

Locus Amoenus and *Locus Horridus* in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*❖

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates several aspects of the sophisticated deployment of the literary tradition of the *locus amoenus* (“pleasant place”) and *locus horridus* (“fearful place”) in the *Metamorphoses* of the Roman poet Ovid. Ovid draws on a series of poetic conventions associated with such literary landscapes in the work of his Augustan predecessors. Elegiac poets such as Tibullus imagine dallying with their mistresses in peaceful landscapes far away from the strife of war, political competition, or urban disorder. In the *Eclogues* of Vergil, the *locus amoenus* may function as a site of poetic power, where the landscape itself both inspires and responds to the singer. In contrast to the pleasure and inspiration associated with these sites elsewhere in Augustan literature, the *locus amoenus* in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* often becomes the site of violent rapes and physical transformations. For example, Jupiter's rape of Callisto occurs in such a pleasant spot, as does Narcissus' fatal act of self-contemplation. The peace and beauty of these sites are set in deliberate contrast with the violence of the actions that occur within them. The *locus horridus* in the *Metamorphoses* is typically inhabited by personifications such as *Somnus* (Sleep) or *Fames* (Hunger). *Somnus*' sleep-inducing castle and the bare crag occupied by *Fames* show the inseparability of the personifications from their functions. They transform the landscape as well as their human victims into versions of themselves. Both types of Ovidian *locus* inspire the description of similar allegorical sites in later medieval and Renaissance poetry.

This paper examines how the descriptions of such places in the *Metamorphoses* form part of the poem's construction of its physical, moral, and literary universe. The vision developed

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throughout the *Metamorphoses* of the relationship between human being and natural landscape contrasts sharply with earlier Latin poetry. The metamorphosis of characters into parts of the natural landscape (Daphne into a laurel tree; Cyane into a pool, and so forth) disturbs the stable boundaries that might otherwise be drawn between figure and background. Such descriptions also serve aetiological purposes: the poem points to the features of today's landscape as authority for the events narrated within it. Ovid's descriptions of landscape, finally, are always intertextual and metapoetic. By showing the operations of *amor* (passion), *cupido* (desire), *furor* (madness), and other passions on both character and landscape, they assist the poet in defining the character of a multigeneric work that combines aspects of both epic and elegiac literary tradition.

KEY WORDS: Roman, epic, Ovid, landscape, rape, personification

奧維德《變形記》裡「優勝之地」 與「可怖之地」之探討

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摘 要

本文探討在《變形記》裡，羅馬詩人奧維德嫻熟地安排文學傳統中「優勝之地」與「可怖之地」場景的諸多面向。奧維德採用了古羅馬奧古斯都時代前輩詩人文學作品裡關於風景描繪的傳統，如輓歌詩人提布魯斯（Tibullus）想像與情婦們嬉遊於桃花源之中，遠離戰爭煩擾、政治角力、都市喧囂；或維吉爾《牧歌》裡擁有詩意力量的優勝之地，能激發且回應歌者。然而相對的，這些奧古斯都時代文學裡原先與歡愉、靈感相連的優勝之地，竟成了《變形記》裡經常發生強暴、身體變形的地點。如宙斯強暴卡莉絲托（Callisto）；如納西色瑟斯（Narcissus）帶有毀滅性質的顧影自憐，皆發生於風光明媚之所。這些地點的優美與平靜被作者刻意安排與發生的暴行做為對比。《變形記》裡的可怖之地則矗滿了典型的擬人化用法：如睡眠（Somnus）擁有令人昏沉欲眠的城堡；飢餓（Fames）佔據光禿的峭壁，這些概念的擬人化與其作用緊密相連。風景與在其中受難者皆是這些概念自身的變化形式。這兩種奧維德式的「地點」是之後中古詩與文藝復興詩裡寓言化地點的濫觴。

本文檢驗描述上述地點如何於《變形記》裡建構物質、道德以及文學等各層面。這種由《變形記》發展出來關於人類與自然景物的關聯與早期拉丁詩形成強烈對比。詩中角色變化為自然景物擾亂了景物與人物的穩固界線。（如達芬妮變為月桂樹，西雅涅化為池水，等等）。此類描述也帶有說明性的目的：詩裡提及事件地點今日的樣貌，證明了詩中敘述事件發生過。最後，奧維德詩內的風景永遠帶有互文的、

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與後設詩文的意涵。藉著描繪激情（*amor*）、慾望（*cupido*）、瘋狂（*furor*）及其他情感在人物及景物上的作用，作者藉此確認多文類作品結合史詩與輓歌的文學傳統特色。

關鍵詞：羅馬、史詩、奧維德、風景、強暴、擬人化

The ancient commentator Servius explains the rhetorical figure of *topothesia* as “a *locus* invented following poetic license” (*topothesia est, id est fictus secundum poeticam licentiam locus*, Servius ad *Aen.* 1.159). This paper surveys a number of Ovid's purposes in employing this poetic license in the *Metamorphoses*. The largest poetic *locus*, the world itself, is created and refashioned three times in Ovid's epic: at first in the Creation episode (*Met.* 1.21-75), next after the Flood sent by Jupiter (1.313-47), and the third time after Phaethon's wild ride (2.401-10). In other episodes, characters metamorphose into features of the natural landscape. Weeping transforms Phaethon's sisters into trees (*Met.* 2.340-66), the nymph Cyane into a pool (5.425-37), the boastful queen Niobe into a mountain ridge (6.310-12), and so on. Alterations to features of the natural landscape in turn affect the direction of this aleatory narrative. Ovidian landscapes in the process of undergoing dynamic change occasion episodes that at times seem to have only the most perfunctory logical connections. Examples of episodes that occur as apparently fortuitous results of landscape change include the following: as Jupiter restores the landscape after its near-destruction by Phaethon, he catches sight of the nymph Callisto and makes her one of his most pitiable rape victims (*Met.* 2.401-40), while the flooding of the river Achelous halts the journey of the hero Theseus and occasions the narrating of numerous inset tales (8.547-9.97).

Any form of landscape description will necessarily be significant in a poem that shows a world continually being altered through divine intervention. What then of the descriptions of more static landscapes? The templates for landscape description in rhetorical treatises and the neoclassical overuse of landscape description, particularly of pleasant places, have often disaffected modern readers. We are tempted to dismiss such ekphrases as a paint-by-numbers approach to constructing narrative, a generic requirement typically completed perfunctorily. For Roman poets, however, landscapes always come laden with both ethical and generic significance.¹ Farmland, gardens, rivers, sacred groves, urban landscapes and villas can all be associated with the discourses of particular Roman literary genres, while ekphrases of these settings can function as motifs employed cross-generically.² For the

¹ In general, see Thomas *Lands*. On landscapes in Roman epic, see most recently McIntyre; in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, see Segal.

² On farmland in Virgil's *Georgics*, see Farrell. On gardens, see Myers; Henderson *Hortus*. On rivers, see Jones. On sacred groves, see Leigh. On urban landscapes, see Welch. On villas, see Henderson *Morals*.

Roman orators, the term *locus* can refer simultaneously to a physical location in the real world and also to a passage within a given text (*Oxford Latin Dictionary* s.v. *locus* 23). The rhetorical writings of Cicero and Quintilian provide instruction in a memorization technique that literalizes the connection between these two meanings of *locus*. In order to remember a lengthy speech, the speaker ought to visualize proceeding through the parts of speech by associating each one with a different *locus*, such as the various rooms of a house.³ Ovidian *loci* have similar associations with both the real world, the fictional world created in the poem, and the worlds created in other texts in which similar textual *loci* appear. We read Ovid's descriptions of pleasant groves not with real-world experience of such landscape features in mind but rather with attention to the traditions of landscape description in prior Greek and Roman poetry.

In this paper, I shall examine how Ovid's ekphrases of two different types of setting form part of the poem's construction of its moral and generic universe. These are the beautiful, secluded "pleasant place" (*locus amoenus*) and the "fearful place" (*locus horridus*) inhabited by allegorized personifications of human emotions or physical states. Though drawing on a number of traditional literary genres, especially elegy and pastoral, the vision developed throughout the *Metamorphoses* of the relationship between human being and natural landscape offers several essential contrasts with earlier Latin poetry. As indicated by the examples given above of the loose transitions in the Callisto and Achelous episodes, Ovid's fifteen-book collection of transformation stories lacks the logical connections and chronological linkages typically associated with epic narrative. Repeated descriptions of similar landscapes instead provide the narrative with a "homogeneous spatial reality" (Segal 7) in place of a diegetic one. The metamorphosis of characters into parts of the natural landscape, however, disturbs the stable boundaries that might otherwise be drawn between the human figure and the landscape background. Ovid's landscape ekphrases also

³ Both Cicero and Quintilian refer to *loci/loca* in their description of this memory technique: "Many *loci* must be used, ones that are clear, well-defined, and separated by moderate intervals" (*locis est utendum multis, illustribus, explicatis, modicis interuallis*, Cicero *De Oratore* 2.358). "They choose *loca* that are as spacious as possible, characterized by great variety, perhaps a great house divided into many rooms" (*loca deligunt quam maxime spatiosa, multa uarietate signata, domum forte magnam et in multos diductam recessus*, Quintilian *Institutio Oratoria* 11.2.18). Some ancient writers credited the invention of this memory technique to the Greek poet Simonides, though both Cicero and Quintilian expressed doubts; cf. Cicero *De Oratore* 2.351-354, 357, Quintilian *Institutio Oratoria* 11.2.11-16. For discussion, see Yates.

expose the fiction of harmony that other poetic genres presuppose between the human singer and the resonant landscape. The landscape may be resonant for the wrong reasons, as in the story of the nymph Echo, or the pleasant background may become the setting for acts of violence, as in many of Ovid's rape narratives. Landscape ekphrases can also serve a self-reflexive aetiological purpose. The poem points to features visible in today's landscape as evidence for the narrator's credibility in narrating the mythical events of the poem. Ovid's narrator urges us to believe in the truth of the story of the metamorphosis of Daphne, for example, because we can see the real laurel wreath today in its privileged location on the emperor's doorposts (*Met.* 1.562-63).

Locus Amoenus

I begin with discussion of the *locus amoenus*, the "pleasant place". In his influential study of Ovidian landscapes, Charles Segal succinctly defines the typical characteristics of this setting: "A secluded grove, quiet water, shade, coolness, soft grass, sometimes rocks or a cavern, are the usual attributes" (Segal 4; see also Schönbeck, Curtius 192-95). The opening lines of Virgil's *Eclogues*, composed in the generation before the *Metamorphoses*, present some of the principal features of the *locus amoenus* in Roman poetry:

Tityre, tu patulae recubans sub tegmine fagi
siluestrem tenui Musam meditaris auena;
nos patriae finis et dulcia linquimus arua.
nos patriam fugimus; tu, Tityre, lentus in umbra
formosam resonare doces Amaryllida siluas.

(Virgil, *Eclogues* 1.1-5, qtd. in Mynors 1)

I provide John Dryden's 1697 translation, produced in an era far more sympathetic than our own to pastoral lyric:

Beneath the shade which beechen boughs diffuse,
You, Tityrus, entertain your sylvan muse:
Round the wide world in banishment we roam,
Forced from our pleasing fields and native home:
While stretched at ease you sing your happy loves;

And Amarillis fills the shady groves.⁴

Virgil draws on a lengthy tradition of pastoral poetry, stretching back at least to the Greek pastoral poet Theocritus in the 3rd century BC, that associates the production of song with the *locus amoenus*. Tityrus' inspiration comes from the location itself, where the "sylvan muse" (*siluestram Musam*) resides. He is "at ease in the shade" (*lentus in umbra*), and shade is a requirement in the hot Mediterranean climate if the singer would indeed be at ease. His poetic production is intimately attuned to a responsive landscape. When Meliboeus tells him that "you teach the woods to resound 'pretty Amaryllis'" (*formosam resonare doces Amaryllida siluas*), the woods become figured not as mere background for the action but as an agent that can be made to participate through the intervention of a skilled singer. As we shall see immediately below, the singer's power over nature reaches its acme in the performance of Orpheus, who can actually compel trees to uproot themselves and follow him. Within the *locus amoenus*, the singer produces a love song, as suggested here by the excerpt "pretty Amaryllis."⁵ While Roman elegy may also treat such subject matter (James 3-34), pastoral eschews elegy's unending rivalries and inconsolable separations, along with its urban setting. Though pastoral characters are certainly aware of violence at the boundaries of the pastoral world—Meliboeus has just been forcibly dispossessed from his land, for example—violence does not actually occur in the pleasant setting itself. As we shall see, the tranquillity of the pastoral setting contrasts with the violent narratives of rape and metamorphosis associated with the *locus amoenus* in Ovid's epic.

The opening speech in Virgil's first *Eclogue* points to Tityrus' great good fortune in being at ease on his own land, whilst its unfortunate speaker Meliboeus must wander dispossessed through the world. As Tityrus explains, his right to reside in this *locus amoenus* was secured for him by the intervention of Octavian (better known to us today as the emperor Augustus, the title he later adopted), and as a result Tityrus will always regard his benefactor as a god (*Eclogue* 1.6-10). The woods that resound to Tityrus' song help the singer

⁴ Quoted from Dryden 1.129 (qtd. in Forst and Dearing 73). For introductions to the European pastoral tradition, see Hubbard and Rosenmeyer.

⁵ Thus the Roman scholar Varro apparently provided a false etymological derivation of the word *amoenus*, "pleasant," from *amor*, "love"; cf. Isidore, *Etymologiae* 14.8.33, Hinds "Landscape" 131, Maltby s.v. *amoenus*.

to demonstrate his harmony with the landscape, but what if he had not received its possession from his benefactor? In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the greatest of all singers, the poet Orpheus, achieves through the power of song alone what the singer Tityrus in the *Eclogues* needed to request from the politically powerful. When Orpheus finds himself in an landscape that lacks trees and shade and is thus wholly unsuitable for the production of poetry, he calls the trees to him to create a *locus amoenus*:

collis erat collemque super planissima campi
area, quam uiridem faciebant graminis herbae.
umbra loco deerat; qua postquam parte resedit
dis genitus uates et fila sonantia mouit,
umbra loco uenit. non Chaonis abfuit arbor,
non nemus Heliadum, non frondibus aesculus altis,
nec tiliae molles, nec fagus et innuba laurus . . . (*Met.* 10.86-92,
qtd. in Miller II. 70)

In keeping with the theme of a Renaissance conference, I provide Arthur Golding's 1567 translation of the *Metamorphoses*:

There was a hyll, and on the hyll a verie leuell plot,
Fayre greene with grasse. But as for shade or covert was there not.
As soone as that this Poet borne of Goddes, in that same place
Sate downe and toucht his tuned strings, a shadow came apace.
There wanted neyther Chaons tree, nor yit the trees to which
Fresh Phaetons susters turned were, nor Beeche, nor Holme,
nor Wich,
Nor gentle Asp, nor wyvelesse Bay, nor lofty Chestnuttree.
(tr. Golding 203)

This passage narrating the creation of a *locus amoenus* results in the inclusion of the traditional elements of grass, trees, and shade. In lieu of attributing resonance to the *locus* itself, Ovid places Orpheus' song in a recursive relationship with the poetic landscape. Through his song, the singer creates a landscape that is in turn the ideal setting defined by the poetic tradition for the production of song (Wheeler 94-116). Ovid thereby questions the assumption that the resonance of the poetic landscape is somehow prior to

the singer's production, a property of the *locus* itself rather than of the creating poet. The description of the landscape confirms not only the power of Orpheus' divine song but also the aetiologies included in earlier parts of Ovid's epic narrative. It is at once both an intertextual *locus* that draws upon pastoral and elegy and an intratextual *locus* that directs the reader back to earlier passages of the *Metamorphoses* itself. Just as the setting in which Orpheus sings alludes to the pastoral tradition of the *locus amoenus* encapsulated in the opening lines of Virgil's *Eclogues*, so the content of his song is drawn from elegy. Orpheus sings of "boys loved by the gods and girls astonished by forbidden passions" (*puerosque canamus / dilectos superis inconcessisque puellas / ignibus attonitas*, *Met.* 10.152-54). Both the erotic content and the generic marker—the announcement that the singer has need for "a lighter lyre" (*nunc opus est leuiore lyra*, *Met.* 10.152) than the weightier instrument associated with epic—point to the traditions of elegiac poetry. In a generic composite characteristic of many episodes of the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid brings together both the content and style of other poetic genres within the epic genre and the metamorphic theme.

Now for the intratextual dimension of Orpheus' grove. The catalog of trees that answer Orpheus' call goes on for several more lines, and itself includes subordinate narratives of metamorphosis, such as the transformation of the unfortunate Cyparissus (*Met.* 10.106-42). Rhetorically speaking, the narrative offers a container filled with unexpected content. Examples such as the Iliadic Catalog of Ships or the Virgilian catalog of Italian forces accustom the reader of epic to associate catalogues with the serious theme of war. As with many other catalogs in the *Metamorphoses*, such as the catalog of Actaeon's hunting dogs (*Met.* 3.206-25), the poet has employed a typical epic means of presenting information for ends not usually associated with the traditional themes of the epic genre. I wish to draw attention only to two species from the catalog of trees that attend on Orpheus. These are the *nemus Heliadum*, "the grove of the Heliades" or, in Golding's explanatory translation, "the trees to which fresh Phaetons sisters turned were"; and the *innuba laurus*, the "virgin laurel-tree," Golding's "wyvellesse Bay." Several books before, Ovid narrated how the metamorphoses of these unfortunate women gave rise to the origins of these trees. When Jupiter destroyed Phaethon, his sisters the Heliades wept for him until their bodies were transformed into trees and their tears into amber (*Met.* 2.340-66). Still earlier in the poem, the god Apollo

attempted to rape the nymph Daphne: as she fled from him, her father transformed her into a laurel tree to protect her from the god. These trees have now become part of Ovid's worldwide landscape. Though the stories of metamorphosis that generated them occur in other parts of the Greek world—Apollo chases Daphne beside the river Peneus in Thessalian Tempe (*Met.* 1.568-76) and the Heliades originate along with their brother Phaethon in Ethiopia (*Met.* 1.778)—the trees are available to be called upon from Orpheus' location in Thrace. The names by which Ovid's narrator refers to these trees, meanwhile, recall and confirm the aetiologies that the Ovidian narrator had attached to these accounts.

Both of these passages from Virgil and Ovid, as in the pastoral tradition generally, present the responsive landscape of the *locus amoenus* as the ideal location for singer and audience. In the *Metamorphoses*, however, Ovid often employs such ekphrases in order to counter the pastoral tradition's associations of peace, security, and harmony with the responsive landscape. Orpheus sings his song as an effort to console himself for his loss of his beloved wife Eurydice. In the pastoral tradition, such songs typically lead the singer to consolation: Corydon's song in Virgil's second *Eclogue* enables him to conclude that he will find another lover if the haughty Alexis spurns him, while Gallus' failure to reach such a conclusion in the tenth *Eclogue* shows his failure to understand this convention of the pastoral world that he has entered as a visitor from the world of elegiac poetry (Perkell 128-40). Not only does Ovid's Orpheus fail to console himself, even though his song goes on far longer than any pastoral poem, but the subject matter of his song even leads to his death. His narratives of homosexuality and incest infuriate the Thracian women: offended by his contempt for the love their sex would offer him, they avenge the insult by tearing Orpheus to pieces. His performance now recalls the blood sport of the urban arena rather than the peaceful song of the rural *locus amoenus*. Orpheus dies at the hands of the angry mob "just as in the amphitheatre the deer about to die in the morning arena game is the prey of the dogs."⁶ The landscape's mode of response to the singer now shifts to lamentation: the trees and rocks that he had charmed now weep for Orpheus (*Met.* 11.45-47).

Orpheus' creation of a *locus amoenus* through the power of his song

⁶ *structoque utrimque theatro / ceu matutina ceruus periturus harena / praeda canum est, Met.* 11.25-27. On such "fatal charades" in the real Roman amphitheatre, see Coleman.

might appear like an originary act of foundation. In fact, it comes long after Ovid's epic has related the invention of the pastoral genre of poetry, or at least of the genre's characteristic instrument, what John Milton called "th' oaten Flute" (Milton 75). In the first book of the poem, not long after the world itself has been created, Jupiter rapes Io and transforms her into a cow in order to conceal her from his jealous wife Juno. Juno sets her servant Argus as a guardian over her rival, a god with a hundred eyes who only ever shuts two of them at a time. Jupiter sends Mercury down to murder Argus and rescue his beloved Io (*Met.* 1.588-721). The situation is reminiscent of the elegiac genre: Jupiter plays the role of the lover shut out from access to his beloved (*exclusus amator*), Io that of the beloved, Argus her lower-status guardian (like the *ianitor* who would guard the door of an aristocratic house), Juno the jealous rival, and Mercury the go-between (James 3-34). What provides a comic variation on the typical elegiac scenario, of course, is that most of the characters are gods and the beloved currently takes the form of a cow. The remainder of the action, however, cannot be fit into an elegiac frame: it draws instead on pastoral and returns at its conclusion to an epic mode. The pastoral genre appears to be half-created at this point. In his invitation to Mercury to play his flute to him, Argus appears to be aware that pastoral song requires a *locus amoenus* featuring grass and shade: "for in no other place is there more abundant grass for cattle, and you see shade fit for shepherds" (*neque enim pecori fecundior ullo / herba loco est, aptamque uides pastoribus umbram*, *Met.* 1.681-82). Argus, however, has never before seen the flute played by Mercury. Mercury begins to relate the story of Pan's invention of the flute after his attempt to rape the nymph Syrinx results in her metamorphosis into a reed. Ovid variously refers to the instrument by all of the names employed in Virgil's *Eclogues*: as *auena* (*Met.* 1.677, cf. Virgil, *Eclogue* 1.2), *fistula* (*Met.* 1.688, cf. *Eclogue* 2.37), *harundo* (*Met.* 1.684, cf. *Eclogue* 6.8), and *calamus* (*Met.* 1.706, cf. *Eclogue* 1.10). The "slender sound" (*sonum tenuem*, *Met.* 1.708) that Pan produces on first playing the instrument recalls both the "slender flute" (*tenui...auena*, *Eclogue* 1.2) played by Virgil's Tityrus and the characteristic opposition between the "slender" genre of pastoral and the "weighty" genre of epic. The narrative of Mercury's subsequent murder of Argus is typical of epic rather than of nonviolent elegy, as well as the source of the god's typical epithet in Homeric epic, *Argeiphontes*, "slayer of Argus."

As scholars of Latin literature have recognized for well over half a

century, the poetry of the Augustan era displays a high degree of generic self-awareness. In their own work, poets comment deliberately, if often obliquely, on their choices of genre, metre, diction, subject matter, length of treatment, typical imagery, aesthetic program, stance with respect to predecessors in their generic tradition, and numerous other characteristics.⁷ Augustan poets frequently manipulate readerly expectations of the typical characteristics of a given genre by setting it in dialogue with its generic neighbors. Length, seriousness, mode of narration, and other poetic properties distinguish Ovid's epic *Metamorphoses* from the briefer pastoral *Eclogues* of Virgil; yet we have already seen some examples of affinity between the two texts. Ovid's typical approach to other genres in the *Metamorphoses* is to subsume them within a capacious epic framework. The narrative of the *Metamorphoses* stretches from the creation of the world down to the poet's own day, and includes multiple accounts of origins. Many metamorphoses result in the creation of a new plant, animal, or bird; other narratives relate the foundation of cities, populations, and human institutions.⁸ Having been created within this epic narrative, the pastoral genre remains secondary and subordinate to epic. Ovid's account of the invention of the pastoral flute is embedded within a series of rape narratives: Mercury's aborted account of the attempted rape of Syrinx occurs within the larger narrative of Jupiter's rape of Io. The foundation of a masculine poetics on the violation of a female body is a characteristic element of many Ovidian aetiological narratives. Both the flute played by the pastoral singer and the laurel crowning the successful poet originate in the attempted rape and metamorphosis of female victims, Syrinx and Daphne (Richlin 1-90). The locations characteristically associated with pastoral now provide the landscape for the action of much of the *Metamorphoses*, and will retain their associations with rape rather than Virgilian tranquillity.

⁷ The bibliography on this subject is too vast to permit summary; Thomas *Reading Virgil* and Hinds *Allusion* provide good points of entry. Classic discussions include Conte, Lieberg, Williams, and Wimmel.

⁸ Plants: e.g., the laurel tree (*Met.* 1.548-552); animals: e.g., the wolf (*Met.* 1.232-239); birds: e.g., Philomela, Procne, and Tereus (*Met.* 6.667-674). Cities: e.g., Cadmus' foundation of Thebes (*Met.* 3.1-130); populations: e.g., the generation of the Myrmidons from ants (*Met.* 7.614-660); human institutions: e.g., the new rites of Bacchus at Thebes (*Met.* 3.528-530).

The Dangers of the *Locus Amoenus*

Episodes of the *Metamorphoses* such as the death of Orpheus and the attempted rapes of Daphne and Syrinx show that Ovid's characters experience the *locus amoenus* quite differently from Virgil's Tityrus, who enjoys pleasure and safety on his own land. Other episodes from Ovid's epic add to the list of dangers associated with the responsive landscape. The Echo and Narcissus episode (*Met.* 3.339-510) shows two different kinds of deformation of the ideal relationship between speaker and responsive landscape. Echo's uncontrolled repetition of the final words of any speaker's utterance parodies the typical claim that the woods respond only to the pastoral singer's beautiful songs. Echo is condemned to respond to any sound, whether beautiful or not. What she believes is a fortuitous opportunity to communicate her passion for the beautiful Narcissus has only arisen because the young man is busy addressing words of love to his own unresponsive reflection. The stillness of the beautiful pool in which Narcissus sees his reflection (and thereby fulfills the prophecy that he will be safe so long as he does not "know himself") represents another form of responsiveness from the landscape that leads to danger; though, in this case, not a form of response based on sound. Even though he recognizes that he has fallen in love with the sight of his own reflection, he cannot move from the spot and wastes away to death. A muddy pool that did not provide a clear image might have been less beautiful than the crystalline pool of the *locus amoenus*, but would nevertheless have been safer for Narcissus.

The Cephalus and Procris episode (*Met.* 7.796-862) similarly associates the responsive landscape with fatal danger. The jealous wife Procris learns that her husband Cephalus calls out "Aura" when he goes out hunting. She assumes that *aura*, the word for "breeze" in Latin, is actually the name of a nymph. As a good reader of Roman poetry, she also assumes that the pleasant landscapes in which her husband hunts are suitable locations for adultery. So she follows her husband into the woods in an attempt to surprise him in the act. Meanwhile, Cephalus thinks he has heard an animal moving in the woods and accidentally kills his wife with a cast of his magical hunting spear that never misses—one of several examples of the foolish Cephalus' failures to benefit from the gods' gifts. As Procris dies, Cephalus learns of her jealousy and she learns of his innocence. Had Cephalus not called out to the cool breeze, a typical feature of the *locus amoenus*, this tragedy might have been averted.

As the foregoing examples suggest, the *locus amoenus* in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is not generally a site for the leisurely production of song in the manner of Virgil's first *Eclogue*. Most are instead the sites of danger, and a typical Ovidian narrative of the epic contrasts the beauty of the site with the violence of the action that transpires within it. As Stephen Hinds observes, such episodes take "the form of a 'paradise lost'" (Hinds, "Landscape" 130). Persephone's rape by her uncle Dis, the king of the underworld, is one of the most famous cases in point:

haud procul Hennaeis lacus est a moenibus altae,
nomine Pergus, aquae; non illo plura Caystros
carmina cynorum labentibus audit in undis.
silua coronat aquas cingens latus omne suisque
frondibus ut uelo Phoebeos submouet ictus.
frigora dant rami, uarios humus umida flores;
perpetuum uer est. quo dum Proserpina luco
ludit et aut uiolas aut candida lilia carpit,
dumque puellari studio calathosque sinumque
inplet et aequales certat superare legendo,
paene simul uisa est dilectaque raptaque Diti
. . . (*Met.* 5.385-395)

Not far from Henna's walls there is a deep pool of water, Pergus by name. Not Cayster on its gliding waters hears more songs of swans than does this pool. A wood crowns the heights around its waters on every side, and with its foliage as with an awning keeps off the sun's hot rays. The branches afford a pleasing coolness, and the well-watered ground bears bright-coloured flowers. There spring is everlasting. Within this grove Proserpina was playing, and gathering violets or white lilies. And while with girlish eagerness she was filling her basket and her bosom, and striving to surpass her mates in gathering, almost in one act did Pluto see and love and carry her away . . .

(tr. Miller I 264-65)

This extensive description of a *locus amoenus* develops many of the elements touched upon only very briefly in the Orpheus episode. Many

elements of this description derive from the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (7th/6th c. BC; Hinds, *Metamorphosis* 51-98). As Stephen Hinds' well-received study of the Persephone episode demonstrates, it is also replete with metapoetic signals. On the literal level, the song of swans produces the music of the landscape. By evoking the traditional metaphorical association of swan and poet, the narrator creates an opportunity to comment both on his deliberate choice of an alternate mythical tradition and the greater fame that accrues to his telling. In other versions, the rape of Persephone takes place in the Nysian plain of Caria, as the narrator signals through the contrast with the river Caÿter. But according to the narrator, his version set in Sicily has more poetic currency—or, in the metaphorical language of the ekphrasis, more swan song (Hinds, *Metamorphosis* 44-48). The abundant growth of vegetation creates both the beautiful prospect and the temperate climate desiderated by pastoral singers. The comparison to a theatre curtain (*uelo*), however, points in this case not to the peaceful performances ideally associated with the pastoral singers of the *locus amoenus*, but to Persephone's upcoming role as a participant in a violent spectacle stage-managed by the unscrupulous Cupid (Hinds *Metamorphosis* 33-35). The perpetual spring (*perpetuum uer*) recalls the Golden Age (*uer erat aeternum*, *Met.* 1.107), occurring at the beginning of the world in Ovid's narrative and concluded before the present iron race of human beings comes to occupy the world. A memory of the Golden Age has been anachronistically preserved here in Persephone's mythical Sicily, one which John Milton would evoke in an effort to supersede it in his description of the Garden of Eden in *Paradise Lost*.⁹ The rape of Persephone will ultimately result in the introduction of winter into the world's seasonal cycle (*Met.* 5.564-571), an alteration to the conditions of human existence comparable to the passing of the Golden Age. The distinction between pastoral and epic landscapes can be expressed in terms of the scale and consequence of the events that transpire within them: nothing of comparable worldwide significance occurs in a pastoral *locus amoenus*.

The association between flowers and virginity, both male¹⁰ and female, is a *topos* of Greco-Roman literature, and so the virginal Persephone's

⁹ "Not that fair field / Of Enna, where Proserpine gathering flowers / Her self a fairer flower by gloomy Dis / Was gathered, which cost Ceres all that pain / To seek her through the world" (*Paradise Lost* 4.268-272). See discussion at Martindale 315-319.

¹⁰ For example, Virgil compares the young warrior Euryalus as he dies to a flower struck by a plow (*Aeneid* 9.433-37). For discussion, see Fowler.

innocent gathering of flowers functions as a metaphorical parallel to the rape narrative that will immediately follow. The contrast between the idyllic setting, the atmosphere of childish innocence, and the grim violence that follows has drawn considerable critical attention. Such a contrast has prompted the label of “anti-pastoral” (Segal 74-85), but more recent readers have observed that some events in the pastoral world no more match the ideal suggested by their beautiful setting. Amy Richlin observes that many episodes of violence in the *Metamorphoses*, such as the more than fifty rape narratives in the epic, are similarly located in visually attractive settings and related in the characteristically light and witty tone for which the Ovidian narrator has been much admired. Richlin argues that “content is never arbitrary or trivial,” and that the effects of these episodes cannot be “nullified” by narratorial distance, perspective, or tone (Richlin 158-59, 168). In many of these episodes, the horror of the violent act itself is accentuated by the concomitant betrayal of the promise of security implied by the beauty and isolation of the *locus amoenus*. Ovid presents an unsafe world in the *Metamorphoses*, one subject at any moment to change as the result of the interventions of unscrupulous rapists, aggressive gods, and implacable fate.

Locus Horridus

The pleasant places of the first five books of the *Metamorphoses* would provide subsequent painters, gardeners, and theatrical set designers with a series of richly imagined landscapes.¹¹ The fearful places of the epic are at once less well known and more fully individuated. In this section, discussion focuses on the places inhabited by the personifications of Famine (*Fames*) and Sleep (*Somnus*), themselves selected from a list of Ovidian personifications that includes Jealousy (*Invidia*) and Rumor (*Fama*). Subsequent European allegorical literature, from the *Roman de la Rose* of Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun to Spenser's *Faerie Queene* and Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* would make much use of such personifications and their surroundings.¹² Ovid's Jealousy dwells in an unheated house in a dark valley buried in fog, where she subsists on a diet of snakes' flesh that causes her tongue to drip

¹¹ See Hinds “Landscape” 141-49. Even the Internet blog (personal weblog) has been compared to the *locus amoenus*: see Mortensen & Walker 259.

¹² For discussion of Ovidian personifications, see Hardie, *Ovid* 227-57. For their reception in medieval allegorical literature, see Lewis 232-296 (“Allegory as the Dominant Form”).

with poison (*Met.* 2.760-782). Rumor lives on a mountain peak equidistant from land, sea, and sky, where she can observe everything that transpires in the world; her house is made of echoing brass, and crowds bringing news continually pass through its thousand entrances (*Met.* 12.39-63). While many Ovidian narratives take place in a generic *locus amoenus*, each *locus horridus* reflects the character of the particular personification that inhabits it. Such uniquely constructed locations exemplify Philip Hardie’s observation that “in the personification resides the essence of language’s power to reshape the world in its own image” (Hardie, “Metamorphosis” 97).

Ovid’s Famine takes part in the conflict between Ceres and the presumptuous Erysichthon, who offends the goddess by chopping down her sacred grove (*Met.* 8.738-878; Tissol 67-72, Solodow 159-62). Ceres takes revenge by ordering one of her nymphs to summon Famine in order to infect Erysichthon with perpetual, insatiable hunger, which results in the man’s consumption of his entire estate and eventually of his own body. Ceres describes the Caucasus in Scythia, the place where Famine resides, as follows:

est locus extremis Scythiae glacialis in oris,
triste solum, sterilis sine fruge, sine arbore tellus.
Frigus iners illic habitant Pallorque Tremorque
et ieiuna Fames . . . (*Met.* 8.788-791, qtd. in Miller I. 460)

As a final example of a well-known Renaissance translation, I provide an excerpt from George Sandys’ 1632 version:

In frosty *Scythia* lies a land, forlorne
And barren; bearing neither fruit nor corne.
Numb Cold, pale Hew, chill Ague, there abide;
And meager *Famine*. (tr. Sandys 375)

When placed at the beginning of a hexameter line, the stereotyped phrase “there is a place” (*est locus*) provides the conventional introduction to the description of a landscape in Roman epic narrative.¹³ Ovid employs the phrase in this form three times in the *Metamorphoses* (in deliberate emulation

¹³ E.g. Ennius *Annales* 20, Virgil *Aeneid* 1.530, Statius *Thebaid* 2.32, Silius Italicus *Punica* 11.505, etc. We may look back to the beginning of the description of the site of Persephone’s rape (*Met.* 5.385) to see how Ovid varies the expected opening of the landscape ekphrasis with the phonic near-equivalent *lacus est*. See discussion at Hinds *Metamorphosis* 35-38.

of Virgil, who employs it three times in the *Aeneid*), each time seeking to vary its conventional use in the tradition through unexpected applications. When assigned to his narrator, the phrase describes not a place on earth, as would be expected, but in the sky (*Met.* 2.195). On the other two occasions, he assigns the phrase to speaking characters (as here in the Erysichthon episode), as if to suggest that they too are aware of the conventions of epic narration (*Met.* 8.788, 15.332; Feeney 340-344). Ovid's use of the phrase *est locus* here in the Erysichthon episode recalls Virgil's use of the phrase introducing the eruption of the Fury Allecto into Italy (*Aeneid* 7.563). Both Famine and Allecto are summoned by angry goddesses in order to take revenge on personal enemies, and both attack their victims through infection (Tissol 70-71).

The nymph's arrival in the Caucasus in response to Ceres' command occasions the following description of the inhospitable *locus* and the terrifying figure who inhabits it:

illa dato subuecta per aera curru
deuenit in Scythiam rigidique cacumine montis
(Caucason appellat) serpentum colla leuauit,
quaesitamque Famem lapidoso uidit in agro
unguibus et raras uellentem dentibus herbas.
hirtus erat crinis, caua lumina, pallor in ore,
labra incana situ, scabrae rubigine fauces,
dura cutis, per quam spectari uiscera possent;
ossa sub incuruis exstabant arida lumbis . . .

(*Met.* 8.796-804, qtd. in. Miller I. 460)

Taking her charriot; through the empty skies
To *Scythia* and rough *Caucasus* she flies.
There, in a stony field, sad *Famine* found;
Tearing with teeth and nailes the foodlesse ground:
With snarled haire, sunk eyes, lookes pale and dead,
Lips white with slime, thin teeth with rust ore-spred;
Through her hard skin the writhel'd guts appeare;
Her huckle-bones stuck up . . . (tr. Sandys 375)

Several of the elements of the physical description of the figure Famine recapitulate elements of the description of the uninviting landscape of the

Caucasus. Her “tough skin” (*dura cutis*) recalls the inflexibility of the “hard mountain peak” (*rigidi cacumine montis*). In contrast to the lush landscapes of the *locus amoenus*, where trees and grass grow abundantly, there is only “sparse grass” (*raras... herbas*) in Ovid’s Caucasus. The underside of the landscape is therefore visible in the “stony field” (*lapidoso... agro*) where Famine resides. Lack of nourishment similarly makes the entrails and bones of Famine’s body visible (*spectari uiscera possent, ossa... exstabant*), structures presumably concealed under a layer of properly nourished flesh for the beautiful nymphs who inhabit the typical *locus amoenus*. Famine’s “snarled hair” (*hirtus . . . crinis*) further contrasts with the nymphs’ abundant, flowing hair (e.g. *Met.* 1.497-498), just as the Caucasus differs from the *locus amoenus* through the absence of the leaves and foliage that are often called “hair” (*coma*) in Roman poetry.¹⁴ Ovid’s descriptions of Famine and her landscape draw on an association made in one of the first episodes of the *Metamorphoses* between the stones of a landscape and the bones of a human being. After the Flood, Themis instructs the last remaining human beings, Deucalion and Pyrrha, to “throw the bones of your great parent behind your back” (*ossaque post tergum magnae iactate parentis, Met.* 1.383) in order to regenerate the human race. Pyrrha eventually interprets the enigmatic order not as a command to violate her mother’s grave but throw stones, the “bones” of mother Earth, from which the regenerated human race immediately springs up. In Ovid’s Caucasus, the earth’s “bones” stick through the “stony field” (*lapidoso . . . agro*) just as the bones do on Famine’s body (*ossa . . . exstabant; cf. prodibant, Met.* 8.808).

Ovid’s description of Famine follows the typical “head to foot” method enjoined in later rhetorical manuals for describing a human body.¹⁵ Though I have excerpted only the beginning of the ekphrasis, it proceeds from Famine’s hair, head, and face down to her knees and ankles. The detailed physical descriptions of the *Metamorphoses*, essential elements of narratives about bodily transformations, provided medieval and Renaissance culture with an abundance of examples for adaptation in literature and the visual arts. In this case, Ovid’s description stresses the similarity between the goddess’s wasted body and the wasted landscape that she has produced around her. Many other

¹⁴ Ovid *Met.* 10.103, 10.648, 11.47, etc.; cf. *Oxford Latin Dictionary* s.v. *coma* 3.

¹⁵ For example, the rhetorician Aphthonius (4th/5th c. AD) recommends that ekphrases of bodies proceed “from head to foot” (ἄπὸ κεφαλῆς εἰς πόδας, 37 Rabe); see Kennedy.

episodes of the poem similarly advert to qualities shared between the figures and the landscapes in which they reside. Cyane's dissolution in weeping after Dis's assault (*Met.* 5.425-437) provides an example of the coextensiveness between water nymphs and their pools. In introducing the local Italian goddess Pomona, whose name can be easily derived from *poma* (the Latin word for apples), Ovid explains that "no other [Hamadryad] was more concerned for the fruit of the tree; from there she took her name . . . She loved the countryside and branches bearing abundant apples" (*nec fuit arborei studiosior altera fetus; / unde tenet nomen... / rus amat et ramos felicia poma ferentes*, *Met.* 14.625-27). Pomona desires to remain virginal, and takes refuge in an enclosed *pomaria* (apple orchard) in order to escape the attacks of aggressive Pans and Satyrs (*Met.* 14.635-36). The orchard's isolation recalls the hidden *locus amoenus* sought by a virginal goddess desiring privacy, such as Diana and her nymphs in the story of Actaeon (*Met.* 3.155-72). In Greco-Roman literature, however, apples are symbols of courtship, while the ripening apple waiting to be plucked is a traditional image of virginity.¹⁶ Pomona's narrative (*Met.* 14.622-771) relates how she loses her virginity through seduction by the shapechanging god Vertumnus. In his amorous overture, Vertumnus indirectly compares Pomona's loss of virginity to the plucking of an apple (*Met.* 14.687-91). Though this seduction episode is much less violent than the narrative of Persephone's rape, the comparison implicitly evokes the earlier association between the young rape victim and the plucked flower. Figure and landscape therefore appear coextensive in the stories of Cyane and Pomona as in the description of Famine.

The cave of Sleep (*Somnus*) in the Ceyx and Alcyone episode (*Met.* 11.410-748) provides the final example of a *locus horridus*. Though also a personification, Sleep is by no means a terrifying figure like Famine or Jealousy, and an errand of mercy rather than an act of vengeance prompts his entrance into the narrative. The goddess Juno takes pity on the loyal wife Alcyone, who remains unaware that her husband Ceyx has been drowned at sea, and orders Sleep to send his son Morpheus to convey this information to her in a dream. The arrival of Juno's messenger Iris at the cave of Sleep occasions the following landscape description:

¹⁶ Courtship: e.g., Atalanta and Hippomenes at Catullus 2.11-13 and Ovid *Met.* 10.560-707. Virginity: e.g., Sappho fr. 105a Lobel-Page. See Gentilcore 113.

est prope Cimmericos longo spelunca recessu,
 mons cauus, ignaui domus et penetralia Somni,
 quo numquam radiis oriens mediusue cadensue
 Phoebus adire potest; nebulae caligine mixtae
 exhalantur humo dubiaeque crepuscula lucis.
 non uigil ales ibi cristati cantibus oris
 euocat Auroram, nec uoce silentia rumpunt
 sollicitiue canes canibusue sagacior anser;
 [non fera, non pecudes, non moti flamine rami
 humanaeue sonum reddunt conuicia linguae;]
 muta quies habitat. saxo tamen exit ab imo
 riuus aquae Lethes, per quem cum murmure labens
 inuitat somnos crepitantibus unda lapillis.
 ante fores antri fecunda papauera florent
 innumeraeque herbae, quarum de lacte soporem
 Nox legit et spargit per opacas umida terras. (*Met.* 11.592-607)

Near the land of the Cimmerians there is a deep recess within a hollow mountain, the home and chamber of sluggish Sleep. Phoebus can never enter there with his rising, noontide, or setting rays. Clouds of vapour breathe forth from the earth, and dusky twilight shadows. There no wakeful, crested cock with his loud crowing summons the dawn; no watch-dog breaks the deep silence with his baying, or goose, more watchful than the dog. [There is no sound of wild beast or of cattle, of branches rustling in the breeze, no clamorous tongues of men.] There mute silence dwells. But from the bottom of the cave there flows the stream of Lethe, whose waves, gently murmuring over the gravelly bed, invite to slumber. Before the cavern's entrance abundant poppies bloom, and countless herbs, from whose juices dewy Night distils sleep and spreads its influence over the darkened lands. (tr. Miller II.162-63)

As with the Scythian Caucasus, the region inhabited by Famine, Ovid similarly locates Sleep's cave in another of the traditional "edges of the earth" (Romm). Ovid draws directly on Homer's description of the land of the Cimmerians, which emphasizes that the inhabitants live in a land blanketed by

perpetual darkness (*Odyssey* 11.14-19).¹⁷ Homer's Odysseus travels to this borderland between the living and the dead to communicate with ghosts. Sleep's errand in Ovid is similar to send a message as if from the dead to the living. While the word *est* in the initial position of the line signals the onset of a landscape description, the bulk of the passage takes the form of a negative ekphrasis. The description of Sleep's cave is developed by means of a catalog of significant absences. The sunlight, pleasant view, vegetation, birdsong and resonant landscape associated with the *locus amoenus* are all mentioned in order to emphasize their absence. Ovid repeatedly emphasizes the silence of the landscape, even if we choose to read without the lines that have only been excluded as interpolations by the poem's most recent editor (Tarrant 336). The traditional expectation of affinity between allegorical figure, function, and landscape occasions one of the best jokes in the *Metamorphoses*. When Sleep rouses himself in order to attend to Iris' command, the narrator relates that "he shook himself from himself" (*excussit tandem sibi se, Met.* 11.621).

In intertextual terms, Iris' visit to Sleep's cave evokes episodes of marital discord in previous epic. One Homeric ancestor of this episode is the "deception of Zeus" episode of the *Iliad*, where Hera asks Sleep to cause her husband to fall asleep after they make love so that she and other gods can help the struggling Achaeans on the battlefield without his knowledge (*Iliad* 14.224-291).¹⁸ The sequel to the episode emphasizes the discord between the king and queen of the gods: when Zeus discovers the trick that his wife has perpetrated on him, he threatens her by recalling how he earlier dangled her from heaven on a chain (*Iliad* 15.18-21). The sleep-inducing flowers found in this landscape recall another episode of discord between lovers, this time between Dido and Aeneas in Virgil's *Aeneid*. This episode begins with the goddess Venus forcing Dido to fall in love with Aeneas. She does so by first putting Aeneas' son Ascanius to sleep in a *locus amoenus* with the typical soft vegetation and shade that conduce to sleep (*Aeneid* 1.690-693). Venus then sends her son Cupid to Dido as a substitute in order to infect Dido with self-destructive passion that will eventually lead to her suicide. Where Zeus and Hera will quarrel through all eternity, and Dido's love for Aeneas turns to hatred, Ovid emphasizes that the love of Ceyx and Alycone has been

¹⁷ Compare, for example, Homer, *Odyssey* 11.15-16 and Ovid *Met.* 11.594-595 *quo numquam radiis oriens mediusue cadensue / Phoebus adire potest; nebulae caligine mixtae.*

¹⁸ Another, more distant parallel, is the dream sent by Zeus to Agamemnon (*Iliad* 2.1-47).

preserved despite their metamorphosis into birds: “then also their love remained, nor in bird form was their marriage pact dissolved” (*tum quoque mansit amor, nec coniugiale solutum est / foedus in alitibus*, *Met.* 11.743-744). Ovid emphasizes through allusive contrast the theme of marital concord that differentiates his Ceyx and Alcyone from the quarreling lovers of the epic tradition.

The Landscapes of Ovid’s Flavian Successors

Many of the elements of landscape ekphrasis presented by Ovid in the *Metamorphoses* would provide formative examples for later European poetry. The Earthly Paradise of Dante’s *Purgatorio* and the Garden of Eden in Milton’s *Paradise Lost* are only a few of the better known and more discussed examples.¹⁹ I conclude with a brief glance at the use of the landscape ekphrasis in two of Ovid’s more immediate successors, the less well-known poets of the Flavian era (69-96 AD).²⁰ Ovid’s mark on the Roman poetic landscape was decisive: he made the *locus amoenus* definitively associated with rape and metamorphosis, and it became the task of succeeding Roman poets to respond to this tradition inherited from the *Metamorphoses*.

Valerius Flaccus’ epic *Argonautica* relates in eight books the story of the Argonauts’ quest for the Golden Fleece and the love of their leader Jason for Medea. The epic includes a traditional episode in which a nymph falls in love with the beautiful young warrior Hylas and abducts him into her pool. Hylas’ lover Hercules goes in search of him and as a result also becomes separated from the rest of the Argonauts (*Argonautica* 3.481-740).²¹ As in Ovid, the *locus amoenus* once more serves as the setting for a rape, and there is a typically Ovidian contrast between the beauty of the site and the danger it poses to the unwitting intruder (as in, for example, Actaeon’s unsuspecting entrance into Diana’s bathing spot). Valerius has deliberately altered, however, almost all of the other narrative expectations inherited from the *Metamorphoses*. This time the genders of the actors have been reversed: it is unexpectedly a male victim who is being abducted by a female. (This story

¹⁹ In general, see Curtius. For John Milton’s use of Ovid, see the exemplary discussion in Martindale.

²⁰ On the reception of the *Metamorphoses* in Neronian and Flavian literature, see the essays collected in Tissol & Wheeler.

²¹ See McIntyre 102-110, Hershkowitz 146-159, Malamud & McGuire, and Murgatroyd.

pattern also has Ovidian precedent, however: the goddess of the Dawn abducts the beautiful Cephalus, for example [*Met.* 7.700-713]). The rape has been arranged by Juno in order to strike at her enemy Hercules, in contrast to the Ovidian rapes committed by Jupiter that usually occur in Juno's ignorance, such as the rape of Io discussed above. Shadow (*umbra*), foliage (*comae*), and sound (*sonus*), the typical elements of the description of a *locus amoenus*, are present in this setting as expected—but in this narrative they refer to the shadow (*umbra*) cast by the nymph, her hair (*comae*, which can mean both “hair” and “foliage” in Latin), and the sound (*sonus*) she makes in approaching, rather than to any element of the landscape: “the shadow and hair and sound of the nymph rising to kiss him distract him not at all” (*nil umbra comaeque / turbavitque sonus surgentis ad oscula Nymphae, Argonautica* 3.560-561). Again as expected, this *locus amoenus* is a responsive landscape, but instead of responding to a singer, it echoes the cries of the helpless lover Hercules, who cannot find his beloved no matter how hard he searches: “He calls again ‘Hylas’ and again ‘Hylas’ through the trackless distances; the woods respond and the wandering echo emulates him” (*rursus Hylan et rursus Hylan per longa reclamat / auia; responsant siluae et uaga certat imago, Argonautica* 3.596-597).²² In this episode, as in many others of the *Argonautica*, Valerius demonstrates his ability to produce creative variations on Ovidian conventions, in this case those associated with the most typical landscape of the *Metamorphoses*.

The poet Statius, best known for his twelve-book epic *Thebaid*, offers a final example of a sophisticated response to the Ovidian *locus amoenus*. In the last decade of the first century AD, he produced a collection of shorter poems in various poetic metres entitled *Silvae*. The title of the collection, “Woods,” itself signifies (among many other connotations) what Carole Newlands has justly called “a new version of pastoral.”²³ In *Silvae* 2.3, given the title “The Tree of Atedius Melior” (*Arbor Atedii Melioris*) by an unknown later editor of the collection, Statius converts the dangerous Ovidian *locus amoenus* into a safe space.²⁴ The poem sets itself the task of describing the aetiology of a tree

²² Valerius has included a deliberate echo of Virgil's thumbnail sketch of this scene, where the Argonauts cry out “so that the whole shore resounds ‘Hylas, Hylas’” (*ut litus ‘Hyla, Hyla’ omne sonaret, Eclogue* 6.44).

²³ See discussion at Newlands 36-38. For the generic connotations of the title *Silvae*, see Wray and Bright 20-49.

²⁴ On *Silvae* 2.3, see Hardie, “Statius”; Vessey; and Cancik 48-56. On poetic landscapes in the *Silvae*,

on the property of Statius' patron Atedius Melior, which has grown in an unusual fashion, dipping toward a pool and then rising up again to the sky.²⁵ The narrative employs a conventional Ovidian frame: the god Pan's attempt to rape Pholoe occasions a chase over the hills of Rome (as yet uninhabited in this narrative set in the mythological past)²⁶ and to the nymph's successful escape into a pool at a location which will one day be part of Melior's property. Pan instructs a neighboring tree to shelter the nymph by spreading its leaves and branches over her pool. The poem therefore unexpectedly eschews the violence or metamorphosis suggested by its initial rape narrative.

Numerous details of the landscape ekphrasis in this brief poem deliberately reverse the rape narratives in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. The description of the foliage that shades the pool (*Silvae* 2.3.1-5) recalls the Ovidian pool in which Arethusa is raped by Alpheus (*Met.* 5.587-591; van Dam 289). The nymph Pholoe falls asleep on the bank of Melior's pool (*Silvae* 2.3.14-17), which signals the prelude to rape in the *Metamorphoses*;²⁷ here she is awakened by Diana in time to escape into the pool (*Silvae* 2.3.20-34). To add one small but significant example of landscape overlooked in the standard commentaries: worn out from her pursuit by Pan, the exhausted Pholoe collapses "at the edge of the bank" (*marginē ripae*, *Silvae* 2.3.17). Statius echoes a line-ending that occurs only twice in the *Metamorphoses*, both times as part of similar narratives of pursuit and rape. Ovid first employs the line ending "at the edge of the bank" (*marginē ripae*) to describe Io's exhausted collapse by the bank of the Nile, after her helpless flight to escape the gadfly sent by Juno as punishment for her rape by Jupiter (*Met.* 1.729). The second and final occurrence of the line-ending in the *Metamorphoses* occurs during the narrative of Alpheus' pursuit of Arethusa (*Met.* 5.598).²⁸ Having stripped to bathe in Alpheus' pool, unaware that it is home to a lustful god, Arethusa emerges naked "at the edge of the bank" and a chase commences that concludes in her rape and metamorphosis. Collapsing

see Newlands 138-142, 164-174; on the collection's representation of the relationship between man and nature, see Pavlovskis.

²⁵ On Statius' patron Atedius Melior, the addressee of the second book, see Nauta 226-227 and White 272-275.

²⁶ For discussion of retrospectives on early Rome in Augustan poetry, see Rea.

²⁷ *Met.* 2.419-421, 11.238-240, etc.; see van Dam 298.

²⁸ Reading *ripae* with Urb²UGL and Miller; Tarrant prints *fontis*, the reading of other MSS.

at the edge of the bank is safe on Melior's property, however, and Statius' evocations of the physical characteristics of Ovidian landscapes only serve to emphasize the contrasting moral function of this setting. The conclusion of the poem offers directly stated praise of Melior's *mores* and *uirtus* (*Silvae* 2.3.64-71). The landscape description supports this claim to virtue. No violence could take place on the property "where now stands the gentle house of Melior, hospitable without deception" (*qua nunc placidi Melioris aperti / stant sine fraude lares*, *Silvae* 2.3.15-16). Instead the god Pan has blessed the site and promised to care for it. When he expressly compares the cherished tree that he commands to grow over the pool to the laurel (*Silvae* 2.3.49-52), he recalls for us that in an Ovidian narrative, the tree would most probably be like Daphne's laurel, the victim of a metamorphosis resulting from attempted rape.

Statius inverts Ovidian convention by making the *locus amoenus* a place of refuge for a threatened nymph instead of yet another quasi-pornographic narrative of violence set against a lovely backdrop. Philip Hardie accordingly speaks of the poet's "Horatianization of an Ovidian narrative setting" (Hardie, "Statius" 219). As a collection, the *Silvae* emphasize concord between human beings, harmony with nature, and favorable relationships with benign gods, a contrast to the indifferent, merciless, and hostile gods that populate both the *Metamorphoses* and Statius' own epic *Thebaid*. It is consonant with the more positive vision of the relationship between man and nature developed in the *Silvae* that the promise of pleasure and security offered by the beautiful landscape of the *locus amoenus* has finally been kept.

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