

The Female Body in Latin Love Poetry

Erika Zimmermann Damer

A dissertation submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
Department of Classics.

Chapel Hill
2010

Approved by:

Sharon James, advisor.

James O'Hara, reader.

Alison Keith, reader.

Paul Allen Miller, reader.

Eric Downing, reader.

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ABSTRACT

ERIKA ZIMMERMANN DAMER: The Female Body in Latin Love Poetry
(Under the direction of Sharon James)

This dissertation seeks to rethink the female body in Latin love elegy in its aesthetic and political significance, and argues that the sexualized body creates poetic subjectivity. It juxtaposes close readings of the elegies of Tibullus, Propertius, and Ovid alongside contemporary theorizations of the female body found in Irigaray, Kristeva, and Grosz. By expanding critical focus to encompass all the women of elegy, this dissertation demonstrates a surprising ambivalence towards the female body in a genre that claims to celebrate female beauty, and offers a new view of elegy's role within Roman conceptions of gender, sexuality, bodies, and empire.

Chapter one offers a brief introduction to contemporary feminist theories of the body as well as an overview of critical literature on the elegiac body. Chapter two examines Lucretius' diatribe against love, Horace *Epodes* 8 and 12, and the Augustan marital legislation as major background for elegy's female body. Chapter three explores the representation of elegy's "other women." The imagery of blood associates the elegiac mistress with grotesque representations of her family members, and of the elegiac procuress, the *lena*. This chapter draws on Kristeva's abject body, as well as ancient notions of feminine corporeality, to argue that the elegists make the female body a stumbling block for their speakers and that this conceptual failure is manifested in

grotesque images of the female body he catalogue of *cultus* and that Tibullus and Ovid incorporate this poetic *topos* in their own elegies. The catalogue of *cultus* substitutes descriptions of luxury goods and adornment for a coherent image of the *puella's* sexualized body in Propertius, while Tibullus uses *cultus* to respond to Propertian elegy and to Catullan invective. Chapter five finds the sexualized female body in Cynthia's and Acanthis' bodily-centered speeches. This chapter argues that Cynthia mobilizes the sexualized female body as a critique of the dominant voice of the male poet-speaker, and makes use of Irigaray's concept of *mimetisme* to link the sexualized body with an elegiac feminine voice.

Viro filiae carissimis

nos, Paulo, amoris exemplum cana simus uterque coma

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have supported me intellectually, financially, and emotionally during the course of this dissertation, and I would like to express my profound thanks to them here.

First, I give boundless thanks to Professor Sharon James, my director, for her unfailing patience, generosity, and all-around aid from day one of this dissertation. It has been a great pleasure learning most of what I know about Latin poetry, and many things I do not, but should, from her. I must also thank my incredible committee members Jim O'Hara, Alison Keith, Paul Allen Miller, and Eric Downing for their assistance, resistance, and good advice at every stage of the project. Jim O'Hara has mentored me through Latin poetry and Greek historiography, and has always generously offered his time, much-appreciated skepticism, and considerable insight into my projects. Special thanks are due as well to Ted Gellar-Goad for inviting me to participate in a panel on ancient bodies and jump-starting this project, and to Alison Keith, David Wray, and John Henkel for contributing to a great panel on Tibullus.

I have received support from the American School of Classical Studies in Athens, from the classics department at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and from Elon University during the long gestation of my dissertation, and I am grateful for the wonderful libraries, lovely accommodations, and delightful colleagues, faculty members, and students who have helped and challenged me.

I owe many thanks to Hunter Gardner, Sarah Alison Miller, and Micaela Janan for putting me on the right track at the outset, to Phiroze Vasunia, James Reeves, and Werner Reiss for sharing their boundless knowledge, and to my dear friends Arum Park, David Carlisle, Sydnor Roy, Katerina Ladianou, Hallie Franks, Curt Butera, John Henkel, Kristina Killgrove, Chris Polt, Derek Smith, Amanda Mathis, Beth Greene, Liz Robinson, Ted Gellar-Goad, Margaret Macdonald, Sarah Hilliard, and Josie Thompson for thought-provoking conversations. If I have neglected to name some here, I do not thank them less profoundly.

My eternal gratitude goes to my grandfather Elmer Suderman, who always asked me questions, and to my family who knew I could do it. And of course, I could not have had my dissertation and my dissertation baby without my beloved Paul and Helena. This is for you two.

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CHAPTER ONE:

Introduction

1.1. The Body, Subjectivity, and Roman Love Elegy

The body has provided a major avenue of inquiry both within classics and within the humanities and social sciences in recent decades. It has emerged as a central concern particularly for feminist writing, as the proliferation of readers, courses, and monographs on topics like Shildrick and Price (1999) *Feminist Theory and the Body: a Reader*, Butler's (1993) *Bodies that Matter*, Luce Irigaray's and Elizabeth Grosz' terms "labial politics" and "corporeal feminism" suggest. Critical thought has transformed understandings of identity by beginning from a position of an embodied subjectivity that places the material body at the center of theoretical debates.

The Roman body has also proven a useful ground for thought within classics, and has provided the focus to a wide variety of discussions about ancient conceptions of sexuality, gender, ethnicity, power, religion, and empire (e.g. Hallett and Skinner 1997, Braund and Gold 1998, Wyke 1999a, 1999b; Porter 1999; Hopkins and Wyke 2005). In

recent years there has also been a major body of scholarship on Roman love elegy,¹ which I here define narrowly as the four volumes of elegiac poetry produced by Propertius between 27 BCE and 16 BCE,² Tibullus' two volumes of elegiac poetry appearing between 27-19 BCE,³ and Ovid's earliest elegiac collection, the *Amores*, published in its second, abridged edition between 7 BCE -1 BCE.⁴ Encouraged by the development of sophisticated criticism and appreciation of Roman elegy, this dissertation looks at the representation of the female body in Latin love poetry.

My study examines the female body's literary representations in elegy and is indebted to contemporary French feminism, but it also studies Roman cultural discourses about feminine corporeality and sexuality, as reflected in literature of the late Republic, the imbrication of women's *cultus* in conceptions of sexuality, gender, and morality, and women's speech on the body. I offer, through a reading of selected poems from the Propertian, Tibullan, and Ovidian corpora, an optimistic recuperative reading of the female body as a site for potential criticism of Roman values and for the construction of an embodied elegiac poetics. My dissertation attempts to work across generic boundaries and connect Roman love elegy into contemporary debates about women's sexuality and the body in late Republican and early Augustan historiography and poetry. Elegy, in this reading, reflects the Roman cultural milieu of which it partakes, yet it also is productive

¹ Lyne's 1980 overview of the Latin love poets offers a standard example of a more encompassing definition of Roman love poetry that incorporates Catullus' *carmina* and Gallus' lost *Amores*. Liveley and Salzman-Mitchell's 2008 collection on elegy and narratology offers a much more inclusive definition of Roman elegy incorporating all of Ovidian poetry in elegiacs.

² I follow Hutchinson's chronology (2006: 8-10).

³ Tibullus' second collection of elegy is unfinished and appeared after his death in 19 BCE.

⁴ I follow McKeown's (1987) dating range here.

of this culture. The Roman elegists actively engage with the social and political world of Augustan Rome, and Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid's positions in the patronage circles of Messalla Corvinus and Maecenas connected these poets very closely to Augustus' broad-reaching renovations of the Roman world.

A reading of the female body, and of female voice in a male-authored text raises the question of essentialism. Yet throughout I read the body as a culturally-determined text, inscribed in its specific Roman cultural moment, and not as a trans-historical physicality. Following Judith Butler's influential notion of genders and bodies as performed and constructed within a cultural background (1993),⁵ I take it as understood that female bodies in Roman society of the mid-first centuries BCE to CE are products of different cultural, historical, and social assumptions, valuations, and ideologies, and are thus not inherently similar in their literary contexts to contemporary 21st century bodies or to the 19th and 20th century European bodies analysed by Freud, Lacan, Kristeva, or Irigaray.

The insights of Kristevan and Irigarayan body criticism, furthermore, take as a given that the body both constitutes and destabilizes the speaking subject and other symbolic discourses. Elizabeth Grosz, a sensitive critic of French feminism, and a major feminist theorist of the body, advances what an embodied subjectivity may mean:

The subject is produced as such by social and institutional practices and techniques, by the inscriptions of social meanings, and by the attribution of psychological significance to body parts and organs. The interlocking of bodies and signifying systems is the precondition both of an ordered, relatively stable identity for the subject and of the smooth, regulated production of discourses and stable meanings. It also provides the possibility of a disruption and breakdown of the subjects', and discourses', symbolic registration.

(1990: 80-1).

⁵ See introduction to Butler, J. (1993).

Grosz here summarizes several critical trends that appear in the work of both Kristeva and Irigaray, as well as the feminist psychoanalytic tradition out of which they develop. The speaking subject is thus understood to be an embodied subject: identity is developed through the process of enculturation as well as through the investment of psychological significance to a subject's body. The body is central to the creation of an ordered identity for an individual. The body is also, Grosz indicates, important for understanding how symbolic orders of meaning in texts and societies function. Yet the body can also prove an impasse to stable meanings in symbolic systems, and a location for the breakdown of meanings.

This definition of the body's role in the development of an embodied subject can also be fruitfully extended into the role of the body in the construction and destabilization of other symbolic systems such as a body of poetry. Roman love elegy places the body at the center of its self-definition in relation to other genres. Propertius defines Cynthia's beauty, and particularly her sexualized body, as the source of his poetic *ingenium* (Prop. 2.1.1-14, see fuller discussion in chapter 4), and the subject of his poetry, which he will pursue instead of epic or scientific poetry, "since my girl has been written" (*quando scripta puella mea est*, 2.10.8). Tibullus also cites the love object of the second book, Nemesis, as the necessary and central topic of his poetry (*usque cano Nemesim, sine qua versus mihi nullus | verba potest iustos aut reperire pedes*, 2.5.111-112). Nemesis is figured as the subject matter of elegiac poetry, and Nemesis' body, through metapoetic play between the five-footed pentameter of elegiac poetry and parts of the human body, provides the definitional boundaries of what elegy is and what it talks about. Moreover, as Lyne contends, the mistress' body provides one avenue of poetic rivalry between

Tibullus and Propertius. In poetic one-upsmanship, Tibullus' Delia of Book 1 is shown to be an elaboration on early images of Propertius' Cynthia in the *Monobiblos*, while the more fully realized corporeality of Cynthia in Propertius 2.1-2.3, responds to and tops the imagery of Delia in Tibullus 1.5.⁶

Ovid similarly links the erotic body with the body of elegiac poetry, as well as with elegiac love sickness in *Amores* 1.1-1.2. In 1.2, the *amator* knows that he suffers from love sickness, because of his bodily sensations, yet cannot identify a love-object that could have caused his corporeal symptoms: *esse quid hoc dicam, quod tam mihi dura videntur | strata, neque in lecto pallia nostra sedent, | et vacuus somno noctem, quam longa, peregi, | lassaque versati corporis ossa dolent? | nam, puto, sentirem, siquo temptarer amore* (1.2.1-5). In Kennedy's brilliant reading, Ovid displays the centrality of the erotic body in the determination of the elegiac genre, as well as the deep connections between erotic experiences and the experience of reading and writing elegiac verses (Kennedy 1993: 46-63).

In keeping with Roman rhetorical terminology, terms from the human body define the elegiac aesthetic, and the poetry is, at times, imagined as the author's body or limbs, or equally, as the body of the *puella*.⁷ Like the human body, elegiac poetry is soft, *mollis*; it is slender, *tenuis*; and it is graceful, *gracilis*. These stylistic terms apply equally to the flesh of the elegiac mistress, and to the body of elegiac poetry in the poems of Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid. Elegiac poetry is also, as Maria Wyke has conclusively

⁶ Lyne (1998: 538-544).

⁷ Keith (1998: 48-52) on Tibullan poetry and the Tibullus' body, (1998: 53-54) on Propertian poetry and Propertius' body, and see also Farrell (2007) on Horace's description of idealized and grotesque human bodies, and bodies of poetry.

shown, shaped using the female body of the mistress as its poetic material or “grammar”⁸.

Ovid personifies *Elegia* in the opening of *Amores* 3.1.7-10:

Venit odoratos Elegia nexa capillos,
et, puto, pes illi longior alter erat.
forma decens, uestis tenuissima, uultus amantis,
et pedibus uitium causa decoris erat.

When Elegy appeared, her coiled hair perfumed,
And limping, one foot short, it seemed to me,
Her gauzy dress and loving looks quite charming,
And graced too by her foot's infirmity.⁹

The personified Elegy has styled and perfumed hair, an attractive shape, extremely thin dress, and the face of a lover, and she also has one foot longer than the other. This personification of *Elegia* closely resembles Propertius' programmatic image of Cynthia in 1.2 and 2.1 - 2.3. Ovid jokes about the uneven structure of the elegiac couplet with its limping pentameter line in his personification of a limping *Elegia*.

Elegy's most definitive body is, thus, the female, or feminine body.¹⁰ In the opening of Propertius' second collection of love-elegy, the poet-speaker defines his poetic act as the writing of Cynthia's body (2.1. 1-8). Glimpses of Cynthia's body (lines 3-14; see discussion in chapter 4), imagined as body-parts in action, inspire grand style writing. Cynthia's body provides a thousand causes for poetry, *mille causas* (2.1.12), while her sexualized body inspire long *Iliads*, and a great history, *maxima historia* (2.1.14,16). Propertius' *Monobiblos* places a poem about Cynthia's *cultus* second and hints at the importance of Cynthia as an embodied object very early in the collection. In

⁸ Wyke (2002: 12-31).

⁹ All my Ovid texts come from Kennedy, and all Ovid translations from Melville (1990).

¹⁰ I use the term the feminine body because metapoetic analogies between *mollis elegia* and the *mollitia* of the poet-speaker are also common within elegy.

the opening poem of the *Amores*, the Ovidian *amator* chooses the meter and subject matter of love poetry—*aut puer aut longas compta puella comas*, a boy or a girl adorned with her long hair (*Am.* 1.1.20)—instead of the subjects of martial epic, *arma gravi numero violentaque bella* (*Am.* 1.1.1).¹¹ Elegy defines its poetic genre through references to its poetic *materia*, the mistress' body, and the mistress' body often appears in language that imitates descriptions of the poetic genre.¹²

The female body that I explore is connected to Greco-Roman notions about female corporeality. It also offers an avenue to explore how Tibullus, Propertius, and Ovid challenge and produce new ideas about sexuality, status, and gender in Rome at the same time that official Roman ideologies are changing through Augustus' reforms of the Roman upper-classes. Central to Augustus' program was an attempt to define legally women's status on the basis of their sexual behaviors. Elegy, I demonstrate, places the sexualized female body at the center of its poetic self-definitions; it shows the interconnectedness of the elegiac mistress with other women of elegy; and it offers a bodily-centered female subjectivity within Cynthia's speeches. My own reading of Roman love elegy is influenced by contemporary feminist theories of embodiment, to which I now turn.

¹¹ Kennedy (1993: 58-63) has shown persuasively how Ovid appropriates euphemistic language of the sexualized male body to describe his poetic output in *Amores* 1.1: the body of poetry is thus mapped onto a human body, and the Ovidian *Amores* play with the conventions of earlier Propertian and Tibullan poetry that have troped the female body as poetic material.

¹² Wyke 2002, Keith 1994, Kennedy 1993.

1.2. Feminist Theories of Embodiment

In their introduction to *Feminist Theory and the Body* (1999), Margrit Shildrick and Janet Price identify three major moments in theoretical engagement with the female body. Both the intellectual traditions of Judeo-Christianity, and the major forces of a post-Cartesian modernism have rejected the body as an obstacle to pure rational thought. The body becomes the excluded other in the mind/body duality: it is a fixed biological entity that must be transcended for the mind to enjoy fully rational subjectivity.¹³ The female body was particularly caught in this devaluation because the feminine was believed to be inherently more corporeal, more physical.¹⁴ The female body has been marginalized as unpredictable, leaky, and disruptive, changeable, and prone to corporeal flows. Feminism, they note, has been concerned with the body—“as something rejected in the pursuit of intellectual equality according to a masculinist standard, or as something to be reclaimed as the very essence of the female”.¹⁵ The third moment they associate with feminist postmodernism, which emphasizes the “importance and inescapability of embodiment as a differential and fluid construct, the site of potential, rather than a fixed given”.¹⁶

¹³ Shildrick and Price (1999: 2).

¹⁴ The conception of the feminine as more bodily, physical, fluid, leaky, and disruptive is common both to Greco-Roman philosophical and scientific notions of the feminine and of the female body (see Hanson 1990, van Staden 1991, 1992 for brief overviews), and to contemporary French feminist thought’s exploration of the female body (see discussion in chapter 3 of Greco-Roman conceptions of the female body).

¹⁵ Shildrick and Price (1999: 3).

It is with this third, postmodern, understanding of the body as a differential and fluid construction and the site of creation of and potential disruption of social discourses that I align my definition. The female body is the object of scrutiny in my readings of Propertian, Tibullan, and Ovidian elegy, and I expose the many ways that it is imagined, as well as the many ways the female body proves a disruptive force for the elegiac non-linear narrative of a love-relationship between the poet-speaker, a Roman elite, and the elegiac *puella*, a Roman courtesan.

1.3. Psychoanalytic theory and the body

The creation of identity, or subjectivity, is bound up with psychological representations of the body within classic psychoanalytic theory. For Freud, the *ego* is “first and foremost a bodily *ego*” (*SE XIX*: 26). There is a link between the structure of the *ego* and the libidinal investments in images of others. Through an identification with others, the self’s own corporeal coherence is psychologically confirmed, in contradiction to lived experience. The body is a necessary component of the fantasy of a cohesive, stable identity because it is that which the subject perceives as a unity. The form of the Freudian *ego*, moreover, is “a mental projection of the body” as it is invested with libidinal significance (*SE XIX*: 26).

Although Lacan is most well known for his post-structuralist insistence that subjectivity is founded in language, the body also plays a definitive role in Lacan’s

¹⁶ Shildrick and Price (1999: 4).

theory of the subject's development of an identity. Lacan's fundamental concept of the divided subject is supported through the opposition between two types of perceptions of the subject's body: the tactile and kinaesthetic perception of the body as fragmented and as a body-in-bits-and-pieces contrasts with the visual perception that grants an illusory unity of the body perceived from outside (Lacan 1977a: 2-13; Grosz 1990: 83). Thus, the subject can never fully reconcile the discordant images of his own identity as fragmentary or as unified. This conflict of perception leads to an ontological conflict and produces the divided subject ("this *Gestalt* symbolizes the mental permanence of the *I* at the same time as it prefigures its alienating destination," Lacan 1977a: 2). Moreover, the dissolution of this imaginary unitary body can send the subject into the preimaginary real, and signal the dissolution of the symbolic orders of language, society, and cultural ideologies (Grosz 1994: 44). Lacan also incorporates the perception of the body into an infant's mirror-stage, the process through which an infant acquires an imaginary and subsequently symbolic identity. The imaginary identity of the child developed through the mirror stage has its own imaginary anatomy, furthermore. This is an internalized image of the body lived as real: it is not a realistic representation of the body, but a fantasized image that is created from the subject's "internalization of its specular image and its acceptance of everyday social and familial beliefs about the body's organic structure".¹⁷

The body, thus, is central to conceptualizations of identity in the psychoanalytic tradition. Rather than a product of a disembodied *animus*, identity is understood to be constituted through a subject's experience of his or her own body, as it is culturally-understood and constructed. The subject's *ego* has a morphological structure, and is a psychically invested, corporeally-derived *ego*.

¹⁷ Grosz (1990: 84).

Yet the subjectivity explored by Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis has been criticized as obstinately masculine, and the female body has provided a theoretical blind-spot for Freudian psychoanalytic theories of subjectivity. Classic Freudian psychoanalysis fails to understand women's sexuality, and Freud famously initiated psychoanalytic confusion about female sexuality and desire when he analogized female sexual desire to a "dark continent" (Irigaray 1985b:48). Freudian subjectivity, as it develops through the Oedipal complex, is also understood to be resolutely masculine and phallic. Freud states that the small girl, as she grows aware of her own identity, imagines herself as phallic just as the young boy does. This blind-spot indicates to critics of psychoanalysis that there is no conception of sexual difference within psychoanalytic conceptions of subjectivity (Grosz 1994: 58-59). Rather, as Irigaray has characterized it, woman is theorized as "the other of the same," and subjectivity is understood to be fundamentally a masculine, phallogocentric model from which the feminine is the excluded other (1985b: 132-142).

The female body has thus been a fraught subject in psychoanalytic discourse. As Elizabeth Grosz, Luce Irigaray, Julia Kristeva, and others have demonstrated, Freud and Lacan posit a male body in their theories of subjectivity and sexuality. In the wake of Freudian psychoanalysis, Jacques Lacan's post-structuralist psychoanalysis further alienated the female body and feminine sexuality from the realm of psychical erotic desire in *Seminar XX*, on feminine sexuality, where he characterized feminine sexuality and erotic desire as extrinsic to, and as unrepresentable within, the Symbolic order. Lacan's seminar produced the (in)famous quip, "Woman (*La femme*) as such does not exist." The universalizing category of woman (*la femme*), because it is the depository for

the rejected qualities of fluidity, corporeality, irrationality, and non-limit that surpass a strict binary model, is by definition excluded from the realm of symbolic language (Janan 2001: 21). Furthermore, identity formation in the Lacanian model depends upon the mirror-stage. As Irigaray has demonstrated, this model for subjectivity does not reflect the sexual specificity of feminine morphology, but instead is supported by the rejected materiality of the maternal body (1985a: *passim*, 1985b: 119-170).

1.4. Irigarayan Bodies and *Mimetismé*

My position stems from Irigaray's central role in difference feminism. The acknowledgement of female sexual differences are understood to constitute gender, sexuality, and subjectivity (1985: 23). To ignore these differences, or to interpret female sexuality through an analogy to masculine phallic sexuality, as traditional Freudian psychoanalytic models have done, forces everyone into an androcentric model of sexuality and subjectivity that Irigaray terms *homosexualité*, or the logic of the same. The deliberate exclusion of sexual difference simultaneously denies the validity of the feminine, which is inscribed as the negation of masculine models (1985b: 23-33).

Irigaray's critique often focuses on the failure in Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis to conceptualize feminine sexual pleasure and feminine sexuality, which

Lacan holds is extrinsic to the psychological mechanisms of sexuality (1975).¹⁸ Psychoanalytic understandings of sexuality and desire erase the materiality of the body, and inscribe it as an object that can be conceptualized only *after* the subject has become a speaking subject, embedded in the cultural symbolic network of language (“There is no prediscursive reality. Every reality is based upon and defined by a discourse,” Lacan 1975, quoted by Irigaray 1985:88). Irigaray, and Grosz, whose philosophy is indebted to Irigaray’s ideas, would stress that the body is constitutive of the speaking subject, and that the materiality of sexual difference does play a part in the construction of identity. As Irigaray has demonstrated, there is a male-gendered body-image that supports the logical structures of the symbolic network of words, social structures, cultural ideologies and practices in Western philosophy and psychoanalysis: this is the logic of the same, or phallogocentrism.¹⁹

In order to change phallogocentrism, Irigarayan critique takes the form of deliberate ventriloquism of Lacan and Freud’s words on female sexuality, which she terms *mimetisme*, or strategic mimicry. Strategic mimicry is the deliberate assumption of the feminine style and feminine role assigned to woman within (psychoanalytic) discourse in order to uncover the mechanisms by which discourse excludes and exploits women.²⁰ Irigaray’s mimesis is deliberately ludic, and intends to mimic the implicit essentialism of phallogocentric discourse. Irigaray, in her essay, *Sexual Difference*,

¹⁸ Irigaray’s critique of Freudian theories of human desire is at 1985b: 34-49, and of Lacan on sexuality at 1985b: 86-105.

¹⁹ Phallogocentrism is a term coined by Derrida to describe how Jacques Lacan privileges the phallus (the masculine) in the construction of meaning. Irigaray uses it in a similar sense, but she sees phallogocentrism at work throughout western metaphysics and language (1985b: 162).

²⁰ This definition (1985b: 220) is provided by Catherine Porter in her translation of *This Sex Which is not One*.

defines the aim of her mimicry: “for women to try to recover the place of her exploitation by discourse without allowing herself to be simply reduced to it” (1991a: 124). Irigaray’s “playful repetition” of Freud and Lacan is a deliberate assumption of the feminine role. Irigaray’s mimesis “exercises a resistance from within masculinist discourse, so as to disrupt it by forcing it to admit the consequences of its own logic which it cannot or does not want to admit” (Xu 1995: 80). She deliberately ventriloquizes Lacan and Freud’s words to exaggerate the *homosexualité* of these texts on human desire. More importantly for this study of the female body in Latin love elegy, Irigaray mobilizes a decidedly embodied argument against the models of human desire and sexuality she critiques. Irigaray continually refers to the female anatomy in her critique, as Xu has argued, to expose the underlying phallogentrism of the discourses she critiques.

Irigaray thus posits an embodied subjectivity which acknowledges sexual difference as critique of existing psychoanalytic models of subjectivity. Irigarayan critical strategies of labial politics, furthermore, employ a similar strategy to that of Cynthia’s speeches. Through Cynthia’s corporeal, direct language, she exposes the sexualized female body of the mistress as well as the sexual relationship that underlies elegiac persuasion poetry. Cynthia’s language critiques the decorum of the description of the mistress’ body that characterizes the poet-lover’s speech about the female body in elegy. Her language posits a body-centered subjectivity that acknowledges the sexualized female body. The sexualized female body is thus mobilized as critique against a dominant symbolic system (psychoanalysis, the poet-speaker’s perspective, respectively) in each medium.

Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva are prolific writers, and I borrow only a small subset of their ideas in this dissertation. Irigaray's and Kristeva's positions both emerge out of Lacanian psychoanalysis, and each have been termed "French feminists." Yet these similarities obscure the major differences between the two.²¹ Both Kristeva and Irigaray have offered provocative theorizations of the sexualized female body, and it is from Kristeva's concept of the female body as abject and Irigaray's notion of *mimetisme* that I draw. Irigaray mobilizes the sexualized female body as a materiality that is extrinsic to the symbolic order and is therefore capable of critiquing this symbolic order. Kristeva locates the *abject* in the sexualized female body represented by the maternal body. The emergence of the abject destroys distinctions between the Self and Other, and obliterates the "clean and proper" subject. Each thinker, thus, offers a key intervention in the theoretical understandings of the female body, and their concepts of strategic mimicry and the abject body offer a hermeneutics for my own analysis of the female body as it occurs within Tibullus, Propertius, and Ovid's *Amores*.

1.5. The Kristevan abject

Irigaray's critique of the female body in psychoanalytic discourse aims, in Grosz's influential interpretation: "to speak about a positive model or series of representations of

²¹ See Grosz (1989) for a thorough comparison between the different aims of Kristeva and Irigaray.

femininity by which the female body may be positively marked, which in its turn may help establish the conditions necessary for the production of new kinds of discourse, new forms of knowledge and new modes of practice” (Grosz 1986:142).²² Kristeva’s intervention into theories of the female body is qualitatively different. In the cultural understandings of the body, Kristeva argues that there are two types: the *symbolic* body, a stable mental morphology governed by the logical rules of body image under the [Lacanian] Rule of the Father, and the *abject* body: the abject body is quintessentially female because of its procreative functions.

Unlike the male body, the proper female body is penetrable, changes shape, swells, gives birth, contracts, lactates, bleeds. Woman’s body reminds man of his ‘debt to nature’ and as such threatens to collapse the boundary between human and animal, civilized and uncivilized (Creed 1999: 111 of Kristeva 1982: 102).

The female body is abject because woman’s body bears a debt to nature: it cannot be fully symbolic because of its changeability and permeability. The maternal body breaks boundaries between Self/Other, Inside/Outside, and it flows, discharges, and drains the interior into the outside (Kristeva 1982: 102-103).

In *the Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, Kristeva advances the concept of the *abject*. The abject is a psychical process wherein a child takes up its own clearly defined “clean and proper” body image in the symbolic order of language. The “clean and proper” self is achieved through the process of abjection, the expelling and exclusion of the pre-Oedipal space of its connection with the body of the mother (Segal 1999: 109; Kristeva 1982: 3-10). Yet abjection is a process of rejecting parts of *oneself* most closely associated with the maternal-child pre-Oedipal space. The abject is associated with everything without clear boundaries, and everything that suggests a non-distinctiveness

²² Grosz (1986: 142).

between inside and outside, between subject and object, and between self and other (Segal 1999: 109; Kristeva 1982: 3-10, 61-71). Abjection exists at “the limit of primal repression,” and has “an intrinsically corporeal and signifying brand, symptom, and sign in repugnance, disgust, and abjection” (1982: 11). Certain culturally-marked signifiers of abjection include physical disgust of rotten foods, bodily effluvia and fluids, the corpse, and signs of sexual difference. The abject “disturbs identity, system and order, and the social boundaries demanded by the symbolic” (Grosz 1990:90; Kristeva 1982: 4-11).

Kristeva grants a special power to literature to give voice to abjection: “literature represents the ultimate coding of our crises, of our most intimate and serious apocalypses” (208). Literature is involved “not in resistance to the abject, but to its unveiling: an elaboration, a discharge, and a hollowing out of abjection” (208).

Literature thus gives a special prominence to the *abject* female body. Kristeva’s analyses of Joyce and Celine stress the ways that these authors can express the abject in the female body. The female body in these works disturbs identity, meaning, language, and symbolic systems of literature. Yet the writer himself has a special ability to give voice to the abject; and Kristeva notes that the abject is productive of language. When abjection is expressed in literature, its symptom is to reject and reconstruct language (Kristeva 1982: 45). The body thus, and the feminine body marked with sexual difference in particular, when it appears in literature, can disrupt the rules and structures of literature that make up the symbolic system. Furthermore, the female body can be the object of repulsion and disgust, and affiliated with the more archaic abject such as bodily fluids, blood, and the corpse. I will show in chapter 3 that the “other women” of elegy are associated with precisely these objects of abjection. The other women of elegy,

although they frequently the subjects of grotesque ecphrases, are nonetheless linked to the elegiac *puella* through the metaphor and imagery of blood. Moreover, the sexualized female body, when it does appear, brings with it a major change in the tone and style of the elegiac poetry around it. Within Cynthia's bodily-centered speeches, elegiac discourse deforms, and Propertius shows the underlying structure of the sexual relationship that subtends the poet-speaker's persuasion poetry. Thus elegiac poetry too can be read as giving expression to the abject within Roman culture.

The Kristevan abject female body, then, can be understood to operate in literature similarly to the function of the sexualized female body in Irigarayan *mimitismé*. In each analysis, the sexualized female body becomes a tool of critique of an existing symbolic system, and its appearance shows the breakdown of fundamental oppositions within symbolic systems, and of a crisis in subjectivity. Each critic shows how women's subjectivity has been denied—for Kristeva, by relegating feminine corporeal identity to an in-between place prior to the emergence of a true, purely psychological subjectivity—for Irigaray, by utterly denying feminine corporeal identity within the structures of psychological subjectivity. Kristeva's emphasis on literature's ability to speak the abject, thus, makes it a good fit for examining Roman love elegy's own construction of the female body.

These two selective readings from Irigaray and Kristeva illuminate my explorations of the female body in Roman love elegy. Elegy, like Lacan and his feminist critics, offers a critical view of cultural definitions of masculinity and femininity. Elegy famously challenges Roman views of identity. The elegiac poet-speaker rejects typical paths for the definition of masculine identity within Roman culture. The poet-speaker does not engage in law-cases, in government service, or in the military. His choice of

soft elegiac poetry instead of masculine epic also posits a challenge to traditional models of masculinity. In lieu of writing epic, or performing public service, the elegiac poet-lover advances the trope of *servitium amoris*, and his *mollitia* marks him as an effeminate male at the same time that elegy reiterates the speaker's unusual construction of masculinity (Wyke 2002: 155-191). Contemporary scholarship of Roman love elegy has concentrated on the critique of cultural definitions of masculinity and femininity, and I now turn to a brief discussion of the important critical sources for my own study of the elegiac female body.

My dissertation moves towards a new definition of the female body in Roman elegiac poetry. I incorporate the guiding principle of Kristevan and Irigarayan theory, that subjectivity is determined in relation to the sexualized body. I explore how female bodily identity is established in love poetry through associations with Greco-Roman medical traditions, by elegy's connection to invective that exploits negative connotations of femininity within Greco-Roman cultures, through an exploration of the representations and avoidances of sexual behaviors, I examine how the body is constructed through dress, and I argue for the establishment of a corporeal feminine subjectivity in Cynthia's speeches.

1.6. Review of Prior Elegy Scholarship

Elegiac poetry engages with Roman culture's constructions of masculinity, femininity, status, and sexuality. Elegy's central *topoi* of the elegiac *domina* and her

enslaved lover implicate the construction of elegiac gender with the building blocks of elegiac genre, and, at least within the Anglo-American tradition, elegiac scholarship has concentrated on questions of gender roles, status, and sexuality in the past 30 years. In her ground-breaking article of 1973, Judith Hallett suggested that elegy created a Roman counter-culture where women were in charge and men adopted subordinate roles. Elegy, in this reading, was a proto-feminist genre that gave voice to a subversive worldview in which erotic experience offered women a dominant position, and Roman men could adopt traditionally feminine characteristics. Hallett's provocative article lies behind much feminist criticism on elegy. From the 1980s onwards, critics have examined the poetic construction of the elegiac mistress, and linked language about the *puella* to the power structures inherent in elegiac language. For all the poet-speaker's claims of erotic subordination to his *domina*, elegiac discourse often makes woman poetic material for the poet-speaker's artistic creation.

Allison Sharrock is one exponent of this position: following the work of Molly Myerowitz Levine who argues that women are *materia* for the male poet's practice, and that they are analogous to nature in Ovid's elegiac works,²³ Sharrock argues that Pygmalion, in the *Metamorphoses*, becomes an analogue for the elegiac poet, and that his story deconstructs the erotic realism of elegy to reveal the power relations implicit in the elegiac genre between the male artist and the female art-object to be manufactured. Sharrock contextualizes Ovid's commentary in her discussion of Cynthia's representation in Propertius. Much like Pygmalion's sculpted girl, Sharrock argues, Cynthia is seen as a

²³ Myerowitz (1981: especially 40-41).

sculpture in Propertius' representation.²⁴ Moreover, this tradition of love-object as art-object shapes the later elegiac corpus.

The representation of Cynthia as a work of art, early in the Propertian corpus of poetry, is programmatic. It hints that, whatever else she might be, the *puella* of the poems is a work of art and as such a construct of the text, the product and guarantee of its mimetic power.²⁵

As with Pygmalion's sculpture, so with elegy. In elegy, "womanaufacture" occurs by creating the *puella* through the act of writing her. The poetic products, including the voice of the elegiac *puella*, reflect on the artistry of the poet.²⁶

Sharrock's article *Womanaufacture* (1991) exposed the connections between Pygmalion's creation of Galatea in the *Metamorphoses* and the ways that Propertius' Cynthia was seen as a passive artistic creation to be constructed by the poet-lover. Ellen Greene (1998) has elucidated the power structures inherent in these constructions of the elegiac beloved as poetic material. By making the *puella* poetic material, the poet-speaker reaffirms his masculine domination over poetic creation. Moreover, elegiac desire is male, and the female beloved is a passive object of erotic desire. Molly Myerowitz (1985) has examined the metaphors of nature and culture in Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*. Myerowitz shows that the Ovidian *praeceptor* constructs his female love objects through analogies to the natural world, and the female stands in need of the process of masculine (poetic) creation. Eric Downing (1990) has examined the actions of the Ovidian *praeceptor amoris* in *Ars* 3, and he persuasively demonstrates that the

²⁴ Cf. Prop. 2.1.9; 1.3.7-8 and 15-16. Sharrock (1991: 41-43) reads these Propertian passages as about the visualization and statue-like state of Cynthia.

²⁵ Sharrock (1991: 43).

²⁶ Sharrock (1991: 49).

praeceptor works to transform the women to whom he addresses his *didaxis* into the ideal, static Woman, who resembles a statue crafted by a male artist

While some critics have examined the ways that the beloved appears as artistic material for masculine production, others stress the lack of individuation of the beloved, and as her status as a poetic representation rather than a biographical woman. The female beloved is “assigned scarcely any subjectivity or individuating features” (Wyke 2002: 157), and she does not represent a pre-textual, biological Roman woman of the late first century BCE. From Roman receptions of elegy until quite recently, critics of elegy have attempted to connect the elegiac mistress to a historical Roman woman. In *Apologia 10*, Apuleius states that Lycoris, Delia, and Cynthia were pseudonyms for the women beloved by Gallus, Tibullus, and Propertius. Tibullus’ mistress was Plania, and Cynthia was a Hostia who has been connected to the poet Hostius.²⁷ As early as the 1950s, Allen questioned this one-to-one identification, both by questioning the sincerity of these apparently romantic love-poets, and by demonstrating that the names of the elegiac mistress are different feminine personifications of Apollo.²⁸

Maria Wyke’s research combines these two strands of elegiac criticism on the elegiac mistress. She shows that although the *puella* cannot be aligned with a real-world, “flesh-and-blood” woman, the elegiac woman does relate to Roman realities about sexuality, status, and gender (1987, revised as 2002: 11-45). Furthermore, Wyke’s research has established a positive connection between the stylistic terms Propertius,

²⁷ Wyke disproves this identification (2002: 18-31). Keith (2008: 88-92) discusses epigraphic evidence from a villa at Tibur associated with the *gens Hostia*, but hesitates to make a one-to-one association between Propertius’ Cynthia and the historical Hostia from the Hostian *gens*.

²⁸ Allen (1950 a and 1950b); Bright denies that Delia is a feminine form derived from Apolline cult (1985: 101 – 115) and associates Delia with Diana instead.

Tibullus, and Ovid use to characterize their form of the Alexandrian Callimachean aesthetic and the language describing the body of the beloved. Elegy's continuing engagement with epic poetry, the new political hegemony, and lyric poetry all have drawn scholarly attention. Central to elegy's rapprochement with epic and with the emergence of a high Hellenistic poetic aesthetic marked by allegiance to Roman Callimacheanism and neoteric style is the character of the mistress. Single-minded attention to love poetry and to a single, particular mistress characterizes the poetics of Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid. The elegiac *credo* is written through descriptions of devotion to the beauty of a particular beloved, and to a concomitant poetic and aesthetic vocabulary. Elegiac genre is *tenuis*, a Roman translation of Callimachus' *lepton*; *mollis*, soft; *blanda*, persuasive or flattering; *levis*, light as opposed to the weight and severity of epic; and *docta*, learned. Each of these stylistic terms also adhere to the presentation of Cynthia and to Ovid's personification of *Elegia* (Wyke 2002: 59-68; 121-128). In Wyke's influential formulation, the *puella* represents the "grammar" of elegiac poetry (2002: 12-77). Alison Keith (1999) has fruitfully extended this discussion to representations of the male bodies of the elegiac poet-speakers, where she shows that Horace characterized Tibullus in language resembling the elegiac aesthetic. Wyke concludes that elegy, in its play with traditional Roman gendered expectations creates a feminized or effeminate male (2002: 155-188), and Keith's study shows how this body terminology appears to describe rhetorical style and rhetorically-influenced Roman love elegy.

The social status of the elegiac mistress provides another major background to my own research. Critics have long seen the connection between the *meretrices* of Roman

New Comedy and the elegiac *puella*. James has further demonstrated that, by reading elegy from the perspective of the *docta puella*, elegiac discourse is shown to be persuasive poetry that works against the economic advantage of the non-citizen, non-marriageable courtesans who appear in Roman love elegy. Michaela Janan (2001) has also illuminated the ways that Propertius' elegiac world in book 4 shows that the convivial world of Propertian elegy is founded in male dominance, female economic dependence, and the subalterity of domestic slaves.

The construction of elegiac subjectivity has risen to the center of elegiac criticism. The construction of the poet-speaker and the elegiac mistress have thus far been examined along poetological lines. Yet challenges to this aesthetically-focused model have emerged. It has become accepted that the poet-speaker of elegy is distinct from the Roman authors Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid. In other words, the poet-speaker is an eponymously named persona who is a character within the elegiac non-linear narrative. Paul Veyne (1988) argued that elegy should be read as a ludic genre, and understood as theatrical. The poet-speaker represents an *Ego*, who resembles the New Comic *iuvenis*, a character to be laughed at in his lovelorn behaviors. Veyne's ludic reading of elegy has serious consequences for the political interpretation of the genre. When elegy takes on politically-charged issues such as the relationship between Propertius and the Augustan Principate, the ludic force of the genre's sensibilities reveals the light-hearted irony of the speaker's anti-Augustan sentiments.

Elegy's poet-speakers reject traditional structures within Roman ideology. The poet-speaker chooses a life of leisure and the writing of poetic *nequitiae* over the pursuit of military, government, or oratorical service, and he chooses to write light erotic elegy

rather than serious epic or praise poetry of Augustus. A second dominant question of elegiac scholarship in the Anglo-American tradition has been the poet's allegiance to, or rejection of, the new Augustan Principate and its renovations of Roman values, social, and political structures. Propertius has been characterized both as a staunch anti-Augustan (e.g. Stahl 1985), and as a sincere encomiast of Maecenas and Augustus (e.g. Cairns 2006). As recent criticism has shown, however, the elegists' attitude towards the Augustan regime are remarkably complex and variable. Miller (2004:131-134), through the use of a Lacanian understanding of eccentric feminine subjectivity, has offered a *tertium quid* in which the Propertian subject position both instantiates and simultaneously contradicts Augustan ideologies. Keith (2008: 139-42) has shown that Propertius, although he claims that elegiac themes and the elegiac life-style are anti-political, nonetheless, through his enjoyment of imperial leisure, engages in and produces the Roman imperial project.

Psychoanalytic criticism of elegy has combined an interest in Roman constructions of gender, sexuality, and status with a sustained attention to elegy's position within the politics of Augustan Rome. The psychoanalytic school of elegy criticism has its foundations in Barbara Gold's 1993 article, wherein Gold demonstrates that the women of love elegy, and particularly Cynthia, "is a literary, sexual, and historical construct," who questions "traditional tropes of the feminine" (90). By reading Cynthia in light of Jardine's *gynesis*, Gold shows that Propertius "destabilizes the traditional roles assigned to women by casting both her and himself in so many different and conflicting roles and by problematizing his representation of her" (1993: 90).

Paul Allen Miller's (2004) study aims to historicize the emergence and disappearance of Roman love elegy. He argues that the conditions for the Roman subject position extended in Roman love elegy exist only during the end of the Roman Republic and the emergence of the Principate under Augustus. Elegy gives voice to a divided subject, and it is able to show the emergence of the (Lacanian) Real through the crisis in Roman subjectivity that it expresses. Elegy is thus more than an "epiphenomenon" of history, but is itself expressive and productive of the divided subject (3).

Miller's contributions to the psychoanalytic school of elegy scholarship are numerous, and I single out only his contribution to female subjectivity. In "Why Propertius is a Woman," Miller argues that elegy is "double-voiced" and that Propertius can speak as (a) woman (130-159). This ingenious reading shows a sympathetic understanding of post-Lacanian renovations of Lacan's study of femininity. It is, however, unconvincing in the end because it fails to recognize how Cynthia's own feminine subjectivity radically rewrites the codes of the elegiac symbolic. This reading, moreover, does not accept the bodily (albeit understood as a symbolic and morphological) condition of sexual difference that is central to a post-Lacanian difference feminism (Gatens 2003: 226-234; Grosz 1994; Whitford 1991: 38-52). In this appropriative reading, the poet-speaker is effeminized, yet elegy's female voices are still silenced. By reading for a bodily-centered subjectivity alert to sexual differences, we see a new facet of elegy's double-voice, but this polyphony emerges through the impersonation of female-voice in a female character.

Micaela Janan's (2001) study of Propertius 4 offers a Lacanian reading of the role of women in Propertius' challenging final book of elegies. Janan demonstrates how

Propertius gives voice to changes and disruptions in the ideological structures of Rome during the Augustan period. Janan further demonstrates how Lacanian theory, particularly of its conceptualization of Woman as a “conceptual deadlock that exceeds symbolization systems” (Janan 2001: 23), illuminates the illogical and contradictory aspects of Book 4. When Propertius stages the feminine voice in Book 4, Woman becomes a lever to reveal failures within Roman ideological structures of male/female, pro- or anti-Augustan, Roman and non-Roman, and epic and elegy. Janan’s reading, thus, opens a possible optimistic reading of women’s role in Roman love elegy once again.

For Miller and Janan, elegy expresses a crisis in elite Roman subjectivity. Each critic uses Lacan’s concept of the divided subject to explore the disruptions of identity experienced by the Roman upper-classes as Augustus transforms the former Republic into an autocratic regime. Traditional Roman methods of gaining status and of defining one’s masculine identity are eroded by Augustus’ consolidation of powers. The Lacanian divided subject is an “erotic-political incoherence” (Janan 2001: 17), and thus provides a useful comparison for the break-down in masculine identity offered within Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid’s *Amores*.

Janan’s psychoanalytic reading of elegy comes closest to my own, particularly her examination of Propertius 4.5 and 4.7 (2001: 85-99; 104-112, respectively). Janan’s careful exploration of the role of Acanthis (4.5) and Cynthia *rediviva* (4.7) shows how women’s speech in book 4 can critique the masculinist vision of prior Augustan elegy, and she explores Cynthia’s speech as an emergence of the positive side of Lacanian *jouissance*, “the conceptual impasses inherent to any logical system” (Janan 2001: 104).

Cynthia's speech radically undermines the ethos of the Propertian poet-speaker, and contrasts the lived, experienced bodily reality of the Roman courtesan "in all its pain and all its attachments to the concrete and material" with the fantasy of the elegiac *puella* (Janan 2001: 113).²⁹ Janan's emphasis on the economic realities of life for the Roman subaltern, as well as her emphasis on lived bodily reality anticipates my own discussions of Propertius 4.7 in chapter 5, as well as my exposure of the bodily-centered curses against the *lenae* and discussions of elegy's other women in chapter 3.

Nonetheless, my own emphasis differs from Janan's. While Janan stresses the illogicality of Cynthia's presentation of the underworld, I concentrate upon her re-imagination of the elegiac love-affair. Janan imagines a Roman body in pain as a tool to deconstruct the elegiac world. My own re-evaluation of the elegiac aesthetic points to the centrality of the sexualized body in dismantling the occluded view of the female body articulated by the poet-speaker. It is only within Cynthia's language that the bodily realities of sexuality can be revealed. Within the dominant voice of the poet-speaker's elegy, the sexualized female body is invisible, and is displaced through a variety of means of deferral. Cynthia's bodily-centered speech creates a feminine subjectivity founded in the sexualized body, and her language reveals the sexual relationship behind elegiac discourse.

Chapter two explores important Roman antecedents to elegy's depiction of the female body. I examine Lucretius' diatribe on love, historiographic and oratorical representations of women in the Late Republic, and Horace's first lyrical collection, the *Epodes*. Finally, I examine how the Augustan marital legislation creates the conditions for a major shift in Roman understandings of the sexualized female body. Augustus'

²⁹ Janan (2001: 109-113).

attempts to legislate female sexual behaviors into a strict binary codification of the sexually-reproductive (the *matrona*) and the sexually-available body (the *meretrix*) offers a major intertext for elegy's own construction of the sexualized body.

Chapter three looks at the representation of elegy's other women. The female body often appears in grotesque form within elegy, as when the poet describes such women as the *lena* (Prop. 4.5, Tib. 1.5, *Am.* 1.8), and even Nemesis' sister (Tib. 2.6); these bodies, I argue, are linked to the *puella* through the imagery of blood. Earlier studies have demonstrated that the elegiac mistress is a literary construction whose beauty is a metaphor for Callimachean poetics. By reading the bodies of other women in elegy, however, my work exposes a surprising repulsion and disgust also at work in the finely-polished elegiac aesthetic. This chapter argues that the other women of elegy can be understood in light of Kristeva's concept of the *abject*.

Chapter four returns to elegy's representation of the *puella's* body. Here I show that Propertius uses the catalogue of *cultus* to disguise the absence of the sexualized female body. Luxury goods and bodily ornamentation stand in for more coherent images of Cynthia's body. Tibullus also employs Propertian *cultus* in his elegies on Nemesis (2.3), and shows that *cultus* and the *puella* are inextricably linked in elegy. Finally, I move from the poetic function of elegiac *cultus* into the political significance of Propertian *cultus* in a larger cultural nexus of Roman morality, gender, and status.

Chapter five argues that elegy does at times present the sexualized body of the *puella* within Cynthia's speeches. Through a reading of Cynthia's speeches in books 1,2, and 4, I argue that Propertius grants Cynthia an autonomous bodily-centered subjectivity

that critiques the dominant elegiac worldview of the poet-speaker. Irigaray's tool of strategic mimicry, *mimetisme*, helps illuminate how this bodily subjectivity functions.

CHAPTER TWO:

Backgrounds to the Elegiac Female Body

This chapter provides an overview of relevant cultural, historical, and literary background to elegy's engagement with the female body and it assembles a diverse collection of Roman sources in a variety of genres. These sources frequently offer direct antecedents to the elegiac phenomena that I will deal with in the remaining chapters. The earlier Latin poets—Lucretius, Catullus, and the young Horace—offer important intertexts for elegy but also form a more general poetic background that the Latin love elegists (Propertius, Tibullus, Ovid) will expand upon. Lucretius' scientific and philosophical ideas offer a broad socio-cultural context for the ways that Roman culture in the first century BCE constructs the female body, as well as a reaction to the *topoi* of the *exclusus amator* and love as sickness that will become standard features of later elegy. This chapter also addresses the Augustan moral legislation, which follows the first cluster of elegiac poetry (Tibullus' two and Propertius' first three books) and represents an alternative textualization of the female body to elegy's exploration of it. For the ease of organization, I have arranged these topics chronologically.

2.1. Republican Poetry and Science: Lucretius

Throughout Book 4 of the *De Rerum Natura*, Lucretius addresses human sensory perception and the presence of simulacra, or hollow images, that create delusions in the mind of their perceiver. These simulacra include visions of the dead, dreams, and wet dreams. In the conclusion to the book, Lucretius offers a diatribe against love. The diatribe begins with a scientific explanation of sexual passion (the buildup of seed when a person imagines lovely images of a chosen love-object) and moves towards the tropes of love poetry. Lucretius' overall view of love is very dark because love prevents a lover from enjoying the pure pleasure of the natural realities of sex by overlaying a delusional worship of the beloved.¹ Love is described as a festering wound that afflicts the mind (4.1048, 1057-69), and causes the crazed lover to imagine that his beloved is perfect, even when she is obviously flawed. The lover's madness is parodied in a brilliant list of ugly Latin descriptions re-scripted as Greek charms (1159-1169), and in the comic-elegiac scene of the *exclusus amator* (1175-1184). For the lover, the beloved's beauty is an end in itself and his concentration on erotic images drives him mad. Love in Lucretius is a preoccupation with a woman's body as seen through deluded lenses. As if alert to the conventions of love poetry, Lucretius' lover expects his beloved to be perfect, and divine. Because this desire is unattainable, the lover is driven to attempt to possess and devour the person he loves (1105-1111; Nussbaum 1994: 174). The experience of love generates only frustration and regret, and finally, violence against the beloved's body.

¹ As Brown (1987: 80) remarks, in Lucretius, love is "basically a shallow obsession with external form."

Lucretius' attitude is that love corrupts the potentially natural, pure pleasure of sexuality. For the male interlocutor Memmius, to whom he addresses the *DRN*, sex between lovers is a violent and frustrating practice, whether the love is attracted to a man or a woman. The lover, because he is uncertain how to sate his own desire, bodily attacks his partner:

etenim potiundi tempore in ipso
fluctuat incertis erroribus ardor amantum
nec constat quid primum oculis manibusque fruuntur.
quod petiere, premunt arte faciuntque dolorem
corporis et dentes inlidunt saepe labellis
osculaque adfigunt, quia non est pura voluptas
et stimuli subsunt, qui instigant laedere id ipsum,
quod cumque est, rabies unde illaec germina surgunt
(*DRN* 4.1077-1085)

Indeed, in the very time of possession, lover's ardor is storm-tossed, uncertain in its course, hesitating what first to enjoy with eye and hand. They press closely the desired object, hurting the body, often they set their teeth in the lips and crush mouth on mouth, because the pleasure is not unmixed and there are secret stings which urge them to hurt that very thing, whatever it may be, from which those germs of frenzy grow.²

Moreover, a lover cannot satisfy his desire to join fully with his beloved.

sic in amore Venus simulacris ludit amantis,
nec satiari queunt spectando corpora coram
nec manibus quicquam teneris abradere membris
possunt errantes incerti corpore toto. . .
denique cum membris conlatis flore fruuntur
aetatis, iam cum praesagit gaudia corpus
atque in eost Venus ut muliebria conserat arva,
adfigunt avide corpus iunguntque saliuas
oris et inspirant pressantes dentibus ora,
ne quicquam, quoniam nihil inde abradere possunt
nec penetrare et abire in corpus corpore toto;
nam facere inter dum uelle et certare uidentur
(4.1102-1113).

So in love Venus mocks lovers with images, nor can bodies even in real presence satisfy lovers with looking, nor can they rub off something from tender limbs with

² My Lucretius text, and translation, are from Smith (1992).

hands wandering aimless all over the body. Lastly, when clasped body to body they enjoy the flower of their age, at the moment when the body foretastes its joy and Venus is on the point of sowing the woman's field, they cling greedily close together and join their watering mouths and draw deep breaths pressing teeth on lips; but all is vanity, for they rub nothing off, nor can they penetrate and be absorbed body in body; for this they seem sometimes to wish and to strive for.

Lucretius' critique of love-making has an extremely harsh tone. Love causes the male lover to suffer continual frustration and non-fulfillment: even when intercourse is pleasurable, there always remains some bitterness even in the flower of enjoyments (*DRN* 1134). Moreover, the lover's aim to possess his beloved does not foster a disinterested concern for the beloved's good (Nussbaum 1994: 177). The lover is too obsessed with his own aims to perceive correctly the beloved's actual nature, or to understand properly his or her actions. Even in the midst of love-making, the lover thinks not of his partner's experience or pleasure, but only of his own desire to control and consume him or her (Nussbaum 1994: 177). In the end, the lover is driven to harm the source of his madness (*DRN* 1079-83). Love's desires are painful for both the lover and the beloved, as well as self-defeating.

There is also the suggestion in Lucretius that the female body is always a flawed object that can cause disgust.³ As the diatribe progresses, love is re-imagined more and more as a heterosexual practice between a male lover and his female beloved. Within the diatribe are two passages elaborating on women's corporeal shortcomings. The first is the catalogue of women's physical flaws that lovers foolishly rename as Greek charms

³ Recent critical readings of the diatribe have concentrated on the centrality of obsession and disgust within Lucretius' diatribe. Martha Nussbaum (1994) argues that Lucretius shows the logical results of the practice of love, and its inevitable *telos* in obsession, disgust, and devaluation of the female beloved's humanity. Pamela Gordon (2002) points out that Lucretius' critique is firmly within its Late Republican context, and that Lucretius condemns Roman masculine sexuality and its Priapic model of domination and violence.

(1153-69). Lovers, blinded by desire (1153), often attribute beautiful characteristics to their deformed and ugly beloveds (*multimodis igitur pravas turpisque videmus*, 1155). The physical flaws of a particular woman are given in Latin and re-envisioned in elegant, literary, slangy, or colloquial Greek (1160-69).⁴ In the *exclusus amator* passage (1073-1084), Lucretius employs the well-known figure of love-poetry and comedy's locked-out lover, the *exclusus amator*, who performs a faithful *paraclausithyron* for his mistress.⁵ Here Lucretius compares all women's bodies. Though the *amator* courts a completely beautiful woman (*cui Veneris membris uis omnibus exoriatur*, 1172), she performs all the same things that ugly women do, including fumigation against gynecological complaints (1174). This passage juxtaposes the lover's outdoor actions, including weeping, kissing her threshold, and laying sweet-smelling garlands, flowers, and perfumes at her doorstep (1177-79) with the disgusting behaviors of the woman inside. She sits indoors fumigating herself with revolting odors while her servants flee and mock her (*et miseram taetris se suffit odoribus ipsa | quam famulae longe fugitant furtimque cachinnant*, 1175-6).⁶ If the *amator* were to be admitted and smell what her body is really like, Lucretius

⁴ Brown (1987: 128-132, 280-294) traces the literary history of this passage to Plato *Rep.* 474d-475, Theocritus 10.24-27, and to the theme of female imperfections in Semonides fragment 7, to a speech by Alexis, a New Comic poet, on the disguise of a courtesan's flaws (fr. 98k) and to Lucilius' mockery of idealized heroines (540-546 M). Lucilius also juxtaposed fanciful Greek and realistic Latin terms in his satirical passage.

⁵ For a complete treatment of the *exclusus amator* motif in Latin poetry, see Copley (1956).

⁶ There is some debate about what this statement actually means. A. E. Housman (1897: 240) argued it was a sarcastic reference to flatulence; Lilja (1972: 143) to defecation; Nussbaum (1994: 180-81) also to menstruation. Brown (1987: 296-7) reads this as medical fumigation, as does Richlin (1995:190). While I agree with Brown's interpretation, Nussbaum makes a compelling argument that Lucretius' basic point in this passage is that there is "something about the way the female body typically works, that, once inspected, produces male disgust (181)."

concludes, he would curse his own foolishness for giving her more credit than mortals deserve (1180-84).⁷

Lucretius' diatribe is remarkable because it seems to mock or exploit many of the conventions of love poetry. Lucretius may depend on Hellenistic epigram and Roman New Comedy for the tropes of his diatribe,⁸ but the negative effects caused by love more closely foreshadow the pose of the elegiac lover developed in Catullus' elegiacs and more firmly established in the second generation of elegy (Brown 1987: 250).

Elegy, in the same way, is clearly aware of Lucretius' diatribe, and I would argue, reflects a thorough knowledge of Lucretius' passage, and employs his anti-love attitude in many of the passages my dissertation examines. The elegists construe their poetic discourse as an alternative reality to traditional Roman masculinity. They play the roles of enslaved lovers, *servi amoris*, controlled by their harsh mistresses, *dominae*, named for the slave-holding female heads of household. Yet, as contemporary feminist readings of elegy show, the male speaker always maintains his position of dominance over his *puella* through frequent eruptions of violence against the *puella's* body (for examples and discussion, see Fredrick 1997, Greene 1998, James 2003).

If Lucretius offers a dim view of love, he does seem to offer some positive remarks on the physical processes of sex and scientific questions such as female pleasure and heredity. After concluding his discussion of the illness of love, Lucretius offers a theory of heredity that is part of two-seed embryology (1020-1287). He holds that

⁷ These two passages have a strong *Nachleben* in Ovid's didactic poems, the *Ars Amatoria* and the *Remedia Amoris*.

⁸ Lucretius' passage on the negative consequences of love (1121-40) has close parallels of detail to comic speeches on the miseries of love (e.g. Pl. *Mer.* 18ff, *Mos.* 142ff, *Trin.* 236ff, 666ff, Ter. *Eun.* 59ff) and Brown argues that he must have been aware of New Comedy's development of the themes. See also Rosivach (1980: 401-403).

because both the mother and father contribute seed to the child, they each contribute to the child's appearance (1208-1232). If the child strongly resembles the mother, it is because her seed dominated. If the child resembles the father, his seed was stronger. In the cases when the child resembles both parents, it is because the mother's blood and the father's body contributed to his make-up (*corpore de patrio et materno sanguine crescunt*, 1214).

Lucretius provides us with a Roman scientific view of how children come to resemble both their parents that acknowledges the Greco-Roman philosophical, scientific, and medical traditions that held that the female body was bloodier than the male. The association of the female body and blood is again adverted to in Lucretius' passage on embryology. We do not know how wide-spread his view was in Republican Rome that children inherit appearance from the mother's blood and the father's body, but it does forecast Tibullus' pervasive concern with women's blood and the way in which, as an operative metaphor, blood connects women's bodies in elegy. Moreover, when Tibullan elegy uses the language of blood to link women who may not be biologically related such as a woman acting as a *lena* for the elegiac mistress (see chapter 3), it demonstrates how Roman culture constructed the female body.

2.2: Republican and Early Augustan Prose

There are several precedents in late Republican prose for elegy's depiction of women. Especially prominent are those of Cicero, Sallust, and Livy. The portraits of

Clodia Metelli in Cicero's *Pro Caelio*, of Sempronia in Sallust's *Bellum Catilinae*, and of Livy's treatment of Lucretia and Verginia in his first pentad of the *Ab Urbe Condita* have proven important antecedents for Tibullus, Propertius, and Ovid's elegiac women. These women are not historical evidence for the development of the so-called "New Women" of Rome, but are rather gendered symbols for the social decay and corruption of traditional Roman values at the end of the Roman Republic (Wyke 1987: 37-40; Dixon 2001: 56-57; Miller 2003: 23-4).⁹ Livy's idealized Lucretia and Verginia, on the other hand, show how Livy constructs a nostalgic view of Roman women's virtue in the early years of the Roman Republic, linking the violation (or inviolability) of female chastity, *pudicitia*, with the foundation of the Roman Republic, and the assurance of plebian rights in the face of a patrician conspiracy. Livy's Lucretia, in particular, offers an idealized image of feminine chastity and virtue elegiac depictions will evoke.

Cicero's portrait of Clodia Metelli's sexual promiscuity and immorality forms the central argument of his defense of Caelius in the *Pro Caelio*.¹⁰ Cicero's portrayal of Clodia combines the *topoi* of the comic *meretrix* and the tragic Medea to build a complex political invective designed to entertain his audience as well as to show Caelius' innocence (Skinner 1983: 275-6), as famously shown in the ending of the *praemunitio*:

⁹ An older generation of scholars frequently took the depictions of upper-class Roman women from satirical and invective genres as historical evidence for the development of a group of sexually-liberated women in Rome (Balsdon, Sullivan, even Lyne 1980). Much feminist scholarship in the 1980s and 1990s has corrected these over-literal readings by placing emphasis on women in literature as products of discourse reflecting not historical reality as much as Roman cultural constructions of norm, ideals, and fantasies about gender and society (e.g. Edwards 1993, Wyke 1987, Henderson 1989). A good basic overview of this shift can be found in Dixon 2001: 3-25).

¹⁰ The date of Cicero's speech is 56 BCE (Austin 1960: 151). On Clodia, see most recently Leen (2000/2001), who discusses how Cicero's portrait of Clodia abrogates social convention and invokes traditional norms of gendered space.

Si quae non nupta mulier domum suam patefecerit omnium cupiditati palamque sese in meretricia uita collocarit, uirorum alienissimorum conuiuiis uti instituerit, si hoc in urbe, si in hortis, si in Baiarum illa celebritate faciat, si denique ita sese gerat non incessu solum, sed ornatu atque comitatu, non flagrantia oculorum, non libertate sermonum, sed etiam complexu, osculatione, actis, nauigatione, conuiuiis, ut non solum meretrix, sed etiam proterua meretrix procaxque uideatur: cum hac si qui adulescens forte fuerit, utrum hic tibi, Luci. Herenni, adulter an amator, expugnare pudicitiam an explere libidinem uoluisse uideatur? (49)

If a woman without a husband opens her house to all men's desires, and publicly leads the life of a courtesan; if she is in the habit of attending dinner-parties with men who are perfect strangers; if she does this in the city, in her park, amid all those crowds at Baiae; if, in fact, she so behaves that not only her bearing but her dress and her companions, not only the ardor of her looks and the licentiousness of her gossip but also her embraces and caresses, her beach-parties, her water-parties, her dinner-parties, proclaim her to be not only a courtesan, but also a shameless and wanton courtesan; if a young man should happen to be found with this woman, would you, Lucius Herennius, consider him to be an adulterer or a lover? Would you think that he desired to ravage her chastity, or only to satisfy his passion?¹¹

Cicero's invective deliberately blurs status distinctions. Clodia's management of her household parodies the actions of an elite male patron, because she is a *mater familias* who behaves like a *meretrix*, and her prominent public status becomes a source of *infamia* rather than a marker of elite masculine *dignitas*. Clodia is a disgraceful model for other women because her public actions precisely pervert those of a successful Roman patron: she actively seeks new lovers and flaunts her affairs publicly (34, 35, 38); she cavorts with her brother, Clodius, in her bedroom (36); her lovers drink, dine, and swim at her house on the Tiber (36); and her home is open to all comers like a brothel (49, 55). Moreover, Cicero stresses Clodia's sexual promiscuity through his use of polite (*femina*) and invective terms (*mulier*) for women: Cicero calls Clodia *mulier* 35 times in the *Pro Caelio*, and *femina* only twice; he sarcastically refers to her as a *mater familias* (32 twice; 57); and he repeatedly calls her a *meretrix* and her lifestyle meretricious (49,

¹¹ Cicero translation from Gardner (2005: 467).

57).¹² Cicero links Clodia's sexual promiscuity to an entire network of vices commonly cited by Romans of the late Republic as symptoms of moral decline such as the rise of pleasures, luxury, faults and vices (57).¹³ Cicero's depiction of Clodia's immoral behaviors also has strong connections with Sallust's Sempronia.

Sallust's *Bellum Catilinae* (publ. c. 42/41 BCE) contains a brief but famous description of Catiline's most prominent female conspirator, Sempronia:

Sed in iis erat Sempronia, quae multa saepe uirilī audaciae facinora commiserat. Haec mulier genere atque forma, praeterea uiro atque liberis satis fortunata fuit; litteris Graecis et Latinis docta, psallere et saltare elegantius quam necesse est probae, multa alia, quae instrumenta luxuriae sunt. Sed ei cariora semper omnia quam decus atque pudicitia fuit; pecuniae an famae minus parceret, haud facile discerneres; libido sic accensa, ut saepius peteret uiros quam peteretur. Sed ea saepe antehac fidem prodiderat, creditum abiurauerat, caedis conscia fuerat; luxuria atque inopia praeceps abierat. Verum ingenium eius haud absurdum: posse uersus facere, iocum mouere, sermone uti uel modesto uel molli uel procaci; prorsus multae facetiae multusque lepos inerat. (*BC* 25)

Now among these women was Sempronia, who had often committed many crimes of masculine daring. In birth and beauty, in her husband also and children, she was abundantly favored by fortune; well read in the literature of Greece and Rome, able to play the lyre and dance more skillfully than an honest woman need, and having many other accomplishments which minister to voluptuousness. But there was nothing which she held so cheap as modesty and chastity; you could not easily say whether she was less sparing of her money or her honor; her desires were so ardent that she sought men more often than she was sought by them. Even before the time of the conspiracy she had often broken her word, repudiated her debts, been privy to murder; poverty and extravagance combined had driven her headlong. Nevertheless, she was a woman of no mean endowments; she could write verses, bandy jests, and use language which was modest, or tender, or wanton; in fine, she possessed a high degree of wit and of charm.¹⁴

¹² *Mulier*: 31, 32 (twice), 33 (twice), 35, 36, 37, 38 (twice), 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 53, 55, 56, 57, 58, 60, 61, 62 (twice), 64, 65, 67 (twice), 68, 69, 70, 71 (twice), 75, 78. On *femina* and *mulier* as polite and invective terms for women in prose, see F. L'Hoir (1992: 39).

¹³ *Quis enim hoc non uidet, iudices, aut quis ignorat, in eius modi domo, in qua mater familias meretricio more uiuat, in qua nihil geratur, quod foras proferendum sit, in qua inusitatae, libidines, luxuries, omnia denique inaudita uitia ac flagitia uersentur . . .* (Cic., *Pro Caelio* 57)

¹⁴ This translation comes from Rolfe (1985: 43-45).

Like that of Cicero's Clodia, Sempronia's behavior transgresses social distinctions between men and women and between elite *matronae* and prostitutes. Sempronia's portrait here is of a too-charming woman whose sexual forwardness compromises her status as a proper elite Roman woman. She is overly well-educated in Greek and Latin; her ability to sing and dance is more appropriate for a high-status courtesan than a proper Roman *matrona*; and she values her attractiveness over her chastity, *pudicitia*.

Sempronia's description is thematically significant to Sallust's work. She embodies the *luxuria*, *avaritia*, and effeminacy that have taken the place of traditional masculine *virtus* in Roman society, and her *virilis audacia* is an ironic reversal of Catiline's conspirators' lack of *virtus* (Boyd 1987: 185). Sempronia acts as Catiline's complement and as a gendered symbol for the moral decay that Sallust associated with the late Republic because of the detrimental effects of the introduction of luxurious Greek and eastern attitudes, lifestyles, and imported goods from the mid second century BCE (Boyd 1987, Wyke 1987, Currie 1998).

It is within the next generation of Roman prose that the female body, rather than female behavior, comes to hold a central thematic position. In Cicero and Sallust, a woman's behavior becomes censurable when she transgresses the status distinctions separating the proper Roman wife from a prostitute. It is important to notice that her sexual transgressions are merely the most sensational in an entire nexus of un-Roman behaviors. Both Clodia and Sempronia also indulge in luxury and excessive desire, and practice lifestyles associated with the introduction of Greek and eastern attitudes. They are gendered exemplars of the degradation in Roman morals at the end of the Republic.

Within Livy, whose first pentad dates to c. 27 BCE,¹⁵ the violated female body becomes a symbol for the Roman state in crisis. Lucretia's rape initiates the expulsion of the kings from Rome and prompts the foundation of the Roman Republic. Verginia's death again marks a crisis in Roman government. Her attempted rape and death signal the tyrannical behavior of the patrician *decemviri* and the need for the re-assertion of plebian rights within the state.¹⁶ It is male bodies overwhelmed with lust whose violent expressions of their sexuality threaten the Roman state (Joshel 2002: 170).¹⁷

The well-known story of the faithful Lucretia shows how strongly Livy links the female body with the health of the Roman state. After her rape by Sextus Tarquinius, Lucretia claims that her chastity, *pudicitia*, has been taken from her (1.58.7). While her mind remains pure, because her body has been violated, she commits suicide lest she prove an example of *impudicitia* to any Roman woman (*corpus est tantum uiolatum, animus insons: mors testis erit*, 1.58.7). Lucretia's violated body, carried out to be publicly viewed, is a symbol for the violation of the Roman state by Tarquin's lust. After she has died, Brutus, Collatinus, and her father immediately expel the kings from Rome

¹⁵ I follow the date argued for by Luce (2009: 46).

¹⁶ See a summary of Verginia's story at Joshel (2002: 168-9): In 450 BCE, the *decemviri* take control over the state, displacing the consuls and tribunes. Appius Claudius, the chief *decemvir*, wants Verginia, daughter of the plebian centurion Lucius Verginius. Appius fails to seduce her with money or promises, so he arranges to have Marcus Clausius claim Verginia as his slave while her father is away at war. Marcus grabs Verginia as she enters the Forum. When she protests, Marcus demands that Appius decide whether Verginia can be claimed as a slave. Verginia's fiancé Icilius speaks to the crowd, but the *decemvir's* wishes prevail, and he declares Verginia a slave. Verginius is granted the right to talk to his daughter's nurse in private, and he takes a knife from a butcher's shop and kills Verginia to claim her freedom and preserve her chastity. Verginius escapes to the army and incites a revolt against the *decemviri*, the tribunate is restored and Verginia's father and fiancé are elected to office (Livy 3.44-58).

¹⁷ These men, like Clodia or Sempronia, are out of control. They are guilty of a variety of Roman vices, including *luxus*, *avaritia*, *libido*, *cupiditas*, *voluptates*, which Livy censures in his Preface (*praef.* 11-12).

and establish the Republic (1.59-60). Woman's sexuality becomes a thematic problem within Livy's text because female beauty tempts the male citizen body to vices. This problem is eliminated through violence against the female body which can restore the Roman state from crisis (Joshel 2002: 171-173).

This thematic of the female body itself as problem rather than female behavior is new to prose of the Augustan period and may be a distinct feature of that time. As we have seen, the female body had already emerged as a theme within late Republican poetry. Lucretius' diatribe suggests that even the most attractive female body may be disgusting when forced into the conventions of love poetry, and Horace's early collection of the *Epodes* also contains several poems devoted to the disgusting female body.

2.3. Horatian Iambic and Elegy

Elegy's interest in the grotesque female body has clear antecedents in earlier Latin poetry. While the Roman New Comedy of Plautus and Terence and Catullus' *carmina* are often cited as elegiac antecedents, these authors do not display the same degree of concern, or offer the same type of imagery of the female body that elegy will. Catullus' often observed interest in the grotesque body is almost entirely confined to relations between men, and he is quite grotesque in his bodily language there. With the exception of a few poems (58, Ameana, the climactic image of Lesbia back home in Rome with all

her lovers in 11), Catullus is not concerned with the female body as a locus of the grotesque. The strongest parallel for elegy's particular form of the female grotesque occurs in Horace's earliest collection of lyric poems, his iambic *Epodes*.

Horace's *Epodes*, published after Actium but reflecting pre-Actian poetry, makes up one of Horace's first collections of published works. In these iambic poems, the speaker assumes the invective persona of the attack-dog. The subject matter of the 17 *Epodes* ranges from despairing poems about the state of civil war in contemporary Rome (9, 16) to seemingly personal invective directed against the witch Canidia, and a social-climbing military tribune (5), as well as two poems about old women. This collection of poetry, like the later *Odes*, is deeply influenced by Horace's Greek predecessors, both the archaic poets Archilochus and Hipponax and the Hellenistic invective *iambi* of Callimachus.

In his late collection of *Epistles*, Horace claims of his iambic poetry that he inherited the meter and genre of invective from Archilochus (*Epist.* 1.1.23-31) but that he did not want to imitate the content, including Archilochus' harsh sexual invectives against Neobule and the daughters of Lycambus. Yet, in four of his *Epodes*, Horace does write invectives against women. These poems offer the strongest antecedent for elegy's depictions of the other women of elegy through their imagery of the grotesque female body and old women (see chapters 3 and 5). Horace's invective against women falls into two groups. In the first, Horace writes poems about the witch Canidia (5, 17, *Sat.* 1.8, mentioned in 3).¹⁸ In the second, he writes two poems of sexual invective against two old women who attempt to, or manage to, seduce the speaker (8 and 12). I will focus here on *Epodes* 8 and 12 because of their strong connection to elegy.

¹⁸ For discussion of Canidia and Horace's poetics of *impotentia*, see Oliensis (1991), (1998).

Epode 8 reports an erotic conversation. An old woman has propositioned the speaker and he is not aroused by her. The poem explains the speaker's initial impotence (*vires quid enervet meas, 2*)¹⁹ as caused by his full-blown disgust at the woman's aged body:

Rogare longo putidam te saeculo,
uiris quid enervet meas,
cum sit tibi dens ater et rugis uetus
frontem senectus exaret
hietque turpis inter aridas natis 5
podex uelut crudae bovis.
sed incitat me pectus et mammae putres,
equina quales ubera,
uenterque mollis et femur tumentibus
exile suris additum. 10

You dare to ask me, you decrepit, stinking slut,
what makes me impotent?
And you with blackened teeth, and so advanced
in age that wrinkles plough your forehead,
your raw and filthy arsehole gaping like a cow's
between your wizened buttocks.
It's your slack breasts that rouse me (I have seen
much better udders on a mare)
your flabby paunch and scrawny thighs
stuck on your swollen ankles.²⁰

This poem plays on typical stereotypes of old women in Greek and Roman literature. She is sexually aggressive, and the physical details of her exaggerated old age and decrepitude are catalogued (Richlin 1984: 69).

The poem concentrates on a piece-by-piece graphic physical description of the old woman's body. This description plays up the speaker's paradoxical attraction to the disgusting body of the old woman (a feature that previous critics have overlooked). The

¹⁹ Horace introduces the sexual usage of *enervare* into poetic Latin here. Lucretius and Catullus use *nervus* for *membrum virile* (Lucr. 4.1115, Cat. 67.27). See Watson *ad loc.*

²⁰ I use D. West's translation (1997) for *Epodes 8* and 12.

view moves from head to ankles, and is perhaps best understood as a parody of love poetry's typical descriptions of the beloved's beauty (Watson 1995). The *Vetula* has a single blackened tooth and a deeply wrinkled face (3-4),²¹ her breasts sag, her stomach is squishy, and she has skinny thighs on swollen calves (7-10). Each of these features are signs of age, but more significantly, marks of childbirth on the female body. These physical traits are (exactly) those avoided by the later elegiac *puella* (Prop. 2.15, *Am.* 1.5, 2.14.7), and those features that the elegiac lover claims turn him off (James 2003: 167-183). Here this language maps out the parodic iambic attraction of the revolted speaker to the unattractive object of ecphrasis. Much to the reader's surprise, the Horatian speaker is aroused by the *vetula* (*sed incitat me*, 7).

The second half of the poem concentrates on the *vetula*'s assets before switching to iambic's characteristically phallic language:

Esto beata, funus atque imagines
ducant triumphales tuum
nec sit marita, quae rotundioribus
onusta bacis ambulet.
Quid? Quod libelli Stoici inter sericos 15
iacere puluillos amant,
inlitterati num minus nerui rigent
minusue languet fascinum?
quod ut superbo prouoces ab inguine,
ore adlaborandum est tibi. 20

May you be blessed with wealth! May effigies
of triumphators march you to the grave,
and may no other wife go on parade
weighed down with fatter pearls!
But why do Stoic tracts so love to lie
on your silk cushions?

²¹ The black tooth of the old woman is a common feature of *Vetula-Skoptik*, and traces back to Aristophanes' old women, *Plut.* 1057-9; it appears in Roman Comedy at Plaut. *Most.* 274-5; and it is at Prop. 4.5.68 (Acanthis). Within Horace's poetry, see also *Epode* 5.47 (Canidia), *Epodes* 6.15, of the rival iambist, *Sat.* 1.8.48 (Canidia loses her false teeth), denied at *C.* 2.8 (of Barine's physical perfection).

They won't cause big erections or delay the droop—
you know that penises can't read.
If that is what you want from my fastidious groin,
your mouth has got some work to do.

The *Vetula*'s conspicuous consumption of wealth in the poem, like her disgusting but attractive body, is multivalent. While the speaker chastises her for publicly parading her wealth and status (*ducant, ambulet*), she is also an attractive object marked by her sexual availability. Pearls, along with (e.g.) Coan silk, Indian imports, and Tyrian dye are products of the Roman empire's expansion into the Greek East that are specifically associated with sexual promiscuity in Roman love poetry (Cf. Prop. 1.2. 1-4, Tib. 2.3. 51-58).²² These luxury goods are tied into a nexus of ideas in Republican Rome that associated eastern luxury goods with the decline of Roman morality and austerity (Edwards 1993, Dench 1998). To wear eastern imports was to mark yourself as soft, effeminate, and sexually passive (*mollis*). The *Vetula*'s expensive luxury goods also anticipate the centrality of *luxuriae* to discussions of the elegiac mistress' body (on which, see chapter 4).

Horace's language borrows from the highly polished Neoteric style of Catullus and his coterie through his use of the diminutive ending (-illus) (*libelli Stoici . . . Sericos pulvillos*, 15,16) to characterize her bedroom.²³ Additionally, Horace is innovative in his Latin: this passage marks the first usage of the adjective *sericus* in Latin (Watson 305). This poem uses linguistically rich style as well as low words that do not

²² In an effort to check conspicuous consumption among the Roman elite, Caesar restricted the wearing of pearls (Mankin). See also discussion of luxury goods and sumptuary laws in chapter 4.

²³ Her Chinese-silk pillows are also a mark of extreme luxury. Chinese silk, though well-known in Greece from the fifth century, was very rare even in the first century CE in Rome (Watson 1995 *ad loc*).

occur elsewhere in poetic usage, and it is the particular mixture of poetic attraction with the speaker's disgust that will be characteristic of elegiac depictions of the grotesque.

The concluding lines offer a compendium of euphemisms for male genitals and sexual actions and literalize the hyper-phallic language of iambic poetry (*nervus* = *fascinum* = *membrum virile*; *rigere* and its antithesis *languere*, 17-18). This sexually explicit language also reminds the reader of the speaker's persona. Throughout the *Epodes* as here, Horace is not the masterful lyric bard of the *Odes*, but the impotent satiric and iambic alter-ego (Oliensis 1998). Moreover, the poem ends in self-irony when the speaker admits that, despite invective's literalized hyper-phallic language, he needs help to reach its climax. The speaker asks for the old woman to play the active sexual partner, and through the act of fellation, to further unman him (Henderson 1999).

Thus, *Epode* 8 presents a long description of the female body of the would-be beloved. Her body, though imagined in disgusting language, is paradoxically attractive, and catalogued in a bits-and-pieces description that anticipates elegiac descriptions of the mistress. The *Vetula* conspicuously displays foreign imports such as pearls, silk, and Greek philosophy, and Horatian usage here incorporates a mixture of poetic, narrative pleasure in detailing the *Vetula*'s body and her goods alongside the speaker's proclaimed disgust at her sexual invitation. These particular features anticipate the ways that the female body is deployed in elegy.

Epodes 8 and 12 have often been taken as a pair since they present similar narrative situations. The speaker finds himself propositioned by an unattractive woman, whom he rejects only after cataloguing the ways she disgusts him. *Epode* 12, however, expands many of 8's themes and has not been sufficiently discussed in earlier criticism.

Epode 12 greatly elaborates 8's bestial imagery for the female body, it too turns self-ironic humor against phallic language for the male body, and it mingles high and low vocabulary. Like *Epode* 8, the speaker becomes impotent at the sight of this mistress, but here the woman compliments his sexual prowess with other partners. Both poems can be read as metaphors about literary style or literally, but *Epode* 12, with its plethora of references to Catullus and Neoteric Hellenistic literature, makes it nearly impossible to avoid a metapoetic reading. While it is not incorrect to call both 8 and 12 aggressively misogynistic poems, it is clear that the bodies of *Epode* 12 at least represent more than fleshy invective targets. *Epode* 12 is, moreover, a strong candidate for the primary poetic antecedent for elegy's engagement with the grotesque speaking female body and with the female body as the site for elegiac *cultus* (see chapters 3, 4, and 5).

The poem falls into two sections: the speaker's rejection of the woman, and the woman's speech complaining of his impotence. In the first section, the speaker rejects the woman because of her excessively strong smell and her animalistic lust (1-12). The close connection between animal imagery and sexual passion recurs in the woman's speech where she turns the speaker's rhetoric against him. While she wanted a worthy bed-partner, she ends up with an *iners taurus*, a near oxymoron, because of the bull's association with the sexual drive (Watson).²⁴ The poem concludes with a sexual role-reversal expressed through an animal simile. While throughout the poem, the woman has been the sexual aggressor; the speaker had also been characterized as an aggressive hunting dog. Now, in her concluding lines, the woman compares herself to wolves and lions, and the speaker becomes a trembling lamb or deer (*ut pauet acris | agna lupos capraeque leones*, 25-6). Her language characterizes the speaker as passive prey in the

²⁴ See also *Epodes* 6.11-12 where Horace is again a bull (Mankin *ad loc.*).

erotic hunt, reversing the gender roles typical for this metaphor. Her language finds a close comparison in Horace's own poetic persona in *Odes* 1.23. 9-10 where Horace exploits animal comparisons to characterize Chloe's coming ripeness for sexual availability in similar language (*atqui non ego te, tigris ut aspera | Gaetulusue leo, frangere persequor*).

Woman is the sexual aggressor, as in *Epode* 8. Here, however, the woman is given the chance to speak her proposition to the speaker. Her speech undermines the iambic speaker's own rejection of his would-be beloved through a series of insults, and questions his construction of the erotic landscape.

Vel mea cum saevis agitat fastidia uerbis:
 'Inachia langues minus ac me;
 Inachiam ter nocte potes, mihi semper ad unum 15
 mollis opus. pereat male, quae te
 Lesbia quaerenti taurum monstrauit inertem.
 cum mihi Cos adesset Amyntas,
 cuius in indomito constantior inguine neruos
 quam noua collibus arbor inhaeret. 20
 muricibus Tyriis iteratae uellera lanae
 cui properabantur? tibi nempe,
 ne foret aequalis inter conuiuia, magis quem
 diligeret mulier sua quam te.
 o ego non felix, quam tu fugis, ut pauet acris 25
 agna lupos capreaeque leones!
 (*Epode* 12. 13-26).

And she gives me an earful for being so choosy:
 "You're not so slack when lying with Inachia.
 Inachia you manage three times a night, but you flop
 at the thought of doing me once. To hell with Lesbia
 who gave me a wimp when I looked for a bull, and all the time
 Amyntas of Cos was mine for the taking,
 with a tool in his great groin sturdier than
 a deeply rooted sapling in the mountains.
 You ask what's all the hurry. Who are these woollens for,
 all double steeped in Tyrian dyes? For you, of course,
 so that when you're with your friends, there will be nobody
 whose trollop loves him more than I love you.

O! I'm so sad. You've run from me like the lamb in panic
from the wicked wolf, or roe-deer from the lion."

The woman develops a series of insults on the speaker's lack of manliness and she attacks his sexual prowess as well as his masculinity.

At the same time, her speech mingles highly literary language rich in metapoetic reference with coarse, euphemistic sexual metaphor. She first mocks his sexual ability by reversing the speaker's phallic braggadocio; though he grows soft with her after one effort (15-16), he is more potent with Inachia, and can go three times in one night.

Amores 3.7 offers a similar usage of the sexual endurance trope, although the speaker is hopelessly impotent in 3.7, he claims that with other partners he could make love two, three, or even nine times in one night (3.7.23-6).²⁵

She also employs subtler insults to his masculinity by accusing him of enjoying rich, foreign clothing dyed with Tyrian dye (21-2). For a Roman man, to wear luxurious imported fabrics marked him with softness or effeminacy, *mollitia* (Edwards 1993: 68). Moreover, when the speaker accepts the woman's gift of clothing, he conducts himself like a Roman courtesan rather than an autonomous Roman citizen male.²⁶

The woman's speech is punctuated by several references to Hellenistic Greek literature and Roman Alexandrianism. Although the proper interpretation of Lesbia's

²⁵ At nuper bis flava Chlide, ter candida Pitho,
ter Libas officio continuata meo est;
exigere a nobis angusta nocte Corinnam
me memini numeros sustinuisse novem.
(*Am.* 3.7. 23-26).

Catullus makes a similar boast in 32.7-8, Propertius boasts of his virility at 2.23.33, and the trope appears in Hellenistic epigram as well (Asclep. *A.P.* 5.181.11-12, Philodemus *A. P.* 11.30).

²⁶ On clothing as a costly gift given by a lover to his mistress, see Plaut. *Men.* 130; *As.* 929; *Truc.* 53, 535-6; Lucr. 4.1130.

names in line 17 has been debated by the commentators,²⁷ it is hard to resist a metapoetic reading that looks back to Catullus' Lesbia and even Sappho. Her name appears after a possible reference to Catullus 32, and is itself followed by Coan Amyntas. The adjective Coan suggests the birthplace of the Hellenistic poet Philetas, but it also looks directly to Theocritus' programmatic seventh *Idyll*, set on Cos, where Amyntas and Eucritus accompany the first-person narrator on their walk to the harvest-festival (7.1). Moreover, the name Amyntas appears ten times in Vergil's *Eclogues*, modeled on Theocritus' *Idylls*.

Previous interpretations of *Epodes* 8 and 12 point to elegy's parallel approaches to the female body in its poetic and political contexts. In the first of these interpretative paradigms, the iambic bodies pilloried have been understood as an allegory for different stylistic traits rejected by Horace.²⁸ Roman rhetoricians and poets made frequent analogies between the human body and types of style.²⁹ Horace himself frequently employs the human body as a metaphor for style in the first book of his *Satires*. The body of poetry and the body of the poet who produce it are most extremely elided at *Satire* 1.4. 56-62 where the speaker imagines removing the meter and re-arranging the words from lines of Ennian epic or from Horatian or Lucilian satire.³⁰ While Ennius'

²⁷Watson feels that Lesbia is a procuress' name, because Lesbian women were known for their sexual talents. Mankin thinks Lesbia is an epithet for Inachia, who is skilled in "Lesbian acts," i.e. *fellatio*.

²⁸Clayman (1975: 55). Horace's *Epodes* 8 and 12, like Callimachean iambic, use a "potent combination of obscene insult and literary criticism."

²⁹On Roman elegy and rhetorical theory, see Keith 1999, who lists some of the analogies between parts of the human body and parts of texts to be found in Roman rhetorical texts, including *corpus*, *membrum*, *caput*, *color*, *candor*, *figura*, *forma*, *latus*, *lumen*, *manus*, *nervus*, *os (oris)*, *os (ossis)*, *pectus*, *pes*, *sanguis*, *vultus* (41, n. 4). Further discussion of the metaphor is in Fantham (1972: 164-174).

³⁰See most recently Farrell (2007) for a discussion of the ancient tendency to equate Horace's body with the poetics of his books. See also Freudenburg (1993: 145-51) on this passage.

poetry stays poetic, satire, when re-arranged, yields the limbs of a torn-apart poet, *disiecti membra poetae* (1.4. 62). In the same poem, Lucilius' muddy, too-long, too-quickly composed, and under-edited style is imagined as a personality trait (*ut magnum, uersus dictabat stans pede in uno | cum flueret lutulentus, erat quod tollere uelles*, 1.4. 10-11). Cicero's *Orator* makes the analogy between the female body and style explicit where the pure style is like an unadorned woman who is naturally beautiful (78-9). The excessively-made up woman of *Epode* 12 wears blush dyed with crocodile dung (*color fucatus stercore crocodili*, 9-10), and Cicero encourages the removal of artificial blush from texts (*fucati uero medicamenta candoris et ruboris omnia repellentur*, *Orat.* 79). The *vetula*'s physique is also described in the language used for rough, archaic verse, and for Stoic style (*turpis, crudus, aridus, and exilis*). Finally, Clayman has proposed that the little Stoic books nestled among silken pillows of *Epode* 8 should also be read as metaphors for an improbable *zeugma* of sparing Attic-style Stoic prose and excessively luxurious Asiatic writing (60). Although Horace does use some of the vocabulary for literary styles that he elsewhere rejects, this reading of the *Epodes* as about style fails to explain the aggression and misogyny of the speaker, and his apparent delight in cataloguing in extreme physical detail the disgusting bodies of his invective targets.³¹

Horatian impotence, *impotentia*, offers a richer explanation for these poems, and one that is more capable of placing them within their political and social context. These women become invective stand-ins for forces that threaten Roman masculinity and stable Roman society. Throughout the *Epodes*, Horace reflects on the period between Philippi and Actium, and his poetry shows a society that is out of control because of the civil

³¹ As Oliensis (1998: 75) remarks on these poems, "If Horace is criticizing not only sexual but literary excesses, the critique has not managed to stay above the mud of its metaphors."

war.³² In *Epodes* 8 and 12, Horace displays sexual rather than political or social impotence, but his virility is at stake throughout the poetic corpus (Oliensis 1998: 77; Fitzgerald 1988: 176). The Latin term *impotentia* has a double meaning: first, it means violence and the failure to master oneself; second, it means weakness, or the inability to master another (Oliensis 1998: 73). This doubled *impotentia* is at play in these poems. The poet's show of sexual impotence in the face of these women as well as his violent phallic invective represent attempts to re-assert Roman masculine dominance and elite Roman control of the world. Sexual inadequacy becomes a metaphor for the poet's inability to correct the disordered political context (Fitzgerald 1988: 189). As Sharon James says in the context of later Roman love elegy, the speaker of love poetry is "Master of his Universe," a Roman elite male whose status as *dominus* is guaranteed by numerous social structures (2005). The women of *Epodes* 8 and 12, by threatening this dominance, pose a threat to masculine potency that must be gotten under control again through the practice of invective.³³ The broader political interpretation of *impotentia* offers a way to understand Horace's early iambic poetry within the political climate of the triumviral period, when the Roman male elite found its dominant position in society seriously disrupted.

Horace's two *Epodes* anticipate trends in elegy such as the centrality of the old woman, her grotesque body, and the blending of corporeally-explicit ephrastic

³² See especially *Epode* 16.1-2: *Altera iam teritur bellis civilibus aetas | suis et ipsa Roma viribus ruit.*

³³ See Fitzgerald (1988), who reads the *Epodes* as a conflict between an Archilochean language of confident masculinity and sexual potency that is consistently upset by a concern with impotence and helplessness, and complicated by "the complex relation of the poet to political figures and events in late republican Rome and by the problematic nature of human relations in general during the protracted civil war" (176). See also Henderson (1999: 101) on the re-assertion of masculinity and dominance by the subordination of the Female as Other.

descriptions with women's speech about sex and the body. This type of frankly sexual language will recur in Propertius' speaking women characters (Cynthia and Acanthis, see chapters 3 and 5) and Ovid's only speaking woman, the *lena* Dipsas (see chapter 3). These *Epodes*, in their catalogues of grotesque female bodies, represent a parodic anticipation of the developments of later elegy in Propertius Book 4 and Ovid's *Amores* and *Ars Amatoria*.³⁴ Ovid's catalogues of revolting female cosmetics in *Ars* 3 and the *Remedia Amoris* closely recall the strong stink and disgusting make-up that make the woman so unappealing in *Epode* 12 (*AA* 3.193-216, *RA* 353-6). In these poems, the iambic speaker expresses his dominance through his penetrating gaze. His violent gaze intrudes into an interior world of women's exposed sexual bodies. As is characteristic of Roman satire, the speaker reveals visions typically confined to the interior. Yet Horace's thematization of the female body in bits-and-pieces looks to later elegiac descriptions of the *puella*.

2.4. Augustan Legal Discourse on the Body: the Julian Laws

Augustus' marital legislation, comprised of the *lex Iulia de adulteriis coercendis* and the *lex Iulia de maritandis ordinibus*, passed in 19/18 BCE, mark a major socio-legal shift in the status and definition of Roman women and form the core of Augustus'

³⁴ Watson (1995: 292) sees these *Epodes* interest in physical detail as "ironic inversion" of a type of Hellenistic epigram detailing the charms of a mistress, such as Philodemus *A. P.* 5.13, 121, 132. He also compares *Epodes* 8 and 12 to Catullus' *Ameana* poems, 41 and 43.

attempts at moral reform. These laws did not arise in isolation, however, but are likely to have developed from a series of Augustus' earlier actions as well as Republican and triumviral legal precedents. The Augustan laws represent a new social control of female sexuality, and a new legal concretization of the distinction between the respectable and the unrespectable Roman woman.³⁵ The following discussion assembles a few Republican legal precedents for Augustus' reforms. This brief discussion concentrates on the changing status of female sexuality within Roman legal discourses and highlights how the Augustan reforms accord women's sexual morality (or at least their behaviors) prominent public and legal recognition from the state for the first time. Propertius' first three books of *elegiae* (1-3, publ. c. 27 – 23) and Tibullus' two collections (publ. pre-19 BCE) represent a large majority of the elegiac corpus and appeared after Augustus gained sole power post-Actium but before the official promulgation of the marital legislation. They are thus positioned to reflect any attempts at reformation that were in the air in this decade and, as I will argue in chapter 3, elegy problematizes precisely those distinctions between respectable and unrespectable women in Roman society that the Augustan legislation sought to clearly distinguish. Elegy's consistent engagement with the language of blood-ties between generations of women stresses the centrality of a family-centered definition for women's identity in this period and imagines the reproduction of the lower-classes that the Julian laws will ignore. Elegy's well-known resistance to

³⁵ With each of these laws, we are reliant on the collection of later jurists and codifiers of the laws, and it can be difficult to totally separate out the original Augustan prescriptions from later attempts at clarification; nevertheless, scholars have reconstructed many of the original provisions. Sources for the *lex Iulia de maritandis ordinibus* and the *Lex Papia Poppaea* are Justinian's *Digest*, early 6th C CE (48.5), Paul's *Sententiae*, anthology c. 300 CE (2.26); *Collatio legum mosaiarum et Romanorum* (c. 400 CE) and Justinian's *Codex*, 6th C CE. Sources for the *lex Iulia de adulteriis* are *Dig.* 48.5.6, Papinian, 148-212 CE (48.5.35), Modestinus, fl. 250 CE, Paul. *Sent.* 2.226.12.

drawing clear-cut status distinctions between women does not, I would argue, offer an answer to the vexed question of whether elegy is pro- or anti-Augustan. Instead, evaluating elegy's engagement with the female body against the Augustan marital legislation locates elegy only as politically-engaged poetry that is strongly influenced by, and influential over, the elite Roman socio-political context in which it was written and performed.

The *lex Iulia de adulteriis coercendis* prescribed a series of provisions, and its later revision, the *Lex Papia Poppaea*, a law named for the two suffect consuls of 9 CE, tightened up and revised its restrictions, and instituted a series of prohibitions for those who violated its strictures.³⁶ The *lex Iulia et Papia*, as the hybrid law is often referred to,

³⁶ McGinn (1998: 70-105) offers the most extensive description of the laws. Treggiari (1991: 277-290) and Edwards (1993: 37-42) also offer discussions of its contents. The following is a summary of its stipulations:

- 1) a father who discovers his married daughter committing adultery in his own or his son-in-law's house can kill daughter and lover, if he is *paterfamilias*. (*Dig.* 48.5.21-4; *Pap.* and *Ulp.*; *Coll.* 4.2.3, *Paul*; *Paul Sent.* 2.26.1).
- 2) If he kills only one of the lovers, he is liable for murder (*Dig.* 48.5.24.4, *Ulpian*; 48.5.33pr, *Macer*).
- 3) The husband could not kill his wife (*Dig.* 48.5.23.4), but could kill the lover, if he is *infamis* (a convicted criminal, an actor, a procurer or a gladiator), or a prostitute or slave (*Sent.* 2.26.4).
- 4) The husband was required to divorce his wife within 3 days of killing the lover and to begin proceedings in the *quaestio* against her for adultery (*Dig.* 48.5.25.1, *Macer*; 48.5.30pr, *Ulpian*).
- 5) The husband, if he knows of the adultery, but does not prosecute, is liable for charge of pimping, *lenocinium* (*Dig.* 48.5.2.2; 48.5.2.6).
- 6) For the first two months after the divorce, only the husband or father can bring an accusation (*Dig.* 48.5.2.8). Thereafter, anyone could prosecute the woman.
- 7) The woman could only be tried after she was divorced (*Dig.* 48.5.12.10, *Papinian*; 48.5.27pr, *Ulp*).
- 8) Prosecution could only be brought up to 5 years after the alleged adultery (*Dig.* 48.5.30.5, *Ulpian*; 48.5.32, *Paul*). The informer, in third party prosecution, if successful, got part of the confiscated property. The rest went to the emperor's treasury.
- 9) Evidence could be obtained from tortured slaves.
- 10) Adultery cases were tried in a *quaestio perpetua*, a permanent law court set up for this purpose. Other such permanent courts existed for parricide, force, *vis*, murder and treason.
- 11) Under the *Lex Papia Poppaea* (9 CE) a convicted adulteress could not inherit. Women found guilty of adultery were prohibited from marriage to freeborn Romans (*Ulpian* 13). This provision made an elite Roman women *infamis* and she would share status with actresses, prostitutes, and procuresses. Conviction carried a punishment of loss of ½ dowry and 1/3 of property, lover a 1/3

had purview over adultery among upper-class Roman citizens male and female, and for the first time the *lex Iulia* made adultery a matter of state rather than something dealt with by the individual household. Most important for my purposes are the ways that this law made the woman's status the determining factor in the legality or illegality of sexual behaviors. This law standardized the categories such as *materfamilias* and prostitute: and depends on the existence of categories of women; those worthy of marriage and those not; those sexually available and those off-limits (Milnor 2005: 150; McGinn 1998b: 144-5).

The *Lex Iulia de maritandis ordinibus* is also a landmark in the development of women's social difference.³⁷ While the existence of formal class structures had governed

of his, and relegation to separate islands (Paul, *Sent.* 2.26.14). Julia, Augustus' daughter, was convicted under this law. Additionally, the law made women adulteresses give up their *stola*, the garment of the Roman matron, and wear a prostitute's *toga*. (Mart. 2.39; 10.52).

³⁷ Prohibitions of the *lex Iulia de maritandis ordinibus*:

- 1) Those of senatorial order, their sons, daughters, and in the male line, grandsons, granddaughters, great-grandsons and great-granddaughters, were forbidden to marry or betroth themselves to freedmen or women, actors, actresses, and anyone whose father or mother was an actor; later legislation added those condemned in a standing criminal court. (Paul *Dig.* 23.3.44pr)
- 2) All other freedborn were forbidden marriage with prostitutes, pimps, procuresses, persons condemned for adultery or caught in the act. (Ulpian *Dig.* 23.2.43 pr.-9, 12-13; Tit. 13.2)
- 3) Those who violated the terms of the law were counted as *caelibes*, even if their marriage was valid under the *ius civile*. These legally unmarried people were liable to the penalties of the law.
- 4) According to the law's definitions of succession, those who were unmarried or whose unions were illegal could get nothing under a will unless they were 6th degree of blood relationship. (McGinn 1998: 73)
- 5) Childless spouses could get only a 1/10 of each other's estate upon death, with an additional 1/10 for each child from a previous marriage.
- 6) Children conceived in marriage itself were granted full capacity if one child survived past puberty, if two lived more than 3 yrs, or if 3 survived to naming day (nine days past birth for male, eight for females). A parent whose children died, an *orbis*, was given 1/2 capacity, while the rest of the property went to the state treasury.
- 7) Women whose marriage ended through death or divorce, under the *Lex Iulia*, had 1 year or 6 months, respectively, to remarry.

The law also granted certain privileges:

For women, it brought freedom from the *tutela muliebris*. *Ius* was granted to men with 3 children or to freedborn women; freedwomen needed four children to enjoy this privilege. Women were

the life of Roman men throughout the Republic through the legal distinctions of *senator*, *eques*, *capiti*, it is only with the Augustan legislation that women are granted legal status distinctions into the categories of *nobilis* or *infamis*. Together, these laws represent the first time in Roman legal history that women's behavior and moral health were subject to control by law instead of by the household.

The Augustan marital legislation has some clear antecedents within Republican law and this type of legislation was also frequently referred to in Republican literature (Cicero *Marc.* 23, Horace *Odes*, Propertius 2.7). Legal or governmental precedent for the Augustan legislation has frequently been adduced for the office of the censor (Milnor 2005, McGinn 1998b, Edwards 1993). Censors held the role of moral arbiters of Roman elite classes in the Republic. The census was conducted every five years when the *lectio senatus* and the *recognitio equitum* occurred.³⁸ The censor's job was to recognize ex-magistrates as senators and to disbar dishonored men from positions of social prominence and political responsibility. The censor's function was known as the *regimen morum*, and they could disbar men from the senate because of military indiscipline, religious offenses, dereliction of public duty or abuse of magisterial power, conduct detrimental to censorial authority, waste or mismanagement of patrimony, especially ostentatious consumption, and excessive spending on prostitutes (McGinn 1998b: 27-28).³⁹ Cicero, in the *de Re Publica*, when speaking of Roman customs, says that the censors ought to teach

exempted from the *lex Voconia* (which forbid persons worth HS 100,000 or more to institute women as heirs), and freed her from obligation to remarry.

³⁸ During the last hundred years of the republic, however, the activities of the census had been severely disrupted (Wiseman 1969: 59-65).

³⁹ Censure in one of these areas brought a diminution of an elite's *dignitas*, and was termed a *nota* (Kaster 1956: 226). Censors also had the ability to demote lower-status Romans from their status as full Roman citizen and or to take away their ability to vote.

men to control their wives and to reinforce Roman social sanctions imposed on women (*Rep.* 4.4.6; Treggiari 1991: no. 209). The censors have a similar role to control citizen's morality and the birth of children in the *de Legibus* (3.7). That Augustus took over the role of censor in the year 20 BCE, when he assumed functions over the *cura morum et legum*, further strengthens the connection between Augustus' expansion of the state's power over elite Roman morality and the traditional role of the censors (Baltrusch 1989: 172-3).

Legal precedents exist for the *leges Iuliae* as well in the form of the *lex Roscia*, the *Tabula Heracleensis*, several of Julius Caesar's, and some of Augustus' early actions. These earlier laws enforce distinctions between Roman citizens granted legal privileges for their upright morals and the *infames*, Romans who did not enjoy full legal benefits of citizenship because of their disgraceful professions or behaviors, such as prostitutes, pimps, gladiators, trainers, beast-fighters, and actors (McGinn 1998b: 65-69). The *lex Roscia* (67BCE) excluded from the XIV Rows reserved for equestrians in the theatre *decoctores*, gladiators (*auctorati*), freedmen, and actors. As the Augustan law will later make explicit, this law indirectly defines the requirements for membership in equestrian order (McGinn 1998b: 28-9). The later *Tabula Heracleensis* records a section of law dating to 45 BCE, that excluded pimps, prostitutes, actors, gladiators, and gladiatorial trainers from municipal magistracies and council memberships as well as marks of honorary membership, like sitting with *decuriones* at games, gladiatorial contests, and public meals.⁴⁰ Julius Caesar, in 59 BCE, perhaps in an attempt to increase the number of the senatorial and equestrian elites, gave the remainder of *ager Campanus* to citizens with

⁴⁰ The language of this exclusion becomes the standard formulaic way of describing prostitutes in the later Julian legislation: *TH* 122-3: . . . *quieve corpore quaestum / fecit fecerit . . . quieve lenocinium faciet*. See further discussion at McGinn (1998b: 33-34).

three or more children (Suet. *Iul.* 20.3; App. *B.C.* 2.10; Dio. 38.1.1-3). Octavian gave his sister and wife release from *tutela muliebris* in 35 BCE (Dio 49.38.1), anticipating the reward for the *ius trium liberorum* to be instituted into law with the *Lex Iulia et Papia*. Finally, Augustus gave preference to married men and fathers of children in the allotment of provinces beginning in 27 BCE (Dio. 53.13.2).

There are also references in early Augustan literature to the need for reform of Roman women and Roman *mores*. In a previous section of this chapter, I explored how prose of the late Republic portrayed Sempronia and Clodia Metelli as elite Roman women who blurred the distinction between the *matrona* and the *meretrix*. Horace, in the third book of *Odes*, explicitly locates the failure of Roman society in women's behaviors that blur the actions of a *matrona* with those of a *meretrix* (3.6.17-33, 3.24. 24-44). These poems, which Nisbet and Rudd assign to c. 28 BCE, sound like explicit references to Augustus' intended marital legislations that were to restore Roman sexual morality (Nisbet and Rudd 2004: xx-xxi, 272-3). The existence of earlier Augustan attempts at this type of legislation has also long been argued on the basis of Propertius 2.7, and a passage in Suetonius (Div. Aug 34) where Augustus tried and failed to pass a law on adultery, *pudicitia*, and social classes.⁴¹ Together these references suggest that Augustus may have attempted to promulgate a version of what would become the Julian laws early in his Principate, but that he failed.⁴² Whether or not there were any official attempts by the state to pass similar legislation, these passages show that the poets are interested in

⁴¹ *Leges retractavit et quasdam ex integro sanxit, ut sumptuariam et de adulteriis et de pudicitia, de ambitu, de maritandis ordinibus.*

⁴² See James (2003: 229-31), Badian (1985) for a brief introduction to the problem.

changes in the political climate that directly address women's sexual behaviors and status.

A crucial difference emerges between the Republican antecedents and Augustus' legislation in so much as Augustus' laws made women the object of legal moral judgment for the first time. Within the republican precedents for the marital legislations, it was male behavior, rather than female, that was at issue (Milnor 2005: 150, Edwards 1993: 20). In the Republic, women had no official role in Roman civic matters, but the development of the social legislation accords women a new legal subjectivity in Roman society (Severy 2003: 52-6). The social legislation can be viewed as dependent on, and reinforcing Roman ideologies of proper femininity (Milnor 2005: 148).

This chapter has explored important Roman antecedents to elegy's depiction of the female body. Lucretius' diatribe on love and Horace's first lyrical collection, the Epodes, offered representations of the female body that anticipate the elegiac female body. Horace's Epode 12 showed the same combination of elegant, parodic speech with grotesque details that I will explore in chapters 3 and 5. Augustan marital legislation created the conditions for a major shift in Roman understandings of the sexualized female body. Augustus' attempts to police female sexual behavior form a major intertext for elegy's engagement with the moral landscape of its contemporary Rome. In the following chapter, I turn to elegy proper. I examine Tibullus' introduction of the "other women" of elegy and explore his representations of these women. These women are connected to the elegiac procuress character, the *lena*, and I examine Propertius and Ovid's deployment of this motif as well.

CHAPTER THREE:

Blood Others: the Other Women of Elegy

In this chapter, I expose the imagery of blood associated with the elegiac female body. By examining how Tibullus, Propertius, and Ovid represent the “other” women of elegy, I demonstrate that the elegiac female body is more complex than has been recognized. Despite elegy’s frequently proclaimed attraction to the *puella*’s physical beauty (e.g., Propertius 2.1.1-16, *Amores* 1.5), the speaker is mystified by the female body. The elegiac mistress, or *puella*, inhabits a world well-populated by non-elite women such as the procuress (*lena*), the wise-woman (*saga*), priestesses of ecstatic religion (*ministra*), slaves, rival girls, prostitutes (*meretrices*), and the *puella*’s sister and mother. Many of these women are bloody and even grotesque, and thus appear very different from the idealized *puella*, but closer examination reveals unexpected and troubling similarities to her.

Elegy represents the female body not only as the *scripta puella*, the perfectly polished woman who looks like the Callimachean aesthetic she embodies (Wyke 2002), but as a disruptive and harmful force that threatens the speaker of elegiac poetry. The appearance of the female body disrupts the speaker’s thoughts and actions, and provokes vivid descriptions of bloody, violent images such as the curses against the *lena*

(Tib. 1.5.49-58, Prop. 4.5, *Am.* 1.8), or the self-mutilating priestess of Bellona (1.6.45-54). Throughout this discussion, I concentrate on elegy's interest in disgusting physical details, magic, and the dead or dying body. Previous studies have shown that such depictions are common for the *lena*,¹ but this nexus of grotesque imagery pervades the other women of elegy as well. Blood in elegy, I argue, operates as a poetic metaphor that links the beautiful *puella* to the most grotesque figures within the elegiac landscape.²

Kristeva's notion of the female body as abject helps to illuminate elegy's metaphor of blood. In *Powers of Horror*, Kristeva advances the concept of the abject as the filth or defilement that a subject rejects to create and uphold his 'clean and proper' identity (1982: 2-4). Spoiled food, bodily fluids, excrement and the dead body are all basic examples of the abject, but the concept extends to the sexual female body *qua* maternal symbol within the symbolic order of language and society (13, 54). Abjection is the first psychic process of expulsion or rejection that helps to define a subject as an individual, and it occurs before the subject has differentiated himself from his mother, the first object (5-6). The abject female body evokes horror of the heterogeneity of mingled,

¹ Elegiac old women may be called four different terms: *anus* (old woman), *saga* (wise woman), *lena* (procuress), or *mater* (mother). Yet these figures are all associated with each other in the category of magic-practicing procuress, See Myers (1996: 6), Dickie (2001: 181-191). Elegy takes up many of Greco-Roman stereotypes about old women, who are often portrayed as ugly, drunken, magic-practioners with a raging *libido* (Richlin 1992: 109-16).

² The grotesque body transgresses acceptable boundaries. It is scatological, sexual, monstrous, or moribund, and is where biological, corporeal details are projected into clear focus. Braund and Gold (1998: 247) and Miller (1998: 259) offer a similar definition in *Arethusa* 1998's special issue on the body. The grotesque body in Roman culture is often female, and women are seen as more bodily than men. See Gold (1998: 371-76) on women in Juvenal, and Wyke (2002: 115-54) on women in elegy. To adduce two parallels of the grotesque female body both very early and very late, Hesiod (*Theogony* 570-89) conceives of woman as mere bellies, and Tertullian (*de cultu feminarum* I.1) says that the lovely female body conceals rankness inside, "a temple over a sewer." Elegy, I hope, is not as misogynistic as Hesiod or Tertullian. Nevertheless, similar notions of female corporeality are to be found in elegy's grotesque female bodies.

undifferentiated identity, and encounters with abjection bring the subject into confrontation with the edges of language where stable meanings collapse (2).

Luce Irigaray's feminist, psychoanalytic philosophy can also help us understand elegy's engagement with blood, the female body, and its connection to narrative disruption. In her essay, "The Mechanics of Fluids," Irigaray challenges psychoanalytic and scientific thought's tendency to group phenomena into binary, hierarchical relationships. This logic, she argues, values the male over the female, and cannot account for feminine corporeality, the flow of bodily fluids, or woman's speech (1985b: 112-113). Woman resists logical discourse because she is like liquid: fluid, flowing, shifting, and blurring, and, as a result, female corporeality short-circuits language about desire or sexuality (1985b: 88-89, 112, 205-212).

Drawing on Kristeva's and Irigaray's insights, I will argue that Tibullus, Propertius, and Ovid make the female body a stumbling block for their speakers and that this conceptual failure is manifested in grotesque, monstrous images of the female body. The grotesque women of elegy, as monstrous bloody females, symbolize the unbridgeable gap between the speaker's identity as lover and the unattainable, but hoped-for sexual relation he seeks with his *puella*, which would guarantee that identification. Woman's bloody fluidity is a material symbol that rejects the speaker's elegiac persuasion and self-interested presentation of his world.

3.1. The Female Body in Tibullus

Tibullus 1.5 offers the images of two apparently contrasted women: beautiful, young Delia and the grotesque *callida lena*. The two women are connected, however, by the failure of the speaker's virility: the *lena* threatens the speaker's potency with her magical spells while Delia's body causes the speaker's potency to fail (1.5.43-44). In this poem, the speaker has been separated from his beloved Delia because she has a new, richer boyfriend; thus the poem is a spurned lover's request that his beloved take him back. After a long bucolic fantasy in which the speaker dreams of the quiet life in the country where Delia will run his household, the lover reveals that he has already attempted to cure his heartbreak with drink and other women. These attempts have always failed because at the moment of sexual consummation, the speaker thinks of Delia and becomes impotent.

Saepe aliam tenui: sed iam cum gaudia adirem,
admonuit dominae deseruitque Venus. 40
Tunc me discedens deuotum femina dixit,
a pudet, et narrat scire nefanda meam.
Non facit hoc uerbis, facie tenerisque lacertis
deuouet et flauis nostra puella comis.
(1.5. 39-44)³

Often have I tried to drink away my troubles,
but the sorrow turned every wine to tears;
often embraced another, but Venus on joy's brink
reminding me of Delia forsook me.
Then calling me bewitched the woman left and to my shame
spread rumors that my girl uses the black arts.
What need has she of spells, with that bewitching face,
soft arms and yellow hair.

³ Throughout the dissertation, I use Lee's translations of Tibullus, Goold's of Propertius, and Melville's of Ovid. I use Maltby's text of Tibullus, Fedeli's of Propertius, and Kenney's Ovid.

In elegiac Latin, the couplet lines 39-40 is filled with sexual euphemism. *Aliam tenere* is commonly used in elegy for sexual intercourse, and the word *gaudia*, or joy, is a euphemism for orgasm.⁴ As the unsatisfied woman leaves, she says that Delia has cursed the speaker, and knows how to cast spells. The speaker, on the other hand, knows that Delia has emasculated him not through witchcraft, but through her beautiful face, soft arms, and golden hair (40-44). Delia's physical beauty no longer represents the Callimachean aesthetic inscribed onto the body, as Maria Wyke has argued (2002: 115-154). Instead, this poem presents the first hint that the female body of the *puella* is harmful and that sexual contact with it is dangerous.

This poem also places the *puella*'s body in close proximity with another, far more grotesque image of woman: the *callida lena* whom the speaker curses to an outlandish, gruesome fate.

Haec nocuere mihi, quod adest huic dives amator:
 uenit in exitium callida lena meum.
 Sanguineas edat illa dapes atque ore cruento
 tristia cum multo pocula felle bibit; 50
 hanc uolitent animae circum sua fata querentes
 semper, et e tectis strix uiolenta canat;
 ipsa fame stimulante furens herbasque sepulcris
 quaerat et a saeuis ossa relicta lupis,
 currat et inguinibus nudis ululetque per urbes, 55
 post agat e triuiis aspera turba canum.
 eveniet: dat signa deus

(1.5. 47- 57).

Such was my downfall. That a rich lover's at her side
 means a crafty bawd has come to ruin me.
 Let her eat raw meat and her lips drip blood
 as she drinks full cups of bitter gall.
 Let the ghosts flap round her bewailing their fate

⁴ See Maltby *ad loc.* for discussion of sexual euphemism in elegy. See also Adams (1990: 181, 197-8) on sexual euphemism of *tenere* and *gaudium*. Cf. Lucr. 4. 1106, where *gaudia* refers to orgasm in a passage about sexual intercourse. Quintilian offers Venus as an elegant metonymy for *coitus* (*Inst. Orat.* 8.6. 24).

and the vampire-owl screech from her eaves.
Let her go hunger-mad and search for herbs on graves,
for any bone left over by ravening wolves.
Let her run with naked crotch, howling through the city,
hunted by a savage pack of crossroad curs.
So be it. God has given the sign.

In these curses, the speaker associates the *lena* with blood—*sanguineas edat illa dapes atque ore cruento* (49), and with dining on poisonous foods (49-50). She is surrounded by ghosts and screech owls⁵ and goaded by starvation to eat bones left by scavenging dogs and the grass that grows atop graves. Finally, he hopes that she will be driven naked throughout the city (*currat et inguinibus nudis*), a degraded spectacle. This description of the *lena* is typical within elegiac poetry, and the curses against her reflect abilities and tendencies commonly associated with this type of woman.⁶ In Tibullus, the *lena* is associated with the witch, the *saga*, because both have magical powers and threaten the speaker's access to his *puella*. Although the speaker consistently presents the *lena* as an obstacle to the *puella* and as hateful as she is lovable, Tibullan poetry links the body of the beloved and that of the *lena*.

Each woman induces the same result in the poet speaker in 1.5: both *lena* and *puella* can harm him. Moreover, there is a strong metonymical connection between the *lena* and Delia that rotates around the failure of the speaker's virility. I use here Lacan's psychoanalytic definition of metonymy. For Lacan, metonymy categorizes the way desire operates in language. Objects of desire (or hatred) are linked to each other because they produce more desire, and are connected through the process of metonymy, wherein

⁵ Owls are omens of death. Cf. the owl Dido sees before she commits suicide (*Aen.* 4.462-63). See also Maltby (2002), Putnam (1973: *ad loc.*).

⁶ See discussions of elegiac magic at McKeown (1989: 204-210), Maltby (2002: 165-172), Hutchinson (2006: 141-142). Dickie (2001: 193-4) updates Tupet (1976).

the object of current attention represents a substitute for the lost object that would satisfy the subject's desire (Mojilla 2005, s.v. *metonymy*). Metonymy differs from metaphor because it is based on the notion of contiguity rather than similarity. Through proximity between Delia and the curse on the *lena* and their shared ability to unman the speaker, the poetry metonymically associates Delia's noxious body with the dangerous potential of magical curses and enchantment (42 - 43). Her body, which so often constitutes both a cause and inspiration for poetry, now brings about his impotence and signifies his lack of potency. Delia's body, then, links her to the *callida lena*.

Poem 1.8 further elaborates on the connection between the beautiful *puella* and the outrageous old woman by using parallel constructions, repetition, and word-play to link old woman with young and spells with the body. This poem presents the speaker in his role of erotodidact; he instructs his former love-interest, the boy Marathus, and then Pholoe, the woman whom Marathus desires, and he attacks Pholoe's hauteur and desire for gifts. In the opening advice to Marathus, the speaker asks why he is so ill. The answer is not magical enchantment but love sickness:

Num te carminibus, num te pallentibus herbis
 deuouit tacito tempore noctis anus?
 Cantus uicinis fruges traducit ab agris,
 cantus et iratae detinet anguis iter, 20
 cantus et e curru Lunam deducere temptat
 et faceret, si non aera repulsa sonent.
 Quid queror heu misero carmen nocuisse, quid herbas?
 Forma nihil magicis utitur auxiliis:
 sed corpus tetigisse nocet, sed longa dedisse 25
 oscula, sed femori conseruisse femur.
 (1.8.17-26)

Or did some old woman enchant you with incantations,
 or with pale herbs in the silent night?
 Spells move crops from neighboring fields,
 and spells check the path of an angry snake,

and spells try to draw down the Moon from her path,
and would do it, had not clashing bronze repelled it.
Why should I complain that song harmed the wretch, or herbs?
Beauty has no need for magical aids.
It hurts him to touch her body, and to give long kisses,
or to entwine thigh with thigh.

Like 1.5, this poem shows the conventional collocation of magical abilities found in elegy (e.g. Prop. 1.1.19-24). The old woman curses her victims to the gods of the underworld with incantations and potions. Her spells are also able to move crops from fields, stop angry snakes, and draw down the moon. Here the connection between the old woman's erotic magic and the *puella*'s body, suggested in 1.5, is made much more explicit.

The *puella*'s body is the second focus of this passage. Again, the language is typical for elegiac descriptions of sex, particularly with the culmination in polyptoton (*sed femori conseruisse femur*, 26). This phrase recurs three times in Ovid's *Amores* in explicitly sexual descriptions (1.4. 43, 3.7. 10, 3.14. 22). Moreover, the female body is described here with typical Tibullan anaphora of *sed*.⁷ The repeating syntactic structure of the sexual encounter and the emphatic polyptoton express close contact between lovers.⁸ Wills, in his study of repetition in Latin poetry, calls this type of repetition "amorous polyptoton" (1996: 200-202). This type of repetition is more generally typical for descriptions of sexual acts (Adams 1990: 180). A third, non-poetic parallel for this amorous repetition also occurs in erotic binding-tablets.⁹ The parallel between the

⁷ See Fineberg (1991) on Tibullan anaphora. Repetition, for Fineberg, signals the speaker's unintentional loss of control, and gives poetic intensity to the description of love-making (80-81).

⁸ McKeown (1989: 94) offers a full list of parallels, Maltby (2002: 309) restates these.

⁹ Gager (1992: 81, 94) cat. no. 27 is a formulary or pattern for binding spells found in Alexandria that ends with the phrases, "join belly to belly, thigh to thigh, black to black." Gager (81) speaks

defixiones' description of sexual consummation sought by the spell-caster and the magical language of this passage should not be overstated but the similarly structured descriptions of sex in each work does add another similarity between the old woman's spells, *cantus*, and the *puella*'s body, *corpus*.

Like 1.5, this poem also connects the old woman's spells and the harmful potential of sexual contact with a *puella*'s body. This poem links the old woman and the young by means of word-play between *cantus* and *corpus*. Tibullan anaphora of *cantus* at the beginning of lines 19-21 is framed in lines 17 and 23 with its near synonym, *carmen*. *Carmen* then becomes one of two parallel subjects of the repeated verb *nocere* in line 23 and 25: while the old woman uses magical songs and herbs to harm the wretched male lover (*quid queror heu misero carmen nocuisse*), the beautiful woman harms him with her body (*sed corpus tetigisse nocet*). By using word-play, this passage demonstrates the proximity rather than the distance between the witchy *lena* and the beautiful *puella*. Each has a consistently damaging effect on the male body: they either emasculate or threaten him.

In the second book of his poetry, Tibullus gives his speaker a new *puella*, Nemesis. Throughout this book, Nemesis is presented as a cruel, harsh, and greedy girl, whose personality itself, rather than more common elegiac obstacles, prevents the speaker from approaching his mistress. Nemesis appears in poem 2.6 alongside the disturbing and graphic image of her dead little sister. Within this poem, the speaker abruptly changes his attitude towards Nemesis. While his first introduction is consistent with his previous descriptions of her as a harsh and greedy mistress, the final reference to

of the "aggressive . . . undisguised sexuality" of these tablets. For Greek erotic magic more generally, see Faraone (1999), Winkler (1990: 71-100).

Nemesis is an abrupt *volte-face*: the girlfriend has suddenly become good, and it is now a *lena* who prevents their relationship (*lena nocet nobis, ipsa puella bona est, 2.6.44*).

Before the *lena* enters, however, the speaker attempts to gain Nemesis' favor by entreating her little sister, who appears to Nemesis as a bloody corpse in a dream.

Parce, per immatura tuae precor ossa sororis:
 sic bene sub tenera parua quiescat humo. 30
illa mihi sancta est, illius dona sepulcro
 et madefacta meis sarta feram lacrimis,
illius ad tumulum fugiam supplexque sedebo
 et mea cum muto fata querar cinere.
non feret usque suum te propter flere clientem: 35
 illius ut uerbis, sis mihi lenta ueto,
ne tibi neglecti mittant mala somnia Manes
 maestaque sopitae stet soror ante torum,
qualis ab excelsa praeceps delapsa fenestra
 uenit ad infernos sanguinolenta lacus. 40
desino, ne dominae luctus renouentur acerbi:
 non ego sum tanti, ploret ut illa semel
 (2.6. 29-42).

Take pity, I implore you, by your little sister's bones:
so may the child sleep softly under gentle earth.
I hold her sacred and will lay upon her burial-mound
offerings and a garland sprinkled with my tears.
I'll fly for refuge to the grave, sit there a suppliant
and to her dumb ashes utter my complaint.
She will not suffer me to weep on her account for ever.
in her name I forbid you to use me heartlessly,
for fear the blessed dead neglected send you evil dreams
and you behold her standing by your bed in grief,
just as when she fell head foremost from the upper windows
and went with blood to the lakes below.
Enough, lest I renew the bitter sorrow of my mistress:
that she should weep once is more than I am worth.

This passage is a *paraclausithyron* perverted, complete with gifts, garlands, and a *querela* (Murgatroyd 1989: 134-139). Instead of singing outside the mistress' door, the speaker will sing his complaints to the sister's grave. Yet the sister's immature bones, her

neglected *Manes*, and her return as bad dreams also suggest that the sister is envisioned as an *aōros*, a spirit violently killed or improperly buried whose ghost returns to haunt.¹⁰

The vivid description of this scene persuaded earlier critics to believe that it may be taken from Tibullus' own life. Nemesis' dream will be terrifying and sad because of the nightmarish appearance of the dead sister. She returns blood-stained from the waters of the underworld, and she appears exactly as she did when she fell to her death. Cairns, however, has established that this passage is well-paralleled in earlier literature (2000: 67). The strange motif of the young child who dies by falling from a high place into the underworld is common within literary and non-literary Hellenistic epigram and Latin inscriptions.¹¹

As with the image of the cursed *lena* in Book I, Tibullus here again associates the female body with blood, bones, and gore. The *lena* (1.5.48) will eat bloody feasts, *sanguineas dapes* (49), drink from her bloody mouth, *ore cruento* (49), and gather bones abandoned by wolves, *quaeret et a saevis ossa relictā lupis* (54). The sister, on the other hand, will appear as a bloody ghost from the lakes of hell, *ad infernos sanguinolenta lacus* (2.6.40). The term *sanguinolentus* is remarkable within elegiac Latin.¹² The term appears here first in verse, and Cairns contrasts this usage with the more standard

¹⁰ On *aōroi* in Greek literature, see Johnston (1999: 161-202). Maltby (2002: 475) cites Mankin on Hor. *Epodes* 5.83-102, who states that victims of premature or violent death make the most violent ghosts. Parallels can be found at Hom. *Od.* 11.72-3 (Elpenor), Hor. *Epodes.* 7.19-20, *Carm.* 1.28.31-4, Ov. *Fast.* 5.419.

¹¹ CLE 462, CLE 1901, AP 7.922 (Antipater), AP 7.471 (Callimachus), Posidippus epigram 10 Bastianini-Gallazzi. Cairns (2000) discusses these epigrams.

¹² The compound *sanguinolentus* appears in only two Roman poetic authors, Tibullus and Ovid. Ovid uses it frequently within his elegiac corpus (PHI search shows it at *Am.* 1.12. 12; *Heroides* 3. 50, 6.46, 7.70, 14.60, *Ars* 1.336, 414, 3.214), but this spelling does not occur in any of his hexameter poems. The spelling in *-ulentus* occurs more commonly. Outside of Tibullan and Ovidian usages, the term appears predominantly within medical contexts.

sanguineus (2000: 69-73). As a rare word, the usage of *sanguinolentus* would stress the bloody imagery within this passage for educated listeners and readers.

Tibullus highlights these women by giving vivid, graphic descriptions of their bodies and the pain and hurt that have befallen them. Each woman is noteworthy for the bloody imagery with which she is described and by her familiar or proximate relationship to Tibullus' two mistresses. Moreover, these women, like Pholoe, receive far more graphic, detailed description of their bodies than is given for Delia or Nemesis. The speaker does not have direct access to either Delia's or Nemesis' body in Tibullan poetry. His mentions of other women within elegy, however, particularly their relations and familiars, thereby stand as metonymical substitutions for the inaccessible mistress. Thus, the speaker concentrates upon their bloody, fleshly bodies in place of the beautiful *puella* whom he cannot see.

There is a final pair of female bodies in Tibullus who can clarify the thematic significance of these bloody women. In 1.6, Delia has chosen another lover and the speaker tries to persuade her to return to him by listing the ways that he has taught her to cheat; reminding her too-trusting partner of lovers' tricks, and by invoking the priestess of Bellona and Delia's mother, who warn her to be faithful to the speaker (l. 1-66). Finally, the speaker threatens Delia with physical violence and an ugly, impoverished old age if she does not return (l. 76-84). These tactics introduce two other women, and in each case blood is again a central metaphor.

While she is in an ecstatic state of prophesy, the priestess of Bellona is capable of self-mutilation without harm:

Sic fieri iubet ipse deus, sic magna sacerdos
est mihi divino uaticinata sono.

Haec ubi Bellonae motu est agitata, nec acri
 flammam, non amens uerba torta timet;
 ipsa bipenne suos caedit uiolenta lacertos
 sanguineque effuso spargit inulta deam,
 statque latus praefixa ueru, stat saucia pectus,
 et canit euentus, quos dea magna monet: 50
 'Parcite, quam custodit Amor, uiolare puellam,
 ne pigeat magno post didicisse malo.
 attigerit, labentur opes, ut uulnere nostro
 sanguis, ut hic uentis diripiturque cinis'
 (1.6.43-54).

Thus runs the God's commandment, this Bellona's high-priestess
 with utterance inspired prophesied to me.
 When in trance, possessed and shaken by the goddess,
 she fears no roaring flame or flailing scourge,
 slashes with her own arms in frenzy with a double axe,
 unscathed soaks the image in a stream of blood,
 and standing there with wounded breast and skewered flank
 chants Bellona's warning oracles:
 "See ye do no violence to the girl whom Love protects,
 lest ye repent of touching her to your great evil after.
 If any man should touch her his wealth shall flow away
 as blood flows from my wounds and wind scatters this ash."

This ecphrastic scene emphasizes the visual details of the priestess' wounds. Her blood spatters the statue of her goddess, *sanguineque effuso spargit inulta deam* (48), and she wounds her arms and chest, *stat saucia pectus* (49). The priests of the cult were famous for their blood-letting and delirium.¹³ The bloody imagery pervades her prophecy as well, where she guarantees her speech with the flow of her blood, *ut uulnere nostro sanguis* (53). The priestess' bloody body and speech form the transition into the strange figure of Delia's mother.

¹³ Although Bellona was an Italian god, this ecstatic form of worship was relatively new in Rome, and the cult was associated with the Cappadocian goddess Ma, introduced to Rome by Sulla in 92 BCE. See other examples of the cult at: Hor. *Serm.* 2.3.223, Verg. *Aen.* 8.703, Sen. *De. Vit. Beat.* 26.8, Lucan 1.565ff, Tert. *Apol.* 9.10.

The mother's role in elegy is unique. She plays the unusual part of the helpful procuress who allows the speaker and Delia to meet:¹⁴

Non ego te propter parco tibi, sed tua mater
me mouet atque iras aurea uincit anus.
Haec mihi te adducit tenebris multoque timore
coniungit nostras clam taciturna manus. 60
Haec foribusque manet noctu me adfixa proculque
cognoscit strepitus me ueniente pedum.
Vive diu mihi, dulcis anus: proprios ego tecum,
sit modo fas, annos contribuissse uelim.
Te semper natamque tuam te propter amabo: 65
quidquid agit, sanguis est tamen illa tuus.
(1.6. 57- 66)

I spare you for your mother's sake and not your own deserving;
old and golden-hearted she disarms my wrath.
In the dark she leads you to me and though terrified
stealthily with no word spoken joins our hands.
Pressed to the door at night, she listens, waiting for me—
can recognize, far off, approaching steps as mine.
Long life to you, sweet lady. If it were possible
I'd give you part of mine.
You I shall always love and thanks to you your daughter;
she is still your blood however she behaves.

In this passage, the speaker delivers his only blessing to an old woman when he prays that she may have a long life. The speaker's praise of Delia's mother has been seen as persuasive rhetoric directed at Delia; if she follows her mother's example, she will return to him (Gaisser 1971). The lines are also a pointed insult to Delia (Murgatroyd 2002: 201, Maltby 2002: 274). Yet, in the end of his blessing, by remembering the blood connecting Delia and her mother, the speaker finds a way to continue his affection for Delia, though she is openly cheating on him.

¹⁴ Maltby (2002: 275) shows the ambiguity of the language in this passage. The term *adducere* frequently means to procure a courtesan in New Comedy (Plaut. *Curc.* 138, Ter. *Adel.*) but it can also refer to the act of bringing a bride to her husband. Gaisser (1971: 209-210) argues that the entire scene is deeply ironic and that the *aurea anus* is both mother and *lena* to Delia.

This blood connection between Delia and her mother is doubly significant. First, once again, this passage characterizes women in the language of blood. Yet the turn of phrase, “I will love your daughter because she is your blood” (*namque tuam te propter amabo | quicquid agit, sanguis est tamen illa tuus*, 65-6) pushes this connection to a surprising conclusion when it equates Delia and blood. This passage, by literalizing the equation between blood and the elegiac mistress, cements the connection of the *puella* to the bloody female body that has pervaded Tibullan elegy.

I argued previously that metonymy linked Delia and the *lena* because they had a similar effect on the speaker, and because of their proximity. After this examination of the prevalent use of blood imagery, it seems appropriate to extend this connection between all of Tibullus’ women. Delia and Nemesis are linked to the other women of elegy through the metaphor of blood connections. As Delia is related to her mother by blood, so Nemesis is related to her blood-stained little sister. Read as a poetic device, blood stresses connections through closeness as well as shared characteristics, and thus is comparable to metonymy. Family relationships operate by stressing the connection between the disenchanted lover and his beloved through a lovable intermediary who is similar to her, but is not her. Alternately, the lover can project his dissatisfaction onto another woman to regain his affection for his beloved. Yet, because the *puella* never satisfies his desire, the speaker finds substitute satisfaction in cursing, or blessing, these others. Thus, his desire works along a chain of metonymic associations highlighted by the metaphor of blood.

The imagery of blood and its metonymical operation is a striking feature of the elegiac female body that has thus far been overlooked in discussions of the female body

in elegy. Tibullus' poetry has provided the clearest, most developed examples of this imagery at work. Tibullan female bodies appear on a spectrum that ranges between the two extremes of the beautiful *puella* and the accursed *lena*. In the next section of this chapter, I examine how Propertius and Ovid also employ bloody imagery. The language of blood proves central to each of the visually detailed, elaborate depictions of the *lena* Acanthis at Propertius 4.5 and Dipsas at *Amores* 1.8.

3.2. Acanthis: Propertius 4.5

In Book 4, Propertius proposes to write aetiological and nationalistic poetry rather than about Cynthia. Nevertheless, he concentrates three of his eleven poems in this book on their love affair (4.5, 4.7, 4.8). In these Cynthia poems, however, significant changes occur in the characterization of the relationship between the speaker and Cynthia. Cynthia's *lena* Acanthis appears *ex nihilo* to teach her lessons in the economic reality of the courtesan's life (4.5), Cynthia returns from the dead to expose the inverted, parodic, and low underbelly of the courtesan's life and her relationship with Propertius (4.7), and an enraged Cynthia bursts in on her lover *in medio convivio* with a troupe of low-class entertainers and prostitutes (4.8).

Propertius 4.5 introduces Cynthia's *lena* Acanthis within the framework of the speaker's curses on her grave. It is structurally and narratively similar to several other

poems in Book 4. Like Cynthia in 4.7, or Cornelia in 4.11, the Acanthis who speaks here has returned from the dead.¹⁵ The poem is framed by the *lena*'s grave (1-4, 75-78), followed by a catalogue of her magical powers (5-18), and the funeral and squalid death that await Acanthis (65-74). The majority of the poem is Acanthis' long speech of anti-elegiac rhetoric (19-64),¹⁶ the "hetaira catechism" instructing Cynthia how to look to her own financial interests, be unfaithful, take many lovers, and value cash over poetry.¹⁷

The Acanthis poem has a powerful parodic effect on Propertius' earlier elegiac world of lover and *puella* and visibly and lexically corrupts the previously high elegiac aesthetic. The speaker's curse and the image of Acanthis' death introduce a lowering of elegiac language to describe the poor, the squalid, and the decaying. This lowering of elegiac language will characterize the rest of the Cynthia poems in book 4. Propertius' focus on the grotesque body in this book is foreign to the rich, elite world of dinner parties, foreign silks, and beautiful bodies that the courtesan and her lover inhabited in books 1-3. Yet, although this poem presents Acanthis negatively, she is depicted with particularly fine attention to pictorial details, with word play, and with manipulation of elegiac, epigrammatic, and comic conventions.

Scholarship has focused on two chief issues within the Acanthis poem: what is the relationship of the speaker to Acanthis, and how does Acanthis' speech relate to the rest of Propertian elegy?¹⁸ I will deal with Acanthis' speech in chapter 5 in my examination

¹⁵ The temporal structure, and even the setting of 4.5, is notoriously difficult. Hutchinson (2006: 137) and Janan (2001: 85-86) agree that Acanthis is dead.

¹⁶ On this speech as anti-elegiac, see James (2003: 52-69).

¹⁷ The phrase "hetaira catechism" comes from Rothstein (1966: 260).

¹⁸ Gutzwiller (1985), Janan (2001), James (2003), Miller (2004), Hutchinson (2006). See

of women's speech in elegy. A third approach has studied the Acanthis poem as it relates to Tibullus' and Ovid's old women and to ideas about old women within their literary, cultural, and historic *milieus*. Here, I concentrate on the imagery of Acanthis' body to address the relationship between the speaker and Acanthis.

Focus on the body allows new perspectives on the Acanthis poem. First, this emphasis shows how Acanthis' speech aligns with Cynthia's own as each posits notions of elegiac love and the body that differ strongly from the speaker's (see chapter 5). Second, my emphasis on depictions of the body brings the focus of the *lena*'s speech back into its poetic context. Third, the accumulation of grotesque and disgusting details onto the *lena*'s body is consistent with Tibullus' and Ovid's depictions of old women, and it makes her the alternate polarity to the beautiful and perfect Cynthia.¹⁹

I will concentrate on the description of Acanthis' body because these passages present a similar set of associations with Tibullus' accursed *lena*.

Terra tuum spinis obducat, lena, sepulcrum
et tua, quod non uis, sentiat umbra sitim;
nec sedeant cineri Manes, et Cerberus ultor
turpia ieiuno terreat ossa sono! (1-4)
. . . .
dum uernat sanguis, dum rugis integer annus,
utere, ne quid cras libet ab ore dies! 60
uidi ego odorati uictura rosaria Paesti
sub matutino cocta iacere Noto."
his animum nostrae dum uersat Acanthis amicae,
per tenuem ossa <mihi> sunt numerata cutem.
sed cape torquatae, Venus o regina, columbae 65
ob meritum ante tuos guttura secta focos!
uidi ego rugoso tussim concrescere collo,
sputaque per dentis ire cruenta cauos,
atque animam in tegetes putrem exspirare paternas:

also Myers (1996) on all the elegiac *lena* poems for an extensive bibliography of earlier work.

¹⁹ Cynthia will destabilize this polarity in 4.7 when she returns to the speaker's dreams as a mangled, fire-eaten, dripping corpse.

horruit argenti pergula curua foco. 70
exsequiae fuerint rari furtiua capilli
uincula et immundo pallida mitra situ
et canis, in nostros nimis experrecta dolores,
cum fallenda meo pollice clatra forent.
sit tumulus lenae curto uetus amphora collo: 75
urgeat hunc supra uis, caprifice, tua.
quisquis amas, scabris hoc bustum caedite saxis,
mixtaque cum saxis addite uerba mala!
(4.5. 59-78)

May the earth cover your grave with thorns, bawd, and, what you abhor, may your shade feel thirst; may your spirit find no peace with your ashes, but may avenging Cerberus terrify your vile bones with hungry howl.

...
“While your blood is in its spring and your years free of wrinkles, make the most of the fact, lest the morrow take toll of your beauty. I have seen rose-beds of fragrant Paestum that promised enduring bloom lying withered by the scirocco’s morning blast.” With Acanthis thus working on my sweetheart’s mind, the bones could be counted through her shrunken skin. But accept, Queen Venus, in return for your favor a ringdove’s throat cut before your altar. I have lived to see the phlegm clotting in her wrinkled throat, the bloody spittle that she coughed up through her last decayed teeth, and to see her breathe her last rank breath on heirloom rags: her sagging shack shivered with its fires gone out. For her funeral she had stolen bands that bound her scanty hair, a cap that had lost its color through foul neglect, and the dog that to my chagrin was over-vigilant when my fingers needed to undo stealthily the latch of the door. Let the bawd’s tomb be an old wine-jar with broken neck, and upon it, wild fig-tree, exert your might. All ye that love, pelt this grave with jagged stones, and mingled with the stones cast curses!

The opening lines curse the old woman with imagery we have already seen associated with the old woman in Tibullus: he hopes her ghost will be thirsty, that she will be a restless spirit, and that Cerberus, the dog who guards the entrance to the underworld, will hungrily pursue her. The curse is also rich in word-play and exploits conventions about old women in antiquity. Pliny speaks of the *dipsas acanthus*, the thirsty thorn bush (*N. H.* 13.139; Theophr. *H. D.* 4.7), and Propertius seems to be consciously punning on its etymology when he speaks of thorns, *spinae*, in line 1, and thirst, *sitis*, in line 2 instead of naming Acanthis (Courtney 1969: 80; McKeown 1989: 202). This couplet also plays

with the conventional idea that old women are drunks (*quod non vis, sentiat umbra sitim*), a notion that appears as early as Aristophanes, becomes very popular in Hellenistic art and epigram, and continues in Roman literature.²⁰ The images that the speaker here associates with the woman's body are evocative of Tibullus' old women. The same congregation of bones, thirst, hunger, and dogs appears in both curses.

After an introductory section cursing Acanthis and describing her magical powers, the poem suddenly shifts to the direct speech of Acanthis. This speech does not fit into a neatly delineated narrative structure that situates the Propertian speaker *vis-à-vis* the two women at the outset. The narrative chronology of this poem is challenging; is the poem set before, directly after, or some time after Acanthis' death?²¹ The narrative connecting Acanthis' speech to the frame is problematic because of textual corruption at the beginning, and because the tenses shift within the course of the poem from present to future to pluperfect.²² If we accept the manuscript tradition, there is a collapse in temporal distinction in this poem.²³ It is as if Acanthis has only just died and the speaker remembers her abilities and speech as having continuing significance in the present

²⁰ Within Hellenistic epigram, epitaphs for old women often give them names associated with wine or drinking, as in Bacchylis (Anon. *AP* 6.291), Silenis (Dioscorides *AP* 7. 456), Maronis (Antipater of Sidon *AP* 7.353, Leonidas of Tarentum *AP* 7.455), Ampelis (*AP* 7.457), Meroe (Auson. *Epig.* 4), *AP* 11.34.3, Philodemus. On the drunken old woman in Roman literature, see Plautus *Cist.* 120f, on Syra, "*multiloqua et multibiba.*" See discussion in McKeown (1989, on *Am.* 1.8.1-4).

²¹ See Hutchinson (2006: 138-139) for a summary of positions, Richardson (1977: 441) on the difficulty of locating this poem in a temporal chronology, and Janan (2001: 85-86) also addresses the temporal aspects of the poem's language.

²² Lines 19-20, the couplet that introduces Acanthis' speech, are hopelessly corrupt (Hutchinson 2006, *ad loc.*; Fedeli 1994: 243). The tenses change from present indicative in 2, to future in 9-10, to the pluperfect *fuertant* in 71.

²³ Here I read Fedeli's text, who preserves the complicated switch of tenses throughout. See his argument defending the MSS tradition at Fedeli (1965: 169).

(Richardson 2006: 441, Janan 2001: 86). The narrative aligns the sight of Acanthis' death with her speech. As the speaker recalls how Acanthis manipulated Cynthia, he simultaneously remembers her death.

Kathryn Gutzwiller has discussed the Acanthis poem in the context of comedy, mime, and epigram and argues that Propertius' *lena* lacks the "more distasteful characteristics" associated with the type. In particular, Acanthis is not venal and is primarily motivated by her concern for Cynthia (1985: 106). By the end of the poem, the reader feels more sympathy for the *lena* than for the lover and her speech destabilizes the generically-constructed image of the suffering lover to reveal the selfishness of his motivations (1985: 105, 110-12). Acanthis deconstructs the speaker's finely-constructed love affair with Cynthia by revealing that Cynthia's spontaneous emotional outbursts and her cultivated behaviors were scripted by Acanthis' advice and directed towards manipulating the male lover (James 2003: 52-59). Most importantly, she reveals that the *puella*'s behavior is economically motivated.

When Acanthis has finished her speech, the speaker describes her consumptive death in great detail. The visual nature and voyeuristic description of this poem is emphasized through his emphatically first-person *vidi ego* in line 67. This mark of autopsy is significant not only because it locates the Propertian speaker as an eye-witness to the scene but also because it stresses that the scene is focalized through the angry Propertian speaker. The vision of Acanthis' death becomes the opportunity for a gruesome ecphrasis. Her body is described in its decrepitude: she is skin and bones (64), she coughs out blood and her teeth are rotten (68), her hair is sparse and her courtesan's *mitra* is dirty and rotten (71, 72). Her house suffers from the same decay and extreme

poverty that she suffers (69-70). Her illness becomes the object of the voyeur's gaze here: Acanthis' ailing body is an object, and the narrator's is a dedicated glance of horror at the female flesh as a corporeal sign of violent loss and death. Acanthis' body is thus described fetishistically, and she is not an organic whole but a collection of parts. Her skin and bones, her teeth, her wrinkled throat wracked with a consumptive cough, her mouth, and her hair are mentioned in turn, and the syntax rarely carries over the line, further emphasizing the separation of body parts (63, 67-69, 71-72).

This scene, like Tibullus' in 1.5, also contains bloody imagery. In Acanthis' magic, she consults a vampire-owl about the speaker's blood (*nostro de sanguine*, 17). As she is dying, she coughs out bloody spittle (*sputa cruenta*, 68). The speaker also sacrifices to Venus a ring-dove whose blood falls before her altars (*guttura secta*, 66). Finally, Acanthis also speaks of blood as a metaphor for youth when she uses the vivid oppositional pairing of green springtime and red blood (*dum vernat sanguis*, 59). Like Tibullus' *lena* of 1.5, Acanthis is strongly associated with death and described in the language of blood.

3.3. Dipsas: Ovid *Amores* 1.8

After this discussion of the elegiac other women in Tibullus and Propertius' Acanthis, I will add only a brief discussion of Ovid's *lena* poem, *Amores* 1.8. This poem

further solidifies the connection between the female body and the imagery of blood in elegy. *Amores* 1.8 has a remarkably close relationship with Propertius 4.5, and it cannot be conclusively decided which poem comes first.²⁴ As in Propertius 4.5, here the Ovidian *amator* listens in on the *lena*'s speech to his girlfriend, curses the old woman, and reports her long speech of anti-elegiac persuasion. Ovid limits his description of Dipsas' body to two brief passages. At the end of the poem, the speaker describes Dipsas' body in few but conventionalized details:

Vox erat in cursu, cum me mea prodidit umbra,
 at nostrae uix se continuere manus, 110
 quin albam raramque comam lacrimosaque uino
 lumina rugosas distraherentque genas. (*Am.* 1.8.109-112)

She was in the midst of her speech, when my shadow betrayed me
 but my hands could scarcely contain themselves from tearing her white and sparse
 hair, her eyes teary from wine and her wrinkled cheeks

Typical of old women in Roman poetry and similar to Acanthis, Dipsas has white, thinning hair, her eyes reveal her constant drunken state, and she has a wrinkled face (111-112). In an extensive list of her magical powers at the beginning of the poem (5-18), however, the *amator* imagines an other-worldly and bizarre appearance for her. He believes that she can fly and take on bird-form and that she has two pupils in each of her eyes (13-16).

Most notable among her magical powers, Dipsas can turn the night-time sky blood red. The image repeats the word "blood" twice (*sanguine*, *si qua fides, stillantia sidera vidi* | *purpureus Lunae sanguine vultus erat*, 11-12). This use of blood is unparalleled in Roman magical spells and within Latin literature. Though a number of

²⁴ Although the second edition of Ovid's *Amores* did not appear before 7 BCE, it is possible that Propertius 4.5 could be aware of a previous edition of *Am.* 1.8. McKeown (1989) discusses the chronology problem. O'Neill (1998) persuasively places Propertius 4.5 first. Myers (1996) agrees, citing Maltby's chronology (1996).

witch's skills are conventional in Latin literature, Dipsas' ability is unique. McKeown has argued that Ovid may be making an etymological joke about the derivation of the alternative word for star, *stella*, and its supposed derivation from *stillare*, to drip (1989 *ad loc*). This argument is persuasive but ignores the repetition of *sanguine*. Ovid is one of the closest ancient readers of Tibullus and Propertius, and I propose that in his *lena* poem he knowingly exploits, and makes more explicit, the language of blood which runs through elegiac depictions of the female body. Ovid here stresses the *lena*'s connection to blood, but he does so by transferring the imagery from her own body to the environment that she magically manipulates. The landscape around her reflects her bloody nature while her own appearance becomes changeable and uncanny.

From the speaker's point of view, elegy is inhabited by a host of grotesque women. Propertius' Acanthis is seen as a fragmented, dying body while Tibullus' *lena* mingles with the dead, eats bloody food, and exposes her naked groin to the entire city. Ovid's Dipsas has a conventional appearance but is rumored to be able to become a monster. Yet it is not only the *lenae* of elegy who are grotesque. All the women I have discussed, from Delia to Acanthis are linked through the imagery of blood, and I shall now turn to ancient views on the female body to examine why.

Blood, gore, liquidity, and unbounded-ness are central features of the elegiac grotesque body. The essential status of women as bloody, wet, and unbounded is a notion familiar from Greek philosophy as well as from Greek medical writings.²⁵ The Hippocratic system implies a strict binary division between woman and man reflected in their different bodily compositions. Early Greek philosophy explicitly systematizes this

²⁵ On women as unbounded, wet, leaky, and dirty, see Carson (1990), who discusses Greek philosophical and literary conceptions of the female.

binary division that defines man as the norm and woman as the deviation. The Pythagorean table of opposites offers the plainest summary of these positions, wherein man is associated with determinate form, limit, one, right, and good, and woman as the opposite is associated with formlessness, unlimited, many, left, and bad (Lloyd 1984: 3).²⁶

Roman culture inherited many of these ideas about the female body from Greek thought. Although Roman medicine no longer viewed male and female flesh as structurally different,²⁷ masculinity and femininity were hierarchized, contested concepts in late Republican culture. As Catherine Edwards has shown, the feminine is linked to ideas of wetness, softness, and pleasure in Roman ideology. While masculine virtue was seen as limited, hard, dry, and public, the pursuit of pleasure, penetrability, fluidity, and openness were female traits, and essentially disgraceful.²⁸ Elegy marks itself as an effeminate genre through its programmatic language of softness, and with its favored adjectives *mollis*, *tenuis*, and *tener* (Edwards 1993: 174, Wyke 2002: 173-77). The imagery of the *lena* and the other women of elegy is not, however, described by these terms that positively identify the *puella*'s body with elegiac poetry (Wyke 1987).

²⁶ Plato and Aristotle continue to make man the privileged term. Plato states that women's souls come from men who lacked sufficient reason (*Timaeus* 425b5-6) while Aristotle writes that woman was a deformed, or defective, man (*GA* 737a28).

²⁷ The idea that the female body was composed of different material from the male fell out of favor in the Hellenistic period. See Hanson (1990).

²⁸ Edwards (1993: 175-177) cites Seneca's description of pleasure (*de Vita Beata* 5.4):
Nam quod ad uoluptatem pertinet, licet circumfundatur undique et per omnis uias influat animumque blandimentis suis leniat aliaque ex aliis admoueat quibus totos partesque nostri sollicitet, quis mortalium, cui ullum superest hominis uestigium, per diem noctemque titillari uelit et deserto animo corpori operam dare?

Instead, elegy offers a number of images of the female body as leaking, bloody, moribund, and uncanny.

3.4. Invective against older women

Amy Richlin's discussion of invective stereotypes against women is helpful for examining elegy's grotesque body (1984). Richlin divides women in Roman satire and invective into three categories based on sexual and physical qualities: young attractive women, young repulsive women, and old repulsive women (68). Her category of the old repulsive woman is partly analogous to the old women of elegy. The old women that Richlin studies are exaggeratedly decrepit, bibulous, and sexually ravenous (69). Invective consistently chastises these women for their interest in sex, which should be practiced only by young women. Moreover, invective depicts the repulsive body by chopping the woman into individual abhorrent body parts, by comparing her genitals with animal imagery, and by comparing women's bodies to corpses and rotting flesh (71). Because these women are neither wife nor mother, and because their sexuality as older women is transgressive, their bodies become an expression of the "uncanny other" (71).

By contrast, elegy's grotesque older woman, the *lena*, does not have a sexualized body. She neither propositions the speaker nor engages in any sexual behavior, and this is a very significant difference from the women lampooned in invective. Instead, the

female body is persistently associated with the imagery of blood. Moreover, elegiac women are associated with death, the dying or wounded body, and magic.

The elegiac other woman is grotesque because the boundaries between the inside and the outside of her body and between her body and the outside world are blurred and transgressed (Young 1993: 112-114). The *lena* of elegy appears in monstrous and distorted form because she threatens the speaker's exclusive prerogative to speech and control over the elegiac landscape and its inhabitants, and thus doubles the speaker's role in discourse. The *lena* plays the role of the anti-lover by encouraging the *puella* to deny the lover and by teaching the *puella* how to do so (Myers 1996: 1). At the same time, as a retired *puella* herself, she is also a doppelgänger of the young and beautiful *puella*. In this way, the grotesque body of the *lena*, which seems at odds with the elegant and clever speeches she gives, instead reinforces her anti-elegiac message.

This chapter has explored the representation of the "other women" of elegy. While the poet-speaker praises the beauty of the elegiac mistress, she is nonetheless associated, through the imagery of blood, with the grotesque representations of her family members (sister, mother), and of the elegiac procuress, the *lena*. Kristeva's concept of the abject female body, and ancient notions of feminine corporeality as leaky and bloody have helped explain this imagery. In the following chapter, I return to the canonical female body in Latin love poetry, that of the mistress.

CHAPTER FOUR:

Cultus and the Elegiac Body

In the last chapter, I examined the bodies of other women in elegy. In this chapter, I turn to the *puella*'s body. In the first sections, I examine the *puella*'s body as it is presented by the Propertian and Tibullan poet-speakers. Maria Wyke's groundbreaking articles of the 1980s exposed the connection between the *puella*'s appearance and the elegiac aesthetic, and my work is deeply indebted to the foundations she has established (Wyke 1987).¹ In this chapter, I seek to move beyond her analysis of the stylistic language joining the *puella*'s body and Callimacheanism to look again at the female body as a sexualized object spoken by elegy's male speakers. I argue that description of the *puella*'s body is always either indirect or partial. In keeping with Joy Connolly and Peter Brooks' analyses of the presentation of the sexualized female body in Roman elegy and in the European 19th century novel, I argue that the *puella* is never imagined as an organic whole, or as a realistic representation of feminine corporeality. Elegiac descriptions of the female body steer away from direct confrontation with the

¹ Wyke's affiliation of the elegiac aesthetic and the aesthetics of the mistress' body has been complemented by the work of Molly Myerowitz on the *Ars Amatoria* and by Alison Keith (1994) on the *Amores*. On Horace's representation of the male elegiac body in a similar affiliation, see Keith (1999). Duncan Kennedy provides an ingenious exploration of elegiac generic markers and their sexual valence in the male body at (1993: 58- 63).

sexualized female body and use various strategies of deferral to mask this structurally significant narrative tendency. The most important of these methods of deferral proves to be the catalogue of *cultus*. I examine *cultus*' participation in Roman moralizing discourses on gender, sexuality, and the import of luxury goods. In the final sections of this chapter, I sketch out how Ovid demonstrates *cultus*' function as a substitute for visions of the sexualized body of the mistress through his replacement of *cultus* with the *puella*'s body parts in *Amores* 1.5 and through the praise of women's *cultus* in the *Medicamina Faciei Femineae* and *Ars* 3.

4.1: *Cultus*

Peter Brooks, in his study of the body in the modern European novel, links what he calls *epistemophilia*, or the pursuit of knowledge of the body as pleasure, with a narrative's attempt to discover the body (1993: 5-7). Brook's study builds from Barthes' notion that narrative is a "strip-tease," that narrative works to reveal the human body (1993: 19). As this aim is continually thwarted, a narrative obtains its forward momentum. The body in literary texts, furthermore, becomes a primary source of symbolism as well as an inscriptive surface onto which meanings are invested (20). As Brooks notes (14), the fact that the body in narrative acquires a "temporal structuring" makes access to it as an object of desire "difficult, indirect, mediated, and subject to

delay, digression, and error". This narrative desire takes the female body as its object in Brooks' study.

Elegy, although the product of an entirely different social and cultural context, similarly strives to understand the sexualized female body of the *puella*. The female body, I will demonstrate in this chapter, is never revealed in an uncomplicated fashion. As Ovid's *Amores* 1.5 demonstrates, the poem in which elegy's most explicit description of the body of the beloved occurs, even catalogues of beautiful corporeal attributes of the *puella* omit essential features. This chapter explores how the male speakers of elegy, the poet-lovers, attempt to describe the female body, and the different methods of deferral that they employ instead.

The elegiac speaker frequently laments his inability to gain access to the *puella*. Often, there are physical barriers within the narrative such as a doorman, a *custos*, or a bolted door.² Other poems speak of the imminent separation of the lover and his *puella* because she will follow another lover to the countryside or to the colonies of the Roman Empire. In other poems, the *puella* herself refuses the speaker's entreaties, or has a household slave act as go-between. Finally, the *puella* has rival lovers who prevent the

² Below are some common barriers to elegiac love, and where they occur. Modified from James (2003: 111).

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| a) <i>custos</i> (the door guard) | Tib. 2.4. 39-40, 2.6; Prop. 1.16, 2.17; <i>Am.</i> 1.6, 2.2-3, 2.2.16, 3.4 |
| b) rival | Prop. 2.9, 2.16, 2.17, Tib. 1.2, 1.6; <i>Am.</i> 2.2-3, 19, 3.4 |
| c) an ocean voyage | Prop. 1.8, 2.26, 2.32; <i>Am.</i> 2.11 |
| d) voyage to the countryside | Prop. 2.19; Tib. 2.3; <i>Am.</i> 3.6 |
| e) the <i>puella</i> says no | <i>passim</i> |
| f) her slave says no for her | Tib. 2.6; <i>Am.</i> 1.12 |
| g) <i>vir</i> (pseudo-husband) | Tib. 1.5, 6, 2.3; Prop. 4.8; <i>Am.</i> 3.8 |
| h) the <i>puella</i> is faithless | Tib. 1. 6; Prop. 1.15, 2.5, 9, 16, 17, 32, 3.14. <i>Am.</i> 2.5, 3. 8, 11, 14. |

speaker from seeing his mistress.³ Each of these obstacles prevents the speaker from attaining his goal of seeing his mistress, let alone of attaining his ultimate aim of having sex with her, without giving her gifts for the privilege (see *Ars* 1. 453: *hic labor est, primo sine munere iungi*). These physical barriers and explicit refusals are complemented by subtler ways in which the elegiac narrative occludes the sexualized body of the speaker's *puella*. Instead of gaining direct access to the mistress, the elegiac poet-speaker presents catalogues of attractive body parts, or of attractive attributes, and these can be understood in light of Brooks' epistemological desire.

Connolly's understanding of elegy as an erotic narrative also informs my reading of these passages. According to Connolly's reading, elegy's non-linear narrative of the love relationship between *puella* and poet-speaker conforms to Barthes' analysis of novelistic narrative pleasure, which is characterized by its continual deferral (2000: 73-74).⁴ Barthesian textual pleasure stems from the desire or expectation of consummation, rather than the representation of bliss itself (Barthes 1975: 55-59). Textual pleasure also lies in working towards the aim of revealing the human body without actually revealing it. Connolly's and Brook's readings intersect in their application of Barthesian textual pleasure to narratives of love relationships. Their insightful readings inform my own account of elegy's presentation of the sexualized female body.

Elegiac pleasure, I argue, lies in the elaborate descriptions of the *puella*'s adornments, her *cultus*, or in the description of her body parts in an analogous catalogue structure. This piecemeal description substitutes a textual or narrative pleasure for the

³ James (2003: 108-52) provides a more extensive discussion of these obstacles as understood from the *docta puella*'s perspective.

⁴ Connolly (2000: 73), Kennedy (1993), Lowell Bowditch (2006) all make creative use of Barthes' vital definition of textual pleasure in their discussions of Roman love elegy.

audience in place of the sexual pleasures sought by the amorous poet-speakers of elegy. Elegy rarely depicts sexual encounters between the poet-speaker and the *puella*, and these encounters, when they do appear, are depicted fleetingly before the elegiac collection moves past them by means of deferral or deflection. Common, however, are poems depicting the *puella*'s beauty in the form of catalogues of attractive features to which I now turn. The majority of this chapter examines the significance of the catalogue of *cultus* within Propertian elegy before examining Tibullus' response to the Propertian *topos* and Ovid's parodic revisiting of *cultus* in *Amores* Book 1. This *topos* is a programmatic aspect of Propertian poetics and it finds expression in the opening poems of the *Monobiblos* and the first three poems of Book 2.

I speak here of the catalogue of *cultus*, and, before I turn to its poetic significance, I will first offer definitions from the *OLD*, the *TLL*, Olson's recent study of Roman women's dress, and from elegiac usage itself. *Cultus* may be defined, following the *OLD*, as: personal care and maintenance or the state of being well-groomed; the adorning of the body, or the style of dress, external appearance, clothing, dress, garb, apparel, or attire. It especially pertains to ornament, decoration, splendid dress, and splendor.⁵ Olson, following the *TLL*, defines *cultus* as follows: "*cultus* is a noun derived from *colere*, a verb meaning to cultivate, lavish attention on, or adorn, and comes to mean external appearance, clothing, personal care, or adornment" (*TLL s.v. 'cultus'* cols. 1333-34, 1337-38; Olson 2008: 8). Throughout, I adopt the Roman term because we lack a straight-forward English equivalent concept.

⁵ Myerowitz (1985: 198) offers a broader-ranging definition of *cultus* within Ovidian erotodidactic. See Gibson (2003: 21-25) on Ovid's praise of *cultus* and the anti-cosmetic tradition.

Cultus and its adjectival form, *culta*, first appears in Roman elegy at Propertius 1.2, where the poet-speaker rejects Cynthia's excessive care for her appearance.

Quid iuuat ornato procedere, uita, capillo
et tenuis Coa ueste mouere sinus,
aut quid Orontea crines perfundere murra,
teque peregrinis uendere muneribus,
naturaeque decus mercato perdere cultu, 5
nec sinere in propriis membra nitere bonis?
(Prop. 1.2.1-6)

What avails it, my love, to step out with coiffured hair and flutter the sheer folds of a Coan dress? What avails it to drench your locks with Syrian perfume and to vaunt yourself in foreign finery, to destroy your natural charms with purchased ornament, preventing your figure from displaying its own true merits?

I follow Propertian usage throughout this chapter. *Cultus* is here comprised of Cynthia's care of her body and her adornment, including the way she carries herself, and the adornments and clothing she uses. Cynthia's coiffure, her dress, and the perfumes used in her hair are doubly-glossed, first as foreign gifts, *peregrina munera* (4), and second as purchased adornment, *mercatus cultus* (5). At line 16, the speaker ribs Cynthia for using purchased fineries to attract her lovers. In contrast to Cynthia's careful and expensive toilette, Phoebe and Hilaria inflamed Castor and Pollux without *cultus* (*non sic Leucippis succendit Castora Phoebe | Pollucem cultu non Hilaria soror*, 1.2. 15-16). The term *culta puella* also occurs in 1.2, when the poet-speaker claims that a girl is refined enough, if she is faithful to one man (*uni si qua placet, culta puella sat est*, 1.2. 26). Propertian *cultus*, then, is a restricted sense of the broader Roman notion of *cultus* as cultivation.⁶ It refers to corporeal adornment and refinements, and is linked to luxuriousness, *luxuria*.

⁶*Cultus* in Roman elegy appears four times in Propertius (revealingly two of these citations come from 1.2. 5, 16; 3.11. 54; 4.8. 75) and only once in Tibullus (1.10. 19). It appears again three times in Ovid's *Amores* (1.8. 26, 3.6. 47, 3.5. 5). It is more common in Ovidian didactic poetry, appearing at *Ars* 1. 511; 3. 23; 3. 127; 3. 433; 3. 681.

Ovid expands upon and clarifies Propertian usage in the *Medicamina* prologue, and in a major section of *Ars* 3. In the *Medicamina*, the *praeceptor* will teach girls how to have pleasing appearances, and asserts that in contemporary Rome refined things are pleasing, *culta placent* (*Med.* 6).

At uestrae matres teneras peperere paellas:
 uultis inaurata corpora ueste tegi,
 uultis odoratos positu uariare capillos,
 conspicuam gemmis uultis habere manum: 20
 induitis collo lapides Oriente petitos,
 et quantos onus est aure tulisse duos.
 Nec tamen indignum: sit uobis cura placendi,
 cum comptos habeant saecula nostra uiros:
 feminea uestri poliuntur lege mariti, 25
 et uix ad cultus nupta, quod addat, habet.
 (*Med.* 17-26)

But you were born and bred for soft refinement;
 You like your gowns adorned with golden hems;
 You like to scent your hair and change your hair-style;
 You like to have your hands ablaze with gems.
 And round your neck you wear great Eastern jewels
 With stones so large no ear could take a pair.
 That's not bad taste; you need to be attractive
 When men these days are all so debonair.
 Your husbands dress up to the nines like ladies,
 A bride has hardly smarter things to wear.

In the prologue, Woman's *cultus* is further defined as dress, coiffure, gemstones, and imported luxury goods (17-25). These goods recall elegiac *cultus*, as we will see. In Ovid's earliest didactic poem, he begins with a eulogy of *cultus*, and the emphasis on a positive valuation of *cultus* recurs in the later *Ars* 3.⁷ The Ovidian passage looks back to elegiac *cultus*, and includes close verbal echoes of Tibullan, Ovidian, and Propertian usage. Tibullus 2.3 offers the image of Coan silk with golden threads woven in, *vestes*

⁷ Watson (2001: 457-464) demonstrates the connections between love elegy and Ovid's didactic poem, but argues that Ovid, in the *Medicamina*, deliberately separates *cultus* from *luxuria*, to which it is tied in Roman love elegy, in order to dissociate *cultus* and promiscuity. Watson offers previous bibliography as well.

tenues . . . auratas disposuitque vias, 2.3. 53-4, while the *Medicamina* includes a golden dress, *inaurata veste*, *Med.* 18. Ovid repeats the phrase he has used to characterize *Elegia* at *Amores* 3.1. 7 (*venit odoratos Elegia nexa capillos*) in his didactic description of girl's *cultus* (*vultis odoratos positu variare capillos*, *Med.* 19). This phrase compresses Propertius' original elegiac description of Cynthia's coiffure at *Prop.* 1.2. 1 and 1.2. 3 (*quid iuvat ornato procedere, vita, capillo; aut quid Orontea crinis perfundere murra*).⁸ Finally, the didactic description of *cultus* looks to the role of exotic stones brought back from the eastern provinces of the Empire in elegiac *cultus*, although precise lexical parallels are lacking in love elegy (*Med.* 19-20).⁹ Thus, Ovid's later didactic usage points to an awareness of Propertius' original deployment of *cultus*, reinforces the Propertian elegiac definition, and suggests the importance of *cultus* in later Augustan receptions of love elegy.

Cultus is also a stated topic of *Ars* 3 (*ordior a cultu*, 101), a didactic poem dedicated to woman's skill in the erotic game.¹⁰ In the *Ars*, *cultus* takes on a broad significance, and refers to refinement of hairstyle, clothing, personal hygiene and cosmetics, as well as crying, walking, talking, musical talents, poetry recitation, dancing,

⁸ Horace, perhaps borrowing from Propertius, employs the phrase *odorati capilli* twice in the *Odes*, at 2.11. 15 and 3.20. 14.

⁹*cf.* *Prop.* 2.16. 15, *semper in Oceanum mittit me quaerere gemmas*; *Prop.* 2.16. 43-44, *sed quascumque tibi vestis, quoscumque smaragdos | quosve dedit flavo lumine chrysolithos*; *Tib.* 2.4. 27, *o pereat quicumque legit viridesque smaragdos*; *Tib.* 2.4. 30, *vestis et e Rubro lucida concha mari*.

¹⁰ Most studies of elegiac *cultus* have previously investigated Ovid's didactic *Ars Amatoria*. Myerowitz (1985: 41-72) offers an extensive treatment of two types of *cultus*, military and aesthetic, in her study of Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*. Her categories differ from mine. While she discusses aesthetic *cultus* as a civilizing factor, and finds it at odds with the ill effects brought about by military *cultus*, I am interested in the narrative pleasure created by these catalogue-like descriptions of adornment. Gibson (2005) also speaks of Ovidian *cultus* and its role in destabilizing the polarized anti-cosmetic tradition.

and even game-playing (*Ars* 3. 101-498).¹¹ I argue here that Ovid's usage clarifies earlier Propertian and Tibullan passages about *cultus* and *luxuria*.¹² Moreover, following Ovidian definitions at *Medicamina* and *Ars* 3, I use *cultus* as the umbrella term to describe women's dress, grooming, and adornment. Ovid concisely and epigrammatically shows that *cultus* is understood as a substitution for the body of the *puella* in the *Remedia Amoris* (*auferimur cultu gemmis auroque teguntur | omnia; pars minima est ipsa puella sui*, 343-344). Elegiac *cultus* is defined, in this couplet, precisely as the adornment and clothing that obscure the mistress.¹³ Throughout the Propertian, Tibullan, and Ovidian usages of *cultus* that I have illustrated, the goods that comprise *cultus* serve to define the physical body of the mistress.

The catalogue of *cultus* is a primary means for the speaker to describe the bodies of their beloveds. *Cultus* has a poetological, moral, and political significance. *Cultus*' representation of the female body distinguishes Propertius' genre from its rival epic. Within the elegiac narrative, *cultus* offers a substitute pleasure for the continuously deferred erotic encounter. Additionally, catalogues of *cultus* displace the sexualized female body of the *puella* from the narrative. The *puella*'s body is then like the disappearing groundline for three-dimensional perspective, always receding from view,

¹¹ I adopt Gibson's (2003: 1-2) schema of topics in *Ars* 3.

¹² In so doing, I disagree with Watson (2001) and Gibson (2003: 21-25), (2005: 121-142) who observe that Ovidian didactic, by praising *cultus*, distances itself from earlier elegiac condemnations of *cultus*. Watson and Gibson's elegant readings of Ovidian didactic oversimplify the complex role of *cultus* in Propertian and Tibullan elegy. Although the speaker disdains *cultus* in Propertius 1.2, throughout Tibullan and Propertian elegy, *cultus* offers a narrative, textual pleasure for the readers in substitution for the erotic pleasure denied the poet-speaker.

¹³ Olson (2008: 7-9) offers clear definitions of Roman linguistic usage about women's dress. See also Shumka (2008: 173-178) for a further exploration of images of the *mundus muliebris*.

but essential to the establishment of the elegiac space and genre.¹⁴ *Cultus* can be understood as an interconnected network of luxury goods and bodily actions metonymically substituted for the body of the elegiac mistress. Like the psychoanalytic part object,¹⁵ the catalogue of *cultus* provides a substitute pleasure for the unattainable sexualized body of Cynthia or Nemesis. More broadly, *cultus* substitutes poetic textual pleasure for the deferred erotic pleasure of the poet-speaker.

Cultus is a part, as well, of a larger Roman moral discourse concerning *luxuria* and its ill effects. Elegy's deployment of and attraction to the *puella's cultus* has political significance in the period of Augustus' consolidation of his power. Central to Augustus' transformation of the Roman elite equestrian and senatorial classes were his attempts to create a new old-fashioned morality. In his own *Res Gestae*, Augustus notes that he restored old Roman *mores* with new legislation (*legibus novis me auctore latis multa exempla maiorum exolescentia iam ex nostro saeculo reduxi et ipse multarum rerum exempla imitanda posteris tradidi*, 8.5).¹⁶ Augustus' transformation of Roman society

¹⁴ Miller (2003: 63-68) argues that Cynthia herself functions in the same way in the *Monobiblos*. Though Cynthia is not characterologically, narratively, or poetically consistent, she is nonetheless the foundation of Propertian poetics in Miller's reading:

The poetry of the *Monobiblos* is inconceivable without Cynthia. She is what allows the work to function and the semiotic game to be played. Yet she herself never comes into focus, rather she is like the vanishing point in a painting that allows the other more defines shapes around it to have their form and intercourse with one another (66).

Miller's reading, despite our strikingly similar metaphor, differs from my own in the emphasis he places on Cynthia as a medium of exchange between men: Cynthia thus operates as the medium of hom(m)osexual desire in this reading. My own interest throughout is less in the incoherence of Cynthia's character and more in the substitution of her *cultus* for a coherent image of her body. On Cynthia as the medium of exchange between men, see also Keith (2008: 115-138) and Oliensis (1997) on erotic triangulation in the *Monobiblos*.

¹⁵ A *part object* is like a Freudian fetish object: the *part object*, in a human subject, is often a body part, such as a breast, that becomes the object of libinial drives, and substitutes for the entirety of the beloved.

and culture brought a period of central focus to Roman morality and to constructions of gendered behaviors and sexuality. Augustan culture brought the marital legislation examined in chapter 2 along with official state sumptuary regulations and the creation of a new emphasis on domestic and wifely virtues (Suetonius, *Augustus* 34.) Augustus encouraged the women of his own household to shift towards simple, plain style in dress and hairstyles, such as Livia's famously simple top-knot style in her portraiture.¹⁷ Elegy's interest in expensive clothing such as sexually-valent Coan silk,¹⁸ elaborate hairstyles, and imported luxury goods marks the genre's participation in contemporary discussions of female dress and morality.

4.2: Propertian *Cultus*

The topic of *cultus* occupies a central position in the poetics of programmatic Propertian elegy.¹⁹ Propertius' *Monobiblos* places this topic second only to the

¹⁶ Milnor (2005: 140-54) offers an excellent contextualization of Augustus' marital legislations as they are reported in Tacitus *Annals* 3.25-28. Milnor examines the wide-spread influence of the Augustan marital reforms in Horace's *Carmen Saeculare*, as well as in Dionysius of Halicarnassus' depiction of Romulus' laws about marriage and family in the *Roman Antiquities* 2.24. 4.

¹⁷ On Augustus' own simple, modest clothing, see Suetonius *Augustus* 64, 73. On Augustan culture's emphasis on moderate, restrained clothing, see Sebesta and Bonfante (1994: 46-64), introduction to Edmondson and Keith (2008).

¹⁸ Coan silk was criticized for its transparency; it was so transparent that it allowed a woman's figure to be seen as if she were naked while she wore it, according to Horace *Serm.* 1.2.101-102: *Cois tibi paene videre est | ut nudam.*

¹⁹ Tibullus also incorporates the catalogue into his elegies (especially 2.3, see below), and Ovidian didactic conspicuously expands upon Propertius' *culta puella* (Prop. 1.2. 26). The *Medicamina Faciei Femineae* begins with a eulogy to *cultus* (1-25), while Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*

programmatic opening declaration of love as sickness and domination by Cynthia.²⁰ This position indicates the relative importance of *cultus* to Propertian poetics. Cynthia’s attractions open the second poem, and I expand upon my previous discussion here:

Quid iuuat ornato procedere, uita, capillo
 et tenuis Coa ueste movere sinus,
 aut quid Orontea crines perfundere murra,
 teque peregrinis uendere muneribus,
 naturaeque decus mercato perdere cultu, 5
 nec sinere in propriis membra nitere bonis?
 crede mihi, non ulla tuae est medicina figurae:
 nudus Amor formae non amat artificem.
 (Prop. 1.2. 1-8)

What avails it, my love, to step out with coiffured hair and flutter the sheer folds of a Coan dress? What avails it to drench your locks with Syrian perfume and to vaunt yourself in foreign finery, to destroy your natural charms with purchased ornament, preventing your figure from displaying its own true merits? Believe me, there is no improving your appearance: love is naked, and loves not beauty gained by artifice.

Cynthia is embodied by her coiffure, her dress, and the goods used to adorn her, or by Roman *cultus*. The speaker catalogues Cynthia’s attractions, and the *puella* becomes a series of catalogued features: her hair is styled, she wears Coan silk, and she perfumes her hair with exotic scents from the Eastern provinces (1-3). Later we find that Cynthia also uses jewelry and make-up to adorn herself:

sed facies aderat nullis obnoxia gemmis,
 qualis Apelleis est color in tabulis.
 non illis studium fuco conquirere amantes:

features catalogues of women’s figures and methods of adornment (e. g. *Ars* 3, which devotes over 200 lines to ways that women can improve their looks).

²⁰ The order of the *Monobiblos* is well-attested through the MSS tradition (see Butrica 1984: 3-11), and is significantly more stable in its order than the second or third books. In his later books of poetry, Propertius speaks of his book of poetry as Cynthia (book 2 or 3). For the movement from programmatic opening poem to a focus on the mistress’ foibles, cf. Catullus c.1 and 2. For the importance of ordering and the programmatic sweep of poems in collection of four books of poetry, Cf. Horace. 1.1-11 with discussion at Lowrie (1995: 33-48), Santirocco (1986: 14-41).

illis ampla satis forma pudicitia.
(Prop. 1. 2. 22-25)

These had beauty which owed nothing to jewelry, pure as the hues in paintings by Apelles. These had no eagerness to gain lovers with cosmetics: for these chastity was beauty fair enough.

In contrast to Cynthia's apparent adornment, the ideal Roman woman does not wear makeup.²¹ According to the logic of Propertius 1.2, Cynthia's use of cosmetics indicates that she adorns herself to attract other lovers (1.2. 4, 23-24, 26).

This cataloguing of superficial *cultus*, I argue, offers the dominant way that the Propertian poet-speaker describes the body of his beloved. This style is indirect and the tendency towards indirect description expresses a narrative desire to continually defer the revelation of the sexualized female body. The catalogue of adornments creates a body seen in bits-and-pieces rather than a coherent image of the *puella's* body. This catalogue structure, moreover, helps to define Propertian style as well as to mark his generic affiliation as a poet of love elegy. Tibullus and Ovid will both respond to the indirect representation of the female body in Propertius 1.2.

The exotic and expensive goods are disdained by the speaker, and he asks that Cynthia disdain them as well (1.2. 4-8). For the speaker goods such as Coan silk, Eastern perfumes, jewelry, and rouge are wretched luxuries, *miserae luxuriae* (1.2. 30). The term is almost an oxymoron: though the speaker disdains luxuries, the poet lavishly adorns his poetry with them. Throughout this chapter, I will press this term *luxuria*. These luxury goods recur throughout Propertius' poetry linked to Cynthia's attractiveness, as well as to his rejection of her greed for such finery (particularly in poems 1.2, 2.1-3, 4.5, 4. 7). It is, however, precisely the objects the speaker disdains that attract him to his mistress. The

²¹ See Wyke (1994), Richlin (1995) on the semiotics of women's cosmetics in Rome.

puella's adornment is the embellishment of the poetry, and the discourse of luxuries as it is entangled with the catalogue of *cultus* is a dominant feature of Propertian style (see recently Keith 2008: 139-65, Bowditch 2006). Indeed, attention to these fineries links Propertian poetics to the Neoteric aesthetic dominant within many contemporary streams of Augustan poetry.²² *Luxuria*'s aesthetic appeal is only one aspect of the term's multivalent significance in Roman culture. As I will suggest, Propertian *cultus* and *luxuria* locate the elegiac world within a contemporary Roman debate on the significance of *luxuria* in the construction of the ideal Roman citizen.

The following discussion examines the linkage between discourses of luxury and the body in Propertius and Tibullus. The female body and its *cultus* do not dominate the *Monobiblos*, although they do occupy a prominent position in its opening poems. *Cultus*' programmatic significance becomes more clear in Book 2, where the Propertian *recusatio* in 2.1 begins with Cynthia's *cultus*.

Poem 2.1 positions Cynthia's *cultus* (lines 1-12) as the subject matter taken up instead of the rival genre of encomiastic epic, and designates the programmatic material for the second book. Wyke (1987) has shown that Cynthia becomes less characterologically coherent in Propertius book 2, that Propertius more frequently speaks of Cynthia in terms of poetic function, and that she is portrayed less realistically as a flesh-and-blood woman (1987: 47-49). Other critics have demonstrated how fully Propertius uses poem 2.1 to engage polemically with the poetics and politics of Maecenas' circle and the emerging Augustan cultural landscape (Stahl 1985: 162-71,

²² Keith (2008: 45-85) on elegiac style. The hallmarks of the Neoteric aesthetic in Augustan poetry include finely-wrought style, the inclusion of Hellenistic Greek, particular metrical characteristics, language and diction, and form. See Ross (1975) on the influence of Callimachus and Catullus on the Augustan poets.

Miller 2004: 137-143, Greene 2000). Yet, as I will argue, poem 2.1 predicts the importance of descriptions of Cynthia's body in the opening three poems of book 2. Moreover, 2.1 elaborates the function of elegiac *cultus* as a substitution for elegiac sex. The catalogue of *cultus* thus substitutes a narrative pleasure—the sight of the *puella*'s body in bits and pieces—for the erotic pleasure that cannot be elegiac, and is thus described in epic language.

Book 2 opens with an announcement of the speaker's generic affiliations as an author of elegiac love poetry. He is not a divinely inspired bard singing epic or martial poetry, but a poet with a single-minded devotion to his mistress' beauty. His poetic material is here figured as the source of his inspiration (*ingenium nobis ipsa puella facit*, 2.1. 4). Throughout the opening imagery, the speaker dwells on details of the *puella*'s body. He will write, he claims, about her clothing, her gait, her hair and its adornment, the beauty of her hands as she plays music, her face, and finally, her nude body.

Non haec Calliope, non haec mihi cantat Apollo:
ingenium nobis ipsa puella facit.
siue illam Cois fulgentem incedere †cogis†, 5
totum de Coa ueste uolumen erit;
seu uidi ad frontem sparsos errare capillos,
gaudet laudatis ire superba comis;
sive lyrae carmen digitis percussit eburnis,
miramur facilis ut premat arte manus; 10
seu composcentis somnum declinat ocellos,
inuenio causas mille poeta nouas;
seu nuda erepto mecum luctatur amictu,
tum uero longas condimus Iliadas.

(Propertius 2.1. 3-14)

It is not Calliope, not Apollo that puts these songs in my mind: my sweetheart herself creates the inspiration. If you compel her to step forth dazzling in Coan silks, a whole book will emerge from the Coan garment; if I have seen the locks straying scattered on her brow, I praise her locks and for joy she walks with head held high; if with ivory fingers she strikes the melody of the lyre, I marvel how skillfully she applies her easy touch; or if she lowers eyelids that fight against

sleep, the poet in me finds a thousand new conceits; or if, her dress torn off, she struggles naked with me, then, be sure of it, I compose long *Iliads*.

Formally, this passage serves as a *recusatio*,²³ or a stylized refusal to write epic poetry on kings and wars (*reges et proelia*, Vergil *Ecl.* 6. 3) or on the great deeds of a great man (Horace *Odes* 1.6), because of the poet's stated inadequacy.²⁴ Propertius' use of Cynthia's *cultus* in the opening of the *recusatio* before undertaking a complex political poem anticipates the opening up of book 2 away from the love relationship with Cynthia towards the Callimacheanism and explicit engagement with contemporary politics of books 3 and 4, and the language of erotic battle with which the *cultus* culminates incorporates a discordantly epic tone into the description.

This passage represents in miniature the sweep of Propertius' language about Cynthia's body.²⁵ He speaks of her attractive features in catalogue format, detailing each individual feature. The catalogue of Cynthia's *cultus*, here broadly defined to incorporate all her bodily behaviors and adornment, culminates in the description of her naked body (13), yet her nude flesh also provides the jumping-off point for the poet's *recusatio*. What follows the nude female body is an encapsulation of epic battles from the theomachy of the archaic Greek poets to Caesar Augustus' victories to be celebrated by contemporary

²³ See Ross (1975: 122-129) on the programmatic *recusatio* at the opening of Propertius Book 3, and Propertius' movement away from subjective love elegy in Books 3 and 4. On the centrality of the *recusatio* in Augustan poetics, see R. Thomas (1988) on the *Georgics* in particular. Cahoon (1985), Lyne (1980), Wyke (2002) discuss the elegiac *recusatio*.

²⁴ Lyne (1995: 32) cites Vergil *Ecl.* 6. 1-12 as the first Callimachean *recusatio* in Roman poetry, and Propertius will return to the Vergilian passage, as well to its window reference, Callimachus' *Aetia*, in the programmatic third poem of Book 3 (3.3. 1-18). Propertius evokes Vergil's sixth *Eclogue* in his opening line: when Vergil's Tityrus attempted to sing epic poetry, Apollo appeared to him and told him to sing a finely-wrought song instead, *deductum carmen* (*Ecl.* 6. 3-5). Vergil's passage translates directly from Callimachus' Greek in the prologue to the *Aetia*, fr. 1. 23-28 Pfeiffer.

²⁵ See Miller (2004: 138) on this passage.

poets before returning to the speaker's single-minded devotion to his mistress (lines 17-38 on battles; 39 -56 on choosing elegy and erotic battles, esp. 45, *nos contra angusto versamus proelia lecto*, 57-77 on choosing elegiac love).

This description shows the desired teleology of the catalogue of *cultus*: elegiac sex (*seu nuda erepto mecum luctatur amictu*, 2.1. 14). Elegiac sex is rarely presented directly. As here, sexual encounters are indirectly represented through a variety of ways. Often, elegiac sex is translated into the idiom of *militia amoris*, or mythologized or epicized.²⁶ When the male speaker recounts sexual encounters with his mistress, I argue, building on Connolly's discussion, his language is veiled, metaphorical, and indirect. Instead of elegiac sex, the poet-speaker frequently offers catalogues of *cultus* or of female body parts. The *puella*, on the other hand, as I will examine in the final chapter, presents a more explicit, frank, and direct picture of their erotic encounters.

In the opening lines of book 2, the poet-speaker imagines their encounter as a form of *militia amoris* in epic language.²⁷ The sexual encounter here too employs martial

²⁶ Joy Connolly (2000) offers an excellent discussion of elegy's tendency to defer discussion of sex through the use of mythological digressions, intertextual references, and interest in the absence of love instead of sexual pleasures.

But further, and more significantly, I will claim that every one of the characteristics that define erotic elegy as a genre is predicated on the particular tactics of that negotiation. That is, the disposition of erotic elegy's fictive characters, its mythological references, artful intertextuality of style, and, above all, its preoccupation with the absence of love rather than its pleasures—in short, the nature of the genre—may all be explained by the necessity to defer the consummation of desire. . . . Roman love elegy [contributes] to a broader western cultural scheme, one that inscribes desire in an erotic discourse that places bodies themselves on the margins of representation (2000: 74).

Connolly's discussion concentrates upon Propertius 2.15, a rare poem about a successful sexual encounter. Connolly's discussion demonstrates how elegy does not present the body, however, because of its use of the "artful tease, the move to mythological reference and literary allusion, and the threat, usually of violence" (84).

²⁷ On *militia amoris* in Ovid's *Amores*, see Cahoon (1988: 298-307). See Greene (1998: 67-92) on the centrality of the language of violence, articulated through the idiom of *militia amoris*, for Ovid's elegiac genre.

language (*seu nuda erepto mecum luctatur amictu | tum vero longas condimus Iliadas*, 15-16). Their encounter is described in language with an epic rather than an elegiac ring: her clothing is not the *vestis*, which typifies the mistress's clothing in elegy, but the cloak, *amictus*. Both verbs (*luctari*, *condere*) have an epic register, and are infrequently found in Propertius, Tibullus, or Ovidian love elegy.²⁸ The speaker and Cynthia's sexual encounter inspires the quintessential epic poem, a new *Iliad* (see also Greene 2000: 246-248). The description heightens the disconnect between elegy and a successful erotic encounter. The speaker, since he has very limited access to the *puella*, imagines rather than describes their sexual encounters. The poet, on the other hand, speaks of their erotic encounters through genre-expanding poetic language. This indirect method provides a pleasure for the audience, who may enjoy hearing the elegiac genre being pushed towards epic, its supposed anti-genre, in lieu of the sexual pleasure the speaker generically does not enjoy.

Poem 2.1 modulates between identification with masculine epic and the *mollis* elegiac style in complex ways, as Ellen Greene (2000) and Paul Allen Miller (2004: 137-143) have shown.²⁹ A primary means for the poet's identification as an elegiac poet of soft poetry is the description of female *cultus* that opens Book 2.³⁰ Cynthia's *cultus*, with its ending in an epicized scene of elegiac sexual encounter, opens a programmatic poem that

²⁸ *Luctari* occurs at: Prop. 2.1. 13; 2.6. 16a; 2.15. 5; 3.14. 4; 3.22. 9; 4.1. 147; Ov. *Am.* 3.7. 9; 3.11b. 33. *Condere* at Prop. 1.42; 3.11. 25; 3.11. 65; Tib. 2.5. 50; *Am.* 2.14. 16.

²⁹ Stahl (1985: 162-171) discusses the humorous juxtaposition of epic language and grand style throughout the poem with the opening elevation of the *puella*'s "silliness . . . doings and chattering" (163) into the epic *maxima historia* (2.1. 16). See also Kennedy (1993: 32-33), Fredrick (1997: 180) on the implication for the construction of elegiac gender relations in the *mollis / durus* trope.

³⁰ See also Wyke (1987), (2002) *passim* on the poet's poetic self-definition via his material, the *puella*.

violates the laws of Roman gender as well as genre. Miller (2004: 138) has shown that lexical allusion to epic through the trope of *militia amoris* “naturalizes the identification of elegy with epic”. Miller argues that poem 2.1 transgresses fundamental boundaries of genre through contamination from epic and encomiastic poetry, and of gender through the continuing deployment of gender inversions. Thus, poem 2.1 shows that the Propertian subject position occupies both sides of Roman ideological matrices but is not wholly either; the Propertian subject simultaneously contradicts and upholds both sides of the binary between traditional Roman values and elegiac non-traditional ones (Miller 2004: 133-134). Greene anticipates this interpretation of 2.1 in her conclusion that the Propertian lover displays contradictory images of masculine behavior through his emulation of epic heroic models that contradict the traditionally passive elegiac poet-lover. These readings point to the role of poem 2.1 in the construction of Propertian masculine subjectivity, yet neither acknowledges the role of *cultus* in the creation of the elegiac mistress, or of *cultus*’ programmatic status.

Poem 2.1 thus defines Cynthia’s *cultus* as the poetic *materia* for book 2. It also demonstrates one function of elegiac *cultus*, as a means for imagining the body of the beloved. Furthermore, the cataloguing of individual features becomes its own narrative end rather than a simple deflection from an organic, coherent picture of the *puella*’s corporeality.³¹

Cynthia’s beauty is the subject of the opening three poems of Book 2. In 2.1. 3-16, Propertius cites Cynthia as the source of his poetic talent (*ingenium nobis ipsa puella*

³¹ Critics have explored “dismembering desire” in Petrarch’s *Rime Sparsa* (Vickers 1981: 265-279); in Ovid’s *Amores* 1.5 (Greene 1998: 77-84); in elegiac erotic violence (Fredrick 1997) and in Tibullus 1.8 and 1.9 (Nikoloutsos 2005 APA meeting abstract).

facit), and proceeds to catalogue her physical attractions.³² Poems 2 and 3 continue to focus on Cynthia's beauty but shift to analogies from the divine world. Poem 2.2 includes an apparently precise description of her corporeal appearance: she has blond hair, long hands, and she is quite tall (*fulva coma est longaeque manus, et maxima toto corpore*, 5-6).³³ This clear description quickly turns, however, to a series of divine and heroic comparisons for her beauty (7-12).

Cynthia's beauty, and mythological comparisons for it, is explored to its fullest extent in 2.3.

Nec me tam facies, quamuis sit candida, cepit
 (lilia non domina sint magis alba mea; 10
 ut Maeotica nix minio si certet Hiberno,
 utque rosae puro lacte natant folia),
 nec de more comae per leuia colla fluentes,
 non oculi, geminae, sidera nostra, faces,
 nec si qua Arabio lucet bombyce puella 15
 (non sum de nihilo blandus amator ego):
 quantum quod posito formose saltat Iaccho,
 egit ut euhantis dux Ariadna choros,
 et quantum, Aeolio cum temptat carmina plectro,
 par Aganippeae ludere docta lyrae; 20
 et sua cum antiquae committit scripta Corinnae,
 carmina quae quiuis non putat aequa suis.
 (Prop. 2.3a. 9-22)

Nor is it so much her face that has ensnared me, fair though it be (and lilies are not whiter than my mistress, like snows of Scythia vying with Spanish vermilion, and rose-petals floating in pure milk), nor her hair falling attractively over her

³²The claim of unitary devotion to the *puella* as the inspiration for poetry represents one of the primary ways that elegiac poetry defines itself in opposition to epic or tragedy. Cf. *Am.* 3.12. 16 *ingenium movit sola Corinna meum*, *Tr.* 4.10. 59-60 *moverat ingenium totam cantata per urbem / nomine non vero dicta Corinna mihi*. Martial, in his claim to follow along the path of previous Latin love poets remarks on this elegiac tendency: *Mart.* 8.73. 5-6 *Cynthia te vatem fecit, lascive Properti | ingenium Galli pulchre Lycoris erat*.

³³This appearance, though specific, has affinities to earlier parallels in Catullus' Ameana (43. 1-4), Quintia (86. 3-4). On these Catullan parallels, see Papanghelis (1991: 372-86). Lyne (1998: 539-44) sees this passage as poetic one-upmanship with Tibullus' Cynthia of 1.5. 43-4. Sullivan (1976: 80) uses this description to build his description of Propertius' girlfriend.

smooth neck, nor the twin torches of her eyes, my lodestars, nor when my girl shimmers in silks of Araby (I am no lover who flatters for no reason)—as much as the fact that, after the wine is put out, she dances as beautifully as ever Ariadne leading her frolic maenads, and when she attempts songs on the Aeolian lyre, gifted to compose something fit for Aganippe's harp, and when she pits her writings against those of ancient Corinna and deems the poems of no one a match for her own.

In 2.3, as in 2.1, the speaker's fascination with the *puella's* body becomes the focus of the poem. Though the speaker claims that Cynthia's beauty is not as attractive to him as her musical and poetic abilities, the man protests too much. The catalogue of Cynthia's beauty occupies five couplets (9-18) and gives a detailed series of comparisons between Cynthia's appearance and the natural world. The passage once again shows the *puella's* body catalogued. This poem blurs the distinction between items of superficial *cultus* such as Arabian silk (*arabio bombyce*, 2.3. 15) and the description of the *puella's* adorned body. Cynthia's body is now catalogued through a series of comparisons to items of *cultus*, luxury goods, and exotic outposts of the Roman empire.

Propertius' longest continuous description of Cynthia's physical body is not a straight forward list of body parts or of the body in bits and pieces, but a series of metaphors and similes drawn from goods and places in the Roman Empire. These similes overwhelm precise corporeal description much as divine analogies figured Cynthia's appearance in poem 2. Although similes, analogies, or mythological exempla interrupt a coherent vision of the *puella's* body, three features emerge as central points of discussion: Cynthia's face, her hair, and the expensive fabric of her clothing, each areas defined in prior Propertian usage as parts of elegiac *cultus*. Cynthia is not the subject of a head-to-toe ecphrasis as in e.g., *Ov. Am.* 1.5. Thus, although the speaker claims to find

inspiration in Cynthia alone, and in her beauty, he never precisely offers an organic view of her.

The extensive emphasis on physical beauty in these three poems further defines a central focus of Propertius Book 2, and concludes the suite of programmatic poems 1-3, which center around Cynthia's physical appearance. While the speaker has rejected adornment in the programmatic 1. 2, these three areas appear consistently subjected to manipulation and adornment, or *cultus*. Throughout the examples I have examined, Cynthia's body is seen not as an unadorned object, but a manipulated, inscribed, and altered text subjected to poetic creation. Her adornment adorns the elegiac text as well, and her body is shown to be always created and inscribed rather than a pre-textual given. While her *cultus* marks her as a literary product, the features of her *cultus* also place her firmly within an Augustan Roman context. In poems 1.2, 2.1, and 2. 2, Cynthia's *cultus* characterizes her. Instead of describing her body *per se*, the speaker catalogues lovely *cultus*. Poem 2.3, by contrast, blurs the distinction between superficial *cultus* and the *puella*.

Cynthia's body is once again linked with discourses of the Roman Empire. Her beauty is compared to places and products from Scythia, Spain, Greece, and the Arabian far east. The luxury goods Cynthia wears appear frequently in Roman moralizing discourses about empire (Edwards 1993, Langlands 2006, Curry 1998, Milnor 2005). Cynthia's luxury goods are associated with women's over-indulgence and failure to adhere to old-fashioned Roman virtues. These luxury goods appear throughout Roman texts of the late Republic and early Empire linked to immoral behaviors and politically disreputable characters. Cicero, Cato, Sallust, Seneca, and other writers credit the

introduction of luxury goods, *luxuria*, brought in by the expansion of the Roman Empire in the last two centuries of the *Republic* to the failure of the Roman state. Alternatively, these goods are symptomatic of a particular citizens' depravity. Critics have shown how these luxury goods mark a Roman male citizen as effeminate (e.g., Edwards 1993). What is the effect of repeatedly joining these goods to the elegiac *puella*? Why does this *cultus* come to characterize the elegiac *puella*?

Propertius 1.2 presents the earliest extant discussion of the *puella's cultus* in elegy.³⁴ But the catalogue of *cultus* there recurs, as I have argued, in much fuller form in the opening poems of Book 2. Tibullus also offers examples of this elegiac *topos*. In the following sections of the chapter, I look towards Tibullus' employment of *cultus* throughout his collection before returning to Propertius. I begin with Tibullus' most similar usage of *cultus* in his collection. In 2.3, Tibullus shows his awareness of and responds to the programmatic Propertian passages opening Books 1 and 2.

4.3: Tibullan *Cultus*

In poem 2.3, Tibullus responds to Propertian *cultus* in his depiction of the beloved Nemesis. My reading here attempts to show that rather than create a sexualized body for the mistress, 2.3 offers a catalogue of erotically-charged luxury items. Tibullus has

³⁴ While Propertius 1.2 is the earliest extant discussion, the centrality of the *topos* to self-definitions of elegiac style in Propertius books 1 and 2 suggests two possibilities. First, *cultus* and the elegiac focus on it are also to be found in Gallus' lost *Amores*, on which see Ross (1975) and Cairns (2006: 70-145). Lyne (1998: 543) traces an interest in expensive dress back to Cornelius Gallus. Second, the clear focus on *cultus* is in fact a Propertian innovation. This explanation, while speculative, helps explain Propertius' continual return to *cultus* in programmatic locations.

incorporated not only the catalogue of *cultus*, but internalized its function within elegy and made its appearance as a substitution for the *puella*'s body. The catalogue of luxury goods offers a narrative pleasure in place of the refused erotic pleasure that the Tibullan speaker cannot find with Nemesis.

Prior treatments of Nemesis in Tibullus demonstrate how fully Nemesis performs the role of the *dura puella*, and show Tibullus' dependence on intertextualities with bucolic poetry. Gaisser (1977) looks at links between 2.3 and Vergil's *Eclogue* 10, while Maltby (2002: 408-410) demonstrates Tibullus' etymologizing turns in the poem. Bright (1978: 192-205) shows how Nemesis' role derives from the etymology of her name. Like the goddess of retribution from where she gets her name, Nemesis represents a sort of anti-Delia figure (Bright 1978: 118). Where Delia is a mistress of the countryside, Nemesis is entirely urban. Where Delia receives the poet-lover, Nemesis always refuses. Nemesis and Delia are polarized literary characters, and Nemesis is utterly unidealized by the poet-speaker. She is, rather, shown to be greedy, hard, fierce, and beautiful (Bright 1978: 185). Nemesis is, furthermore, the subject addressed in Tibullus' longest poem on the greedy girl (James 2003: 87-88). She is associated with greed for needless luxuries in both 2.3 and 2.4. Nemesis is a greedy mistress (*domina rapax*, 2.4. 25) and she uniformly refuses elegiac poetry as a substitute for material gifts (*nec prosunt elegi nec carminis auctor Apollo | illa cava pretium flagitat usque manu*, 2.4. 13-14). Even more than Propertius' Cynthia, Nemesis is associated with *luxuria* and *cultus* to the exclusion of any realistic description of her body.

Throughout his representations of Nemesis in Book 2, the Tibullan speaker fails to create a body for his lover. Nemesis, like Delia, lacks an *ecphrasis* of her body; yet

the corporeality of these *puellae* is described in very different ways.³⁵ Delia's body is frequently described as completing actions and making gestures (especially in poems 1.5 and 1.6), whereas descriptions of Nemesis' corporeality tend to be brief, two word descriptions of disembodied body parts: at 2.4. 14 Nemesis has a hollow hand (*cava manus*); at 2.4. 59 the speaker hopes that she might look on him with a gentle face (*placidus vultus*); and at 2.6. 43 she has expressive eyes (*oculi loquaces*). Tibullus does not create a coherent ecphrastic description of her body as Propertius 1.3, on the sleeping Cynthia, and Ovid's *Amores* 1.5 arguably offer. Nor does the speaker attribute his erotic failures to contemplations of Nemesis' body, as he did of Delia's in poem 1.5 (see chapter 3). In Tibullus Book 2, there is no body of a *puella* with which to have a relationship in these descriptions. Instead, the poet focuses only on those body parts that can communicate exchanges and thus suggests a physical relationship without ever embodying the girlfriend.³⁶

Poem 2.3 at first appears to present a body of Nemesis: when the Tibullan speaker offers to clothe his *puella*, she is imagined as the bodily subject of several active verbs of motion (*fluat, incedat, gerat*, 51-53). Yet, as I argue, this passage does not present a tangible body of Nemesis. Much as the catalogue of *cultus* substitutes for a coherent description of Cynthia in Propertius Books 1 and 2, Nemesis' first appearance in elegy is as an ornamented body, or an adorned body in bits-and-pieces.

³⁵ Fineberg (1993: 249-56) explores Tibullan personifications of abstract phenomena (*Aetas, Poena, Mors, Somnia Nigra*) as women moving on foot and enriches this discussion of female embodiment in Tibullus.

³⁶ See Veyne (1988: 87-88), who shows that the elegiac mistress is rarely described, but rather is envisioned only in bits and pieces. The *puella's* immateriality shifts emphasis onto the elegiac *Ego* character. Fredrick's (1997) reading of violence on the elegiac body takes the material body within elegy seriously as the site of erotic violence.

Heu heu diuitibus uideo gaudere *puellas*:
 iam ueniant praedae, si Venus optat opes
 ut mea luxuria Nemesis fluat utque per urbem
 incedat donis conspicienda meis.
 illa gerat uestes tenues, quas femina Coa
 texuit auratas disposuitque uias:
 illi sint comites fusci quos India torret
 Solis et admotis inficit ignis equis.
 illi selectos certent praebere colores
 Africa puniceum purpureumque Tyros.
 (2.3. 49-58)

Alas, there's no denying that girls adore the rich.
 Then welcome Loot if Love loves affluence.
 My Nemesis shall float in luxury and strut
 the Roman streets parading gifts of mine.
 She shall wear fine silks woven by women of Cos
 and patterned with paths of gold.
 She shall have swart attendants, scorched in India,
 stained by the Sun-God steering near.
 Let Africa with scarlet and with purple Tyre
 compete to offer her their choicest dyes.

In a rare show of the speaker's generosity, Nemesis' *cultus* is imagined. Nemesis' body is, as Cynthia's has been, imagined through the particular adornments she will enjoy.

The corporeal description of her in fact begins with verbs for activities of Nemesis' body (*fluat, incedat, incedat, gerat* 51-54) but moves on to characterize in more precise details the skin tone and actions of her servants and her clothing (54-59).

Her gait (51-42) and her clothing (53-59) are singled out in this poem. Lyne (1988: 538-41) has argued that Tibullus may have originated elegiac discussions about the *puella's* beautiful features at Tib 1.5 (*non facit hoc herbis facie tenerisque lacertis | deuouet et flauis nostra puella comis*, 53-54), to which Propertius responded in Book 2, especially in poem 2.2 and 2.3. In 2.2, as we examined above, Cynthia's gait is compared to Juno's, and to Athena's (*fulva coma est longaeque manus et maxima toto | corpore et incedit vel Ioue digna soror | aut cum Dulichias Pallas spatiat ad aras*, 2.2.

5-7). Lyne's study does not examine how common this imagery of beautiful female body-parts is, or how frequently the *puella's* walk serves to characterize her body (in Prop. 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, Tib. 2.3).³⁷ Indeed, women's walk in elegy operates not only to characterize the *puella's* body, but also metapoetically to align the *puella's* body with the body of elegiac poetry (e. g. Prop. 2.12. 24, *et canat ut soleant molliter ire pedes*; Tib. 2.5. 111-12, *usque cano Nemesim, sine qua versus mihi nullus | verba potest iustos aut reperire pedes*; Am. 3.1.8). As Wyke (2002: 67) demonstrates in her discussion of Prop. 2.12, more space is allotted to Cynthia's walk than to descriptions of her body in the poem. I suggest that *cultus* and this piecemeal description of the female body as body parts clothed in luxury goods is central to elegiac style. Tibullus redeploys the description of Cynthia's Junonian grace and grandeur in poem 2.3 to imagine Nemesis' corporeality. In each passage, the *puella* proceeds, *incedere* (Prop. 2.2. 6, *incedit*; Tib. 2.3. 54, *incedat*).³⁸ Yet Nemesis' motion is also imagined as closely bound up with her display of luxury goods (*ut mea luxuria Nemesis fluat utque per urbem | incedat donis conspicienda meis*, Tib. 2.3. 54).³⁹ As in the Propertian passages, Tibullus describes the *puella's cultus* as a substitute for a coherent description of her body.

2.3's description of Nemesis' *cultus*, moreover, presents significant intra- and intertextual echoes with those describing the typical gifts for the elegiac *puella* in Tibullus 2.4 and Propertius 2.16. The gifts Nemesis will receive from Tibullus in 2.3 recur as cursed causes of evil in pretty girls in Tibullus 2.4. In 2.3. 53-58, Nemesis will

³⁷ See Fineberg (1993: 249-56) on women's walking and metrical metaphors in Tibullus.

³⁸ Propertius 3.13 applies much of the terminology of the catalogue of *cultus* to contemporary Roman *matronae*. Like the elegiac *puella*, the matron *incedat* in her splendor (3.13. 11). Cynthia turns the walking language against the speaker at 4.7. 33.

³⁹ Putnam (1973: 173) notes the etymologizing between *luxuria* and *fluere* in this line.

be cloaked in Coan silk with golden threads, and in garments dyed with Tyrian and African purple. In 2.4, the Tibullan speaker curses these same *luxuriae*, including wool dyed with Tyrian dye (*niveam Tyrio murice tingem ovem*, 2.4. 28; cf. 2.3. 58, *purpureum Tyros*), Coan dresses (*Coa vestis*, 2.4. 29-30; cf. 2.3. 53-54, *illa gerat vestes tenues, quas femina Coa | texuit*), and pearls from Red Sea shells (*e Rubro lucida concha mari*, 2.4. 30). These goods are also similar to those that the poet-speaker laments that his *puella* demands from him in 2.16. 17-18, 43-44 (*semper in Oceanum mittit me quaerere gemmas | et iubet ex ipsa tollere dona Tyro; sed quascumque tibi vestis . . . quosve dedit flavo lumine chrysolithos*). Tibullus thus links the *puella*'s body into a network of imperial imports brought into the Roman capital through his introduction of the new beloved Nemesis. Nemesis embodies urban taste and style through her garments (Bright 1978: 202). At the same time, Tibullus 2.3 responds to Propertian imagery and to the centrality of *cultus* in the production of the elegiac *puella*. Moreover, as in Propertius' deployment of *cultus* in 1.2, the poet-speaker is attracted to the luxury goods he introduces in a diatribe against war-gotten gains, *praeda*.

Poem 2.3 undermines many of the Tibullan speaker's typical positions. Tibullan elegy frequently praises the life of the countryside and the elegant simplicity of life outside of the city (e.g. 1.1, 1.5, 2.2), but in 2.3 the speaker denigrates its rusticity and complains about the realities of hard labor (Putnam 1973: 166, Cairns 1979: 155). The elegiac lover fantasizes in 1.5 that his mistress Delia will live with him in the countryside; in 2.3 Nemesis can be happy only in the city (Miller 2002: 149). Nemesis' appearance in 2.3 also abruptly undercuts the speaker's diatribe against spoils, when he admits he will willingly grant them to Nemesis. Bright (1978: 197) remarks that the

“point of 2.3 has been the rejection, by implication, and gentle mockery of all of [the Tibullan speaker’s] most cherished values”. Miller (2002: 149), similarly, notes how 2.3 demonstrates the “artificiality” of the rustic idealism of Book 1. Thus we may interpret that Nemesis’ function in the poems of Book 2, when she does appear in the text, as being to disrupt or reverse the elegiac world which Tibullus has tried to establish.⁴⁰

Poem 2.3 provides the clearest examples of Nemesis’ disruptive function: she causes the Tibullan speaker to renege on his idealizing view of life in the countryside, on his choice of poverty over search for gain, articulated as *praeda* in 2.3; and she opens the space for urban images such as the *puella*’s guardian, her threshold, and her luxurious clothing to appear in a poem about the countryside. This poem may be read as a pair with 1.5, in which the Tibullan speaker imagines himself and Delia living happily in the countryside and serving Messalla when he comes to visit (Miller 2004: 120). In that poem, the countryside allowed the lovers to have a happy relationship; in 2.3, Tibullus wants to bring Nemesis back from the countryside where life is characterized by hard labor,⁴¹ and where she dwells with a rival.

In order to get Nemesis back into the city, the Tibullan speaker abandons his diatribe against wealth and his choice of noble poverty, and says that he will willingly give his girlfriend many luxurious gifts. This is a jarring reversal in two ways: first, the elegiac poet, in the face of Nemesis, will give up all pretensions of not paying for his mistress and he will give her copious gifts, a thing which none of the other elegists agree

⁴⁰ My interpretation expands on the excellent remarks by Cairns: “Nemesis’ presence in Book 2 allows Tibullus to express some attitudes which contradict those of Book 1 and are in opposition to the standard views of the lover in Roman elegy” (1979: 154). See also Maltby (2002: 394) on this perspective.

⁴¹The Tibullan speaker would have to farm in the countryside, and he would experience the aches and pains of manual labor (5-10).

to do;⁴² second, this is a total reversal of the Tibullan position in his first book. Nemesis' luxury, moreover, will be extremely visible: she will overflow with his luxuries (*ut mea luxuria Nemesis fluat*, 2.3. 51); and she will parade conspicuously (*incedat donis conspicienda meis*, 52) throughout the entire city clothed in imported wares and surrounded by a throng of foreign slaves (51-58).⁴³ As I discussed above, there is a strong echo of these clothes in Tibullus 2.4, but in that poem, the Tibullan speaker rejects conspicuous luxuries as the cause of greed for girls and evils for men (2.4. 29-30). Thus, Nemesis reveals the inability of the Tibullan speaker to maintain a constant position on his choice of poverty or a consistent moralizing tone towards *luxuria* and *cultus*.

4.4: The Other Women of Elegy Revisited. *Cultus* in Tibullus 1.9

While Tibullus deploys the catalogue of *cultus* in typical Propertian style in Book 2 as a substitute for an image of the *puella*'s body, *cultus* appears in book 1 among elegy's other women. That is, Tibullus divorces the catalogue of *cultus* from the *puella* but shows, through the introduction of *cultus* in association with Pholoe, the inseparability of the trope from the elegiac *puella*.

⁴²Except for Ovid, who at *Am.* 1.10. 63-64, after a long series of complaints against women's greed, will give presents to the girlfriend, so long as she does not ask for them.

⁴³ The slaves themselves are Roman *praedae*, and thus *luxuriae* because of their exotic imported status (Putnam 1973: 173, Miller 2002: 155).

In the third of the Marathus poems (1.4, 1.8, 1.9) the speaker laments his impending separation from his lover Marathus.⁴⁴ Marathus has begun to ask for gifts, and the poem includes several long passages against *lucra*, against the greedy lover, and an elaborate curse against the rival who taught Marathus to expect gifts (1.9. 53-76). Murgatroyd has aptly characterized the poem as unusually angry, and full of contempt and hatred (*ad loc*). The lengthy curse includes a catalogue of *cultus* in an unlikely location, as well as a long discussion of female sexual infidelity and “shameful” behaviors. 1.9 provides the strongest evidence for the connection of the catalogue of *cultus* to the *puella*’s body, as it moves from an explicit sexual discussion of the female body to veiled language of *cultus* to Catullan intertextualities before it settles on the characteristically elegiac *culta puella*.⁴⁵

At te, qui puerum donis corrumpere es ausus,
rideat adsiduis uxor inulta dolis,
et cum furtiuo iuuenem lassauerit usu, 55
tecum interposita languida ueste cubet.
Semper sint externa tuo uestigia lecto,
et pateat cupidis semper aperta domus;
nec lasciua soror dicatur plura bibisse
pocula uel plures emeruisse uiros. 60
Illam saepe ferunt conuiuia ducere Baccho,
dum rota Luciferi prouocet orta diem.
Illa nulla queat melius consumere noctem
aut operum uarias disposuisse uices.
At tua perdidicit, nec tu, stultissime, sentis, 65
cum tibi non solita corpus ab arte mouet.
Tunc putas illam pro te disponere crines
aut tenues denso pectere dente comas?
Istane persuadet facies, auroque lacertos

⁴⁴ My focus here is unusual for a study of the Marathus poems. I do not consider the beloved Marathus in this poem, and instead concentrate on the invective in the curse against the rival lover (1.9. 55-76). For an excellent recent study of Marathus in Tibullus, with relevant bibliography, see Nikoloutsos 2007, and forthcoming (2011) on Tibullus 1.9 in particular.

⁴⁵ *culta puella* occurs elsewhere at Prop. 1.2. 26; Ov. *Am.* 3.7.1; Ars 3. 51; Juv. 11. 202. Maltby (2002: 337) remarks on the irony of the designation in this poem.

Vinciat et Tyrio prodeat apta sinu? 70
Non tibi, sed iuueni cuidam uolt bella uideri,
Deuoueat pro quo remque domumque tuam.
Nec facit hoc uitio, sed corpora foeda podagra
Et senis amplexus culta puella fugit.
(Tibullus 1.10. 53-74)

But as for you who dared corrupt my boy with bribes,
may your own wife gull you with her cuckoldry
and when her furtive needs have tired out a young lover,
limply lie with you, tunic interposed.
Ever may your bed bear the marks of strangers
and your door be open to the lecherous.
Never be it said that even your licentious sister
sank more wine or served more lovers than your wife.
They tell me that drinking at her parties often lasts
till Lucifer's bright wheel rolls in the day.
There's no one who can better spend the night than she
or play a more exotic range of parts.
Except your girl—she's learnt it all. But you, big fool, don't notice
when she moves her body for you with a new-found ease.
Do you suppose it is for you she sets those curls
or runs the fine comb through that silky hair?
Is yours the face that tempts her to sport the golden bracelets
and leave the house attired in Tyrian gown?
She wants to look attractive for a young man I could name:
for him she'd blast your home and blue your money.
And nobody can blame her. As a girl of taste she finds
your gout and senile gallantry repulsive.

Tibullus curses the rival, Marathus' corrupter, by wishing shame on his household and coterie. He hopes to shame the rival through his wife's and his sister's debauchery.

While the wife represents sexual promiscuity, the sister combines sexual promiscuity with drunkenness. The poem curses the corruptor with a loss of power similar to the poet-speaker's own powerlessness over Marathus (Lee-Stecum 2002: 257-9). This curse can be understood within the context of the emerging moral consensus that was

legitimized in the marital legislation that placed legal sanctions on adulterers and stigmatized the compliant husband who allowed himself to be cuckolded as a pimp.⁴⁶

Sexual infidelity and drunkenness are particularly shameful behaviors sanctioned against Roman women: both could lead to a charge of *notitia* against the male head of such a household, and provided reasonable grounds for a husband to seek divorce or to censure his wife (see also discussion of Roman morality in Chapter 2).⁴⁷ The speaker first directs his curse against the wife of the corruptor, and uses graphic and coarse language for her overtly sexual behaviors (1.9. 54-58). The language of the curse is explicit and unusually direct, although, as I demonstrated in chapter 3, Tibullus uses such invective language against the other women of elegy. The wife will deceive Marathus' corrupter repeatedly and flagrantly with her affairs (*adsiduis dolis*, 54; *semper sint*, 57; *semper pateat*, 58), and she will take an active role in her sexual activities, as she is the subject of each of the verbs describing her behavior. She laughs as she tricks her

⁴⁶ Nikoloutsos (2011 forthcoming) rightly analyses this curse within the changing legal and political climate of elite female sexual activity in Augustan Rome.

⁴⁷ Gellius (10.23. 2-5) records remarks of Marcus Cato in his speech, *De dote*, in which Cato remarks that a husband can rightfully punish his wife equally for drinking wine as for committing adultery against him:

Marcus Cato non solum existimatas, set et multatas quoque a iudice mulieres refert non minus, si uinum in se, quam si probum et adulterium admisissent. Verba Marci Catonis adscripsi ex oratione, quae inscribitur *de dote*, in qua id quoque scriptum est in adulterio uxores deprehensas ius fuisse maritis necare: 'Vir' inquit 'cum diuortium fecit, mulieri iudex pro censore est, imperium, quod uidetur, habet, si quid peruerse taetreque factum est a muliere; multatur, si uinum bibit; si cum alieno uiro probri quid fecit, condemnatur.'

Pliny records a story that a husband, Egnatius Metennius, beat his wife to death for drinking under the kingship of Romulus (*N.H.* 14. 89). The story reappears in Valerius Maximus (6.3. 9-10), who frames the anecdote in a broader critique of the quality of *severitas*, and whether it is a virtue or a vice when exercised in such fashion (Langlands 2006: 156). See discussion of wine-drinking in these sources at Treggiari (1991: 268-271).

husband (54), she wears out her young lover (55), she sleeps worn-out from sexual activity (56), and she continually opens her household for her eager lovers (58). She furthermore will leave obvious traces of other lovers in her husband's bed (57). This wife will not be the passive member in her sexual activities, or behave within the circumscribed boundaries of acceptable sexual behavior for a Roman wife.⁴⁸ Instead, she will shame her husband through her sexual activity and promiscuity. Her activities, are, moreover, expressed in remarkable Latin: *usus* and *lassare* first appear here for sexual intercourse (Maltby 2003: 334).⁴⁹ The curse against the *uxor* contains many elements of standard invective against wives in Latin literature, as shown by the comparison of her behavior with the attacks Cicero leveled against Clodia (*Pro Caelio*, 49, *Si quae non nupta mulier domum suam patefecerit omnium cupiditati*). Her behavior will be, just as Cicero concludes his syllogism, meretricious (*palamque sese in meretricia vita collocarit*). Clodia and the sister are inappropriately sexual active, and each opens her household to eager lovers.

The corrupter's sister represents two female vices of drunkenness and promiscuity:

Nec lasciua soror dicatur plura bibisse
 Pocula uel plures emeruisse uiros. 60
 Illam saepe ferunt conuiuia ducere Baccho,
 Dum rota Luciferi prouocet orta diem.
 Illa nulla queat melius consumere noctem
 Aut operum uarias disposuisse uices.
 (1.9. 59-64).

⁴⁸On the circumscribed possibilities of sexual activity in Roman women, see Parker (1997: 47-65), and Hallett and Skinner, edd. (1997 *passim*). Lucretius offers a distinction between wifely and meretricious sexual practices when he states that wives have no need for motion in bed because they should stay still in order to conceive (*DRN* 4. 1274-77).

⁴⁹ While this is first usage of *usus* for sexual intercourse, Plaut. *Amph.* 108 gives *usura corporis*. See Murgatroyd *ad loc.*

She will bring the corrupter infamy for her unrivalled ability to drink all night and to assume multiple sexual positions (59-60). Again, the speaker uses the language of euphemism and neologisms to characterize her behaviors. He describes her sexual activities through terms often reserved for military service. She does not serve as a soldier for pay, but has instead served many men, *plures emeruisse viros* (60).⁵⁰ She also assumes posts of sexual position, rather than military posts, *operum varias disposuisse vices*, 64. This usage of *vices* to mean *figurae Veneris* is unparalleled.⁵¹ Rather than characterizing her position in Roman male social pursuits of politics, military, or the law, the invective questions the proper female *pudicitia* of the sister through her association with traditionally male social pursuits.

These curses are effective because they bring accusations against the women of the corruptor's household which could shame him as male head of household, and could reduce the status of the women cursed to that of disenfranchised and shameful classes of Romans, including pimps, procuresses, actors mimes, gladiators, and chiefly prostitutes. The corruptor's household performs activities, that is, that could bring charges of *infamia* in Roman culture.⁵² Tibullus marks the women's transgressions of gendered expectations by his deployment of the language of the Roman masculine spheres of

⁵⁰ There is also possibly word-play on *meretrix* in the verb (Maltby 2002: 334).

⁵¹ See Murgatroyd, Maltby *ad loc* on the unusual Latin in this passage.

⁵² On women's sexual morality, see Langlands (2007 *passim*). Public drinking and sexual promiscuity are two of the most common charges that could impose a mark of shame, a *nota*, on the household men of a citizen woman in the Republican period. Just as excessive wine-drinking could reduce a woman's status by revealing her failed *pudicitia*, adultery was sanctionable in the Republican period as well, and there is a punishment for women's adultery recorded in the very earliest Roman laws, the 12 Tables. After the appearance of the Julian laws, the *matrona* charged with such behaviors could herself have her status revoked either by being asked to wear the prostitute's toga, she could be divorced, and her property would be handed over to the government. These curses are effective in so much as they hope to brand Marathus' corrupter through a public lowering of his status.

patronage, politics, military, and the law courts for sexual and convivial matters.

Tibullus' manipulation of language usually reserved for masculine pursuits of public life may also suggest Tibullus' reliance on Catullan precedents in this poem as well.

As the curse continues, the speaker turns to a third female member of the corrupter's coterie:

At tua perdidicit, nec tu, stultissime, sentis, 65
Cum tibi non solita corpus ab arte mouet.
Tunc putas illam pro te disponere crines
Aut tenues denso pectere dente comas?
Ista haec persuadet facies, auroque lacertos
Vinciat et Tyrio prodeat apta sinu? 70
Non tibi, sed iuveni cuidam uolt bella uideri,
Deuoueat pro quo remque domumque tuam.
Nec facit hoc uitio, sed corpora foeda podagra
Et senis amplexus culta puella fugit.
(Tib. 1.9. 65-74).

The sister has taught her skills to an unspecified female, *tua*. This pronoun comes without an antecedent. Commentators have suggested that *tua uxor* is to be understood, but this supplement is neither immediately apparent nor does it adequately explain the shift from the sexually explicit description of the *uxor*'s behavior to the more veiled language of *cultus* I examine. Instead, I argue that *tua puella* should be supplemented, as *puella* is stated at the conclusion of the passage at line 74, and the type of elegiac description that follows *tua* here is nearly always used of the *puella*'s body.⁵³ The passage moves in an unusual narrative, beginning with a relatively direct scene of activity in the bedroom (65-6) to more veiled language as the *puella*'s *cultus* is discussed (67-71),

⁵³ Tibullan usage (and more broadly, Propertian and Ovidian elegiac usage) elsewhere supports this supplement as well. It is common within elegy to address the mistress with a simple pronoun (e. g. Prop. 1.2. 25, 2.3. 25; Tib. 1.3. 84), but less frequent to address a newly introduced character this way.

and finally to the naming of the *culta puella* (74), and the characterization of the corruptor as a *senex foedus et podagrosus* (73-74).⁵⁴

The narrative scenario of the foolish lover and his beloved's newly skillful behavior has several important elegiac and lyric parallels. Throughout the curse, the corrupter takes on the role of the New Comic *stultus amator*, a foolish rival character who does not recognize the girl's deception of him with another lover.⁵⁵ In the curses against his female family members' *pudicitia*, the corrupter would lose status through his household's behavior. When the focus on his sexual shame becomes the *culta puella*, Tibullus' poem further assimilates the old man to the *stultus amator* type (*tu, stultissime, 64*). The narrative situation now begins to resemble the elegiac *Amores* 2.5 in which the *puella* demonstrates to the Ovidian *amator* the new skills in the bedroom he believes she must have learned from his rival (2.5. 55-60). In Tibullus 1.9, the mistress has learned movements that her lover does not recognize (*nec tu, stultissime, sentis | cum tibi non solita corpus ab arte movet, 64*). The poet-speaker thus curses the foolish rival's by pointing out his inattention to the signs that his beloved is cheating on him. As I will argue more fully below, Tibullus enriches his invective through a series of intertextualities to Catullan invective against Rufus in c. 69 and 71.

The direct language of life in the bedroom moves towards more veiled descriptions of the female body as the narrative shifts to a description of the woman's toilette. The description of her adornment offers the catalogue of *cultus* in full swing:

⁵⁴ While I will argue for the centrality of Catullan invective's influence in this passage, the gouty old man who attempts to woo an attractive partner appears in Lucilian invective as well. *cf. quod deformis, senex arthriticus a<c> po<d>agrosus est, quod mancus miserque, exilis*, Lucil. 331 Marx.

⁵⁵ Elegy inherits many of the type characters of Roman New Comedy including the figure of the *stultus amator*.

attention is paid to how she moves (64), to how she styles her hair (67-8), and to her sartorial choice: she puts on golden bracelets and dresses in Tyrian silk (69-70). As elsewhere, the emphasis falls on her hair, her face, her walk, and an erotically euphemistic body part, her lap (*Tyrrio prodeat apta sinu*, 70).

The larger passage progresses from invective descriptions of explicit sexual contact with the *uxor* to the elegiac avoidance of sexual images of the *puella's* body. Although this passage comes from one of Tibullus' Marathus poems (1.4, 1.8, 1.9), directed to a boy-lover rather than an elegiac *puella*, the curse against the corruptor reincorporates the figure of the *puella culta* into a poem on a male beloved. The speaker begins with curses invoking sexual-promiscuity and drunkenness as potential sources of shame for the accursed man, in language that will recur as sexually explicit corporeal speech in Cynthia's own words in Propertius (see chapter 5). Yet as the curse shifts to incorporate the catalogue of *cultus*, the tone and 'genre' of the poem changes. When Tibullus incorporates language evocative of the comic-elegiac rival, the *stultus amator*, ignorant of his beloved's newly learned love-play and cultivation, the poem moves back towards traditionally elegiac language of the learned mistress, the *culta puella* (1.9. 74). Thus, the catalogue of *cultus* is inextricably bound up with the elegiac mistress, and language of the catalogue of *cultus* stands in for more explicit description of the sexualized female body of the mistress.

Although Tibullus writes of both male and female beloveds in his poetry, he does not segregate the love-objects of his poet-speaker along the same gendered binary male-female that would imply a modern homo- or heterosexual relationship.⁵⁶ It is precisely in

⁵⁶ Pace Veyne (1988: 141-145), who argues that Tibullus preferred Marathus, and was actually homosexual in the modern sense.

Tibullus' Marathus poems that this distinction is most unclear. Although poem 1.9 addresses Marathus and his corrupter who first taught him to ask for gifts, we have seen how Tibullus incorporates the elegiac *puella* into his poem. Poem 1.8 also incorporates a love-triangle structure in which it is deliberately unclear whom the poet-speaker addresses as beloved, Pholoe or Marathus.⁵⁷

There is also an important Catullan cast to the appearance of the *puella* in 1.9. Tibullus incorporates the influence of Catullan invective, as well as New Comic and elegiac stock situations to create the image of the *puella culta* of 1.9. The connections to Catullus' *ouvre* appear through the use of the colloquial term *bellus* for the more elegiac *pulcher* as well as through the characterization of the rival as a *senex podagrosus*, an invective taunt that appears in Catullus 69 and 71 against Rufus. Tibullus uses the colloquial term *bella* to describe the *puella's* appearance. Elegiac prettiness is more often expressed through the term *pulcher* (Murgatroyd 2001: 274). Indeed, this is the only occurrence of *bella* in such a context (Lee 1990:141).⁵⁸ Catullus uses *bellus* more frequently than the rest of the Latin love poets, and it is in Catullus that the clearest parallel for this passage comes.⁵⁹ Catullus c. 8 offers an instructive parallel: *quis nunc te adibit? cui uideberis bella* (17). Compare the Tibullan passage:

Non tibi, sed iuveni cuidam uolt bella uideri,
deuoueat pro quo remque domumque tuam.

⁵⁷ Booth (1996) has argued that Tibullus 1.8 and 1.9 can be read as a continuous narrative of a love-relationship between the Tibullan poet-speaker and Marathus that is later complicated as Marathus falls in love with the woman Pholoe.

⁵⁸ *Bellus* occurs elsewhere at Lygd. [Tib] 3.4. 52, [Tib] 3.19. 5, Ov. *Am* 1.9. 6.

⁵⁹ See Murgatroyd (2001: 274) for further discussion. *Bellus* appears most frequently in Plautus (27 X), and in Cicero's letters (28 X). It appears elsewhere in Roman love poetry at Catullus (14X). See Ross (1969: 110-11) on Catullus' usage of *bella*. See also Navarro Antolin (1996: 352-3) on the term's appearance in Lygdamus in the *Corpus Tibullianum*.

Nec facit hoc uitio, sed corpora foeda podagra
Et senis amplexus culta puella fugit.
(Tib. 1.9. 71-74)

In Catullus, the speaker fantasizes that the mistress wonders who will consider her beautiful. The Tibullan passage reverses this idea to conform with the elegiac trope of the faithless *puella*: the girl does not make herself lovely for the accursed rival to the poet-speaker but for another lover because she scorns his old age and his gout (1.9. 71-74).

The speaker's attack on the corrupter as a foul old man also looks back to Catullan passages. Gout, while a common enough affliction in antiquity, occurs only here (*corpora foeda podagra*, Tib. 1.9. 73) and in the Catullan elegiacs in Latin love poetry.⁶⁰ Catullus' elegiacs against Rufus accuse him of foul-smelling armpits and gouty feet. At c. 69, Rufus wonders why no woman, imagined as a *bella puella* (*hunc metuunt omnes, neque mirum; nam mala valde est | bestia, nec quicum bella puella cubet*, 69. 7-8) is willing to have sex with him even if he gives her expensive clothing or jewelry (1-4). At c. 71, Rufus has found a partner, but his stench weakens her, and his gout kills him (*illam affligit odore, ipse perit podagra*, 71. 6). The Catullan cast of the Tibullan passage characterizes the invective of the curse, but also looks to Catullus' *oeuvre* more broadly.

Catullus, as is evident even from these two invective elegies, offers provocative language of the body and of sexual behaviors throughout his corpus. His poetry of the affair with Lesbia is frequently cited as a source for the elegiac love-affair. Yet Catullus' descriptions of Lesbia's body are themselves circumspect, or characterized by a similar avoidance to elegiac descriptions of the *puella's* body. It is only when the Catullan

⁶⁰ *Podagra*, or its adjectival form, *podagrosus*, also appear in Ennius *Saturae* frag. 64; Lucilius *Saturae* frag. 331Marx; Plautus *Merc.* 595 and *Poen.* 532, Vergil *Geo.* 3.299, Horace *Serm.* 1.9.32, *Epist.* 1.2.52. Gout appears as a mundane illness in Cic. *Epist. ad Fam.* 7.4.1.5.

speaker imagines Lesbia with other lovers that he speaks in corporeally-explicit language (11. 16-20, 58. 4). Like the later elegists, Catullus avoids sexually-explicit language of the beloved's body, and instead projects corporeality onto other women (e.g., Quintia in c. 86), and more commonly, onto the other men implicated in his homosocial poetic play (Wray 2001).

The fleeting appearance of the catalogue of *cultus* in 1.9 emerges in an unlikely location. Rather than applied to Marathus, as it is surprisingly in 1.8. 9-16, here the catalogue characterizes an unnamed *culta puella*. This linkage between *cultus* and the *puella* reinforces and drives home my interpretation of *cultus*' narrative function, as well as its inseparability from the *puella*'s body. The catalogue of *cultus* again substitutes for the discussion of the sexualized body of the *puella*. The closer the narrative comes to the *puella*'s sexualized body, the more it retreats from direct language of the sexualized female body towards the catalogue of *cultus*.

4.5: Catalogue of *Cultus sine puella*

The catalogue of *cultus* also appears several times divorced from the *puella*. Propertius 3.13 offers a moralizing passage against *luxuria* in a poem complaining that women expect to receive expensive luxury imports in exchange for their favor (3.13. 8).⁶¹ The premise of this poem hews to a Roman moral tradition that links the consumption of

⁶¹ Other passages incorporating the catalogue of *cultus* include Tibullus 2.4. 26-30 (where *luxuriae* are faulted for women's infidelities). See discussion in section 3 of this chapter.

luxury goods and imported foreign culture with softness, *mollitia*, and the failure of traditional Roman virtues.⁶² This moralizing message is undercut, however, by the extremism of the examples offered to substitute for failed women's morality in Rome.

The poem begins by asking why nights with women have become so expensive. Because they expect to be adorned in the spoils of empire before they leave their homes (3-4). Roman women demand Indian gold, pearls from the Red Sea, Tyrian purples, and Arabian spices and perfumes (3.13. 5-8). These goods comprise elements of elegiac *cultus*. The very premise of the poem increases reader's surprise when the speaker reveals he is talking about Roman wives, *matronae* (3.13. 11). Their behavior in this poem better suits the elegiac *puella*, a Roman courtesan available for the nights the speaker laments have become so costly, and the figure most associated with *luxuria* in Propertius' poetry.

This poem shows a strong linkage between *luxuria* and the female body in its surprising inclusion of the term *matrona*, typically so far from elegiac discourse (*matrona incedit census induta nepotum | et spolia opprobrii nostra per ora trahit*, 3.13. 11-12). Here the wife, *matrona*, assumes the attributes of the unmarriageable non-citizen *puella*. All aspects of her *habitus* from her gait and her clothing to her public reception take on attributes of the *puella*, and the opulence of her clothing in particular make her the object of public scrutiny. Her expensive clothing marks her as sexually available in elegy (*c. f.* the speaker's complaint in Propertius 1.2), but also as a wasteful consumer of her family's goods. The catalogue of *cultus* at the outset of the poem inserts the *matrona*'s

⁶² Dench (1998) contextualizes Roman moral discourses' linkages between luxury and moral weakening in her long-range study of the ideology of decadence, excess, and military power and austere identity in Greek and Roman culture. Her survey demonstrates how traits such as lust, lack of self-control, and the desire to display and consume wealth as clothing were categorized as feminine. See also Edwards (1993: 63-97).

body into Roman moralizing discourse against Roman wives' display of wealth through their clothing, as hinted at in Roman sumptuary legislation, including those in the Julian Laws, the long-since repealed Oppian Law that restricted *matronae* from wearing purple or gold in excess of ¼ oz, and the restriction of Tyrian dye under Julius Caesar that Augustus may have maintained.⁶³

The term *matrona* is itself revealing for its infrequency in elegiac poetry: it appears only once in Tibullus (2.5. 91), twice in Propertius (at 2.33a. 4 and here), and twice in Ovid (*Heroides* 5. 85; 17. 41). This vocabulary is far more common in Horace. The term *matrona* appears four times in *Sermones* 1.2 on the proper sort of woman and on moderate male sexual behavior (54, 63, 78, 94); twice in the Roman *Odes* (3.2. 7, 3.4. 59) and the *Odes* (1.15. 34, 4.15. 27), and in the *Epistles* (1.18. 3) and *Ars Poetica* (116, 232). It is unusual for elegy to name so precisely a married citizen woman, except in a denial of *matronae* as proper love-objects.

Thus, the Tibullan speaker, for example, states that his beloved cannot be a Roman *matrona*, since she cannot wear the clothing (the long *stola* and the *vittae*) that identify a Roman citizen wife (*sit modo casta, doce, quamvis non uitta ligatos | impediatur crines nec stola longa pedes*, 1.6. 67-68). Ovid reinforces the identification of the elegiac *puella* as a courtesan in the *Remedia Amoris*, where the speaker denies that elegy is a

⁶³ These reforms included sumptuary legislation, dress reform, *et al.*

- Citizen men were required to wear the toga in Forum (Suet. *Div. Aug.* 40.5).
- As triumvir, in 36/5 BCE, Augustus restricted purple to senators and magistrates (Dio 49.16. 1).
- The *lex Iulia de maritandis ordinibus*, passed in 18 BCE, may have had clauses on dress restrictions (McGinn 1998).
- The *lex Iulia theatralis*, passed c. 20-17 BCE, made those wearing dark clothing, rather than togas, sit in back rows instead of the first 14 rows that were reserved for *equites*, *senators*, and the *domus Augusta*.
- Marital legislations stated that a convicted adulteress had to wear the plain toga, and give up the *stola* (McGinn 1998).

genre for married women. The *Praeceptor amoris* uses the epic-tragic exemplary wife Andromache to contrast with the New Comic hetaira, Thais (*quis feret Andromaches peragentem Thaida partes? | peccet, in Andromache Thaida quisquis agat | Thais in arte mea est; lasciua libera nostra est | nil mihi cum uitta; Thais in arte mea est, Rem. 383-6*). As James has shown, elegy frequently adopts the language of Roman marriage to describe the non-marital relationship between the poet-speaker and his mistress, but she has persuasively analysed this language as a form of linguistic misdirection.⁶⁴

Propertius' striking usage here contradicts the typically ambiguous application of marital vocabulary to a relationship between a Roman courtesan and her lover that cannot be considered a legal Roman marriage. Propertius, in 3.13, uses a *matrona* shaped to look like an elegiac *puella* through the language of *cultus* and the female body. His employment of this term is a sophisticated incorporation of Horatian lyrical and satirical ethical concerns into his third book of elegies, as well as a response to the Augustan attempts to reform elite Roman women's marital morality that Horace may refer to in the *Roman Odes*.

The language of 3.13 has a distinctly political ring in the years after Augustus attained sole control over the restored Roman Republic and its *mores*. The usage of the term *matrona* also demonstrates Propertius' response in book 3 to the publication of Horace's politically charged *Roman Odes*. Although Propertius' publication book 3 anticipates Augustus' assumption of the role of *ensor* over the *cura morum et legum* in 20 BCE (*Res Gestae*), the third book is broadly responsive to the publication of Horace's

⁶⁴ On the application of terms from legal Roman marriage to non-marital relationships in elegy, see James (2003: 42-49). The ambiguous presentation of the elegiac *puella* and the language of marriage throughout Tibullus, Propertius, and Ovid has continually inspired attempts to make her a free, married Roman woman, see Treggiari (1971) and Williams (1968). Yet her status is most likely that of a Roman courtesan, as James (2003), Copley (1956) have argued.

first three books of *Odes* in 23 BCE.⁶⁵ In the sixth poem of the Roman *Odes*, Horace cites the sexual promiscuity of Roman wives as the source for the contemporary failure of the Roman state, for military defeats, and for the loss of traditional masculine virtues of military prowess and rustic hardness (3.6. 17-34). Horace's *Ode* has been read as a hint of an early publication of a form of the Julian Laws, when it identifies the centrality of marital dysfunction to Augustus' intended reforms.⁶⁶ The Augustan moral legislation will strongly delimit the legal and social space of the *matrona* and attempt to create a strict binary separating the *matrona* from the *meretrix*. Here in Propertius 3.13, as in Horace's *Ode*, the Roman wife behaves immorally, in her search for *luxus* and expensive *cultus* and in her sexual promiscuity.

My reading of 3.13 points to how strongly elegiac female sexuality is articulated through ideas of dress, and how strongly dress is linked to Roman moralizing discourses of empire and the consumption and display of luxury goods. In elegy, even the *matrona*, when she enjoys elegiac *cultus* and *luxuria*, attains the form of the *culta puella*. The moralizing discourse of this passage concentrates typical late Republican and Augustan ideas about women's sexuality, body, and consumption. More importantly, 3.13's concatenation of *cultus* and the *matrona* points to the broader Roman attitude toward the elegiac *puella's cultus*. This attitude comes into clearer focus when a *matrona* takes up the *puella's* role.

In the next section of the poem, the Propertian speaker proposes a radical and unrealistic solution to Roman woman's greed for imported luxury goods. Instead of

⁶⁵ See Lowrie (1997: 266-315) for a sensitive discussion of interchanges between Horace's erotic poetry and Propertian elegy.

⁶⁶ See the introductory remarks to *Ode* 3.6 at Nisbet and Rudd (2004 *ad loc*).

seeking Roman women, the speaker turns to praise of marriage practices in India. In India, when a husband dies, his wives vie for honor by committing ritual suicide at his funeral pyre. The Propertian speaker argues that this suttee makes Indian wives a fortunate choice for Roman men (3.13. 14-24). But the extremism of this exemplum stretches the credibility of the speaker's complaint against *luxus* and *cultus* at the outset of the poem. The speaker's position as an upholder of traditional Roman morality may thus shown to be ironic, where it was less obviously so in poems 1.2 and 2.1.

Gibson (2007) has recently explored how Ovid, Horace, and Propertius employ and travesty poetological, aesthetic, and ethical excess in their love poetry. Horace represents the idea of the mean throughout his poetry with praise of ethical, poetic, and sexual *mediocritas*, while Propertius represents a libertine poetics and lifestyle (2007: 43-70). His ethical concerns are not the center of my focus on 3.13, yet Gibson sensitively argues that Propertius travesties the limits of *mediocritas* in Horace's official court poetry. I extend his argument here to show that Propertius 3.13's association of the Roman *matrona* and elegiac *cultus* in a poem that praises such an extremist moral position is a further travesty of Horatian and Augustan moral discourse.

Throughout Propertian elegy, the poet-speaker has described the *puella's* body through the catalogue of *cultus* as a narrative substitution for the pleasure of erotic consummation the poet-speaker infrequently experiences. I have argued throughout this chapter that catalogues of *cultus* are the indirect means through which the poet-speaker can describe the sexualized body of the *puella*. The generic attraction to the *puella's* adornment, furthermore, proves definitive for the elegiac genre. While epic poetry concentrates upon kings and battles (*reges et proelia*, Vir. *Ecl.* 6. 3), elegy concentrates

on the *puella's* corporeal *cultus* (Prop. 2.1. 3-14, discussed above). The linkage between *cultus* and *luxuria* implicates elegy into a broader Roman moralizing discourse on the import of luxury goods into the Roman city, and characterizes the Propertian and Tibullan speakers as ironic arbiters of traditional Roman gendered and sexual *mores*. Although Propertian and Tibullan elegy carefully describe individual elements of the *puella's* adornment, elegy rarely presents scenes of erotic life in the bedroom, and never provides a coherent and complete image of the body of the *puella*. Instead, the sexualized body of the mistress is the ultimately illusory guarantor of poetic subject-matter, and while sex is the ultimate aim of the poet-speaker's persuasive poetry, as at Tibullus 2.4. 19-20 (*ad dominam faciles aditus per carmina quaero | ite procul, Musae, si nihil ista ualent*) the genre avoids explicit discussion of sexual consummation, as Connolly and Brooks have shown. Thus, the textual pleasure of seeing the *puella's* adornments displayed as goods of empire replaces the sought-out, but continually deferred erotic pleasure.

4.6: Ovidian *cultus* and *corpus*

In *Amores* 1.5, Ovid responds to the centrality of the catalogue of *cultus* in Propertian and Tibullan elegy. Through the piece-meal description of Corinna's

attractive body parts, and the erotic and poet climax that concludes the poem, Ovid lays bare the function of the elegiac catalogue of *cultus* as well.

Perhaps the most famous poem in the elegiac corpus, Ovid's *Amores* 1.5 names Corinna, the elegiac mistress, for the first time. The *amator* catalogues all of Corinna's body-parts, and presents one of the most explicit descriptions of the sexualized female body of the *puella* in elegy.⁶⁷ The poem enumerates the bodily objects of the *amator*'s gaze (18-23), and culminates in a euphemistic avoidance of their sexual encounter at the end of the poem (25). Her corporeality is detailed, piece-by-piece, and we have a nearly complete ephrastic description of the sexualized female body.⁶⁸

Ut stetit ante oculos posito uelamine nostros,
in toto nusquam corpore menda fuit.
quos umeros, quales uidi tetigique lacertos!
forma papillarum quam fuit apta premi! 20
quam castigato planus sub pectore uenter!
quantum et quale latus! quam iuuenale femur!
Singula quid referam? nil non laudabile uidi
et nudam pressi corpus ad usque meum.
Cetera quis nescit? lassi requieuiamus ambo. 25
(*Am.* 1.5. 17-25)

Stark naked as she stood before mine eye,
No blemish on her body could I spy.
What arms and shoulders did I touch and see,
How apt her bosom to be pressed to me!
Belly so smooth below her breasts so high,
And waist so long, and what a fine young thigh.
Why detail more? All perfect in my sight;

⁶⁷ Keith (1994: 30) notes that this is one of the fullest portraits of a mistress in Latin elegy.

⁶⁸ Greene (1998: 77-84) analyses Corinna's appearance here as "fragmented parts controlled by the *amator*'s controlling gaze" (77). Greene stresses that the portrayal of Corinna is here a composite of details or a series of dismembered images, and the mistress becomes a spectacle, and a fixed object of the *amator*'s gaze. Greene aptly cites Nancy Vicker's classic analysis of Laura in Petrarch as "a body fetishized . . . in a process that entails an obsessive dismembering of the female body, and an insistence on describing the woman through the isolation of her parts" (Greene 1998: 82).

And naked as she was, I hugged her tight.
And next—all know! We rested.

Corinna is faultless in the speaker's gaze: her shoulders, arms, breasts, belly, side, and legs are each singled out for praise. What is absent from this description, however, is her head and face, two features that would serve to individualize the mistress, and characterize her as more than a sexually-attractive female body (Greene 1998: 83). Boyd (1997: 156) notes that this description employs a drive towards realism through the incorporation of the haptic visions of gazing, touchability, and love-making that moves beyond the conventional decorum of elegiac love-scenes established in Tibullus and Propertius.⁶⁹

Like Boyd, I argue that Ovid, through his explicit detailing of the sexualized body of the *puella*, exposes the poetic function of the catalogue-style descriptions found in Propertian and Tibullan elegy. The *amator's* description of Corinna's body is analogous to the catalogue of *cultus* in both style and function. In Propertius and Tibullus, the catalogue of *cultus* substitutes for a more complete ecphrasis of the *puella's* body. The catalogue of *cultus* has a narrative structure similar to Ovid's bodily catalogue: while earlier elegy describes the *puella* piece-meal through her clothing and adornment, Ovidian elegy supplies the absent body through images of Corinna's individual body parts. Whereas Ovid's poem ends with a witty refusal to describe a sexual encounter (*et nudam pressi corpus ad usque meum | cetera quis nescit*, 24-25), Tibullus and Propertius offer catalogues of the *puella's cultus* as a narrative pleasure that substitutes for the erotic pleasure of a sexual encounter the poet-speaker cannot attain with his mistress. Thus Ovid points to the centrality of the catalogue of *cultus* in earlier elegy as well as its poetic

⁶⁹ Hinds (1987: 4-6) summarizes earlier reactions to this poem as either too explicit for elegiac decorum (Williams), or suggestive but shallow (Lyne).

function. In his description of Corinna's body in *Amores* 1.5, as Sharon James has noted of Ovid's erotic poems overall, Ovid "makes explicit what was present but usually only implicit in the works of Propertius and Tibullus" (James 2002: 157).

Ovid returns to the centrality of *cultus* and its coimplication with elegiac descriptions of sex and the body in the *Ars Amatoria* and the *Remedia Amoris*. I deal only very briefly with Ovid's erotodidactic poetry here, because the generic differences between the elegiac poet-speaker and the *praeceptor amoris* who addresses a narrative audience of the Roman everyman addressed in *Ars* 1 and 2 who needs to learn the art of loving (how to find a girl, catch her, and keep her, *Ars* 1 *passim*) require the Ovidian didactic speaker to use a different style of language to talk about the female body. Nonetheless, most research into Ovid's use of *cultus* has focused on Ovidian erotodidactic because of the hymnic praise of *cultus* in *Ars* 3.⁷⁰

Ars Amatoria Book 3 announces the programmatic importance of female *cultus* for its stated aim of arming women in the wars of love (*ordior a cultu*, 3. 101). This line begins the instruction proper of the erotodidactic work, and introduces a nearly two-hundred line passage on women's proper *cultus* of their bodies through hairstyles (135-68), clothing (169-92), cosmetics (193-208), and concealment of the acts of becoming ornamented and of the faults in the female body (209-290). Ovid's usage here furthers the connection between *cultus* and the sexualized female body, reiterates the centrality of *cultus* to elegiac poetic definition, and attempts to decouple *cultus* from *luxuria*. Ovid's passage in praise of *cultus*, furthermore, shifts to invective-style corporeal language about

⁷⁰ On the rarity of praise of *cultus* in the Greco-Roman anti-cosmetic tradition, see Gibson (2003: 129-130) on *Ars* 3: 101-34.

the faults of the female body, and shows the female body as an unfinished poetic material in need of artistry (*cultus*) to achieve a pleasing outward form.⁷¹

Ars 3 literalizes the link between the *cultus* of the *puella* and gaining sexual access to the *puella*'s body. While the *praeceptor*'s stated aim in *Ars* 3 is to arm women in the battles of love, much of his attention throughout the poem teaches women to tame their own bodily imperfections.⁷² As *Ars* 3 proceeds, the *praeceptor* shifts from instructions recalling the three areas that encapsulated the elegiac female body (hair, face, and dress) to the proper *cultus* of sexual positions. The restriction of the *praeceptor*'s usage of *cultus* to female adornment here is perhaps intended to be humorous, and comes as a surprise after the opening praise creates an antithesis between Greek and early Roman *rusticitas* and the *cultus* of the contemporary newly renovated Golden city of Augustan Rome (3. 113-120).⁷³ Yet, as I have argued throughout this chapter, catalogues of *cultus* constitute a central focus for defining the interests of the elegiac genre. Ovid's didactic usage praises women's *cultus*, and in so doing, points to the ambiguous status of *cultus* in Propertian and Tibullan elegy. Elegiac catalogues of *cultus* were, on the one hand, objects of poetic adornment, as well symbolic of elegiac taste and refined style. At the same time, elegy's deployment of *cultus* was linked to rejections of *luxuria* in the Roman moralizing tradition. Gibson has argued that Ovid, by emphasizing an aesthetics of moderation, dissociates *cultus* from *luxuria* in the *Ars* (2003: 22), and thereby frees

⁷¹ See Downing (2002: 235-242), who demonstrates that *cultus* further assimilates the women addressed to statue-like artistic material.

⁷² Myerowitz (1985: 215) notes that of 812 lines in *Ars* 3, only 168 deal with the handling of men, and the rest focus on female self-cultivation. Myerowitz further compares the instructions on love-making at the end of books 2 and 3; while men are taught techniques for love-making to women (2. 703-32), women are taught how to look good doing it (3. 769-808).

⁷³ See Gibson (2003: 134) and Watson (1982).

Ovid from the anti-cosmetic tradition. At the same time, Ovid's poem explicitly mark the links that were less clear in Tibullan and Propertian elegy between *cultus* and *luxuria*.

4.7. Conclusions

This study of *cultus* in Roman elegy suggests several conclusions. First, the catalogue of *cultus* is a prominent and under-examined aspect of elegiac constructions of the female body. The catalogue of *cultus* is a particularly Propertian *topos*: After 1.1, Propertius' programmatic poems (1.2, 2.1-3, 3.1 -3, 4.1) all foreground *cultus* in some fashion. Tibullus and Ovid also incorporate the catalogue of *cultus* into their own elegy in novel fashion. Tibullus applies the catalogue of *cultus* to his boy lover; it next appears in the midst of an invective passage as a means to reintroduce the *puella culta*; and it enters as a complete contradiction of the poem's stated diatribe against *lucra* and *luxuriae* in 2.3. Ovid recognizes the narrative function of the catalogue of *cultus* as a substitute pleasure for an uncomplicated view of the sexualized female body, or for an erotic encounter itself. In the first poem to name the beloved, Corinna too is given a catalogue description of the body in bits-and-pieces, yet the *luxuria* which substituted for body parts in Propertius and Tibullus are transformed into body parts, and the sexual encounter is also included in *Amores* 1.5.

Elegy's deployment of the catalogue of *cultus* is part of a broader anti-cosmetic tradition of Greek and Roman high literary culture with roots in Socratic philosophy and extending into Roman thought on the body, status, and sexuality. Roman dress indicated the wearer's status to other members of society in direct terms. As Edmondson (2008)

and Olson (2008) have demonstrated, Roman identity, and particularly Roman masculine identity, as they were constructed through dress were contested areas subject to legal modifications under Augustus. Augustan legislation codified and regulated the dress of Roman senators and Roman *matronae* through sumptuary legislation, and Augustus' laws show an interest in controlling dress as early as the Triumviral period.⁷⁴ The purple stripe on a senator's toga, the *toga praetexta*, was required to be of only a certain width, and a citizen could wear only a certain number of rings on his finger. Augustus restricted the wearing of purple to certain classes, and required that citizens wear the toga in order to conduct business in the Roman forum, or to go to court. Roman women, if convicted of adultery according to the *lex Papia Poppaea* (9 CE), were required to wear the prostitute's toga rather than the matron's traditional dress with a long flounce (McGinn 1998).⁷⁵

In chapter 2, I explored the semiotics of *luxuria* for a Republican Roman matron. Cicero's Clodia Metelli and Sallust's Sempronia were presented as exemplars of female depravity with unchecked *libido* and conspicuous over-consumption of luxury goods. Their *cultus* marked them as cultural outsiders to the Roman masculine ideal of simplicity, scarcity, and harsh discipline. Sallust's Sempronia hints at the irresistible charm and attractiveness of a woman skilled in Greek arts of singing, music, and dance, while censuring her. The new Augustan ideals for a renewed Republic and a return to old-fashioned values for elite Romans were on display in the *domus Augusta*, a standard of the new idealized womanhood. Augustus and his household lived in modestly

⁷⁴ See note 63 for summary of some sumptuary legislations.

⁷⁵ This has been a traditional interpretation of the Julian laws. Olson (2002) has recently questioned whether elite *matronae* did in fact assume the toga if convicted of adultery, citing the paucity of non-poetic evidence.

outfitted homes, wore linen spun by the women in the household, and introduced a new simplicity of hairstyle and limited makeup.

The elegiac female body, by contrast, signals sexual availability. Coan silk, with its transparency, clearly defined the figure of its wearer, and marked her dishonorable status as a non-*matrona* (*numquid gemmas et ex alieno litore petitos lapillos et aurum vestemque nihil in matrona tecturam concupivit*, Sen. *Controv.* 2.5. 7). Cynthia's abundant makeup and elaborate hairstyles are criticized because they suggest she seeks new lovers (Prop 1.2), and expensive clothing and jewelry are gifts that grant access to a *puella's* household (Prop. 2.16). The elegiac *puella* has her literary ancestry in New Comedy's *meretrices*. She is a very expensive prostitute who owns property, slaves, and is not under the control of a pimp or procuress (although my last chapter emphasized the importance of the *lena* character within elegy). Nonetheless, the elegiac *puella* is one of a group of Romans marked as *infamis* by her profession and status.⁷⁶

My research raises a new question on which I can only speculate. What does it mean for Roman women with *infamia* to be associated with excessive *luxuria*? Consumption of *luxuria* marks a Roman citizen male as *mollis*, as soft or effeminate (Edwards 1993: 63-97). Yet the *puella's cultus* aligns her with feminine *infamia* and the lack of proper *pudicitia* in Roman society. Her dress both indicates and displays her social status to other Romans, and constructs her status as an outsider to feminine *pudicitia*. The excessive consumption of *luxuria* further alienates the elegiac *puella* from female modesty, and suggests her sexual availability.

⁷⁶ See Edwards (1997: 81-82) on the legal and social *infamia* that adhered to the Roman prostitute. For Edwards, the Roman prostitute exemplifies how Roman society linked the experience of transgressive sexual activity with dubious pleasures of the senses, particularly vision (1997: 83).

In the following chapter, I turn towards Cynthia's speeches. Her speeches are centered in the sexual reality of the *puella's* life and livelihood. I will argue that her speech presents an alternate voice in male-authored elegy to the dominating voice of the elegiac poet-speaker. I argue, furthermore, that Cynthia finds subjectivity in the realities of sexual life, and that it is in her speeches that the elegiac poets can fully describe the sexualized female body.

CHAPTER FIVE:

Body Talk: Women's Speech on the Body

In this chapter, I turn to elegiac women's speech on the body. My discussion focuses on Propertius, because with her four major speeches (1.3, 2.29b, 3.6, 4.7), Cynthia is the elegiac female voice best represented in the corpus after the elegiac poet-speaker.¹ I also examine the surprising speech of the *lena* Acanthis in Propertius 4.5. Tibullus does not attribute direct speech to any female characters in his elegies, and Ovid allows only a few words in *oratio recta* from female speakers. Thus Cynthia both offers a counter-perspective to that of the dominant elegiac male voice, and is central to a consideration of how elegiac female speech presents the female body. My discussion centers on two major questions: how do female speakers talk about the body? Does the change in speaker cause a change in narrative style and its presentation of the female body? I conclude that the change in speaker has a dramatic impact on the narrative style, and particularly in the presentation of the female body. Cynthia's speeches foreground the sexualized female body in a way that the Propertian poet-speaker and elegy elsewhere avoid. While chapter 3 introduced the corporeally-focused descriptions of the other

¹ The speech of Dipsas the *lena*, at *Amores* 1.8, is a noteworthy exception. With 85 lines of reported direct speech, *Am.* 1.8 presents the longest direct speech attributed to a woman within Propertius, Tibullus, and the *Amores*. Dipsas' speech has a close parallel with Acanthis' speech at Propertius 4.5, and I will discuss the speeches of the *lenae* in the final sections of this chapter. On the distribution of types of elegiac female speech, see James forthcoming.

women of elegy and drew upon the Kristevan concept of the abject female body, and chapter 4 explored how the elegiac speaker presented catalogues of *cultus* as substitutions for the sexual body of the *puella*, chapter 5 demonstrates that Roman love elegy does incorporate explicit descriptions of the sexual female body—in the speeches of Cynthia and Acanthis.

5.1: Female Speech in Elegy

Female speech has been an occasional area of critical concern within classics, but the term itself requires some clarification. What is “female speech”? Is it a reasonable goal to seek female speech when reading male-authored texts such as the elegy of Propertius? Critics have termed the assumption of the feminine voice by a male-author ventriloquism (Harvey 1992:17; Gamel 1998). Ventriloquism is a major issue in the critical pursuit of the feminine voice in Roman love elegy (Gamel 1998; Janan 2001; Wyke 2002).² When the *puella* speaks in her own words, does her perspective differ qualitatively from the poet-speaker’s own perspective? To what extent does the male author grant autonomy of speech to a female speaker, and to what extent does her language simply validate the dominant perspective of the male poet-lover? Does she, in other words, speak in language that is intended to please the poet-lover, or does the

² Elegy is a genre likely to have been performed at the poetic *recitationes*, begun under Asinius Pollio in 39 BCE, and the degree of intertextual references between Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid suggest that the three heard each other’s elegies in performance before publication.

author allow a distinctive female voice, and female subjectivity to be presented through the words of the speaking woman?

Critical views diverge on this central point in the reception of Roman love elegy. Ventriloquism is particularly at issue in Propertius Book 4, where the issue of poetry as performance is thematized through the speaker's many changes of speaking character. As Wyke has shown, when Propertius allows a female *ego* to speak, elegy begins an "especially complex interrogation of gender" (2002: 183; Janan 2001: 100-13). The female speakers of book 4 challenge "the old elegiac poses of the constant lover, a fickle mistress, and his servile devotion" (Wyke 2002: 179). Book 4 then disrupts the "entirely exclusive perspective" of the poet-speaker offered in Propertius Books 1-3 (Conte 1999: 46). Yet, as I will argue in this chapter, Cynthia's speeches disrupt the poet-speaker's singular perspective and the elegiac aesthetic of avoidance of the sexualized female body throughout the Propertian corpus. My reading of Cynthia's speeches thus points towards a continuity rather than a disjunction between Propertian poetics in his first three and final books of elegy.

I do not operate on the essentializing model of a direct equation between a female gendered speaker and female speech. Instead, I accept the critical definition of "feminine discourse," as an umbrella term that encompasses suppressed discourse(es) that work(s) against dominant modes of expression. This definition has been developed in many post-structuralist critical models, but it has been most fully articulated in the feminist psychoanalytic tradition represented by Irigaray, Cixous, and Kristeva.³

³ Miller (2004: 130-159) uses this kind of definition in "Why Propertius is a woman" to argue for the extrinsic quality of the speaker's position within Propertius' elegiac poetry, and to grant that Propertius the poet creates poetry that can speak from the feminine position defined as such: "because [he can speak authentically from a position of excess] . . . because his speaking

Recently, critics have begun paying attention to female speech in elegy. Much criticism has employed a broadened definition of feminine discourse that has developed out of psychoanalytic models. Flaschenriem compares Propertius 1.15 and 2.5 with 4.7, where she argues that Cynthia is a maker of “texts” that emphasize her autonomy (1998: 49). Cynthia is, in this reading:

a metaphor for a feminine perspective, or a subjectivity, which the poet’s earlier erotic fictions acknowledge intermittently, but generally appropriate as a part of the male narrator’s literary repertoire; she signifies the existence of an autonomous, though largely unrepresented, female point of view.⁴

Flaschenriem (1998: 63) interprets Propertian elegy as dialogic, and can contain “contesting voices.” Her reading of Cynthia’s speech as representative of a genuine feminine subjectivity that contrasts with the dominant male voice of the poet-speaker in Propertius’ fourth book supplements my own argument that Cynthia’s body-focused speech presents a distinct new voice and a distinct way of speaking about the female body within elegiac discourse. Like Flaschenriem, Janan’s (2001) Lacanian study of Propertius Book 4 also emphasizes that Propertius uses Cynthia’s voice in a conscious examination of how elegy constructs gender roles, and in a broad critique of *Romanitas*’ associated values and ideologies of gender, social structures, status, and political roles.

James (forthcoming) also looks at female speech in elegy, but excludes Propertius book 4. She concludes that female speech in elegy cannot tell us anything about how any individual woman, even a poetic character, might have talked, as the language of the

position simultaneously marks the gap between the [Lacanian realms of the] Imaginary and the Symbolic and sutures them together . . . and because he articulates the rules of the game . . . from a position that accepts the game and finds itself outside of the Symbolic system that prescribes it” (159). This formulation is a clear representative of what it means to speak from the feminine position in the feminist psychoanalytic tradition represented by Irigaray, Cixous, and Kristeva.

⁴ (1998: 63).

elegiac *puella*, like many of her other behaviors, represent “the part dictated to her by her profession and social status . . . her speech represents perspectives and interests of her class and profession, rather than those of an individual woman” (2). For James, Acanthis’ dictum, “*in mores te verte viri*” (Prop. 4.5. 45-56) is the most important clue for interpreting female speech. The *puella* enacts these instructions, and her highly individual actions are merely generic behavior, mirroring her lover’s own behavior.

James’ article expands upon a discussion of female Latinity in Roman elegy and Roman comedy from a 2005 APA panel on “the Gender of Latin.” In his study of the classical Latin language, Joseph Farrell proposed that, while we do not have extensive records of women’s speech spoken by a woman, we do have evidence for what Romans believed to be persuasive representations of female speech by a male-author (2001: 56). Ancient commentators such as Donatus noted that female speech in Roman comedy is qualitatively different from male speech (*ad Phormio* 1005: *feminarum oratio, etsi non blanditur, blanda est*). Donatus’ remark suggests that, for the ancient reader and auditor, women’s speech in comedy is flirtatious, wheedling, or persuasive. In his study of female speech in Roman comedy, Adams concluded that women “tend to be more polite or deferential,” and “are more prone to idioms expressing affection or emotion” (1984: 76). Dorota Dutsch’s recent study of female speech in Roman comedy has endorsed the existence of a uniquely feminine voice within Roman comedy. For Dutsch, female voice in comedy employs linguistic markers of relationality, or “being-with-the-other” (2008: 227). James, by contrast, shows that female speech in comedy does not necessarily differ from male speech, and that Cynthia’s elegiac language is not always soft, wheedling, and flattering (*blanda*); thus comedy and elegy allow female speakers to present a gender-

neutral Latin that is in no way linguistically marked as feminine (James 2005: 33-34). My own reading of elegiac female speech shows that Cynthia's elegiac language is marked as distinct from the poet-speaker's through her continual references to the sexualized body.

Female speech, and female subjectivity, has also been an area of concern for Efrossini Spentzou in her study of women writing in the *Heroides*. Spentzou seeks to find a feminine voice in these texts, distinct from the author's. By reading "against the grain" and exploiting the notion of texts as open and indeterminate, Spentzou compellingly argues that the heroes of Ovid's poems act as writers and subjects whose own narrations disturb conventional receptions of the heroic myths they are drawn from, and that Ovid's texts can therefore present female voice and subjectivity. Along with Janan and Miller, Spentzou engages productively with French feminist thought. Their readings make us comfortable with open, indeterminate texts that can contain multiple, contradictory positions. More importantly, these readings show us that the Propertian text can contain at least two voices,⁵ and that women's speech in elegy can be distinct from the Propertian speaker's.

These critical approaches have honed in on, or rejected, the possibility of autonomous female speech within Propertius' male-authored poetry and related genres. The poet Propertius thus needs to be distinguished from the Propertian poet-speaker whose language of the female body I have examined in the previous chapters. Yet these readings have not emphasized the central position of bodily language in Cynthia's

⁵ Miller's Propertius speaks as a woman; as a result Propertian poetry becomes "double-voiced." Miller's reading elegantly demonstrates that Propertius is neither simply pro- or anti-Augustan, but that his subject position operates within and outside of conventional Augustan ideologies (2004: 130-160).

speeches, nor have they attempted to read Cynthia's speech as a continuum across the corpus and not only in book 4. By reading all of Cynthia's speeches along with Acanthis' parodic *didaxis* (1.3, 2.29b, 4.7, 4.5), the centrality of the sexualized female body to the constitution and articulation of an alternate feminine subjectivity within Propertian poetics becomes clear.

My own approach combines close reading of the texts at hand with an application of Irigaray's feminist thought on feminine discourse and its imbrications with the body. Throughout her writings, Irigaray makes specific references to sexual difference as a basis for the emergence of a new sexual imaginary. Her philosophy demands the acceptance of sexual difference as a necessary precondition for the development of new, egalitarian language (1985b: 119-169; 1993 *passim*). Moreover, her writings frequently invoke sexually-specific realities of the female body, such as the multiplicity of erogenous zones, or the importance of touch. Critics of Irigaray's thought point to her repetition of Freud and Lacan on the body as a biological essentialism.⁶ This criticism has been countered by Whitford and others. Irigaray makes strategic use of repetition, and of exaggerations of the Freudian psychoanalytic model of the body, in order to articulate her radical critique of it. Central to Irigaray's mimetic speech is her insertion of the materiality of the female body into the Freudian psychoanalytic models she wishes to critique. In a move termed "labial politics" by Price and Shildrick, Irigaray mobilizes the female body as critique of the Freudian and Lacanian passages she quotes, paraphrases, and repeats. Her strategic mimesis, or *mimetisme*, I will argue, can help to

⁶ See Moi (1985: 137-149). Within classical studies, Skinner's (1999: 175-92) excellent article raises similar methodological hesitations about Irigaray's work.

illuminate how women's speech operates within the Propertian corpus by offering an analogue for Cynthia's own bodily-centered speech.

5. 2: Cynthia's Speech in Propertius 1.3

The ephrastic 1.3 has garnered considerable critical attention, particularly in relation to its pictorial depiction. From Boucher's acknowledgement of painterly details to Valladares' recent detailed study of Propertian depiction and Pompeiian wall painting (1965, 2005 respectively), visual aspects of 1.3 have been well studied.⁷ My focus is not on the ephrastic frame, but on Cynthia's speech (lines 35-46).⁸

The poem famously opens with the speaker's vision of the sleeping Cynthia, whom he compares with legendary heroines, and ends with her speech, when she wakes to find him staring at her. Cynthia's words establish expectations about her later speeches in the corpus and introduce several important tendencies that will characterize her speeches throughout. First, she laments about the speaker's infidelity. Next, she asserts her own faithfulness. Finally, she speaks in complaints, mirroring in small-scale the aesthetics of the Propertian elegiac complaint song (Keith 2008: 206):

'tandem te nostro referens iniuria lecto 35
alterius clausis expulit e foribus?
namque ubi longa meae consumpsti tempora noctis,

⁷ See also Breed 2003 on visual details of 1.3.

⁸ Boucher, Breed, Valladares offer readings of the visual details of 1.3.

languidus exactis, ei mihi, sideribus?
 o utinam talis perducas, improbe, noctes,
 me miseram qualis semper habere iubes! 40
 nam modo purpureo fallebam stamine somnum,
 rursus et Orphea carmine, fessa, lyrae;
 interdum leviter mecum deserta querebar
 externo longas saepe in amore moras:
 dum me iucundis lassam Sopor impulit alis. 45
 illa fuit lacrimis ultima cura meis.⁹
 (Prop. 1.3.35-46)

“Has another’s scorn then at last brought you to my bed, expelling you from doors closed in your face? For where have you spent the long hours of the night which was due me, you who come, ah me, exhausted, when the stars are driven from the sky? Oh, may you spend nights like these, you villain, such as you are always compelling poor me to endure! For now I was beguiling sleep by spinning crimson thread, and now in my weariness by music of Orpheus’ lyre; and sometimes, all forlorn, I softly complained to myself that in unmarried love waiting is often long: till Sleep with soothing wings overcame my exhausted body. That was my weeping’s last concern.”

Cynthia’s speech opens with a direct accusation against the Propertian lover that he has been recently driven from another’s doorstep (36). She speaks in euphemistic language, incorporating her complaint that she has wasted her valuable night time in waiting (37). While she was totally faithful, and sat up alone with her maids and her weaving at night, her language evokes the poet-speaker’s sexual behaviors. She complains that the speaker is worn out now, *languidus* (38), a word with sexual connotations in Neoteric and New Comic passages.⁹ As in her later speeches, Cynthia begins with direct language about the body and sexual contact, and moves on to other subjects.

Recent critics have argued over the tone of Cynthia’s speech at 1.3. James (forthcoming) persuasively argues that Cynthia offers a *querela*, an elegiac complaint

⁹ See *languidus* at Cat. 25.3 (of a penis), 64.219, 331; of a conspicuously faithless wife at Tib. 1.9.56; and of the *membrum virile* at Ov. *Am.* 3.7.73. See discussion at Adams (1990: 45-37).

song, that has many topical similarities to the Propertian speaker's own.¹⁰ Although the speaker fears Cynthia's fierce reproaches (*metuens iurgia expertae saevitiae*, 18), Cynthia names her own speech a *querela* (*querebar*, 43). The speaker creates expectations that Cynthia will speak angrily and his language has been largely accepted by critics (citations at James forthcoming). Yet Cynthia's own words articulate a divergent picture. The speaker imagines the sleeping Cynthia through mythological comparisons and alludes only indirectly to the sexual realities of their relationship, but Cynthia, in her own words, introduces a different modality.

5.3: Cynthia's Second Speech: 2.29b

Poem 2.29b repeats the narrative of 1.3. Though Cynthia's speech at 2.29b is the shortest of her speeches, it is central to defining her mode of speaking. She foregrounds the sexual relationship shared by the Propertian speaker and herself to the exclusion of other topics. Her speech here, like her speech in 1.3, lacks the broader view of the Roman courtesan's household and economy that takes central focus in her later speeches. Instead, these early speeches reflect the tight narrative focus on the *puella* and her poet-lover that characterizes the *Monobiblos*.¹¹

¹⁰ See also Kaufhold (1997: 95).

¹¹ Wyke (2002: 46-77) explores the development of the Propertian poetic aesthetic in Book 2 and shows how this excludes a realistic narrative of a love relationship, or a realistic and veristic

If Cynthia's *querela* in 1.3 alludes delicately to sexual activity, her rebuke at 2.29b brings us into direct contact with the reality of sexualized bodies. This poem sets the scene for a confrontation between the speaker and Cynthia. It is early morning, and the speaker goes to see if Cynthia is sleeping. He finds her alone, and her sleeping beauty strikes him dumb. His drunken admiration wakes Cynthia, and she delivers a lengthy speech in which she angrily upbraids him. She reminds him of her fidelity in surprisingly direct and explicit language:

'Quid tu matutinus,' ait 'speculator amicae?
Me similem uestris moribus esse putas?
Non ego tam facilis: sat erit mihi cognitus unus,
uel tu uel si quis uerior esse potest.
Apparent non ulla toro uestigia presso, 35
signa uolutantis nec iacuisse duos.
aspice ut in toto nullus mihi corpore surgat
spiritus admissio notus adulterio.'
(2.29b. 31-38)

“What!” said she, “do you come spying at dawn on your sweetheart? Do you think I am like you men in behavior? I am not so fickle: enough for me to know one man, yourself or somebody more faithful. No marks can be seen pressed into the bed, nor any indication that two have lain in love. See, no breath heaves in all my frame, stirred by adultery committed.”

Cynthia, as always, claims to be faithful, but in language strongly and explicitly evoking her involvement with a rival man. Moreover, her language is filled with words with sexual significance, and her speech culminates in frank words about the after-effects of a sexual encounter.

Despite, or perhaps because of, its scandalous language, this passage has not received the critical attention it deserves. I will read closely through her speech and highlight instances of innuendo or explicit description. At line 33, Cynthia asserts that she is not *facilis*, and that she will have only one partner at a time. In elegiac contexts,

picture of Cynthia, like the one developed in the *Monobiblos*.

the term *facilis* often has the same connotations as its English counterpart: e.g., *Ars* 1.617, *quo magis, o faciles imitantibus este, puellae*; *Ars* 3.547, *uatibus Aoniis faciles estote, puellae*; Tib. 2.4. 19, *ad dominam faciles aditus per carmina quaero*. *Cognitus*, as Fedeli (2005 *ad loc*) notes, carries a sexual significance in Propertius, as it did in Catullus 61.179-80. The sexual content of 35-38 is obvious both in the Latin and in my translation. Here Cynthia speaks about signs of physical contact, such as stains on a mattress, rumpled sheets, and the impressions of two bodies left on the bed.

Finally, she draws attention to her body as a sign of her purity; her whole body (*in toto corpore*) is quiet, there is no *spiritus*—she is not gasping for breath, or exuding odors. Critical attention to Cynthia’s speech has fastened on the proper interpretation of the phrase *spiritus surgat*. Fedeli, along with Richardson, cautiously endorses Sullivan’s reading that *spiritus* means an “unmistakeable odor” rather than panting or gasping.¹² This interpretation seems best to me as well, since it is consistent with Cynthia’s more explicit language about the sexualized female body. The former reading, where *spiritus* denotes panting or gasping for air, looks to a scene from the Roman adultery mime which may have provided inspiration for this poem.¹³ Both readings yield a direct passage with uncompromisingly explicit language of sexual behaviors.

The *vestigia* of line 35 deserves more attention as well. *Vestigia* have an exclusively sexual, negative connotation in her speech. Elsewhere in elegy, the term is also used as a sign of infidelity. The Tibullan speaker uses it as when he curses the man who taught boys to ask for gifts in exchange for their beauty. He hopes that this man’s wife will be conspicuously unfaithful, (*semper sint externa tuo vestigia lecto*, 1.9.57) and

¹² Fedeli (2005: *ad loc*); Richardson *ad loc*.

¹³ See discussion at Fedeli (2005: *ad loc*).

that their house will always be open to eager adulterers. In Propertius 2.9, the speaker promises that he will be all alone rather than let another woman put her mark in his bed (*nec domina ulla meo ponet vestigia lecto | solus ero, quoniam non licet esse tuum*, 2.9.45-6). At 2.16, the jealous speaker imagines the signs of Cynthia in bed with his rival, the foul Illyrian praetor (*barbarus excussis agit vestigia lumbis | et subito felix nunc mea regna tenet*, 2.16. 27- 28). Finally, Ovid's *lena* Dipsas instructs Corinna to always make sure that her lover see signs of another man on her bed to insure his jealousy and willingness to pay (*ille viri videat toto vestigia lecto, Am. 1.8.97*). Elsewhere in contemporary literature, Livy's Lucretia also uses the term *vestigia* when she confesses her rape to Collatinus, and remarks that the signs of her violation are obvious in the bed, *vestigia viri alieni, Collatine, in lecto sunt tuo* (1.58.7), rather than on her own body.

While 1.3 and 2.29b have many similarities in narrative, the quality of Cynthia's speech changes between the two poems. In 1.3, Cynthia alludes to the possibility of the sexualized female body through euphemistic language, but in 2.29b, Cynthia's language is direct, and remarkably visceral for elegiac discourse. Cynthia's speech in 2.29b is more in keeping with her later speeches in its emphasis on the sexual realities of the female body, and of the sexual relationship with underlies the elegiac romance created by the poet-speaker.

5.4: Real or Imaginary Female Speech: 3.6

Because of the ambiguity as to whose speech is being reported, poem 3.6 represents an interesting test-case for the difference between male and female speech in elegy. This poem contains one of four long speeches attributed to Cynthia in the Propertian corpus (1.3, 2.29b, 3.6, 4.7). The poem offers a hybrid of masculine and feminine discourse, and shows continuity and discontinuity with Cynthia's speeches elsewhere as well as with the Propertian speaker's presentation of the *puella*'s body.

The poem opens with the Propertian speaker's address to the slave Lydgamus whom the speaker begs to tell him the truth about his *puella*'s state and to report her speech back to the speaker. Throughout the opening lines there are repeated hints that suggest how difficult it will be to attribute the speech which follows to Cynthia rather than to the poet-lover. Moreover, these remarks hint at the possibility that Lydgamus' reportage is highly biased and motivated (1-6). The slave Lydgamus is given two choices: he will gain his freedom if he tells the speaker what he wants to hear, and calls it the truth (*dic mihi de nostra, quae sentis, vera puella | sic tibi sint dominae, Lygdame, dempta iuga*, 1-2; *per me, Lygdame, liber eris*, 42), or he will receive a beating if he speaks falsely (*est poenae servo rumpere teste fidem*, 20). The speaker acknowledges the possibility that Lydgamus' motivations drive him to fib and report only what the speaker wants to hear (*haec referens, quae me credere velle putas*, 4). Thus, hints throughout the poem may incline us to doubt the veracity of Lydgamus' speech, and it is therefore unlikely that the words represent Cynthia's own. As a result, most commentators and

critics agree that the speech presented here represents “hoped-for *oratio recta*,” or the Propertian lover’s own words, rather than female speech on the body.¹⁴

Cynthia’s appearance returns again to the trope of the *puella*’s *cultus*. The topic here appears as *cultus neglecta*:

Sicin eram incomptis uidisti flere capillis?
 illius ex oculis multa cadebat aqua? 10
 nec speculum in strato uidisti, Lygdame, lecto,
 ornabat niveas nullane gemma manus?¹⁵
 ac maestam teneris uestem pendere lacertis?
 scriniaque ad lecti clausa iacere pedes.
 (3.6.9-14)

So you saw your mistress weeping and with hair awry, a flood of tears streaming from her eyes? And on the bedcover you saw no mirror, Lygdamus, and no jewel adorned her snow-white hands? So her dress hung forlornly from her delicate arms, and at the foot of her bed her toilet-box lying locked?

In this desired vision, Cynthia has unstyled hair (*incomptis capillis*, 9), she weeps (10), she ignores the mirror as it lies on the bed that is still made from her sleepless night (11), she wears no jewelry (12), her clothing hangs unkempt, and her *scrinium unguentorum* is shut, a sign that she wears no makeup or perfumes (14).¹⁶ Cynthia’s sad appearance demonstrates how the *puella*’s *cultus* is manipulated to fit the narrative situation and the speaker’s subjective predictions.

¹⁴ The phrase ‘hoped-for *oratio recta*’ comes from James (forthcoming, 32). Butler and Barber (1969: 273), Warden (1980: 22) Richardson (2006: 337) and James agree that this speech is most likely the lover’s own, rather than Cynthia’s represented speech. Butrica believes that this is Cynthia’s speech.

¹⁵ Lines 11-15 illustrate the troubling state of Propertian MSS and the copious interpretations of editors in small scale. Suringar transposed vss. 12 and 14 (and defended by Shackleton Bailey) and even conservative textual critics (Fedeli’s Teuber text) print this re-arrangement.

¹⁶ *Scrinia* occurs only here in Latin love elegy, and at Catullus 14.18. Its usage is not entirely clear, as the typical meaning is book-cases rather than perfume case. I read it, in the context of the catalogue of *cultus*, as a perfume case, a *scrinium unguentorum*, as at Pliny *N.H.* VII 108 and XIII.

Before Cynthia speaks, the speaker imagines the situation he hopes to find in her household. She is to be in a state of elegant neglect from her grief, and the household will have given itself over to an exaggerated state of grieving. In an outlandish and hilariously melodramatic passage, the speaker envisions Cynthia and her household weeping and mourning over his absence, and using their weaving and wool to dry their eyes with (15-18). The household and Cynthia offer, as in 1.3, an exaggerated fantasy of Lucretian chastity recast in line with the speaker’s intensely egotistical imagination.

Cynthia’s speech, as it is reported at third-hand removal, receives a similar treatment to the way her speeches are reported elsewhere in the corpus. Her speech is a *querela* in response to the speaker’s *iurgia*: she opens by accusing the speaker of infidelity, she promises slave torture (4.7), and she speaks of her misery (see more detailed comparison between 1.3 and 3.6 at James forthcoming p. 36).

The majority of her speech (3.6. 19-34) details a magical spell that Cynthia’s rival has used to enchant the Propertian lover and the curse Cynthia wishes on her rival (lines 25-34, or 10 of 15 lines). The detail of the recipe for the love potion that follows is uniquely specific for elegy and looks outside of typical elegiac discourse towards ancient love magic.

Non me moribus illa, sed herbis improba vicit:	25
staminea rhombi ducitur ille rota;	
‘illum turgentis ranae portenta rubetae	
et lecta exsuctis anguibus ossa trahunt	
et strigis inuenta per busta iacentia plumae,	
cinctaque funesto lanea uitta toro.	30
si non uana canunt mea somnia, Lygdame, testor,	
poena erit ante meos sera sed ampla pedes;	
putris et in uacuo textetur aranea lecto:	
noctibus illorum dormiet ipsa Venus.’	
(3.6.19-34)	

That woman has triumphed not by winning ways, but by magic herbs: he is drawn by the whirligig's threaded wheel. "He is lured by the sorcery of the toad puffed with venom and the bones she has gathered from the dried bodies of snakes, a screech-owl's feathers found among sunken tombs and a woolen fillet that has decked a bier. If my dreams portend the truth, Lygdamus, I swear that he shall pay a late but ample penalty at my very feet; dusty cobwebs will be woven over his empty bed and Venus herself will sleep on their nights of love."

Cynthia's rival has used multiple magical substances to enchant the Propertian speaker including: *veneficium*, the Latin term for pharmacology;¹⁷ the *rhombus*, a wheel; body parts of frog; and necromantic ingredients.

In order to find parallels for Cynthia's list, we must look outside elegiac love poetry. In his defense against charges of witchcraft, Apuleius cites a fragment of Laevius' poetry that lists the proper ingredients for a Roman love-charm:

'Philtrā omnia undique eruunt:
antipathes illud quaeritur,
trochiscili, unguēs, taeniae,
radiculae, herbae, surculi,
saurae inlices bicodulae, hin-
nientium dulcedines.'

(Laevius frag 27 Courtney)

The relatively innocent ingredients in this list do not compare with Cynthia's rival's use of necromantic substances. A closer parallel stems from Horace's *Epodes*. At *Epode 5*, Canidia and her fellow witches bury a boy alive in order to gather his liver for a love-charm they are making. The ingredients required are gathered from corpses and chthonic animals:

Iubet sepulcris caprificos erutas,
iubet cupressos funebris
et uncta turpis oua ranae sanguine
plumamque nocturnae strigis

¹⁷ *Veneficium* has a terrifically wide semantic range in Latin, and covers pharmacology, the use of magically-active herbs, as well as poisons and love-philtres. On the broadness of its semantic range, see Graf (1997: 46-49).

herbasque, quas Iolcos atque Hiberia
mittit uenenorum ferax,
et ossa ab ore rapta ieiunae canis
flammis aduri Colchicis.
(*Epode* 5. 17-24)

She orders wild fig trees to be brought, uprooted from tombs; orders funereal cypresses and eggs smeared with the blood of a hideous toad, the feathers of a nocturnal screech owl, and herbs imported from Iolcos and Hiberia where poisons grow in abundance, and bones snatched from the jaws of a starving bitch—all burned up in the flames of Colchis.

Like the ingredients employed by Cynthia's rival, Canidia creates her love-charm from charnel materials. Horace's *Epodes* again, in its depiction of erotic love magic, appears to be a central text that influences elegy's approach to the female body.

The magic depicted in Propertius 3.6 may be a binding spell, a *defixio*, since the rival draws in the lover (*ducitur*, 26; *trahunt*, 28) with her equipment.¹⁸ As Gager has shown in his study of curse tablets and binding spells, the *defixio* typically uses “deeply aggressive and violent language to constrain the target,” and *defixiones* frequently include mention of charnel and chthonic ingredients used to guarantee the efficacy of the magical charm.¹⁹

This passage more closely resembles topics of the male speaker's approach to the female body than the way that Cynthia speaks elsewhere. In chapter 3, I explored the language of the poet-speaker about the other women of elegy. There, the speaker blended magic with curses, necromancy, and violent, obscene language. The passage in 3.6 is redolent of such masculine discourse on the female body. Cynthia's curse at 3.6 thus looks, in short-hand terminology, more masculine than feminine. As she concludes her

¹⁸ Faraone (1990: 13) terms this type of spell an attraction spell, in Greek an *agogai*, meant to charm a second party.

¹⁹ As, e.g. *PGM* IV, lines 296-466. See discussion at Gager (1999: 81), and at Winkler (1990).

querela, moreover, Cynthia curses the rival with a promise of future loneliness and impotence (30-34). Cynthia promises a full punishment for the betrayer to come in the form of promised impotence and abandonment. Like the language of the erotic *defixio*, the imagined curse prevents the scorned beloved from having successful affairs with other women (*noctibus illorum dormiet ipsa Venus*, 3.6.34). Cynthia's imagined curse also recalls the impotence of the Tibullan poet-speaker in 1.5.

One of the best known Hellenistic ancestors of elegiac magic is Theocritus *Idyll* 2, and its imitation in Vergil *Eclogue* 8, where Simaetha uses an *agogai* to draw her lapsed lover back to her. Within the elegiac tradition, magic fascinates the male speakers of the genre as an alternate tradition and means to power, and the speakers frequently curse wise-women, witches, and *lenae* for their power over discourse.²⁰ More specifically, these female agents threaten male sexual autonomy through their erotic magic (See *Am.* 3.7, Tib 1.5, Cynthia's at 4.7, see also the discussion in chapter 3). Although elegy invokes erotic magic and spells frequently throughout the works of Tibullus, Propertius, and Ovid, Cynthia's speech at 3.6 provides the most precise discussion of the components of a magical recipe, and of its working.

We have seen thus far in Cynthia's two speeches (1.3, 2.29b) that love, sexual language is spoken by the *puella*, rather than being displaced onto a repulsive other woman. In Cynthia's speeches, the female body is imagined in terms of corporeal, sexual *realia* and such sexual language is consistently a feature of her language across the corpus, as we shall see in book 4. In poem 3.6, by contrast, although the speaker credits Cynthia with practicing erotic magic, and with cursing her rival, the language is more

²⁰ See discussion of polemical language of the male poets against female magic at Myers (1996), Sharrock (1994: 50-86).

consistent with patterns established in the poet-speaker's own curses against the *lenae* than with Cynthia's language about the body. In the previous two chapters, I have explored how the Propertian speaker talks about the female body. The poet-lover's curses against the other women of elegy associate the female body with blood, magic, and Greco-Roman medical ideas about the female body. The poet-lover veils the mistress' body through elaborate piece-by-piece description and avoids the reality of sexual confrontation as in 2.1, or the speaker defers confrontation with the sexualized body through catalogues of *cultus*, mythological digressions, or through the use of simile and metaphor. The *puella*, on the other hand, denudes the sexual act and exposes all of its corporeal details in 2.29 and again in 4.7 to which I shall now turn. We shall see that Cynthia's language is raw and powerfully evocative of sexual acts. She is consistently more explicit than the Propertian speaker about the sexualized female body, and her words have an almost satiric or iambic proximity to the obscene.

5.5: Cynthia's posthumous Speech. Poem 4.7

It has long been recognized that Cynthia recasts the erotic affair in a new light in 4.7. Cynthia's appearance in this poem presents a withered parody of the finely-polished luxury associated with her body in Books 1-3. Cynthia's speech unwrites the eroticized

death fantasies of Propertius 1-3 and twists the *topos* of the elegiac *querela* through the intrusion of realistic details from life. 4.7 operates as a fully fleshed-out homage to Tibullus' brief vision of the epiphany of the dead sister in 2.6, which concluded his short poetic collection. Cynthia's parodic speech affords an opportunity for the hermeneutic of Irigarayan mimetic speech.

4.7 is a surprising poem in a novel collection of elegiac poetry. Propertius has announced his conclusion to love elegy about Cynthia at the end of book 3 (3.25), and the speaker's remarks at 4.1 appear to support this departure. Rather than offering a continuation of the love poetry of much of Books 1-3, Tibullus 1 and 2, and Ovid's as yet unpublished *Amores*, Propertius Book 4 proposes to compose aetiological poetry in the vein of Callimachus' *Aetia* (57-71, esp. 69 *sacra diesque canam et cognomina prisca locorum*).²¹ Indeed, Propertius openly aligns himself with the aetiological and Alexandrian program of Callimachus when he declares himself *Callimachus Romanus* (4.1.64). Poems 1, 2, 4, 9, and 10 conform to this programmatic statement of aetiological intent, while the panegyric 4.6, on Actium, an equally significant departure from the elegiac love relationship, also adheres to the speaker's plan to celebrate Roman history. Book 4 further unsettles the first-person elegiac subjectivity characteristic of Propertius 1-3 and Tibullus 1 and 2 by allowing many new characters to speak (Horus, Vertumnus, Arethusa, Tarpeia, Acanthis, Heracles, Cornelia). Moreover, Book 4 strikingly contains 5 striking poems spoken not by the narrator, but *in persona* of a Roman woman. Arethusa's overheard letter (4.3) may be the inspiration for Ovid's later *Heroides*,²² while

²¹ Hunter (2006) has explored how Propertius 3.1 positions itself as a continuator of Callimachean principles. See also deBrohun (2003: 1-33).

²² As Fedeli (1965: 119) asserts. Spentzou (2003: 25), Hutchinson (2006: 101), point to the

Acanthis in 5, and Cynthia in 7 and 8 return to Propertius' love affair to rewrite it topsyturvy. Propertius' poetry concludes with the words of the ghostly Cornelia, wife of Paullus and former stepdaughter of Augustus, in her moving speech to her bereaved husband. Poem 4.7 offers Cynthia's longest speech (4.7. 13-94, or 81 lines) and one of the longest female speeches in love elegy (only Propertius' Cornelia of 4.11. 1-102, and Ovid's Dipsas at *Amores* 1.8. 23-107 are longer).

Like Cornelia in 4.11, Cynthia appears as a ghost to the speaker in a dream (*lurida umbra*, 2). Her appearance is both the same as she was in Books 1-3, and significantly altered:

Eosdem habuit secum quibus est elata capillos,
 eosdem oculos; lateri uestis adusta fuit
 et solitum digito beryllon adederat ignis,
 summaque Lethaeus triuerat ora liquor. 10
 spirantisque animos et uocem misit: at illi
 pollicibus fragiles increpuere manus
 (4.7. 7-12)

Her hair, her eyes were the same as when she was borne to the grave: her dress was charred at the side, and the fire had gnawed at the familiar beryl on her finger, and Lethe's water had withered her lips. But it was a living voice and spirit that emerged as her brittle fingers cracked with a snap of her thumb.

This passage recalls the major theme of Propertian interest in the *puella*'s body, and also shows significant continuities with the macabre appearances of the other women of elegy discussed in chapter 3. Her flesh is largely unaltered: it is only her mouth and hands that have changed (*liquor triuerat summa ora*, 10, her fingers crackle, 12) while her eyes and hair are the same as they were before (*eosdem capillos, eosdem oculos*, 8, 9). Her clothing, on the other hand, has suffered from the actions of death and the pyre (Warden 1980: 19). Her dress is burnt, and her expensive ring, specified only here as beryllion, is

connection between the elegiac letters written by women in the *Heroides* and Propertius 4.3, but demonstrate that priority of dating cannot be established.

also marked by the fire (8, 9). As in Books 1-3, the elegiac speaker pays more attention to details of the puella's *cultus* than to her body. Even as a ghost, Cynthia frustrates the speaker's ability to understand her body. Cynthia's aestheticized grotesquerie is the culmination of the brutal iconography of the other women I examined in chapter 3.²³

Cynthia's tomb and her wishes for her estate after death appear both in the speaker's frame and in Cynthia's speech. Her burial is anti-Callimachean in its location and availability to public view, and her intentions for the poetic corpus undo the poet's expressed intentions elsewhere. Cynthia's tomb, located along the *via Tiburtina*, a major Roman thoroughfare between Rome and Tibur, will be visible to any passer-by. The location of this tomb just outside the city-walls represents a common place for burial in the late Republic and Empire. Cynthia's tomb will, moreover, be in an area popular among elites and non-elite Romans alike (Hutchinson 2006: 173). Her epitaph is also to be prominently displayed on a public column (l. 84-5).

This conspicuous location is an anti-Propertian burial. Throughout 1-3, the speaker fantasized his own, and Cynthia's funerals and tombs. These burials reveal a Callimachean preference for obscure locations off the beaten path, as well as modest appurtenances, as the passage from Propertius 3.16 demonstrates.

Di faciant, mea ne terra locet ossa frequenti 25
qua facit assiduo tramite uulgus iter!
post mortem tumuli sic infamantur amantum.
me tegat arborea deuia terra coma,

²³ While I have stressed continuities across elegiac descriptions, Cynthia's appearance here has literary ancestry as well. Warden and Allison (1984) have shown how Propertius manipulates Patroclus' appearance to Achilles as ghost in *Il.* 23.66-67 in the shaping of Cynthia's vision. Hubbard (1974: 150-52) discusses the difference between the Homeric world of *Il.* 23 and "the Roman world of sordid and brutal actuality . . . firmly located in the *verismo* of the mime (151)." As Hubbard aptly notes, in 4.7 "we have come a long way since it made sense to do what we did at the beginning, and analyse a poem of Propertius in terms of its relation to the elegancies of Meleager" (152).

aut humer ignotae cumulis uallatus harenae:
non iuuat in media nomen habere uia.
(3.16.25-30)

God forbid that she should bury my bones in a busy spot, where the crowd travels along an unsleeping thoroughfare! Thus are the tombs of lovers desecrated after their death. Let secluded ground cover me with leafy trees, or let me be buried where I am enclosed in an unmarked mound of sand: I like it not to have my name recorded on a highway.

The Propertian tomb is imagined in language reminiscent of the famous prologue to Callimachus' *Aetia* with its metapoetic aesthetic of the untrodden path far from the wagon trails of other travelers (*Aetia* frag 1.23-28 Pfeiffer). The desired obscurity and shelter from public view place the Propertian tomb in the Roman Callimachean tradition while Cynthia's desire for a public and visible monument contradict the aesthetic visible in Propertius' hoped-for tomb.

Cynthia requests that the lover destroy all evidence of their poetic love-affair (*et quoscumque meo fecisti nomine versus | ure mihi; laudes desine habere meas*, 4.7.77-8). Her request confounds the speaker's desired funeral, where his three books of poetry and modest Plebian rites will form his funeral procession (2.13.17-40). Cynthia hopes to replace these three books of poetry, which record their love-affair, with her own elegiac epitaph:

Hic carmen media, dignum me, scribe columna,
Sed breue, quod currens uector ab urbe legat:
'HIC TIBVRTINA IACET AVREA CYNTHIA TERRA
ACCESSIT RIPAE LAVS, ANIENE, TVAE.
(4.7.83-86)

There on the middle of a pillar inscribe an epitaph worthy of me, but brief, such as the traveler may read as he hastens from Rome:
HERE IN TIBUR'S SOIL LIES GOLDEN CYNTHIA:
FRESH GLORY, ANIO, IS ADDED TO THY BANKS.

She will usurp the speaker's role as subjective first person speaker and author of elegiac poetry with her own poetic output, a short but worthy poem, *carmen dignum et breve*.²⁴ Cynthia, in other words, envisions their love affair not as a means to bring poetic immortality to the Propertian speaker (as it had been in 1-3) so much as a finite, impermanent, and fleshly affair (lines 76-77).

Poem 4.7 contains Cynthia's longest speech of the corpus. As in 2.29b, Cynthia opens her speech to Propertius with explicit reference to the sexualized body.

'Perfide, nec cuiquam melior sperande puellae,
 in te iam uires somnus habere potest?
 Iamne tibi exciderant uigilacis furta Suburae 15
 et mea nocturnis trita fenestra dolis?
 per quam demisso quotiens tibi fune pependi,
 alterna ueniens in tua colla manu!
 saepe Venus triuio commissa est, pectore mixto
 fecerunt tepidas pallia nostra uias. 20
 (4.7.13-20)

"Traacherous one, from whom no girl can expect better, can sleep so soon have power over you? Have you so soon forgotten our escapades in the sleepless Subura and my window-sill worn away by nightly guile? How oft by that window did I let down a rope to you and dangle in mid-air, descending hand over hand to embrace you? Oft at the crossroads we made love, and breast on breast our cloaks warmed the road beneath."

Her language moves from elegiac euphemism to direct language. The speaker is faithless, *perfidus*, and their relationship was a series of secretive meetings, *furta*,

²⁴ Cynthia's epitaph will be suitably epigrammatic in its brevity, and look to the origins of Roman love elegy in Hellenistic and Roman funerary epigrams. See Ramsby (2007: 15-38) on elegy's relationship to funerary epigram, and see (2007: 39-72) on the Propertian "epitaphic habit." Her phrase *carmen dignum* also looks to the Qadr Ibrîm fragment of Cornelius Gallus, where Gallus thanks the Muses for allowing him to speak poetry worthy of his mistress:

. . . . tandem fecerunt c[ar]mina Musae
 quae possem domina deicere digna mea.
 (Gallus fr. 145.6-7 Hollis)

Cairns (2006: 90-93) illustrates the usage of the Gallan *carmina digna* in other Augustan poets, and remarks that by the time Ovid uses the phrase it has lost its particularly Gallan resonance. Cairns (2006: 93n.85) argues that this phrase may already be a cliché at Prop. 4.7.83.

characterized by the need for night-time tricks, *nocturni doli*. Cynthia's language up to this point is typically elegiac. Now, however, her narrative begins to diverge from that of the elegiac love-affair narrated by the speaker in Books 1-3. Cynthia's neighborhood, it appears, was the *Subura*, Rome's prostitute's district in the first-century BCE.²⁵

Hutchinson therefore proposes that Cynthia once lived in a brothel. This suggestion is contradicted by the presence of Parthenie, Cynthia's nursemaid, as well as by the number of other slaves Cynthia seems to have in her household.²⁶ At 19-20, Cynthia is quite explicit about the nature of their meetings. She uses the common poetic device of metonymy, where Venus is used for sex, and she speaks of their encounters in the crossroads on a thrown-down cloak. As in 2.29b, the pattern of Cynthia's language moves from words with a significant sexual meaning within elegy to explicit language about sexual acts.

Cynthia here rewrites the erotic history between the speaker and herself. Instead of the polished passages rich with mythological exempla of 2.15 and the structured catalogue of physical charms in 2.1, Cynthia recalls her life in the red-light district, and her randy meetings in the cross-roads. The narrative trajectory of the beloved from goddess-like beauty and perfection to indiscriminate promiscuity in the cross-roads and alleyways is paralleled by Catullus' Lesbia (cf. 2, 3, 5, 7 versus 11, 58) and Horace's Lydia

²⁵ On sex workers in the Subura, see McGinn (2004: 21) with citations of further scholarship on the question of brothels in the district.

²⁶ As Hutchinson (2006: 185) notes himself. Like the unlikelihood that a prostitute dwelling in a brothel would have had a nurse-maid, Cynthia's narrative contains several inconsistencies in its telling. Janan (2001: 102-113) pays careful attention to these inconsistencies, and looks broadly to how Cynthia's speech reveals the instability of Roman ethical attempts to judge women as good or bad based on a faithful or faithless dichotomy.

(*Odes* 1.13, 1.25). Yet it is only in Propertius where this low, sexual language is spoken by the *puella* herself, and it is consistently a feature of her language across the corpus.

Cynthia's conclusion reiterates the carnality and immediacy of her bodily-centered speech. As the ghost disappears, she promises the Propertian speaker that they will spend eternity together, locked in an erotic embrace:

Nunc te possideant aliae: mox sola tenebo:
mecum eris et mixtis ossibus ossa teram.
(93-94)

Other women may possess you now: soon I alone shall hold you with me as you will be, and my bones shall press yours in close entwining.

The blunt corporeality of Cynthia's speech here has confused critics. Papanghelis (1987: 147-51, 192-195) aptly characterizes the image of Cynthia throughout 4.7 as simultaneously skeletal and polished, macabre and erotic. Warden (1980: 60) stresses the obscene connotations of Cynthia's usage of *terere* and *tenere*.²⁷ Allison (1980: 172) and Hutchinson (2006: 158) defend the positive tone of the image, finding parallels in Patroclus and Achilles' mixed bones (*Hom. Il.* 23. 83-91), the Roman practice of adding more bones to an existing bone jar, and images throughout books 1-3 of the bereaved embracing the dead's bones (1.17. 12, 22; 1.19. 18, 2.8. 20). The physical language reinforces Cynthia's unglamorized vision of elegiac sexual behaviors, and fittingly closes her longest speech with a new vision of erotic love grounded in the body.

Poem 4.7 owes much to the world of Tibullan elegy and is well-populated by other non-elite women. Here Cynthia names a host of new characters who inhabit her household. The characters are household slaves who suffer punishments and tortures

²⁷ For the obscene connotations of these lines, see also Traenkle (1960: 138), Camps *ad loc.* Pace Fedeli (1965: 204).

under a new mistress, a woman who has risen from a street-walking prostitute to replace Cynthia as the head of a wealthy household (39-40, 47-8, 76). This passage is unique in Propertian elegy for the vast number of named women presented.²⁸ These characters are two-dimensional creations whose names signify and pun upon their household functions.²⁹ The expansion of characters in the Propertian love affair radically revises the small world of female characters that the speaker had imagined in books 1-3. Moreover, Cynthia's appearance here as a dead shade reproaching the poet-lover recalls the vision of Nemesis' sister in Tibullus' final elegy (2.6.29-42).³⁰ The crowd of female personalities, however sketchily incorporated, marks Propertius 4.7 as a continuation of Tibullan narrative innovations.

The daily life of new characters created in Cynthia's speech reveal the support staff of disenfranchised classes in Roman slaveholding society. The prominence of slaves and their activities, as well as their torture, shows the influence of mime and comedy on the poem (Hutchinson 2006: 175). Hubbard (1974:150-52) discusses the influences of epic, tragedy, and epigram on this poem, and emphasizes "the Roman world of sordid and brutal actuality . . . firmly located in *verismo* of the mime" (151). These readings well document how thoroughly Propertius incorporates other genres into his elegies, but their emphasis on generic origins undervalues the change Cynthia's speech represents within Propertian elegy. Janan's reading comes closest to my own as she argues for a "feminine skepticism" that "scrutinizes beliefs of love elegy *in toto* by

²⁸ Lygdamus is the only male slave named. Nomias, Petale, Lalage, Parthenie, and Latris all appear for the first and only time here (lines 35-75).

²⁹ Allison (1984), Janan (2001:107-112), and Warden offer good treatments of the functional naming at work here.

³⁰ Hutchinson (2006: 7).

presenting a more accurate picture of the complexity of the world in general and of poetry in particular” (103). Cynthia’s speech reveals the traditional place of male dominance and her household’s dependence upon the lover for economic support and social status.³¹

While some details of Cynthia’s speech conform to the pattern of the larger elegiac code articulated by the speaker in books 1-3, she overwrites this history with a new vision, grounded in the realities of the body and its labors. Cynthia’s speech focuses, from the outset, on the sexual relation that subtends the elegiac narrative. In chapter 3, I stressed the importance of the *lena* for elegy. Here Cynthia recasts elegy in her speech, through the inclusion of an anti-*lena* figure, similar to Tibullus’ mother character (Tib. 1.6.57-68). Cynthia’s aged nurse precisely contradicts generic expectations of the *lena*. She is a doublet for Acanthis or Dipsas, rewritten in Cynthia’s realistic idiom. Parthenie, whose name means virginal, is not a greedy old *lena*, but an old maid who does not exploit the speaker’s wealth (*potuit nec tibi avara fuit*, 73).

Cynthia’s speech offers an arch-elegiac expression, a *querela* (95).³² Her speech features many standard elements of Propertian elegiac poetry. She begins her speech with an accusation of Propertius’ infidelity (*perfide*, 13, *tua perfidia*, 70), asserts her own continual fidelity (*me servasse fidem*, 53), and introduces a rival (Chloris, 39-40, 46-7, 71-2). Cynthia dwells on her wishes for her funeral and burial, and incorporates a

³¹ Janan (2001:104).

³² Saylor (1969) showed that *querela* is very nearly a technical term for Propertian elegy.

funerary inscription into her speech, emulating the elegiac “epitaphic habit”.³³ Finally, Cynthia, as the speaker has frequently done for her, inserts herself into a comparison with mythological heroines in the underworld (56-70). Cynthia’s *querela*, then, emulates a particularly Propertian poetic expression in many of its key elements. This *querela*, moreover, returns only after the innovative opening of lines 11-49.

The legal and rhetorical overtones of Cynthia’s speech have been remarked upon (Warden 1980: 37, Dufallo 2007). Keith (2008) has argued for the influence of rhetorical training on Propertius Book 4, and considers these speeches developments of the *prosopopoeia*, the rhetorical exercise of impersonation of a character to be portrayed. Dufallo (2007) places Cynthia’s, and Cornelia’s speeches, within the rhetorical tradition of the *mortuos ab inferiis excitare*, exemplified in his discussion by the personification of Appius Claudius Caecus (*Pro Caelio* 33-34). Warden observes how rhetorical details appear throughout the poem: the speech has the tone of a public *laudatio funebris*, includes a *captatio benevolentiae*, and incorporates a popular rhetorical *topos* of poison (cf. *Pro Caelio*), and uses legal language (*lis peragere*, 95). Cynthia’s speech persuasively rewrites the landscape of the Propertian love affair as an orator might, and her speech seduces the readers of Book 4 into rereading Books 1- 3 with a focus on the female bodies so often omitted or unrealistically shaped in conformity with the dominant elegiac code.

Cynthia’s speech, and her similar, but subtly altered appearance can be understood in light of Irigarayan mimetic speech. The rhetorical emphasis that sees Propertius’ poems about Cynthia’s language as successful poems *in persona* aligns

³³ Ramsby (2007: 39-71) discusses Propertius’ incorporation of epigrams into his poetic collection.

closely with the ways Irigaray explicates female speech in her early works. Women are, on the one hand, forced to speak in masculine persona within contemporary patriarchal discourse, or to appear hysterical, incoherent, and irrational if they attempt to speak as woman (1985b: 29, 130-138). This is because the existing symbolic order of language does not allow for a sexuate Imaginary that acknowledges feminine subjectivity. Thus, within the dominant symbolic order of discourse, to make an attempt to speak (as) woman, to *parler-femme*, the speaker inevitably will speak as Other from outside of the symbolic order.³⁴

Irigarayan critique of psychoanalytic discourse also points to a positive gain from this eccentric position. Irigaray's writings explore the possibility of a different sort of women's speech, grounded in the acceptance of femininity not as the negation of masculinity, but as its own autonomous identity as a sexuate I. One can deliberately and strategically speak in the feminine within masculinist discourse, and thus can "jam the theoretical machinery" and produce a space for the expression of women's voices and desires (Irigaray 1985b: Whitford 1991: 70-71).

One must assume the feminine role deliberately. Which means already to convert a form of subordination into an affirmation, and thus begin to thwart it . . . To play with mimesis is thus, for a woman, to try to locate the place of her exploitation by discourse, without allowing herself to be simply reduced to it. It means to resubmit herself—inasmuch as she is on the side of the 'perceptible,' of 'matter,'—to 'ideas,' in particular to ideas about herself that are elaborated in/by a masculine logic, but so as to make 'visible' by an effect of playful repetition, what was supposed to remain invisible: recovering a possible operation of the feminine in language.

(*TS*: 76, CS 73-4, translation from Whitford).

³⁴ Farrell's arguments for the lack of feminine Latinity offer an uncanny parallel with Irigaray's critique that women cannot speak as women within the phallogocentric symbolic order: "In Latin culture, women play the role of the linguistic Other. At best they may attain to a nearly masculine culture. The most successful can almost pass as men" (2001: 83).

Within this new form of speaking, Irigaray links the female body and its sexual realities to the possibility of a new form of speaking, one that begins from the acknowledgement of sexual difference and moves to articulate a new subjectivity grounded in the body. Moreover, Irigaray continually inserts references to feminine sexual specificity into her criticisms. Irigarayan *mimitismé* deliberately over-performs the part scripted for women in masculinist psychoanalysis and philosophy in order to make it readily visible. Irigaray thus exaggerates the feminine role assigned to women within masculine logic to such an extent that it becomes ridiculous. Her apparently reductive corporeal language is strategic and ludic. Her labial politics have opened her work to the charge of essentialism. Yet as Braidotti has argued, Irigaray's deliberate mimicry must go through essentialism to produce difference (1989: 99).

Cynthia's language operates analogously to Irigarayan *mimetismé* within Propertian elegy. It is only within Cynthia's speeches that the sexualized female body is present. Moreover, Cynthia grounds her critique of the poet-speaker's view of the elegiac world in the sexualized body. Cynthia's speeches begin with insistence on the materiality of sexual intercourse, and her language thence articulates a new, discordant picture of the elegiac relationship.

5.6: The "Other Woman" Speaks: Acanthis in Propertius 4.5

Propertius' fourth book of elegies opens subjective first-person elegy to numerous new female voices, as well as to aetiological and other new topics foreign to the love-

affair between the speaker and Cynthia depicted in books one through three. Book 4 also presents a radically new version of this love affair through different voices, such as Cynthia's at 4.7 and Acanthis' at 4.5. In chapter 3, I examined the imagery that frames Acanthis' speech, and I turn now to her speech itself (4.5.21- 62).

Throughout Acanthis' speech, topics and complaints of the speaker return in a new key. Acanthis' speech differs more subtly from the poet-speaker's than Cynthia's. While Cynthia's speeches over-write the trajectory of Book 1-3's love relationship, Acanthis' speech has much in common with the elegiac story viewed from the poet-speaker's dominant perspective. Her speech differs, however, by exaggerating undervalued or unmarked aspects of the love relationship elided by the poet-speaker. In my close reading of 4.5, I will stress Acanthis' repetition of particular elegiac *topoi* we have seen elsewhere in connection with the female body. My approach will incorporate the Irigarayan concept of strategic mimesis to demonstrate how Acanthis mimics and parodies male speech typical of the body to articulate a new and challenging position against the elegiac mode. Her repetition and subtle modulation from the elegiac code can be understood in light of Irigaray's employment of strategic mimicry in her critical readings of Freud and Lacan's texts on feminine sexuality, corporeality, and subjectivity.

Acanthis' speech (4.5. 21-62) weaves between the two dominant perspectives I have charted on the female body. Acanthis' speech offers a condensed list of elegiac topics: she begins with a catalogue of *cultus*, focalized through a new perspective,³⁵ onto faithless women, from the demand for gifts to violence against the female body, from promised sex to its deferral. Midway through her speech she shifts to the side I have

³⁵ Her own? See Fowler (1990), a classic article on deviant focalization in the *Aeneid*.

categorized as the feminine perspective on elegy: she tells the *puella* to have *signa* of sexual behavior visible on her body, and instructs the mistress to imitate the *mores* of Thais, the New Comic courtesan who models the courtesan’s lifestyle, and her partner while maintaining awareness of the financial and social realities of the courtesan’s life. In the end, she returns to the catalogue of *cultus*, even mockingly quoting the male speaker, before she concludes with metaphorical language of female beauty and old age.³⁶

Acanthis’ speech begins with another instance of the catalogue of *cultus*. Her perspective on these elite luxury goods is markedly different from the *puella*’s, and from the speaker’s accusations against the greedy girl.

‘Si te Eoa Dorozantum iuuat aurea ripa
et quae sub Tyria concha superbit aqua,
Eurypylique placet Coae textura Mineruae,
sectaque ab Attalicis putria signa toris,
seu quae palmiferae mittunt uenalia Thebae, 25
murreaque in Parthis pocula cocta focis;
sperne fidem, prouolue deos, mendacia uincant,
frange et damnosae iura pudicitiae!
(Prop. 4.5. 21-28)

“If golden chrysolites from Orient shores take your fancy, and the shell that flaunts its purple in the Tyrian sea, or you like the Eurypylean weave of Coan silk and fragile figures cut from coverlets of gold, or the wares shipped from palm-bearing Thebes and glass cups baked in Parthian kilns, then tear up promises, cast down the gods, let lies prevail, and shatter all the laws of bankrupt chastity.”

The *puella* gathers gold, Tyrian purple, Coan silks, cloth with gold interwoven,³⁷

³⁶ Lines 55-56 offer an exact repetition of 1.2.1-2. On those grounds, Hutchinson (2006: 148) argues that they are spurious. Fedeli (1994) prints them as Propertian, on the argument of Shackleton Bailey (1952-53: 16-20). Heyworth deletes them in his OCT, noting that they do not appear in ζ.

³⁷ Cf. Tib. 2.3.54, and Maltby’s commentary *ad loc*.

Egyptian goods,³⁸ and Persian myrrh. In other elegiac passages, these goods are highly valued, and sought out by the *puella* (e.g. Prop. 2.16. 15-18, 43-45; Tib. 2.3. 53-58; 2.4. 27-30). Each of these objects are inherently valuable, yet they are marked out as well as products of Augustus' continuing expansion and consolidation of the Roman Empire. The catalogue of imports runs, in roughly chronological order, along the empire's expansion. The *puella* will enjoy the products of Phoenician Tyre, conquered in the third Punic War; Greek weaving, Pergamene antique fabrics, as well as the products of Augustus' own conquests of Egypt and, most recently, Parthia, only just brought into a peaceful relationship with the Romans through the treaty of 20 BCE that returned Crassus' lost standards. Just as works of *Japonisme* adorned nineteenth century European households and artworks and conveyed status through their exoticism, so Propertius' text is loaded here with the language of empire and of imported luxury goods newly available through the continuing expansion and consolidation of Roman imperial power.³⁹

When the speaker cites *cultus* in moralizing discourse decrying the *puella*'s enjoyment of such objects, the poet, nonetheless, shows the speaker's continuing attraction to such luxury goods. Acanthis, on the other hand, qualifies her description of these status items. She expresses distain for these luxury goods, yet allows that the *puella* may want them. Her description of the rotting images cut from Attalid bedclothes (*sectaque ab Attalicis putria signa toris*, 24) is particularly discordant. Hutchinson, in his recent commentary, has singled out *putria signa* as "overly-disruptive of Acanthis' own

³⁸ Richardson (1977 *ad loc.*) suggests linen, gold, and art objects.

³⁹ Keith (2008: 139-165) and Bowditch (2006: 306-25) have recently examined Propertian elegy's use of discourses of empire and luxury and their relationship to issues of gender.

focalization,” so he suggests the alternative reading *lucida signa*.⁴⁰ The manuscript transmission of *putria*, however, is clear and undisputed. Moreover, Acanthis’ advice depends on the disagreement of her valuation of these goods from Cynthia’s desire for them. Thus, accepting the manuscript reading better distinguishes Acanthis’ view from the speaker’s.

This appearance of this catalogue of *cultus* within Acanthis’ speech presents a complex narrative situation: whose view is reflected here? How can we and how do we separate Acanthis’ focalization from favorite *topoi* of Propertian style? I approach this blurring and similarity between the speaker’s and Acanthis’ discourse as the emergence of a discordant voice within the opening lines of Acanthis’ speech. As she continues to speak, Acanthis’ own point of view emerges as both parodic repetition of the speaker’s elegiac discourse and a critical exposure of its underlying structures.

When Acanthis turns next to violence against the female body (31-32), her speech introduces another topic typical of male speech on the body, and it is again spoken in a different key.⁴¹

Si tibi forte comas uexauerit, utilis ira:
post modo mercata pace premendus erit.
denique ubi amplexu Venerem promiseris empto,
fac simules puros Isidis esse dies.
ingerat Aprilis Iole tibi, tundat Omichle
natalem Mais Idibus esse tuum.

⁴⁰ See discussion of suggestions at Hutchinson (2006: 143).

⁴¹ Fredrick (1997) offers a psychoanalytic reading of violence against the female body influenced by film theory. Fredrick’s reading sees violence against the female violent scenes as evidence of the violence of sexual difference described as scopophilia in the Freudian tradition. See Greene (1999: 84-92) on voyeurism and violence in the *Amores*; James (2003:184-197) argues that elegiac violence is a product of generic male resentment and anger against the courtesan built into the genre and most fully exposed by Ovid’s treatments of the subject in the *Amores* and *Ars Amatoria*.

supplex ille sedet: posita tu scribe cathedra
quidlibet! has artis si pauet ille, tenes!
(4.5.31-38)

If he chances to have pulled your hair, let his anger bring you profit: he must be punished by purchasing peace later. Then when he has bought your embraces and you have promised him sex, make sure to feign that the days of Isis have arrived, commanding abstinence. Let Hyale impress on you that April is coming, and Omichle harp on the fact that the Ides of May is your birthday. Should he sit in supplication before you, take your chair and write something: if he trembles at these tricks, you have him!

Acanthis does not decry male violence against the *puella*'s hair or clothing, as the Propertian speaker does at 2.5. 21-26, or the Tibullan speaker at 1.10. 53-66, where such violence is a breach of urbane poetic decorum (*rusticus haec*, Prop. 2.5. 25).⁴² Instead, Acanthis remarks how useful male anger can be because it can be exploited for apologetic generosity from the *amator* (as happens at *Ars* 2.169-72). Her speech suggests that elegiac violence is to be expected, and exploited by the *puella*.

Her parodic repetition of the male perspective continues with her advice to delay promised sex. Instead of offering a long mythological diversion, or other methods of deferral common to the elegiac code, Acanthis' suggested delay is tangible and matter-of-fact. The *puella* should delay a sexual encounter by claiming that she must make religious observances that required chastity, or have her slaves claim that it is her birthday, and cannot meet the lover until she has been given a gift (33-36).

Acanthis next introduces the *signa* of sexuality. The *puella* should always show marks of recent sexual behavior on her body, to trick the poet-lover into jealousy.

Semper habe morsus circa tua colla recentis,

⁴² Prop. 2.5.21-6 is a clear response to Tibullus 1.10.53-66. Tibullus' passage distinguishes between the acceptable violence of the erotic *rixa*, and unacceptable violence against the *puella* when the *amator* loses control and strikes her. On Tibullus' passage and the tradition of elegiac violence, see James (2003: 185-87).

litibus alternis quos putet esse datos.
(39-40)

always have fresh bites about your neck which he may think
have been given you by a rival's teeth.

Acanthis advises that the *puella* should be marked with visible signs of her encounters with multiple partners. From the *lena's* perspective, multiple partners provide economic insurance and a means to gaining additional goods. These *signa* of sexuality appear throughout elegy from the poet-speaker's perspective. Their imagined appearance at *Amores* 1.7 offers a suitable comparison of the way that the elegiac speaker and elegiac women use the same *topos*.

Amores 1.7 shows the speaker's violence against the *puella* enacted. The *amator* strikes Corinna, and while she is speechless, he claims that her silence is harsh punishment enough (21-22). Greene (1999: 88-92) has observed that Ovid's poem reveals the continuing male dominance over the *puella* inherent in the elegiac code. Corinna is revised in this poem from active agent to passive artistic *materia*,⁴³ and the poet's ability to compare her physical situation with mythological comparisons undermines the elegiac position of the poet's subservience to his mistress. In the midst of his self-chastisement, the *amator* wishes that he had substituted the controlled violence of the erotic *rixa* for his uncontrolled violence, and that the marks on the *puella's* body were caused by his love-bites rather than his slap (*aptius impressis fuerat livere labellis | et collum blandi dentis habere notam*, 1.7. 41-2). In this passage, the Ovidian *amator* wants to leave tangible marks of his engagement on the *puella's* body. Elsewhere, when this

⁴³ Greene's analysis of this poem parallels critical views of the elegiac mistress as poetic material elsewhere throughout Ovid's amatory works, and within elegy. See Wyke (1987a) on Cynthia as *materia*; Sharrock on Pygmalion and womanufacture; Myerowitz Levine (1985) on woman as nature to be shaped by *cultus* in Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*.

image appears, it is, as Acanthis advises, to be a sign of a rival for the *puella*'s involvement.

Sharon James has described how Acanthis articulates the economic and social realities of the choices a courtesan must make to support her lifestyle and to allow for a livelihood once she has grown too old to continue to practice.⁴⁴ Acanthis' speech concludes with advice to choose a lover based on his income, regardless of his social status:

Aurum spectato, non quae manus afferat aurum!
uersibus auditis quid nisi uerba feres?
‘[quid iuuat ornato procedere, uita, capillo
et tenuis Coae ueste mouere sinus?]
qui uersus, Coae dederit nec munera uestis,
istius tibi sit surda sine arte lyra.
dum uernat sanguis, dum rugis integer annus,
utere, ne quid cras libet ab ore dies!
(4.5.55-60)

Look at the gold, not the hand that brings it; listen to their verses and what will you gain save empty words? ‘What avails it, my love, to step out with coiffured hair and flutter the sheer folds of a Coan dress?’ Whoever brings verses and not gifts of Coan silk, consider his penniless lyre to be without a tune. While your blood is in its spring and your years free of wrinkles, make the most of the fact, lest the morrow take toll of your beauty.

As Acanthis advises Cynthia to choose a lover based on his income regardless of his social status, she notes that poets do not offer material or monetary security, and directly quotes the programmatic opening of Propertius 1.2.1-2. Her use of the passage is inapposite, in the view of the commentators. Fedeli, following Knoche (17-19),⁴⁵ argues that Acanthis recycles a passage meant to speak against the *puella*'s use of such *cultus* for the purposes of endorsing it in 4.5. The argument that Acanthis should use a Propertian

⁴⁴ See James (2003: 52-65), Janan (2001: 85-96).

⁴⁵ Fedeli (1965: 164-5) follows argument of Knoche (1936: 17-19). Hutchinson (2006: 148) follows Fedeli.

passage in the same fashion as the Propertian speaker, I hope to have shown, runs precisely against the original and divergent tone of Acanthis' speech. Acanthis' point is clarified in the following couplet (57-8): poetic verses offer no security, but expensive Coan silk can.

Irigaray's strategic mimicry again offers a new angle on this poem. Irigaray's critique of philosophers and psychoanalysts uses strategic mimicry (*mimetisme*), and a brief example from her essay *Così Fan Tutti*, a mimetic critique of Lacan's studies of feminine sexuality and desire, illustrates her method.

So how then are women, that "reality" that is somewhat resistant to discourse, to be defined? "The sexualized being of these not-all women is not channeled through the body, but through what results from a logical requirement in speech. Indeed, the logic, the coherence inscribed in the fact that language exists and that it is external to the bodies that are agitated by it, in short the Other that is becoming incarnate, so to speak, as a sexualized being, requires this one-to-one procedure." Female sexualization is thus the effect of a logical requirement, of the existence of a language that is transcendent with respect to bodies . . . take that to mean that woman does not exist, but that language exists. That woman does not exist owing to the fact that language—a language—rules as master, and that she threatens, as a sort of "prediscursive reality" to disrupt its order.

. . . .
The being that is sexualized female in and through discourse is also a place for the deposit of the remainders produced by the operation of language. For this to be the case, woman has to remain a body without organs. This being so, nothing that has to do with women's erogenous zones is of the slightest interest to the psychoanalyst . . . the geography of feminine pleasure is not worth listening to.
(1985b: 88-90)

Throughout her critique, Irigaray juxtaposes Lacan's original text, and her critique of it, without distinguishing her quotations from her own writings. My own text follows Catherine Porter's translation, where the Lacanian quotation is offset with quotation marks, and obscures the powerful effect of the blurring of two voices in dialogue created by not offsetting the quotation. This blurring of the text's voice is deliberate, and represents a clear example of Irigaray's mimetic critique. Moreover, in this passage,

Irigaray forcefully demonstrates that Lacanian psychoanalysis fails to conceptualize feminine sexual difference because sexual difference and feminine pleasure are *a priori* excluded from language, or the realm of the Symbolic, through the phallic logic of the Same that marked woman (*la femme*) as “not-all.” That is, there is no way to understand the sexualized female body, or feminine sexual pleasure, within a logic constructed on the basis of the exclusion of the sexually-distinct body.

I wish to stress Acanthis’ repetition of programmatic elegiac passages on the body. Acanthis quotes the poet-speaker’s first words addressed Cynthia (1.2.1-2) at 4.5.55-56.⁴⁶ The repetition of the line can be understood, not as a potentially spurious later inclusion, but in light of Irigaray’s employment of strategic mimicry in her critique of Lacan’s text on feminine sexuality, corporeality, and subjectivity.

5.7. Conclusions

Irigaray’s concept of strategic mimicry negotiates between two critical views of elegy. In the first, the *puella* performs in accordance with the poet-speaker’s desires, and her speech does not represent a feminine voice. Her speeches thus represent the most literal interpretation of ventriloquism, wherein she parrots the poet-speaker’s vision of elegy. In the second view, female speech points to distinct female voice within the genre,

⁴⁶ These lines were quite popular of these lines in antiquity, as we can conclude from their inclusion on a Roman inscription, CIL IV 1893-4 (47-8n).

especially in Propertius' fourth book. Use of Irigaray's model allows us to acknowledge in Cynthia and Acanthis the repetition as well as the divergences from the elegiac code articulated by the dominant male voice of the poet-speaker. Irigarayan mimicry deliberately and parodically returns to central aspects of the texts she critiques.⁴⁷ Acanthis similarly imitates the dominant discourse about the female body in elegy while offering substantial differences from it.

Elegy, I would argue, does not represent the authentic female speech of a particular Roman woman of the 1st century BCE. It does, however, offer within it a discordant and different female speech, which speaks of the economic and social realities of a courtesan's life, and of the life of other Roman non-elite women in this period. I would like to conclude with the notion that Cynthia's candor presents an alternate voice in the male-authored text of elegy. Cynthia's speeches articulate the reality of the female body and we should listen intently to her speaking differently, without attempting to naturalize her disruptive, incongruent language as metapoetry about textual creation or as ventriloquism of the speaker's desires. Her language is not romantic, idealized, or even terribly erotic. Instead, it describes the body in all of its explicit, corporeal, sexual glory.

⁴⁷ On Irigarayan *mimetismé* as parody, see Miller (2004: 135-137).

CHAPTER 6:

CONCLUSION

In his introduction to *Constructions of the Classical Body*, James Porter (2002) highlights the importance of studying the ancient body because the “original and partly estranged sources deepen our understanding of the historical and cultural contingencies of our own constructions of the body today” (2). The ancient body is not a pre-cultural, trans-historical monolith, but is rather the product of the cultures that produced it as a meaningful category for processing human existence and for studying human engagement with the environment. Porter’s introduction also points to the mutual benefit of reading ancient texts against modernity, and to the inevitability that any reading of “the original and partly estranged sources” of antiquity will be situated within the particular idiolect of the reader, that is, within his or her own historical, cultural, and political circumstances.

This dissertation has attempted to rethink and to deepen our understandings of the female body in Latin love elegy in its aesthetic and political significance, as well as to probe the ways that the sexualized body creates subjectivity in the first poetry in the Western tradition devoted to an extended heterosexual love-relationship. As such, this study offers not only close readings of selections from the poetry of Tibullus, Propertius, and Ovid but also a comparative reading of Roman love elegy against contemporary theorizations of the female body found in Irigaray, Kristeva, and Grosz

I have read the female body in Latin love elegy in a dialogue with other Roman genres and discourses, and examined how the elegists estrange the body that provides the foundation for their genre, yet I have also created a dialogue between the contemporary feminist theorists of the body and the Roman elegists. I hope that this productive interchange has illuminated aspects both of the elegist's work and of the modern theoretical understandings of the sexualized body and of the role of the female body in literature.

One legacy common to Freudian and post-Freudian psychoanalysis and Foucaultian archaeologies of sexuality has been to consider the role of the ancient body in the emergence of categories of sexuality and subjectivity (Porter 2002: 3). Anthropological and sociological models of the body, meanwhile, have looked at the ways that bodies are signified and enculturated, and at how the body is marked with sociological and political status or stigma (Porter 2002: 4). My dissertation has drawn from these broadly outlined aims of research on the body to argue that the female body in Roman love elegy is a problem. I follow Porter's definition of a problem here: "it is a source of concern, debate, reflection, and representation, a nodal point of anxiety and disquiet" (2002: 6). By this definition of a problem, the female body is surely one. The elegists use their praise of the female body as a generic boundary marker, and as the source for the poetic refusal to write epic or encomiastic poetry. Propertius defines his poetics through his references to Cynthia's adornment and beauty, and Tibullus and Ovid pick up on and play with Propertian *cultus*. Yet the sexualized body of the mistress, although it provides a generic reason for the creation of erotic elegy, is itself lacking. I have explored the elegiac female body as a problem through the connection of the female

body to blood and the Kristevan abject, through the deferral of an uncomplicated view of the *puella*'s body in favor of catalogues of luxury goods and processes of adornment, and through Cynthia's bodily-centered speeches that foreground the sexual relationship that generates elegiac love poetry. In these readings, the female body adheres to Grosz' definition of the embodied subject (1990: 80). The female body is "a precondition for an ordered, relatively stable identity" for elegiac genre and aesthetics. Yet it also exposes the disruptions and breakdowns of elegy's symbolic registration (Grosz 1990: 80).

Joy Connolly's (2000) article on the erotic body in Roman love elegy typifies prior critical understandings of elegy's presentation of sexual intercourse and of the body. Connolly has argued that the Propertian poet-speaker excludes sexual consummation, and the naked female body, from elegiac discourse. In her reading, "the aristocratic rules of the genre simultaneously prevent the body's full disclosure and scorn the body as the ultimate object of desire" (2000:94). Connolly's elegant expression encapsulates a broader critical view that elegiac decorum prevents the elegists from revealing the material, sexuate body.¹ Yet my work demonstrates that elegy does not have a strong discomfort with physicality or with the body in general.

Rather, the female body upon which the genre is focused proves to be beyond the limits of elegiac decorum and a continuing site for its transgression. Similar in its function to the Kristevan abject in literature, or to the sexualized female body in Irigarayan critique, elegy's female body points to the limits of the symbolic order of Tibullan and Propertian elegy. It is a central problematic of the genre.

¹ See, e.g., Williams, Lyne 1980, who are summarized by Hinds (1987: 4-6). See also Lowrie's discussion (1997: 266-274) which argues that elegy uses poetry in place of erotic seduction. Fredrick (1997: 172-196), building an argument from Mulvey's Freudian critique of the male gaze in cinema, argues that elegy avoids presenting female genitals.

The focus of prior research on the elegiac body has thus far been the *puella's* body or the effeminized, *mollis* body of the elegiac speaker. The mistress' adorned and finely-polished figure presents a classical ideal of integrated, organic, sexually-decorous female flesh. Yet my dissertation exposes the ways that elegy transgresses the Winkelmannian classical body in the figures of the other women of elegy and in Cynthia's speeches. Elegy does not simply present a travesty of the classical ideal for the sake of humor, such as the bodily grotesque advanced by Bakhtin (1984) and shown in Roman satire. Instead, the elegiac body is a body in abeyance. While the poet-speaker aims for sexual contact with his mistress, her sexual body is constantly deferred, put off, or represented through its attributes and the luxury goods that characterize it, rather than as an attainable unity (chapter 4). My reading of the other women of elegy demonstrates the limits of an aesthetic model that seeks to find the polished and Callimachean in Roman elegy, and shows that the genre is also interested in the fluid, corporeal, and unclassical. The female body that is frequently on display in elegy transgresses the limitations of integral form through the imagery of blood that Tibullus introduces to the genre. The sexualized body also appears in nearly invective explicitness in Cynthia's speeches.

My research points towards several new directions, and opens up new questions for the interpretation of elegy. First, how does the male body appear in elegy? Is it also an integral component of the construction of masculine elegiac subjectivity? How does the poet-speaker, and the elegiac *puella*, speak of the masculine body? What is the iconography of male flesh? Is it also idealized and abjected? Does the presentation of the

Tibullan and Propertian male body differ qualitatively from that of the female body? Kennedy (1993), Keith (1999), and Wyke (2002) have already explored how the male body in elegy is effeminized and analogized to generic markers of Roman love elegy. Yet the figures of the rival soldier (e.g., Prop. 2.16) or the ex-slave (e.g., Tib. 2.3), wounded in battle or marked through their livelihood, demand attention for their failure to adhere to this model of effeminized masculinity. In Propertius 2.16, Cynthia has taken a rival lover, an Illyrian praetor. The poet-speaker describes an explicit scene of Cynthia's love-making where she has poured her limbs round her foul partner for seven nights (*septenas noctes seiuncta cubares | candida tam foedo bracchia fusa viro*, 23-24). The praetor, meanwhile, is described with actions that recall sexual activity and Cynthia's candor about sexual relationships (*barbarus excussis agitat vestigia lumbis*, 27). Although commentators have remarked that this image means that the rival paces like an *exclusus amator*,² the language directly looks to sexual language I have highlighted in chapter 5 as characteristic of Cynthia's candor. In the poet-speaker's imagination, Cynthia and the sexualized body are displayed together, but sexualized corporeality is pushed off onto the male rival. Moreover, the bodies of the rivals in Propertius and in Tibullus 2.3 are marked as foreign, *barbarus* (*barbarus*, Prop. 2.16.27; *barbara pedes*, Tib. 2.3.64).

Future expansions of this project will take into account not only the female body, but the body in elegy, and explore how the elegiac male body is gendered through imagery. How can we situate the construction of the body within elegy itself, and what is the construction of the sexualized body of the elegiac lover-poet and his rivals? How in

² See Richardson, Camps *ad loc.*

turn does the elegiac male body conform to or undermine gendered expectations in Roman culture more broadly?

A second major aspect that I will return to is how Ovid deals with the female body in his *Amores* and in his didactic poems. Does a reading of the female body confirm or complicate Quintilian's evaluation of Ovid as *lascivior auctor elegiarum* (*Inst.* 10.1.93)? Is there an overlap or a distinctive difference between Ovid's treatment of the female body in the elegiac *Amores* and the didactic *Ars Amatoria*, *Remedia Amoris*, and *Medicamina Faciei Femineae*? In Ovid's *Ars Amatoria III*, the female body and its *cultus* receive considerable attention from the *praeceptor amoris*. The body must be subjected to *cultus* because the unadorned body, or the body in the process of adornment, provokes disgust and horror (*ista dabunt formam, sed erunt deformia visu | multaue, dum fiunt, turpia, facta placent*, 217-218; *multa viros nescire decet; pars maxima rerum | offendat, si non interiora tegas*, 229-230). Ovidian didactic compresses the horror of female flesh generated by the other women of elegy with the sexually-available bodies of the elegiac mistress. What might Ovid's zeugma of the abject and the celebrated mean for reading earlier Tibullan and Propertian elegy?

Finally, this project has engaged in only a very limited fashion with the political changes in Augustan Rome. How does the iconography of the elegiac female body interact with Augustus' attempts to police female sexual behaviors and to inscribe a formal legal distinction between *meretrix* and *matrona*? The Julian laws reconceived elite women in terms of their reproductive function, or their sexual availability, and elite female fertility was rewarded with status distinctions, such as the *ius trium liberorum*, while female sexual promiscuity resulted in a demotion of status. The other women of

elegy are connected, as I have demonstrated, through the language of blood and kinship to the elegiac *puella*. The language of family structures between non-elite, non-citizen women runs through Tibullan elegy. Tibullus' poems create households and structures that fall outside of the purview of the Julian laws. Nonetheless, the strong familial structures between women may point to elegy's awareness of the developing importance of female sexuality and the role of the family within Augustus' newly reformulated Roman ideologies.

More than anything else in this dissertation, I have attempted to estrange the female body, and to shake conventional critical notions of what the female body is in Latin love poetry, and what it is doing. Elegy famously seems to admire and praise the beautiful, unadorned, naked female body, but a close examination of that body has demonstrated a very troubled attitude toward it by the very men who purport to adore it. This project presents a re-evaluation of the elegiac genre in the light of a new reading of the female body, and I have tried to expose unexpected and unnoticed elements in the elegiac aesthetic. By expanding out critical focus to encompass all the women of elegy, my work exposes a surprising ambivalence towards the female body in a genre that claims to celebrate female beauty, and I have offered a more nuanced view of the elegiac genre within Roman conceptions of status, sexuality, and empire.

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