BLUFF YOUR WAY IN DIDACTIC:
OVID'S *ARS AMATORIA* AND *REMEDIA AMORIS*

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arguor obsceni doctor adulterii
Ovid *Tristia* 2.212

Ever since Augustus' extraordinary public acknowledgement of Ovid's didactic powers, the poet's critics, adopting the role of defending him with, we can only assume, the best of intentions, have, to a quite remarkable degree, detracted from his achievement.[1] Malcolm Heath (1985.254) bases his plea on a formal technicality: "Lucretius adopts the posture of one expounding and advocating the Epicurean philosophy, and that is precisely what he intends to achieve: philosophical persuasion. Ovid, equally, adopts in the *Ars Amatoria* the posture of one expounding and inculcating the principles of the art of seduction; but no one supposes that Ovid really wrote his poem in order to instruct the youth of Rome in that art." Heath cites the examples of Lucretius and Ovid to illustrate a distinction he makes between "formal" didacticism ("purporting to be intended to instruct") and "final" didacticism ("intended to instruct"). The *subject* of the *Ars Amatoria* is ostensibly *amor*, even arguably *adulterium*, but we are assured that the poem does not really, finally, intentionally *teach* it. Its very didactic form, apparently, may even act as a guarantee of that. Were the academic profession to apply this distinction with such disinterested rigour to its own activities, the result might—just conceivably—be somewhat disconcerting. However, the

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1 For Augustus as himself a *praeceptor*—arguably a *praeceptor amoris*—cf. O'Gorman 1997, esp. 105–15.

continuing stream of publications on Ovid's amatory didactic would seem to testify to a sturdy faith in the pedagogical effect, at least in respect of scholarly writings.[2] Thus fortified (or perhaps not, for questions concerning the authority and truth claims of *any* pedagogical act cannot wholly be evaded), let us delve into what is involved in the question "(what) does the *Ars Amatoria* teach?"

In the opening lines of the first book, the poet announces that Venus has put him in charge of the education of her son (*me Venus artificem tenero praefecit Amori*, 7). A recalcitrant charge, to be sure, but at a tender age when he might still be receptive to a teacher's attentions (*ille quidem ferus est et qui mihi saepe repugnet;/sed puer est, aetas mollis et apta regi*, 9–10). There follows a mythological scene of teaching (11–16):[3]

> Phillyrides puerum cithara perfecit Achillem
>   atque animos placida contudit arte feros.
> qui totiens socios, totiens exterruit hostes,
>   creditur annosum pertimuisse senem;
> quas Hector sensurus erat, poscente magistro
>   verberibus iussas praebuit ille manus.

> Chiron made the boy Achilles accomplished on the lyre and subdued his fierce spirits with his peaceable skill. The one who so often terrified his friends, so often his enemies, is believed to have been scared of the old one, full of years. The hands which Hector was destined to feel, at the word of his teacher, he presented, as ordered, for smacks.

In passing, we might note the "already/not yet" teleological structure characteristic of such scenes of teaching. We can compare the picture Horace gives us of his education, describing himself, with hindsight, in a period before he was "the poet": already Horace, but not yet "Horace." The "already" is Horace's image of himself in the past—his past self-fulfilling its destiny towards the present in which he writes; the "not yet" is what he is

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2 For recent surveys of the scholarship on Ovid's didactic poems see Küppers 1981, Holzberg 1981 and 1997.101–21, Myerowitz 1985, esp. 190–98.

3 Text cited from Kenney 1994; translations my own.

doing as a boy—learning poetry—not yet writing it.[4] The same structure is effected in the *Ars Amatoria* by means of citation of the *Iliad*, with the already, but not yet, "man-slaying" hands of Achilles compliantly held out to receive blows. The teleological structure of such pedagogical anecdotes points to a present that may be either "in spite of" or "because of" the teaching scene, or a mixture of the two.

What, then, does this *exemplum* tell us about the education of Achilles or the effects of teaching in general? Chiron makes the young Achilles accomplished in lyre-playing, and we might look "forward" into the "future" to the consolation Achilles seeks for his "fierce spirits" from this "peaceable skill" in *Iliad* 9.186–91. In a sensitive and consoling interpretation, Molly Myerowitz (1985.47) sees in the "delicate ambiguity" of *annosum . . . senem* a reference to Priam and the scene in *Iliad* 24 in which the old king puts his lips to the hands which killed his son and elicits the compassion of Achilles, thus incorporating the *exemplum* into a reading of the *Ars Amatoria* as an exploration of "the implications of art as a universally humanizing and civilizing force" (Myerowitz 1985.43). In a less sanguine mood, we might reflect that, in Chiron's school, civilizing tendencies are inculcated with considerable violence. Some contemporary theories of education claim that pedagogic action is by nature authoritarian; thus Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron suggest that even in the absence of physical punishment, a coercive "symbolic violence" operates and, indeed, is a constitutive element of the pedagogical effect.[5] Thus "pedagogical communication is not reducible to the formally defined relations of communication (sender-receiver), much less to the explicit content of the message" (Ulmer 1985.171), but extends to the reproduction of the dominant values of a society and its ways of relating. The phenomenon of transference ("a mode of investing persons or objects with positive and negative qualities, according to our early memories of significant experience of familial figures and the expectations founded thereon," Wright 1985.15) might also be deemed

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4 Cf. Hor. *Epist*. 2.1.70–71, (sc. *carmina Livi*) *memini quae plagosum mihi parvo / Orbilium dictare*. This scene offers a useful model for what follows: Horace learns in school to reproduce poetry before going on to produce what will in turn be reproduced by schoolchildren in the future (cf. *Epist*. 1.20.17–18, addressing his book of *Epistles*: *hoc quoque te manet, ut pueros elementa docentem / occupet extremis in vicis balba senectus*).

5 Bourdieu and Passeron 1977.54. On Bourdieu's notion of symbolic violence, misrecognised as such by those involved in the process of education and social reproduction, cf. Thompson 1984.55–61. Cf. also Harold Bloom's discussion (1973) of the scene of teaching in terms of the Oedipal forces of rivalry with the father and the Freudian defence mechanisms operative within the family.

relevant. In the case of Achilles, we might say with Myerowitz that the pedagogical effect lies in his continuing association of the signifier *annosus senex* with an authority to which the appropriate responses are summed up in the verb *pertimescere*.

However, is the effect limited to the reproduction of patterns of respect for the authority vested in age, or do the imprinted association of the hands with violence and the imposition of authority manifest themselves in equally subtle but more disturbing ways? The "man-slaying" hands of Achilles recur when the *praeceptor amoris* discusses foreplay towards the end of Book 2 (705–16). The fingers, we are told, will find what they are to do in those parts in which *amor* moistens his darts (*invenient digiti quod agent in partibus illis, / in quibus occulte spicula tingit Amor*, 707–08). This Hector did "in" Andromache (709–10), and great Achilles, too, "in" the captive Briseis when, exhausted from the enemy, he lay on the couch of love (*fecit et in capta Lyrneside magnus Achilles, / cum premeret mollem lassus ab hoste torum*, 711–12). With a direct address to Briseis, the *praeceptor* allows a note of scholarly curiosity to enter about the phenomenon of female sexual desire and its relationship to a male culture of physical prowess based on violence (713–16):

> illis te manibus tangi, Brisei, sinebas,
>   imbutae Phrygia quae nece semper erant?
> an fuit hoc ipsum quod te, lasciva, iuvaret,
>   ad tua victrices membra venire manus?

> Did you allow yourself, Briseis, to be touched by those
> hands which were always soaked in Phrygian blood? Or
> was it, lascivious woman, this very thing, that conquering
> hands were going for your body, that excited you?

The juxtaposition of the *membra* of Briseis and the *manus* of Achilles (716) calls to mind the way in which the limbs of warriors who die at the hands of the epic hero are loosened in death; but the pedagogical frame brings a fresh dimension to the familiar elegiac assimilation of the terms describing lovemaking and warfare.[6]

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6 The closest Virgilian parallel to Homeric phraseology is to be found in the description of the death of Turnus: *ast illi solvuntur frigore membra* (*Aen.* 12.951). For "dying" as a term for "orgasm" cf. Adams 1982.159; for *solvere* connoting death or orgasm cf. Kennedy 1993.60 n.16.

As incorporated into *this* reading, the (. . . same?) *exemplum*, displaying its characteristic teleological structure (already, but not yet), looks "forward" to some characteristically late twentieth-century preoccupations about sex, violence, and the pedagogical process. But we should pause for a moment. In asking the question "what does the *exemplum* of Chiron and Achilles *tell* us about the effects of teaching?" we are using a word from the didactic register and inscribing ourselves, in turn, into a pedagogical scene in which, structurally, the author is the source of authority, the text is the communicated message, and the reader passively receives the message. Definitions of didactic poetry reproduce a characteristic structure, that of the master communicating a body of knowledge to the pupil, which mirrors the theory of reading just sketched. Thus Malcolm Heath defines didactic as follows (1985.253): "a covering term for those poetic genres (for example the philosophical works of Empedocles and Lucretius, the paraenetic elegy of Theognis) which explicitly or implicitly claim to embody information or advice with a view to the instruction or edification of the audience of address." And yet, we have seen (to recall the words of Ulmer cited above), that pedagogical communication is not reducible to such formally defined relations of communication and, indeed, that the pedagogical effect is plotted teleologically not from the point of its production, but rather from wherever, whenever, and whatever happens to be its point of reception (whether that be Augustus, Molly Myerowitz, or my own use of the *exemplum*). This, in turn, reproduces a theory of reading in which meaning is not simply determined at the point of production, but is only fully realised at the point of reception. Whilst the words of the *exemplum* remain constant as signifiers, their significance is not immanent, but is bound up in their citation, making of them a "text," and revealing the process of signification to be a two-way phenomenon which involves reading "into" as well as "out of." We might refer to the *Ars Amatoria* and the *Remedia Amoris* as "teaching texts" so as to incorporate a dual perspective: on the one hand, to refer to texts which are styled "didactic," whilst simultaneously, on the other, to signal their appropriation within a pedagogical discourse of the criticism, analysis, and teaching of such texts. Thus the texts of didactic poetry, teleologically configured within our readings, fulfil a homologous function in our *didaxis* to that of the *exemplum* in a didactic poem. We may therefore (already, but not yet) see ourselves inscribed in the phenomenon whose patterns we are trying to delineate.

This point deserves further emphasis. Let us consider the following quotation and ponder some of its implications (Morton and Zavarzadeh 1991.vii):

> We understand pedagogy not commonsensically, as class-
> room practices or instructional methods as such, but as the
> act of producing and disseminating knowledges in cul-
> ture, a process of which classroom practices are only one
> instance. From this position, all discursive practices are
> pedagogical, in the sense that they propose a theory of
> reality—a world in which those discourses are "true." For
> the proposed world of these discourses to be "obviously"
> true, people need to be "instructed" so as to find them
> true.

If pedagogy is defined so as to include all discursive practices, then "didac-
tic" becomes an all-embracing type, such that, in assessing the pedagogical
effect, there can be no final appeal to formal considerations (in Ovid's case,
for example, the shift from hexameter to elegiac couplet)—or vice versa, for
that matter, for "didactic" can include all kinds of writing: "epic," "elegy,"
"philosophy," "scholarship," or whatever. *This* essay, in so far as it asserts
"truths" (be they moral, philosophical, historical, or aesthetic) or a particular
"theory of reality," becomes an example (*sic*) of the "didactic," thereby
reproducing the synecdoche characteristic of didactic poetry in which the
particular system being expounded is regarded as the vehicle for universal
truths. Thus, again, we might see our own contributions as standing *within*
that discourse and understand the force of the statement that what we teach,
transmit, and reproduce are the "correct" modes of allegorisation.[7] "For," to
quote Ulmer once more, "in addition to whatever conscious symbolic mas-
tery is conveyed, the educational process also communicates an implicit
pedagogy, transmitting a kind of 'total' knowledge of a cultural code or style
by means of the apprentice's identification with the master, who, to a large
extent, has himself unconsciously internalized this style. The resultant
paradox," he concludes somewhat morosely, "is that pedagogic communica-
tion is able to perpetuate itself, even when the information transmitted tends
toward zero."[8] This observation can serve to focus attention upon the inside/

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7 Amongst the things being taught in the interpretative essay (whether written by "student"
   or "teacher") are various modes of situating one's self in regard to authority.

8 Ulmer 1985.171–72. It is perhaps more interesting to see the "information" involved in
   pedagogic communication in terms of Bourdieu and Passeron's concept of the "cultural
   arbitrary," on which cf. Thompson 1984.57: "That which is imposed by the educational
   system is 'arbitrary' in the sense that it cannot be deduced from any 'universal principle' of
   a physical, biological or spiritual kind; and yet the cultural arbitrary is embedded in the

outside structure (figured as "mastery" of a symbolic system leading to authority) which seems to operate in didactic representations of knowledge—the master communicating a body of knowledge (however "arbitrary") to a pupil. Within the arguments of didactic discourse, terms such as "transmission" and "tradition" reproduce the active/passive tenor of such representations, incorporating at the level of such individual terms the teleology already attributed to *exempla*—a teleology masked by their abstraction *as* "terms" (or, as it may be, *exempla*) from the particular arguments they articulate. Thus, "reproduction," a term with more resonance for an Ovidian *praeceptor*, appeals to the tripartite structure of teacher/material/pupil no less than the others, but alters the emphases given to it in an argument by terms such as "transmission" or "tradition" by reversing the active/passive tenor. This process of re-definition not only alters the boundaries, the *fines*, which determine what stands "inside" and what "outside," but also the *finis*, the *telos*, of the argument as well. Let us explore further the implications of the argument so far in the context of a discussion of Ovidian *didaxis*.

The self-styled *praeceptor amoris* instructs his pupil to play the role of the lover and to mimic the wounds of love in his words; credibility is to be achieved by whatever means it takes (*Ars* 1.611–12):

> est tibi agendus amans imitandaque vulnera verbis
>   haec tibi quaeratur qualibet arte fides.[9]

This couplet "theorises" the first formal instruction in the work (1.41–42), which thereby comes to function as an example of the theory:

> dum licet et loris passim potes ire solutis,
>   elige cui dicas "tu mihi sola places."

> While it is possible and you are able to range far and wide
> with your reins loose, choose to whom you may say "you
> are the only one for me."

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system of power relations between groups and classes, so that its imposition serves to sustain the existing relations of domination. The educational system can succeed in imposing the cultural arbitrary only in so far as the arbitrary is misrecognized as such, that is, is recognized as legitimate."

9 Cf. also *Ars* 1.439–40: *blanditias ferat illa tuas imitataque amantum / verba*. To fall *out* of love, a similar strategy is recommended at *Rem.* 497–98: *quod non es, simula positosque imitare furores: / sic facies vere, quod meditatus eris.*

These two lines resolve the phenomenon of love into two ostensibly op-
posed concepts: on the one hand, a matter of rational choice (*elige*) and the
application of an acquired skill (the *ars* which gives the poem its title), and,
on the other, an overwhelming force which allows no freedom of action. The
image of "reins loose" implies the presence, and perhaps the imminent
exercise, of external control: you are to choose *dum licet*.[10] The phrase *tu
mihi sola places* represents the conventional expression by a Roman lover of
his exclusive passion;[11] such are the words the (would-be) lover is to mimic.
But, the *praeceptor* goes on to warn, often the one who starts by assuming
the role of lover begins to love "really"[12] and has become what, at the start,
he had pretended to be (1.615–16):

> saepe tamen vere coepit simulator amare;
>   saepe, quod incipiens finxerat esse, fuit.

We are invited to enter a world of *make-believe*, the world of the complex of
words based on *ludere*. The verb can suggest "play a role,"[13] "deceive," but it
can also mean "practise," and *ludus*, of course, is the word for "school."
Pedagogy is represented here as a form of mimesis, but in such a way as to
disturb the familiar paradigms of truth, reality, and authenticity which,
under the sign of "tradition" or "transmission," have dominated representa-
tion and education—not to speak of representations *of* education—from
Socrates to the present day. If you want to *be* a lover, you must *play the role*
of a lover. The discourses of mimesis and ontology are, as usual, intimately
linked. Ontology seeks to distinguish between reality (what is present,
authentic, and so on) and appearance. The discourse of mimesis observes a
fixed order: the thing imitated is always before the imitation. The interpreta-
tion of mimesis preserves this order: the representation effaces itself in
bringing to appearance the essence of the imitated. In the Platonic pedagogi-

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10 *dum licet* is something of a leitmotiv in Ovidian didactic; cf. also *Ars* 3.61, *Rem.* 79.

11 Cited, if it needs a specific source, from Prop. 2.7.19; cf. [Tib.] 3.19.3. But its phraseology
    is the source of many Ovidian plays: e.g., *Am.* 1.3.15: *non mihi mille placent*; 2.4.20: *cui
    placeo, protinus ipsa placet*; *Ars* 1.63: *sive cupis iuvenem, iuvenes tibi mille placebunt*;
    1.613–14: *sibi quaeque videtur amanda; / pessima sit, nulli non sua forma placet.*

12 For the rhetoric of this in inviting the collusion of females in their own seduction cf.
    Kennedy 1993.67.

13 For *ludere* as "take on a role" on the stage (cf. *Oxford Latin Dictionary s.v.* §6) or
    elsewhere, cf. Cael. *Fam.* 8.9.1: *civem bonum ludit et contra Caesarem sententias dicit.* For
    the pejorative connotations of the verb, see below.

cal theory of anamnesis, the order of memory and that of imitation are the same, and, in the related ontology, the imitated is more real and superior to what imitates it because it is prior. In that the imitation can itself, in turn, become an object of imitation in a chain without beginning or end, it is always going to be somewhat contingent in practice (if inevitable in theory) to restrict the sequence to any two, the first of which will then tend to take on an originary character. In Ovidian mimesis, however, "reality," instead of standing in first place in the sequence as "cause" or "prior truth" (as in Platonic metaphysics), stands at the end as "effect." The so-called "reality effect" is no less real for being viewed as effect rather than cause; the pejorative associations the phrase so often has might be seen as the lurking authority of the rhetoric of Platonic metaphysics.

Within this Ovidian discourse of mimesis and ontology, the individual subject (in this case the "lover") is viewed as the effect rather than the origin of meaning and signification: an alternative paradigm of truth is proposed in *Ars* 1.615–16 and juxtaposed with the paradigm it would "displace." However, the rhetoric of the *simulator* who begins to love *vere* and who becomes what, at the start, he had pretended to be depends for its effect not on an outright rejection of the Platonic model of metaphysics, but on its subordination to the Ovidian model. Subtle shifts of perspective are being offered, not least on the issue of knowledge. The structure of *didaxis*, with its characteristic abstraction of "material" (the teacher communicating a body of information to the pupil) remains constant on the face of it, but what is to be learned—that is, imitated—by the pupil is not a thing or a concept but a text (such as *tu mihi sola places*). These "texts" are what a script is to a play: a set of lines or directions which, for their full effect, must be "enacted." *Didaxis* thus emerges as re-presentation or re-production, and we might recall that the verb "to teach," *docere* (and cf. Greek διδάσκειν), is also the verb "to produce a play."

*Re*presentation works to separate word and reference, signifier and signified: you must choose to whom you say *tu mihi sola places* (and, of course, you do not have to say it to only one person). The words of the Achilles *exemplum* may have looked the same, but we saw how their meaning changes in citation, which effects an appropriative re-definition of the text in question towards a new *telos*. A set of quotation marks is there, even if effaced, in every use of every word and is available to undermine certainties, be they philosophical, epistemological, political, etc. In discussing how much physical coercion may be used in the course of seduction, the *praeceptor* says that "you are allowed to apply force: that kind of force is

pleasing to girls" (*vim licet appelles: grata est vis ista puellis*, 1.673).
appellare, here rendered as "apply," can also mean "call," allowing a further
translation of the line which reveals the effaced quotation marks and, with
them, the rhetoric of its various appropriations and the interests involved:
"you may call it 'force': that sort of 'force' is pleasing to girls." You may call
it a "pun," but that sort of "pun" is disruptive of received certainties—and of
the authority they embody. Word-*play* is not always "mere" and can be
"serious." Recall Bourdieu on "symbolic violence," no less "violent," in his
account, for being "symbolic." From this perspective, what is ("really")
"violence" cannot simply be resolved by a (Platonizing) appeal to some
prior thing. The lines, the *fines*, are being constantly re-drawn in the citation
of the term to serve different ideological ends. From Bourdieu's ideological
perspective, this very procedure of re-definition can be no less "violent"
than a smack, and no less harmful for not being *realised* to be so.

Re*present*ation, in its emphasis on "realisation" (*now*) rather than
"reality" and in its construction of a "present" out of a shuttling between a
"past" and a "future," articulates the (already/not yet) structure of teleology,
not only of the example and of memory and history, but, more broadly, of
knowledge in general. In particular, the relationship of "cause and effect,"
traditionally assumed to be in that order (and so in Platonic ontology and
mimesis), is reversed in Ovidian mimesis, with the "effect" emerging as
anterior to, and as configuring, the "cause." Neither perspective is *per se*
correct, for the terms are interdependent, and a shuttling procedure operates:
one tenor ("cause" > "effect" or "cause" < "effect") will always seem to
predominate in any one representation, but the opposite is always operative,
albeit at an occluded level. For Ovidian *didaxis,* truth is not thereby ex-
cluded; indeed, it is precisely taken "inside" and assigned its role *within* a
more general system whose principle is the quotation mark. As Ulmer
(1985.177) remarks, using a particularly felicitous pun, "knowledge mimed
is science in quotation marks, no longer insight, but *in cit*ation." It is this
element of enframing, of contextualization (inevitable because always
present), that makes knowledge pedagogy. To make room for "truth" *inside*,
"representation" moves *outside* as the *master* term, the reference point: the
Platonic hierarchy of ontology and mimesis is reversed, and "truth" is now
reckoned by the standard of its representation rather than vice versa. The
negative connotations of *simulator*, the legacy of the Platonic tradition, now
become positive. Representation, rather than being seen as a degenerative
process as in Platonic mimesis, with each copy being less truthful than the
last, brings about the very possibility of truth, knowledge, and progress.

This works to shift knowledge from the domain of epistemology to that of rhetoric as its heuristic mode, from a metaphor of *discovery* (of a prior truth) to one of *construction* or *invention* (of a consequent "truth"). Etymologically, "invention" suggests "coming upon" something already there, but what one comes upon is not a prior ("discovered") truth, but, in rhetorical parlance, the *materia*, the textual traces, out of which truths can be forged. Knowledge is resolved into a set of *loci* out of which a fresh text can be generated, to be appropriated in its turn. However, if there is one lesson that rhetoric has taught us down the ages, it is that any argument can be reversed or, if we shift into the medical imagery of the *Remedia Amoris*, an exemplary text in this respect, all discourses (of love, *didaxis*, or whatever) are open to complete recuperation. Just as "Platonic" mimesis can be recuperated and included within "Ovidian," so "Ovidian" could be recuperated and included within "Platonic." This is the shuttle effect of representation we saw before, and it operates also in metaphor and imagery, where the tenor of signification can always be reversed,[14] allowing the possibility of seeing discourse as always self-reflexive. Plato represents education in a classic image in the *Phaedrus* (276E–77A):

> πολὺ δ᾿, οἶμαι, καλλίων σπουδὴ περὶ αὐτὰ γίγνεται, ὅταν τις τῆι διαλεκτικῆι τέχνηι χρώμενος, λαβὼν ψυχὴν προσήκουσαν, φυτεύηι τε καὶ σπείρηι μετ᾿ ἐπιστήμης λόγους, οἳ ἑαυτοῖς τῶι τε φυτεύσαντι βοηθεῖν ἱκανοὶ καὶ οὐχὶ ἄκαρποι ἀλλὰ ἔχοντες σπέρμα, ὅθεν ἄλλοι ἐν ἄλλοις ἤθεσι φυόμενοι τοῦτ᾿ ἀεὶ ἀθάνατον παρέχειν ἱκανοί, καὶ τὸν ἔχοντα εὐδαιμονεῖν ποιοῦντες εἰς ὅσον ἀνθρώπωι δυνατὸν μάλιστα.

> But, in my opinion, serious discourse about them is far nobler when one employs the dialectic method and plants and sows in a fitting soul intelligent words which are able to help themselves and him who planted them, which are not fruitless, but yield seed from which there spring up in other minds words capable of continuing the process forever, and which make their possessor happy, to the farthest limit of human happiness.

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14 Cf. Kennedy 1993.46–63.

The image of husbandry dominates the representation of the didactic process: the verbs τρέφειν and *educare* cover the training both of crops and of children, and georgic (as well as *Georgic*) imagery pervades the *Ars Amatoria*.[15] But if the subject of Virgil's poem is husbandry, the shuttle effect of imagery allows one to reverse the tenor of signification and see that his poem is no less about the process of enculturation in the broadest sense. Ovid's subject, *amor*, in an image that is no less Platonic (if not platonic), makes "carnal" the model of all knowledge, and *didaxis* is structured in the same terms as its subject, the sexual act.[16] The *praeceptor* urges that, just as the hunter knows where to find his prey, the lover "who seeks the raw material for a long love-affair should first learn in what place there are girls in numbers" (*Ars* 1.49–50):

> tu quoque, materiam longo qui quaeris amori,
> > ante frequens quo sit disce puella loco.

Within this eroto-rhetorical epistemology, the equation of the female with *materia* figures the process of *inventio* as the lover learning the places (*loci*) in which he might come upon the object of his quest. The *loci* of rhetoric are presented in the usual topographical imagery (in this case, derived from the city of Rome, *Ars* 1.55–98), which, according to the third book of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, aids their commitment to memory.[17] *Inventio* relates to mimesis (now recuperated from its associations with imitation of, and immediate reference to, a prior reality) not as "copy" but as *copia*, the rhetorical term signifying abundant fullness of expression,[18] and is figured in *Ars* 1.98 as sophisticated women in such numbers as to challenge the powers even of the *praeceptor* himself (*copia iudicium saepe morata meum est*). "Truth" here is not a reflection of "reality," but emerges in the *realisation* that knowledge and love are both "expressions" of desire and that desire is fulfilled in expression.

      To view didactic discourse as involving not so much "knowledge" as "texts-in-citation" is to re-focus the issue of authority we saw to be a constitutive element of the pedagogical effect. The sense of closure, now

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15 Cf. Leach 1964.
16 Cf. Kennedy 1993.60.
17 Cf. Carruthers 1990.71–73 on the "architectural mnemonic" in rhetoric.
18 Cf. Ulmer 1985.180–81.

shifting from the realm of the cognitive towards that of the aesthetic, comes not simply from a sense of insight (reference to a prior truth), but from a sense of literariness: reference to and reconfiguration of a prior text. This shifts our gaze along the chain so that we see authority as an effect, enacted in citation. One of the purposes of citation (whether it be in a didactic poem or an academic article) is to (attempt to) appropriate and reproduce authority. If we now cast our eyes back along the chain, we see that the source of the citation has become, in rhetorical parlance, an *auctor*. In Ovid's erotic *didaxis*, texts-in-citation range from the very general, which, though they may have no specific *auctor*, enact authority through the very frequency of their citation, such as the proverbial[19] and the conventional (e.g., *tu mihi sola places*), to the highly specific and explicit allusion (as in the catalogues of authors in *Ars* 3.329–46 and *Rem.* 759–66). The Ovidian equation of *didaxis* and mimesis "grounds" the intertextuality that is so prominent a feature of didactic poetry and elides any distinction between Ovidian didactic and literary practice, means or ends.

  "Where, oh where," I hear the cry, "is Ovid in all this, his fun and brilliance and energy, and the chaste elegance of his language?"[20] Well, "[l]et it be stated for the record that the *Ars Amatoria* is an extremely witty poem" (Myerowitz 1985.10). But it is testimony to the recuperative power even of "traditional" criticism that "chaste elegance" looks the very opposite of the charge which Ovid felt obliged to rebut (cf. *Rem.* 361–97, especially 361–62: *nuper enim nostros quidam carpsere libellos, / quorum censura Musa proterva mea est*, "for recently certain people have sniped at my little books, according to whose criticism my Muse is shameless"). Ovid's defence is on grounds of "propriety" (cf. *Rem.* 387–88: *si mea materiae respondet Musa iocosae, / vicimus, et falsi criminis acta rea est*, "if my Muse corresponds to its playful material, I've won, and she's been prosecuted on a false charge") illustrating (if further illustration were needed),[21] the slipperiness and universal applicability of this term. Decorum thus remains an abiding criterion in literature and its criticism, whatever its school. Read from the perspective of "tradition," the term "appropriate" is an adjective, from that of "reproduction," it is an imperative. We might see such a distinction in the reception of Ovid's poems, with scholarship (in a

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19 Cf. Kenney 1958.
20 West 1993.24, reviewing Kennedy 1993.
21 Cf. Kennedy 1993.60–61.

gesture which constructs its authority) positioning itself "outside" and treat-
ing the poetry as an "object" of study (thus operating under the sign of
"discovery"), whilst literature (as a recent example, Roland Barthes' *Frag-
ments d'un discours amoureux* might be cited)[22] treats it as generative-
performative, reconfiguring it as a set of *loci* out of which a new text can be
created (thus operating under the sign of "invention"). It has been one of my
aims in this piece to test the rigidity of such distinctions. As Myerowitz
continues (1985.11): "a central point of the *Ars Amatoria* seems . . . to be the
deliberate confusion of traditional categories of serious and unserious, real
and unreal, important and unimportant . . . It is the jumbling of traditional
opposites that makes the poem as serious as it is funny." Recuperation of the
poem for one or other of these poles is perhaps inevitable,[23] and is often
effected by splitting the poem's *ego* into poet and *praeceptor*, as Myerowitz
does to distance her "humanist" Ovid[24] from his *praeceptor*'s disturbing,
disruptive, or otherwise dubious views.[25] Such a division is always operative
and is one of the major sources of the poem's effects, for, from the viewpoint
of tradition, *praeceptor* is a most unlikely role for Ovid to play. The easiest
escape is to say that he is not "really" playing it—a tempting enough course
for the poet of the *Tristia*, and one in which he has been "followed" all too
easily by his critics. But in sealing Books 2 and 3 of the *Ars Amatoria* with
his *sphragis*, the identity of poet and *praeceptor* is fused and endowed with
the authority of Ovid's signature: NASO MAGISTER ERAT (3.812).[26]

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22 For Barthes' "Ovidian" view of love as a discursive artefact cf. Kennedy 1993.64–82.
   Barthes evokes the *Ars Amatoria* in an intertextual citation of the poem's "foundation
   myth," the Rape of the Sabine Women (*Ars* 1.101–34): "Each time a subject 'falls' in love
   he revives a fragment of the archaic time when men were supposed to carry off women (in
   order to ensure exogamy): every lover who falls in love at first sight has something of a
   Sabine woman (or of some other celebrated victim of ravishment)" Barthes 1979.188.

23 Myerowitz immediately goes on to say (1985.11): "In developing the seriousness of the
   unserious, I merely follow Ovid's lead." The construction of authority by means of the
   image of "following" is a classic expression of the "traditional" model in didactic; cf., for
   example, Lucretius 3.3–4: *te sequor, o Graiae gentis decus, inque tuis nunc / ficta pedum
   pono pressis vestigia signis*.

24 Cf. Myerowitz 1985.24: "Like most critical clichés, Ovid's so-called 'humanity' represents
   the basic truth, and nowhere is this humanity more clearly revealed than in the *Ars
   Amatoria*."

25 Durling 1958 and Blodgett 1973 are other members of what we might, as a mnemonic
   shorthand, term the "Further Vices" school of Ovidian criticism.

26 As Trevor Fear has pointed out to me, the figure of the *praeceptor* invites identification as
   an older manifestation of the poet/lover of the *Amores*. Whereas, in the *Amores,* this figure
   yields to *amor* (cf. *Am*.1.2.9–10: *cedimus, an subitum luctando accendimus ignem? /*

Lusus habet finem, the *praeceptor* remarks close to the end of the final book of the *Ars* (3.809), and, for present purposes, we might be tempted to render this as "the world of make-believe has its *telos*." But is 1.615–16, in which the *simulator* becomes a lover "really," the goal of *didaxis* or a warning about its potential effects? Not only representation but *didaxis* as well effaces itself in bringing reality to appearance. There is a prevarication in the opening lines of *Ars* 1:

> si quis in hoc artem populo non novit amandi,
>   hoc legat et lecto carmine doctus amet.

This couplet alludes to the convention whereby "a didactic poet is likely to emphasize the pitiable state of those ignorant of his art,"[27] but the phraseology of *si quis . . . non* raises the possibility that this act of *didaxis* may lack an essential element in its structure, an audience ignorant of its subject. The prevarication is reproduced in the more troubled context of *Tristia* 1.1.112, which has as its subject the three books of the *Ars Amatoria*: *hi quia, quod nemo nescit, amare docent*. This could be taken to mean that Ovidian *didaxis* is "just a joke," empty of any meaningful effect: there isn't anyone

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cedamus: leve fit, quod bene fertur, onus), now *amor* will yield to him (*et mihi cedet Amor*, *Ars* 1.21). The *praeceptor* attempts to assert control over *amor* by stressing, in the opening lines of the *Ars Amatoria,* the status of *amor* as a *puer* and thus of an age suited to instruction: *aetas mollis et apta regi* (1.10; the notion of *amor* as *mollis*, as a *puer delicatus* [cf. Sharrock 1994.30–50], sexualises the pedagogical authoritarian dynamic by suggesting the effeminate and vulnerable position of *amor* in relation to the *praeceptor*). This is, at first sight, confirmed by the Chiron-Achilles *exemplum*, but the equation of the *praeceptor* (= Chiron) inflicting violent instruction on Achilles (= *amor*) slips straight into an image of *amor,* in the past, inflicting pain on the *praeceptor*, an experience which now supposedly serves as the basis for the latter's authority and ability to control *amor*. The *praeceptor* presents himself as both victim and victimiser, and one source of his pedagogic authority can be seen to reside in the temporal and poetic movement from the *Amores* to the *Ars Amatoria*, expressed in autobiographical terms as a shift from young, inexperienced erotic victim to older, experienced controller of erotic discourse (cf. *usus opus movet hoc*, *Ars* 1.29). The pedagogic dynamic of the *Ars Amatoria*, in a characteristic Ovidian move, is enmeshed in a deliberate confusion of autobiography and poetic development. To fix this dynamic in a new generic context of didactic, the *praeceptor* has to refigure *amor* as a malleable *puer* rather than an erratic and overwhelming divine force, and *amor*'s past mastery of the *praeceptor* is refigured in turn as affording *materia* for the (ex-)lover's revenge in the *Ars Amatoria*. This calls to mind the proverbial truisms that those who can, do, those who can't (or who no longer can), teach; and that those who were once the victims of abuse become abusers themselves.

27 Hollis 1977.31 *ad loc.*

who doesn't know how to love. On the other hand, it may be in its efface-
ment, when it is not seen as such, that the pedagogical effect is at its most
powerful. It is the moment when "you" become *you* that the *Ars* becomes
"really" didactic, and *Ars* 1.1–2 and *Tristia* 1.1.112 can be read as testimony
to the well-nigh universal power of the process of enculturation. Be that as it
may, just as love may be seen as the effect no less than the cause of
representing one's self as a lover, so *fides* may also be viewed as an effect of
discourse to be sought after in pursuit of one's desire by whatever means it
takes (*haec tibi quaeratur qualibet arte fides*, 1.612). The friendly *praeceptor*
tells us that we need look no further than his *Ars*, which will provide *fides* in
plenty (3.791–92):

> si qua fides, arti, quam longo fecimus usu,
>   credite: praestabunt carmina nostra fidem.

Didaxis depends for its effect on *fides*. But we might recall that (1.740):
nomen amicitia est, nomen inane fides ("'friendship' and 'trust' are empty
words") and that (3.674): *prona venit cupidis in sua vota fides* ("trust comes
headlong to those who desire their prayers answered"), and we might reflect
on the rhetoric of the phrase *si qua fides*, which may either be an appeal to
confidence ("trust me") or a warning against it ("if you can trust me"). The
praeceptor duly gives the lover his words (cf. *verbis*, 1.611), the script, with
which he can gain the *fides* he seeks (1.612). But we might recall that the
favourite phrase *verba dare* can (and, arguably, usually does) signify "to
fool" in Ovidian *didaxis*.[28] If you are being taught, as you are in *Ars
Amatoria* 1, to seduce (*capere*),[29] bear in mind that you have been antici-
pated (*sic*) by your <u>*praeceptor*</u>, whose aim is to stay one step ahead. The
verbs *decipere*, *capere*, and *praecipere* form a pedagogic circle (vicious or
virtuous as the case may be) in Ovidian *didaxis*[30] and need to be watched
carefully, as they take *didaxis* itself into the ambit and structure it in terms of
what it teaches, thus eroticising the relationship between teacher and pupil
and figuring instruction as seduction.[31] Note the masterly pun in *Ars* 1.263–
66:

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28 Cf. *Ars* 1.721, 2.166, 558, 3.617; *Rem.* 34, 95, 722.
29 Cf. the programmatic description of *Ars Amatoria* 1 and 2 in *Ars* 2.11–12: *non satis est
    venisse tibi me vate puellam; / arte mea capta est, arte tenenda mea est.*
30 Cf. especially *Rem.* 41: *ad mea, decepti iuvenes, praecepta venite.*
31 Cf. *Ars* 1.10, where the pupil *amor* is presented in terms suggestive of a *puer delicatus*:
    aetas mollis et apta regi.

Hactenus, unde legas quod ames, ubi retia ponas,
　　praecipit imparibus vecta Thalea rotis.
nunc tibi quae placuit, quas sit *capienda* per artes,
　　dicere *praecipuae* molior artis opus.

The *praeceptor,* too, plays a role: to intend to instruct one must purport to intend to instruct. As Malcolm Heath remarked in the passage I quoted at the beginning of this essay, Ovid does indeed adopt in the *Ars Amatoria* "the posture of one expounding and inculcating the principles of the art of seduction." But can it be the case that "*no one* supposes that Ovid really wrote his poem in order to instruct the youth of Rome in that art"? "Seduction," as one may learn from the pages of Alison Sharrock 1994, need not be viewed only as an "erotic" phenomenon, but can trope the relationship of author and reader. Recall, too, that, at the point of reception, any line between "formal" and "final" *didaxis*, no matter how carefully constructed (whether by Ovid or by Malcolm Heath), is liable to rude deconstruction.[32] *Lusus habet finem* . . . and we may close with one last citation. No less an authority than Cicero, in a gesture already, but not yet Ovidian, recuperates that great Platonic model of the teacher (and, it may be recalled, that other pretender to the title *praeceptor amoris*) thus: *in omni oratione* simulatorem, *quem irona Graeci nominarunt, Socratem accepimus* (*Off.* 1.30.108). The trick of teaching, it really does appear, is one of confidence . . . but is there anyone who is not taken in?

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