyes and the quick introduction of a poem focused on gazing at the mistress (1.3) is a worthy comparison. The gaze within the Ovidian poetic program (elegiac and epic) is, however, more predatory, as it were, than the gaze found in the early poems of Propertius, where it is in fact his face that is lowered to the ground, and the lover himself who is transfixed by the sleeping Cynthia’s beauty. Although this active and male Ovidian gaze leaves ample room for gendered reading, I generally avoid this approach throughout the chapter, as the subject has been well studied in recent decades.338 Throughout the poems examined here, I identify three types of looking: characters within the narrative who look; the mind’s eye of internal and external readers as they construct mental images from the narrative; and the phantasia of internal or external narrators.

My aim is to show that throughout his considerable poetic career Ovid reflects on not just erotic viewing, but viewing in general, and consciously manipulates his reader’s mental imaging. We hold that Ovid acknowledges viewing as a potent device for communicating poetic, and especially erotic, information to his audience throughout his career, but with variation between works. His varied approach to viewing in the Amores and the Ars (as well as the Remedia, which we do not treat here) appears as one of his central themes in the Metamorphoses. Treatments of

338 Although we are not undertaking a gendered reading, it is worth noting that various female gazes or looks in the Metamorphoses, those of Europa, Salmacis, Echo, Juno, and Arachne (though the latter is a special case) are unproductive, non-penetrative (e.g. unable to see through disguises), or even invidious. This is quite interesting for the student of Ovid, and the treatment of female gazes in the Metamorphoses may be compared to the way in which female students in the Ars are addressed in the poem’s final sex scene (3.795-808): women should only hide physical flaws, while apt male readers are capable of penetrating the arcanae notas to reveal the women’s faking.
viewing and visualization are interwoven and ever-fluctuating like the *Metamorphoses* itself, its characters, and Ovid’s career as a whole. By noting the variegated threads of viewing woven through his poems, we can see that Ovid examines his poetic program in relation to genre throughout his career. This authorial self-examination and conscious reflection on genre is a key element of my approach to Ovid in this chapter: how he uses vision and visualization across genres as a way to examine himself as a poet, and the relationship between text, audience, and author will be shown below.339

In recent decades of Ovidian criticism, several scholars with very different approaches have come tantalizingly close to beginning to unravel Ovid’s threads of viewing. My view of Ovid is informed in part by Solodow’s discussion of Ovid’s thoughts on art, realism, and, in particular, the creation of poetic reality. Solodow believes that the phenomenon of metamorphosis holds “important truths about perception, understanding, and art.”340 Ovid’s statements on these subjects are not limited to the *Metamorphoses*, I think, and the revealing phenomenon is not metamorphosis, but vision, a theme which unifies not just the *Metamorphoses*, but all the works discussed here. Solodow also holds that Ovid’s descriptions “often represent actual paintings and sculptures” and his “narrative, moreover, consists for the most part of static pictures.”341 On the contrary, especially in the case of the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid’s work struggles to capture the motion inherent in the theme of metamorphosis.342

Although Ovid’s earlier poems are perhaps more “pictorial” than the *Metamorphoses*, even these are charged with motion or the potential for motion. Our first impression of Corinna in *Amores*

339 In particular, Ovid uses viewing as a means of enacting and examining deception in poetry. On the subject of realism and deception in the *Amores*, see Weiden-Boyd 1997, 108.
341 Solodow 1988, 220.
342 See Leach, who holds that Propertius’ static pictorialism is to be contrasted with Ovid’s almost moving images (1988, 409).
1.5 is markedly different than the first real depiction of Cynthia in elegy 1.3. The latter is viewed like a motionless statue and is compared to paintings of a known type until the illusion created by ekphrasis is shattered by her voice. As an image Cynthia is static, thus allowing the lover’s illusion to be maintained. When she is given voice, the illusion is broken, but still does not become mobile. She becomes either a sort of talking statue or, perhaps more aptly, a disembodied voice existing within the text. Corinna is entirely different. When she is first beheld, she is already in motion (venit), perhaps recalling Lesbia’s gentle steps into the house at Catullus c. 68.70-76.\textsuperscript{343} Corinna moves while Cynthia lies. Corinna fights (coyly, I think) to keep her clothes on. Even as Corinna comes to rest and explicitly becomes a viewed object (ut stetit ante oculos nostros), the motion of the scene does not cease. The survey of her body-in-pieces flits rapidly from one body part to the next, rarely lingering. The gaze of our mind’s eye moves across her body. Despite the fact that Corinna is here comprised of individual snapshots, our eyes remain in motion as we view her.\textsuperscript{344} Further, we must recall that a film is nothing more than a series of snapshots viewed in rapid succession.\textsuperscript{345} This film-as-series principle is, I think, illustrated on the structural level in the \textit{Metamorphoses}. The epic is not a disjointed collection of still images, but a meandering series of individually moving images (and shifting narrators) which skips to and fro, reconnecting with itself like Arachne’s shuttle moving back and forth across her loom (for which, see below) weaving threads of \textit{diversi mille colores} (6.65).

Ovid’s visuality, especially its connection to poetic imagination and questions of narrative technique, has been recognized by recent scholarship. Rosati’s thoughtful study of

\textsuperscript{343} The Semiramis/Lais simile further reinforces motion: the courtesans entered bedrooms, \textit{thalamos}…isse.

\textsuperscript{344} Note that this flitting of the narrator’s eye from one body part to another is reminiscent of the physiological activity of viewing and reading, as the eye moves rapidly from point to point as it forms an image.

\textsuperscript{345} Early on Viarre used the comparison to film to approach the \textit{Metamorphoses}, finding that the dynamic energies working toward metamorphosis in the poem far exceed the static conventions of ancient painting, so much that the visual effects of the \textit{Metamorphoses} should be described as cinemagraphic rather than pictorial (1964, 97-117). Barsby also notes the filmic qualities of \textit{Amores} 1.5 (1973, 67).
Ovidian illusionism in the stories of Narcissus and Pygmalion focuses at some length on phantasia. He holds that it is unlikely that Ovid would consciously adhere to an aesthetic principle of phantasia.\textsuperscript{346} As will be shown in the discussion of Ovid as quasi-divine creator, it would seem that Ovid in fact views phantasia as a productive, rather than simply imitative, act, and suggests that he is actually in tune with a “poetics of phantasia” as a way for literature to become not just a mimetic shadow of reality, but productive of reality itself.\textsuperscript{347} A pair of highly nuanced readings by Heath (1991, 1992) examines the connection between internal audiences and the wider narrative of the \textit{Metamorphoses}. In examining the story of Actaeon Heath dwells on issues which I treat below, especially the crucial connection between \textit{videre} and \textit{narrare} made by Diana in this episode. Weiden-Boyd’s work on the \textit{Amores} discusses issues pertaining to Ovid’s marked use of extended similes to create “a new emphasis on the visual and concrete in a genre seemingly overgrown with convention.”\textsuperscript{348} While I agree with her assessment of Ovid’s particular program of visuality in erotic poetry, it is worth noting that, as discussed in previous chapters, exploration of the visual and the concrete in elegy is not unique to Ovid, but a subject pursued by Catullus and Propertius as well. Hinds’ essay on landscape in Hardie’s \textit{Cambridge Companion} offers a fruitful discussion of Ovid’s self-conscious manipulation of the tradition of poetic landscape description as a means of exploiting potential interplay between verbal and visual types of imagination.\textsuperscript{349} In a recent book on the \textit{Metamorphoses}, Rimell (2006) seeks to counter the dominant model of interpretation of Ovid’s male artists as viewers who (re)create women as artwork by presenting a set of women artists from the epic.

\textsuperscript{346} Rosati 1983, 83.
\textsuperscript{347} Exemplified by the grove on Gargaphie where Actaeon meets his end. Nature here imitates art, as opposed to the normative reverse, art imitating nature. Nature is not only imitating visual art (especially landscape painting), but, more properly, literary art, set-piece descriptions or \textit{laudes of loca amoena} (as Diana herself provides in the Callisto episode) and bucolic landscapes from Hellenistic poetry.
\textsuperscript{348} Weiden-Boyd 1997, 91.
\textsuperscript{349} Hinds 2002, 122.
Interpretations of gaze and image in Salzman-Mitchell’s 2005 work on the *Metamorphoses* have influenced the interpretation of Ovid presented here. Salzman-Mitchell holds that reading and imagining (which is a different sort of visual process) are in constant tension in the *Metamorphoses*. She understands, as I do, that “Ovid’s stories stimulate us to create visual representations and incite us to transform text into image. *Metamorphoses* is a visually charged text where the acts of seeing and representing images are widely exploited in the internal stories, in the relationship between characters, and in the effect that the text produces in the reader…[V]isualization is an intrinsic aspect of metamorphosis.…” 

This sentiment is applicable to Ovid’s poetry as a whole, and not just the *Metamorphoses*. Unlike her approach, however, I do not approach Ovid from a specifically “gender-sensitive perspective”.

Both Salzman-Mitchell and Rimell push against a strong vein in Ovidian scholarship which alternately identifies the poet with the figures of Narcissus, Orpheus, Pygmalion, and Arachne. Ovid-as-Narcissus in particular is popular because of the neatness of the image of Ovid “the poet bent over in admiration of his own virtuosity, triumphantly mirroring himself in the astonishment of his public.”

Ovid’s fixation on linguistic surfaces, illusionism, mirroring, visual display, and feigning has made Narcissus a trendy figurehead for Ovidian poetics. Orpheus, as the quintessential poet, has also proved a popular figure to represent Ovid, as suggested by Segal’s book on the subject, which examines the “creative and restorative” power of poetry. Pygmalion, too, has been a subject of critical attention, especially as regards the connection between poetic creation of reality and the connection between art and text (as

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351 “Ovidio è il poeta Narciso, il poeta chino nell’ammirazione del proprio virtuosismo, che si esalta specchiandosi nello stupore del suo publico, il poeta *nimium amator ingenii sui*, secondo la felice definizione dello stesso Quintiliano” (Rosati 1983, 50).
352 Rimell 2006, 2. See also Hardie 2002a, 28.
353 Segal 1989.
Pygmalion’s story is told by Orpheus).\[^{354}\] Elsner has seen in the figure of Pygmalion a metaphor for “the reader as creator of his own narrative, his own reality, out of the text of the *Metamorphoses*.”\[^{355}\] Identification of Ovid with Arachne has been alternately questioned and suggested.\[^{356}\] I find the metaphor of Arachne particularly appealing, though I do not necessarily see Arachne as an Ovid figure, but rather Arachne’s tapestry as a symbol for Ovid’s larger poetic program.

Although the three poems—the *Amores*, the *Ars*, and the *Metamorphoses*—are treated in chronological order in this chapter, the progressive fallacy that persists in Ovidian scholarship (i.e. the idea of the *Amores* as a “training ground” for later works) must be strongly resisted. As we will see throughout this chapter, Ovid makes sophisticated statements about viewing in the *Amores* which remain relevant, and are referred back to frequently, in the *Ars* and the *Metamorphoses*. The self-conscious employing of visualization and marked statements about the place of vision in poetry is not unique to later poems such as the *Metamorphoses*, but forms a common thread throughout his works. While there is no truly chronological development in Ovid’s use of these themes that I can detect, their use and his particular focus in using them does change between works. In the *Amores* the focus is on viewing love and love poetry in action, much in the manner of Propertius discussed in the previous chapter. This is perhaps best categorized as viewing “in the elegiac tradition.” The *Ars Amatoria* concentrates more on viewing in poetry and its relation to poetry itself, especially as created by eroto-poetic *ars*. I term this viewing “about the elegiac tradition.” Viewing and visualization are treated more

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\[^{354}\] See Anderson 1963, 25; Hardie 2002a, 23. So popular is the theme of Pygmalion that he became the subject of a block of articles in *Ramus* edited by Elsner and Sharrock (1991).

\[^{355}\] Elsner 1991, 159.

broadly in the *Metamorphoses*, and are employed (interrogated, even) with a particularly philosophical or theoretical tone.

Throughout our exploration of Ovid, we will see poetry, love and vision interconnected. There is a demonstrable intentionality in Ovid’s exploration of poetic seeing and telling, particularly in the realm of love. As Hardie pointedly notes, “The history of Ovid’s reception starts with Ovid himself…”357 With this in mind, I suggest that Ovid is quite aware of his own reception or potential reception, and as a result is quite intentionally staging a certain reception of his works. Vision and visualization are essential to how Ovid is perceived, as our discussion of mirrors and reflections of the self will examine. In this chapter, I push against the continuing tendency in Ovidian criticism to fall into polar camps filled with either/or interpretations of both poet and poetry. Instead of interpretations which preclude other readings, I think Ovid and his poetry should be viewed as complex, protean figures, deliberately open to many readings. In addition to being an embodiment of metamorphosis (as we see in the close of the *Metamorphoses*, 15.871-79), I present in this chapter a metaphor for our interpretation of Ovid’s intricately laced corpus, Arachne’s tapestry as woven in Met. 6. The border of ivy that frames Arachne’s tapestry is an appropriate metaphor for Ovid’s own works, described by the narrator as having flowers interwoven with knotted ivy (*nexilibus flores hederis habet intertextos*, 6.128). Not only do the words chosen, *nexilis* and *intertextus*, reflect the intricate weave of Ovid’s oeuvre, but, with typically Ovidian flair, the interwoven structure of the line itself. The microstructure of this line, in a story often understood as reflecting Ovid’s own views on poetic art, reflects the macrostructure of not only the *Metamorphoses*, but of all of Ovid’s poetry. The story of Arachne foregrounds not only questions of artisanship, but also of viewership, whether the viewing of art or the viewing of images produced from text, that is, ekphrasis (of which the

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357 Hardie 2002b, 3.
tapestry is one). Because this woven ekphrasis, a literary nexus of art and text, is itself framed by knots, it is an apt metaphor for my interpretation of Ovid’s poetry. Threads of vision, love, and poetry are so entangled within and between his works that it is difficult to apply anything more than an arbitrary chronological ordering to the poems, which constantly refer back to one another, or perhaps even look forward to unwritten poems.

Of the two tapestries woven in the contest, Leach notes, “They are not, as it were, windows looking outward towards a world outside the poem, but mirrors of the poem itself.”358 Like Catullus’ door in c. 67, Arachne’s tapestry calls on us to take the time to understand it, to look long and hard at it. In its lack of hierarchy, its ill defined space, and its border which insists on the act as well as the figure of interweaving, we see this myth as an appropriate symbol of poetic creation as essentially tied to viewing and viewership. The two tapestries in this story are noteworthy among ekphrases because they deliberately explore two contrasting attitudes toward art and artistry.359 Minerva’s tapestry represents the iconic mode of ekphrasis, a pure description translating one medium into another. Arachne’s tapestry, in contrast, is in the poietic mode and emphasizes the making of the object itself, rather than the description or easy visualization of the object. Audience and readerly judgment are another thread woven into this episode, as throughout Ovid’s works. Not only is there an internal audience, but Arachne herself is cast by Minerva as an implied reader of her images: *ut tamen exemplis intellegat aemula laudis* (6.83). Further compounding our understanding is the fact that the rapes depicted in Arachne’s tapestry are viewed by the internal audience of women, but these same rapes (or rapes of similar type) are scenes that the reader has seen elsewhere in the poem. At this moment, the broader perspective

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358 Leach 1974, 106.
of the external audience aligns with the more limited perspective of the internal audience of weaver women.

The narrator toys with the reader’s judgment through his use of the generalizing second person, which we will discuss further in our section on the *Metamorphoses*. The case for Arachne’s greater skill at illusionism relies on a direct appeal to the reader: *Maeonis elusam designat imagine tauri / Europen: verum taurum, freta vera putares* (6.103-4). Nowhere does Arachne condemn the gods. Their condemnation rests in the eyes of the beholder (i.e. Minerva), who admits the success of Arachne’s work and its portrayal of divine cruelty in the same gesture with which she destroys the testimony of the *caelestia crimina*.

The complexity of Arachne’s story shows that, for Ovid, ekphrasis is not just a device for literary ornament, but is used at crucial junctures to examine a wider poetic truth (as with Propertius in 1.3, 2.12, and 2.31/32). At the intersection of text and image, Ovid, like Propertius, finds a device suited to express an essential facet of his poetic program. Just as ekphrasis is an intersection, so too is Arachne’s tale an intersection, a weaving of threads of vision and text. Indeed, whereas Minerva’s tapestry is “inscribed” with words, Arachne’s has none, yet is still able to communicate to the audience, just as the speechless Philomela was able to send a message to her sister through image without the aid of written word.\(^\text{360}\) The story of Arachne exemplifies the failure of the progressive fallacy applied to Ovid. His poems are a complex, ever-expandable web of connections with a common thread of viewing running throughout.

### 4.2 *Amores*

\(^{360}\) Although the story of Philomela is not discussed at any length here, it is an episode well worth scrutiny, and particularly applicable to this dissertation. When Tereus goes to Athens to fetch Procris, he sees Philomela, gazes at her, and lusts after her (6.455, 475-82). He rapes her with his eyes (6.478) and fantasizes about what lies under her clothes (6.492). As he rapes her, the simile of the eagle and rabbit ends with the predator gazing at his captive (6.518).
We begin tracing threads of viewing with the *Amores* by discussing two opposite treatments of vision, the narrator as viewer and as viewed object. The programmatic introduction of the mistress, 1.5, presents the elegiac lover as a voracious viewer of his mistress’ nude body, while an elegy from near the end of the collection, 3.7, stages the lover as an impotent spectacle. As noted above, the point of departure for the *Amores* is Ovid’s use of viewing and visualization *in* the elegiac tradition. I will examine Ovid’s use of techniques seen in the preceding elegiac tradition, especially the work of Propertius, and how he manipulates these techniques to push the boundaries of the genre while still remaining firmly within its confines. Corinna becomes a symbol of “sexy” poetry (i.e. love elegy), and Ovid goes even further than Propertius in demonstrating to his reader that the pretty mistress who is the object of the lover’s hungry eyes is symbolic of the seductive text itself. We will perhaps see a contrast between Propertius’ mistress-as-text, dressed in her Coan finery and other generic baubles, and Ovid’s *scripta puella*, shown to us for the first time naked, denuded of all generic trappings except sex appeal, just as the failed lover of 3.7 is shown bare in the failure of his elegiac loving. *Amores* 3.7 will be shown to be a programmatic poem in its own right, and serve as a bridge to Ovid’s new treatment of love elegy in the *Ars Amatoria*; 3.7 shows us the first overt glimpses of the elegiac man behind the curtain. The two poems are complimentary in their presentation of the elegiac tradition: one puts on display both loved object and text, and the other poet-lover and his text. Ovid invites the reader to see both lover and beloved, poet and text, in the mind’s eye.

Preliminary to the discussion, two important precedents in the study of visuality in the *Amores* deserve comment: Benediktson’s discussion of “pictorial” passages in the *Amores*, and Weiden-Boyd’s work on the relation of the *Amores* to its genre and its generic predecessors.361

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entirely on the subject of the use of image in the *Amores*. Still, it suffers from many of the same assumptions about Ovid’s poetic and generic intentions in the *Amores*, and particularly the relation of Ovid’s use of image to that of Propertius, which plague much of Ovidian criticism. Further, I disagree with some of the basic assumptions about Ovid’s technique. Benediktson’s criteria for “pictorial” passages are as follows: some sort of stimulus provided for the reader through figurative language or description of pictorial detail. This stimulus should be direct; the injection of external elements (e.g. the personality of the author) is deemed to interfere with the stimulation of the reader’s imagination and prohibits pictorial poetry. Humor, a hallmark of Ovidian technique, is also said to interfere. The pictorial effect of a scene is aided by a lack of motion in the scene. Not only are these criteria excessively rigid, but they are almost entirely out of sorts with Ovid’s poetic style. Ovid stimulates the reader’s mental imaging without reference to actual pictures; a similar fallacy about Propertius’ “pictorialism” was discussed in the previous chapter. There is no need for an actual, historical artwork or archetype known to the reader; the mind’s eye can be stimulated without prior knowledge of a particular picture, as the rhetoricians make quite clear. Looking in the poetry of Ovid or Propertius for paintings or sculptures now lost leaves us chasing ghosts like Orpheus after Eurydice. Not only should we avoid seeking paintings where there need be none, but we must also not force Ovid into some specious competition with Propertius.

Weiden-Boyd’s approach to the *Amores*, while not dealing specifically with visuality, is instructive. She points out that Ovid’s unique use of extended similes and mythological exempla is an attempt to transcend or push the boundaries of the elegiac genre. Ovid’s similes place “a

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363 As Benediktson does, seeking to explain the differences in the two poets’ imagism by speculating about what artworks they may or may not have seen, and by adducing in Ovid a “need to do more than duplicate the techniques of his predecessor” (1985, 119-120).
new emphasis on the visual and concrete in a genre seemingly overgrown with convention.”

Although we saw Propertius struggling with these same issues of visuality and concreteness, I hold that Ovid deliberately presses the issue in the *Amores* through the marked use of rhetorical devices discussed in our first chapter. In the same breath, the author of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* discusses both *exemplum* and *simile* as devices which affect the vividness of a statement. *Exemplum* illustrates and amplifies, making its object *ornatior*, *apertior*, and *probabilior*, all while bringing it *ante oculos*. The primary benefit of both is the increase in vividness: *exprimit omnia perspicue ut res prope dicam manu temptare possit*. Although these devices, used to the extent that Ovid uses them in the *Amores*, are somewhat out of place in elegy, I believe that Ovid employs them self-consciously to explore the place of vision and visualization in love elegy. The emphasis on the place of vision in love appears early in the collection with the lover’s autopsy of the flames of love, strongly asserted with the line-initial *vidi ego* (1.2.11-12). The lover’s decision to yield to love (1.2.10) is based on his firsthand visual experience with its results. Whereas Propertius’ face was cast down by love, Ovid’s eyes are wide open, and it is his own knowledge, derived from what he has seen with his own eyes, which compels him to yield to love to ease his lot. Further, the assertion of autopsy so early on in the collection compels the reader to take Ovid’s account of love seriously. Firsthand knowledge based on visual information increases the perception of the reality of the events in the text.

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365 *ad Her.* 4.62.
366 Weiden-Boyd connects this recurring theme of autopsy in the *Amores*, signaled by *vidi ego*, first to the didactic tradition, specifically the *Georgics*, and secondly to Ovid’s desire to imply that his autopsy (at *Am.* 1.2.11-12 and 2.12.25) is derived from similes he has read in the past (1997, 93-103). This suggestion is promising, and very much in keeping with the approach to Ovid presented here, given the clear rhetorical connections between simile and the mind’s eye.
4.2.1 *Ecce Corinna venit (Am. 1.5)*

After asserting the reality of his knowledge of love by means of autopsy, the poet allows the reader to share his perspective in a crucial poem, the introduction of Corinna. *Amores* 1.5 has been the subject of scholarly attention, though much of it dismissive of the existence of any deeper meaning than a display of the lover’s amatory success. In a poem that is unabashedly visual, Ovid introduces us to his lover, and, as I hope to show, to his particular brand of “sexy” love poetry, which is integrally tied to mental imaging.


It was sultry, and day had passed noon; I set my limbs in the middle of the bed for a rest. Half the window was open, the other half shut; the light was just about like the woods generally have or like twilights shine faintly as Phoebus takes his leave, or when night has departed, but the day is not yet risen. That’s the kind of light that should be supplied to shy girls, in which shrinking modesty might hope to have concealment.

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367 Papanghelis, for example, dismisses the poem as “far from being a complex composition” (1989, 54). Barsby reads the poem as “describing a straightforward act of love for its own sake” (1973, 71), and Wilkinson similarly as “a straightforward account of a successful act of love” (1955, 53).
Look! Corinna comes draped in a belted tunic,  
her parted hair spilling over milky shoulders, 
just like shapely Semiramis is said to have entered men’s bedrooms 
and Lais, too, loved by many a man.
I tore off her dress. It was no big deal, since it was thin, anyway,  
but still she struggled to be covered in her tunic.
Even though she fought as one who didn’t want to overcome,  
she was overcome—with no difficulty—by her own betrayal.
As she stood naked there before my eyes,  
nowhere on her entire body was a single flaw:
what shoulders, what arms I saw—and touched!
How fit for squeezing the shape of her breasts!
How flat the stomach beneath her perky chest!
How beautiful and ample her flanks! How youthful her leg!
Why should I recount each bit? Nothing not worthy of praise did I see,  
and I pressed her, nude, close to my own body.
Who doesn’t know the rest? Tired, we both rested.  
May afternoons often happen to me just like this!

The first appearance of the puella in Ovid’s book of elegy is extremely visual. The poem opens ekphrastically with aestus erat, already focusing attention on the presentation of visual art through literary art. Indeed, we might see his couch as a sort of locus amoenus for this Ovidian, indoors, urban version of the bucolic landscape suggested in the woods of the fourth verse. The subtle plays on the dynamics of inside/outside in the discussion of the chamber’s windows reinforces this idea of a transplanted bucolic setting for love.368 Poetic tradition and poetic technique are neatly tied to the first erotic encounter between the poet and the primary mistress of the collection.369

After spending roughly one third of the poem on matters of scenery and illumination, Corinna’s epiphany is strongly marked by the line-initial ecce of v. 9. The very first time the reader encounters the puella, he is commanded to look at her, to share the lover’s devouring gaze. The marked entrance of Corinna has caused some discussion over whether we are to understand her arrival as expected or unexpected.370 Although it has been claimed that the

368 Compare Catullus cc. 6 and 32: an erotic scene located in a bedroom, in poems where inside is distinguished from outside, and in which the poet easily and graphically reveals his (or his friend’s) sexual activity.
369 See especially McKeown’s commentary on 1.5 for allusions to earlier erotic poetry.
370 Nicoll 1977, 41.
narrator created the lighting conditions in his chamber to suit the imminent sexual encounter, there is no evidence in the poem to suggest that this is the case.\textsuperscript{371} While such an interpretation seems plausible, especially given Ovid’s penchant for contrivance, the matter remains ambiguous. Nevertheless, even though he does not say he created the room’s very specific lighting conditions, the narrator does dwell on them for quite some time. Coupled with the ekphrastic opening, the focus on scenic description, and particularly the visual (rather than aural or olfactory, as found in Catullus c. 6) components of the scene, reinforces the strong visual element in the poem. In addition to some eight lines dwelling on the lighting of the bedroom, mention of the eyes and words of viewing are frequent in the poem. When Corinna stands naked, she does so \textit{ante oculos nostros}, before our very eyes. Not only do I think that Ovid here deliberately uses the same terminology for the effects of \textit{enargeia} as found in the Latin rhetorical treatises, but also that first-person plural pronoun is to be be understood not as the “royal we”, but as in fact involving the reader in the act of viewing. Indeed, the whole poem is a virtuoso demonstration of the power of \textit{enargeia} to make the listener (or reader, in this case) present at the scene. The personal involvement of the listener or reader in the scene described by the speaker is a key element in the use of vivid language to help bridge the gap between authorial and readerly subjectivities, and thus it is only appropriate to understand \textit{nostros} as “our” eyes, rather than just “my” eyes.\textsuperscript{372}

\textit{Amores} 1.5 may be seen as in some ways analogous to Propertius 1.3, with both poems serving as revelations of the mistress’ physical form. Although Cynthia was introduced in the first words of Propertius’ collection, and her typical mode of dress described in 1.2, it is not until 1.3 that the reader catches a glimpse of Cynthia (or at least parts of her), this time compared with

\textsuperscript{371} Papanghelis categorically states that the lover created the lighting conditions (1989, 60).
\textsuperscript{372} In 3.7 this scenario will be reversed, and the poetic \textit{ego} will become a spectacle for our consumption.
paintings and described in repose like a still life. As discussed in the last chapter, Propertius treats his Cynthia-as-artwork as a disobedient ekphrasis, one which can speak, but which stymies his attempts to actually touch her. His attempts to arrange her hair or adorn her are rebuffed by her fundamental unreality and lack of physicality. Cynthia can exist as mental image and be given voice through the medium of text, but she cannot really be grasped. Indeed, an attempt to do so might potentially wake her, breaking the illusion and causing her to rail against her lover.

The revelation of Corinna in *Amores* 1.5 is markedly different, though it serves a similar function in the collection. Just as in Propertius 1.3, *Amores* 1.5 is saturated with visuality. Propertius emphasizes the visual by likening Cynthia to known works of art, and by playing with the eyes in the moon simile. Ovid, on the other hand, uses explicit words of seeing, *ecce, ante oculos, vidi* (vv. 9, 17, 19, 23) in addition to his lengthy description of the bedroom’s lighting. Corinna is as much an object for visual display—and Ovid bids our eyes roam over her nude body—as for artistic appreciation in the manner of a painting like the sleeping Cynthia. Unlike Cynthia, Corinna can be touched, pressed, and held. The poet juxtaposes seeing her and touching her, *vidi tetigique* (v. 19), almost reveling in the fact that she can be touched: “I saw her, and even touched her”. He can touch her, and she is made to be fondled, *apta premi* (v. 20). The poem culminates in their embrace: *nudam pressi corpus ad usque meum* (v. 24). Corinna’s existence as viewed object is emphasized as much as her existence as touched object. Ovid attempts to reify Corinna and his experience by showing that he is actually able to touch his mistress in this programmatic poem. While Corinna is *apta premi*, we must remind ourselves that Cynthia was, on the other hand, only *apta videri*.

Not only does Ovid push the boundaries of Propertian elegy—set at a mistress who can be seen, but not touched—by fondling Corinna as well as gazing at her, but he also raises an
issue which is central to this chapter: the connection between seeing and telling. Although this issue will be discussed at length in the context of the Actaeon myth, we should note that Ovid has planted the seeds for such a discussion in one of the most important poems of his first work.

After dwelling on Corinna’s body for six lines, the lover completes his gaze with a speech act (singula quid referam?). Not only does he turn his act of viewing into an act of speaking, but the rhetorical question points outward to the reader, addressing us as tacit witnesses to the bedroom scene. We have seen Corinna naked before our eyes because of the very fact that he has recounted each detail. But what he does not recount is left to the reader’s imagination.373 The next statement juxtaposes seeing and telling: nil non laudabile vidi (v. 23). Every part of her body seen was worthy of praise, the same words of praise which were lavished on her arms, sides, stomach, thighs, and breasts in the preceding six lines. The lover has responded to visual stimulus verbally, just as Catullus responded to visual cues from Flavius’ body and bedroom with lepido versu in c. 6. From this very early point in Ovid’s poetic career, threads of vision and speech are knotted together.

A common theme of several interpretations of Amores 1.5 is Corinna’s function as a sort of inspiratory Muse, and the poem as detailing a quasi-divine poetic initiation on par with Hesiod’s encounter on Helikon.374 The noontide hour suggested by aestus erat is the time par

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373 His account of her body omits, of course, two key elements: her face and her genitals. Despite the fact that this lover can touch his puella, she remains a fiction for us, never given recognizable and individual features. Her status as poetic construct is safe because she lacks identity as a real woman, despite her reification. Moreover, her lack of explicitly mentioned genitals foreshadows the poem’s anti-climax. This selective (or perhaps restrictive) authorial voice leaves crucial elements of Corinna’s appearance up to the reader’s supplementation. Quintilian notes that listeners who supplement create images from their own pre-existing phantasiae (Inst. 8.3.64). Supplementing the details omitted by the poet involves the reader’s participation in the experience of the text. One might also suspect that, if in this case a reader supplements from his own store of erotic phantasiae or memories, that the erotic titillation of the text might be felt all the more strongly. (This of course presumes a male reader.) Zanker (2004) discusses at length readerly supplementation in Hellenistic poetry and art.

374 Cf. Am. 3.12.16: ingenium movit sola Corinna meum. Ovid’s mistress is elsewhere described explicitly as a goddess: 1.7.32, 2.11.44, 2.18.17, and 3.2.60.
excellence for poetic initiation and inspiration. In a typically Ovidian twist on the inspiratory encounter with a daemon meridianus, Ovid’s initiation to poetry is more sexual than divine. I suggest that Ovid is presenting the emblem of his text, his “sexy” lover-Muse, to the reader. He is not seeing his “Muse” for the first time, but rather displaying her to his reader for the first time. Her epiphany is directed outwards to the reader, and not inwards to the poet-lover. We are privileged to see a first-hand glimpse of poetic initiation, but the single most important moment—the sexual joining of poet and text, the creation of love poetry—is left to our imagination. We should begin to wonder whether the poet-lover was ever “inspired” at all, calling into question the entire elegiac reality of the Amores. Does his sexy mistress exist? Or is she a sexy Muse?

Whereas the reader’s first encounter with Cynthia finds the lover with his eyes cast down, his gaze deactivated, and no physical description of the all-important mistress whatsoever, our meeting with Corinna is entirely different. Ovid’s puella is an entity to be perceived visually, and special attention is paid to viewing her: in viewing her, we view Ovid’s love poetry. The perfection of Corinna’s body reveals her as poetry: the menda of v. 18 is unique because nowhere else in Latin besides Ovid is the word used in the sense of “physical blemish”. Indeed,

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375 See Nicoll 1977 and Papanghelis 1989. Furthermore, the midday setting, and the phrase aestus erat, anticipates several stories from the Metamorphoses which foreground viewing in erotic or quasi-erotic contexts. The settings for the rapes of Io and Callisto, as well as the fates of Actaeon and Narcissus, all involve midday heat. We might also recall the setting for Tiresias’ fateful encounter with a nude goddess in Callimachus Hymn 5. The intertwining of visual transgression (Actaeon qua Tiresias), evasion or hiding from intrusive seeing during erotic activity (Io, Callisto), poetics (Corinna), and erotic self-absorption (Narcissus) is a theme which will be explored throughout this chapter.

376 In a poem which puts on display, so to speak, Ovid’s elegiac program, he nevertheless alludes to one source of poetic inspiration, Philodemus’ tour of his Óscan mistress’ anatomy (AP 5.132 = GP = 12 Sider). Ovid’s choice of Philodemus as a foundation text for his own revelation poem suggests a strong departure from the visual aspect of Propertius’ poetry. Whereas Propertius chose to allude to Meleager in his opening lines, a poet whose eyes are constantly beset by pretty boys and girls, and who is thus visually passive, Ovid alludes to Philodemus, whose gaze is active, roaming over his mistress’ body. We see in this contrast between the programmatic poems of Ovid and Propertius the poets’ different treatment of vision in the realm of love. Propertius’ approach to Cynthia is often “look but don’t touch” (as in 1.3), or “imagine and worry” (as in 1.11), while Ovid’s is “look, touch, then show-and-tell”.

377 This subject, the sexual creation of love poetry, will return at the end of second book of the Ars Amatoria.
outside of this passage and a handful of others from the *Ars* and *Remedia, mendae* are frequently errors of a literary sort. Corinna’s faultless beauty is both physical and literary, reinforcing her status not only as *scripta puella*, but as the embodiment of Ovid’s particular take on love elegy. Her literary beauty is inextricably linked to her physical beauty: our literary and visual judgment of her coincide. Compare also the opening poem of the third book of the *Amores*, where the personified Elegy’s garb (*tunica velata soluta*, 3.1.51) recalls Corinna’s clothing from 1.5.9 (*tunica velata recincta*). Elegy, and Ovid’s Elegy in particular, is sexy. Her sex appeal is not simply based on her seductive literary qualities, but on her visual qualities, including how she dresses. Ovid’s elegy is written to be visualized, whether it be the personified Elegy-as-text with her different-sized feet and revealing clothing, or Corinna standing before our eyes, her body examined bit by bit, revealing not a single blemish, physical or literary. Further, as Hardie has suggested, this tantalizing analysis of Corinna’s body involves us as readers: “The teasing revelation that the elegist’s object of desire, Corinna, may be no more than an effect of the text confronts us with an awareness of our own investment of desire in the process of reading.” By visualizing the text—and how could we not, given its sex appeal?—we become personally involved in the poem, we become full partners in viewing Corinna as she stands before *oculos nostros*. Thus we do just what the door of Catullus c. 67 wishes its accusers would do, take the time to get to know the text personally, to understand that erotic poetry is a way to find out what goes on behind closed doors (or half-parted shutters, in this case).

Our own involvement in viewing as we read leads us to the poem’s anti-climactic end, and another theme which we will trace in our next poem, *Amores* 3.7, and in our discussion of

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379 Similarly Keith: “Corinna herself embodies the stylistic principles of elegiac verse” (1994, 32).
380 See especially Keith (1994) for the expression of elegiac poetical traits as physical traits.
381 Recall that material with erotic content is more readily visualized than that without (Esrock 1994, 183).
382 Hardie 2002b, 8.
the *Ars Amatoria*. After spending all but three lines of the elegy on setting the mood of the scene and describing Corinna’s body, the poem begins to reach what appears to be climax: *et nudam pressi corpus ad usque meum* (v. 24). Finally, the sensual detail which fills the poem is about to be consummated in a graphic love scene unlike anything found in Propertius. Or so we think. But as soon as Corinna is pressed close against his body, the lover who was quite eager to display his mistress’ body balks at describing the deed itself, and coyly draws the curtain (or closes the shutters, as it were). All of our voyeuristic anticipation is dashed with an almost perfunctory *cetera quis nescit*. It is as if the lover looks up at the last minute, turns to us, hitherto unnoticed spectators, and shuts the bedroom door with a wry smile. When the curtains part again, we see the couple lying on the bed in a post-coital embrace. With this three-word gesture, Ovid brings the reader’s voyeurism into sharp focus. We now realize that the *oculos nostros* gazing at Corinna are ours as well as the lover’s. And we realize too that we can just as easily be excluded, our prying eyes shut out of the bedroom, with a flick of the pen. That this intensely visual poem culminates in *not* viewing the poet’s lovemaking is instructive. We do well to recall what we did not see in the poetry of either Catullus or Propertius. Neither poet provides so much as a thumbnail sketch of his mistress, and the details that are provided are meager, at best, and then confined only to tropes of female beauty. Catullus offers no love scenes of *his* mistress, though he gives us some details of her monstrous sexuality after their affair has ended, and allows us to know his crass desires with Ipsitilla (though we have no consummation there, either, or even an indication that the Herculean *novem fututiones* ever took place). Propertius 1.3 spends more time comparing Cynthia to works of art than actually describing the woman herself. She has little more than the body parts any human being has, eyes, hands, a lap, temples, hair, and elbows. As discussed in the previous chapter, however, Propertius’ visualization is his
amatory undoing. He tells us little about Cynthia, keeping her a shadowy figure, despite her centrality to his poetry. Even in his most sexually explicit poem, 2.15—concerned as it is with feasting our eyes on love, *oculos satiemus amore*—Propertius provides scant details of what Cynthia actually looks like, and no details that are specifically of their sex that night. We are told she performed a sort of striptease for him, and that her breasts are not saggy, but nothing else (aside from the potential for bruised arms, if she tries to keep her clothes on too long). In this same poem Propertius tells us almost as much about mythological love scenes, Helen and Endymion, as he does about the “real” lovers who are the subject of the poem. There is no clear indication that their *rixa* even ended in intercourse. So too with the anti-climactic ending of *Amores* 1.5. We are given much greater detail about Corinna’s body, and some of her parts are actually described, and we are even taken right up to the point of their lovemaking, but we are not allowed to see the act itself. Moreover, only implication provides any evidence that the deed was actually done. By examining the lack of description and explicit sexual contact in Catullus, Propertius, and Ovid, we begin to see that not only is anticipation as important as consummation, but that the eyes are as powerful a factor in love poetry, despite the apparent limitations of its literary medium, as they are in love itself. Whereas Propertius’ anticlimax was much more subtle, Ovid removes any subtlety to state the obvious: this woman is not real. We may be able to visualize her through description provided in the poem, and she may even seem real enough to be touched, but she remains illusory, a textual creation with no face and no genitals, and therefore unable to provide the reader with true satisfaction. Corinna, the emblem of Ovid’s sexy poetry, becomes the ultimate tease.

The epigrammatic ending of *Amores* 1.5 leaves us one more verse to examine, however. The final line of the poem, *proveniant medii sic mihi saepe dies*, read straight, and assuming that
Ovid and Corinna have just made love, expresses a simple wish that these midday sexual encounters continue to happen. As we have seen, however, the poem is perhaps not as simple as a recounting of successful lovemaking. With the pointed anticlimax in mind, let us reconsider this last wish. Do we understand it as meaning “Having just made love, I wish that this kind of midday keeps happening”, or as “What an enticing thought! I wish that would actually happen”? Is this a wish for reoccurrence, or a wish that an erotic daydream might actually come true?\textsuperscript{383}

Although the interpretation is left deliberately ambiguous, whether we understand the poem as fact or fantasy, a scene from the \textit{Metamorphoses} suggests the latter. In Book 9, Byblis, plagued by sleepless nights and erotic dreams, realizes that her sexual encounters with her brother are just dreams.\textsuperscript{384} Still, she desires to repeat them: \textit{saepe licet simili redeat sub imagine somnus} (9.480). Biblys’ phrasing of her wish is far more explicit in showing her desire to repeat her erotic dreams than the closing line of \textit{Amores} 1.5, but the similar wishes provide enticing evidence to suggest that \textit{Amores} 1.5 is more fantasy than fact. Read as daydream, the pieces begin to fall into place: the poet was languishing on his bed during his midday siesta, his own mind as \textit{aestus} as the air, when a beautiful mistress suddenly arrives. He undresses her and admires her, but cannot remember all the details, and cannot put a face on this fantastic lover. Although he cannot remember perfectly what happened (of course they made love; how could they not?), the scene was enticing enough to make the poet wish that it would happen to him in real life. In fact, it was so stirring that it resulted in poetry. \textit{Amores} 1.5 may show us an Ovidian twist on Propertius 1.10 as well as 1.3. \textit{Amores} 3.7, to which we now turn, takes this play to a new level, and provides us with a spectacle, both sexual and poetic. In this poem, as well as 1.5, poetic

\textsuperscript{383} Recall the situation of Catullus c. 32: the poet, in a post-prandial heat, calls on Ipsitilla to satisfy his sexual urges. The temporal setting for both poems is the same, and both lovers have their sexual fantasies will languishing alone in their chambers during siesta.

\textsuperscript{384} This story, especially vv. 455-86, is particularly informative for understanding \textit{Amores} 1.5 as a poem about an erotic daydream, rather than an account of an actual encounter between poet and mistress.
inspiration, embodiments of sexy poetry, and a lack of sexual fulfillment all combine to point to an important part of Ovid’s program of love elegy.

**4.2.2 Poetic impotence as *spectaculum* (**Amores** 3.7)**

*Amores* 3.7 is odd. Its uniqueness in the collection is marked not only by the poem’s length, but its conspicuous subject, impotence. Confusion over this strange elegy is perhaps best put by Sharrock, whom I quote here at length. She writes, “Such self-exposure as this, which is not a confession so much as a display, seems rather a bizarre indulgence, especially from a poet renowned for his self-esteem: it is, moreover, almost without precedent, and so does not have the dubious authority of being a ‘topos’ to explain its presence.” Whether intentionally or not, Sharrock’s own phrasing of the the poem’s oddity sheds light on my approach to this elegy. “Self-exposure”, “display”, “a bizarre indulgence”, “almost without precedent”, are all phrases which aptly fit this poem. Indeed, a display is exactly what we find in *Amores* 3.7, which is, quite literally, a poetic *spectaculum*. Because it stands out not only in its length, but also subject matter, the poem which contains a poet-turned-spectacle (v. 15) begs to be looked at and examined, much like Catullus c. 67. I hold that *Amores* 3.7 is programmatic of Ovid’s particular brand of extremely visual amatory poetry (and his poetry in general, too). This poem both compliments and extends themes introduced in 1.5. Behind this discussion lies an important question which Ovid seems to beg us to ask: is visuality a necessary component for literary eroticism?

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385 Due to the length of this poem, I refrain from presenting the text in its entirety. This practice will continue for the discussions of the *Ars Amatoria* and the *Metamorphoses*.

386 Although an uncommon subject, impotence poems are not unprecedented. See especially Philodemus *AP* 11.30 (*GP* = 19 Sider), Tibullus 1.5.39-42, and Horace *Ep.* 12.

387 Sharrock 1995, 156.
Recalling Ovid’s noted penchant for rhetoric and ancient judgments of his own self-indulgence provides a useful backdrop for approaching this poem.\textsuperscript{388} The rhetorical nature of the poem is neatly demonstrated in the couplet which laments the lover’s inability to capitalize on erotic daydreaming come true.\textsuperscript{389} In frustration he shouts \textit{at quae non tacita formavi gaudia mente! / quos ego non finxi disposuique modos} (vv. 63-4)! This couplet is so densely packed with meaning, it is difficult not to lavish interpretation on it, or to imagine that this was not exactly the sort of line that spurred Quintilian to think of Ovid as a little too in love with his own talent. In one artful knot Ovid combines threads of seeing and telling, painting and poetry, and phantasia productive of poetry. The three finite verbs of the couplet, \textit{formavi, finxi, disposui}, are all appropriate to the rhetorical and poetic practice of \textit{inventio}.\textsuperscript{390} The hexameter line shows this \textit{inventio} taking place in the poet’s mind; the scene created by his \textit{inventio} is comprised of various sexual \textit{gaudia}. His \textit{inventio} has provided him with a soundtrack for his erotic fantasy, as well, as his imagination is described as \textit{non tacita}. Not only does this refer to the sexual murmuring and dirty talk which she whispers in his ear, but also to the fact that these sexual joys are not the stuff of private, interior space, but are already material for publication.\textsuperscript{391} The pentameter tells how he “painted” these sexual fantasies in his mind’s eye. \textit{Modos} is, of course, a loaded word, meaning not only the sexual positions he envisions in his erotic fantasy, but also the metrical arrangement of the verse in which he will describe those positions. The double meaning of \textit{disposuique modos} shows clearly that poetic phantasia is productive not only of poetic text, but also mental.

\textsuperscript{388} Seneca, of course, claims to have seen Ovid declaim in his early years, and says that the poet preferred \textit{suasoriae}, and would only declaim \textit{controversiae} which could be portrayed in character, (\textit{non nisi ethicas, Contr}. 2.2.12.). Cf. McKeown, who likens the \textit{Amores} to a set of eroticized declamations, both \textit{suasoriae} and \textit{controversiae} (1987, 69). Quintilian’s verdict that Ovid was overly fond of his own ingenuity (\textit{Inst}. 10.1.88) is commonly trotted out as the typical ancient judgment of Ovid’s style.

\textsuperscript{389} I think here we see a twist on \textit{Amores} 1.5.

\textsuperscript{390} Cf. \textit{Dial}. 3.3: \textit{tragoediam disposui iam et intra me formavi}.

\textsuperscript{391} Note a similar sentiment in Catullus’ poem about Flavius’ affair. Silence and telling are opposed throughout, and Catullus’ desire for his friend to break his silence stems from his own wish to publish (\textit{vocare}) the affair in verse. Ovid’s joys are already formed in \textit{lepidus versus}, even before they have ever left the shelter of his mind.
image. Here, the use of *finxi* is very similar to *effictio*, of the idea of “word painting”, seen in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*.\(^{392}\) In both cases, a word which describes a mode of artistic production (whether sculpture or painting) is used to represent the mental process of creation which precedes a verbal act. This couplet shows the same creative progression as laid out in Chapter 1: the poet creates a phantasia in his own mind, and is stirred by it (sexually, in this case; cf. the *aestus* of 1.5.1); his phantasia is expressed verbally in the poem, but composed as pictures in the mind’s eye. Its verbal expression would consequently stir the reader to similar emotion. In this case the teasing sexuality of the poem with its erotic build-up and anticlimax both arouses and frustrates our desire for consummation. The poem-as-tease is revealed early in the description of the willing mistress as *saepe petita*, a phrase which suggests the “long desire” which characterizes *eros* in elegy, and reminds us that delay not only enhances desire, but, in the case of reading, compels us to keep reading. From the very beginning, elegy 3.7 is being set up as a climax to an understood elegiac back-story of successful wooing. Throughout his long desire, the poet has been anticipating this moment, laying out the scene in which he finally “gets the girl”.

As noted above, I feel that *Amores* 3.7 is, like 1.5, programmatic, though several of the elements from the earlier poem are reversed, and emphases rearranged. Unlike 1.5, if we read between the lines *cetera quis nescit* a successful sexual encounter, the woman’s touch in 3.7 is ineffectual in bringing about consummation.\(^{393}\) Both poems, 1.5 and 3.7, employ clear first-person language of viewing (*vidi, ecce*: 1.5.9, 19, 23 and 3.7.39, 67), and both make spectacles, one of the woman (1.5.17-22), the other of the impotent lover (3.7.15). Although 1.5 rather clearly juxtaposes seeing and telling (v. 23), we must ask what sort of point 3.7 makes about

\(^{392}\) *ad Her* 4.63.

\(^{393}\) These lines, 39-40, are comparable to 1.5.19. Indeed, Ovid even embellishes the earlier statement: *at qualem vidi tantum tetigique puellam! / sic etiam tunica tangitur illa sua*. 193
seeing and telling. The bold inclusion of such a private matter as impotence in a collection which should have a successful lover at its head lends even more force to the *species* of the limp member. If a love poet would not seek to conceal his own impotence, how can he ever seek to conceal visual evidence of his affairs?394 Indeed, his private life becomes a necessary part of his poetic display.

*Amores* 1.5 presents a love scene which is emblematic of Ovid’s love poetry, and *Amores* 3.7 is little different. Not only is the *puella* of 3.7 like his elegy, but the course of the sexual encounter in the poem mirrors his approach to love throughout the collection. Like elegy, the *puella* of 3.7 is *culta* (v. 1), and like his Muse, she attempts to “inspire” him with whispered *blanditiae* (v. 11).395 Personified *blanditiae* accompany Eros in the introduction to the collection (1.2.35), and in the programmatic poems of *Amores* 2 and 3 they are almost equated with elegy themselves (2.1.21 and 3.1.46). In addition to being beautiful and cultivated (not unlike the personified Elegy in 3.1), the insertion of the curious detail about the mistress departing with bare feet (3.7.82) may perhaps recall Elegy’s own feet (3.1.8).

Extending the trick ending of *Amores* 1.5, elegy 3.7 is itself an enacted anticlimax. The closest approximation to climax, and the poet’s return to potency, is signified by the present tense *quae nunc ecce vigent* (v. 67). The poet interrupts the past-tense narrative well before the end of the poem, sharpening our sense of his frustration. Not only do we shift to a vivid present tense, but the poet practically points at his reinvigorated member with the deictic *ecce*. It is only fitting that his sexual potency (too late, alas!) is expressed visually, put on display, just like his

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394 Catullus similarly addresses the lover’s ability (or inability) to conceal his love affairs in cc. 5-7. Love is made to be published, and keeping silent is futile. Your own body will betray you. Seeking to exclude prying eyes while addressing your readers’ ears is difficult, if not impossible.

395 Sharrock 1995, 166.
earlier impotence. Whereas *Amores* 1.5 takes us to the very point of consummation, drawing out our desire for nearly the whole poem, *Amores* 3.7 attempts to tease us with the possibility that the mistress’ coaxing will finally have some effect on the poet’s enervated member. Whereas the anticlimax of *Amores* 1.5 is a surprise, 3.7 is from its very beginning anticlimactic. The entire elegy enacts the *saepe petita* of v. 2: we, along with the poet, continue hoping and praying that he will suddenly spring to life and give us all—poet, mistress, and reader, fulfillment.

The poem presents not just an emblem of sexy love poetry in the guise of the provocative mistress who is like the Corinna of 1.5 or the personified Elegy of 3.1, but also with an emblem for the love poet himself: Tantalus. His unfulfilled desire and eternal frustration symbolizes the paradox of the poem, an erotic account of erotic failure. Tantalus appears in the poem as *taciti vulgator* (v. 51), which is precisely the role played by the poem’s narrator. In this two-word epithet Ovid expresses the essence of what makes this elegy so remarkable: the lover is like Tantalus, never to obtain satiety, but his punishment is proleptic. Tantalus was punished with eternal thirst and hunger for revealing the secrets of the gods. The lover, on the other hand, is apparently punished with impotence for revealing his own impotence, if we understand the “secret” divulged to be his sexual failure. A look forward to another appearance of Tantalus in the *Ars Amatoria* suggests that the “secret” of *Amores* 3.7 is less the poet’s own impotence than his revelation of the details of his *amores* in general. There the *garrulus Tantalus* is used as a negative exemplum to illustrate the *praecceptor’s* sound advice to keep the details of one’s love affairs secret: *at contra gravis est culpa tacenda loqui* (2.604). The student is told in no uncertain terms that Venus wants her rites kept secret (*praecipue Cytherea iubet sua sacra*

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396 This deictic *ecce* is all the more marked in a poem which is otherwise fixated in euphemism. See here Sharrock 1995, pp. 157-61
It would seem that the lover’s impotence in *Amores* 3.7 is punishment not for divulging the secret of his impotence, but of his affairs as a whole. How can love poetry exist when its very subject matter is to be kept secret, and, if revealed, is punished with the inability to carry out love affairs successfully? If erotic failure is the result of publishing erotic poetry, how can this poetry ever come to fruition? I would suggest that, in view of the failures seen in Propertius 1.3 and *Amores* 3.7, and the anticlimax and inconclusive success of *Amores* 1.5, Ovid is demonstrating that love elegy cannot provide consummation because it is not real love, but fiction. Given the repeated appearance of Ovid’s questioning his resolve to pursue Elegy in Book 3, poem 3.7 becomes all the more poignant a statement of Elegy’s failures. She looks pretty, flashes seductive glances, and whispers dirty talk, but she always leaves both poet and reader on the point of climax. She may call us “daddy” (*dominumque vocavit*, v.11), as it were, but like the poet we are left frustrated by our own impotence, and even more so by the view of her as she trips away from the bed naked, seductive to the very end.

The odd nature of *Amores* 3.7 is an attempt to call attention to the poem, and to compel the reader to spend more time unraveling its intricacies. This unique species of love poetry and love poet combines threads of strongly visual language, poetic memory, and the divulging of private, erotic details. Here, nearing the end of the *Amores*, Ovid lays out fundamental

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397 Sharrock suggests that *Amores* 3.7 is about the writing of unrealized sexual fantasies, which are themselves erotic poems which went unwritten (1995, 159). This interpretation is quite in concert with my thoughts about the nature of the writing of love poetry presented here. I would add to her reading of the poem as a sort of expression of poetic memory, however, the strong visual element inherent in the Greco-Roman *ars memoriae*. The memories are all the more vivid because they are tied to visualization, both in the process of remembering them and in expressing them to the reader. Compare also my interpretation of Catullus c. 11 as a true retrospective of his affair with Lesbia: the love song containing his memories becomes more salient when we look back on it. Ovid also alludes to Catullus c. 32 directly, echoing Catullus’ *novem continuas fututiones* (and consequently Philodemus *AP* 11.30) with the more complex *ter Libas officio continuata meo est; / exigere a nobis angusta nocte Corinnam, / me memini numeros sustinuisse novem* (3.7.24-26). Ovid changes Catullus’ reference from an offer of nine acts in a single night to a memory of nine acts. Sharrock notes, “[H]e is directing us towards a poetic sort of memory and a poetic sort of sex (1995, 170).” Poetic memory (*o noctem meminisse*) and poetic sex also lie at the heart of Propertius 1.10. Again *Amores* 3.7 leads us back to a readerly voyeurism through its connections of poetic memory as love poetry to be visualized. Reading someone else’s poetic account of erotic memory leaves us, like Propertius, voyeurs, witnessing the spectacle of the poet-as-vulgator.
connections between vision, memory, and love poetry by linking his own take on the matter to similar ideas in Catullus and Propertius. All of these connections are set center-stage in the narrator’s impotent species, and that of the poem itself, marked out by its length and the oddity of its subject. The spectacle demands examination. I think that, by forcing our mind’s eye onto this display of impotence through such strong visual language, Ovid is reinforcing an idea introduced as early as 1.5: we readers are meant to be seeing in the Amores a complex web of erotics, poetics, memory, and allusion, all tied together in the mind’s eye. Amores 3.7 demonstrates that visualized elegy and erotic failure go hand in hand in the elegiac world because of the fundamental unreality of the phantasms generated in the mind’s eye.398

4.3 Ars Amatoria

We move now from examining love poetry “in the elegiac tradition” to Ovid’s experiment in eroto-didaxis, the Ars Amatoria. Our approach to this poem is to treat it as love poetry “about the elegiac tradition”. In this unique poem, Ovid teaches his willing student the importance of seeing his way through not just a love affair, but love poetry. Indeed, perhaps the most revealing facet of the Ars Amatoria is not a peek into a woman’s boudoir as she arranges her hair and makeup, but a peek behind the curtain at the love poet arranging his poem. This behind-the-scenes look at love poetry reveals its dark secret, which had been hinted at in the Amores: Elegy is a tease.399 Our backstage pass to love poetry in the Ars is provided by our

398 McKeown notes that Propertius 2.15 and Amores 1.5 are the only two extant elegies that show “a successful sexual encounter at any substantial length” (1987 v. 1, 103). He says that this lack of success is due to elegy’s generic conventions which focus on the cruelty of the mistress rather than amatory success (for what fun is elegy if all we see is success?). While this is certainly a correct statement, I would add that, as seen in our discussions of both Propertius and Ovid, elegy cannot succeed because it is not real. Neither of the two “successful” encounters is actually seen to be successful. As I have suggested throughout, I think both Ovid and Propertius are quite conscious of this fact and deliberately write their “successful” encounters as ambiguous to express their fundamental unreality. 399 Rimell similarly notes, “the tease of the Ars Amatoria’s fiction is that lovers get to peep into each other’s universes (2006, 70).”
ability to visualize what the poet writes; unlike the Muse, the reader is not left waiting outside the bedroom door (2.704). The all-access pass provided by the poem’s didactic mode directly involves the reader as a spectator of the course of the student’s amatory education. As didactic, however, we must ask ourselves what lesson we are to learn by watching the student undergo his (or her) transformation to successful elegiac lover. Although there are many lessons, the most important for the particular approach to Ovid presented here is this: the precise use of visualization in Ovid’s program of love poetry, and especially how he conceptualizes the gaze as it functions in love and love poetry.

4.3.1 Confusions of viewer and viewed

In order to understand Ovid’s use of the gaze, his student must carefully attend the lessons of the praecceptor, and must be willing to review the instructional material presented in the Ars Amatoria, but also in the text which forms its experimental data set, as it were, the Amores. The complexity of internal and external referencing in the Ars seems to be the first real test of a student’s worthiness to follow the program. Not only do some of the praecceptor’s lessons on viewing seem to contradict themselves as we move through the text, but also as we look backward to the Amores and forward to the Metamorphoses. Exemplifying the labyrinthine nature of the curriculum of viewing are numerous instances of reversals of viewer and viewed in the poem. Two hunting grounds described in the first book, the Circus and the arena, are an excellent starting point for the reversal of the gaze. In an artfully structured line which literally mirrors itself, the praecceptor gives the reader a first taste of his game: spectatum veniunt, veniunt spectentur ut ipsae (1.99). Women come to the Circus to eye potential lovers and to be eyed themselves. Even Cupid himself becomes a party to this game of mirrors. The god has fought in
the arena, part of the spectacle watched by an unwitting victim: *illa saepe puer Veneris pugnavit harena / et, qui spectavit vulnera, vulnus habet* (1.165-66). That Cupid can be said to have participated as a gladiator, and therefore as an object of the gaze, shows the twofold, mirrored nature of the love taught in the *Ars Amatoria*. Love’s dupe comes to the arena expecting to see, it seems, at least one of three things: the actual fights, the women there to be seen, and perhaps a sort of amatory gladiatorial contest of men on the prowl, competing with women as well as other men. He has come to see someone else be victimized, whether by the sword or by love, but becomes himself the victim of a crafty Cupid. What happens to the viewer-turned-victim is instructive: *et pars spectati muneris ipse fuit* (1.170). This hapless fellow is of course the sort of ideal reader and student of the *Ars Amatoria*. He unexpectedly suffers the bite of Cupid’s arrow, and becomes part of the very spectacle he was watching. In the blink of an eye, the viewer becomes the viewed. The reader becomes a part of the poem’s eroto-didactic performance.

Not only do we see a frequent reversal of the gaze, but the poem also presents us with a sort of mirroring of gender roles. Whereas the male is generally presented as the active partner, the hunter or the Roman rapist of Sabine booty, in the first two books of the *Ars*, his role as active pursuer is perhaps more precarious than thought. The male hunter is given leave to gaze at his female prey: *quod spectes, umeris afferet illa suis. / illam respicias, illam mirere licebit: / multa supercilio, multa loquare notis* (1.498-500). Indeed, *she* will actually bring him something to look at, a pretty face. As soon as the man is positioned as the active viewer, however, the mirror is reintroduced. To woo his intended target, the man is instructed to play the role of Echo, to mirror the actions of the woman: *cum surgit, surges; donec sedet illa, sedebis* (1.503). The

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400 Cf. Gunderson (1996, 115-16): “The arena can be taken as an apparatus which not only looks in upon a spectacle, but one which in its organisation and structure reproduces the relations between observer and observed…the spectacle of the arena has specular effect which makes a new spectacle of its own observers, revealing and determining them through their relationship to the image of themselves produced by their relationship to the arena.”
verbal mirroring of the line reinforces the fact that the student’s actions become passive mimicry
of the woman’s actions. The first two books of the *Ars Amatoria*, those directed at a
specifically male audience, place the male lover in the role of a hunter of women. Part of his
training, however, teaches him to become simply a mirror of his quarry, to act as she acts.
Indeed, his lessons in this technique are reinforced by the structure of the lines themselves. The
instructional text of the *Ars Amatoria*—like most of the advice contained within—is duplicitous
and mirror-like. It instructs the reader how to play the game, gives him a seat in the arena and
places a commentator beside him, explaining each move of the ideal love affair. But watching
love wounds being delivered creates in turn wounds in the watcher. The reader of the *Ars
Amatoria* unexpectedly becomes a part of the spectacle of love, a lover himself with a vested role
in learning the lessons, which allow him some modicum of control over the feeling (and, in the
*Remedia Amoris*, a final release from its grasp). If we understand the *Ars Amatoria* to be “about
the elegiac tradition”, we find that, by extension, the reader-viewer may suffer the same fate as
the unsuspecting arena-goer. Reading elegy and its erotic battles may be likened to the spectator
at the games. We may think ourselves detached observers, but may end up ourselves struck by
love. While the eyes may be guides in love, they also serve as loci of infection for love’s
sickness, as Meleager and Propertius make clear (and Catullus/Sappho, to a lesser extent). With
its mirroring text and reversals of viewership, I think Ovid is pointing out that erotic poetry is as
much a mirror of its reader’s own desires as it is a window onto the love of another. Like
Propertius reading in 1.10, we have an active desire to keep reading the love of another because
it affects us with its ardor. In generically codified love elegy, the reader can find what Catullus
was seeking from Flavius and Camerius—to become a *particeps* in the love of another. The

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401 Mirrored action returns in the next book as well: *arguet: arguito; quicquid probat illa, probato; / quod dicet, dicas; quod negat illa, neges. / riserit: arride; si flebit, flere memento* (2.199-201).
vehicle of this participation is, of course, *versus lepidus*. Ovid’s didactic is like a mirror: it shows the reader not only how we learn, but also what we want to learn. What the reader sees in the *Ars Amatoria* is what was demonstrated in Propertius 1.10, the reader peering as a voyeur at the love of another, but affected by love nonetheless.

**4.3.2 Anticlimax 1 (*Ars* 2.703-30)**

By the time the faithful student of the *Ars Amatoria* nears the end of his tutelage, his mind is filled with countless lessons, techniques, proper hunting grounds, tips, and tricks. The only thing left for him is to put his skills into practice, find a lover, and lead her to bed. Ovid obliges, and the exemplary student and his new mistress make their way to the bedroom for satisfaction—*Venerem seram* (2.701)—that has been delayed for some fifteen-hundred verses. With a turn to the dutiful student (or reader) who has lasted this long in the program, Ovid prepares the prize: *si modo duraris, praemia digna feres* (2.702). In keeping with the strong visual element that runs throughout the *Ars Amatoria*, the climax of instruction is introduced not just with an *ecce*, but with an explicit witness, the *conscius lectus* (2.703), an inanimate witness similar to those seen notably in Catullus cc. 6 and 7, Propertius 2.15, and various Hellenistic epigrams (e.g. Philodemus *AP* 5.4 = 1 *GP* = 7 Sider and *AP* 5.8 = 69 *HE* = 36 Sider). Another witness is implied, however, but this time not an invited guest. The *ecce* which begins the passage is direct to the reader, telling us to look at the scene unfolding. Further, the specification that the bed will receive two lovers reminds the reader that we are neither of those two. The reader is staged as a voyeur to the scene, neither lover nor complicit bed, but is nevertheless told to look.
One witness is excluded, however, from the impending love scene: the Muse, who is told to wait outside the bedroom. The lovers are able to make their own poetry, without divine inspiration: *sponte sua sine te celeberrima verba loquentur* (2.705). Ovid’s “initiation” to love poetry was sexual, as seen in *Amores* 1.5, and throughout the *Amores* his particular Muse is herself a seductress, very much like Corinna. Here the successful student becomes his own poet, like Ovid in the *Amores*, and this climactic scene becomes his own version of the sexual encounter with sexy love poetry. After being given behind-the-scenes access to the world of love poetry, being told how to be a poet-lover, the student is able to produce poetry of his own accord, not from any divine source, but from a sexual source. But from just what sort of sexual source is this inspiration for the writing of *celeberrima verba* to be derived? The sex of this climactic scene seems to be less intercourse than mutual masturbation.

The primary erotic activity of the two lovers is touching (vv. 706, 713, 719-20), and Ovid indulges in a lengthy exemplum describing the ways in which famous epic women, Andromache and Briseis, touched their men before or after a day of fighting. When Achilles rests tired on his couch, it is not from lovemaking, as, presumably, at the end of *Amores* 1.5, but from combat; Briseis allows herself to be touched by Achilles’ battle-worn hands, not his lovelorn hands. Secondary to touching are gazing and murmuring (vv. 705, 721-24). Eyes may flash with passion and lips murmur the lovers’ song, but nowhere do we find mention of true consummation. Indeed, the *praeceptor’s*

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402 Note also the potential play of interior and exterior spaces with the Muses’ exclusion at the doors (clausas fores) while we watch the scene transpiring behind closed doors. A similar play may be seen in *Amores* 1.5 with its partially opened shutters and similar view of interior events.

403 Cf. the finale of Catullus c. 6, where Flavius’ sexual escapades are transformed into verse by the poet. There the intervention of a poet was needed, whereas in the *Ars Amatoria* the lover becomes his own poet with no need for outside help (save the *praeceptor’s* instruction, of course).


interjection of advice in the midst of the scene suggests only dilatory foreplay: *crede mihi, non est Veneris properanda voluptas / sed sensim tarda prolicienda mora* (2.718-19). After two books of instruction, our climax is dashed by further delay. Our instructor reminds us that pleasure must not be rushed, but teased out gradually with slow delay. Two lovers have entered the bedroom, to which the reader has been given access, and we expect consummation; we see foreplay and sultry looks. Expecting climax, we are let down again by the *praecceptor* who advises still more foreplay. Elegy, even in this revealing didactic take on the genre, remains a tease.

Rather than viewing the sex of 2.703-30 as masturbatory with the connotation that it is entirely non-purposive, as Rimell does, I suggest that it is preparatory for a final climactic sex scene in the next book. As our instructor reminds at vv. 718-19, delay is important to the textbook love affair. After two books of titillation, the reader can endure one more. Furthermore, the emphasis on touching recalls one of the more remarkable features of *Amores* 1.5, which distinguishes it from Propertius 1.3: the ability to actually touch the lover. Within the love scene visualized by the reader the focus is on glances, sounds, and touching. The first two are within the power of elegy to provide, but the third is unique to Ovid. In *Amores* 1.5 he juxtaposes seeing and touching (*vidi tetigique*, 1.5.19), emphasizing exactly what Propertius was unable to do in his own erotic confrontation with his mistress. Yet in both cases, *Amores* 1.5 and *Ars* 2.703-30, this novel erotic touching leads nowhere: the end of *Amores* 1.5 is playfully ambiguous, and the sex scene of the *Ars* does not actually show intercourse.406 Even though Ovid emphasizes his own touching and the touching of his two lovers, elegy only provides us with what it is truly able to provide, mental images and sounds.

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406 Similarly, touching and talking, as well as the mistress’ beauty, fail to revive the impotent lover in *Am.* 3.7.
At the end of the scene, I think we do well to return to its beginning and the role of voyeur in which the reader is implicitly cast. As neither one of the *duo amantes*, and permitted visual access where the Muse was specifically excluded, the reader is allowed to watch what literally takes place behind closed doors. In emphasizing the aspect of manual foreplay in this scene, I think what Ovid points to neatly intersects with Freud’s definition of voyeurism. Ovid shows the limits of visualized poetry: it can arouse the reader with its vividness—its sex appeal—but it is still not the real thing. Elegy can provide sight and sound and try to mimic touch, but it is still unreal. The third part of Freud’s definition of voyeurism is most relevant: “if, instead of being preparatory to the normal sexual aim, [looking] supplants it.”

For the two lovers in the scene, looking, talking, and touching are all—presumably—preparatory to a sex act (one which the reader never sees). For the reader-voyeur, however, the normal sexual aim cannot be fulfilled because he is neither part of the scene, nor is the scene itself even real. While not approaching such a strong statement which could be qualified with “aberration” or “perversion” in Freudian terms, Ovid does show that visualized fantasy is no substitute for reality in matters of love. On an epic battlefield or a courtroom *enargeia* may help to convince or persuade, to catch the listener up in the event, but in the bedroom, looking with the mind’s eye only leaves the reader unfulfilled.

I suggest reading the anticlimactic culmination of *Ars* 2 in light of earlier anticlimaxes from the *Amores* as contributing to a wider statement about the nature of love elegy. We find another deliberate anticlimax after being titillated by the text—titillating both in its intimate, behind-the-scenes look at love, and the potential for erotic success if we follow its lessons—for two books. In *Amores* 1.5, though the poet claims to have seen *and* touched, he leaves ambiguous whether or not he actually had sex, and indeed whether or not the whole scene was

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407 Freud 1953 (v. 7), 123 (emphasis mine).
anything more than an erotic daydream. Similarly, the awkward impotence of the lover in *Amores* 3.7, despite manual coaxing and whispered *blanditiae*, proves a letdown: the foreplay itself is explicit, but avails nothing because of his impotence. Again we are being pointed to the conclusion that love elegy, no matter how strongly visual and sexy in its appearance, is essentially masturbatory. Ovid is here putting a point on suggestions made in Propertius 1.3 and 1.10, and even in Catullus’ own reaction to a day’s writing with Calvus in c. 50. The text is sexy, does titillate, and can stir emotion in the reader, but it cannot provide climax. The reader might be able to see and hear, but cannot touch.

### 4.3.3 Anticlimax 2 (*Ars* 3.795-808)

The third book of the *Ars Amatoria*, whether added as an afterthought or not, provides an important reprise of this anticlimactic love scene which completes the student’s instruction in the previous two books. Although the lessons directed to a new crop of female students may often be simple—perfunctory, even—reversals of the instructions given to men, the love scene that caps women’s instruction in Book 3 puts an important cap on the poem as a whole. The climactic love scene of this third book begins with delay, in this case an extended mythological digression, the story of Cephalus and Procris (3.686-746), and makes this delay an essential aspect of the woman’s successful tryst. After dallying on his story, the *praecceptor* remembers his audience, waiting in the background, ready to be led to the climactic scene, which begins at a dinner party: *solliceite expectas, dum te in convivia ducam* (3.749). Delay is a built-in factor of the scene: the student is to come to dinner fashionably late (*sera veni*, 3.751) because delay

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408 Here I suggest that viewing the sex scene of *Ars* 2 as foreplay in preparation for both another book of poetry and a truly climactic sex scene at its end points to the fact that the three books of the *Ars Amatoria* are a cohesive whole. The first book provides lessons (and sufficient delay) leading up to the foreplay which ends *Ars* 2, which in turn gets the reader in the mood for “real” sex at the end of the next book.
enhances one’s charm (grata mora venies, 3.752). So important is delay for this tryst, she is deemed a procuress (maxima lena mora est). One begins to suspect that there is a reason delay has been so emphasized thus far.409 Not only does delay become a woman’s ally, but night too, for she covers up any physical flaws the student may have (et latebras vitii nox dabit ipsa tuis, 3.754). Concealment and delay will return, as we continue our lesson. But one more delay, proper table manners, keeps us from our expected outcome. The student is admonished to remain sober to avoid double vision (nec, quae sunt singula, bina vides, 3.764). Why double vision? The problem with drunkenness which follows, the fact that a drunk woman becomes too “easy” (or even a potential victim of rape), makes perfect sense within the context of the Ars Amatoria, but double vision seems out of place. Sound judgment (animusque pedesque / constant, 3.763-64) is having clear, not double, vision. After all this delay, I think we, as readers, do well to pause for just one more moment and review with clear head the instruction given thus far. The double vision we (or at least the female student) are warned against can very well be seen as emblematic of the duplicity and amatory double-speak which is the heart of the praecceptor’s eroto-didactic program. Not only are lovers taught to be duplicitous, but they, both male and female, are taught to become mimics, mirror images of the beloved they are wooing.410 We are told not to rush, and our progress is frequently delayed by narrative digressions. Rushing, as well as drunkenness, is unbecoming, and one will lead to double vision. But double vision is exactly what the faithful student has been practicing, becoming a double of his or her quarry. I would also suggest that this admonition to avoid double vision can be applied with a glance back to our last anticlimax: conscius, ecce, duos accepit lectus amantes. The student

409 The Ars Amatoria consists of two books of instruction culminating in anticlimax, followed by a third book of instruction which begins its climax with an extended digression.
410 For male students as mirror images, see above. Female students are to become mimics, not necessarily of their male lovers, but of poets. A specific set of poets, epigrammatists and elegists in particular, is provided at 3.329-44. Ovid is himself, of course, on the list of poets to know.
following his lessons is told to look at the two successful lovers, but the two do little other than look at one another and whisper sweet nothings in each other’s ears. How successful are the two lovers who do not actually have intercourse? Perhaps what we are told to look at would be different if we had not been suffering from an induced double vision. If we approach this anticlimactic love scene with single vision, instead of duplicitous double vision, I think what we see instead of duo amantes is unus lector. Looking and listening, but never getting any farther than that with his uncooperative—but sexy—new tease, Elegy.

Having been cautioned about the dangers of double vision, and having been delayed for long enough, the tutor coyly brings the reader once again to the threshold of climax: ulterioria pudet docuisse (3.769). Though seemingly reluctant, the praeceptor does not disappoint, and proceeds to describe in vivid detail the various sexual modi apropos to each body type. Unlike the “sex” offered at the end of Book 2, the sex which follows Ovid’s miniature Kama Sutra is penetrative, if sentiat ex imis venerem resoluta medullis / femina is any indication (3.793-94). Her reaction to the joint pleasure of intercourse is to be verbal: nec blandae voces iucundaque murmura cessent, / nec taceant mediis improba verba iocis (3.795-96). The celeberrima verba which needed no Muse in Book 2 are here clarified, and the woman is to be an active participant in producing love’s music. For those unfortunate women who cannot feel pleasure ex imis medullis, though, the teacher bids them simply fake it (dulcia mendaci gaudia finge sono, 3.798). Like women who do feel pleasure, the unfortunate fakers are to respond verbally, and, moreover, to provide visual reassurance of their pleasure through seductive movements and glances (3.802).

Even more unfortunate for these women who cannot orgasm is the potential for taking an

411 The style here is reminiscent of Hellenistic sex manuals. See further Parker 1992.
412 The quo pariter debent femina virque frui of v. 800 and the ista pars of v. 804 leave little doubt that Ovid is talking about vaginal intercourse.
413 One cannot help but think of the attempts of the mistress to revive the poet’s reluctant member in Amores 3.7.
experienced lover who knows a woman’s secret signs, one who can see through the ruse of her feminine *ars*—namely the male reader of the *Ars Amatoria*. Ovid’s male reader is able to penetrate the trickery of Ovid’s female student by knowing the *arcanae notae* of *ista pars*, not just the physical signs of orgasm, but, importantly, the written signs which provide her instruction in moaning, moving, etc. Avoiding detection, whether she was faking or not, is the ultimate (in the truest sense of the word, for the book ends here) lesson for the female student. The successful female lover must take as much care as the *amator* of *Amores* 1.5 seems to have lavished on his urban *locus amoenus*: she must control the illumination in her boudoir to prevent her lover from getting a clear view of his partner, whether as a means of concealing her sexual faking or simply covering up any bodily flaws (the very *mendae* which Corinna so notably lacks in *Amores* 1.5) she may have, and which are the subject of numerous lessons in Book 3 of the *Ars Amatoria*.414

Corinna, when introduced to the reader for the first time, is put on display and seen to have no flaws, whether physical or poetic. The female student of Book 3, however, is bound to have some physical flaws, which she must conceal. Ovid goes to great lengths throughout the book to advise women to conceal their various faults, and even during sex, when there is little opportunity to hide any flaws, he instructs women on how best to position themselves to present the most flawless view for the male partner. Unlike Corinna, that emblem of sexy—and flawless—love poetry, the all-too-human female student of Book 3 is flawed, and must consequently avoid visual detection, whether by artful *modus* or lighting. The *Ars Amatoria* ends in sham sex, and we discover the essential fact that visual faking and sexual faking are one

414 *Nec lucem in thalamos totis admitte fenestris; / aptius in vestro corpora multa latent* (3.807-8). Recall the final act of the undersexed mistress of *Amores* 3.7 who trips away from the bed to the bathroom in an overt display of washing intended to conceal the fact that she had not actually made love. The mistress of 3.7 is forced to fake it even when her lover is not up to the task. Women must pretend (if necessary) for their own potent lovers and even for an audience of handmaids or friends if their lovers were impotent.
and the same, both aspects of *ars*. The *ars* the *praecceptor* has been teaching is the art of faking—the art of love poetry, which is, at its heart, faking love. In love poetry, a flawless mistress, free from all sorts of *mendae*, can be depicted. The *Ars Amatoria* reveals, however, that love poetry is make-believe: real women have physical flaws and must attempt to hide them from view (unlike Corinna who stands before our very eyes like a statue, enduring our analyzing gaze). They can hide and they can moan, make the poetry of love, but in the real world all of their faking is undone by the secret signs of *ista pars*, which can be detected by a skilled lover who has completed Ovid’s erotic education.

At the end of Book 3, despite the clear climax in penetrative intercourse (and graphically so), Ovid has left his reader with another anticlimax. Earlier we thought we had reached sexual climax in Book 2, the goal of our instruction, only to discover the lessons continued in Book 3. Although the final lines (vv. 733-744) of Book 2 seem to put a neat cap on the book, the final thrust of the (anti-)climactic sex scene should leave some doubt. When the lover is instructed to keep pace with his partner, *ad metam properate simul* (v. 727), we should become suspicious. As is commonly overlooked by translators, *meta* is not simply a goal, the finish line on a race track, but also a turning post signaling another go around. If the goal is to have been mutual climax after sexual intercourse, our lover seems to have failed, since the love scene points to mutual masturbation rather than penetrative intercourse (where Book 3, on the other hand, will end). After approaching this *meta*, the lovers lie vanquished together, like Ovid himself at the anticlimactic end of *Amores* 1.5—again, a poem which provides no evidence that intercourse has taken place, and, to the contrary, suggests that the whole scenario was an erotic daydream. Although he thought his task was completed at the end of Book 2, the *praecceptor* perhaps miscounted the laps remaining at the *meta*. Book 3 builds up to sex again, but this time the
anticlimax which faces the reader is of a different and much broader sort. Our love scene this go
around gives us very clear, and very easily visualized (indeed reminiscent of wall paintings in a
lupinar or Pompeian bathhouse), penetrative intercourse, but foils us again with anticlimax.
While the man is busy gratifying himself, the woman is left faking, verbally and visually. For
half of the couple, there is no climax, and, if we are to take the praeceptor at his word that
mutual orgasm is the desired end, the sex is therefore unfulfilling. Despite finally seeing
“actual” intercourse, Book 3 ends with the woman so busy hiding physical flaws by contorting
into various positions or responding with verbal signs of pleasure that she cannot reach orgasm.
Lusus habet finem. Anticlimax again. Although we have reached the end, we have only
managed to come full circle back on ourselves, but with the knowledge that visual and verbal
faking are integrally linked in love and, more specifically, in love poetry. The doctus amator
knows the visual and verbal cues to a faking mistress, the notae of her own body and the notae
litterarum of the Ars Amatoria. In the end, love poetry ends up going around the track forever,
never reaching its goal of sexual fulfillment, no matter how sexy it looks along the way.

4.3.4 Conclusion

In final estimation, the Ars Amatoria reveals that the reading audience has been watching
the love lessons for men and women. Even when the Muse was shut out, the reader sees what
goes on behind the closed doors of the bedroom—and the classroom. We see the private
anticlimax of Book 2 in apparent masturbation, just as we saw the anticlimactic species of the
impotent lover in Amores 3.7, to which the dismayed puella responded by faking sex with a post-
coital shower, a façade of the same sort taught to female students in Ars 3. We return full circle
to the *Amores* and the programmatic revelation of Corinna which ends in anticlimax—visually and poetically—for the reader as Ovid epigrammatically drops the curtain at the end of the 1.5.

This constant circling, never reaching the *meta*-as-goal is all part of Ovid’s game of love. We readers watch, even though we are not supposed to be watching (the Muse is shut out, so why should we be permitted to see?), per our instructor’s admonition. We discover that the gaze of our mind’s eye is under his control. For the reader of the *Ars Amatoria* who has also read the *Amores*, the narrator controls the point of view, and shows him how to envision the “past”, the erotic back-story which validates the praecceptor’s claim to firsthand knowledge.\(^\text{415}\) Not only does the narrator tell us how to envision the erotic past, but he also controls the gaze of our mind’s eye, taking it into the bedroom, even though he has admonished a divinity to wait outside—just as he shut the reader out at the end of *Amores* 1.5.

Who can see what and the control of the gaze is naturally an important aspect of privacy, especially the kind of privacy that Catullus sought for his own love affair, or that the kind of privacy that allows love’s work to proceed without fear (*cum libera dantur / otia, furtivum nec timor urget opus*, *Ars* 2.729-30). Leisure granted to secret love affairs is a product of a lover’s *ars*, and as we have seen, the *ars* taught in the *Ars Amatoria* is as much a lover’s skill as it is a poetic skill. At the ends of Books 2 and 3 the reader seems to have come out on top as a viewer with little restriction on what can be viewed. The reader can penetrate privacy, pass through shut doors that exclude Muses, just as the skilled lover can penetrate a woman’s sexual fakery or know her *blanditiae* for what they are, sweet nothings. Our ability to see behind closed doors is limited, however, as *Amores* 1.5 shows us, to what the poet wishes us to see. The privileging of the reader’s mental gaze and its penetrative ability will be demonstrated in several stories of the *Metamorphoses*, our next topic, wherein we find characters who are unable to see through divine

\(^{415}\) See Leach 1988, 440.
disguises. The power of our gaze will also be called into question as we receive another lesson from a different sort of teacher in the *Metamorphoses*. The view afforded the reader will be shown to be a figment created by a quasi-divine creator of images and landscapes, the poet.

4.4 *Metamorphoses*

The *Metamorphoses* is arguably Ovid’s most visual poem.\(^{416}\) The importance of the gaze is revealed in the very first episode of the poem, the creation of the world and man from Chaos. The human gaze is, from the outset, differentiated from the divine and animal: animals are made to gaze at the ground, man’s eyes are uplifted to gaze at the heavens, and the gods naturally look down from heaven (1.83-86). Ovid presents a viewing hierarchy at not just the beginning of the poem, but at the very beginning of the world, the reality inscribed in the poem. The reader of the *Metamorphoses* is sometimes a privileged viewer, sharing the poetic creator’s omniscient gaze. At other times our mind’s eye is focalized through the eyes of characters within the story such as Pygmalion’s statue awaking for the first time and seeing her creator looming above her. The manipulation of our gaze by the narrator is an important aspect of the poem’s program, and will be discussed below.

In addition to the assignation of diverse gazes at the creation of the world, two other devices warrant brief note before continuing, Ovid’s curious use of the word *imago* and his use

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\(^{416}\) The epic’s strong visual element has been the subject of numerous studies. Wilkinson (1955, 172), Mariotti (1957, 626), and Spencer (1997, 7-8) note the visual tendencies of the *Metamorphoses*. Tissot’s 1997 work on Ovidian landscape (pp. 64-88 in particular), and Solodow (1988), discussed above, are of particular note. Galinsky goes so far as to claim a “visual over-explicitness” for the epic (1975, 179-84). Rosati notes not only the strong visual disposition of the epic, but also its “linguaggio spettacolare” (1983, xxxi). Barkan holds that “the art of metamorphosis is the art of the image” (1986, 17). Most recently, Salzman-Mitchell’s work has dealt extensively with the use of phantasia and reader visualization in the *Metamorphoses* (2005). As with Propertian scholarship, there is also a frequently misplaced desire for finding parallels with actual works of visual art in Ovid’s poetry generally, and the *Metamorphoses* in particular. Rosati (1983, 137 n. 80) provides a useful summary of attempts to ground Ovid’s imagery in visual art. Laird rightly faults classicists who “insist on pinning literature down to known facts and artefacts, giving little credit to poetic imagination” (1993, 19).
of generalizing second person singular verbs. The use of *imago* throughout the poem points to the importance of viewing. Peculiar uses of the word include its use with a genitive noun in place of the noun itself (e.g. Perseus being *correptus imagine formae* when seeing Andromeda for the first time, 4.676).⁴¹⁷ Ovid also uses *imago* with great latitude to connote “deceptive appearance”.⁴¹⁸ Perhaps the most peculiar—and instructive—use of *imago* is as a deceptive sound, an echo: *deceptus imagine vocis* (3.385). This last use is important because it shows a blurring of the line between visual and verbal signs which will reappear throughout the poem. Solodow proposes that Ovid’s marked use of *imago* suggests a “strictly imitative” nature of art.⁴¹⁹ Since many of the uses of *imago* do not refer to any sort of representation at all, but are instead periphrases which call attention to themselves, I suggest that Ovid is rather pointing to this word, *imago*, and, by extension, all “images” in the *Metamorphoses*, as a marker of the strongly visual character of the poem. *Imago* is used frequently and unexpectedly to call attention to images. When used of actual images, the emphasis is not strictly on imitation, but on the deceptive potential of an image (note the twofold use of the word of Jupiter’s disguises in Arachne’s tapestry, 6.103 and 110). Further, the verbal art used by Ovid is preeminently deceptive because it aims to create *imaginés* in the reader’s mind, to transgress modes of signification, to mix the verbal and the visual through mental image induced by the written word. Because it is productive of images, Ovid’s language is also productive of a fictive reality, the reality of the *Metamorphoses*’ myth-world.⁴²⁰

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⁴¹⁷ Further: Minos, having learned that Scylla has betrayed him for love, is *turbatusque novi…imagine facti* (8.96). See also 11.427 (*aequora me terrent et ponti tristis imago*) and 14.768 (*solis imago / evicit nubes*).

⁴¹⁸ *Imago* is used to mean “disguise” (7.360, 14.80, 1.213, 2.804, 3.1, 3.250), “illusion” (7.301, 1.754, 2.37), and “reflection” (13.840-41, 4.349, 15.566).

⁴¹⁹ Solodow 1988, 209.

⁴²⁰ Ovid’s peculiar use of *imago* throughout the epic belies a deeper statement about mimesis in general, for which there is no room for discussion. The *imago* periphrases, with their redundant objective genitives, call attention to the mimesis inherent in represented images. The strategies of and reflections on representation in the *Metamorphoses* will be the subject of a future study.
The use of the generalizing second-person singular in the Metamorphoses, while not specifically related to viewing, is an important device used by Ovid at critical junctures in the text as a means to help guide audience reaction and, in particular, to make the reader feel personally involved in the scene described. Its use compliments the play of perspectives in the poem as a way to engage the reader. Commentators on the Metamorphoses often assert that the imaginary “you” used frequently by Ovid is unepic. Despite their criticism of the device, it is inherited from Homer, Apollonius, and Vergil, although Ovid far surpasses his predecessors in the frequency of the use of the generalizing second-person singular, showing some thirty examples in primary narrative and nineteen in embedded narrative. Important for our purposes, the majority of occurrences in the Metamorphoses “induce the listener to respond to visual phenomena in the story-world.” For example, the device is used in eight different metamorphoses to cast the reader in the role of spectator to the transformation (e.g. Ino 4.416-542; Semele 4.545-48; Cyane 5.425-37). As can be frequently seen in critical assessments of Ovid, particularly commentaries, the rhetorical devices used by the poet are seen as excessive flourishes which damage the flow of the poem. Rather than disrupting the reading of the poem—if we bear in mind that these rhetorical devices are being employed exactly as the rhetoricians suggest—Ovid uses them to direct our attention to specific elements of his text, or to hold our attention, rather than to distract the reader. Ovid seeks to make us spectators, participants in the narrative, not to exclude us or distract us. Longinus confirms that the injection of the second person into epic, especially the device of antimetathesis, a sudden change in

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421 Bömer asserts that these subjunctives are typical of the Metamorphoses, but not epic (1969, 560-61). Hollis says that the involvement of the reader, even to a small degree, is unepic (1970, 76). Anderson says that apostrophe to the audience breaks “the usual decorum of epic, but Ovid feels no compunction about the rule” (1972, 154).
422 See Wheeler for a thorough summary of the construction in other epic poets (1999, 140-151).
424 This latter example, the metamorphosis of Cyane, has generally been deemed pedantic and artificial by commentators (Kenney 1973, 144-45; Anderson 1997, 542-43).
person, increases the audience’s involvement in the text. The device provides a powerful effect and often makes the audience think themselves in the midst of the danger described in the text. Longinus expounds on a passage from Herodotus, noting that the reader seems to travel with Herodotus, who turns hearing into sight (τὴν ἄκοῆν ὄψιν ποιῶν). By seeming to address an individual, and not the entire audience, the narrator makes him more actively interested in the text (ἀγώνις ἐμπλεκών). Ovid uses rhetorical devices like antimetathesis or a generalizing second-person verb to more fully involve the reader in the narrative and, in particular, to promote enargeia, turning hearing into seeing. In addition to promoting mental imaging through these devices, Ovid also invites the audience to judge certain scenes (e.g. 1.162 and 6.23-25). This latter example is of particular interest, since it provides the introduction to the contest of Arachne and Minerva. The reader is involved as a judge of the tapestries from the very beginning when it is presumed one would think her taught by Minerva (scires a Pallade doctam, 6.23). With a characteristic twist, though, Arachne herself violently rejects this claim in the next two verses. The reader is made a judge early in the episode, and his judgment is immediately questioned by the main character of the episode, creating a sort of interactivity between the reader and the actors of the scene. Arachne’s swift rejection of our presumed understanding of her tutelage shows not only her artistic independence, but serves as a challenge to the audience. Similarly, her tapestry challenges clear visual representation with its poietic ekphrasis.

4.4.1 Landscapes for rape (Io and Callisto)

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One of the clearest indicators of Ovid’s strong disposition toward the visual in the
Metamorphoses is the extent to which he includes descriptions of landscape. In this section
and the next I examine Ovid’s frequent inclusion of landscape as a phenomenon that moves
beyond simple ornamental description (whether to “set the mood” of an episode or to serve
simply as a purple passage) to one which raises questions of artistic creation. We will see that
landscape serves as a means for Ovid to create erotic scenes within the world of the poem, rather
than simply to describe them. Creation and description, problems central to the Arachne episode
which serves as the theme for this chapter, often appear in conjunction in ekphrastic passages in
the Metamorphoses. The creation of natural settings by poetic skill and the resultant contest
between ars and natura—a contest which Ovid openly presents in the Metamorphoses and in the
Ars Amatoria—will be the further subject of section 4.4.2. Landscape, erotics, and creativity are
a complex knot which we seek to unravel below. Although the Metamorphoses is written with a
strong sense of the visual, and despite a number of ekphrastic passages throughout the poem,
there are only three extended ekphrases of objects in the epic: the doors of the Sun’s palace (2.5-
18), the tapestries of Minerva and Arachne (6.61-128), and the mixing bowl of Aeneas (13.685-
99). Three ekphrases for such a visual (not to mention long) poem is a remarkably low
number. There are, however, a number of shorter descriptions of landscapes which can be called
ekphrastic. Perhaps Ovid limited his use of the device because a number of stories in the poem
are actively concerned with vision and the intersection of art and text, topics which are within the

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426 Ovid’s use of landscape has been the subject of several full-length and shorter studies. See especially Segal 1969, Leach 1988, Solodow 1988 (203-232), Parry 1964, and Hinds 2002. On the locus amoenus topos generally, see Curtius 1973 (especially ch. 10), and more particularly in the Metamorphoses, Hinds 1987, 36-38.
427 Spahlinger (1996, 264) adds several ekphrases to this list: the works of Daedalus (the Labyrinth, Pasiphae’s cow, Daedalus’ own wings), Philomela’s carpet, Polyphemus’ song, and Orpheus’ first song in the Underworld. Polyphemus’ song, while filled with florid description, is not an ekphrasis. Orpheus’ song is not at all ekphrastic, and, moreover, contains no visual elements whatsoever. Philomela’s tapestry, while perhaps an apt canvas for an ekphrasis, provides no more than a cursory description of the item, and no details at all of its content, save the implied message to Procne.
purview of ekphrasis. Having made problems of vision, art, and text subjects throughout the poem, the need for actual ekphrases may have been limited. Nevertheless, all three ekphrases involve problems which form the heart of this chapter, conflicts of *ars* and *natura* and *videre* and *narrare*. The Arachne episode is discussed at some length below, but I note only briefly some issues from the descriptions of the Sun’s palace and Aeneas’ krater. In the former ekphrasis, the tension between art and nature appears in the phrasing *materiam superabat opus* (2.5). A confusion of seeing and seeming such as found in our discussion of Propertius 2.31/32 appears in the scene of the Naiads who *nare videtur* (2.11). Ovid plays on the ambiguity of the nymphs depicted on the doors who seem to swim, but who are also seen to swim by the door’s viewer, Phaethon. Similar again to Propertius 2.31/32, Ovid plays with the meaning of the word *signa*, in this case both “constellations” and “sculpted figures” (2.18). The latter ekphrasis, Aeneas’ mixing bowl, repeatedly raises issues of art and text. On the bowl the artist has carved a seven-gated city whose gates stand in place of a name (*hae pro nomine erant et, quae foret illa, docebant*, 13.686). The ekphrasis allows image to stand in place of written word, though in fact the text of the ekphrasis stands in place of image. This description shows a downward progression of levels of signification: the gates tell (*docebant*), the pyres signify (*significant*), and eventually the nymphs seem to weep (*videntur*). Further, in this passage Ovid uses *facit* to govern a series of indirect statements referring to pictorial representations, a rare grammatical occurrence and used nowhere as widely as here.428

The idea of the self-conscious “making” of an object’s description bleeds into our next subject, the creation of landscapes, rhetorical *loca amoena*, which serve as the setting for a large

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number of important stories in the *Metamorphoses*, especially rapes.\footnote{Hinds offers the following list of stories from the first five books: Daphne, Io, Callisto, Actaeon, Narcissus and Echo, Pyramus and Thisbe, Salmacis and Hermaphroditus, the Muses, Proserpina, and Arethusa (2002, 128). A large number of these stories, which occur in “essentially interchangeable *loca amoenaa*”, are examined in this chapter. Episodes taking place in overtly rhetorical landscapes seem to have a particular disposition to problems of vision.} The mightiest creator of landscape in the *Metamorphoses* is also the poem’s preeminent rapist, Jupiter.\footnote{Although Jupiter is obviously the greatest creator of physical landscape within the narrative itself, we should point out the precious and extremely rhetorical creation of landscape by Orpheus and his quasi-magic musical abilities. The bard, looking for a spot to sing his song after his failed rescue of Eurydice, and looking for an audience to tell his tale to, uses his music to create a shady *locus amoenus*, complete with twenty-seven varieties of plants, catalogued at length (10.90-106). Like Jupiter manipulates the Arcadian landscape to serve as a setting for the bucolic erotic scenes which pack the first five books of the epic, Orpheus shapes the real world to fit a rhetorical topos: the need of a *locus amoenus* for shade to be truly amoenus (*umbra loco venit*, 10.90). See further Curtius for the canonical definition of a *locus amoenus* in European literature as “a beautiful, shaded natural site. Its minimum ingredients comprise a tree (or several trees), a meadow, and a spring or brook. Birdsong and flowers may be added. The most elaborate examples also add a breeze” (1973, 195). Ovidian and other ancient *loca amoenaa* often add shade from a cave and some form of standing water, both of which are features commonly found in the *Metamorphoses*.} The rapes perpetrated by the king of the gods tend to follow a pattern: he catches sight of his victim, falls in love, pursues his quarry, deceives them, and finally rapes them. Jupiter’s endeavor into the realm of landscape creation is his recreation of Arcadia, his particular care (and Vergil’s archetypical bucolic landscape), after the accidental destruction of the world by Phaethon (2.405-8). He makes sure to add springs and rivers, grass, and leafy trees. Of this scene of creation, Hinds writes, “Jupiter’s manipulation of ‘real’ space tends to read as mimcry of the ecphrastic manipulation of rhetorical space, rather than vice versa.”\footnote{Hinds 2002, 129.} This new landscape also conveniently serves as a setting for Jupiter’s second rape of the poem, Callisto. While Jupiter is still coming and going, engaged in creating the new Arcadian landscape, Callisto appears before his eyes: *dum reedit itque frequens, in virgine Nonacrina / haesit, et accepti caluere sub ossibus ignes* (2.409-10). It is almost as if Jupiter had laid out a scene for a pastoral love affair, including a *locus amoenus* in which to tryst, just like Orpheus (above n. 430) creates himself a rhetorical landscape in which to sing. Indeed, not only does it provide an enticing place for
Callisto to rest after a hunt, but it also provides Jupiter with a secluded spot to help him avoid detection, as he declares in direct speech, “hoc certe furtum coniunx mea nesciet” inquit (2.423). Not only is his landscape an attractive setting for “love”, but it also provides concealment, although Jupiter humorously declares that Callisto is even worth the risk of being detected and nagged by Juno (2.424). The god himself has already stated the importance of concealment and detection for this story, and the theme continues in his method of rape. As usual, he disguises himself, this time as Diana, to carry out his rape. It is only at the moment of rape (impedit amplexu nec se sine crimine prodit 2.433) that the maiden begins to see through the disguise of the god, a disguise which was no match for the reader’s privileged position. In case the reader is not yet aware of the importance of concealment and revelation for this scene, the narrator intervenes with a sympathetic nod to Callisto’s resistance: illa quidem contra, quantum modo femina posset / (adspiceres utinam, Saturnia, mitior esses), / illa quidem pugnat, sed quem superare puella, / quisve Iovem poterat? (2.434-37). If only Juno had been watching the scene, she may have been less cruel to Callisto afterwards. We on the other hands, have seen just how she struggled, and are left with the narrator’s sad conclusion “quis Iovem poterat?”. We have seen more than the queen of the gods, and therefore have greater knowledge and room for sympathy.

Shortly after the rape and Jupiter’s dash back to heaven, the narrator directs our gaze to a new arrival: ecce, suo comitata choro Dictynna per altum / Maenalon ingrediens (2.441-42). As soon as we readers are told to behold the goddess’ arrival at the grove that witnessed Callisto’s defilement, Ovid provides a twist. The presence of a word for a grove of some sort (nemus, in

432 Even though Jupiter thinks the scene private, it is not as private as he may have thought. The reader sees the entire rape scene unfold, disguises and all, and Juno herself is later said to be well aware of his antics, and has already prepared a punishment for Callisto (2.466-67).

433 This narrative aside further confirms that the reader was an unnoticed viewer of the scene, since we know of her resistance.
this case) and a resumptive relative pronoun suggests the formula which characterizes rhetorical
descriptions of places. Diana finds the grove, and presumably also its pool, to her liking and
praises it as she dips her foot into the water (ut loca laudavit, summas pede contigit undas; / his
quoque laudatis ‘procul est’ ait ‘arbiter omnis’ 2.457-58). The twofold repetition of the verb
laudere, especially in the phrase loca laudavit, calls to mind a set-piece rhetorical laus locorum
of the type common from rhetoric.434 The goddess seems to provide rhetorical praise of Jupiter’s
newly created landscape.435 Ovid’s play does not end there, however, at a character delivering
an elided praise of the god’s handiwork. Diana’s next act after praising the grove is to boldly
declare in direct speech “procul est” ait “arbiter omnis: / nuda superfusis tingamus corpora
lymphis” (2.458-59)! “No witness is near: let’s bathe our nude bodies in the brimming waters.”
Diana is, of course, quite wrong in her assertion that there are no witnesses nearby. Just a few
lines prior the reader was directed to witness Diana’s arrival, her calling to Callisto, her
laus locorum, and now the disrobing of her coterie, with the narrator’s sudden ecce. The twist is
humorously piquant, as if reader and narrator crouch hiding behind some bush, undetected by

434 Quint. Inst. 3.7.27; Persius 1.70-1; and perhaps Hor. Ars 16-18.
435 Hinds 2002, 129. Ovid provides an even more rhetorical laus in the Callisto story of the Fasti: ut tetigit lucum
densa niger ilice lucus, / in medio gelidae fons erat alius aquae), / ‘hic’ ait ‘in silva, virgo Tegeaeas, lavemur!’
(2.165-67). Here the ekphrastic description is condensed into just two lines. Given that Diana seems to offer
rhetorical praise of Jupiter’s artistic handiwork, it is perhaps useful to point to another episode which seems to
suggest an ekphrasis coming from within the passage. The story of Peleus and Thetis seemingly begins as an
ekphrasis of Thetis bathing before she is seen by Peleus and raped. The scene is introduced as an ekphrasis with a
formulaic est sinus (11.229), and the grotto is described in some detail. The rhetorical illusion is soon broken,
however, by a direct address to Thetis—specifically Thetis as she was wont to come nude to this locus amoenus
quo saepe venire / frenato delphine sedens, Theti, nuda solebas, 11.236-37). The second-person address continues
through the rape scene as the nymph is caught sleeping and held fast through all her changing forms. Not only does
the direct address to a character within the seeming ekphrasis disrupt the passage, but the description is further
muddled when the internal frame of the grotto wavers between natural and artificial. The direct voice of the narrator
is heard here trying to determine whether the grotto is real or artificial (natura factus an arte, / ambiguum, magis
arte tamen, 11.235-36). He sides with artifice. Although no character within the narrative delivers the ekphrasis,
the rhetoric is disrupted by the narrator’s address to a character acting within the landscape described by the
ekphrasis and by the narrator’s own confusion over the artificiality of the landscape itself. That he settles on
artificial after some deliberation is telling. The landscape of Thetis’ grotto is not so much a creation of a painter’s
brush, but of an orator’s words and rhetorical training, not unlike Jupiter’s own “real” manifestation of the locus
amoenus topos in the Callisto tale. It is also good to recall the many uses of imago which call attention to their own
representationality. Again, words and their ability to represent image are called into question.
Diana, who, entirely unaware, calls to her beautiful friends, “Let’s get naked, girls!” The scene is almost reminiscent of a sexploitation or horror film as the camera mimics the gaze of some hidden voyeur, whether undersexed fraternity boy or machete-wielding fiend. We are invited to share the narrator’s omnipresent surveillance, to witness a goddess and her nymphs nude, at a moment when even the divinity thinks she has some privacy. Unlike Actaeon, whose fate is discussed at length below, our gaze eludes Diana’s detection, and, more importantly, her punishment. As viewers, the reader is privileged in a way that viewers within the narrative are not. The superiority of our knowledge to Diana’s own is again confirmed through the goddess’ comic ignorance of Callisto’s pregnancy. While we were allowed to witness the rape itself (which even Jupiter thought was done in secret), Diana is too dull—or hopelessly naïve—to notice the telltale signs of pregnancy on the girl, a fact that even her nymphs had long since noticed. Even given nine month’s visual evidence of the deed, Diana still cannot detect Callisto’s secret. Not until the pregnancy is literally laid bare (nudo patuit cum corpore crimen, 2.462) does Diana understand what the reader has known for some time.436 Before this point, Callisto’s own body had revealed the secret, just as Flavius’ own body betrays his escapades to Catullus. With great difficulty she hides the evidence from her face (2.447); she keeps her own gaze fixed on the ground (2.448); her blushes give visual signs of her shame (laesi dat signa rubore pudoris, 2.450). Even with a thousand tokens (mille notis, 2.452), primarily visual, Diana is unable to detect what even her band of virgins already had. The virgin goddess’ gaze is defective, compared to other characters in the narrative, and especially compared to our own, which was aware since the first moment of the story. Diana’s visual ignorance is as humorous a spectacle in this episode as Callisto’s plight is pathetic. The Callisto episode presents a sort of

436 And Juno, too, as Ovid reveals: senserat hoc olim magni matrona Tonantis (2.466). Juno managed to see the obvious (presumably from afar), and had even been plotting her revenge all the while, despite Diana’s own inability to see what was right before her eyes.
real-world manifestation of the *locus amoenus* topos with Jupiter as creator of a landscape appropriate to bucolic erotic adventure, and Diana as a sort of rhetorician or poet, praising the landscape her father has created. Her lack of reflection on issues of artistic creation and viewship provides a foil to the all-seeing (or so we may think) reader. Diana’s comic inability to see straight, as it were, sets our own vision in relief, and paves the way for another, more momentous encounter between Diana and viewship. Further, the mode of creation espoused here is based on the verbal manipulation of the visual: ekphrasis and Diana’s incorrect assertion about her privacy reinforces the idea that, in the *Metamorphoses*, creation is visual (or at least strongly so), but that its visuality is conveyed verbally (through her elided set-piece *laus*).

Juno’s punishment of Callisto, despite its ironic outcome, is far less comic than Diana’s ignorance, however. Having brooded for some time over her revenge, the goddess moves to destroy her rival’s beauty via metamorphosis: *haud impune feres: adimam tibi namque figuram, / qua tibi, quaque places nostro, inportuna, marito* (2.474-75). Her attack is wide of the mark, however, as she mistakenly thinks that Callisto’s beauty is a concern to her. There is no suggestion that Callisto was at all concerned for her beauty, and her simple attire and hairstyle (a type repeated many times throughout the epic to describe girls like Callisto), and consorting with Diana imply just the opposite. While she does succeed in making Callisto ugly by transforming her into a bear, Jupiter foils her revenge and provides the opposite of the desired effacement. By making her a constellation, Jupiter makes Callisto visible to all, and such a nagging reminder of his affair that Juno bids Tethys to prevent the bear from ever bathing in her waves. In attempting to erase Callisto’s beauty, Juno only served to make her more visible. For the fifteen years that the nymph is trapped in a bear’s body, however, she is tortured by a lack of self-recognition. Not only is she unable to speak (2.488), but she forgets her new form, actually running from other
woodland beasts out of fear brought on by a lack of self-knowledge (*oblita quid esset*, 2.493). Her transformation has obliterated who she is: she cannot speak and cannot recognize herself visually, a fate which will be a constant refrain of metamorphoses throughout the epic, but especially in the post-rape transformations which fill the early books of the poem.

Jupiter’s first rape, Io, presents a slightly different, but similarly visual, scenario. Io’s rape also takes place in a *locus amoenus*, signaled by a formulaic *est nemus*. This particular landscape, Tempe, is especially significant, as it is the *locus amoenus* par excellence. Indeed, by Ovid’s own day, *tempe* had become a neuter noun meaning “a beautiful sequestered vale.” In the vale of Tempe, where the gods have gathered to console Daphne’s father for his loss at the hands of Apollo, Io’s father mourns his own daughter’s loss, not knowing that Jupiter has seized her. Jupiter had earlier seen the nymph and advised her to go into the woods for shade—and so he would have a suitably secluded spot to ravish her. In direct speech he advises the girl “*pete*” *dixerat* “*umbras / altorum nemorum*”, to which the narrator adds a stage direction: *et nemorum monstraverat umbras* (1.590-91). Jupiter refers to these woods a second time in v. 594 as a spot which will provide her shade from the day’s heat, but with no danger from beasts. Not only does his insistent pointing (*monstraverat*) and repetition suggest where Io should go to be raped, but also where the reader’s mind’s eye should imagine the rape. His pointing leads the knowing reader of the *Metamorphoses* to the scene’s presumed outcome in sexual assault. Although Jupiter deliberately points out the woods to his victim and to the reader, he seeks to obscure the place and his deed from his wife. As Io flees from him, he covers the land in a cloud to hide his deed: *cum deus inducta latas caligine terras / occuluit tenuitque fugam rapuitque pudorem* (1.599-600). Just as Callisto is unable to see through Jupiter’s disguise, so too can Juno not penetrate the cloud cover, despite the fact that she is looking down from on high (*interea medios*).

437 *OLD* s.v.
Iuno despexit in Argos, 1.601). Although she watches from a superior position, her gaze is defective like Diana’s, who was unable to see the pregnant nymph right under her nose. Juno may not be able to see her husband, but she still senses that she has been wronged (1.607-9). Despite an inferior vision, Juno may be a savvy reader, able to understand the oddity of a locus amoenus covered in black clouds, which prompts her to look for her husband (1.602-6). Being an astute reader and realizing that the Tempe or Arcadia of the Metamorphoses is always bright, sunny, and cloud-free compensates for a failure of penetrative vision.

Juno’s gaze indirectly remains the subject of the next movement in the story, the imprisonment of Io under the watchful eye of Argus. Upon dispelling Jupiter’s cloud and finding the beautiful Io-as-heifer, Juno eyes her up and grudgingly admits her beauty (in agreement with the narrator’s assessment) as if admiring an artwork: bos quoque formosa est: speciem Saturnia vaccae, / quamquam invita, probat nec non (1.612-13). The guard she sets on her new possession is the archetypal watcher, always awake and seeing in every direction. Although Argus normally only rests two eyes at a time, he is no match for Mercury’s somniferous tale (1.668-721). Argus fails as a watcher at the moment he fails as a reader (or listener) of erotic stories. When he loses interest in Mercury’s tale of Syrinx, which essentially repeats the story of Apollo and Daphne which immediately precedes it, and dozes off, he loses his life. The death of Argus culminates, as one might expect, with his eyes, expressed with the precious phrase centumque oculos nox occupat una (1.721). In death, Argus’ gaze goes from that of an actively watching custos to a passive visual decoration on Juno’s bird, the peacock

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438 Ovid playfully presents the scene in which Io-as-heifer is revealed to the suspicious Juno. After being thoroughly looked over and demanded as a gift by Juno, to not give the cow would cause suspicion that something hides behind the disguise (non dare suspectum est, 1.618). Jupiter does not want to allow Juno to look any deeper into the disguise. This idea is repeated with the idea of seeing through the disguise brought out more explicitly: poterat non vacca videri (1.621). Just like her inability to penetrate Jupiter’s cloud, Juno cannot see through the cow disguise, though in both cases, she knows that something is amiss, hiding behind Jupiter’s obscuring trickery.
Argus remains an active viewer until the point where he fails as a reader—falling asleep in the middle of an erotic tale such as fill the *Metamorphoses*—and becomes instead a viewed object, simple window dressing, rather than active spectator of love stories.\(^{439}\)

Matters of true vision fill the remainder of the story, both in Io’s punishment at the hands of a Fury, and in the question of her recognition by others. Before the death of Argus, Io wandered the fields and banks of her father’s river, seeking some acknowledgment from her family. None were able to see through her metamorphosed form and see the real girl beneath. Not only is she unrecognizable, but she is unable to speak her own name and plight (*nomenque suum casusque loquatur*, 1.648). Although unable to speak, Io, like Procne in a later episode, is able to communicate through writing, pawing her name in the dirt with a hoof (1.649). She substitutes *littera pro verbis* and obtains her anagnorisis. After her moment of recognition, all-seeing Argus drags her away from her family and places her in a pasture where he can keep watch from all directions (*unde sedens partes speculatur in omnes*, 1.667). Later, as punishment for the death of Argus, Juno punishes Io by casting a Fury before her eyes and her mind, who torments the girl’s heart with “hidden” goads (*horriferamque oculis animoque obiecit Erinyn, / paelicis Argolicae stimulosque in pectore caecos*, 1.725-26). The choice of *caecus* to describe the goads which prick Io’s soul is noteworthy. Not only does this suggest that they were hidden within her heart or mind, as one might expect, but the primary meaning of *caecus* as “blind” echoes the fact that the Fury was also placed before her eyes, blinding her and sending her into a wild panic. Indeed, *caecus* can have an active force, “blinding”, and is used this way by Ovid elsewhere in the *Metamorphoses*.\(^{440}\) Juno’s attack on the girl is specifically targeted at her eyes.

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\(^{439}\) Konstan (1991) discusses Argus as a reader and the implications of his death for the reader of the *Metamorphoses*. See also Heath 1991, 236. Wheeler thinks that the Argus story is “of undoubted metanarrative significance” (1999, 1).

\(^{440}\) *OLD* s.v.
placing a horrible visage before them, blinding her. Whereas Juno’s punishment of Callisto was an attempt to destroy her beauty, something that would compel others to look at her, the punishment meted out to Io is to destroy her own ability to see (or at least see anything other than a horrible Fury).

4.4.2 Ekphrasis and the question of ars vs. natura

Having discussed how Ovid employs erotic episodes which take place in rhetorically constituted landscapes, and having pointed earlier to his limited use of longer ekphrasis, I turn to a subject that has lurked beneath the surface for some time, the repeatedly recurring tension between ars and natura in the Metamorphoses. In typically contradictory fashion, the epic simultaneously espouses art over nature and nature over art, just like the Ars Amatoria simultaneously required art to remain both hidden and apparent to be effective. The depiction

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441 See especially Solodow 1988, 209.
442 The third book of the Ars Amatoria presents contradictory views on whether ars must be hidden or revealed to have its fullest force. After a physical metamorphosis under the praeceptor’s tutelage, the female student is told to come out of hiding and reveal the beauty of her new “education”: quod latet, ignotum est; ignoti nulla cupidis: / fructus abest, facies cum bona teste caret (3.397-98). Physical beauty, and therefore desirability, is a product of the praeceptor’s poetic abilities to teach (cf. Propertius to Cynthia, warning that she not trust too much in her beauty) and, in particular, her ability to mimic the poetry of Ovid and other great poets (3.317-20; Downing 1990, 245). Her desirability must be seen to be believed; her new beauty needs a witness. Although here it is taught through poetry and is largely a product of her ability to replicate famous love poetry, she still requires someone to attest to her physical beauty (her bona facies). The example Ovid provides is telling, the Venus of Apelles: si Venerem Cous rursuum posuisset Apelles, / mersa sub aequoreis illa lateret aquis (3.402-3). The very proof the praeceptor provides for the student’s revelation of her beauty is a painting of Love herself. Elegy, in this case the elegiac mistress who is a product of poetic ars, is equated with a painting of not just a beautiful nude woman, but a painting of the embodiment of Love. Whereas elsewhere in Ovid’s erotic poetry the personified Elegy comes to Ovid dressed like Corinna, here the female product of Ovid’s charm school is likened to a painting of the essence of Love (which can, by extension, also not exist without a witness, so 3.402). The mistress is a product of poetry, and she is material to be reckoned visually, as is Love itself. (cf. Propertius’ ekphrasis of Love in elegy 2.12.) Quite contrary to this vivid assertion of Love’s need for exposure, Ovid earlier teaches the female student to conceal all of the operations behind the making of her beauty (i.e. not letting her lover see into her bedroom or see her without makeup: 3.209-10, 3.225-30). Here there is no inherent contradiction with the quod latet, ignotum est dictum: men do not want to see behind the scenes; they only want to see the beautiful finished product. This visual art, the finished Venus, is all a front for poetic art. The pretty co-ed Ovid has created in the third book is a product of poetry, not only his own didactic, but of his love elegy in the same way that Cynthia or Corinna are products of elegy. By extension from the viewer, we readers do not want to see a behind-the-scenes look at the composition of love poetry; we only want the finished product. Whereas Ovid coyly drew the curtain on our voyeurism at the end of Amores 1.5, here he boldly reveals the man behind the curtain as he creates a sexy poem to put on display.
of Europa on Arachne’s tapestry is the preeminent example of art as an imitation of nature in the *Metamorphoses: verum taurum, freta vera putares* (6.104). Arachne’s art is so real that one would almost think the woven bull and straits real. Despite this crucially placed example of nature over art, most of the confrontations between the two modes end with the victory of *ars*. In the actual Europa episode (as opposed to that depicted on Arachne’s tapestry) Ovid follows the example of Moschus, but makes art far more prominent in the simile (*cornua parva quidem, sed quae contendere possis / facta manu*, 2.855-56). The *quidem sed* contrasts the size of the horns with their artificiality, bringing the craft of Jupiter’s disguise into even greater relief. The horns on the “real” bull are small but artfully made, which suggests a master craftsman who can execute flawlessly on a small scale. In the tale of Adonis, art actually provides the standard by which to judge the boy’s beauty (10.515-18). Here he is actually compared to a painting of Cupid of the same type as described in Propertius 2.12 (*qualia namque / corpora nudorum tabula pinguntur Amorum*, 10.515-16). As with the Europa story, Ovid makes the triumph of *ars* more visible by inserting an editorial comment. The narrator adjusts his own simile of the painted Cupid in vv. 517-18, noting that Adonis and the painted Cupid would be indistinguishable if one added a quiver to the former or removed it from the latter. In the rape of Hermaphroditus by Salmacis, which bears resemblance to the first anticlimactic love scene of the *Ars Amatoria*, the effect of the boy swimming in Salmacis’ pond is “as if someone covered and ivory statue with clear glass” (4.354-55). The essence of the real boy’s beauty is best conveyed as if he were a work of art. The description of the grove on Gargaphie, the site of Actaeon’s destruction, which we will discuss at length below, is perhaps the most direct statement of the superiority of *ars* to *natura* in the world of the *Metamorphoses: arte laboratum nulla:*

*simulaverat artem / ingenio natura suo* (3.158-59). The grove is natural, made by no mortal

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443 See also 5.193-94, 7.791, 10.250-1 for similar uses of the generalizing second-person singular.
skill, yet Nature has gone out of her way to imitate art with her own skill. Thetis’ grotto, discussed above (n. 96), makes a less direct, but nonetheless clear, statement about the two modes of production. Introduced as ekphrastically with est specus, the grotto is described as natura factus an arte, / ambiguum, magis arte tamen (11.235-36). Although it is not clear from the outset, after some hesitation, the narrator decides that the grotto is more artificial than natural, despite its natural appearance. All of these examples show art becoming a “definer and creator of reality” rather than simply an imitator. Finally, in the Pygmalion episode, the ultimate artist creates an object so artful that art conceals itself within its own art (ars adeo latet arte sua, 10.252).

The preferred mode of exploring the subject of the tension between art and nature is ekphrasis because it is naturally transgressive of boundaries. Ekphrasis blurs the line between visual and literary depiction. Even the shorter landscape descriptions of the poem tend to have symbolic borders expressed by phrases like est locus. Within these ekphrastic boundaries, the distinction between artificial and natural objects is blurred. In “natural” examples he tends to comment to the effect that “it was so real it seemed man-made”, and in “artificial” examples “the image was so good it seemed real”. The question of art versus nature and its multiple iterations in Ovid’s poetry, particularly in the Metamorphoses, suggests that Ovid holds that art is not simply mimetic, but possesses its own creative force. Ars does not imitate natura, but, to a degree, creates it. The narrator’s hesitance at deciding whether Thetis’ grotto is more art than nature obfuscates the fact that the grotto is a product of poetic ars. Salzman-Mitchell suggests, “The undercurrent of this is perhaps that there is no ‘nature’ in poetry but that everything is, at

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444 Solodow 1988, 213.
some level, constructed as *ars.*\(^{445}\) Just as Jupiter creates erotic landscapes which are rhetorical in conception, and which serve conveniently as settings for his erotic adventures, so too does the great creator of the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid, create landscapes and natural features while employing his narratorial voice to point to the products of his creative skill, just as Jupiter repeatedly directed Io to the woods where he would rape her. The landscapes invented by both creators are settings for love (or, more correctly, rape). Ovid, like Jupiter hiding from an angry Juno, plays a game of hide-and-go-seek with the reader, sometimes concealing the artfulness of his creation, sometimes revealing it fully. The coy narrator of *Amores* 1.5, stringing the reader along with the temptation of sex before cutting him off so abruptly, plays a similar game to that found in the *Metamorphoses*.

4.4.3 Tattletales’ comeuppance (the Raven and the Crow; Aglauros)

We turn now to a set of tales in Book 2 which are not erotic, but which form a cohesive group commenting on transgressive seeing and telling.\(^{446}\) Davis has deemed these episodes collectively “*indicium* tales”.\(^{447}\) The tales display a pattern of offense and punishment: a talkative individual (*garrula, loquax*) sees illicit acts or something forbidden (*adulterium, crimen*, the breaking of a pact), and reports the deed (*narrat, refero*). Viewed in brief, the complex consists of the stories of the *corvus loquax* (2.535) and the *garrula cornix* (2.547-48),

\(^{445}\) Salzman-Mitchell 2005, 43 (emphasis original). Compare Leach, who suggests that Arachne’s tapestry points to a sort of “truth in art” which “sees through human eyes the shapes in which the gods have been seen by those whom they wish to deceive (1974, 117).” By extension, we may read the poetic ekphrasis of Arachne’s tapestry as a sort of reader’s insight into “divine” (i.e. poetic) creation and disguise.

\(^{446}\) The fact that Ovid places a lengthy complex of interrelated tales which involve the viewing and telling of forbidden sights so early in the epic, alongside or near many other episodes which focus on viewing, points to the importance of such stories for the *Metamorphoses* as a whole.

\(^{447}\) Davis 1968, 18-63.
both of whom have seen something they were not supposed to, and have told about it.\textsuperscript{448} Both earn the censure of the narrator, who deems the crow a \textit{non exorabilis index} (2.546). The talkative raven is cursed because of his loquacity: \textit{lingua fuit damno: lingua faciente loquaci / qui color albus erat, nunc est contrarius albo} (2.540-41). His crime is witnessing Coronis’ adultery (\textit{sensit adulterium}) and hastening to reveal it to Apollo (\textit{latentem / detegeret culpam}, 2.545-46). Before he can depart to inform Apollo, however, his interlocutor, the garrulous crow, holds herself up as a negative exemplum, recounting that she was punished for seeing what was forbidden, and was later reprimanded for telling about it (2.557-58, 563-64). Hidden in a tree, the narrating crow tells that she saw the daughters of Cecrops opening Minerva’s chest, into which they had specifically been told not to look by the goddess. Although the crow was not in violation of Minerva’s injunction, she was nevertheless punished for telling what she saw, namely someone else seeing what should not be seen. The lesson she provides is clear: don’t talk too much (\textit{mea poena volucre / admonuisse potest, ne voce pericula quaerant}, 2.564-65). The raven ignores the crow’s advice and tells Apollo what he had seen (\textit{vidisse ... narrat}, 2.599), thereby earning the god’s hatred after he kills Coronis in a fit of rage.\textsuperscript{449}

Within the framing narrative of the raven and the crow is the story of Aglauros, which warrants particular scrutiny, both because of her seeing and telling what was forbidden, and the manner of her punishment.\textsuperscript{450} Aglauros convinces her sisters to look into the box, which had been forbidden by the goddess (\textit{et legem dederat, sua ne secreta viderent}, 2.556). Later, when Minerva recounts the event, she calls it an uncovering of her secrets (\textit{arcana profana / detexisse}, 2.755-56) in violation of an agreement (\textit{contra data foedera vidit}, 2.757). For the moment,

\textsuperscript{448} These two might be called bad readers of the \textit{Ars Amatoria}, specifically 2.605-8, where the \textit{praecceptor} enjoins his students to remain silent about the details of one’s love affairs.

\textsuperscript{449} The phrasing of this particular passage anticipates the story of Actaeon in the following book.

\textsuperscript{450} Although we look only at the story of Aglauros here, the inset tales within this inset tale are similar stories of humans who saw or told too much: Ocyroe (2.633-75) and Battus (2.683-707). See further Heath 1992, 78-81.
Aglauros escapes punishment, despite the information of the tattling crow. The first part of the Aglauros tale provides multiple explicit references to her intrusive seeing. Nevertheless, because the story is focalized through the crow’s point of view, the reader never really gets a clear view of exactly what is inside the chest opened by the daughters of Cecrops. Of course the audience knows that it is Erechthonius (we are told as much, 2.552-556), but we are never shown (i.e. given a description of what the girls saw) since we see through the eyes of the crow hiding overhead in an elm tree. Although the reader has knowledge of its contents, viewing is denied because we are seeing through the wrong eyes.

After two intervening stories which also deal with violations of contracts by overly bold talkers, the narrative returns to the impetuous Aglauros who had earlier avoided her just desserts for visually transgressing Minerva’s secret. Aglauros’ sister, Herse, who had earlier tried to avoid violating her contract with Minerva, is seen by Mercury as he flew overhead. Mercury is so taken by the girl that he immediately descends to earth to woo her. Unlike nearly all the previous divine amores we have seen thus far in the Metamorphoses, Mercury declines to disguise himself, relying instead on his natural beauty: nec se dissimulat: tanta est fiducia formae (2.731). He does, however, take the time to primp himself (five verses worth), checking his hair, cloak and staff, and even polishing his winged sandals (2.732-36). Aglauros is the first to see him as he enters the palace, and she gazes at him with the same eyes with which

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451 This line may echo Propertius’ admonition to Cynthia in elegy 3.24 (falsa est ista tuae, mulier, fiducia formae). Unlike Propertius’ mortal poetic creation, who needed to be reminded of exactly who had given her her beauty, Ovid’s divine poetic creation needs no disguise. This appropriate confidence is humorously undercut, however: quae quamquam ista est, cura tamen adiuvet illam (2.732). Mercury may be a bit more like a normal mortal lover (the kind who might read the Ars Amatoria) than originally thought. The simple phrase nec se dissimulat distinguishes Mercury very clearly from Jupiter, who has thus far relied either on disguise and camouflage. Mercury’s method of wooing is also far different than the bumbling rape attempt by Apollo: he simply walks into the women’s chambers in all his divine glory, states his purpose, and asks Aglauros to inform her sister that he would be her new lover (2.745-47). Although there is insufficient space here to examine Mercury’s unique approach, its marked difference from other divine love affairs (or, rather, rapes) in the early books of the Metamorphoses warrants further scrutiny. Why does Mercury eschew the violence of his counterparts for persuasion (if one can call it that), and, moreover, why does his persuasion work, while Apollo’s failed so spectacularly with Daphne?
she had recently spied on Minerva’s secret (adspicit hunc oculis isdem, quibus abdita nuper/viderat Aglauros flavae secreta Minvervae, 2.748-49). By this point we find that Aglauros is the consummate intrusive viewer, and her visual violation of secrets has been announced twice. In addition to the anticipated outcome of Aglauros intruding upon Mercury’s affair, we find the girl to be quite venal, actually demanding a weight of gold from the god to secure her aid.

Entirely unprompted, the scene shifts from Aglauros and Mercury to Minerva, who had apparently been watching this entire scene unfold (vertit ad hanc torvi dea bellica luminis orbem, 2.752). In case the reader had forgotten Aglauros’ earlier crime, Minerva recalls the girl’s transgression of her secret, specifically the visual transgression of her secrets against their agreement, contra data foedera vidit (2.755-57). The sudden and unexpected shift in perspective sets the stage for one of the most vividly horrific descriptions of the epic, the Minerva’s meeting with Invidia. The encounter begins by describing Envy’s house, which opens in the manner of landscape description with domus est (2.761). The enjambment of abdita in the following line, however, unexpectedly alters our reading from a formulaic landscape introduction to a perfect passive verb. After a four-line description of her abode (2.761-64), Minerva, who refrains from entering, sees the disgusting Envy through the opened door (videt intus, 2.768). The point of view of this particular scene is focalized through Minerva’s eyes, and the reader sees, in vivid detail, what the goddess saw. At the horrible sight, Minerva averts her own eyes (visaque oculos avertit, 2.770). When Invidia sees Minerva, she changes her own form to match the goddess’ dismay (utque deam vidit...vultumque deae ad suspira duxit, 2.773-74). The whole scene is a play of looks and images: the setting and Envy are described in full detail, and we know them through Minerva’s own eyes. Minerva averts her eyes from the scene, yet it is still described for us. Envy vividly undergoes self-induced metamorphosis at the sight of the goddess (2.775-782).
We must recall that this extended scene is prompted by Minerva’s apparent spying on Mercury and Aglauros. The meeting of Minerva and Envy interrupts another scene starring an unrepentant transgressive viewer, which is in turn nested in a set of tales illustrating the problems of telling what one has seen.\textsuperscript{452}

Not only should the unprompted and graphic intrusion of Envy’s recruitment scene draw our attention to questions of viewing, but the manner of Aglauros’ punishment should remove any doubt as to Ovid’s aim. The meddlesome viewer is punished by \textit{Invidia}, the ugly embodiment of viewing gone wrong.\textsuperscript{453} Just in case the reader was unsure that Invidia is truly the embodiment of an ill-omened look, Ovid reiterates forms of \textit{videre} three times (\textit{visi, videt, videndo}, 2.778, 780) in his description of Envy. With a playful \textit{figura etymologica}, Invidia watches Minerva depart \textit{obliquo lumine cernens} (2.787). Aglauros’ punishment is particularly telling: she is infected with \textit{invidia} via her mind’s eye (\textit{germanam ante oculos fortunatumque sororis / coniugium pulchraque deum sub imagine ponit / cunctaque magna facit}, 2.803-5). Envy’s poison attacks the mind’s eye as if it were lessons derived from a rhetorical textbook. Not only are the phrases \textit{ante oculos} and \textit{sub imagine} taken directly from rhetorical discussions of mental imaging, but the impact they have on Aglauros is the same as the outcome of visualization on an orator’s audience: what is visualized is believed all the more strongly (\textit{cunctaque magna facit}). With her mind under attack by implanted phantasiae, the visual component of our problematic seeing and telling collocation is complete. The result of what Aglauros sees in her mind’s eye is an overwhelming compulsion to tell her father what she has

\textsuperscript{452} Salzman-Mitchell (2005, 40-41) further connects Minerva to Invidia, noting that the glance which opened this digression (\textit{vertit ad hanc torvi dea bellica luminis orbe}, 2.752) is echoed in Minerva’s looking away from the sight of Envy (\textit{visaque oculos avertit}, 2.770). Also, Minerva is the first to look \textit{into} Invidia’s house, \textit{videt intus} (2.768), giving her a certain intrusive gaze as well.

\textsuperscript{453} As we look forward to the crucial story of Actaeon, we see that Minerva aptly punishes Aglauros’ mind’s eye for a crime of vision. Unlike Minerva, Diana’s punishment of Actaeon’s transgressive viewing assaults the youth’s capacity for speech.
seen so that he will punish Herse (*saepe velut crimen rigido narrare parenti*, 2.813). The visual aspect of *invidia* has created a malicious speech act.\(^{454}\) This speech act in turn will be the final end of Aglauros. Driven mad with jealousy, she blocks Mercury’s path and attempts to bar him from Herse, in clear violation of their contract (as the god himself says, *stemus pacto isto*, 2.818). As final punishment, Mercury turns her into a block of black stone. Not only can she not move, but she cannot speak: *nec conata loqui est nec, si conata fuisset, / vocis habebat iter* (2.829-30). Finally, after several hundred lines, the transgressive viewer is punished with silence after invidious mental images drove her to a malicious speech act which was itself transgressive (of a second contract, in this case).

Book 2 of the *Metamorphoses* opens with an ekphrasis, the description of the Sun’s palace, and the creation of a rhetoricized landscape in which Callisto would be raped, introducing multiple problems of viewing, as noted in section 4.4.1, above. The second half of this book, which occurs at the end of the Callisto episode, focuses on stories of intrusive seeing and its connection to unrestrained telling. Multiple tattletales are punished for their transgressive viewing, but none so vividly as Aglauros, whose story spans most of the second half of the book. While it may have seemed that Aglauros had gotten away with flagrantly transgressing Minerva’s secrets, her penetrative look into the chest would eventually be punished by Invidia. Envy’s effect on Aglauros is a direct assault on her mind’s eye, and the outcome is an envy magnified by the vividness of her mental image, just as the rhetoricians teach that amplification is achieved through vivid description addressed to the mind’s eye. The visual punishment endured by Aglauros compelled her to respond to her phantasia with a speech act. The same process of phantasia leading to verbal reaction implied in rhetorical treatises is evident here as well. Although the locus of Aglauros’ punishment is rightly her eyes (or her mind’s eye, in this

\(^{454}\) Not unlike was demonstrated in Catullus cc. 5-7, 11, and 39.
case), suffering as she does under vision gone awry, *In-vidia*, the crime of vision eventually leads back to telling. When we return to the question of *videre* and *narrare* in the story of Actaeon, the connection between the two will be less clear than in the Aglauros episode which occupies so much of Book 2, and emphasis will be placed on different aspects of the concepts.

### 4.4.4 Artists and viewers (Orpheus, and Pygmalion)

The next subject will be treated at less length because these particular tales, the stories of master artists, Orpheus and Pygmalion, are well trodden areas of Ovidian scholarship. Although they are a current vogue in scholarship, many studies focus on a single aspect common to both, the character as artist or creator. What is missing in many examinations, however, is the fact that these artists are also viewers. At a narrative structural level, the Orpheus-Pygmalion complex of stories may be seen as a sort of literary-visual *mise-en-abyme*: Pygmalion the artist is a viewer of his own work, and is himself a creation of a poet who suffers because of a fault of vision, and Orpheus is in turn a creation of another poet, Ovid. In his discussion of Orpheus’ failed rescue mission and, in particular, the Ovidian adaptation of Vergil’s version of the story (*G*. 4.485-520), Anderson writes, “Thus Ovid continues to place little emphasis on Eurydice, but as much as possible to keep our eyes on Orpheus.”

Ovid has almost entirely written Eurydice from the story, and focused instead on the poet and especially his visual violation of his agreement (*ne flectat retro sua lumina*, 10.51). Although Orpheus’ power as poet allows him to bring Eurydice to the point of resurrection, it is his human inability to restrain his gaze that causes her double death. Just as he approaches the upper world, Orpheus, described as *avidus videndi* (10.56),

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455 Anderson 1972, 480.
turns to look for Eurydice (*flexit amans oculos*, 10.57), thus violating his compact with Pluto.\(^{456}\) Orpheus’ look-turned-deadly seems to recall Propertius’ failed encounter with Cynthia in 1.3. Propertius is fixed on looking at his mistress, and is unable to touch her, but is forced only to listen to her harangue. Orpheus, also hot for looking, is left grasping at empty air as Eurydice is dragged away (10.58–59), delivering a single pathetic word in direct speech, “*vale*”.\(^{457}\) Both poet-lovers are watchers, but both are incapable of touching their mistresses, despite any capability for realistic speech the women may have. After Eurydice’s re-death, Orpheus’ sorrow is described by means of a set of similes, comparing him to figures from the Underworld (10.64–71). Orpheus becomes fixed (*stupuit*) like the petrified couple of Olenus and Lethaea. Of all of the possible mythical figures turned into statues to use for a simile, Ovid chooses a woman who was too trusting in her beauty (*confisa figurae*, 10.69). In addition to its surface meaning of “good looks” in this case, the word might also suggest “ghost” or “depicted image”.\(^{458}\) What, exactly, does Orpheus’ comparison to Lethaea imply: that *he* was too trusting in his own “*figura*” (whatever that may be), or too trusting in *her* ghostly image?\(^{459}\)

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456 Orpheus’ description as *avidus videndi* is perhaps grounds for suspicion. The adjective *avidus* is quite a loaded word, and can denote excessive or mindless desire, to the point of comparison to animals, as well as simple eagerness or zeal. Indeed, its primary meanings are rather more negative than positive. See *OLD* and *TLL* s.v.

457 Eurydice’s capacity for speech is diminished to a single word in the *Metamorphoses* from approximately five verses in the *Georgics*.

458 *OLD* s.v. 8.

459 The confusion of potential subjects seen in the simile is found elsewhere the Orpheus-Eurydice scene. On their journey upward which of the two lovers is the potential sluggard is in question: *hic, ne deficeret, metuens avidusque videndi* (10.56). Orpheus is the subject of *metuens*, but who is the subject of *deficere*, Orpheus or Eurydice? Even the exact meaning of *deficere* is unclear. Is Orpheus worried that Eurydice will slip back down (a spatial meaning of *deficere*) or will lag behind, or is he afraid that he himself will fail to rescue her? That her shade will fade away, or that his own strength will wane? The subject of the couple’s final failed embrace is similarly ambiguous: *flexit amans oculos, et protinus illa relapsa est / bracchiaque intendens prendique et prendere certans / nil nisi cedentes infelix adripit auras* (10.57–59). Having removed the comma where it is traditionally found after *relapsa est*, the subject of *intendens* and *certans* becomes unclear. The two subjects of v. 57 are sure: Orpheus looks back and Eurydice is snatched away. Editors and translators generally understand Orpheus to be the one reaching out and grasping empty air. But would Eurydice not do the same? Rimell suggests that the blurring of subjects and the muddling of Virgil’s clear prototype points to “a breakdown of difference into symmetry and preview[s] the homosexual and incestuous temptations of the rest of Book 10” (2006, 111). I think that the blurring of distinction points more to the limits of human vision than to the dangerous types of love yet to come in the book. It was Orpheus’ zeal to see which causes her to be pulled away in a blur of grasping arms and failing mortal ability. His
Orpheus’ excessive desire to see his wife led to his failure to save her from death and, as if the very grammar of the statement is preventing it, to touch her. The Orphic songs which comprise most of the remainder of Book 10 (vv. 143-707) and bleed over into the following book are an indirect result of Orpheus being avidus videndi. No longer able to see his wife, he replaces his unrequited love with an image of perfect love between man and woman, the Pygmalion story, which can exist only in poetry. Orpheus’ vision of perfect love is a product created by an artist who is also the sole viewer of his creation. The sculptor created by the poet does what the poet cannot, give life and create a woman who is tangible and visually accessible to no one but her creator. Pygmalion’s puella will be emphatically unlike the prostituting Propoetides; she will not be περίφοιτου (Call. AP 12.43 = 2 HE = 28 Pf.). Pygmalion wants a woman who is not like an elegiac mistress, circulated around to all comers. Orpheus’ poetically created artist-spectator attempts to create a woman unlike a poet would create.

Ovid’s version of the Pygmalion story deviates wildly from the other extant version of the myth, wherein Pygmalion is no artist, but simply an agalmatophiliac. Although Ovid takes the unique step of making Pygmalion a sculptor, only two-and-a-half lines of the episode are actually devoted to his creation of the statue (10.247-49); the rest of his story deals in minute detail with his own visual and tactile interaction with his creation. Indeed, the description of Pygmalion’s act of creation is banal, at best: interea niveum mira feliciter arte / sculpsit ebur formamque dedit, qua femina nasci / nulla potest.\(^460\) Although Pygmalion’s story is traditionally held to be a description supreme artistry, in reality, the story is more about his spectatorship and his interaction with the completed artwork. So great is his unexpressed artisanship (marked by

look again returns in the comparison to Lethaea who trusted too much in something ephemeral and intangible. In poetry seeing and touching are two very different things.

\(^460\) Contrast this act of creation with the weaving contest between Arachne and Minerva and the exquisite detail with which Ovid treats their artistic production.
the famous statement *ars adeo latet arte sua* that his art fools its own creator. Pygmalion gazes in admiration (*miratur*) at his own creation and is soon inflamed with love. At this crucial turning point, love, the artist loses his ability to discern the artificiality of his own work: *saepe manus operi temptantes admovet, an sit / corpus an illud ebur, nec adhuc ebur esse fatetur* (10.254-55). His art is so visually deceptive that he must resort to touch, and even then is still unable to say whether it is real or not. Pygmalion’s self-deception recalls the story of Parrhasius and Zeuxis, wherein artist deceives artist.461 Taken to the Ovidian extreme, Pygmalion’s art is so persuasive that it tricks not just birds or another artist, but its own creator. Orpheus’ perfect love shatters the bounds of realist art with an indecipherable reality. Elsner continues this train of thought, writing, “The critic, transformed by Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* into a reader-lover, is generated by the Pygmalion passage into the wish-fulfillment fantasy of realism. As Pygmalion loves and desires, so the reader loves and desires—dramatising and enacting the poem he quotes.”462 Orpheus’ story of perfect love and perfect art blurs the lines between realism and reality. The Pygmalion story becomes Orpheus’ wish-projection, a means for him to find a lover’s triumph that he failed to find.463 The only way the poet can succeed in love is through his song and its ability to create a fictional—but “real”—world of successful love. As was dramatized in Propertius 1.3, however, this poetic love is destined to fail because Pygmalion falls in love with *sui operis*, neither a real woman nor anything real at all, but instead the stuff of poetry. Pygmalion is duped into loving his own fictionally “real” creation. Fondle it though he may, it remains as illusory and unavailable for true consummation until there is a divine intervention in the mortal artist’s creation. Like Orpheus, Pygmalion’s art only brought him to the point of supreme divine achievement, the giving of life. Both poet and visual artist are

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463 Leach 1974, 123.
unable to create or renew life, to make something *real*, despite the surpassing *realism* of their works within their respective media.

Similarly, Ovid is a creator but one who self-consciously displays the limits of his ability to create reality. Ovid is a greater inventor than even Jupiter, who only specifically creates one landscape, whereas the poet has created the entirety of the *Metamorphoses*, and with it all things divine and mortal. In Ovid’s penchant for the visual, I think we find his own recognition of the limits of his power to create. There is a reason that “Ovid’s landscape descriptions characteristically involved *invitations to view*,” and that the host of contests between *natura* and *ars* are generally resolved unfavorably for nature.464 By bidding the reader to view his creations, and by repeatedly juxtaposing the creative abilities of nature and art, Ovid compels us to judge the success of his creation to deceive, and to hide its artifice though artifice, just as he repeatedly uses generalizing second person verbs to bid the reader to judge matters internal to the narrative, especially those regarding truth judgments. Pointing out the artificiality of his creation and literally putting that artificiality before our mind’s eye, Ovid simultaneously reminds us of his skill and the limits of realism. Like Orpheus or Pygmalion, the mortal artist cannot create life; he may create the semblance of life, but his creation will remain intangible.

### 4.4.5 The Theban stories: problems of vision and (self-)knowledge

This section provides an examination of the second extended complex of stories revolving around matters of seeing and telling. Themes which were developed in Book 2, particularly in the Aglauros narrative, are reprised and brought to a much bloodier—and spectacular—head in Book 3. Additionally, Book 3 is marked by tones of pathos and philosophical reflection which were largely absent from similar tales of Book 2. Notably absent

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from Book 3 are tales of rape. These two books are devoted to flawed or transgressive seeing and the attainment of self-knowledge by doomed characters, and precede the narratological tours-de-force of Books 4 and 5 where emphasis shifts from issues of seeing to issues of telling. Although it is Pentheus’ profane desire to see what should not be seen—and his resultant transformation into bloody spectacle—which serves as the bridge between the seeing tales of Books 2 and 3 and the telling tales of Books 4 and 5, it is the story of Actaeon which we consider pivotal in this portion of the *Metamorphoses*. In the Actaeon story, examined at length below, the connection (specious though it be in the context of the story) between *videre* and *narrare* is made explicitly by the goddess Diana after Actaeon’s visual intrusion into her private bath. Although Book 3 is replete with tales important to this study, especially that of Narcissus, the story of Actaeon unites in a single, vivid narrative many of the themes we have been tracing in this chapter: seeing, telling, eroticism, self-knowledge, art and nature.

Before turning to this central argument I briefly note two important stores which frame the Actaeon episode, the stories of Tiresias and Cadmus, and another which serves as a sort of reprise, Pentheus’ deliberately transgressive seeing. The story of Cadmus, with its vivid description of the epic combat between the hero and the serpent of Mars, provides the prelude to the story of Actaeon, and reveals the importance of seeing for the rest of the book’s episodes.

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465 Heath, in an intriguing, but highly interpretative, pair of studies, suggests that the rapes which fill the pages of Book 2 actually lead to the excessive punishment of Actaeon in Book 3 (Heath 1992 and 1991). The setting of Actaeon’s intrusion into Diana’s bath is very similar to the bucolic erotic landscapes which served as stages for the rapes of Callisto and Io in Book 2 and of Daphne in Book 1. Heath argues that we are to understand Diana as involved in a reading of the *Metamorphoses*, and, in her particular case, a naïve and uninformed reading, which results in her misinterpreting Actaeon’s accidental violation of her privacy. Given her incorrect reading of the first two books of the epic, Diana thinks Actaeon will attempt to rape her and punishes him accordingly.

466 I pass over the tale of Semele which follows immediately after the death of Actaeon. Of note in this story is a reversal of roles with Juno coming in disguise to a mortal woman for a purpose very much different than her husband’s shape-shifting. The affair of Jupiter and Semele has been entirely elided in this tale, which begins from the revelation of her pregnancy to Juno. Rather than using a disguise to deflower a virgin, Juno uses it to trick the deflowered virgin into seeing her own demise. Juno’s phrasing of her trick is of note: she tells the girl that she cannot just take the man’s word for it, that he is Zeus, but must see him in his full splendor, *insignia* and all. Seeing is believing, in this case.
Cadmus’ discovery of his slain comrades foreshadows the manner of Actaeon’s death: like the errant youth, Cadmus enters a wood where he sees his dead warriors (*ut nemus intravit letataque corpora vidit*, 3.55). The Theban stories of Book 3 begin with both a physical and visual intrusion into a sacred space by Cadmus and his warriors, and this intrusive transgression echoes throughout the following stories. Whereas Actaeon’s sight results in his own death, Cadmus only sees those already dead before personally encountering the death-dealing snake. After a combat so full of *enargeia* it would put Homer to shame, Cadmus takes stock of his defeated foe: *dum spatium victor victi considerat hostis* (3.95). Out of nowhere, a divine voice pointedly asks, “Serpentem spectas?” before turning the tables on the watcher, “*Et tu spectabere serpens*” (3.98). The very founding of Thebes begins with a direct question of Cadmus’ vision, which introduces the problem that plagues his house: seeing which turns the viewer into the viewed.

Following the death of Actaeon, Ovid provides two short and emphatically less serious episodes, Semele and Tiresias, which are best seen as comic relief after the epic and tragic episodes of Cadmus and Actaeon and before the spectacular destruction of the voyeur Pentheus. Tiresias’ “punishment” provides a useful counterpoint to the inapt punishment of Actaeon as well as a reiteration of the question of the justice of retribution meted out by the gods for seemingly trivial crimes of vision. Ovid’s version of the Tiresias story is markedly different from that presented by Callimachus in *Hymn 5*, and while the idea of mortal transgression of seeing what should not be seen is less apparent, the outcome is nonetheless the same: a mortal is blinded for seeing what he should not. Unlike Callimachus’ version which places the errant Tiresias in the role of a reluctant voyeur stumbling upon Minvera’s bath, Ovid makes the prophet entirely the victim of Juno’s wounded pride after losing a bet with her husband. Although it was

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467 The voice’s prophecy is brought to pass late in Book 4 after Cadmus and Harmonia have gone into exile and Cadmus is transformed into a snake (4.576-89).
seeing what should not be seen (two snakes mating, in this case) which gave Tiresias the knowledge to settle the debate, it was not the direct cause of his blinding. Although Tiresias is blinded out of Juno’s spite, seeing what he should not led to the knowledge to settle the dispute. The Tiresias episode combines the same essential elements (a mortal seeing too much, a divinity’s overreaction) as the Actaeon episode that precedes it, but in a different order and with a much lighter outcome. Indeed, as recompense for Juno’s excessive punishment, Jupiter grants Tiresias a special form of sight, seeing the future. Tiresias’ “metamorphosis” is unique in that for a sort of crime of vision, he is rewarded with sight greater than what was taken from him. His true sight also provides the bridge into the following episode, which revolves around the issue of mirrored sight and self-knowledge, Narcissus. Tiresias’ fame for prophecy is also the introduction to the last episode of problematic seeing, Pentheus (3.511-26).

The final “metamorphosis” of Book 3 is Pentheus’ transformation from king to vivid warning to the Thebans to recognize Dionysus’ divinity. Pentheus’ death comes as a result of his spying on the rites of Dionysus. His story begins as he rejects Tiresias’ true vision, ironically scoffing at his blindness (verba senis tenebrasque et cladem lucis ademptae / obicit, 3.515-16). In response, the seer prefaces his prophecy by saying that Pentheus should wish he were blinded and unable to defile the rites of the god with his eyes (3.517-18). In the end, it is Pentheus who will complain that the blind have clearer vision than the sighted: meque sub his tenebris nimium vidisse quereris (3.525). Playing on his Euripidean model, Ovid inserts a messenger scene unexpectedly introduced by a narratorial ecce (3.572). The messengers return, having not seen Bacchus (Bacchum vidisse negarunt, 3.573), but bringing instead one of his votaries (a version

468 In abbreviating the myth as found in Euripides’ Bacchae, Ovid omits the sexual overtones of the tragic original. Ovid’s Pentheus is not bewitched and tricked into visual transgression as Euripides’ Pentheus is, but instead rushes to Cithaeron out of anger, his rage described in an extended simile (3.701-707). Most of the deliberate voyeurism of the Euripidean original has also been lost. It is remarkable that Ovid, of all poets, chose to discard the more sexual aspects of his model.
of Euripides’ Lydian stranger). Pentheus’ anger is channeled through his eyes, and he stares
down the attendant: *adspicit hunc Pentheus oculis, quos ira tremendos / fecerat* (3.577-78).
After a narrated digression of more than one hundred lines (entirely unnecessary, as Pentheus
himself notes: *longis ambagibus*, 3.692), the king hurries off to spy on the bacchic rituals coming
to a plain described as *spectabilis undique* (3.709). Unlike his Euripidean model, Ovid’s
Pentheus seeks no hidden observation post, but places himself out in the open, as if on a stage,
visible to all. As he gawks with profane eyes, he is quickly seen. In the blink of an eye, the
viewer becomes the viewed: *hic oculis illum cernentem sacra profanis / prima videt… mater*
(3.710-13). The following frenzied attack is punctuated with words of seeing which heighten the
savagery of his death. Arms ripped from his body, Pentheus shows the bloody stumps to his
mother with a plaintive “*adspice, mater!*” Rather than looking on him with recognition and pity,
Agave responds to the sight (*visis*) with a shout before tearing off her son’s head (3.725-27). She
displays the head as a token of her victory with a deictic *haec*. In this story, Pentheus quickly
goes from active and angry watcher to viewed object in a gory drama, begging for recognition
from his own mother, but instead being held up as an insignia of his own destruction. In his
own version of the *Bacchae*, I think Ovid attempts to create a sort of stage within the narrative—
the *spectabilis undique campus*—on which to play out his drama without the aid of a
messenger’s speech. The bloody death of Pentheus happens before our very eyes, rather than
occurring off stage and being recounted by a third party, its aftermath revealed with props or
wheeled out on an ekkyklema. The brief but forceful snatches of direct speech punctuated by
graphic description (some of which almost seem like stage directions, e.g. *trunca sed ostendens
deiectis vulnera membris*, 3.724), and the scene’s culmination in a deictic display of the severed

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469 Viewer and viewed are similarly twisted in *Ars* 1.165-66 where the unsuspecting spectator of wounds at the arena
ends up inflicted with Love’s wounds himself.
head, help the reader enact the scene in his or her mind.\textsuperscript{470} By addressing our mind’s eye with vivid description, Ovid’s dramatic narrative is able to accomplish what fifth century tragic convention would not allow, the presentation of violent events on “stage”. Not only does Ovid’s version of the Bacchae use visualization to great effect to overcome the limits of genre, but the whole story serves as a brutal cap to a book filled with mortals brutalized by the gods for crimes of vision.

Having examined the tales surrounding the Actaeon episode, we turn now to this story which I think is pivotal in the early books of the Metamorphoses, and critical to understanding Ovid’s expression of a visual poetics.\textsuperscript{471} This single tale draws together various threads woven throughout Ovid’s poetry, some of them stretching all the way from the Amores and Ars Amatoria and extending into the exile poetry. Ovid calls the audience’s attention to this tale in several ways. One way which may have been more apparent to the ancient reader is the marked difference between Ovid’s version of the tale and other tellings. Two known versions of the story were circulating before the writing of the Metamorphoses.\textsuperscript{472} According to Diodorus

\textsuperscript{470} Aristotle comments in the Poetics that the fearful or pitiable can arise from both the visual component of tragedy (ἐκ τῆς δριμοῦ γίνεσθαι) as well as its poetic elements (e.g. the structure of events) (1453b1-5). This latter course is the aim of the better poet. Indeed, the better poet can write the play’s events in such a way that a person who hears the events will experience their horror, even if he has not seen it (δεὶ γὰρ καὶ ἄνω τοῦ ὀρόου οὐτως συνεστάναι τὸν μῦθον ὡσε τὸν ἀκούσα τὰ πράγματα γινόμενα καὶ ἑλειν ἐκ τῶν συμβαίνοντων). The poet’s art is separated from (and, by extension, superior to) stagecraft because it creates the same effects without material trappings. Ovid does just this: he strips the dramatic scene of all its material trappings, and conveys the emotion of the scene without it ever being seen.

\textsuperscript{471} The Actaeon story is similarly climactic in Heath’s reading of the poem (1991, 233). In our case, however, the climax is rather a nexus, a knot in Ovid’s literary tapestry where threads and seeing and telling intertwine to form the clearest picture yet of exactly what the poet is weaving.

\textsuperscript{472} There are also several extant representations of the story of Actaeon in Roman wall painting. In the Casa del Frutteto in Pompeii a Third Style painting of Actaeon and Diana adorns one of the dining room walls (Fig. 18). In this painting, set against a wilderness background, Actaeon stops short before entering into the clearing as if stopped by the sight of Diana. He raises a hand over his head in a gesture of surprise. A second painting from Pompeii in the Casa di Epidio Sabino portrays the scene very differently (Fig. 19). Actaeon, standing within an architectural feature, watches Diana, who is fully clothed and on the point of pursuing him. Leach writes, “[W]e see him as a sophisticated voyeur who uses the cover of the shrine to look further into the secrets of the natural world” (1988, 330). Even in pictorial representations of the scene, there is no agreement over Actaeon’s agency in the event; there is no firm statement of his innocence or his deliberate voyeurism. Ovid’s very clear expression of his innocence

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Siculus, one myth has Actaeon challenge Diana to a hunting contest, while the other recounts his attempt to rape the goddess.473 Before the narration of the episode proper even begins, however, the narrator emphatically denies these alternate versions and absolves Actaeon of any guilt he would have had in the versions recounted by Diodorus.474 A version perhaps more in line with Ovid’s is implied in Varro, who connects video to vis, perhaps using Actaeon to illustrate his etymology.475 Further, the savageness of Actaeon’s punishment—questioned by the narrator and even other gods—causes this episode to stand out from others in the Metamorphoses. Actaeon seems to be the only character in the poem who is transformed simply to make his death and the events leading up to it more agonizing. Indeed, his punishment is dragged out over some fifty-eight verses. This story truly involves “uniquely tormenting and lethal consequences”, which make it all the more attention grabbing.476

should tell us something about the intended purpose of this story, especially within the context of the Theban tales which all revolve around problems of vision.

473 D.S. 4.81.3-5. Otis proposes that Ovid makes reference to a lost Hellenistic model which portrays Actaeon as a deliberate voyer, a version we see for the first time in Apuleius’ version of the tale; this same Hellenistic story provides the model for the catalogue of hunting dogs (1966, 133-35). Otis’ proposition ignores the fact that Actaeon is clearly not a deliberate voyer in Ovid’s version, as the narrator expressly states. There is also no need to posit a Hellenistic source for the catalogue, as such literary flourish is very much in keeping with Ovid’s style; indeed, a similar catalogue interrupts the hunt for the Caledonian boar in the mock epic of Book 10. In the case of Actaeon, I think the catalogue seems only to delay the inevitable, to build suspense before the gruesome death we know is coming, and perhaps also to increase the pathos of the scene when Actaeon cries out to the dogs he knows so well, for now we also know them, their names and even their breeding. While the catalogue is certainly a purple passage, it is also an example of enargeia, vivid and detailed description which puts us at the scene. Heath counters Otis’s argument, “Ovid would seem to be relying rather heavily on his audience’s knowledge of the alternate accounts to make sense of his own version, or else the poet is simply a poor stitcher of tales (Otis does not suggest which is more likely)” (1991, 93). Knowing other versions only enhances the novelty of Ovid’s version, but it is not necessary for understanding it. Finally, Ovid is most certainly not a poor stitcher of tales; when he changes them, it is for a reason, such as can be seen clearly in his dramatic changes to the Pygmalion story.

474 The narrator reassures Cadmus “Fortunae crimen in illo, / non scelus invenies; quod enim scelus error habebat?” (3.141-42).

475 L. 6.80. The text here is problematic, however. Varro cites a line of iambic tetramer catalectic, probably by Accius (so Aldus), which, though corrupt, seems to refer to the Actaeon story. The reconstructed verse reads cum illud oculis violavit is, qui inviidit invidendum. From this example, Varro proceeds to say that such illicit seeing is violating rather than vitiating. Derived from vis, videre would have a penetrative force, and if we are correct in reading Actaeon in Varro’s citation, then the boy is guilty of violating the goddess, whether intentionally or not, with his eyes.

After a narratorial insertion declaring Actaeon’s innocence of any crime, the episode proper begins in the manner of a landscape: *mons erat* (3.143). We are introduced to Actaeon and his band of hunters, and told by the narrator that it is midday (a statement which itself takes two whole lines). Actaeon addresses his mates, noting again that it is midday. The twofold announcement of the noon hour, and the description of the length of the shadows and the exact position of the sun in the sky (3.144-45) perhaps echoes the scenic description which begins *Amores* 1.5. The scene involving a nude woman that this description builds up to will be of a very different sort than that found in the *Amores*, however. Whether or not Ovid alludes to the *Amores* here, the narrator’s heavy-handedness calls our attention to the setting, an idyllic bucolic landscape at noontide. If nothing else, the reader knows that the scene takes place on a mountain at midday.

Whereas the initial repetition of the noon hour may or may not allude to *Amores* 1.5, it is difficult not to see a bit of Corinna in Actaeon when the youth is re-introduced into the scene. He stumbles onto Diana’s bath with an *ecce nepos Cadmi…pervenit* (3.174-76) as Corinna entered the lover’s bedroom with an *ecce Corinna venit* (1.5.9). Like the arrival of Corinna, the introductory *ecce* which announces Actaeon’s entrance urges us to visualize the scene, drawing our mind’s eye to it. Ovid called his reader’s visual attention to the introduction of Corinna—a pivotal moment in the collection—with nearly the same language he uses to

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477 Rohde remarks on this unusual example of “unessential” speech in Actaeon’s repetition of the narrator (1929, 55 and n. 4). Heath argues that we are almost to understand that Actaeon is responding to a cue by the narrator by repeating what has just been said (1991, 240). The youth is ignorant of the narrative and the setting described, and therefore proceeds to re-describe it.

478 The description of Diana which precedes Actaeon’s arrival may also echo the description of Corinna in *Amores* 1.5, although both fit very well into a pattern of Ovidian description used when depicting women which focuses specifically on their hair and clothing (cf. the descriptions of Callisto and Atalanta at 2.412-13 and 8.318-19, respectively). During her disrobing scene, one of Diana’s nymphs takes her *depositae…pallae* (3.167) while Corinna enters the bedroom *tunica velata recincta* (1.5.9). Diana takes up her hair into a knot, *sparsos per colla capillos / colligit in nodum* (3.169-70), while Corinna’s parted hair spills over her neck as Diana’s presumably was before she knotted it (*candida dividua colla tegente coma*, 1.5.10). Although Diana is not in motion as Corinna is, the scene is nevertheless active as the goddess disrobes and her nymphs move here and there preparing her for the bath.
introduce the wayward hunter in the *Metamorphoses*. Using Corinna as a model raises an important question for the first-time reader: will the Actaeon episode be erotic? If we recall Corinna’s arrival and the landscape description which resembles every other which generally precedes rape scenes in the *Metamorphoses*, the reader may predict some sort of ill-fated sex scene (and we have, after all, just read an extended description of a bunch of beautiful virgins disrobing before a bath). Despite the numerous signs pointing toward a sex scene—landscape, nude virgins, allusion to the *Amores*—the narrator has already informed us of Actaeon’s lack of ill will. The very first words of the scene contradict the strongly erotic overtones with which it is told. It seems like we are being set up to witness an attempted rape, and we are told to focus our gaze on the scene, yet we know that Actaeon’s intentions are pure and his crime accidental. The reader is left with a vividly described image of a naked goddess and a front-row seat to the most vivid death scene in the epic. The reader will get the benefit of visually violating the goddess’ privacy while being free from retribution. Unlike Actaeon, however, the reader may not be free of guilt, titillated by what he has seen of the “shower scene” and perhaps even taking a perverse pleasure in the vivid description of Actaeon’s spectacular death: *qui spectavit vulnera, vulnus habet*, after all.⁴⁷⁹ By subtly hearkening to the *Amores*, recalling one pivotal passage in another, both of which are emphatically visual, Ovid once again brings threads of erotics and the gaze back upon themselves in his poetic tapestry.

The structure of the passage as a whole and especially its rapid shifts in focus from one locale or character to another highlight the strong visual component of the story. After a preparatory wide shot, as it were, which describes the mountain, the narrator focuses on a particular piece of real estate, the grove on Gargaphie. Having introduced Actaeon, the narrator

⁴⁷⁹ The varied judgment of the gods regarding of the justice of Actaeon’s punishment may apply to our own individual judgments of the outcome: *rumor in ambiguo est; aliis violentior aequo / visa dea est, alii laudant dignamque severa / virginitate vocant* (3.253-55).
suddenly cuts away from him in favor of the grove, and the description of this new locale begins anew with another ekphrastic opening, *vallis erat* (3.155). The narrator similarly makes an unexpected shift away from Diana, abandoning her in mid-bath at 3.174-76, and re-introducing Actaeon. What we see in the ekphrastic description of the grotto is logically what we anticipate Actaeon will see, but the scene he presumably sees is very different. The description shifts from the natural surroundings of the grove itself to its occupants, the nude Diana and her nymphs. When Actaeon does enter the grove, the word order of vv. 177-80 teases our point of view. In verse 178 the subject of *viso* remains unknown, and the *pectora* of the *nudae nymphae* are provocatively erotic. If the reader anticipates the syntax, he may logically assume that the nymphs’ breasts are the viewed objects. The following line provides an unexpected reversal of expectations: it is not Actaeon who is doing the seeing, but who is being seen (*viro*); and the nymphs’ breasts are not being seen, but rather struck (*percussere*). The reader likely expected to find Actaeon looking at the enticing nudes before him, but instead the tables are turned. “[W]e can see that we are not simply looking through Acteon’s eyes at the nymphs, but actually half-participating in their response to Acteon.”

Points of view shift throughout the story of Actaeon. The episode begins with a point of view external to the hunter, shifting from him to Diana and her nymphs to the chance meeting, before narrowing to focalize through his eyes during the crucial punishment phase of the episode. 

The description of Gargaphie perhaps the finest landscape description in the *Metamorphoses*. It is also the most artificial and rhetorical landscape in the epic, as we discover that Nature has actively imitated art with her own skill (*simulaverat artem / ingenio natura suo*, 3.159). Despite being crafted by no mortal hand (*arte laboratum nulla*, 3.158), the grove is nonetheless a product of artifice. It is noteworthy that Ovid inserts this most artful ekphrasis, indeed the poem’s strongest statement about the triumph of *ars over natura*, into an episode already loaded with issues of viewing. This ekphrasis, which so decidedly places art over nature, seems to be echoed again in the inapt punishment of Actaeon’s voice, despite the fact that it is his eyes which are at fault. Word and image are foregrounded in this ekphrasis, just as *videre* and *narrare* are in Actaeon’s death. 

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481 Leach 1988, 459.
narrative, which begins with the recognition of his new form in the mirror of a pool (3.200). During the accidental collision of mortal and immortal we see a sort of contest of gazes waged between Diana and Actaeon. Actaeon’s understood gaze is answered by the nymphs with a shout and a look of their own, with Actaeon as the passive object (viso...viro, 3.178-79). As they crowd around Diana in an attempt to shield her from view—an attempt which fails miserably, since she stands head and shoulders above the rest (3.182)—the goddess responds with her own oblique gaze (in latus obliquum tamen adstitit oraque retro / flexit, 3.187-88). She turns just a bit to shield herself before shooting him a glance, but just enough to look at him, quite literally, askance. Unlike his mortal gaze, her divine gaze is baleful and destructive; the only result which could come from his gaze is telling, if we follow Diana’s own logic, whereas her counter-gaze is capable of destroying him.

The punishment phase of the tale begins when Diana directs her attack against Actaeon’s vultum virile (3.189), his male gaze. Given the lack of agency seen above in viso viro, however, we must wonder what Actaeon actually saw. Indeed, it was he who was seen by the nymphs. What he actually saw is only inferred from the context. Although she splashes water on his face and, by extension, the eyes which have offended her, the statement which accompanies her assault is notably ill-suited to the actual crime of seeing what should not be seen. “Nunc tibi me posito visam velamine narras, / si poteris narrare, licet,” she adds (3.192-93). “Now you can tell that I’ve been seen naked, if tell you can.” While Actaeon has seen what he should not, the narrative provides no evidence that he intended to say anything about the incident. The narrator’s insistence on his lack of active agency in the event perhaps argues against Diana’s

482 Leach 1988, 455.
483 Although the text does not describe her posture with any detail other than provided in vv. 187-88, I think we do well to imagine something similar to statues of Aphrodite like the Capitoline type or the Crouching Aphrodite which have heads turned and eyes cast back, their nudity poorly concealed.
484 What the reader has seen in his mind’s eye is far clearer than what Actaeon saw.
assumption that his seeing would lead to telling. Nevertheless, in her mind, *videre* and *narrare* are inextricably linked. Although she adds the inapposite *narrare* and a punishment to suit it (i.e. the inability of Actaeon-as-stag to speak), his actual death accompanies a reversal of the active male gaze which began with the passive *viso viro*. When his pack of hounds arrives, they catch sight of him (*videre canes*, 3.206) while he voicelessly begs them to recognize him (*Actaeon ego sum: dominum cognoscite vestrum!* 3.230). The active male viewer and controlling master has become entirely impotent; without a voice to direct the scene, he becomes the spectacle. Seeing and saying are now applied to new ends. Hot on the dogs’ heels come Actaeon’s friends who similarly suffer a failure of vision: *ignari instigant oculisque Actaeona quaerunt* (3.243). Though they see him, they too fail to recognize him. As the hero-turned-deer is ripped apart—described in wonderfully graphic detail—his death becomes a spectacle (*oblatae…spectacula praedae*, 3.246). In a pathetic, but quite Ovidian, twist, Actaeon’s final wish before expiring is to be a viewer of the bloody scene, not a passive victim: *vellet abesse quidem, sed adest; velletque videre, / non etiam sentire canum fera facta suorum* (3.247-48).

“Well he might wish to be elsewhere, but here he is; well too might he wish to see, not feel the savage actions of his own hounds.” Even as he is rent asunder, Actaeon wishes he were an active viewer. Deprived of voice, however, he is deprived of visual agency. Whereas earlier he might have told what he saw, now he cannot see because he cannot say.

This leads to the episode’s central question. Does Actaeon’s viewing of the divine alone warrant his death, or rather the perceived threat of turning his sight into a speech act? The actual crime of seeing the goddess naked is almost entirely elided, and we are never told what Actaeon actually saw. When he arrives in the grove, we assume from the nymphs’ reaction that he saw them naked, even though it is Actaeon who is the object of their seeing at vv. 178-79. The
revelation that Diana was actually seen in the nude is delayed for another six verses, however, until she blushes under his gaze: *is* [i.e. *color*] *fuit in vultu visae sine veste Dianae* (3.185). Only here with *visae Dianae* is it made certain that Actaeon saw her naked. Nonetheless, for a crime which earns such a stiff punishment, there is remarkably little attention paid to what Actaeon saw or even the fact that he saw anything. Although Actaeon’s crime was committed with the eyes, Ovid’s story does not parallel a similar mythological tale, Callimachus’ account of Tiresias’ blinding, wherein the youth is blinded for seeing Athena naked. 485 While the crux of the punishment for Ovid is the metamorphosis into a stag, the emphasis on Actaeon’s lack of speech while in that form, coupled with Diana’s unmotivated inclusion of *narrare* in Actaeon’s death sentence, focuses our attention on a crime of speech which has not been committed instead of a crime of vision which has been committed. It seems that the potential for telling what has been seen is a greater offense than actually seeing what should not be seen. In the previous book, the extended complex of tattletale stories provides a similar, if less brutal, lesson. Both birds are punished for what they *said*, not what they saw, and Aglauros initially avoids punishment despite her clearly transgressive spying. It is only when she threatens to tell her father about Herse’s affair that Minerva finally punishes Aglauros’ eyes, and not her mouth. 486 Actaeon’s ability to speak is attacked despite its innocence, while Aglauros’ eyes are punished for a verbal threat (that, however, coupled with her earlier visual transgression). Salzman-Mitchell astutely notes, “It is the transformation of her image into text which disturbs the goddess.” 487 Diana’s personal integrity had been violated (literally so, if we accept the reconstruction of Varro’s quotation of

485 Other characters in the *Metamorphoses* are silenced specifically so that they cannot speak, whether to prevent them from saving themselves or continuing to offend. Callisto is made mute by Juno so that she cannot call on Jupiter for help (2.482-83), and Ocyroe too to prevent her from prophesying (2.657-58). The removal of Philomela’s tongue similarly prevents her from calling for help, though her physical form remains unchanged. 486 It is telling that Ovid uses Actaeon to illustrate his own “crime” and punishment in the *Tristia*: *cur aliquid vidi? cur noxia lumina feci? / cur imprudenti cognita culpa mihi? / inscius Actaeon vidit sine veste Dianam* (2.103-5). 487 Salzman-Mitchell 2005, 50.
Accius, cited above) by Actaeon’s visual transgression. Her adducing of narrare from videre implies that her divine, and indeed bodily, integrity would be under threat again if Actaeon had been allowed to tell about what he had seen. By telling about his encounter, describing her nudity to his listener, Actaeon would open her to the scrutiny of the mind’s eye. Conveyed in spoken or written form—as text—Diana’s privacy is threatened by circulation to a wider audience. Her godhead could become the stuff of erotic poetry.

But in her punishment of Actaeon, Diana has once again, as in the Callisto episode, failed to take notice the reader. Although Actaeon was punished within Diana’s realm, the narrative, she cannot act against the reader, if she even knows of our presence. Whereas Actaeon died because of what he saw and may potentially have said, the reader who visualizes the scene shares a similar view to that seen by Actaeon yet escapes punishment, able even to tell of Diana’s discomfited blush as she stands a head taller than her nymphs. Indeed, the Metamorphoses itself is a product of the videre-narrare nexus: what Ovid conceives in his phantasia is expressed through words, which in turn spur the reader to form a picture in his mind’s eye. The reader’s privileged position as unpunished—and unnoticed—arbiter of scenes like the Callisto and Actaeon stories is implicit in the narrator’s final notice of the episode: rumor in ambiguo est; aliis violentior aequo / visa dea est, aliis laudant dignamque severa / virginitate vocant: pars invenit utraque causas (3.253-55). We should note that the narrator does not say “the gods debated amongst themselves the merits or demerits of Actaeon’s punishment.” While within the context of the narrative of the Metamorphoses the pars utraque may well imply heavenly factions, the statement itself allows any and every reader of the story to be his own judge, to weigh the relative justice of Diana’s destruction of Actaeon. Standing outside the narrative, the reader is allowed to see things forbidden to those within the narrative. Ovid leaves it for each
reader to decide whether seeing or telling is a bigger threat to personal integrity and privacy, and
to decide the justice of the unintentional voyeur’s punishment.

I have discussed the nature of Actaeon’s crime and the aptness of his punishment, though I have only skirted the edges of this latter subject. Actaeon’s story is one of crime and punishment, and the structure of the episode reflects its subject matter with approximately half of the story devoted to the “crime” and the remainder devoted to the punishment. Whereas the majority of the “crime” section is devoted to description of the grove and of the nymphs with very little attention paid to Actaeon, the punishment section focuses on Actaeon’s unique torment and gives a rare glimpse of the tormented psychology of a victim of metamorphosis. Although the reader is granted a special knowledge of the exact nature of Diana’s attack, Actaeon himself does not know what she has done to him until he finally sees his reflection in the revealing mirror of a pool. Errant and transgressive viewing is brought to final fulfillment by a mirror turned on the victim, leading to his self-knowledge. Diana’s combination of *videre* and *narrare* is brought to a head at the painful moment of Actaeon’s attainment of self-knowledge. His visual recognition of his new form (*ut vero vultus et cornua vidit in unda*, 3.200) is immediately tied to his loss of articulate speech (‘*me miserum!*’ *dicturus erat: vox nulla secuta est!* 3.201). Vision allows Actaeon an internal, psychic self-recognition, but his inability to speak prevents him from articulating his selfhood to the external world, with deadly consequences. Despite his external transformation, his mind remains his own (*per ora / non

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488 He cannot speak, but he is able to grunt, however: *ingemuit: vox illa fuit* (3.202). The loss of human speech and its replacement by inarticulate, but still vocal, noise must be all the more frustrating for Actaeon. He maintains a semblance of voice, but not enough to make himself known to others or to save his life. We should note that v. 200 (*ut vero vultus et cornua vidit in unda*) is omitted in the recentiores and subsequently deleted by Heinsius, presumably on their authority and the fact that the line echoes Io’s recognition at 1.640-41. Given the similarity of the scenarios between Io and Actaeon and the importance of self-recognition to both, there seems to be little reason to delete the line on these grounds. Quite the contrary, if one recalls Ovid’s predilection for repeating himself to make a metanarrative point (e.g. repeating the Daphne episode in the Syrinx story), the simple echoing of a phrase in two very important tales of self-recognition should hardly be off-putting.
sua...mens tantum pristina mansit, 3.202-3). So what makes Actaeon Actaeon, and different from his new form as deer? The ability to say who he is. His self-knowledge allows him to see through the form he’s been changed into, though others without his self-knowledge are unable to penetrate the disguise without his verbal activity (verba...desunt 3.231). In Actaeon’s punishment we find that identity is contingent on the ability to articulate one’s selfhood verbally. Barkan suggests that what Actaeon saw in the grove unlocked the secret of self-consciousness, his own divine aspect, and that this revelation leads to his death. Note also the fact that, after his transformation (cladis), Diana is the subject of the next five verbs (dat, dat, cacuminat, mutat, velat 3.190-197). Actaeon, who had earlier been a commander of his friends and of his own hunting dogs, an active pursuer and hunter, is now the hunted, passive object, grammatically and otherwise. The next active verb of which Actaeon is the subject is fugit (3.198). Even as grammatical subject, his action is that of a prey animal and not the active hunter he was only moments before. The catalogue of hunting dogs which has earned critical censure for its excess serves to reinforce this fact, that Actaeon remains in control of his gaze, but is unable to impact the world around him as active subject because he has lost his ability to speak. The catalogue is introduced by the sight of Actaeon and proceeds for nineteen verses describing the hounds. Actaeon cannot even attempt to command them, though: clamare libebat: “Actaeon ego sum: dominum cognoscite vestrum!” The listing of dogs serves reinforce the fact that Actaeon has lost all verbal control: he who once named those dogs and controlled

489 Or textually, as in the case of Philomela.
490 “Metamorphosis becomes a means of creating self-consciousness because it establishes a tension between identity and form, and through this tension the individual is compelled to look in the mirror” (1986, 46). Like Actaeon, Io’s look in the mirror of a pond provides a similar terrifying self-revelation: novaque ut conspexit in unda / cornua, pertimuit seque externata refugit (1.640-41). Although Io’s fate is not as brutal as Actaeon’s, the moment of recognition that one is no longer oneself is similarly terrifying to the viewer; Io flees herself, not having to deal with the frustration of being unable to control one’s own dogs or friends because of an inability to articulate oneself. Further, Actaeon’s look in the mirror is far different than Narcissus’ in this same book, who cannot distinguish his reflected self from a visible other.
them by calling their names cannot even say his own name to make them recognize their master. See though he might, he cannot act because he cannot say. *Narrare* has trumped *videre* as the strongest force for asserting selfhood.\(^{491}\) Although Actaeon is no longer able to say who he is (note that his own attempt is a failure, 3.230), Ovid is able to call him by whatever name he chooses. It is not until the point of his death that Actaeon is actually named Actaeon; throughout the tale Actaeon is called by periphrases (e.g. *nepos Cadmi* or *Autonoeius heros*) or pronouns.\(^{492}\)

Diana’s nymphs are named, Actaeon’s dogs are named, but the subject himself is never even called “Actaeon” until his friends, unable to see through his new form, call out his name, calling him to their quarry (3.243-44), but even there only in indirect speech. Ovid makes a studied show of not naming the hero of the episode, going beyond simply denying the youth the ability to say his own name at a critical moment in the narrative. Diana’s ominous injunction “now try to tell” has been true for the entire episode.\(^{493}\) Seeing or being seen is not simply enough. One may come to know oneself through sight, but without the ability to articulate one’s selfhood to others through language, one is not.

### 4.5 Conclusion

Let us turn now to retrace some of the threads of Ovid’s tapestry, and to examine what he has woven. From the beginning of his career to its end, Ovid calls attention to issues of image and text and, most importantly, their interconnection. Whether asking what sort of impact the voluntary revelation of personal information might have on the love poet, or teasing the reader’s

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\(^{491}\) Note that Io was able to make herself recognizable to her father by a sort of writing with her hoof (1.648-655). Though she is visually unrecognizable, she is able to assert her identity through language.

\(^{492}\) Pronouns (*illo*, 141; *illum*, 176; *qui*, 177; *tibi*, 192; *ille*, 228; *ipse*, 229); other names (*nepos*, 138; *erili*, 140; *nepos Cadmi*, 174; *viro*, 179); periphrases (*iuvenis…Hyantis*, 147; *Autonoeius heros*, 198). This last example, *Autonoeius heros*, is an Ovidian neologism and the only adjectival use of Autonoe in Latin. Ovid is so concerned with *not* naming Actaeon that he creates an adjective just to avoid calling him by name, though he goes equally far in the opposite direction by giving names to the nymphs and dogs.

\(^{493}\) The story of Dryope offers a similar take on the connection of speech to being. She ceases to exist as soon as she stops speaking (*desierant simul ora loqui, simul esse*, 9.392). Loss of speech upon metamorphosis have been noted by critics. See especially Solodow 1988 (189-90, 214), Quirin 1930, and Colavito 1989 (3-13).
sexual fantasies, or pondering which is more powerful in its transgressive revelatory ability, seeing or telling, Ovid approaches these questions with an eye to the reader’s eye. Ovid’s extremely visual and descriptive brand of poetry is not simply baroque or rhetorical for the sake of being baroque or rhetorical, but rather to achieve a certain ends within his poetic program. While his use of vivid description may indeed be rhetorical in the truest sense of the word, Ovid employs these techniques derived from his rhetorical training as a means of connecting with his reader and involving him more deeply in the work. While he lacks the emotional intensity of Catullus or the lyricality of Propertius, Ovid uses the same means, *enargeia* and the reader’s mental imaging, as his predecessors, but to different ends. If perhaps not in an emotional register, Ovid approaches his reader on an intellectual level, calling attention to the rhetorical techniques he uses and how he uses them, and thus inviting his reader to think actively about image and text, visualization, and the reader’s role in poetry.

Throughout Ovid’s poetry we readers should be aware of our own position in relation to the text, be aware that we are not just readers, but viewers of individual poems, which constitute scenes, and of the tapestry of Arachne that is his larger program. The threads—of erotics, visuality, and poetry—which comprise the scenes on his tapestry are so thoroughly intertwined that it is impossible to unravel them. To do so would undo the larger image of the tapestry itself. We must appreciate each weft thread as it emerges and submerges within and between poems, and note how its variegated color changes as it runs back and forth on itself. Arachne’s tapestry has become the preeminent metaphor for my examination of Ovid for several reasons. Arachne’s tapestry is ever-expandable and inextricable because it lacks the geometric boundaries which confine Minerva’s weaving. Understanding Ovid’s poetry need not require a chronological or developmental hierarchy. Indeed, the insistent self-reference throughout Ovid’s
poetry compels us to step back and view the whole, rather than attempting to move from top to bottom, left to right. Arachne’s tapestry is literally ineffable, lacking the written word present on Minerva’s tapestry, neatly labeling the scenes and their figures. Her work is purely visual, but nevertheless understandable as narrative. In its ineffability, Ovid creates a paradox: as an ekphrasis, the visual image of Arachne’s non-verbal tapestry is necessarily expressed through words. The tension between art and text, word and image, neatly bound up in this paradox is, as shown above, present in the poems surveyed in this chapter. From this paradox comes another: the tapestry is non-aesthetic, an ekphrasis which cannot be returned to a visual medium. Arachne’s ineffable visual creation exists in purely literary form. As seen particularly in Amores 1.5 and 3.7 and the Ars Amatoria, love poetry is a visual event as much as a literary event, and to separate the two, to remove visualization from reading, is to undo the whole. Finally, in its ekphrastic form, Arachne’s tapestry is poietic, focusing on ars and the artist, who, in this case, is capable of matching divine artistry. Ovid’s keen interest in the power of artistry—and the failure of artists, in particular—is evident throughout his work. Having failed to renew life, the poet Orpheus creates a fantasy of life-giving, Pygmalion, a visual artist who turns out to be more a spectator than a creator, and whose creation only lives due to divine intervention. Or the sex created by the teacher of erotic ars turns out to be nothing more than vivid masturbation in the anticlimax of the second book of the Ars Amatoria, and a host of necessary female fakeries at the end of the third. Poetic ars can create something that looks and sounds like sex or love, but is not a substitute for the real thing.

But when looking at the complex weave of narrative and image that is the Metamorphoses, we find that our tapestry may also be a mirror. Although mirrors provide important self-revelations in both the Io and Actaeon episodes, it is in the Narcissus episode that
the mirror is used to its fullest extent for a philosophical reflection on self-knowledge.\(^{494}\)

Through his insistently self-reflective style, pointing out his own rhetorical and literary sleights of hand, Ovid shows us a reflection of ourselves as we read and view. As characters in the narrative gaze into mirrors and have some larger truth about their existence revealed, we gaze at them gazing, and see the moment of revelation. Our reflections, however, are never seen in the mirror as we peep over the shoulder of the unfortunate changeling coming to the horrible recognition of their self-effacement. Our lack of reflection in the mirror into which we gaze reminds us both of our absence from the text, and our simultaneous and paradoxical presence at an event of momentous importance, destruction or loss of self, in the life of a character. We find ourselves as interlopers, voyeurs peeping in on their sad fates for the sake of entertainment.\(^{495}\)

To use a more modern analogy, we might say that Ovid’s tapestry is transformed into a sort of television screen, its surface reflecting our image back at us (but only if we sit close enough to see), as we watch his dramas and comedies of love and pain play out in the intangible world behind the glass. Like devoted fans, we may feel a deep connection with the characters acting behind the screen, but we can never truly interact with them or pass through the glass barrier. Ovid subtly reminds us of this when we see his lover boldly not just see, but touch, Corinna before the poet cuts off the signal, coyly blacking out the screen before we see too much. Indeed, that particular episode may have been nothing more than an erotic daydream of our hero.

We can also undertake to study his program of love, but the exemplary student within the text (i.e. behind the screen) still fails at consummation, despite his training. Though mental image

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\(^{494}\) For Narcissus and philosophical reflection, see in particular Bartsch (2000 and 2006, especially pp. 84-103) and Hardie (2002a, 28).

\(^{495}\) Or for artistic appreciation, as Hinds puts it, “…the desiring gaze crystallizes at a crucial moment into an image of artistic connoisseurship” (2002, 138).
allows us a moment of shared-but-different fantasy with the poet, he never fails to remind us that our shared experience is just that, fantasy.

In the end, the love we see in Ovid’s poetry tends to lead to failure, or, worse, death or the effacement of the self. The lover of *Am.* 3.7 fails in his sexual conquest and becomes a spectacle of his own failure. Even in *Am.* 1.5 where we see Corinna’s body-in-pieces before our very eyes, we fail to see the lover consummate his passion, nor can we determine if the whole scene is even real (noting the ambiguity of the closing optative subjunctive). The artist who produces a visual masterpiece on par with—or better than—that made by divine skill is destroyed along with her art. Orpheus re-kills his bride because he is *avidus videndi.* For his sinful desire to see what should not be seen, Pentheus is turned into a gory spectacle on a *spectabilis undique campus.* Even innocent viewers like Actaeon are destroyed for accidents of sight (so too Tiresias, to a lesser degree).

Accidents of sight, however, can become crimes of speech. As a prelude to his death, Actaeon is deprived of voice, and consequently of selfhood: having recognized his transformed form in the revealing mirror of a pool, he does not have the voice to identify himself as Actaeon to his companions. The transfixing and transforming revelation of the mirror of a pool reappears in other crucial tales in the *Metamorphoses.* Narcissus is transfixed: having lost himself in love for his own reflection, he becomes like a statue, a representation of a boy more than a real boy. Revelation of the self in the mirror of the *Metamorphoses* often leads to the erasure of the self. Indeed, Echo is erased from visual existence altogether, reduced to a disembodied voice, as a direct consequence of Narcissus’ encounter with his own reflection. Hermaphroditus too suffers in the mirror of a pool. Salmacis feeds on him with her eyes, which glint like the sun reflecting off the water of her pool. In her zeal to have the boy, she loses herself in him, quite literally.
She disappears while he survives, twisted into a freak of nature. Not only is she erased because of her desire, but she is cursed when the boy curses her pool. But the pools of Narcissus and Salmacis prove to be both same and different. Narcissus’ is mirroring, while Salmacis’ is translucent. Same-but-different, the two pools offer a reflected look back on the viewer and a revealing image of what lies behind.

Ovid’s poetry, and especially the *Metamorphoses*, is filled with failures and deaths which hinge on faults of vision, whether seeing or being seen. What do we make of this fact? Why does he so often invite us to view such failures and transformations when viewing itself was their very cause? I would suggest that Ovid reminds us that as readers we possess an existence outside of the text—outside of the mind’s eye—unlike the characters within his narrative, who can be erased, reduced to spectacle, voice, or nothing at all, with the stroke of a pen or a blink of the mind’s eye. Unlike Argus, it’s not off with our head should we fall asleep while reading, nor will we cease to exist, whether through erasure or loss of voice.

Rather than reducing this fact to some great metanarrative joke which pervades Ovid’s poetic corpus, I think Ovid makes his point in earnest. We readers are privileged to have a text which can reveal truths—about love, poetry, society, ourselves—without the attendant dangers of reality. An astute reader finds his identity clarified in the mirror with no risk to his selfhood. He gains from the experience, unlike Ovid’s characters who generally suffer to a greater or lesser degree. We do not risk death like Argus if we put down the text for a rest. We do not undergo physical metamorphosis like the characters, but instead another type of revelatory change through the mirroring of the text. Do we like playing the voyeur? Do we like viewing rape? Do we like viewing the brutal deaths of Actaeon and Argus? Do we find the gods just or unjust? Do we accept the limits placed on the artist? Is he deceiver, revealer, or creator? Are we complicit
or resistant? And, importantly, are we in control, or are we controlled by him? All these can be revealed to the individual reader as he gazes into the mirror of the text. As we view ourselves viewing, we must always remain aware of the man behind the curtain, or, in this case, the mirror.
General Conclusions

Mental imaging is a powerful tool with which a writer can grab and hold his audience’s attention, or increase their personal, emotional, and intellectual involvement with the text. In this dissertation, I have examined how and why Catullus, Propertius, and Ovid write with an eye to the mind’s eye of their reader. The importance of appealing to the mind’s eye of the audience and the techniques used to do so are not unique to these three poets, however. Appealing to the mind’s eye is a topic discussed by Greek and Roman rhetoricians, and is a method of author-audience interaction which can be seen as far back as Homer. One of the primary benefits of vivid language, speech which induces the reader or listener to form mental images, is that it gives the impression that the listener is present at the event described. By placing the reader or listener at the scene, the speaker accomplishes two important goals: he makes his version of events seem true or otherwise increases their perceived reality; and he increases the emotive force of the scene, whether it be sadness, anger, excitement, or otherwise. By compelling the reader to visualize, the author establishes a contact between their separate subjectivities. Being allowed to see through the eyes of the poet, as it were, creates a certain intimacy between author and reader. In the case of so-called subjective love elegy, the reader is often put in the shoes of the poet-lover, or placed in a position like that of a confidant or friend. Part of a love poet’s success is his ability to convince the reader of the reality of his love, and to make the emotions known to and felt by the reader. Helping the reader to see love is more convincing that simply telling them about love. Further, manipulating a reader’s perspective allows the author to reveal or conceal, or to increase a sense of connection or isolation. As we have seen in our discussion, Catullus, Propertius, and Ovid approach the mind’s eye of their readers differently, and have different aims in doing so, though the techniques they use are often similar.
The poetry of Catullus has long been called vivid and immediate. My study demonstrates that these judgments stem from Catullus’ particular approach to his reader’s visualization, as well as from other techniques like his frequent use of vulgarity or vocative addresses. The immediacy and presumed high level of personal contact felt between many readers and the Catullus persona is paradoxical, however, when one takes stock of just what aspects of visuality and visualization he focuses on. Throughout the Lesbia poems, he strives to protect his own privacy—and that of his love—all while actively seeking to invade the privacy of others. By controlling visual access to his innermost feelings, Catullus denies outsiders verbal control, all while attempting to assert his own dominance. Readers feel close to Catullus, like confidants to whom he tries to explain his love. Yet, upon examination, it seems we know precious little about the relationship, and Lesbia in particular, aside from Catullus’ alternating joy, alienation, and anguish. We are allowed to see his side of the story and little else. Readers may take from his poetry indelible images such as Lesbia playing with her sparrow in cc. 2 and 3, or Catullus’ own visceral reaction to seeing her in c. 51, but what remains unseen is the very force which leaves the poet addle-brained and tongue-tied: Lesbia. The reader is provided with scant detail about this most important facet of Catullus’ poetry; we know little other than that she is beautiful and has a strong effect on Catullus with her presence. This glaring, but easily overlooked, detail is an important aspect of Catullus’ use of his reader’s mental imaging. Even though we may feel that we are being privileged and taken into his confidence, he remains in control of not only what we see, but also the point of view from which it is seen. While he explicitly commands Lesbia not to look at his love as she once had during happier times, thus depriving her of access to his innermost self, he implicitly does the same to his reader by not showing. By controlling just how close we can get to his love, Catullus seeks to solve the paradox of publishing poetry concerned
with private matters; the reader can get close, but not too close. This control also helps to
demonstrate the novelty of the love felt by Catullus. When seen from his perspective, it is a
unique feeling which must be shepherded and kept away from those who would not appreciate it.
After Lesbia’s rejection of Catullus’ precious feeling, he uses visual control as punishment.
Whereas he once concealed her from view by means of his poetry, after she has spurned him, he
uses his poetry as a weapon, as a means of exposing her to scrutiny. In the climactic c. 11,
Catullus bares all, showing his damaged love with the vivid flower simile, while simultaneously
revealing Lesbia’s monstrous sexuality.

The access the reader is given to the most intimate details of a poeticized love affair, and
the fact that poetry can provide access, become explicit subjects for Catullus when he steps back
from personal poetry. The hiding and revealing, the showing and telling of love poetry that was
enacted in many of the poems of the Lesbia cycle is also discussed in a more objective fashion in
two important poems. Both cc. 45 and 67 have been remarked as different in both tone and
content from the other poems of Catullus. By approaching these poems as a sort of objective
commentary on Catullus’ thoughts about personal poetry, especially love poetry, we can both
account for their oddness in the collection, and uncover new ways to interpret the Lesbia poems.
I have argued that poem 45 is to be viewed as if it were a painting of a love scene: it is a poem
that bids us to take a step back and think about love from the perspective of an outsider. What
does a happy love affair look like, and what does it sound like? Is it even possible to have a
blessed love? Viewing a seemingly happy couple from the outside allows the reader to think
about the type of love he may have assumed had been shared by Catullus and Lesbia. Indeed,
the narrator pointedly asks the reader, “quis ullos homines beatiore / visit?” in concluding the
poem. Has the reader seen a happy couple in real life? In art? In poetry? The vexed c. 67,
remarkable both for its tone and its content, similarly invites the reader to contemplate the connection between what we read or hear and what we see. As I have argued, when interpreting the loquacious house door as a mouthpiece for revelatory poetry, all need for positing unknown historical personages from Verona evaporates. Far from being a piece of poetry meant to be understandable only to a select few, c. 67 offers Catullus’ own thoughts about the type of poetry he writes. His verse is not at fault for allowing people to see what is taking place behind closed doors if it is already rumored. Claiming that poetry offers a sort of protection for the author (as Catullus reminds us in c. 16, persona and poeta are not one and the same) is a claim which returns in Ovid. Seeing and saying are closely related phenomena, and both are the concern of love poetry.

Propertius offers a very different take on seeing one’s way through love, which fits with his particular style of poetry. While Catullus’ gaze is often active and controlling, and he seeks to use his poetry as a means of putting those who have wronged him on display, Propertius’ once proud gaze is deactivated, cast to the ground by Love after he is infected by Cynthia’s own gaze. Both poets express the pain of their love, but their reactions to its tribulations are different, much like the different approaches to love seen in the epigrams of Meleager and Philodemus. Whereas Catullus takes a stance between Meleager’s suffering lover and Philodemus’ lover who is not afraid to strike back when wronged, Propertius is firmly in the camp of the pathetic Meleagrian lover. His particular poetic alignment is seen both in how he describes his own gaze and how he addresses the mind’s eye of his reader. From the beginning we are told that he is visually powerless in the face of Cynthia’s captivating gaze and love’s force. The fact that Propertius is now miser under her visual domination is reinforced by the juxtaposition of his once proud gaze with its current deactivation. His powerlessness is reinforced in 1.3 when he compares himself
to Argus, the eternal watcher who is never a lover. This salient mythological image helps to show the reader exactly the position in which Propertius finds himself: he can look, but his gaze is ineffectual in bringing about consummation of his love. The images drawn from myth, especially from those common in contemporary visual art, help Propertius to show the cracks in his realist love fantasy. Cynthia may look like a work of art as she lies sleeping, but she defies his artist’s touch. She is seen to be real, but attempts to touch her show her to be even less real than a painting or statue. Love has defeated Propertius’ active male gaze, and, as a result, he has turned that gaze inward to a fantasy world which should remain in his control. Even in this fantasy world, however, Cynthia remains outside his influence. In Propertius the reader sees a lover who cannot win, one who is repeatedly bested in contests which pit his ineffectual gaze against that of a more powerful rival. Propertius’ status as pathetic lover is reinforced when the reader sees that, even in his own vivid fantasy, the lover is a loser.

Like Catullus, Propertius’ collection of elegies uses mental imaging for two distinctly different, but related, purposes. On the one hand, visualization is used subjectively to convince the reader that both Cynthia and the love that he feels for her are real. On the other hand, Propertius reflects on not only the use of mental imaging in poetry, but also on the wider connection of visual and textual art, especially ekphrasis. The second book of elegies in particular attempts to present ekphrastic representations of love and poetry. Elegy 2.12 offers a description of a painting of Love, the truest possible artistic representation of the god. Although painted with the utmost skill, the visual representation does not match Propertius’ particular malady, and it is up to his poetic version of love to correct the painted version. The most personal and fitting depiction of love comes in the mind’s eye: spurred by Propertius’ poetry, the
reader can visualize exactly the type of love that torments him, a type slightly different from the excellent, but nevertheless inaccurate, painted archetype.

In addition to describing his perfect image of love, Propertius writes an ekphrasis of Augustus’ new temple of Apollo. With form reflecting content, he moves our mind’s eye through the temple complex, first around the portico with its literal intercolumniations (Poenis digesta columnis, 2.31.3), then to its statues and external altar, then to the exterior of the temple, and finally, with a spatial deinde leading the way, into the sanctuary itself with its cult statues. As our mind’s eye moves through the temple precinct, the art scattered throughout becomes progressively more real. The statue of Apollo which stands outside the temple seems to sing (to Propertius, at least), but fails, as it is still qualified as mimesis, as a marble representation (marmoreus 2.31.6). Next, our eyes fall on Myron’s famous herd of cows, more lifelike—vivida—but still representations, signa. The sculptures which are a favorite subject of ekphrastic epigram are almost real, but not quite. Within the temple, however, all qualifications are removed and the god himself (deus ipse, 2.31.15) stands amidst his mother and sister. The external statue seemed to be like the real Apollo, but inside the temple we are presented with the real article, the god, whose singing (sonat) is the last word of the ekphrasis. The progression from artistic mimesis to divine reality shows poetry winning the day over visual art. The god of poetry can be brought alive as deus ipse only through poetry; this one is real, while the marble one only seemed real. All of this descriptive delay leads up to showing Cynthia that her beauty is not the only beauty that can hold her lover immobile; visual art can fix him as well. From this mildly liberating recognition, brought about by poetry’s triumph over visual art in an implicit paragone, he can begin to reflect on further connections between word and image in love poetry. Verbal depiction—the narrative delay of the ekphrasis itself—can mimic the effects of beautiful
visual depiction. Indeed, it is poetry which comes closer to god than visual mimesis. Through his poetry, Propertius attempts to capture tableaux of love and beauty, to distill his emotion into an image easily understandable to his reader, and to show that these images, those created by text, are superior to those of visual art.

Ovid’s use of his reader’s mental imaging is as different from his predecessors as the rest of his poetic program, though there are points of similarity with both Catullus and Propertius. Like Catullus, Ovid’s gaze is active and perhaps even aggressive; and like Propertius his use of mental image tends to show the cracks in poetic realism. Whereas Propertius attempted to distill emotion and beauty into singular, static and recognizable images, Ovid struggles to capture motion in his poetry. The *Amores*, in particular, has a cinematic quality about it, cutting between shots, as it were, between moments in the narrative of his poetic love affair, and within individual poems. The capturing of motion in text is inherent in the very theme of Ovid’s great epic, metamorphosis. Within the various tenuously connected episodes (which nevertheless flow from one another), motion is of paramount importance, whether in Apollo’s chasing after Daphne and the detail lavished on the rippling of her hair and clothing as she runs, or the twisting of her body into a motionless tree, or in the gender-bending embrace of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus, or the vivid battle between Cadmus and the serpent. In his attempt to capture motion in his poetic images (and, I think, in the structure of his poems as well), Ovid seeks to overcome text’s fundamental lack of spatiality. Narrative may progress through time, but space is another matter. In my view, Ovid understands the impossibility of textual spatiality, but instead tries to circumvent this lack by addressing the mind’s eye, wherein one can create images static or cinematic, images which talk, images which move through space and time. As a poet, he can create the utmost in realism in the reader’s mind, though he recognizes the limits of his
creation, just as Propertius confronts the intangibility of the *scripta puella*. As a creative force, Ovid judges art to be superior to nature, although, as we have seen, such judgments are often only in the eye of the beholder. The story of Actaeon teaches us that seeing and telling are closely related phenomena, and that telling in fact is the more potent—dangerous, even—of the two, as it can create seeing without the necessary precondition of a perceived real object.

In examining his major amatory works, the *Amores* and the *Ars Amatoria*, two separate approaches to Ovid’s use of visuality were taken, one “in the elegiac tradition” and the other “about the elegiac tradition”. In the *Amores* Ovid attempts to write “straight” elegy, positioning his persona in the role of a poet-lover who goes through all the requisite motions of an elegiac love affair. He takes special care to foreground the role of the eyes in his elegiac program. Although not within the first line of the collection as in Propertius, Ovid nonetheless makes the first appearance of Corinna a visual poem par excellence. Her introduction is as much seen as it is read. The *Amores* is certainly more intellectual than emotional, but it nonetheless employs visualization in many of the same ways as Propertius. By letting eyes guide us through the love affair with Corinna, it becomes all the more real, despite the fact that Ovid plants many clues to the poem’s fictionality. While the reader may have been able to catch glimpses of the poet at work behind the fictional love world of the *Amores*, the *Ars Amatoria* deliberately explodes the elegiac world by writing an elegy about elegy. By teaching the reader the rules of the elegiac game, Ovid shows all its secrets. The most important secret is revealed during the climactic love scene which is to be the reward for completing two books of erotodidaxis. Instead of consummation, we find anticlimax and more elegy. The final lesson of the *Ars Amatoria* is not that love elegy allows the reader to see behind the closed doors of the bedroom, but that what we see behind those closed doors is unreal, no matter how sexy it may be. I interpret the
Metamorphoses as a tapestry like that woven by Arachne, one which represents the complexity of Ovid’s entire poetic program, composed of many individual images which combine to form an ever-fluctuating but integrated whole. Individual episodes on this tapestry recapitulate themes from earlier poems, and introduce new ones. The threads from which the tapestry is woven are drawn from all of Ovid’s poetry, and one which reappears consistently throughout is viewing. In the Metamorphoses especially, control of the mind’s eye allows Ovid a great creative power by engendering a world of his own design in the reader’s mind. While this is a natural product of narrative text, epic, amatory, or otherwise, Ovid calls attention to this power by providing a behind-the-scenes look at love poetry or epic, simultaneously showing the limits of realism and the creative power of poet and text. For Ovid, the poet is both a creator and a revealer, either of his own phantasia or of the secrets behind his composition.

Whether attempting to show one’s heartbreak or dominance via control of perspective, or distilling visual beauty into words, or attempting to capture motion in text, or playing to the reader’s intellect, we have seen that a concern for what a reader sees as he reads was an important aspect of Latin love poetry. Although this examination of love poetry was prefaced with rhetoric, this does not imply that the poetry surveyed is necessarily rhetorical (although that epithet is frequently applied to Ovid). While various rhetoricians have attempted to analyze and codify mental image under terms like phantasia, enargeia, or evidentia, they are simply trying to explain techniques which they knew to be effective for persuasion or rousing emotion, and which had been known for untold centuries to be effective. The poets discussed were undoubtedly rhetorically trained and familiar with the theoretical aspects of mental imaging and the power it can have over the listener. Nevertheless, this does not reduce their poetry to mere rhetoric. Instead, we have seen that they employ techniques which are most effective in building a special
relationship with their readers, making them feel the emotion they felt, or compelling them to believe in a particular version of events, in addition to serving as a means to explore themes unique to their individual poetic programs. Effective poetry addresses not only the reader’s ear, but his mind’s eye as well.

This dissertation has helped to explain certain statements which have become virtual truisms in the study of Roman love poetry. It is often repeated that Catullus’ poetry is immediate and gripping, and that Propertius has a so-called *tempérament visuel*. But why is Catullus’ poetry immediate, and just what defines Propertius’ *tempérament visuel*? I have shown that the former is partially a product of a poetry which addresses our mind’s eye through vivid and salient images, those which are both forceful and memorable, as well as controlling what we visualize so that we form Catullus’ desired image. In the case of Propertius, an analysis of mental imaging techniques largely unencumbered by a need to find precise parallels in extant wall painting or sculpture frees us from biographical fallacy. We can now see that his *tempérament visuel* is a product of particular poetic techniques without resorting to equivocating claims that Propertius had a particular taste for art, or was so surrounded by it on a daily basis that it heavily influenced his poetry. By examining mental image in the work of multiple poets, I have also shown that all three approach the reader’s eye in two distinct, but complementary ways, one “practical” and one “theoretical”. The fact that Catullus, Propertius, and Ovid all use the techniques in earnest *and* reflect on them suggests that visual poetry is a conscious authorial choice. While their style may be different, all three know the techniques are effective (both as students of rhetoric and poets), and deploy them according to the dictates of their particular poetic programs. Catullus and Ovid especially recognize that love poetry is a sort of voyeurism which stages the reader as a viewer of the private subjects discussed in the poems—as Propertius
vividly demonstrates in 1.10. The poets seem to suggest that poetry should afford the poet some sort of protection from violating real social norms by revealing private information. If we understand Ovid’s exile for a *carmen* and an *error*, and take Catullus c. 16 in earnest, both poets show that some readers are incapable of distinguishing between real and read. Strategies of realism may be too successful if the reader fails to distinguish between what is vividly perceived in the mind’s eye and what is actually real. Playing the voyeur to another’s relationship can increase the erotics of the amatory text, especially if the reader feels that he is being especially privileged or is not supposed to be observing at all, or is compelled to use personal erotic memories to supplement incomplete detail in a poem.

By tracking the use of visualization across three major Latin love poets, we have seen the range of uses for which it can be employed, and this study helps to better explain some of the frequently made claims about each poet’s style. Nevertheless, such a survey necessarily trades depth for breadth, and raises as many questions as it answers. Having laid the groundwork in this dissertation, I have opened the door to several future small and large scale studies. The absence of Tibullus’ poetry from consideration was due both to constraints of time and space, as well as what I perceive to be a lesser disposition towards visuality in his poetry than seen in Catullus, Propertius, or Ovid. Still, there are elements of the visual present in his poetry, and his repeated mention of concealment in love affairs might be fruitfully examined against the background of the public revelation that is love poetry.

The study which looms the largest, however, is the very author on which I lavished the greatest portion of this dissertation, Ovid. Doing justice to the *Metamorphoses* requires far more space than available here. By applying the principles of this dissertation to the epic as a whole, I hope to come to a broader understanding of the poem as a means of encapsulating its titular
phenomenon, metamorphosis. How does Ovid use the medium of text, with its inherent temporality, to overcome its deficiency, spatiality, while capturing the essence of change? In addition to coming to a better understanding of his entire program of erotic elegy or the *Metamorphoses*, a focus on Ovid’s use of mental imaging may help to answer a nagging question in Ovidian scholarship: the nature—or even reality—of Ovid’s Tomitan exile. The Ovid persona of the exilic poetry repeatedly takes his own mental journeys to Rome and its environs as a means of escaping from the reality of his exile (e.g. *Pont.* 1.8.31-8; *Tr.* 4.2.19-64), as his imagination alone is not exiled: *mente tamen, quae sola loco non exulat, utar* (*Pont.* 4.9.41).

Does mental imaging provide a brief relief from actual banishment, or is it a means of making the reader believe in the fantasy of banishment?

Although an approach largely eschewed in this dissertation, a parallel study of love poetry and erotic art, in particular wall painting is a logical extension of my work. Roman erotic art in its public and private context has been studied by Clarke (1998), but his work is lacking in several respects. It pays little attention to literary evidence, especially from love elegy, which often overlaps in theme, tone, and content. How does contemporary visual art compare to its literary parallels? Do techniques for depicting emotion or passion, for example, appear in verbal and visual images of love? Zanker’s (2004) work on viewing in Hellenistic poetry and art is a useful starting point, and his principles can be fruitfully applied to Roman erotic poetry and art. Furthermore, by tracking modes of viewing in both art and poetry from the Hellenistic to the Roman period, we come to understand better Roman adaptation of Greek techniques, as well as

496 Questions about Ovid’s exile, or even whether he ever was relegated, have been raised in recent years after several decades of silence. Janssen’s 1951 article is one of the earliest formulations of disbelief about the Tomitan exile. Skepticism about his exile was most strongly expressed recently by Fitton Brown (1985). Habinek (1998) provides a useful discussion, including bibliography (see especially p. 218 n. 9). Claassen provides the best summary of the question to date (1999, 34). Although such skepticism seems to be born out of the still widespread tendency to see in Ovid a fundamental lack of seriousness, feigning an exile and writing poetry from this “exile” would indeed be the greatest coup of Ovid’s literary *lusus.*
uniquely Roman elements. Seeing how poets and visual artists adapt the methods used in their
sister art will help to expand visual studies, and the study of ancient ekphrasis in particular.
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