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REVIEW ARTICLE

To Be or Not To Be a "New Formalist": Ovidian
Studies in 2003*

Sara H. Lindheim

BARBARA WEIDEN BOYD, ed. *Brill's Companion to Ovid*. Leiden:
Brill, 2002. Pp. xiii + 533. ISBN 90 04 12156 0 (cl.)

Contributors: Barbara Weiden Boyd, Michael Dewar, Elaine
Fantham, Ralph Hexter, Alison Keith, E. J. Kenney, Peter E. Knox,
John F. Miller, John Richmond, Gianpiero Rosati, Garth Tissol,
Patricia Watson, Peter White, Gareth Williams.

PHILIP HARDIE, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Ovid*. Cambridge:
Cambridge University Press, 2002. Pp. xvi + 408. ISBN 0 521 77528 0
(pbk.)

Contributors: Christopher Allen, Alessandro Barchiesi, Colin
Burrow, Jeremy Dimmick, Andrew Feldherr, Fritz Graf, Thomas
Habinek, Philip Hardie, Stephen Harrison, Stephen Hinds, Duncan
F. Kennedy, Raphael Lyne, Carole Newlands, Alessandro
Schiesaro, Alison Sharrock, Richard Tarrant, Gareth Williams.

Ovid is not Virgil, and for a long time this was considered a lia-
bility. Taking its cue from the negative judgments of Seneca the
Elder and Quintilian,¹ Ovidian scholarship constructed a poet
congenitally prone to trivialization, and then in turn responded to its
own creation by trivializing his work. This tendency no longer pre-

* My thanks go to Joe Farrell and Bob Morstein-Marx for their helpful suggestions
and good sense.

¹ Seneca, *Contr.* 9.5.17, *nescit quod bene cessit relinquere* ("he does not know how
to let go of something that is well and truly played out"). Similarly, Quintilian,
Inst. 10.1.88, *nimum amator ingenii sui* ("excessively in love with his own tal-
ent/cleverness"), or the equally condemnatory assessment that his tragedy, *Medea*,
demonstrates how great a poet Ovid could have been, *si ingenio suo imperare
quam indulgere maluisset* ("if he had preferred to harness, rather than to give free
reign to, his talent," 10.1.98).

dominates in Ovidian studies—perhaps not a surprise in a postmodern world that invites a re-evaluation of our attitudes to literary play. A recent collection of papers delivered by leading Ovidian scholars at a conference in Cambridge in 1997 includes one that heralds a “new formalist revolution,”² defined primarily by its twin concerns with questions of genre and intertextuality, as a corrective and far more productive method of reading Ovid. Indeed, one might say that what was once a revolution is now more of an orthodoxy. Two new collections of essays about Ovid, *Brill's Companion to Ovid*, edited by Barbara Weiden Boyd, and *The Cambridge Companion to Ovid*, edited by Philip Hardie, are testaments to the leading role the “new formalist” approach plays in the current Ovidian reassessment.

This is not to say, however, that the two companions resemble one another—quite the contrary. “New formalist” criticism encompasses a broad range of readings that one can—speaking very generally—divide into two distinct categories. Some scholars, stressing the poet’s wit, humor, and masterly manipulation of language, view Ovid’s constant play with genres and previous texts as a function of his conversation with literary tradition. Others, still exploring questions of genre and intertextuality, ascribe a more weighty purpose to Ovid’s generic and literary gymnastics, Ovidian *jeux d’esprit* notwithstanding; for poetic texts, they argue, do not exist in a literary vacuum, but rather participate in, and contribute to, a variety of contemporary cultural discourses. By and large *Brill's Companion* showcases Ovid’s literary dialogue with his Greek and Latin forefathers, while *The Cambridge Companion* predominantly offers readers essays that link Ovid’s poetics with cultural, social and political issues. Considered together, the contributions of leading contemporary Ovidian scholars in the two volumes provide the non-specialist (or the not-yet-specialist) with a good overview of the concerns that currently prevail in Ovidian studies, and the specialist with a sense of the possibilities for further discussion.

Faced with a fairly prolific poet, both given to polyphony himself and eliciting polyphonous interpretations of his work from others, Barbara Weiden Boyd chooses to construct a collection that she hopes

2 Ingo Gildenhard and Andrew Zissos, “‘Somatic Economies’: Tragic Bodies and Poetic Design in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*,” in *Ovidian Transformations: Essays on the Metamorphoses and its Reception*, eds. Philip Hardie, Alessandro Barchiesi, and Stephen Hinds. *Cambridge Philological Society Supplement* 23. Cambridge 1999, 163 with note 4.

will provide readers with an insight into "the essential Ovid."³ Rather than artificially reigning in scholarly argument and dissent, she seeks to get at the core of Ovid by setting each contributor the task of "focus[ing] on a feature of the work under consideration that in some way typifies or captures a crucial aspect of the experience of reading Ovid."⁴ Thus the scope of the fourteen essays that make up this collection is intentionally restricted, and the majority attempt a detailed analysis of a particular topic within only one Ovidian work or narrowly-defined genre (for example, eroto-didactic or exilic poetry). To the reader, then, falls the task of quilting together the neatly compartmentalized pieces into a whole.

If Boyd embraces the impulse to impose order and to present the world with an "essential Ovid," Philip Hardie yields to an equally strong, yet opposing, impulse elicited by the experience of reading Ovid: to accept the polyphony and go with the Ovidian flow. Hardie's editorial decision means that almost every contribution ranges over texts and topics, reflecting the promise in the volume's preface that the work will offer an introduction to basic aspects of Ovid — his poetry, reception, and contemporary scholarly issues. If the scope of the essays in *Brill's Companion* is deliberately restricted, the *Cambridge Companion* encourages its contributors to cast their nets widely, whether this amounts simply to discussing a significant number of texts, or whether it means exploring the relationship between literature and its (political, historical, and/or cultural) contexts.

With its surveys of the state of scholarship and its decision to separate out texts and issues into neatly compartmentalized segments, *Brill's Companion*, on the one hand, offers the non-specialist a comfortable entrée into Ovidian studies. One can certainly imagine the utilitarian advantages of directing a student to articles that discuss often narrowly circumscribed issues over a single text, or even portion of text. On the other hand, the practice of discussing texts in isolation, or separating out considerations, for example, of genre and sources, narrative, and history/politics in the *Metamorphoses*, or of style, tone and structure, from politics and religion in the *Fasti* presents artificial divisions that scholarship rarely bears out.⁵ The *Cambridge Companion*,

³ Boyd, "Preface," in *Brill's Companion*, x.

⁴ Boyd, "Preface," in *Brill's Companion*, ix.

⁵ Consider here the comments of John F. Miller, note 16 below.

which is on the whole more exciting, yet makes fewer concessions to introductory pedagogy as it embraces wide-ranging discussions of texts around “big picture” questions, may actually turn out to be more accessible to graduate and undergraduate students as well as to the general reader. The *Cambridge Companion* provides English translations of (almost) all the Latin cited, whereas the Brill volume rather surprisingly translates only the large block quotations. In addition, at the end of each chapter in the Cambridge collection the reader can find a brief but helpful synopsis of some essential scholarship for those interested in further study.

The final sections of the two collections nicely exemplify the different readings that the organizational principles of these companions elicit. Both conclude with essays on the reception of Ovid in later writers. In this portion the two volumes most resemble each other, at least structurally, perhaps because the pieces in the Brill collection abandon the narrower one-text/genre format, and expand in range here. That said, the significant differences between the two collections remain far more striking. While Boyd opts for a more traditional approach to the idea of “reception” with her three contributions, in diametrically opposed fashion, Hardie widens the scope of what traditionally constitutes “reception.” And yet, one does not need to seek out the concluding pieces of the collections to perceive this divergence; indeed a similar difference in scope emerges from a comparison of the very beginnings of the volumes. The opening two chapters in each collection, it seems to me, introduce key themes and approaches that in many ways set the tone for their respective collections. In addition to difference, however, the reader cannot help but note a striking and fundamental similarity; “new formalist” interpretation, in its multiple guises, is the critical stance of choice in these two Companions.

Recently the later reception of Ovid’s texts has caught the attention of Ovidian scholars, in particular those who study the *Metamorphoses*.⁶ In large measure this interest in the ways in which later writers engage with Ovidian works forms a natural counterpart to the concerns of “new formalist” criticism, centering as it does on questions of intertextuality,

⁶ The collection of essays, *Ovidian Transformations*, born from a 1997 Cambridge conference entitled “Perspectives on Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. Modern critical approaches and earlier reception,” bears witness to this burgeoning interest. Also of note is the substantial section of the *Cambridge Companion* devoted to reception, 249–67, on which more below.

the reworking and reinterpreting of Ovid's poems by later poets, artists and novelists. Indeed, Ovid himself inaugurates the process of re-writing, as Stephen Hinds has recently pointed out, becoming in his exile poetry "the first extant reader (outside the epic itself) to interpret and reprocess the *Metamorphoses*."⁷

The Brill collection concludes with three chapters on the later reception of Ovid. Michael Dewar discusses Ovid's legacy in writers from the first through the fifth centuries C.E. He points out that post-Augustan writers had a wide range of models to select from when they put pen to paper. To compose in an Ovidian manner with regard either to *ars* or to *ingenium* represents an active choice, and the vigilant reader should always ask what the later writer achieves artistically through the Ovidian allusion. He traces the use Seneca made of Ovid's exilic works in his own exilic writings, the manner in which Statius appropriated Ovidian mythological material, and finally how Claudian used Ovid to enrich the tone of his panegyric poetry. Ralph Hexter then offers a consideration of the metamorphoses Ovid undergoes in the early and high Middle Ages, seeking to isolate aspects of Ovid as exile, as mythographer and as lover that most captured the imagination of medieval writers. John Richmond brings the volume to an end with a chapter connected to the idea of reception if one posits a rather literal definition that includes questions of textual transmission. Richmond examines Ovidian manuscript tradition, discussing transmission in general as well as the transmission of individual works.

The *Cambridge Companion* also concludes with a section on the later reception of the poet's works. Following in the footsteps of the Cambridge conference on Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and its later reception, the *Cambridge Companion* traces post-Ovidian appropriations of Ovid's poetic texts all the way down to the late twentieth century and into visual as well as literary culture. The section celebrates "CH-CH-CH-CHANGES,"⁸ pointing out the metamorphoses Ovid undergoes as he is appropriated by different artists, as he becomes a myriad of Ovids, each incarnation serving a specific function determined by the appropriator, yet also casting some new light on the original in a dynamically

⁷ Stephen Hinds, "After Exile: Time and Teleology From *Metamorphoses* to *Ibis*," in *Ovidian Transformations*, 48.

⁸ John Henderson quotes the lyrics of David Bowie in the title of his contribution to *Ovidian Transformations*, 301–23, in which he discusses this phenomenon.

fluid process. Ovid delights in visual illusion, conjuring up vivid images before our eyes through his poetry, probing the profound kinship between artist and poet.⁹ Christopher Allen examines the various uses to which painters from the Renaissance to the French Revolution put Ovidian mythological material. He argues that Ovid's love of artifice and pure enjoyment in storytelling entice the painter, offering him the space in which to inhabit the tale and render it his own. Further, the idea of metamorphosis "through which an individual is corporeally changed into an emblem of himself"¹⁰ appeals to the Renaissance sensibility, and thus draws the artist once again to Ovid. Though one might certainly quibble with this definition of metamorphosis, pointing out that in the Ovidian text itself the process is potentially complicated, by aspects of narrative perspective, for example,¹¹ Allen's argument does well to draw our attention to a Renaissance reconstruction of Ovid.

Later writers also seize upon aspects of Ovid that "speak to them." Raphael Lyne explores the translations of Ovid into English, from Arthur Golding to Ted Hughes, along with the interpretive choices these poets make in the act of translation. In his second contribution, "Love and exile after Ovid," Lyne considers texts from the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the twentieth century. He suggests that authors from these periods gravitate towards Ovid, especially as lover and/or exile, because, having recreated their own Ovids in their own images, they then identify with their creations. Similarly, Jeremy Dimmick discusses the variety of appropriations of Ovid by authors in the Middle Ages, who discover in the poet a figure through which to conceptualize their own issues with authority, both secular and religious, while Colin Burrow argues that Renaissance poets find in Ovid's obsessive concern with posterity's rereading of his texts a model for their own sense of distance from, yet engagement with, the Classical

⁹ For the relationship between Pygmalion and the elegiac poet, see Sharrock's "Womanaufacture," *JRS* 81 (1991) 36–49, and on spinning/weaving as a metaphor for poetry in the Arachne episode, see most recently Gianpiero Rosati, "Form in Motion: Weaving the Text in the *Metamorphoses*," in *Ovidian Transformations*, 240–53.

¹⁰ Christopher Allen, "Ovid in Art," in *The Cambridge Companion*, 340.

¹¹ Andrew Feldherr, "Metamorphosis in the *Metamorphoses*," in *The Cambridge Companion*, 169–72, offers a nice reading of Lycaon, and the way we see his transformation as a change into his "real" wolfish self because of the narrative's "univocality" (Jupiter's voice) and its "erasure of alternative points of view."

past. Finally, Duncan F. Kennedy delves more deeply into twentieth century reception of Ovid by considering the ways "in which the 'Ovidian' is invoked, but also interrogated"¹² by Christoph Ransmayr, Salman Rushdie and Joseph Brodsky, arguing that each writer appropriates the idea of metamorphosis to his own ends.

The first two chapters of both collections similarly exemplify the broader scope of the contributions in the *Cambridge Companion*. Peter White opens *Brill's Companion* with a chapter that situates Ovid as an Augustan poet. Dividing Ovid's career chronologically into "early," "prime," and "exile" periods, White reconstructs what we can plausibly claim to know about Ovid's life, and sketches out the pervasive, though not central, presence of Augustus and Augustan Rome in Ovidian poetry. He is particularly interested in the *Fasti* as a text that openly bears the marks of the poet's revising pen, in particular where mentions of Augustus are concerned. Perhaps, argues White, the manipulations to which Ovid subjects Augustan time and space do not constitute the subversive subtext scholars often ascribe to him.¹³ We should instead give due importance to literary decisions about content based on poetic economy as well as on the necessity for a slight shift in panegyric away from Augustus and towards the members of the imperial house brought on by the death of the *princeps*.

White's impulse to soften the predominant scholarly picture of an Ovid who questions, or, more forcefully, challenges, contemporary imperial institutions resurfaces in other contributions in the collection. Further, the chronological model of organization that White adopts anticipates the overarching framework to *Brill's Companion*, which offers nine core chapters on Ovid's extant poetry in chronological

¹² Duncan Kennedy, "Recent Receptions of Ovid," in *The Cambridge Companion*, 323.

¹³ Primary proponents of this "subversive" scholarship on the *Fasti* are Alessandro Barchiesi, *The Poet and the Prince: Ovid and Augustan Discourse* (Berkeley 1997); A. J. Boyle, "Postscripts from the Edge: Exilic *Fasti* and Imperialised Rome," *Ramus* 26.1 (1997) 7–28, and the introduction to *Ovid. Fasti* (London 2000) xxv–liv, and *Ovid and the Monuments. Ramus Monographs* 4 (Bendigo, Australia 2003); Stephen Hinds, "Arma in Ovid's *Fasti* — Part 2: Genre, Romulean Rome and Augustan Ideology," *Arethusa* 25 (1992) 113–53; Carole Newlands, *Playing With Time: Ovid and the Fasti* (Ithaca 1995); and Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, "Time for Augustus: Ovid, Augustus, and the *Fasti*," in *Homo Viator: Classical Essays for John Bramble*, eds. Michael Whitby, Philip Hardie, and Mary Whitby, (Bristol 1987) 221–30.

order, beginning with the early elegiac works. In similar fashion, the second chapter highlights an issue that remains a key element in many of the subsequent analyses. E. J. Kenney discusses language and style in Ovid's works, dividing his attention between the elegiac poems and the *Metamorphoses*.¹⁴ The emphasis on Ovid's detailed obsession with language, with aesthetic principles of surface and form, dovetails nicely with chapters that focus on issues of Ovidian self-fashioning through dialogue with prior literary texts.

In "The *Amores*: the Invention of Ovid," Barbara Weiden Boyd suggests that the elegiac collection serves to establish Ovid's literary identity. Through a close analysis of poems 2.9 and 2.9b, Boyd demonstrates that Ovid self-consciously deploys literary allusion to show his own poetic mastery. While the context of a love affair demands the lover-poet's lack of emotional restraint, the vigorously proclaimed turmoil is in fact belied by its dazzlingly controlled poetic expression relying heavily on learned and precise allusions to other poets. In her chapter Patricia Watson covers Ovid's didactic elegies, offering a survey of scholarly work on the poems, with an emphasis on Ovidian humor in the texts as well as the poet's play with generic conventions and literary traditions. *Brill's Companion* completes its group of essays on Ovid's early elegiac career with Peter Knox's picce on the *Heroides*. Here perhaps inevitably questions of genre and intertextuality dominate the discussion since the heroines exist in prior literary texts and more often than not undergo generic transposition to appear in Ovid's elegiac poems.¹⁵ Knox opens with the thorny question of authenticity, and then

¹⁴ The section on the *Metamorphoses* essentially reproduces his earlier article, E. J. Kenney, "The Style of the *Metamorphoses*," in *Ovid*, ed. J. W. Binns (London 1973) 116–53.

¹⁵ Recent important work on the *Heroides* featuring genre and intertextuality as interpretive linchpins would include the host of commentaries on the epistles that have emerged: Alessandro Barchiesi, *P. Ovidii Nasonis Epistulae Heroicum 1–3* (Florence 1992), Federica Bessone, *P. Ovidii Nasonis Heroicum Epistula XII: Medea Iasoni* (Florence 1997), Sergio Casali, *P. Ovidii Nasonis Heroicum Epistula IX: Deianira Herculi* (Florence 1995), Theodor Heinze, *P. Ovidius Naso Der XII. Heroidenbrief: Medea an Jason* (Leiden 1997), Peter Knox, *Ovid Heroides. Select Epistles* (Cambridge 1995); the key articles of Joseph Farrell, "Reading and Writing the *Heroides*," *HSCP* 98 (1998) 307–38, Duncan F. Kennedy (see note 23 below) and Stephen Hinds, "Medea in Ovid: Scenes from the Life of an Intertextual Heroine," *MD* 30 (1993) 9–47; and Florence Verducci, *Ovid's Toyshop of the Heart: Epistulae Heroicum* (Princeton 1985).

turns to genre and "source texts." He discusses how Ovid, through references to prior literary texts, creates heroines who then suffer a change in generic register at the poet's hands; they appear in an elegiac setting where they must endure an elegiac perspective on their stories.

Similar concerns return in one of the Brill collection's three chapters on the *Metamorphoses* and one of its two contributions on the *Fasti*. John F. Miller writes a chapter about the *Fasti*'s style, structure and tone in which he probes the poem's status as an elegiac text, and examines its connections with other Roman calendars and Callimachus' *Aetia*. Alison Keith, focusing on genres and sources in the opening five books of the *Metamorphoses*, points out the generic tensions in the epic's proem, and traces the prevalence of genres other than epic, especially tragedy and elegy, in Books 1–5. She also offers a reading of the Perseus story, mining its Virgilian and Homeric allusions to set out the ways in which Ovid offers a new vision of epic heroism.

Subsequent chapters that carry forward the somewhat artificially divided discussions of these two poems seek to join poetic issues to other central questions in Ovidian scholarship.¹⁶ Taking a position that stands at odds with the currently prevailing opinion about Ovid's relationship to Augustus, Elaine Fantham argues that Ovid seeks to praise Augustus in the *Fasti*.¹⁷ In a chapter that focuses explicitly on questions of politics and religion in the poem, Fantham suggests that Ovid carries out this project of panegyric primarily by means of his poetic artistry, in particular his wit and inventiveness, which lead the poet into occasional contradictions and fabrications in some aspects of religion.

Garth Tissol, who writes the Brill chapter on the *Metamorphoses* dedicated to questions of history and politics, takes up a position in the opposite camp. He discusses the ways in which Ovid renders historical material in Books 11–15 so that it resembles the rest of the poet's

¹⁶ Miller himself, "The *Fasti*: Style, Structure, and Time," in *Brill's Companion*, 170, notes the artificiality of the dichotomy between text and context in his own chapter: "The formalist orientation does not mean to suggest that literature and society exist as separate worlds, or that issues of style and structure can be detached from the work's ideological puzzles ... The limited focus aims rather to make way for the companion chapter in this volume [Fantham's] to concentrate on Augustus and religion."

¹⁷ This is not to imply that Fantham stands alone in her views. On the *Fasti*, in particular, as a poem that praises Augustus, see Geraldine Herbert-Brown, *Ovid and the Fasti: An Historical Study* (Oxford 1994).

project in the epic. The stories of Troy and Rome become fractured, rather than totalizing, incoherent, suffering from problems of chronology and from a proliferation of internal narrators and thus narrative perspectives. Unlike the teleological tellings of Roman history present in Virgil's *Aeneid* or the Augustan Forum, Tissol argues, Ovid offers his own version, more like the woven tales on Arachne's tapestry than on Minerva's. *Fata* no longer provide the guiding explanation for Augustan Rome but rather the random *fama* whose monstrous personification appears near the opening of the historical material.¹⁸ Although perhaps not as explicitly, the final contribution in *Brill's Companion* on the *Metamorphoses* espouses the same critical stance. In his discussion of Books 6–10, Gianpiero Rosati considers narrative through the lens of the Arachne and Minerva episode. He suggests that the tale reveals the ultimate arbitrariness of narrative, subject to the whims of the narrating voice, as well as to the power the narrator possesses.

Like the Brill collection, the *Cambridge Companion* opens with the twin concerns of place and language. In the first chapter Richard Tarrant rehearses the kinds of information one might expect from the opening essay in a companion, questions of biography and chronology, and yet he sets this information within a wider framework; to Tarrant, questions of place, where Ovid is concerned, involve most significantly questions of Ovid's driving need to locate his place in literary history. Ovid's desire to situate himself, Tarrant argues, manifests itself variously, in his propensity to draw up lists of poets, in his writing in a host of genres, in his obsession with Virgil and Callimachus, in his intertextual and inter-generic ventures, in his habit of exhaustively working through themes or ideas. But most of all, Tarrant suggests, place for Ovid is a fluid concept, infinitely changeable depending on perspective, on how one writes it, or, more precisely, on how one re-writes it.

In the *Cambridge Companion's* second chapter Philip Hardie too engages with questions of place, broaching the issue of whether to situate Ovid as a "Golden Age" or "Silver Age" poet. The use of language is the yardstick here; in particular, Hardie sets out to locate Ovid as a poet of his time, both Augustan and early imperial, through a consideration of his verbal pyrotechnics. Ovid's self-conscious deployment of language, in displays showy for their rhetoric, but also for the ways in which they mirror the spectacularity of his contemporary Roman world,

¹⁸ Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 12.39–63.

challenges readers to ponder questions equally valid for texts and contexts, poetry and politics, about the relationship between performance or fiction and reality, glossy surface and what lies underneath.

Like White and Kenney in the Brill collection, Tarrant and Hardie introduce central themes that run through the *Cambridge Companion*. The first is that Ovid is a rather slippery fellow, given to metamorphic self-revision, an acknowledgement that "Reading Ovid is a contract that can be renegotiated at any time."¹⁹ The only crucial or essential experience of reading Ovid is that it is a dynamic, rather than a static, process, fluid intratextually as well as from one Ovidian text to another. Here there will be no attempt to isolate carefully contained aspects of reading Ovid. The chapters also draw our attention to the contributors' keen interest in language, not for the sake of artistry *per se*, but rather for the relationship Ovid establishes between signifiers and signifieds, between language and "external reality." While maintaining the concern with poetics, so central to "new formalist" criticism, the Cambridge Companion also to a significant degree points to the connections between literature and its contemporary context.

The sense of Ovidian self-revision pervades Stephen Harrison's chapter entitled "Ovid and genre: evolutions of an elegist." Harrison explores the poet's characteristic manipulation of generic boundaries, as he moves along a trajectory from amatory poetry to exilic lament. Themes and motifs from his earlier amatory poems resurface in changed, "respectable"²⁰ form in the elegies from Tomis as the former lover besieging the locked door of his beloved undergoes a transformation into the exiled poet seeking readmission to his beloved Rome. Self-revision in the exilic elegies also takes centerstage in Gareth Williams' chapter. In a moment of criticism imitating art, Williams engages in his own project of self-revision, offering both collections a(n albeit only slightly altered) contribution on the exilic works, the *Tristia*, *Epistulae ex Ponto* and *Ibis*. Williams argues that Ovid, master manipulator of generic conventions, revives elegy's connection with lament in the exilic poetry, as he has in fact already done, but differently in the single *Heroides*, dipping into intertextual allusion to complete his portrait of physical isolation. The distance between his exilic elegiac output and

¹⁹ Barchiesi, *The Poet and the Prince*, 262.

²⁰ Harrison, "Ovid and genre: evolutions of an elegist," in *The Cambridge Companion*, 91, calls the exilic poetry a "respectable revision of elegy."

“normal” Roman elegy, especially visible in the epic nature of his sufferings that encroach upon the elegiac frame, mirrors his own distance from Rome. The *Heroides*, however, are only one of the works to which Williams sees Ovid returning and thus investing with new meaning. Ovid constructs his exile so that the *Metamorphoses* becomes a storehouse of tales that almost anticipate his fate — Niobe who is transformed but who eternally grieves for her former state, Arachne, Marsyas, and Daedalus, all destroyed because of their *ingenium*, Narcissus and Phaethon, because of their obsessions.

Although the Williams piece straddles the two collections, the two volumes otherwise approach the elegiac material in strikingly contrasting ways. Alison Sharrock’s chapter in the *Cambridge Companion* entitled “Ovid and the discourses of love: the amatory works” focuses on both literary and political issues. Opening the piece with the statement that “all poets speak in quotations,” she too considers Ovid’s propensity to repeat his own material.²¹ The *Amores*, the *Ars Amatoria* and the *Remedia Amoris* read together as variations on a theme reveal the constructed nature of the lover who operates within socially, politically, but also literarily constructed discourses of love, a subheading of which, Ovid wittily points out, remains the discourse of renunciation. Alessandro Schiesaro also discusses the *Ars* and the *Remedia*, now in conjunction with the *Fasti*, and even the *Metamorphoses*, as he weaves together an argument about Ovid’s views on the existence of knowledge and certainty. Examining the poet’s allusions primarily to the didactic poetry of Lucretius and Virgil, Schiesaro suggests that Ovid’s own didactic poetry rejects both Lucretian and Virgilian models of knowledge, and offers instead that the “outside world [is] constantly shaped and reshaped by desire and interpretation, by the gaze and the words of the beholder.”²² The power and possibilities that Schiesaro argues Ovid ascribes to rhetoric have wide-ranging implications in an authoritarian regime.

While literary issues dominate the Brill chapters on Ovid’s early career, Sharrock and Schiesaro highlight the broad political implications of the elegiac works and their intertextual tendencies. In his chap-

21 Sharrock, “Ovid and the discourses of love: the amatory works,” in *The Cambridge Companion*, 150.

22 Schiesaro, “Ovid and the professional discourses of scholarship, religion, rhetoric,” in *The Cambridge Companion*, 70.

ter on the *Heroides* Duncan F. Kennedy also participates in the *Cambridge Companion's* interest in opening up the discussion of Ovid's early works to a wider range of questions. Kennedy, who wrote an early, influential article on *Heroides* 1 pointing out the importance of reading the heroine's letter in conjunction with a particular "source text,"²³ here makes use of *Heroides* to think through questions of narrative and temporality, as well as questions about the formation of literary canons. Ovid's heroines come from other texts, already written by the time Ovid conjures them up according to the prescriptions of his collection. As external readers of the women's epistles, we "know" their stories, since we have read their "source texts." The Ovidian heroine's version of her narrative thus drives us to ponder the authority we ascribe to the "source text" as purveyor of "objective" truth from which the heroine deviates if she tells her story otherwise. The poems also raise related questions about temporality which the text throws into confusion; if the heroines are the letter-writers then their tellings actually precede the "source texts," compelling readers to consider a new relationship between epistle and "source text" in which great, canonical, male authors follow in the heroines' literary footsteps.²⁴

Interpretation of the *Fasti* and the *Metamorphoses* in the *Cambridge Companion* also gravitates towards questions of genre and intertextuality, while explicitly engaging with issues of contemporary context. Take, for example, Stephen Hinds' assessment of Ovidian landscapes, "Landscape with figures: aesthetics of place in the *Metamorphoses* and its tradition," in which Hinds begins with Ovid but then follows the Ovidian landscape into later literature and the visual arts. Hinds argues that Ovid both pursues a dialogue with, and plays a key role in creating, the literary tradition of the *locus amoenus*; for the poet appropriates the genre and then alters and codifies its conventions, fashioning a dichotomy between a beautiful setting and the violence that frequently occurs within it. Hinds further suggests the possibility of a fruitful, dynamic interchange between Ovid, a poet fascinated with the gaze and with language's ability to create highly visual images, and Roman painting in the first century C.E.

²³ Duncan F. Kennedy, "The Epistolary Mode and the First of Ovid's *Heroides*," *CQ* 34 (1984) 413–22.

²⁴ The same issues are also at play in Alessandro Barchiesi, "Future Reflexive: Two Modes of Allusion in Ovid's *Heroides*," *HSCP* 95 (1993) 333–65.

More often than not, however, the interpretations join together poetics and Augustan *political* discourse. Carole Newlands contends that in the *Fasti* Ovid simultaneously exposes Augustus' attempts to impose control over time and kicks against imperial authority. Like Schiesaro, Newlands sees the *Fasti* as a meditation on knowledge and truth, categories that in Ovid's hands, through narrative and intertextual techniques, are shown to be both constructed by authoritarian power and open to contestation. The scholarly disagreement over Ovid's position towards the Augustan regime, however, is visible in the Cambridge volume, as it is in the Brill collection. Creating a nice contrast to both Newlands and Schiesaro, Thomas Habinek offers a contribution that ranges over Ovid's works to discover a poet who has internalized Augustan imperialist ideology and whose works constitute one important element, as Augustus himself understood so well, for sustaining it.²⁵

A recent trend in scholarship on the *Metamorphoses* draws on narratology in an effort to untangle the dizzyingly interlaced series of episodes that make up Ovid's *carmen perpetuum*.²⁶ Several contributions in the Cambridge collection revolve around narrative issues and differentiate themselves from Rosati's chapter in *Brill's Companion* by their explicit engagement with wider implications that studies of narrative have for questions of representation. Though not expressly narratological in his approach, Fritz Graf discusses the function of myth in

²⁵ Here see also his more detailed argument about the exilic works in Thomas N. Habinek, *The Politics of Latin Literature: Writing, Identity and Empire in Ancient Rome* (Princeton 1998) 151–69.

²⁶ See, for example, Alessandro Barchiesi, *Speaking Volumes: Narrative and Intertext in Ovid and Other Latin Poets* (London 2001); Stephen Hinds, *The Metamorphoses of Persephone. Ovid and the Self-Conscious Muse* (Cambridge 1987); K. Sara Myers, *Ovid's Causes: Cosmogony and Aetiology in the Metamorphoses* (Ann Arbor 1994); Gianpiero Rosati, "Il racconto dentro il racconto: funzioni metanarrative nelle 'Metamorphosi' di Ovidio," *Atti del convegno internazionale: "Letterature classiche e narratologia." Materiali e contributi per la storia della narrativa greco-latina* 3 (1981) 297–309; Garth Tissol, *The Face of Nature: Wit, Narrative, and Cosmic Origins in Ovid's Metamorphoses* (Princeton 1997); Stephen Wheeler, *A Discourse of Wonders: Audience and Performance in Ovid's Metamorphoses* (Philadelphia 1999) and *Narrative Dynamics in Ovid's Metamorphoses* (Tübingen 2000); Andrew Zissos, "The Rape of Proserpina in Ovid *Met.* 5.341–661: Internal Audience and Narrative Distortion," *Phoenix* 53 (1999) 97–113.

narrative terms. He argues that the poet demonstrates, especially in the *Fasti* and in the *Metamorphoses*, the power that the narrator actually wields in telling even the most traditional of tales. Andrew Feldherr deploys principles of narratology in service of his central argument about the use of metamorphosis in the *Metamorphoses*. Lycaon the tyrant becomes a wolf. Does he become that which he always already was? If, argues Feldherr, you accept the story as narrated by Jupiter, then yes. If, on the other hand, you consider the narrator and his personal interest in the story as we hear it, then the emphasis falls not on order but rather on instability, change, erasure and suffering.

There is much at stake in the pieces by Graf and by Feldherr not only about building stories but also about narrative's power to construct ideologies. Indeed, following immediately on the heels of Feldherr's chapter, Alessandro Barchiesi underscores the potential that questions of narrative have for shedding light on political (defined in its broad sense) issues. He demonstrates the richness of the *Metamorphoses* to those who wish to study the ways in which narratives are constructed, since the poem maintains an insistent focus on story-telling that unfolds at a variety of levels and in a host of seemingly endlessly proliferating voices. But he also points to limitations of formalist studies of narrative technique, which open up a new series of questions even as they answer others. He calls for the broadening of studies of narrative to wider implications that can occur only should one "take into account issues like power, gender, history and identity."²⁷

Barchiesi's point about the importance of gender issues to Ovidian studies as well as their occlusion might well be turned on both of these collections. The editor of the Cambridge Companion claims that its contributions represent "a sample of the range of approaches that have emerged during what has been nothing less than an explosion of critical and theoretical studies of Ovid in recent years;"²⁸ the editor of *Brill's Companion* does not explicitly tackle its relationship to the variety of interpretive stances among Ovidian scholars, beyond the open acknowledgment that one volume cannot encompass all points of view.²⁹ Either separately or as a whole, the two volumes do not, in fact,

²⁷ Alessandro Barchiesi, "Narrative technique and narratology in the *Metamorphoses*," in *The Cambridge Companion*, 181.

²⁸ Philip Hardie, "Preface," in *The Cambridge Companion*, xvi.

²⁹ Boyd, "Preface," in *Brill's Companion*, x.

offer readings that showcase a range of scholarly options, but rather highlight the orthodoxy that “new formalist” criticism has become in Ovidian studies. Interpretive positions that have not traditionally come under the rubric “new formalist” find little or no room at the table. Only eleven pages out of the approximately nine hundred that make up the two volumes deal explicitly with gender issues: Alison Sharrock’s second piece in the Cambridge collection entitled “Gender and Sexuality,” in which she considers both the construction of masculinity and “wom-anufacture.” Ovid has been, and continues to be, an important poet for feminist scholars in Classics, many of whom, in fact, preceded the “new formalists” in turning serious scholarly attention to Ovid, and eleven pages, no matter how good, do not do justice to the complexities, possibilities and the significance of their arguments.³⁰ In addition, a second and notable lack is the absence of any real discussion of the contribution that psychoanalytic approaches have made to Ovidian studies, a fact amusingly underscored by an entry in the *Cambridge Companion’s* index for “Lacan, J.” that is then left without a page reference.³¹

Questions of gender, identity (sexual and otherwise), and desire, are at play in all Ovidian texts; indeed, the editor of the *Cambridge Companion* has elsewhere claimed Ovid’s place “as one of the great writers of desire in the western tradition.”³² Feminist and psychoana-

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³² Philip Hardie, *Ovid’s Poetics of Illusion* (Cambridge 2002) 11.

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lytic approaches explicitly engage with these questions. To eschew considerations of Ovidian texts openly informed by feminist and/or psychoanalytic theory while promoting formalist discussions of genre, intertextuality and narrative — even ones that open up into larger conversations about cultural discourses, but without feminist or psychoanalytic theoretical underpinning — effectively serves to present an image of current Ovidian studies that excludes these approaches. Especially with the emerging interest in the reception of Ovid there should be room too for the Ovids constructed through feminist and psychoanalytic readings; they can only add to the richness of the picture.

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