47. See A.W.J. Holleman, 'Ovid and the Lupercalia', *Historia* 22 (1973), 260ff.

48. The episode is sufficiently disturbing to Fantham (n.15 above, 57) that she decides that Ovid wrote the Priapus' attempted rape of Lotis in Book 1 to replace it and would have removed the incident in a final version. One thing Fantham and I agree upon is 'the unsuitability of [Ovid's] fiction (*mendacia uatum*) to the dignity of Vesta—and surely to the official standing of the goddess who maintained the generative continuity of Rome' (57). The resulting destabilisation of 'official' images of *Romanitas* is, however, *pace* Fantham, far from exceptional in this poem.

49. Mentioned in the *Fasti Praenestini, Feriale Cumanum* and elsewhere; but omitted in some calendars, e.g. the Tiberian *Fasti Verulani*.

50. Alluded to at *Fasti* 2.615f., 5.140. For the Augustan importance of the Lares Compitales, see C.R. Phillips III, 'Roman Religion and Literary Studies of Ovid's *Fasti*', *Arethusa* 25 (1992), 55-80, esp. 65.

51. According to the *Fasti Praenestini*.

52. *Parilia* was marked by games 'to commemorate the announcement of Caesar's victory at Munda': see Beard (n.9 above), 9, citing Dio 43.42.3, 45.64.

53. Defined by Quintilian at *Inst. Or.* 9.2.64 as when 'from something said something hidden is dug out', *ex aliquo dicto latens aliquid eruitur*; among the occasions for its use: 'if it is not safe enough to speak openly', *si dicere palam parum tutum est*, 9.2.66. Cf. Ovid *Rem.* 359f.: *sed tu/ingenio uerbis concipe plura meis* ('you with your intelligence understand more than my words').

54. The phrase is that of S. Hinds, 'Generalising about Ovid', in A.J. Boyle (ed.), *The Imperial Muse: To Juvenal Through Ovid* (Berwick, Australia, 1988), 26.

55. On this see esp. Barchiesi (n.2 above), 272-77; Newlands (n.10 above), 211-18, and 'The Ending of Ovid's *Fasti*' in A.J. Boyle (ed.), *Roman Literature and Ideology: Ramus Essays for J.P. Sullivan* (Bendigo 1995), 129-43.

56. Phillips (n.50 above), 63, for example, citing P. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy* (New York 1967).

57. Mark Poster, in M. Groden and M. Kreiswirth (eds.), *The Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory and Criticism* (Baltimore and London 1994), 278.

58. Note the revisionary nature of Augustus' religious revival: editing (including/excluding) Greek and Roman prophetic writings, most especially the Sibylline books; reviving those rites he wished to revive, restoring those temples he wished to restore: see *Res Gestae, passim*.

59. Contrast the openings of *Amores, Ars Amatoria, Metamorphoses*, on the one hand, and that of *Fasti* on the other. Germanicus (in *Fasti* 1) and Augustus (in *Fasti* 2) have replaced the fictive gods of poetic inspiration.

60. At least Ovid thought him Roman, and emphasises his non-Greekness (*Fasti* 1.90) in opposition to Callimachus, whose opening of *Aitia* is recalled. On *Fasti*'s Callimacheanism Barchiesi (n.2 above) is outstanding.

61. It should be noted that this was not inevitable. The senate decreed in 45 BCE that Quintilis be renamed Iulius, but after the Ides of March the change was ignored until the consul Antony announced that the Ludi Apollinares were to be held *Nonis Iuliis*. Cicero and the conspirators wished to retain Quintilis (Cic. *Att.* 16.1.1, 4.1). The public sacrifice on Caesar's birthday was not performed in 44 or 43, but was made compulsory in 42 by the triumvirs. Octavian's success made the name stick.

OVID'S HEROIDES AND TRISTIA: VOICES FROM EXILE

P.A. Rosenmeyer

exulis haec uox est: praebet mihi littera linguam,
  et si non liceat scribere, mutus ero.

Epist. ex Pont. 2.6.3f.

This is the exile's voice; the written word gives me a tongue,
  and if writing is forbidden, I shall be dumb.

Ovid's exilic persona reveals itself over the course of his correspondence as a literary pastiche of other texts and identities. We hear the narrator's voice in the *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto* echoing that of Horace and Propertius, Homer's Odysseus and Vergil's Aeneas. These allusions to canonical works are widely recognised and catalogued.[1] But equally crucial to Ovid's self-presentation are allusions to his own previous masterpieces. I interpret his choice of the letter form for the exile poems as not only an allusion to, but also an authorial statement of identification—on some level—with his earlier epistolary work, the *Heroides*. The *Heroides* may be read as letters from exile, *epistulae ex exilio* in which Ovid pursues his fascination with the genre of letters and the subject of abandonment through literary characters; the *Tristia* take that fascination one step further as the author himself, in letters to loved ones, writes from the position of an abandoned hero of sorts.[2]

Ovid could not have predicted that he would find himself in the very situation he had previously imagined only as a fiction. His exile is an odd instance of life imitating art: the exile poetry, as a one-sided correspondence, most closely imitates the single epistles, *Heroides* 1-15.[3] The heroines claim that they are innocent and undeserving of the suffering they experience; Ovid says he is innocent of all crimes but the crime of naiveté, *hanc merui simplicitate fugam* ('I have earned this exile through my simplicity', *Tr.* 1.5.42), and is therefore unworthy of so harsh a punishment as exile to the Black Sea.[4] The heroines have been abandoned by lovers whom they view as omnipotent, potential saviours or destroyers; Ovid, we sense, fears being abandoned by his friends, as he begs *nec amici desere causam* ('do not abandon your friend's cause', *Tr.* 1.9.65), and views Augustus both as the powerful cause and the potential remedy of his wretched exile. Ariadne (*Her.* 10) and Briseis (*Her.* 3) write displaced in foreign lands; Ovid complains ceaselessly of his isolation in the foreign Getic hinterlands. In sum, Ovid and his heroines suffer banishment at the hands of a powerful persecutor and abandonment by their former allies; they see themselves as fractured, wounded creatures separated from their proper environments;

they are forced to beg for a return to their previous position, namely the status of a stable relationship (with a lover or Augustus) or a secure home.

The parallels I have drawn above assume that we can compare the *Heroides* and the *Tristia*, that they have more in common (tone, subject matter, metre, generic form) than not. Some critics might object to this assumption, particularly those who read the *Heroides* as somehow less 'real' in their emotions than the later exile poetry. The heroines' letters have been called charming, witty, irreverent, sophisticated, bantering, capable of 'raising a smile', full of pathos.[5] All these adjectives imply a certain artistic distortion of or distancing from real suffering, as if their literary nature prevented these women from stepping out of the page and showing real wounds. I read the *Heroides* as a much more complex interplay of literary and psychological insights, a game that can be humorous in one line and deadly serious in the next; we have only to think of Medea's threats in *Her.* 12 to realise just how dangerous these 'charming' women can be. Conversely, I also read the *Tristia* as more playful and literary, less 'straight' autobiography. In both works, one early and one late in his career, Ovid remains the artist, subsuming 'fact' to the effective presentation of poetic fiction.

So how does the one work, obviously fictional, affect our reading of the other, written in a self-professedly autobiographical mode? If we accept the reading of the *Heroides* as merely witty and amusing, then does that work prevent us from taking Ovid's plight 'seriously' in the *Tristia*? Is his persona in his own exile letters just another variation on a poor abandoned soul? What are we to make of the shift in voice from female to male, from myth to memoir? These are some of the questions I will address below.

I. A Question of Letters

Two questions arise immediately regarding the epistolary nature of the *Tristia*.[6] Are the poems under discussion really letters at all? Are they 'real' letters, literary letters, letter poems? One answer may be, as I will discuss below, that Ovid's separation from his intended audience 'forces' him to write letters, these versified *sermones absentis ad absentem* ('conversations from someone absent to an absent friend'). But does the same situation also force him to write the kind of letter that he does, namely a complaining, petitioning, desperate letter detailing the miseries of his exile?

Ovid opens the *Tristia* with references to his *liber* ('book', *Tr.* 1.1.1), a collection of *carmina* ('poems', 1.1.39), but this first poetry book is sent off as if it were a letter: a messenger with the mandate to go back to Rome in the author's place and plead on his behalf, an epistolary petition for pardon. Elsewhere, Ovid uses the actual word *epistula* ('epistle', *Tr.* 3.3.1) for the individual pieces, or its equivalent, *littera* ('letter', *Tr.* 3.7.2). Epistolary form functions particularly well in an exilic context for two reasons. First, the letter entails the

separation of author and audience by its very form. Ovid writes letters because he is far away from those with whom he wishes to talk, and the fact of the letters underscores that distance. These are simultaneously personal and yet very public expressions of his thoughts and emotions. He addresses letters to his wife and to friends (mostly unnamed), while always imagining other 'readers' looking over their shoulders, including Augustus, the people of Rome (*Tr.* 3.1.82), and ultimately posterity. Second, letter form allows Ovid the freedom to write himself into being over and over again. The letter is often used as a means of sending someone an update on one's mood or situation; it is a perfect medium for charting Ovid's changing conditions and for describing his surroundings. In each letter he has a fresh opportunity to reinvent himself, to develop a new persona for himself within the text's boundaries, or just to flesh out an already existing one. Ovid's stance as an unhappy exile, his portrayal of himself as a victim, fluctuates from letter to letter in the *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto*, as his relationship with his hosts changes over time.[7]

Critics have objected that the exile poems are not *really* epistolary in nature beyond a brief acknowledgment of opening and closing conventions, a certain informality of speech associated with letter or conversational style, and, in the case of the letters from Pontus, the title of the collection.[8] So, for example, E.-A. Kirfel argues that, of the fifty elegies of the *Tristia*, only twenty-six are actually letters. In his opinion, the definition of letter form depends solely on 'Anfangs- und Schlussformeln', although it remains unclear whether he believes these texts were actually written and sent as letters, or merely well-formed impostors dressed in epistolary garb.[9] I disagree with Kirfel's definitions, not least because letters in antiquity, whether 'real' or literary, existed in a variety of forms, some more structured than others. While formal epistolary openings and closings do exist, we also have letters that jump *in medias res*, unsigned letters, descriptive letters that read like prose narratives, letters that replace messengers' speeches, and so forth. Epistolary format is much more fluid than Kirfel's rigid structural demands would allow. In fact, using his criteria, not even the *Heroides* themselves would count as letters, although Ovid himself defines them as such. I argue that it is precisely the flexibility of the letter form that led Ovid, who had boasted of his originality in inventing the format for his *Heroides* (*ignotum hoc aliis ille nouauit opus*, 'he invented this work, unknown to others', *A.A.* 3.346; see also his proud survey of the collection at *Am.* 2.18.21-40), to further exploration of the genre in his letters from exile. The mythological costuming in his earlier work is replaced by a new weightier aspect, as Ovid's fate becomes his poetry, and the epistle is used as a method of poetic self-representation.[10] Ovid clearly viewed the letter format as a way to experiment with literary form, to comment obliquely on his earlier works, and to elicit the sympathy of his audience at the same time.

But it is not only epistolary structure that these pre- and post-exilic works share; as mentioned above, they also share tone and mood. The desperation, the longing, the self-deception, and the resistance to fate found in the *Tristia* are all

prefigured in the *Heroides*.[11] Before a recent trend towards rehabilitation of the poems,[12] critics often accused the heroines of monotonous harping, of endless repetition of their misfortunes.[13] Ovid directly charges his own letters with the same fault, claiming that his friends must be tired of hearing the same complaints over and over again; his words are so tediously predictable that recipients of his letters can guess their contents even before breaking the wax seal:

> taedia consimili fieri de carmine uobis,
>> quidque petam cunctos edidicisse reor.
> nostraque quid portet iam nostis epistula, quamuis
>> cera sit a uinclis non labefacta suis.
>>>> (*Ex Pont.* 3.7.3-6)

> I think you have all become weary of my monotonous poems,
>> and you have all learned by heart what I seek.
> You already know what message my letter bears, although
>> the wax has not been broken from its bonds.

When Ovid himself draws attention to the monotony of his verses, most readers heartily agree.[14] But recently Gareth Williams's work has pointed out clearly the 'fiction' of Ovid's poetic decline, and reinforced the idea of a 'mischievous Muse'; he argues convincingly that the technical skill which Ovid displays in so many of his exile poems contradicts his repeated insistence on the erosion of that skill, and that his self-depreciation is strategic in its attempt to win the reader's sympathy for his wretched situation.[15] Thus the tenor of Ovid's poetry is a conscious artistic choice, much as his choice of letter form is a conscious one. Ovid chooses genre, tone and topic for his *Tristia* with literary effect in mind.[16] In this case his person and his persona appear to experience the same events and states of mind: exile, unhappiness, loneliness, even pathology. But he is not 'trapped' or reduced to this state by his historical situation. Other poets have been exiled and chosen to write on a whole range of topics: consider Sappho or Anacreon, for example, both authors caught up in the politics of their time who reveal no trace of their private lives in their poetry. Other ancient authors, on the other hand, have decided to use their writings as a mirror of their lives and histories: Alcaeus comes to mind as a contemporary of Sappho's whose poetry was filled with allusions to local political wranglings. But, as with all mirrors, we as readers must expect a certain amount of distortion and glare. Ovid constructs his 'life' in exile just as he had constructed the lives of his heroines: shaping stories to suit his medium, and selecting a medium to match his topics. Form and content conspire to implicate the reader, and to elicit the exact response Ovid desires.

II. Sad Songs and Heroines: Correspondences

Considering the shared generic affiliation (letter form) and the similar personal situation of the letter writers, it is hardly surprising to find passages in the *Tristia* reminiscent of earlier material in the *Heroides*. This is true particularly for a variety of epistolary *topoi*: references to the act of writing itself, flights of fantasy in which the letter writer imagines reactions to and consequences of his or her actions (e.g. suicide), and statements about the relationship between literary content and lived context.

References to the act of writing itself abound in both books, as Ovid's narrators seem fascinated by the concrete effects of their emotions on the page. Tears flow freely, shed by characters well versed in persuasive literary tropes and calculated self-presentation.[17] In *Heroides* 3, Briseis warns the reader in advance that *quascumque adspicies, lacrimae fecere lituras* ('whatever blots you see, my tears have made them', *Her.* 3.3), while in *Heroides* 15, Sappho manages to get through almost half her letter before lyrically calling attention to teardrops trickling down like dew:[18]

> scribimus, et lacrimis oculi rorantur obortis;
>> adspice, quam sit in hoc multa litura loco!
>>>> (*Her.* 15.97f.)

> I write, and my eyes are made wet as dew with their rising
>> tears;
> Look now, how many blots there are in this spot!

In *Tr.* 3.1, the letter itself apologises for its shabby appearance and blurry lines:[19]

> littera suffusas quod habet maculosa lituras,
>> laesit opus lacrimis ipse poeta suum.
>>>> (*Tr.* 3.1.15f.)

> The letters are stained and blurred with blots,
>> because the poet himself has damaged his work with
>>> weeping.

In the beginning (*Tr.* 1.1.13f.), Ovid exhorts his letter to take pride in its blots, since they are caused by the poet's own tears; but nearer the end of the collection (*Tr.* 4.1.95f.), Ovid's tears reflect only despair, as his letters are dampened by frequent weeping. Ovid sustains a consistency of progress in the imagery of his grief; thus, having begun the collection with references to tear-stained pages, he indulges in deeper and more frequent outpourings as the book goes

on. The 'monotony' of his grieving in the exile poetry becomes a function of the Horatian unity of his art and pose.[20]

Occasionally other fluids threaten the integrity of the script: in *Heroides* 11, Canace alludes grimly to bloodstains that may obliterate part of her message, as she sits writing with pen in one hand, drawn sword in the other (11.1-4),[21] while *Tristia* 1.11, purportedly written during a storm at sea, is sprayed by whitecaps and jostled in the wind (1.11.39f.). The irony of calling attention to such physical markings is that the reader, faced with an unblotched page in perfectly regular typefont, may begin to lose faith in the 'accuracy' of the copy. The physical reality of the clean page challenges the poetic illusion, and this awkward juxtaposition threatens the poem's status as 'letter'. We are reminded that we are reading fiction, and suspect the writer of histrionics.[22]

Shaky or weary hands add to the supposed illegibility of certain letters. In the *Heroides*, Ariadne's hand trembles (10.140), Hypermnestra's hand falters (14.131f.), Helen (17.266) and Cydippe (21.245f.) both end their long letters with the excuse that their tired hands fail them.[23] In the *Tristia*, Ovid varies the trope by insisting that even a trembling hand does not keep him from carrying on: he continues to spin verses *trementi...manu* ('with a trembling hand', *Tr.* 1.11.17f.). But at one point his *liber exulis* ('exile's book', *Tr.* 3.1.1) stutters and stumbles with fear in front of Augustus' house, almost incapable of proceeding:[24]

> me miserum! uereorque locum uereorque potentem,
> et quatitur trepido littera nostra metu.
> aspicis exsangui chartam pallere colore?
> aspicis alternos intremuisse pedes?
>
> (*Tr.* 3.1.53-56)

> Miserable me! I fear the place and I fear his power,
> and my letters are shaken by shuddering fear.
> Do you see my page turn pale, with bloodless colour?
> Do you see every other foot begin to tremble?

Here we are asked to imagine the very letters (alphabetic) on the page beginning to shake, the page itself turning pale; even the limping foot of the pentameter is attributed to the letter's own 'foot' trembling with fear at the power of Augustus.

Other writers in the *Heroides* call attention to the character of their handwriting: Briseis (3.1f.), writing elegant Latin elegiacs, claims to be ashamed of her rudimentary Greek and barbarian handwriting (she is Mysian, after all!), while Oenone mocks her lover Paris with the words *non est*/*ista Mycenaea littera facta manu* ('this letter has not been created by a Mycenean hand!', *Her.* 5.1f.), taunting him with his fear of a message from Helen's offended husband, Menelaus. These are actually two rather rare instances in the *Heroides* of cultural and lin-

guistic specificity. The corpus is primarily atopical and mythical, even in its treatment of Sappho (*Her.* 15). It causes Ovid no concern if his heroines, whatever their linguistic background, write Latin verse, and he depends on his readers' imagination to sustain the literary illusion. In sharp contrast, the *Tristia* are defined and constrained by their geographical, cultural, and linguistic milieu. In the later collection, Ovid reveals an obsession with style, poetic language, the search for the right word, and a sense of cultural isolation and displacement. His greatest fear is of losing his grasp of Latin and being reduced to composing in Getic (*Ex Pont.* 4.13). In the *Tristia*, such problems become central to the coherence of Ovid's self-projection, and we could choose to read them as the concerns of an older and wiser poet, one whose own exile has forced him to come to grips with issues of national, cultural and linguistic identity. On the other hand, Ovid the consummate artist may choose to stress precisely those issues which were unexamined in his earlier work for the sake of variation. There is the added theme of the threat to his fame, his poetic productivity, which was tentatively explored earlier in the persona of Sappho. Ovid's environment in Tomis, including the language and customs around him, becomes of paramount importance for the health of his creative soul.

In the *Heroides*, Sappho may be seen with hindsight as a doublet for Ovid himself.[25] She finds herself unable to benefit from her great fame as a poet, reduced to yet another abandoned woman in love, just as Ovid, the famous poet, will end up lonely and frustrated in his exile. Sappho wonders whether her lover can recognise her familiar handwriting, or whether he must read on until she identifies herself by name (15.1-4). This toying with self-identification in the opening epistolary address may be read in tandem with Ovid's playful omission of addressees' names in the *Tristia*. In one letter from Pontus, we are even asked to guess the writer's name from the place of writing:

> quam legis, unde tibi mittatur epistula, quaeris?
> hinc, ubi caeruleis iungitur Hister aquis.
> ut regio dicta est, succurrere debet et auctor...
>
> (*Ex Pont.* 3.5.1-3)

> You ask whence the letter which you read is sent to you?
> From this place, where the Hister joins the blue waves.
> When the place is named, the writer too should occur to you.

Ovid also calls attention to a lapse in his regular writing habits when someone else pens his epistle to his wife; he himself is far too sick to write (*Tr.* 3.3.1-4), too tired finally even to continue dictating (*Tr.* 3.3.85-88). He hopes that his wife will recognise the words and feelings as his own, even if the handwriting is not. We can read this claim as a concrete way of making a figurative point: in exile, Ovid is no longer his former self, and no longer writes the way he used to, even to the point of hiring a secretary to do the job.

Using such familiar epistolary tropes, the letter writers lament the difficulty and unfairness of their present circumstances of loss. The reader is overwhelmed by each letter writer's isolation, sense of injustice, desperation to communicate, and fear of failing at the set task of persuading an unwilling addressee (lover or Augustus) to relent and allow a reconciliation. In the fictional or mythical context of the *Heroides*, the heroines are vocal and explicit about their own innocence in adversity. Thus Phyllis argues that she has done nothing more than love unwisely; otherwise, she has committed no *scelus*, no *crimen* (2.27-30). So, too, Cydippe protests her innocence, and disassociates herself from the words put into her mouth by Acontius:

> nil ego peccaui, nisi quod periuria legi
> inque parum fausto carmine docta fui.
>
> (*Her.* 21.181f.)

> I have committed no offence, except that I read a false oath
> and was clever in the matter of a verse which was far from
> lucky.

The reader with hindsight hears vibrations of Ovid's own protestations of innocence, although in the *Tristia*, he admits the uselessness of such protest: addressing his own book, he counsels:

> tu caue defendas, quamuis mordebere dictis;
> causa patrocinio non bona maior erit.
>
> (*Tr.* 1.1.25f.)

> Take care not to defend me, even though you will be attacked
> in biting words;
> my case, not a good one, will be made worse by your
> advocacy.

This is a form of *praeteritio*, of course, and by analogy with the protests of the heroines, we can read Ovid claiming innocence for himself here, even if the Roman public might sling insults at his epistolary messenger. In the letter above, the *Tristia* are tempted to reject the *Heroides*' stance of self-defence and injured innocence in order not to alienate Augustus further by explicitly attributing to him bad judgment. But actually they often slyly hint at precisely that fact, and Ovid comes across as extremely self-defensive in many of the letters.[26] With a strategy less likely to be personally offensive to Augustus, the *Tristia* embrace wholeheartedly the *Heroides*' attitude of abandonment.[27] Medea offers a model for this approach, as she mourns her wretched solitude, exiled from both fatherland and husband, a suppliant at the feet of Jason:

> deseror, amissis regno patriaque domoque,
> coniuge, qui nobis omnia solus erat!...
> non mihi grata dies; noctes uigilantur amarae,
> et tener a misero pectore somnus abest....
> tam tibi sum supplex...
>
> (*Her.* 12.161f., 169f., 185)

> I am deserted after losing my kingdom and my country and my
> home
> and my husband, who alone was all these things to me!...
> The day brings me no pleasure; nights are spent in bitter
> wakefulness,
> and soft sleep is far removed from my wretched soul....
> I am as much your suppliant...

Ovid, too, calls himself a *supplex* (*Tr.* 2.201; 5.2.43f.), and his case is perhaps even more dire than Medea's, since she projects herself as a suppliant but at the same time plots a revenge that we know will be successful, while Ovid is left powerless to do more than beg and complain. He paints a picture of hopeless days and agonised nights stretching into eternity in a barbarian outpost where his genius languishes unappreciated, and he himself is powerless, deracinated. But even as he composes his supplications in verse, obsessed with writing since (he claims) he can do nothing else, he questions his own stubbornness, wondering whether his actions should rather be called *stupor, insania* (*Tr.* 1.11.11), *morbum* (*Tr.* 2.15), or even *furor* (*Tr.* 4.1.37).[28] He admits that he is obsessed with poetry, returning again and again to the art that was the original cause of his misfortune. Thus in *Tr.* 1.11.7f. the Cyclades marvel at his (fool-)hardiness at composing at sea; in 2.3 he wails *cur modo damnatas repeto, mea crimina, Musas?* ('Why do I turn again to the Muses only recently condemned, the causes of my guilt?') and compares his actions to that of a vanquished gladiator eager to return to the arena, or a battered ship putting out to sea again (2.17f.; see also 5.7.34: *uulneribusque meis tela cruenta sequor*, 'and I seek weapons made bloody by wounds of my own'); in 4.1.29f. he moans *sed nunc quid faciam? uis me tenet ipsa sacrorum,/et carmen demens carmine laesus amo* ('But what am I now to do? The very force of the sacred calling grips me,/and in my madness, although harmed by poetry, poetry I love'). Even more tellingly, in this same poem, Ovid compares his fate to that of an obsessed lover:

> sentit amans sua damna fere, tamen haeret in illis,
> materiam culpae persequiturque suae.
> nos quoque delectant, quamuis nocuere, libelli,
> quodque mihi telum uulnera fecit, amo.
>
> (*Tr.* 4.1.33-36)

A lover is generally conscious of his own ruin and yet persists
    with it,
    and goes after that which fuels his fault.
I too take delight in my books, even though they have harmed
    me,
    and I love the very weapon that caused my wounds.

Ovid the demented lover, compelled to write to regain his beloved's favour all the while knowing that his case is hopeless, strikingly resembles the tortured lovers in the *Heroides*. A phrase in *Tr.* 2.3, *cur...repeto...Musas?* ('why do I turn again to the Muses?'), can serve as a rallying point for both works. It is an obsessive repetition, a compulsion, not necessarily the healthy relief that Ovid claims at various points in his poetry. Ovid says that the madness of poetic composition keeps his mind from gazing too often at its woes and offers him a kind of 'cure' (*Tr.* 1.11.12), or distracts the unhappy poet/lover from his misfortunes (*Tr.* 4.1.39f.; *Ex Pont.* 1.5.55: *casus obliuia nostri*, 'forgetfulness of my misfortunes').[29] That would work if the poetry produced were on the subject of, for example, cheerful pastorals or humorous encounters with the locals. But this kind of repetition, built into the generic framework of the elegiac epistles, I interpret according to Ovid's playful naming game above: it is a morbid, furious, self-lacerating compulsion, a way to relive every day the agony of fate rather than to heal or console the self; in short, a pathology. He wishes he could stop, but is unable to stop himself: *nec possum et cupio non ullos ducere uersus* ('I lack the ability and yet I long to compose some verses', *Tr.* 5.12.63).[30]

In his 'uncontrollable scribblings', Ovid complains at great length about the lack of an audience,[31] and his heroines, while not explicitly commenting on this situation, also complain to the empty air. The lack of not just a sympathetic audience, but any audience at all, turns the letter writers into their own audience. It causes them to turn inwards, lose touch with the 'reality' they are unwilling to face, as they hope vainly for a recall from exile, or a return of the beloved.[32] Ovid 'performs' for himself, becomes the public for his own 'tragedy': he writes to himself, reads to himself, and cries at his own verses (*Tr.* 4.1.91-99). Although there is no one to hear him, he passes the day in composition and recitation (*Tr.* 4.10.113f.). Later he says he talks to himself in order not to forget his native tongue (*Tr.* 5.7.61-64), although even this begins to seem useless to him (*Tr.* 5.10.37; 5.12.31f.). As he reads and recites, he feels the wounds (of the decree of exile? of injustice?) as if they were just recently inflicted, and weeps in self-pity (*Tr.* 4.1.97f.). His dual role as writer and reader may be split further into the duality of imagined writer—a character in his own literary composition—and internal addressee—again of his own literary composition. He acts out all parts: heroine and hero, wife and husband, self and friend. He is both author and critic, persona and audience.[33] But this is where the fiction of letter writing begins to break down: letters are meant to be answered, yet

neither his nor the heroines' single letters (*Her.* 1-15) ever (as far as we the readers can see, and not counting Sabinus, *Am.* 2.18!) receive a response. The repeated acts of writing and sending, rather than creating a bridge to the 'outside' world (which is a letter's accustomed function), instead emphasise the writers' complete isolation. The epistolary fiction of an addressee (wife, friend, lover) fails in its attempt to create or sustain a sense of community for these writers, as they all individually mourn their solitude in verse.

A direct result of this solitude, given the absence of epistolary replies, is the freedom to imagine responses, actions, and even rescues. It is a favourite habit of literary letter writers to create dialogue, fantasise about consequences, plot elaborate revenge, and generally imagine events unfolding just as they wish. In the *Tristia*, Ovid takes great delight in personifying his letters in order to contrast their freedom with his imprisonment. He only wishes he could be as free (*liber*) as his book (*liber*) to return to his beloved Rome:

> tu tamen i pro me, tu, cui licet, aspice Romam.
>   di facerent, possem nunc meus esse liber!
>
>   (*Tr.* 1.1.57f.)

> But you go instead of me and look upon Rome, you who are
>   allowed to do so.
> I wish that the gods would make it possible for me now to
>   be my book!

His letter can revisit all his favourite haunts, even if he himself is exiled far away in wretched Tomis.[34] Similarly, Leander, as he writes to Hero, imagines her beautiful hand reaching for the letter as it arrives on shore; he wishes fervently that his own hand, rather than just writing a letter, could carry him over the waves to his goal:

> protinus haec scribens, 'felix, i, littera!' dixi,
>   'iam tibi formosam porriget illa manum...'
> at quanto mallem, quam scriberet, illa nataret,
>   meque per adsuetas sedula ferret aquas!
>
>   (*Her.* 18.15f., 21f.)

> Immediately, writing these words, I said, 'Go, fortunate letter!
>   She will soon reach out her beautiful hand to you...'
> But how much I would rather my hand swim than write,
>   and eagerly carry me through the accustomed waters!

Elsewhere Ovid envisions letters as his children, bereft of their father (*Tr.* 1.7.35, 38), undeserving of exile with their unfortunate master (3.14.9f.). In the proem to book 3, a *liber exulis* ('exile's book', 3.1.1) begs for a kind reception

by Rome, offering an apology for its repentant master. Ovid uses the letter per-
sonified to plead his own case, and, in a neat twist on his usual petition to a
true friend, presents a letter narrating its own engendering, full of pathos and re-
alistic epistolary touches:[35]

>...Nasonis epistula ueni...
>qui mihi flens dixit 'tu cui licet, aspice Romam.
>   heu quanto melior sors tua sorte mea est!'
>flens quoque me scripsit, nec qua signabar, ad os est
>   ante, sed ad madidas gemma relata genas.
>
>   (*Tr.* 5.4.1, 3-6)

>   I have come, a letter of Naso's...
>who said to me as he wept, 'Look upon Rome, you are al-
>   lowed to do so.
>   Alas! How much better is your lot than mine!'
>Weeping also he wrote me, and the signet by which I was
>   sealed
>was raised first not to his mouth but to his damp cheeks.

When even the letter fails to reach its goal, Ovid imagines his writers turning
to older, more magical methods of transportation away from their ills: Ovid
wishes for Triptolemus' chariot, Medea's dragons, or the wings of Perseus or
Daedalus, to rush home through the air to his native land (*Tr.* 3.8.1-10), while
Leander, frustrated by storms on the Hellespont, craves the wings of Daedalus
(*Her.* 18.49) and envies Phrixus his ram (18.143), although he quickly asserts
his own human skills: 'But I do not really ask for the help of ram or ship, as
long as my body can cut through the waves' (18.145f.).

In imagining such miraculous escapes and happy endings, Ovid's literary
heroes and heroines are not entirely free to fantasise events turning out just as
they choose.[36] Unlike Ovid, they are constrained by prior tellings of their story.
Ovid in exile is constrained not by the past, but by an unknown future and the
whim of the master storyteller, Augustus. When Ovid tries to mould himself to
literary models in the *Tristia*, he may be attempting to 'constrain' himself in a
similar way: thus Odysseus returned home safely after many years abroad, and
so will he. Literary fantasies seem safer to Ovid than the unpredictable twists
and turns of his own life.

More common than such escapist fantasies are imagined responses, both to
the reception of the letter in question, and, even more elaborately, to imagined
acts. Ovid creates a touching picture of his wife's anxiety as she receives his
most recent epistle: she grows pale and opens it with an anxious hand (*Tr.*
5.2.1f.).[37] Leander imagines Hero eagerly reaching out to receive his letter,
raising it to her lips in a kiss, breaking the bands that seal the sheets with her
'snowy teeth'—the whole passage is infused with eroticism (*Her.* 18.16-18). In

contrast, Acontius dreams of Cydippe's virginal reluctance as she reads his let-
ter: he sees her blush and tremble even before she begins to read, and he reas-
sures her that the letter contains no trick, that she should read through to the
end without fear (*Her.* 20.1-5).

Ovid also creates more painful scenes: in *Tr.* 3.3 he imagines his deathbed,
and sees his wife, informed of his passing, beat her breast with trembling hand
and stretch forth her arms to call on her beloved husband (3.3.47-50).[38] He tells
her not to scratch her cheeks or tear her hair (3.3.51), but his inclusion of those
options adds to the drama of the scene. His instructions also convey his hope
that she would miss him enough to want to mutilate herself, and that she, of all
people, would not have forgotten him in his exile. He omits no detail of his
miserable and unwitnessed death in Tomis: no one to close the eyes of the
corpse, his body unmourned and buried in an unmarked tomb, a pitiful request
for the return of his bones to Rome and the installation of a tombstone with a
four-line inscription of his own devising (3.3.73-76). Surely this letter is in-
tended less for his wife's sake—no one could take this as a consolation letter—
and more for his own; it is a way for him to fantasise about his own death and
funeral, to direct his friends' (and enemies') reactions in the final hour, outdoing
Trimalchio here in morbid self-indulgence.[39] In death, Ovid can obtain that
which eluded him in life: he returns to Rome and a monument is established in
his honour, inscribed exactly as he requests. He is free again to write the poetry
he chooses, and, tellingly, his funeral inscription shows him playing with
'tender loves', asking a passing 'lover' to offer a prayer on his behalf. So Au-
gustus will not have the final word, after all.

Ovid experiments in this letter with seeing and experiencing in his own per-
sona what he had imagined his heroines seeing and experiencing in theirs. So,
for example, Dido (*Her.* 7.183ff.) and Hypermnestra (*Her.* 14.127-32) also envi-
sion their own deaths and their lovers' reactions.[40] In *Heroides* 2, Phyllis plays
a similar game, imagining Demophoon's reaction as her dead body washes up
on shore; she claims his heart, no matter how adamant, will be softened at the
sight, but she will not pity him (2.135-38: assuming the dead can feel pity for
the living...). The inscription on her tombstone will tell the world that he alone
was the cause of her suicide (2.147f.).[41] Such epitaph writing is quite popular
in the *Heroides*: in addition to Phyllis, Dido (7.195f.) and Sappho (15.183f.)
also write their suicide scenes and burials. Writing one's own epitaph is a logi-
cal extension of writing one's life story. Ovid and his heroines try to retain to
the last moment whatever slight control they have left over their own lives,
even if it takes the form of a death scenario and an obituary.

Epitaph writing is just one of the references to writing found in the *Heroides*
and Ovid's exile poetry. As discussed above, letters comment on their own cre-
ation, on their reception, on their appearance; they also comment on content
and style. Several of the *Heroides* express an anxiety about their own readabi-
lity, or, not without reason, the tenacity of their reader-lovers: *perlege!* ('read
right to the end!') say Phaedra (4.3), Oenone (5.1: *perlegis?*—'are you reading

right to the end?'), and Acontius (20.3), worried that their reader(s) may break off before finishing. But Ovid acts much less interested in his letters' reception, even when his writings are harshly criticised by an unimpressed reader:

> 'at mala sunt.' fateor. quis te mala sumere cogit?
>   aut quis deceptum ponere sumpta uetat?
>
> (*Tr.* 5.1.69f.)

> 'But they are of poor quality.' I admit it. Who forces you to
>   take up writings of poor quality?
> Or who forbids you, after you have been cheated, from
>   putting down what you have taken up?

These lines appear in the first letter of his last book of *Tristia*, and in this book, Ovid finally draws an explicit connection between his life and the tone and content of his poems:[42]

> hic quoque talis erit, qualis fortuna poetae:
>   inuenies toto carmine dulce nihil.
> flebilis ut noster status est, ita flebile carmen,
>   materiae scripto conueniente suae.
>
> (*Tr.* 5.1.3-6)

> This book too will be like the circumstances of the poet:
>   throughout my whole song you will find nothing enjoy-
>   able.
> Just as my state is mournful, so my song is mournful,
>   the writing befitting its subject-matter.

He represents his whole work, looking both backward to the earlier four books and forward to the one about to be written, as a single lengthy lament, just as his life in Tomis has become one long funeral.[43] He acknowledges with his critic that his poems may be of bad quality, but that is the fault of his misfortune (lack of audience, no library, no Rome), not his (former) native genius. This self-deprecation, of course, is itself a complex literary game.[44] He repeats the same complaint in *Ex Pont.* 3.9, almost a *locus classicus* for Ovid's exilic monotony, as he responds to yet another disgruntled critic:

> nil tamen e scriptis magis excusabile nostris,
>   quam sensus cunctis paene quod unus inest.
> laeta fere laetus cecini, cano tristia tristis...
>
> (*Ex Pont.* 3.9.33-35)

> And yet nothing is more pardonable in my writings
>   than the fact that in practically all of them there is a single
>   thought.
> When I was happy my song was usually happy; now sad, I
>   sing sad songs.

In the *Heroides*, Sappho tells a similar story. She, too, a famous poet, has switched genres in mid-career, from love poetry to elegy, and sings songs that suit her current mood:

> forsitan et quare mea sint alterna requiras
>   carmina, cum lyricis sim magis apta modis.
> flendus amor meus est—elegiae flebile carmen;
>   non facit ad lacrimas barbitos ulla meas.
>
> (*Her.* 15.5-8)

> Perhaps, too, you may be asking why my verses alternate,
>   when I am better suited to lyric poems.
> I must weep for my love—elegy is the song of mourning;
>   no lyre is suited to my weeping.

Love songs are the labour of happy minds, but unrequited love for Phaon has robbed her of happiness. Sappho equates her personal appearance with her role as poet, as did Ovid when he warned his book in *Tr.* 1.1.3-14 that it should be *incultus* ('unadorned'), without a purple cover, polished pages or perfumed paper, as befits the book of an exile.[45] Sappho no longer cares to adorn herself since her admirer has gone (15.73-78), nor can she bring herself to pick up the lyre. Her eloquence, she exclaims (quite eloquently!), has abandoned her along with her lover and only *dolor* remains:

> nunc uellem facunda forem! dolor artibus obstat,
>   ingeniumque meis substitit omne malis.
> non mihi respondent ueteres in carmina uires;
>   plectra dolore iacent muta, dolore lyra.
>
> (*Her.* 15.195-98)

> I wish I were now eloquent! Grief checks my skill,
>   and all my abilities are impeded by my sufferings.
> My old capacity for poetry does not respond to my call;
>   my plectrum and my lyre lie silent through grief.

In Sappho's letter, Ovid points to poetic composition outside the framework of the epistle: the poet speaks of writing love songs or elegy, not more verse letters. The letters themselves allow for a broad generic definition of their texts,

including, as mentioned above, *liber*, *carmina*, *scripta*, *epistula*, or the unmarked *opus* (*Tr.* 4.1.94). In fact, few of the letters obey strict epistolary conventions such as informative openings and polite closures (an exception being *Her.* 13), but several play on the reader's expectation of the same.[46] Thus *Tr.* 3.3 closes with a joke on the inappropriateness under the circumstances of the customary farewell:

> accipe supremo dictum mihi forsitan ore,
> quod, tibi qui mittit, non habet ipse, 'uale'.
>
> (*Tr.* 3.3.87f.)

> Receive perhaps the last word uttered by my lips,
> a word which does not apply to him who sends it to you:
> 'farewell'.

Tr. 5.13 ends on a more positive note for the reader:

> accipe quo semper finitur epistula uerbo,
> aque meis distent ut tua fata, 'uale'.
>
> (*Tr.* 5.13.33f.)

> Receive that word by which a letter is always ended,
> and, that your fate may be different from mine, 'farewell'.

The letters also echo the customary epistolary refrain of 'why don't you ever write back?'.[47] The heroines offer no excuses for their unfaithful correspondents (*Her.* 6.3-8: Hypsipyle argues that a letter can be sent even in inclement weather; 15.219f.: Sappho asks for a letter even if it bears bad news), but Ovid in the *Tristia* invents reasons why the letters, surely sent off, might have gone astray. His perception of the role of letters is so closely tied to that of friendship that he cannot imagine a true friend neglecting to write (*Tr.* 4.7.1-20; 5.13.15-26).[48] Just as he and his friend used to pass long hours in conversation, so now he hopes that their letters will take over that task, replacing live voices with silent scripts: *sic ferat ac referat tacitas nunc littera uoces* ('thus may our letters now carry and bring back in return our soundless voices', *Tr.* 5.13.29). The answer to missing letters is...*more* letters:

> mille potest causis a te quae littera saepe
> missa sit in nostras rara uenire manus;
> mille tamen causas scribendo uince frequenter,
> excusem ne te semper, amice, mihi.
>
> (*Tr.* 4.7.23-26)

> There can be a thousand reasons why letters
> often sent by you rarely reach my hands.
> But overcome these thousand reasons by writing often,
> lest I forever make excuses to myself to explain your conduct.

In both epistolary works, the *Heroides* and the *Tristia*, Ovid follows the basic rules of the genre: his and his heroines' letters are written as if in the midst of great emotional upheaval, the pages acting as sounding boards for their writers' emotions. The letters offer a means of communication in solitude, although in both cases, the lack of response gives the impression of writing into the void. In the *Heroides*, Ovid can assume his educated readers know exactly how the stories will turn out; in the *Tristia*, however, his contemporary audience was in as much suspense as he was, waiting for that all-important letter from Augustus. I hesitate to draw any conclusions about the evolution of Ovid's creativity in epistolary verse before and during his exile. It is difficult to speak of a maturation of style when our perspective is complicated by the autobiographical mode of the later collection. Perhaps it will be more useful to explore how Ovid reinvented his earlier material, which particular passages he chose to rework, and how he adapted their contexts.

III. Incorporating the *Heroides*: *ille (re)nouauit opus*

The discussion so far has focused on general points of similarity between two of Ovid's epistolary works, the *Heroides* and *Tristia*. But there are several instances where the later work appears to allude directly to the earlier, and I would like to turn to these passages next. The first instance is that of Ovid comparing his wife to one of 'his' literary heroines; the second is that of Ovid himself referring to heroes mentioned in the double letters.

Ovid sets his wife up as one of the heroines on many different levels. In the first place, her behaviour at his departure from Rome, as she weeps, groans and stretches out her hands to her departing husband (*Tr.* 1.3.93-101), recalls the behaviour of some of the abandoned women in the single *Heroides*.[49] As a form of consolation (or warning?), he offers her examples from mythology of other wives who remained faithful or blameless in ill fortune: Andromache, Semele, Evadne (*Tr.* 4.3); Andromache, Penelope, Alcestis (*Tr.* 5.5); and finally Penelope again in the last poem of the last book (*Tr.* 5.14).[50] While Penelope does appear in the *Heroides*, quite prominently in first place, these allusions are too general in nature to be pressed into service as direct references to the earlier work.

In *Tr.* 1.6, however, we can press the allusions slightly more, since the whole letter is couched in self-consciously literary terms.[51] The letter opens with a list of comparanda for his wife:

nec tantum Clario est Lyde dilecta poetae,
    nec tantum Coo Bittis amata suo est,
pectoribus quantum tu nostris, uxor, inhaeres,
    digna minus misero, non meliore uiro.

                    (*Tr.* 1.6.1-4)

Lyde was not loved so much by the poet of Claros
    nor Bittis adored so much by her lover from Cos,
as you, my wife, are held fast in my heart,
    you who deserve a less wretched, not a better, husband.

Antimachus and Philetas are not named directly, but associated with their place of origin: Claros for Antimachus, the site of a famous oracle of Apollo in Colophon, and Cos for Philetas. It is perhaps telling that Ovid in exile identifies his poetic ancestors specifically by their homes, their communities. The men in this list are actual historical figures, and not coincidentally influential Hellenistic narrative elegists. But their female loves exist only on paper: Lyde and Bittis are literary pseudonyms, muses, inventions and reflections of their authors, not 'real' women.[52] Ovid claims that his love for his wife is stronger than that of these famous literary lovers, but at the same time, by the very examples he chooses, he subverts her importance to his own: she is the shadowy 'muse', he is the great poet. Her shadowiness is further emphasised by her absence from Tomis, and Ovid may be playing with the idealising effect which separation from a beloved inevitably brings about. In lines 5-8 of the same poem, Ovid removes her even further from the status of a flesh-and-blood woman, but adds physical substance to her idealised image: he turns her into a caryatid, on whose marble pillar his 'ruins' are supported, and a protector of his shipwrecked timbers. She is the supporter and guardian of his physical being; her *uirtus* (1.6.15), unchanging as her caryatid's marble surface, is all that sustains him in exile.

    After some bitter words about faithless friends, Ovid turns to mythology for more models of his wife's saintly behaviour:

nec probitate tua prior est aut Hectoris uxor,
    aut comes extincto Laodamia uiro.
tu si Maeonium uatem sortita fuisses,
    Penelopes esset fama secunda tuae.

                (*Tr.* 1.6.19-22)

In uprightness neither Hector's wife nor Laodamia,
    her husband's companion in death, is your superior.
If fate had allotted as your poet the Maeonian Homer,
    Penelope's renown would be second to your own.

He caps these couplets with the line *prima locum sanctas heroidas inter haberes* ('you would be the first to hold a place among the august heroines', *Tr.* 1.6.33), a line difficult not to read as a direct reference to his own literary creations,[53] and finishes the letter by saying that, while his poetic ability fails to match her merits, as far as his feeble strength can carry him he will offer her immortality in his song. I would argue that Ovid's praise of his wife in this passage recalls his *Heroides*, particularly Penelope (*Her.* 1) and Laodamia (*Her.* 13), but that his main concern is still his own reputation. This interpretation is supported by the fact that, while Andromache and Laodamia are paired with their ill-fated husbands, Penelope is matched with Homer himself. Elsewhere Ovid will 'be' Odysseus, the great hero, but here he tellingly prefers to equate himself with Homer, the *uates*.[54]

    In *Tr.* 3.10, Ovid again appears to allude to his earlier oeuvre: he compares his own situation to that of two heroes from the *Heroides*, interestingly now from the double epistles (Leander, *Her.* 18; Acontius, *Her.* 20). How should we interpret Ovid's temporary shift from female to male models? One could speculate that he chooses the double epistles for his own *comparanda* because these texts are somewhat less misanthropic than the earlier ones.[55] But this question in turn is connected to a related issue, namely our interpretation of Ovid's adoption of the female voice in the *Heroides*. His ventriloquism may be viewed as coopting or colonising the female voice for a purely male agenda. The male author condemns the whole opposite sex through its own speech and actions, as these women appear alternately hysterical, vindictive, pathetic, jealous, or self-deceptive; they remain passive victims, powerless to change their fate. But the same poems may be interpreted as literary tributes to the power of the female persona. According to this view, Ovid identifies with his heroines, uses their gendered, foreign voices to enunciate views and feelings he would be at a loss to express in his own, male, Roman voice. We can read this against the background of 'the gendered relations of domination and submission so instrinsic to Roman constructions of sexuality'; as did Propertius before him, Ovid may be 'taking the woman's part, putting himself into play as the feminine'.[56]

    Once Ovid leaves the realm of impersonation (*Heroides*) and writes in an autobiographical mode (*Tristia*), he has a choice to make: to continue to play with figures of 'feminisation' which served him so well when he was writing in another's voice, or to remasculinise himself, particularly if he felt any concern that further feminisation might suggest a continued alliance with the kind of erotic poetry that got him into trouble in the first place. Typically for Ovid, he chooses to play with both forms, electing whichever role suits his purposes at the moment. The resulting fluidity of identities is remarkable, opening up a Pandora's box of relationships and personas. Ovid sets himself up as an abandoned heroine, but then turns around and identifies his wife as one, too. Can both coexist as heroines, or is Ovid then obliged to take up the mask of the abandoning hero, in the footsteps of Odysseus? Since both the *Tristia* and the *Heroides* are elegiac, we can also view Ovid's shifting roles from the perspec-

tive of the elegiac lover. But is Ovid playing the rejected lover to Augustus' hard-hearted *puella*, or is he rather the abandoning lover to his sad, faithful wife (standing in for his mistress)? When Ovid playfully alternates between passive femininity (the abandoned one) and larger-than-life masculinity (the abandoner), he takes on the curiously split personality of elegy's lover/poet.[57]

At *Tr.* 5.13 and *Ex Pont.* 1.10, Ovid uses female role models, seeking sympathy for his ('feminine') weakness and abandonment. In *Tr.* 3.10, he recruits male role models: Odysseus, Acontius and Leander, the first two also particularly known for their clever wiles and arts of persuasion, and all three well equipped to supply a vein of grim humour for his verses. Even such famous characters as these, says Ovid, would find it difficult living with him in exile. In the midst of his litany of complaints about the freezing weather and sterile environment of winter at Tomis, Ovid implies that his literary heroes would soon discover themselves to be at the mercy of the environment, whether for better or worse. Thus, Leander (*Her.* 18) would bless the ice and snow that allowed him access to his beloved across the water:

> si tibi tale fretum quondam, Leandre, fuisset,
> non foret angustae mors tua crimen aquae.
>
> (*Tr.* 3.10.41f.)

> If you, Leander, had once of old had such a sea,
> your death would not be a charge against the narrow waters.

Leander's ease of access, of course, would mean that his story would never be immortalised in legend, since there were no hardships to overcome, no funeral rites to honour. On the other hand, Acontius (*Her.* 20) would have had no way to begin his love affair: he would have cursed the infertility of the soil that begrudged him a piece of fruit with which to ensnare the unsuspecting Cydippe:

> poma negat regio, nec haberet Acontius in quo
> scriberet hic dominae uerba legenda suae.
>
> (*Tr.* 3.10.73f.)

> The region does not bear fruit, and here Acontius would have
>   nothing
> on which to write the words for his mistress to read.

Ovid uses these myths to try to contextualise his own situation, render it less unique, offer parallels which might show him a way out of his desperate straits. But his methods backfire, as his own myths lose their meaning in the harsh land of the poet's exile.[58] Leander would never have become famous without his superhuman swim; Acontius could not even have gotten started on his love story in Tomis. The absurd reality of the snowbound north frustrates both Ovid

and his literary antecedents. The traditional mythologies have to be rewritten if Ovid is going to convey the full exent of the horrors of his life at Tomis.

In *Tr.* 3.10, when Ovid puts himself in the same category as his literary heroes, he opens his exilic persona up to accusations of 'fictionalisation'. By fitting himself into the canon of the persecuted or the larger-than-life, he, too, becomes that much more distanced from the 'reality' of his lived experience.[59] He shapes his persona for literary effect much as he shapes that of Acontius or Leander, and boasts frequently that it is his writing that will win him everlasting fame (e.g. *Tr.* 3.7.49-54; 4.10.125-32).[60] He writes his 'autobiography', meant to be published in his lifetime, with as much concern for veracity as any modern politician.

Elsewhere in the *Tristia*, Ovid taps other mythical sources for examples of faithful friends. Writing to friends in Rome, he compares himself to Orestes and his friend to Pylades, or he plays Achilles to his friend's Patroclus, Pirithous to his Theseus, Euryalus to his Nisus (*Tr.* 1.9.27-35).[61] He hopes his friends' loyalty will impress even Augustus into reconsidering his case. In *Tr.* 1.5, Ovid opens with the same category of heroes already mentioned: Orestes, Achilles, Pirithous, Euryalus (1.5.19-26). He points out that it was the suffering of these great men that proved their friendships in time of stress and gave such renown to their companions. By imagining himself in the company of great men, Ovid distances himself slightly from his heroines, who suffer their exile in complete isolation, friendless and abandoned by faithless lovers. But in other ways, *Tr.* 1.5 raises an important issue common to both works, namely an intense preoccupation with the letter as a construction of the self, not a reflection of any lived reality. 'Reality' takes a back seat here to representation, and in *Tr.* 1.5, Ovid questions the rhetorical persuasiveness of his self-presentation, his 'mythologising' of his own persona.

Halfway through *Tr.* 1.5, Ovid changes tack, marking the new direction with two Homeric *topoi*: he claims that he has endured more woes than stars that shine in the sky, or grains of dry dust (1.5.47f.); if he had a tireless voice, lungs of brass, and many mouths with many tongues, not even then could he relate the full story (1.5.53-56). Having neatly inserted himself, an elegiac poet, into the ranks as an epic narrator, he then draws a careful and lengthy comparison between his misfortunes and those of Odysseus.[62] As he declares at the beginning of this section:[63]

> pro duce Neritio docti mala nostra poetae
> scribite: Neritio nam mala plura tuli.
>
> (*Tr.* 1.5.57f.)

> Learned poets, write of my sufferings instead of the Neritian
>   hero's:
> for I have endured more than the Neritian.

Ovid goes through the issues one by one (1.5.59-78), manipulating them when necessary to serve his purposes: he travelled further than Odysseus; he is alone while Odysseus had his crew (!); he is exiled while Odysseus could always hope to (and finally did) return home; his home is the place of empire and gods, while Odysseus came from scruffy backwaters whence absence is no great punishment; his body is weak and untrained, while Odysseus was a born soldier;[64] he has been punished and abandoned by his 'god', Augustus, while Odysseus, in spite of Poseidon's wrath, could always count on Athena to back him in a crisis (see also *Tr.* 1.2.9f.). Ovid's tone is more boastful than long-suffering; he exaggerates his misfortunes and belittles or distorts Odysseus' in order to outdo his 'rival' in wretchedness. In a final attempt to discredit the Greek hero and bolster his own case, Ovid writes:

> adde, quod illius pars maxima ficta laborum,
> ponitur in nostris fabula nulla malis.
>
> (*Tr.* 1.5.79f.)

> Moreover, the greater part of *his* labours is fictitious;
> *my* sufferings contain no element of fiction.

In this section, 'mythology is a token of falsehood', as Odysseus becomes 'an exemplar of fictional suffering against which the poet can establish the "reality" of his own hardships'.[65] But this poetic strategy backfires for Ovid, as his ploy to intensify his own misfortunes at the expense of Odysseus' serves only to emphasise their basic incomparability, and Ovid's own exaggerations. As G.D. Williams points out, 'mythical *exempla* can be used to give guidance, but when our experiences are set in immediate competition with them we can easily find ourselves fictionalising our own lives rather than adding a dimension of reality to the myth.'[66]

IV. Truth in Fictionalising

Here we confront the great conundrum of Ovid's poetic innovations: what is *ficta* and what is *nulla fabula* ? Does *Tr.* 1.5 abandon mythology and literature as a source of gnomic truth, and, if so, do we read this act as a retroactive condemnation (or, at the very least, a lower ranking) of his own *Heroides*?[67] By insisting on the gravity of his own loss and suffering in the exile poetry, does Ovid underscore the insubstantiality or even levity of the literary situations of the heroines, whom he firmly situates in the same world of *fabula* as that populated by Odysseus and his men?[68] Or is this merely a convenient posture for his immediate focus, namely to enhance his self-presentation as history's greatest undeserving victim of fate? In such an emotionally laden situation as exile, and in the genre of autobiography, we expect 'the truth'; but does not truth demand

multiple, complex meanings with an author so committed to rhetorical posturing, to clever wit, and to intertextual allusion?[69]

One response is that truth and fiction for Ovid function less as polar opposites and more as points on a continuum. He is concerned primarily with exploring and representing emotion for its own sake, not in order to prove or document facts. Is it 'truer' to show fictional characters acting out 'honest' and lifelike emotions, or rather to limit oneself to what actually happened in a recorded (auto)biography or history? I suspect Ovid would agree with the former statement; he acts out emotions equally effectively in the voices of his heroines and in his own persona(s) of the exile poetry. It is the reader who is at fault if he or she seeks a single truth in any of Ovid's works.

Perhaps Ovid's terminology of contrasts—not false vs. true but rather 'fictitious' on the one side as opposed to 'not invented solely for the sake of a good story' on the other side—reveals an anxiety about a polarised definition of truth and falsehood.[70] Earlier in the *Tristia* he confessed that, while writing his erotic poems, he had invented love scenarios for himself: *et falso moui pectus amore meum* ('and I stirred my creative breast with a fictitious love', *Tr.* 2.340). If he admits he is skilled in inventing false scenes of emotion, attributing to his own heart a simulated love, how can we trust him with 'true' emotions now, or distinguish between what is *falsus* or *fictus* and not? When convenient he protests *nec liber indicium est animi* ('nor does my book give clear evidence of my mind', *Tr.* 2.357, with regard to his erotic works); but in the *Tristia*, he asks us to believe just the opposite.

In pitting the truth value of the *Tristia* against that of the *Heroides*, we must not lose sight of what they have in common, namely their epistolary form. Here, I would suggest, lies a preliminary response to the issue of fictionalisation. On the most basic level, all letters are fictions. Epistolary technique always problematises the boundaries between fiction and reality.[71] Whether the writer claims to write in his own voice or that of a mythical figure, the moment he puts words to paper he invents a self, a life, a set of feelings. Based on a process of selection and self-censorship, the letter is a construction, not a reflection, of reality. The similarities between the many voices of Ovid's exile, both his heroines' and his own, originate in their generic affiliation. The voices of Ovid's heroines survive the cataclysmic events in the poet's own life to flourish again in a context that is both different and at the same time hauntingly familiar.[72]

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NOTES

1. For a general discussion of this literary background, see e.g. B.R. Nagle, *The Poetics of Exile, Latomus* 170 (Brussels 1980), 32-70, who also discusses the relations between Ovid's exile poetry and his earlier erotic poetry books. In this paper I focus primarily on the generic connections between Ovid's epistolary exile poetry and his *Heroides*, a topic not widely studied.

2. In G.D. Williams's words, 'Ovid exploits the creative possibility of exile to pursue a form of psychological investigation which he had previously conducted through his literary characters.' J. McKeown points out to me that the *Heroides* themselves are already adapting the conventions of 'personal' love elegy, i.e. the genre in which Ovid purports to be writing about himself, so we should be wary of assuming a straightforward chronological development from *Heroides* to *Tristia*, literary to 'personal'.

3. The double epistles (*Her.* 16-21) will, however, enter my discussion at points.

4. Ovid does refer to *carmen et error* (*Tr.* 2.207), but does not equate these with actual 'crimes'.

5. These adjectives are culled from the works of G.B. Conte, *Latin Literature: A History*, tr. J.B. Solodow (Baltimore 1994), 350; E.J. Kenney, *Ovid Heroides XVI-XXI* (Cambridge 1996), 3; W.S. Anderson, 'The *Heroides*', in J.W. Binns (ed.), *Ovid* (London 1973), 49-83, esp. 66f.; D. Hine (tr.), *Ovid's Heroines* (New Haven 1991), ix; F. Verducci, *Ovid's Toyshop of the Heart* (Princeton 1985), 4.

6. While I refer occasionally to passages from the *Epistulae ex Ponto*, the main focus of this paper will be relations between the *Heroides* and the *Tristia*.

7. This argument was presented by G.D. Williams in his original panel paper.

8. E.-A. Kirfel, 'Untersuchungen zur Briefform der Heroides Ovids', *Noctes Romanae* 11 (1969), 28f. and 33f., traces conversational style in the exilic works through word searches: e.g. *precor, rogas, scis, credo*. P. Knox, *Ovid Heroides* (Cambridge 1995), 25f., also mentions 'word choice and syntax intended to suggest everyday speech'.

9. Kirfel (n.8 above), 25: 'Diese Hinwendung zum Adresssaten ist der wichtigste Unterschied zwischen der reinen Elegie und der Briefelegie.' See also *ibid.* 29: 'Die Form des Briefes hängt einzig und allein von den Anfangs- und Schlussformeln ab.' This issue is also discussed intelligently by M.H.T. Davisson, '*Tristia* 5.13 and Ovid's Use of Epistolary Form and Content', *CJ* 80 (1985), 238-46, who acknowledges that Ovid's letters had no real practical function (i.e. they were not sent as letters) but nevertheless retained many aspects of epistolary style and content. I discuss epistolary form more thoroughly in my current project on the subject.

10. See H. Rahn, 'Ovids elegische Epistel', *A & A* (1958), 105-20, esp. 105.

11. See W. Nicolai, 'Phantasie und Wirklichkeit bei Ovid', *A & A* (1973), 107-16, esp. 108.

12. This trend has been supported by the work of such scholars as A. Barchiesi, S. Hinds, E.J. Kenney and P. Knox. New commentaries on individual *Heroides* have also recently appeared, by S. Casali, T. Heinze and G. Rosati.

13. See, for example, G. Showerman, *Ovid Vol 1: Amores and Heroides*, 2nd ed., rev. G.P. Goold (Cambridge MA 1977), 8: 'The *Heroides* are not a work of the highest order of genius. Their language, nearly always artificial, frequently rhetorical, and often diffuse, is the same throughout—whether from the lips of barbarian Medea or Sappho the poetess.' H. Jacobson, *Ovid's Heroides* (Princeton 1974), 74, labels them 'repetitive'. Even Kenney (n.5 above, 1) states regretfully that it 'is difficult to rescue them, especially if they are read sequentially, from the charge of monotony'. But to accuse Ovid's heroines of continuous harping on their misfortunes is to ignore the constant variations in pitch, tone, motivation, justification, and levels of paranoia that make each case unique.

14. Thus W.S. Anderson (n.5 above, 81) sustains the idea that the exile poems reflect a narrowing of options, a reduction in quality: 'Fate and unappreciative Augustus would reduce him to the despair of the women in the *Heroides* I-XV which he had once imagined so brilliantly.' B.R. Nagle (n.1 above, 132f.) concludes that 'monotony is the unavoidable product of constantly unpleasant surroundings and a constant desire to improve them', but she does acknowledge that it is in Ovid's best interest to portray his life in exile as being as miserable as possible. See also Nicolai (n.11 above, 108f.), who implies that Ovid's personal situation 'forces' him to write such dismal exile poetry. Cf., however, Davisson (n.9 above), 246: 'Ovid's integration of epistolary form and content was neither an inevitable result of his situation nor merely a practical strategy. Rather, he was attracted by the artistic challenge of creating a form which was both poetic and epistolary.'

15. G.D. Williams, *Banished Voices* (Cambridge 1994).

16. G.D. Williams points out to me the comparable situation of Seneca in exile, who presents one self-image (deferent and desperate to win Claudius' pity) in the *Consolatio ad Polybium*, and a very different one (cheerful and optimistic) to his mother in the *ad Helviam*.

17. Tears on the page are, of course, a conventional epistolary trope: in addition to the examples to follow, see e.g. Ovid *Ex Pont.* 1.9.1f.; Prop. 4.3.3f.; Cic. *ad fam.* 14.2.1 or *ad Q. fr.* 1.3.3. For a discussion of the heroines' carefully designed self-presentation, see S. Flaherty, *The Rhetoric of Female Self-Destruction: A Study of Homer, Euripides, and Ovid* (Diss. Yale Univ., 1994).

18. The debate on the authenticity of Sappho's epistle continues to rage: for the most recent opinions, see P. Knox (n.8 above), 12-14 and bibliography.

19. The personified book-letter is adapted from Horace; see Rahn (n.10 above), 108-10.

20. This point was suggested to me by G.D. Williams.

21. Dido also sits with drawn sword, and predicts that blood will soon mingle with her tears (*Her.* 7.184-86), although she does not specifically say that the drops will fall on the page.

22. Certain letters set up contexts that the reader mistrusts: thus in *Tr.* 1.11, we do not really believe that Ovid wrote the actual letter in the midst of a storm (cf. e.g. Petr. *Sat.* 115: Eumolpus writes a poem at sea), although we may be convinced by his basic sentiments expressed therein; similarly in *Her.* 10 Ariadne writes her letter on a deserted island, with no messenger present to deliver it.

23. In the spirit of the conceit, Cydippe begins her letter with a disclaimer: *quam tibi nunc gracilem uix haec rescribere quamque/pallida uix cubito membra leuare putas?* ('How thin and delicate do you think I am, with difficulty writing this answer to you? How pale as I scarcely prop my body up with my elbow?', 21.15f.); but she does somehow manage to continue for roughly another 230 lines.

24. The phrasing of the passage to follow recalls similar outbursts of self-pity in the *Heroides*: see variations on *me miseram, a demens*, or *ei mihi* in *Tr.* 5.2.39, 5.10.51; *Her.* 2.103, 3.61, 5.149, 7.98; see also the common complaint that the unfeeling and unresponsive interlocutor was born of flint, suckled on wild beasts: *Tr.* 3.11.3f.; *Her.* 7.37, 10.132. In this passage, *uereor* leaves a certain amount of ambiguity as to whether Augustus' house is to be respected or simply feared.

25. Sappho is a particularly tempting parallel because she is the only heroine who is a poet in her own right, but Ovid's situation of exile and abandonment suggests parallels with the shared experiences of all the heroines, as I argue throughout this paper.

26. See e.g. *Tr.* 1.9.59-65; 2 *passim*; 3.5.43-54; 4.4.35-54.

27. On abandonment as a specifically 'female' condition, see L. Lipking, 'Aristotle's Sister: A Poetics of Abandonment', *Critical Inquiry* 10 (1983), 61-81, and his book on the same subject, *Abandoned Women and Poetic Tradition* (Chicago 1988).

28. Note the potentially subversive erotic undertones of all these nouns for Ovid's 'condition'. Williams (n.15 above, 84f.) discusses Ovid's poetic madness as part of the general unhappiness of his exile, but also as a mental state traditionally associated with poetic inspiration. He sees an erotic presence, however, in *Tr.* 5.13 (*ibid.* 124ff.), where Ovid transfers symptoms of love-sickness to his exilic state. He draws some important conclusions from these observations (*ibid.* 127): 'And yet the allusive presence of so many erotic motifs in *Tr.* 5.13, with no attempt made to conceal their literary origins in their new exilic context, suggests that Ovid's break with his erotic past is not quite as complete as he would have us believe in *Tr.* 5.1 and elsewhere.'

29. This is the interpretation accepted by most critics: see e.g. Nagle (n.1 above), 71; Williams (n.15 above), 89. See the similar approach to letter-writing as a cure for grief in Cicero, e.g. *ad Att.* 9.10.1; 12.39.2.

30. His stated inability to stop himself is yet another poetic stance, of course. This kind of pathology also appears in the *Ibis*, that 'exercise in compulsive frustration'; see G.D. Williams, 'On Ovid's *Ibis*: A Poem in Context', *PCPS* n.s. 38 (1992), 171-89, and also *PCPS* suppl. vol. 19.

31. See *Tr.* 3.14.43-47; 5.7.53-58; 5.12.55-58.

32. It is a telling moment when Phyllis tries to find something 'real' or stable to swear by: she tries to swear by Demophoon's grandfather, but then catches herself short and exclaims *nisi fictus et ille est* ('unless he too is a fiction', *Her.* 2.37).

33. This is discussed briefly in Rahn (n.10 above), 119. But Rahn goes on to argue that Ovid's style shifts gradually from a distanced or ironic treatment of themes in earlier works (e.g. *Heroides*) to a more direct artistic self-portrayal in the exilic works; I disagree with this interpretation, as I will make clear later.

34. Further references to the wandering letter: *Tr.* 3.7 (to Perilla); *Ex Pont.* 1.1; 3.9; 4.5. For a discussion, see Nagle (n.1 above), 82-90.

35. Again, in the case of the many different ways in which Ovid portrays his books as forlorn and powerless, Ovid projects a miserable situation but offers elaborate poetic variations in his descriptions of that desolation. As G.D. Williams argues (n.15 above), there is a tension between Ovid's claim of declining poetic powers in bad circumstances and the dynamism of his poetic imagery.

36. This point was suggested to me by Sara Lindheim.

37. The following line begins (5.2.3) *pone metum* ('lay aside your fear'), a neat allusion to Acontius' reassurance to Cydippe in *Her.* 20.1: *pone metum!*

38. Rahn (n.10 above), 112 calls this poem 'eine Art Testament', and reminds us that Propertius also played with such type scenes (1.17; 1.19; 2.13; 3.6).

39. The next logical question would be whether the humour generated by the Petronian treatment is at all present in Ovid's rendition. The answer will vary with the individual reader.

40. On this point see Rahn (n.10 above), 112-14.

41. Equally unrelenting is Hypsipyle's lengthy vision of revenge on her rival Medea (*Her.* 6.147-51). On a lighter note, Ovid creates a dialogue in *Tr.* 5.1 with a reader who objects to the bad quality of his verse.

42. Note the flexibility (self-contradictory nature?) of the argument: his erotic poetry does not accurately reflect his chaste life, but here his sad life in exile is indeed reflected in his equally sad poetry: see also *Ex Pont.* 3.9.49: *musa mea est index nimium quoque uera malorum* ('My Muse is only too true a witness of my sufferings'). I will return to this issue towards the end of this paper, but it is worthy saying here that this line of flexible argument certainly implies a parallel flexibility in the self-presentation of the writer. Ovid manipulates his persona to suit his literary needs at any given moment.

43. Nagle (n.1 above), 28-32, offers some interesting observations on Ovid's use of language which equates exile with civic, physical, and also poetic death, i.e. the end of his career as a major poet. Ovid stages a funeral both for himself (*Tr.* 1.3) and for his poetry (*Tr.* 1.7: the *Metamorphoses*), which he wishes to suppress on the model of Vergil's *Aeneid*.

44. On this subject, see in particular Williams (n.15 above), 50-99, on e.g. *Tr.* 3.14.37-40; 5.12.53-58. As he says, 'it is in a context which, paradoxically, laments the decline of his talent that Ovid's creative facility and allusive technique are most fully active' (57).

45. This passage is discussed in Williams (n.15 above), 60; see also S. Hinds, 'Booking the Return Trip: Ovid and *Tristia* 1', *PCPS* 31 (1985), 13-32, esp. 14.

46. On such conventions see Kirfel (n.8 above) *passim*, but esp. 29-32, and Rahn (n.10 above), 112f.; see also Williams (n.15 above), 122f., who notes, on the conventional opening greeting of *salutem mittere*, that 'the epistolary format of *Tr.* 5.13 lends itself to creative exploitation of the language of sickness and health'. On *salutem mittere* vs. *dicere* as a way to emphasise the writer's distance from his addressee, see Davisson (n.9 above), 240. For further play with *salus* in the opening lines, see e.g. *Her.* 4 (Phaedra), and 16 (Paris), discussed in Williams (1994), 124f., and *Ex Pont.* 1.10. Epistolary *uale* occurs in the last lines of *Her.* 9.168; 20.242; 21.248. The word occurs internally at moments of emotional leavetaking: *Her.* 5.51; 12.56; 13.14; 15.100; there is also an internal *uale* in *Tr.* 1.8.26.

47. This is discussed briefly in Kirfel (n.8 above), 27f.

48. On this connection between letters and *amicitia*, see Williams (n.15 above), 116-28.

49. Rahn (n.10 above, 111f.) compares Ovid's behaviour in this farewell scene (*Tr.* 1.3) to that of heroines in the *Heroides*: 'Hatte in den *Heroides* eine Laodamia, Ariadne, Penelope geklagt wie eine vom Leid getroffene Römerin, so klagt nun ein vom Leid getroffener Römer wie die Heroen und Heroinen der troianischen Zeit.'

50. In *Tr.* 5.5.43, Ovid writes that the day of his wife's birth brought forth a character comparable in chastity and prudence to that of *illis heroisin* (Salmasius' correction of *heroibus*).

51. E.J. Kenney, 'The Poetry of Ovid's Exile', *PCPS* n.s.11 (1965), 37-49, reminds us that *Tr.* 1.6 is not a personal poem, and that we should not blame Ovid for what we perceive to be a boasting tone, praising his wife as a reflection of his own poetic reputation. He also comments on the choice of *comparanda* (40): 'In comparing his wife to Andromache or Penelope Ovid was not paying her an empty and formal compliment but bestowing on her the highest praise that he, a poet, could conceive.'

52. Cf. Kenney (n.51 above), 39, who puts it slightly differently: 'The *exempla* are chosen because the men in question were famous poets, for the women were almost certainly not their wives but their mistresses.' I think the point here is not marital status, but rather historical vs. fictional identity.

53. There is some confusion on the ordering of these lines; I adopt the transposition given by modern commentators, e.g. G. Luck, *P. Ovidius Naso Tristia* (Heidelberg 1967), 52. On the first book of the *Tristia* in general, see also Hinds (n.45 above).

54. His affiliation to Odysseus is facilitated by his favourite comparison of Penelope to his wife; see *Tr.* 5.5.3-4, where he imagines himself as Odysseus, far away at the edges of the earth on his wife's birthday.

55. S. Besslich, 'Ovids Winter in Tomis. Zu *trist.* III 10', *Gymnasium* 79 (1972), 190, asserts another view: 'Wenn die Spätdatierung dieser Briefe richtig ist, so sind sie die letzten erotischen Gedichte vor der Verbannung und damit besonders geeignet, wenn der Dichter Beispiele sucht, um glaubhaft zu machen, dass von ihm fernerhin nichts dergleichen mehr zu erwarten ist.'

56. I quote Maria Wyke, 'Taking the Woman's Part: Engendering Roman Love Elegy', in A.J. Boyle (ed.), *Roman Literature and Ideology* (Bendigo 1995), 110-28, esp. 116. See also C. Edwards, *The Politics of Immorality in Ancient Rome* (Cambridge 1993), 63-97.

57. This line of thought was suggested to me by Sara Lindheim.

58. On this see H. Fränkel, *A Poet Between Two Worlds* (Berkeley 1945), 125ff. Ovid also refers to Acontius and Leander in *A.A.* 1.455-58, 2.249f. For a detailed comparison of *Tr.* 3.10 with *Her.* 18 (Leander), see Besslich (n.55 above), 186-89.

59. See S. Mariotti, 'La Carriera Poetica di Ovidio', *Belfagor* 12 (1957), 609-35, esp. 633: 'Ovidio diventa un "personaggio" della propria poesia come le dolenti eroine delle epistole amorose.' Similarly Williams (n.15 above), 49: 'An exile who creates an "unreal" picture of his circumstances in exile by manipulating his "facts" to creative advantage,' or, on the *Ars* (*ibid.* 170): 'As soon as Ovid argues that the material of the *Ars* is not a valid depiction of his personal character, the extent to which *any* of his material can be taken as truly reflecting a real inner self is immediately open to question.' On this theme, see also *Tr.* 2.353-58.

60. Ovid never has a heroine resort to this threat, i.e., that she has the power through writing to tarnish the reputation of her beloved. In this way, although otherwise their situations are so similar, he distinguishes his own poetic voice in the *Tristia* from those of his female characters in the *Heroides*.

61. Rahn (n.10 above, 115) reads these great names from classical mythology as vivid embodiments of human emotional situations and relationships.

62. Rahn (n.10 above, 116-18) argues that Odysseus is different in nature from Ovid's other models of friendship and courage, and actually resembles a 'Leitmotiv' in Ovid's exile poetry. Williams (n.15 above, 107-11) also discusses this syncrisis and its relationship to the first part of the poem on friendship. Odysseus appears as a character in love elegy also in Prop. 4.8 and Tib. 1.3.

63. He is, of course, already following his own advice and, as the best of the *docti poetae*, writing his own *mala*.

64. Williams (n.15 above, 113) notes the programmatic language in these passages about hardness (epic) and softness (elegy), war and love.

65. Williams (n.15 above), 108.

66. Williams (n.15 above), 109.

67. Rahn (n.10 above, 145) argues for a logical artistic progression from the earlier epistolary experiments to the later, stating that the *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto* are the *telos* of the genre begun with the *Heroides*. While I agree that there is no huge gap between the pre- and post-exilic works, and that many of the same attitudes are present in both works, I hesitate to interpret them teleologically, for this again would automatically and unfairly denigrate the earlier material.

68. In labelling these stories 'literary' instead of 'mythical', I accept the argument of P. Knox (n.8 above, 18-25), who suggests a literary point of reference behind each of the single *Heroides*.

69. Rahn (n.10 above, 144f.) puts it well: 'Ist er so heillos routiniert und rhetorisiert, dass alles nur Mache, unecht, Gefühlssurrogat, Kitsch ist?' I particularly like the use of the word 'Kitsch' to describe some of Ovid's practice.

70. On issues of truth and lying in ancient poetry, see M. Puelma, 'Der Dichter und die Wahrheit in der griechischen Poetik von Homer bis Aristoteles', *MH* 46 (1989), 65-100, and L. H. Pratt, *Lying and Poetry from Homer to Pindar* (Ann Arbor 1993).

THE ROLE OF THE BOOK IN TRISTIA 3.1

Carole Newlands

The third book of the *Tristia* is the first to have been written in Tomis, Ovid's place of exile. The long journey from Rome, the subject of the first book of the *Tristia*, is over. The distractions of the journey can no longer sustain him, and his only pleasure is to weep, in other words to write the elegy of lament:

> dum tamen et uentis dubius iactabar et undis,
>   fallebat curas aegraque corda labor:
> ut uia finita est, et opus requieuit eundi,
>   et poenae tellus est mihi tacta meae,
> nil nisi flere libet...
>
> (*Tr.* 3.2.15-19)[1]

But while in turmoil I was being tossed around by winds and waves, my worries and sad heart were distracted by the battle for survival. Now that the journey is over, the effort involved in travel is spent, and the land of my punishment has been reached, weeping is my only pleasure.

In the third book of the *Tristia*, Ovid starts to face the grim reality of Tomis. Yet he can still travel through the poetic imagination; as he says in *Tr.* 3.2, Rome and its longed for, familiar places steal often into his thoughts: *Roma domusque subit desideriumque locorum* (21). In *Tr.* 3.1 Ovid returns to Rome via his poetry book, wittily personified as a provincial visitor who is somewhat fearful and breathless with wonder at the magnificent sites of Augustan Rome.[2] Through the reported experience of the poetry book Ovid reveals his love for the city but also his deep feeling of alienation from it, for his longing for Rome is complicated by the painful realisation that the city has rejected him. *Tr.* 3.1 directly expresses the poet's anxiety about the reception and the preservation of his poetry in a city that has failed to understand him.

Tr. 3.1, which was composed at Tomis, has rightly been regarded as a sequel to *Tr.* 1.1, a poem in which Ovid, voyaging towards his place of exile, orders his poetry book to travel to Rome on his behalf: *tu tamen i pro me, tu, cui licet, aspice Romam* ('you go on my behalf; you look on Rome, since you are allowed to', *Tr.* 1.1.57).[3] Nonetheless, there are significant differences between the two companion pieces. For instance, in *Tr.* 1.1 the poet anticipates a public indulgent towards his poetry book and even, perhaps, imperial pardon.[4] In *Tr.* 3.1 the book, upon its imagined arrival in Rome, experiences a very different