

SINE ME, LIBER, IBIS: THE POET, THE BOOK AND THE READER IN *TRISTIA* 1.1

The first couplet of *Tristia* Book 2, Ovid's *apologia pro libris suis*, poses the question which will dominate his discussion throughout that poem: what is the relationship between a poet and his poetry?

quid mihi vobiscum est, infelix cura, libelli,
ingenio perii qui miser ipse meo?

What do you books, an ill-starred care, have to do with me – I, a wretch who has perished through my own talent?¹ (Tr. 2.1.1–2)

Central to Ovid's argument throughout this second book of the *Tristia* is the contention that one cannot read literature *literally* and, more specifically, that to make a direct correlation between an author and his work is fundamentally to misconstrue the nature of literature. While Ovid's reference to his *libelli* here as an *infelix cura* conflates his literary output with his emotional state, thus identifying his writing with himself, the question that Ovid is asking in these lines highlights precisely the problems inherent in such an equation.² Ovid explicitly and at length addresses his relationship to his poetic products in *Tristia* 2, of course, yet the whole of the *Tristia* shows a notable preoccupation with the poet's relationship to his own poems, a preoccupation underscored by the fact that these new poems must serve as the instrument of his communication with Rome. More than his other works, then, these poems should present the voice of the poet *in propria persona*, especially given their epistolary nature.³

However, just as *Tristia* 2 insists that the poet is not his poem, so too the persona that Ovid constructs, and the relationship of that persona to his literary output, is not only a central concern throughout the *Tristia* but also a fundamental and programmatic focus of *Tristia* 1.1, the opening poem of the collection, in which Ovid 'constructs' his bookroll and imagines various relationships both with this object and with the reader.⁴ In *Tristia* 1.1 Ovid initially develops an identification between himself and his bookroll, between poet and poetic product. Indeed, studies of this

¹ The text of the *Tristia* which I have used throughout is J.B. Hall (ed.), *P. Ovidi Nasonis Tristia* (Stuttgart, 1995); specific divergences are noted. The translations are my own.

² There is also an implicit play on the meanings of *cura* = 'care' and 'a work (written with care)' (*OLD* s.v. *cura* 3b: 'the object or product of (literary) application'). Cf. *Pont.* 4.16.39. As with the juxtaposition of *cura* and *libelli*, the double meaning of *cura* conflates Ovid's writing with his misfortune.

³ A constituent feature of the epistolary mode is its supposed sincerity, but this is a pose that, as we shall see, Ovid plays with in *Tristia* 1.1, especially by developing multiple identities for the bookroll. On epistolary conventions, J.G. Altman, *Epistolarity: Approaches to a Form* (Columbus, OH, 1982) offers a fundamental discussion.

⁴ G. Williams, 'Representations of the bookroll in Latin poetry: Ovid, *Tr.* 1.1.3–14 and related texts', *Mnemosyne* 45.2 (1992), 178–89 provides insightful comments on the representation of the bookroll in *Tr.* 1.1 and in other poets, especially regarding the analogy between the visual

poem stress the imaginative development of the poetic persona in exile, a persona reified in Ovid's description of his bookroll which articulates a close identification between the poet's fate and the book's appearance.⁵ This is the explicit rhetoric of the poem's opening; however, I argue that, while Ovid initially configures the book's persona as a second self, at the very same time and throughout the rest of *Tristia* 1.1, the poet ironizes that very equation by articulating a highly complex picture of the nature of the bookroll and its relationship(s) to its author and to the reader.⁶ Thus, while Ovid instructs the book to stand in for himself at *Tr.* 1.1.57 ('you go in my place', *tu tamen i pro me*), in the very next line he acknowledges the unattainability of the wish: he cannot *be* his book ('if only I could be my book now', *di facerent, possem nunc meus esse liber!*).

It is in the physical features of the bookroll that the poem's initial identity and identification with the poet is constructed, yet those visual features can and should be read in multiple and divergent ways in the light of Ovid's succeeding discussion in *Tristia* 1.1. Ovid's bookroll, it turns out, plays a variety of fictive roles whose potentialities are contained in that initial physical description and brought to the fore as the poem progresses. In other words, the bookroll as a material artefact offers a tangible example of the lesson – and defence – which the poet subsequently offers in *Tristia* 2 on the 'instability of meaning' in poetry.⁷ In sum, through the fictive object of the bookroll, Ovid constructs, plays with, and finally questions what we now call the biographical fallacy, the propensity of readers to conflate an author with his fictions. *Tristia* 1.1, then, becomes a meditation on writing and reading as inherently complex and multivalent activities.

In the first section of this essay, I explore Ovid's description of the bookroll and its relationship to both himself and the reader. Beyond the overt rhetoric of identification between poet and poem, Ovid's treatment of the bookroll and its material features highlights the fictionality of this poetic product, a strategy which

description and the (supposed) aesthetics of its contents, an analogy which I discuss further below.

⁵ For discussions exploring this identification between the persona of the poet and the persona of the bookroll in various poems of the *Tristia*, including *Tr.* 1.1, see e.g. S. Hinds, 'Booking the return trip: Ovid and *Tristia* 1', *PCPhS* 31 (1985), 13–32, C. Newlands, 'The role of the book in *Tristia* 3.1', *Ramus* 26.1 (1997), 57–79, J.-M. Claassen, 'Ovid's wavering identity: personification and depersonalization in the exilic poems', *Latomus* 49 (1990), 102–16, at 111–12 and J.-M. Claassen, *Ovid Revisited: The Poet in Exile* (London, 2008), 47–50. Hinds, in particular, offers an incisive discussion of Ovid and his books in the *Tristia*; however, he does not focus in detail on the actual description of the bookroll in *Tr.* 1.1 and its implications for reading the *Tristia*. P. Hardie, *Ovid's Poetics of Illusion* (Cambridge, 2002) in turn details the complex relation of text to reality throughout the Ovidian corpus and in the exile poetry at 283–325. Note Hardie's comments at 284–5 on the tension between realism and fictionality in the exile poetry: 'The exile poetry shouts out "this is for real"; but Ovid knows, and knowingly exploits the fact, that he has cried wolf too often before for the reader ever to take him quite at face value. Reality, in Ovid's and his reader's shared experience of his poetry, long ago fused too intimately with the text to emerge now in its pristine and pretextual innocence [emphasis in original].'

⁶ Consider Claassen's acute observation that one must take account not only of 'the literal level of ostensible meaning' when dealing with Ovid but also that the '[a]wareness of the creator-poet's use of irony and frequent slippage between ostensible and real meaning in the rest of his oeuvre compels us to examine individual [exile] poems for a possible second level of meaning', (n. 5, 2008), 77.

⁷ See A. Barchiesi, *Speaking Volumes: Narrative and Intertext in Ovid and Other Latin Poets* (London, 2001), 79–103. As Barchiesi observes at 102, '*Tristia* 2, if Augustus knows how to listen, is above all a lesson on one important aspect of poetry, its instability of meaning'.

implicitly raises questions about the nature of poetry and of a reader's response to it. In the second section I explore how, throughout the course of *Tristia* 1.1, Ovid develops multiple personae for the bookroll, playfully exploring various relationships between himself and it. In so doing, Ovid more explicitly complicates and problematizes that direct identification of poet and poem which he, and we readers, make at the beginning of the poem. In the last section, I offer comments on the relationship between Ovid, this new poem and the *Ars amatoria* in the light of the previous discussions. By revisiting and reworking the logic of the *Ars amatoria*, Ovid questions (Augustan) assumptions about a book's effects on a reader and an author's responsibility for those effects. This programmatic first poem is thus an apt prelude not only to Ovid's later *apologia* in *Tristia* 2 but also to the entire *Tristia*.

I. READING THE BOOKROLL

Tristia 1.1 famously opens with Ovid's *propempticon* to the bookroll itself. The prominence of this rhetorical gesture foregrounds the question of the nature of the poetic project as well as the author's relationship to it, since this send-off is not simply a description of the poet-like bookroll and a call for it to represent him but also a statement of permanent separation and farewell. Ovid, after all, is bidding goodbye to his book. At the same time that Ovid constructs the bookroll as a mimesis of the author, the opening description also emphasizes, through its focus on what is materially present and absent, the imaginative and fictive nature of this bookroll: we are *meant* to read this description as fiction.

Parve – nec invideo – sine me, liber, ibis in Vrbem, ei mihi! quo domino non licet ire tuo! vade, sed incultus, qualem decet exulis esse; infelix, habitum temporis huius habe.	
nec te purpureo velent vaccinia fuco – non est conveniens luctibus ille color – nec titulus minio, nec cedro charta notetur, candida nec nigra cornua fronte geras.	5
felices ornent haec instrumenta libellos: fortunae memorem te decet esse meae.	10
nec fragili geminae poliantur pumice frontes, hirsutus passis ut videare comis.	
neve liturarum pudeat; qui viderit illas, de lacrimis factas sentiet esse meis.	
vade, liber, verbisque meis loca grata saluta: contingam certe quo licet illa pede.	15
siquis, ut in populo, nostri non inmemor illic, siquis, qui, quid agam, forte requirat, erit, vivere me dices, salvum tamen esse negabis – id quoque, quod vivam, munus habere dei.	20

Little book – I bear no grudge – you will go without me to the City, alas, where your master may not! Go, but go unadorned, as is fitting for an exile; wear the unfortunate attire suited to this occasion. Don't let the dark berry with its purple dye veil you – that colour is not suitable for mourning – nor is your title to be marked with cinnabar or your page with cedar oil, nor are you to bear white horn-bosses on your black brow.

Let these items adorn fortunate books: you should be mindful of my state. Nor are your twin brows to be polished with the fragile pumice stone – that way you will look shaggy with your hair undone. But don't be ashamed of your blots; whoever sees them would know that they were made from my tears. Go, book, and with my words greet the dear places: I will touch them with the only measures that I can. If there is anyone there, as is likely among that people, who is not unmindful of me, if there is anyone who happens to ask how I am, tell them that I am sound – but not safe. Still, the fact that I am alive I consider a divine gift. (Tr. 1.1.1–20)

Ovid's direct address to his personified book in *Tristia* 1.1 is a strikingly witty and innovative reworking of topoi conventional to descriptions of bookrolls and to opening poems in a collection.⁸ The description is, on the one hand, an extended play on the typical address to the patron-dedicatee, wherein the object delivered is described in playfully disparaging terms as a modest offering unworthy of the recipient, the most famous example, perhaps, being Catullus 1, one of Ovid's models for this passage.⁹ Yet, while Ovid's address to his *parve liber* superficially mirrors Catullus' rhetoric, Ovid's diminishment of his own poem is, of course, reconfigured to suit his specific purposes and situation. In particular, the rhetorical effectiveness – and the wit – of the book's characterization depends upon the verisimilitude of the alternative, the *de luxe* edition and its accoutrements, counterposed to Ovid's own fictional construct of his decrepit product.¹⁰ The descriptive 'dressing down' of the book in this initial ekphrastic moment represents the book as a kind of anti-presentation object. Unlike Catullus' polished little book, for example, Ovid's is shaggy, marred and unfinished, explicitly lacking a final polish (*nec fragili geminae poliantur pumice frontes*, 11). The description of the bookroll, then, is itself transgressive, challenging assumptions about what a poem 'should' look like. By reversing such conventional expectations, the lamentable bookroll highlights the imaginative nature of this, or any, poetry; indeed, the very notion of a personified book 'dressing' in a particular way implies the adoption of a fictive persona.

By enumerating the physical qualities suited to an expensive and luxuriously appointed *de luxe* edition which a new work might be expected to possess but which his own will pointedly lack, Ovid performs an exercise in negation: no purple cover, no red title inscription, no cedar oil anointing the paper, no white bosses, no polished edges, all underscored by the insistently repeated negatives *nec* (5), *non* (6), *nec* (7), *nec* (7), *nec* (8), *nec* (11), *neve* (13). In stark contrast to a luxurious and 'polished' book, *infelix* Ovid's *infelix* book will go unadorned and in clothing suited to the author's misfortune (*infelix, habitum temporis huius habe*,

⁸ For examples in other poets see Williams (n. 4), 178–80.

⁹ Catullus famously uses the physical description of the bookroll to characterize the aesthetic nature of the content. His poetry book, *lepidum novum libellum* | *arido modo pumice expolitum* ('charming new book, newly polished with a dry pumice stone', Cat. 1.1–2), embodies the neoteric aesthetic values of charm (*lepidum*), innovation (*novum*) and refinement (*expolitum*). In addition, the diminutive *libellum* (used twice in eight lines), while suggesting a positive aesthetic valuation of brevity, also marks Catullus' deprecating characterization of the value of his work, his *nugae*, in the face of his dedicatee. The observations on Catullus 1.1–2 and *Tristia* 1.1 here and in the next two paragraphs are particularly indebted to Gareth Williams's discussions, see Williams (n. 4) and G. Williams, *Banished Voices: Readings in Ovid's Exile Poetry* (Cambridge, 1994). On the programmatic language of Catullus 1 see also W. Batstone, 'Dry pumice and the programmatic language of Catullus 1', *CPh* 93.2 (1998), 125–35.

¹⁰ The most detailed description of such a *de luxe* bookroll is provided by Lygdamus ([Tibull.] 3.1). That poem too is a *propempticon*, and its parallels to *Tristia* 1.1 suggest that Lygdamus was, in fact, influenced by Ovid.

Tr. 1.1.4). Moreover, blotted with tears like a rough draft with its marks and corrections, the bookroll not only mirrors Ovid's crippled emotional state but visually embodies Ovid's professed incapacity to offer an artistically finished product: *neve liturarum pudeat; qui viderit illas, | de lacrimis factas sentiet esse meis* ('and do not be ashamed of your blots; whoever sees them will know that they were made from my tears', *Tr.* 1.13–14). Like those blots, the absence of cedar oil, which served as a preservative from moths and decay, underscores the transitory and ephemeral nature of the object; it is a temporary and vulnerable poetic effort.¹¹ Here the book's provisional nature, its poetic 'incompleteness', mirrors Ovid's own suspension from his physical and artistic life in Rome.¹²

Bracketed by the repeated imperative *vade* which opens and closes the description of the bookroll (3 and 15), the negative description is also an anti-catalogue, effectively an unwilling *recusatio*, that marks his own leave-taking as loss, and not simply loss of place but of culture, refinement, civilization. Indeed, the two opposed physical book types mirror the antithesis between the physical spaces of Rome and Tomis (as Ovid constructs them): the non-existent *de luxe* book, colourful and polished, evokes Rome as the locus of refinement and luxury, all that is *cultus*, while the substituted book, *incultus* (3) and *hirsutus* (12), aligns with the poet's place of exile, uncultured Tomis peopled with shaggy-haired barbarians.¹³ Ovid's treatment of the topos of book description is thus a representation of a series of absences: the absence of a dedicatee to whom Ovid can address his work, the absence of the aesthetic and material qualities expected of a bookroll containing a new work by Ovid, and the physical absence of Ovid himself from the literary world of Rome. Functioning as an epistle, the bookroll should bridge the distance – physical, emotional or otherwise – between the writer and the recipient, but at the same time the very existence of this object also creates that distance, and Ovid's own particular manner of description not only underscores that distance but the notion of absence and non-existence generally.¹⁴ This is a paradox of letter writing: the author is present and is not present; the reader is not present and is present.

Thus, while the bookroll embodies 'Ovid on the Black Sea', the insistent emphasis on negation, absence and separation – on those things that the bookroll is not – also raise questions about the nature of the bookroll, the poetry contained in it,

¹¹ For cedar oil as a preservative: Plin. *HN* 13.3, Mart. 3.2.7; cf. also *Tr.* 3.1.13 and Hor. *Ars P.* 332.

¹² The configuration of the book as dishevelled and intended only for a select audience underscores Ovid's representation of the content as unfinished. The poet sends the book out 'as is' since in his exile he cannot vet his work among friends prior to a more public distribution, as seems to have been the regular practice. On the conventions of presenting works-in-progress among friends prior to distribution of the finished work, see E.J. Kenney, 'Books and readers in the Roman world', in id. and W.V. Clausen (edd.), *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature Volume II: Latin Literature* (Cambridge, 1982), 3–32 and especially R. Starr, 'The circulation of literary texts in the Roman world', *CQ* 37 (1987), 213–23.

¹³ Cf. *Tr.* 5.7.18, *non coma, non ulla barba resecta manu*; *Pont.* 1.5.74, *hirsutos ... Getas*. These are standard Roman conceptions of the Tomitans and associated peoples. See Williams (n. 9, 1994), 8–28.

¹⁴ On the nature of 'I–you discourse' in epistolary writing and the phenomenon of spatial and temporal absence, see Altman (n. 3), at 117–42. P.A. Rosenmeyer, 'Ovid's *Heroides* and *Tristia*: voices from exile', *Ramus* 26.1 (1997), 29–57 discusses the *Tristia* (and the *Heroides*) as epistolary fictions, a form which, among other things, 'allows Ovid the freedom to write himself into being over and over again' (31). See also Hardie (n. 5), 297 on the bookroll and 'the absent presence of the epistle'.

and how it should be read. Importantly, the list of visual attributes which Ovid ascribes to the book is structured sequentially as a mimetic engagement with the hypothetical physical object of the bookroll. Ovid's description is ordered as an enactment of the reading process itself, mirroring the experience of handling an actual bookroll as the reader embarks upon the reading of its contents. The reader first sees and holds in his hands the bookcase (*vaccinia*, 5), then reads the title of the work (*titulus*, 7),¹⁵ his eyes fall upon the roll itself (*charta*, 7), noting the lack of bosses (*cornua*, 8)¹⁶ and the rough edges or surfaces (*frontes*, 11), finally focussing on the page and its markings (*liturarum*, 13) as he begins to read the text. By miming the reader's process of physically engaging with a bookroll and of embarking upon the reading experience, Ovid's description makes that engagement and that experience central to the reading and understanding of this particular poem.

Consider the particulars of Ovid's description which seem to refute the notion that this bookroll is to be understood as a 'real' bookroll. The poet moves from items particular to a book (*vaccinia*, *titulus*, *charta*) to the mention of the *cornua* and the book's *nigra fronte*, appropriate literally to a living being and figuratively a sign of emotional distress and mourning as *luctibus* (6) makes clear.¹⁷ This process of anthropomorphism culminates in the details of the book's dishevelled hair and tear-stained appearance (*passis ... comis, lacrimis*, *Tr.* 1.1.12, 14). By equating the draft erasures of the work to the poet's tears, the book is literally marked both by and as the physical product of the poet's suffering, and is thus ostensibly mimetic of the poet's emotional state, yet at this very moment, and indeed by that very equation, the verisimilitude of the object is destroyed: there are no actual erasures here; there are no actual tears; there is no actual shaggy hair.¹⁸

Ovid's sorry bookroll is thus constructed not only in opposition to a hypothetical *de luxe* scroll but also to any physically real bookroll which would have contained the description of that fictive bookroll. Indeed, the disparity between what the poem says and what the poem is – that is, between the description (the poetry) and the thing described (the bookroll) – would have been thrown into high relief by the actual object held in the reader's hand, a bookroll which surely possessed what Ovid says it lacks (polishing, cedar oil, bosses) and lacked what Ovid says it possesses (rough edges, tear stains). In other words, Ovid's description of the bookroll enacts a process of fictionalization whereby the material book object becomes more and more immaterial and *unreal* as he proceeds through the catalogue of its physical

¹⁵ Either before or after removing the roll from the case, depending upon whether *titulus* is taken to mean the label for the cover or the title on the first page. The construction and appearance of actual bookrolls is discussed by S. Stephens, 'Book production', in M. Grant and R. Kitzinger (edd.), *Civilization of the Ancient Mediterranean: Greece and Rome* (New York, 1988), 421–36 and J. van Sickle, 'The bookroll and some conventions of the poetic book', *Arethusa* 13 (1980), 5–41. Sickle also provides interesting observations on the physical engagement of the reader with the bookroll. For a full discussion of the book and its place in Roman culture, see now R. Winsbury, *The Roman Book: Books, Publishing and Performance in Classical Rome* (London, 2009).

¹⁶ More precisely, it is unclear whether we are to image the book as lacking bosses altogether or simply lacking auspicious white ones.

¹⁷ Williams (n. 4), 185. Compare the tradition of wearing dark and uncleaned clothing when in mourning (the *toga pulla* or *sordida*).

¹⁸ In *Tr.* 1.2. and 1.4 Ovid enacts a similar moment in which his own emotional state and the external world are so in tune that the former can only be read as fiction. There, Ovid writes in a state of emotional upheaval which just happens to coincide with a violent sea storm.

attributes, and so Ovid's focus on the material qualities of the bookroll ironically highlights the *immateriality* of his description. The description of the bookroll loses its verisimilitude, its actuality.¹⁹ We readers are encouraged to – indeed we must – imaginatively *create* this book, a book very unlike the one we hold in our hands. We are both witnessing and sharing in the creation of fiction.²⁰

The reader's experience of reading the opening of the poem and the recognition of the disjunction between Ovid's assertions and the reality of the physical object thus make this opening ekphrasis a moment to contemplate the fictionality of poetry itself, anticipating that detailed discussion in *Tristia* 2 of how to read literature. The discrepancies between the words of the poem and any actual scroll before the reader's eyes argue for the necessity of not taking everything the poet says at face value – of not taking literature literally. This is, on the one hand, a rather obvious point: no one would presume that the described bookroll is a physical actuality; on the other hand, the unreality of the bookroll foregrounds the imaginative nature of the poem, and of the poet, as fictive constructions. So too, while Ovid's description of his bookroll determines – indeed, through its rhetorical excesses, overdetermines – the identification of the poet with this poem, the first line also stresses at least their physical separation: the phrase *sine me, liber, ibis* articulates and, in effect, programmatizes a disjunction between the poet and his poem.

The extended description of the bookroll brings the relationship between the poet and his poetic product to the fore as a central issue for consideration, yet at the same time Ovid also foregrounds the relationship between this poetic product and the reader. Ovid insists that this is not a book for everyone. In lines 27–30 Ovid configures the ideal reader of the *Tristia* as one particularly suited to the sentiment and outlook of the book itself by identifying the reader both with the emotional state of the poet and with the physical state of the book. Just as Ovid's tears are imprinted on the book (*lacrimis ... meis*, 14) so too the reader would weep over it (*nec siccis ... genis*, 28); both book and reader are, moreover, silent

¹⁹ It might be suggested that my reading of the bookroll's description is itself over-literal, but that is precisely the point I am trying to make: through his detailed description Ovid encourages us to appreciate the fact that to read over-literally is to misread; we must recognize that what we are reading is not 'real'. So, too, the affinities between the *Tristia* and the *Heroides* promote an appreciation of Ovid's words in *Tr.* 1.1 as a fictional pose (e.g. *Tr.* 1.1.13–14: *neve liturarum pudeat; qui viderit illas, | de lacrimis factas sentiet esse meis* ~ *Her.* 3.3: *quascumque adspicies, lacrimae fecere lituras*). See Rosenmeyer (n. 14).

²⁰ This particular point depends especially on the presumption of an individual reader holding the text in his own hands, which is the scenario envisioned by Ovid himself (cf. *Tr.* 1.1.27–9), rather than, say, read aloud by a slave. On the complex question of the nature of book reading in antiquity see W.A. Johnson, 'Toward a sociology of reading in classical antiquity', *AJPh* 121 (2000), 593–627. I would argue that the ancient convention of engaging with poetry aurally, of listening to rather than reading a text, only further underscores the text's immateriality. On 'the normal practice of listening to, rather than looking at, texts', see E. Fantham, *Roman Literary Culture* (Baltimore, 1996), 42 and 14–17. As Fantham observes at 121 of Ovid in exile: 'The man became a voice. I write, therefore I am.' In addition, the physical format of the bookroll and the performative nature of reading in antiquity make the reader/auditor's role of special importance for the creation of meaning. Johnson (this note), at 620: '[I]t was the *reader's* job to bring the text alive, to insert the prosodic features and illocutionary force lacking in the writing system ... The reader played the role of performer, in effect, and the sort of direction for pause and tone given by the author's paralinguistic markup in our texts (commas, quotes, italics, indentation, etc.) was left to the reader's interpretation of the lines ... A surprising amount of the burden to interpret the text was shifted from author to reader [emphasis in original].'

figures (*tacitus*, 21 and 29). The book is thus not only a mirror image of the poet but also of the ideal reader of the *Tristia*, a silent figure of mourning, full of sighs and tears. In other words, while Ovid constructs a persona for the book, he also constructs a persona for the reader: Ovid's new work, the 'Lamentations', is a weeping book meant for weeping readers. However, the inherent problem raised in constructing an ideal reader's response is the potential failure of actual readers to respond appropriately. Like the bookroll, as we will see, Ovid perceives that a reader's response is potentially beyond the control of the poet.

In equating the silent book and the silent reader, Ovid not only constructs a particular and specialized audience for his work, he also configures the act of reading as both illicit and voluntary. The poet presents the paradox of a bookroll told to be silent (*atque ita tu tacitus*, *Tr.* 1.1.21) but which can only 'speak' if someone listens to – that is, reads – it. In telling the book to be silent, Ovid shifts the responsibility for the text from the bookroll as the instrument of the author's voice to the reader as the agent who makes the bookroll speak and thus effectively licenses its words: by the very act of reading the reader becomes responsible for what the poem says. Moreover, lacking an explicit addressee (unlike later poems in the collection), the book is to slip incognito into Rome like a secret messenger and find its way to its anonymous audience (*clam tamen intrato*, *Tr.* 1.1.63). The silence of the book, its hidden nature and the reader's clandestine receipt and reading of it transform reading into a conspiratorial act. Indeed, as Ovid subversively configures it here, reading the poem is itself a transgression of the poet's will.

The book as an autonomous, illicit agent in search of a particular reader and subject to that reader's response further separates the book from the author, privileging the book–reader relationship over the author–book or author–reader relationship. This shift from author–reader to book–reader is more fully developed, and literalized, in *Tristia* 3.1 where Ovid's own voice is replaced with that of the book which speaks directly to the reader. Thus, for example, the bookroll asks the reader for advice about where it should go in the city (*Tr.* 3.1.19–20), and an imagined reader guides the bookroll through the sights of Rome. The author becomes the subject of the discourse of others.²¹

Consider, too, the complex line *siquis, qui, quid agam, forte requirat, erit* ('if there is anyone there who happens to ask how I am', *Tr.* 1.1.18) which nests a series of limiting questions within one another that circumscribe the identity of the ideal reader in relation to the poet. Just as the reader unrolls the bookroll to access the poet's words, here the reader 'unwraps' the syntax of the line to get at its meaning. The word order makes the reader an active agent in delving into the poem in order, quite literally, to reach the poet (*agam*) and what he is up to (*quid agam?*). This line which 'conceals' the poet in its centre may be compared to the syntactically parallel later lines where the central embedded phrase is not *quid agam* but *quia sis meus* [*liber*], thus shifting the focus from the poet to the bookroll: *si quis erit, qui te, quia sis meus, esse legendum | non putet* ('if there is anyone there who does not think that you should be read because you are mine', *Tr.* 1.1.65–6). In delving into the complex syntax of that line and reaching its nested centre, the goal is no longer to find (out about) the poet himself but to consider the nature of the book.

²¹ A full consideration of *Tristia* 3.1 is beyond the scope of this paper. For a discussion of that poem see Newlands (n. 5).

The disparity between the imaginative description of the shabby bookroll and the material reality of the actual bookroll in the reader's hand is replicated in Ovid's discussion of the poetic quality of the book's content. Ovid reconfigures the earlier process by which he makes the reader aware of the fictionalization of the book and its contents now in terms of its poetic and literary aesthetics rather than its visual qualities. Here, the contradiction is between Ovid's professed poetic failings and the high artistic quality of the poetry contained within this 'immaterial' book. At line 35 Ovid offers an aesthetic critique of his book, associating the poet's poor emotional state with the poor quality of his poetry, thus arguing for a complete identification between the poet and the poetic product.²² Ovid suggests that the poetry – which is being read as he expresses his reservations – will be found lacking: *culpabere forsan, | ingenique minor laude ferere mei* ('perhaps you [my book] will be faulted and will be thought to fall short of the praise [ordinarily] due to my talent', *Tr.* 1.1.35–6).

This passage brings to the fore the issue of reader evaluation on the level of aesthetic assessment, and when Ovid then speaks specifically of how poetry (*carmina*) is produced, he emphasizes the identification between a happy poet and a good poetic product: 'poems are produced when drawn from a calm spirit' (*carmina proveniunt animo deducta sereno*, 39). Indeed, Ovid emphatically dissociates poetic production from his own emotional state:²³

carminibus metus omnis abest; ego perditus ensem
haesurum iugulo iam puto iamque meo.²⁴

Poetry is free from all fear; but I am lost and I think at any moment I will feel the knife at my throat. (*Tr.* 1.1.43–4)

The very fact that this thought exists in verse belies the poet's assertion, and indeed the quality of the verses throughout *Tristia* 1.1 itself contradicts the poet's profession of artistic incapacity. They are skilfully crafted, allusive, polished.²⁵

²² On Ovid's identification of the appearance of the bookroll with the poor quality of the poetry, see Williams (n. 4), esp. 182–6. Williams (n. 9, 1994), 50–99 *et passim* details Ovid's 'pose' of poetic decline.

²³ The word *deducta* (39) is charged with connotations of Callimachean aesthetics, and so one might think that Ovid is referring only to his inability to compose the sort of refined poetry he was able to in Rome. However, the insistent unqualified repetition of *carmina* three times in six lines, beginning alternate lines (*carmina*, 39; *carmina*, 41; *carminibus*, 43), emphasizes that his comments have to do with the conditions necessary for writing poetry of any kind, not just good poetry.

²⁴ I adopt *abest* (the reading of most manuscripts) rather than *obest* (the reading of P4pc and Francius) which Hall (n. 1) accepts. *obest* lessens the strength of the opposition that Ovid draws here between the poet's situation and the poet's output; however, even if one accepts that reading, the opposition would remain. I also retain the manuscripts' *perditus* where Hall emends to *terrītus*.

²⁵ On Ovid's skilful use of metre and prosody in the *Tristia* see especially G. Luck, 'Notes on the language and text of Ovid's *Tristia*', *HSPh* 65 (1961), 243–61; J.-M. Claassen, 'Meter and emotion in Ovid's exilic poetry', *CW* 82.5 (1989), 351–65; and Claassen (n. 5, 2008), 85–110, esp. 97–8: 'It is not unjustified to state that, far from showing signs of weakening or degeneration, Ovid's exilic poems may be judged, at the prosodic level, as the culmination of his oeuvre.' Regarding *Tr.* 1.1 in particular, see Williams (n. 9, 1994), 50–99, who observes at 52 that 'such distinctive elegies as *Tr.* 1.1 ... are implicitly self-refuting because there is a basic discrepancy between the technical skill which Ovid displays in their composition and their repeated and unambiguous insistence on the gradual erosion of that skill', something which Williams later

Indeed, this couplet itself in which Ovid explains the reason for the poor quality of his poetry ironically exhibits Ovid's typically accomplished poetic skills: the hexameter is entirely dactylic; the delayed caesura before *ego* stresses the disjunction from *carminibus* at the beginning of the line; the long vowels of *haesurum* opening the pentameter stress the 'clinging' threat facing the poet; the epanalepsis of *iam ... iam* adds pathos; the correptions of *egō* and *putō* are in accordance with Augustan prosodic conventions.²⁶ In other words, the formal features of the poem are at odds with the poet's own explicit assessment of them: the poem and the poet disagree.

Like the contradiction which arises between Ovid's fictional description of his bookroll and the material reality of the bookroll in the reader's hands, here Ovid offers a contradiction between what the poetry says and what the poetry actually does. In aesthetic terms, the poetry of the lines argues for a rejection of the poet's own assertions since the attentive and skilled reader can note the disjunction between those assertions and the poem's artistry: a sorry content does not, after all, mean a sorry style. This juxtaposition between the poet's rhetorical assertion of failure and the poetry's formal success thus plays out on the textual level the disjunction between what the poet professes and what the poem actually accomplishes. Poetry, Ovid suggests, as a mode of representation which refracts reality through the *artes* of metrics, prosody, vocabulary, etc., is necessarily an artificial construct, and the skilled reader appreciates (or should appreciate) poetry not (or not simply) for what the poet says but for how well the poet says it, for what the poem accomplishes *aesthetically*. Ovid thus provides an oblique mirror and defence of the *Ars amatoria*, a subtle argument enacted textually against the (Augustan) assessment of that other *carmen* which proved so disastrous to the poet.

Tristia 1.1 demonstrates the perils of reading literally and the need to recognize that 'Ovid', the fictive persona who makes his assertions on the page, and Ovid, the figure who created that fictive persona and its assertions, are not only separate voices but also, potentially, voices in contradiction. So too, Ovid brings the reader to the fore as an agent in the construction of meaning. In sum, what Ovid has done here is to demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of reading and of reading culture in which, as W.A. Johnson has recently articulated, 'reading is not simply the cognitive process by the individual of the "technology" of writing, but rather *the negotiated construction of meaning within a particular sociocultural context*'.²⁷

(n. 9, 1994), at 79 calls a 'technique of dissimulation'. See also B.R. Nagle, *The Poetics of Exile: Program and Polemic in the Tristia and Epistulae ex Ponto of Ovid. Latomus*, vol. 170 (Brussels, 1980), 119–25, on ways in which Ovid presents his 'deterioration'.

²⁶ *egō*: 'always in poets of the best age' (Lewis and Short s.v. *ego*); *putō*: see M. Platnauer, *Latin Elegiac Verse: A Study in the Metrical Usages of Tibullus, Propertius and Ovid* (Cambridge, 1951), 52, citing this line. Correlation of *ego* was, however, optional among pre-classical authors (Plautus) and revived in post-Augustan poetry (Juvenal). Ovid's adherence to Augustan standards shows him to be working well within the polished conventions of high poetic artistry. One is tempted to add that the correptions of *egō* and *putō* seem lexically to enact the diminishment of the poet just as he is disparaging his own work. The *puto* of line 44 is also telling for Ovid's play on actuality and perception in this poem.

²⁷ Johnson (n. 20), 603 (emphasis in original). S. Casali, 'Quaerenti plura legendum: on the necessity of "reading more" in Ovid's exile poetry', *Ramus* 26.1 (1997), 80–112 discusses Ovid's strategies in the exile poetry which encourage the reader to look for hidden meanings and significances, a theme that J. Ingleheart, 'What the poet saw: Ovid, the error and the theme of sight in *Tristia* 2', *MD* 56.1 (2006), 63–86 explores as well.

II. THE BOOKROLL AND THE BOOK'S ROLES

The anthropomorphic features of Ovid's intangible bookroll highlight the nature of the book as a fictional construct, yet the bookroll is not simply an analogue for the poet. The bookroll is a creature of multiple guises in relation to the poet; it mimics, represents, responds to and, indeed, has the potential to oppose the poet. This is deeply ironic and complicates Ovid's stated instructions to the book that it should appear as a representative of the poet, a visual instantiation of the poet's emotional state. As the poem progresses, Ovid constructs various relationships with his book which have the effect of highlighting the complex nature of that relationship. Not just an instantiation of the relegated poet, the bookroll is a protean creature, situated in a variety of relationships to the poet and playing multiple roles: slave, messenger, mourner, intercessor, child. By representing the decrepit bookroll entering Rome in secret and in disguise Ovid makes the book a Ulysses-like figure, an assumer of identities, a wandering beggar who must test the loyalty of the people it meets on its return home. Indeed, Ovid explicitly equates himself to Ulysses at various points in the exile poetry.²⁸ Ovid and the bookroll are most alike in this: they both have multiple and shifting identities.

Ovid's initial rhetorical gesture in the poem is to anthropomorphize the physical bookroll and to configure his relationship to it as one of master to slave (*domino ... tuo*, *Tr.* 1.1.2; repeated at *Tr.* 1.1.97), while *parve*, the very first word of the poem, underlines the book's ostensibly subservient status to the author. At the same time, however, Ovid's address puns on the book (*liber*) which implicitly goes free (*liber*) without him to the city (*Tr.* 1.1.1, 15).²⁹ Thus, while Ovid refers to himself as *dominus* and would appear to be responsible for his book, the *propempticon* at the same time effectually functions as the manumission of this slave-book: in sending the book away, the slave-book is set free. To follow the logic of this conceit, while the book may retain the ties of a *cliens* to its former master, as a 'freedman' it can no longer be considered simply the master's property, a creature wholly under his control.³⁰

The manumission of the *liber* is a particularly suitable analogy for the 'publication' of the *liber* which sent the book out of the hands of the poet and into the world. As Kenney states:

Publication ... was less a matter of formal release to the public than a recognition by the author that his work was now, so to speak, on its own in the world: the word usu-

²⁸ Esp. *Tr.* 1.5.57–84 (also *Tr.* 1.2.9, 3.11.61, 5.5.51; *Pont.* 3.3.53, 3.6.19, 4.10.9, 4.14.35). See H. Rahn, 'Ovids elegische Epistel', *A&A* 7 (1958), 105–20, esp. 115–18.

²⁹ See Hinds (n. 5), 13–14, where he discusses this imaginative master–slave relationship and notes the pun on *liber/liber*. Hor. *Epist.* 1.20 provided a model for the equation poet : bookroll ≈ master : slave. There, too, the bookroll is sent forth like a freed slave (*liber*, line 1), although unlike Ovid's it is nicely polished (*pumice mundus*, 2). See E. Oliensis, 'Life after publication: Horace Epistles 2.20', *Arethusa* 28 (1995), 209–24 and W. Fitzgerald, *Slavery and the Roman Literary Imagination* (Cambridge, 2000), 30. Martial 1.52 offers the most explicit play on this conceit, describing his 'freed' *libellos* as *manu ... missos* (7). The master/slave conceit in Ovid is apparently confined to the exile poetry. See J.F. Gaertner (ed.), *Ovid. Epistulae ex Ponto, Book I* (Oxford, 2005), 215 on *Pont.* 1.2.134 for additional examples in Ovid and elsewhere.

³⁰ On the legal position of the freed slave, the mechanics of manumission and the complex relationship between freedman and former master, see e.g. T. Wiedemann, 'The regularity of manumission at Rome', *CQ* 35 (1985), 162–75, A. Watson, *Roman Slave Law* (Baltimore, 1987) and K. Bradley, *Slavery and Society at Rome* (Cambridge, 1994).

ally translated 'publish' (*edere* = Greek ἐκδιδόναι) connotes the resignation of rights and responsibilities.³¹

While this observation occurs in a general discussion of the absence of copyright laws and legal safeguards in connection with the circulation of books in antiquity, it is also an apt description of the relation of an author to his work, and of the 'problem' of authorial responsibility. The force of circumstances made this problem a central concern to the author of the *Tristia*, and through this fictive master-(freed) slave relationship Ovid suggests that a poet should not be held responsible for his poetry, that a poem is 'on its own in the world'.

In sending the book to Rome, Ovid also employs the book as his messenger, a reified manifestation of the peripheral exile's representative in the imperial centre. Ovid's instruction that the book 'greet the pleasing places with my words' (*verbisque meis loca grata saluta*, 15), for example, highlights the book's role as Ovid's mouthpiece at Rome.³² However, just as the contrast between the *de luxe* and the decrepit bookroll mirrors the contrast between Ovid's former home, refined Rome, the locus of *cultus*, and his new home, Tomis, the land of the *incultus* barbarian, so too the bookroll's journey highlights the separation of the bookroll from the author. In *Tristia* Book 1, Ovid and his bookroll journey in diametrically opposite directions away from and to Rome, a disjunction in movement between Ovid and his book which underscores the disjunction between the poet and his poem. When Ovid makes that standard pun on the literal and figurative meanings of *pes*, his physical foot and the poem's metrical foot (*quo licet illa pede*, *Tr.* 1.1.16), the wordplay highlights not the conjunction, but rather the disjunction, between those literal and figurative meanings: Ovid's poetry goes where Ovid himself cannot; the two 'feet' tread two different paths.³³

Ovid sends forth his book not just as a freed slave and a messenger, but as the survivor of the poet's metaphorical death.³⁴ Indeed, the fancy accoutrements of the *de luxe* bookroll are rejected precisely because they are unsuited for mourning garb (*luctibus*, 6), to which Ovid adds a panoply of mourning tokens: a dark brow (*nigra fronte*, 8), tears (*lacrimis*, 14), and the image of the unshorn book with its hair in disarray (*hirsutus passis ut videre comis*, *Tr.* 1.1.12).³⁵ Throughout this

³¹ Kenney (n. 12), 19; see also B.A. van Groningen, 'ΕΚΔΟΣΙΣ', *Mnemosyne* 16 (1963), 1–17.

³² If one takes *grata* in its passive sense, however, this line becomes an oblique tongue-in-cheek act of self-praise in the midst of the overt rhetorical stance of self-disparagement: 'greet the places that have taken pleasure in my words'.

³³ Hardie (n. 5), 284: 'Here the pun in *pede* "foot of body/metrical foot" already makes the point: it is only on his metrical feet that Ovid can travel to Rome'. Notably, for my discussion of the connections between *Tristia* 1.1 and the *Ars amatoria* below, this punning recalls the opening of the *Amores* (1.1.4) where the forcible removal of a 'foot' compels Ovid to write love elegy – which led to such things as the *Ars amatoria*. For *pes* as metrical foot, see *OLD* s.v. *pes* 11. S. Hinds, *The Metamorphosis of Persephone: Ovid and the Self-Conscious Muse* (Cambridge, 1987), 16–18 provides a discussion of this pun with additional examples in Ovid and elsewhere. Cf. also *Tr.* 3.1.11–12 where Ovid uses the motif of the 'limping verses' (*clauda ... carmina*) of elegiac poetry to make the same equation between poetic form and content.

³⁴ Ovid's relegation as a kind of death is a leitmotif of the exile poems. See Nagle (n. 25), 22–35 and Williams (n. 9, 1994), 12–13.

³⁵ The detailed focus on the physical tokens of mourning evokes the particularized meaning of *luctibus* (*Tr.* 1.1.6) as the external signs of sorrow worn by the bereaved (*OLD* s.v. 1c). For the conventions of mourning which emphasize physical mortification, see K. Olson, 'insignia lugentium: female mourning garments in Roman antiquity', *AJAH* 3–4 (2004–5 [2007]), 89–130 who focusses on female mourning, a particular aspect of Ovid's description which I discuss below.

poem there are insistent intimations of Ovid's death: he has been struck by the thunderbolt of Jupiter (*sc.* Augustus) (*me quoque, quae sensi, fateor Iovis arma timere*, *Tr.* 1.1.81); shattered by a fierce storm, he has suffered a catastrophic shipwreck in his relegation (*mea cumba ... vasta percussa procella*, *Tr.* 1.1.85); the *Metamorphoses* have been rescued from his funeral pyre (*nuper ab exequiis carmina rapta meis*, *Tr.* 1.1.118).³⁶ Of course, just like Ovid's pseudo-decrepit bookroll, his 'death' evoked here and elsewhere in the *Tristia*, however resonant as an evocation of his emotional or artistic situation, is undeniably a poetic fiction.

Seen in this context, the book not only plays the role of mourner for the 'dead' poet but, what is more, it becomes a kind of epitaphic inscription that appeals to the passing traveller, the voice of the deceased speaking to whoever will listen.³⁷ Ovid's own appeal to the unknown reader parallels conventional addresses to the passing stranger found in actual funerary epigraphs. Compare, for example, *CLE* 1191 where the epigraphic *carmina* are, like Ovid's bookroll, professedly without adornment or skill (*incomptos elegos*):

Praeteriens quicumque leges haec carmina nostra,
quae tibi defuncti nomina vera dabunt,
incomptos elegos veniam peto ne verearis
perlegere ...³⁸

You who in passing will read these verses of mine which will give you the true name of the deceased, please do not shy away from reading these unadorned couplets ...

Indeed, in the specifically funereal and mournful context of *Tristia* 1.1, lines 15–19 sound strikingly like such actual epigraphic phrases as *siquis forte legat titulum nomenve requirit* (*CLE* 1085),³⁹ where the deceased appeals to the stranger who has happened upon his tomb to remember him and bring news to the living:

siquis, ut in populo, nostri non inmemor illic,
siquis, qui, quid agam, forte requirat, erit,
vivere me dices ...

If anyone, as [is common] in a great multitude, remembers me there, if there is anyone there who by chance may ask how I am doing, tell them that I am alive...

(*Tr.* 1.1.17–19)

³⁶ Cf. also *Tr.* 1.7.37–8 where Ovid says that his bookrolls (*volumina*) 'have not been published by himself but, as it were, snatched from the funeral pyre of their master': *non sunt haec edita ab ipso, | sed quasi de domini funere rapta sui*.

³⁷ The equation between book and funerary monument is, of course, a common trope of poetry, Horace *Odes* 3.30 being a pre-eminent expression of this conceit. Important as well is the fact that the word *titulus* (the 'title card' of the bookroll as at *Tr.* 1.1.7) is also the regular term for an epitaph (*OLD* s.v. *titulus* 1 and 2). Compare also *Tr.* 3.3.73–8 where Ovid offers his own epitaph (*titulo*) and asserts that his poems will be greater and longer-lasting *monimenta*: *hoc satis in titulo est: etenim maiora libelli | et diuturna magis sunt monimenta mihi* (77–8).

³⁸ Cited by E. Wolff, *La Poésie funéraire épigraphique à Rome* (Rennes, 2000), 47.

³⁹ For other examples and a discussion of the role of the passer-by in funerary epigraphy, see R. Lattimore, *Themes in Greek and Latin Epitaphs* (Urbana, IL, 1962), 230–6, Wolff (n.38), 45–53 and M. Carroll, *Spirits of the Dead: Roman Funerary Commemoration in Western Europe* (Oxford, 2006), 53–8.

Here Ovid's instructions to the bookroll echo epigraphic conventions in which the tombstone as written object speaks to the passer-by. Ovid, however, ironically and humorously reverses the expected instructions to the stranger: the book is not to report that he is dead but that he is still alive, but doing poorly, with enjambment of the pivotal word *vivere*. So too, in a wry reconfiguration of the typical epigraphic formula *sit tibi terra levis*, the request to the passer-by to pray 'may the earth be light upon you',⁴⁰ Ovid imagines that the book will find an anonymous reader who will pray *sit mea lenito Caesare poena levis* (*Tr.* 1.1.29–30), 'may my punishment be light (with Caesar mollified)'.⁴¹

Thus, on the one hand, the bookroll is configured as the survivor of Ovid's fatal misfortune and in turn cast as the tombstone itself, the 'last words' of the deceased. Yet, on the other hand, the bookroll is most vivid as a pathetic figure, a mourner for the exilic 'death' of the poet, and out of this primary image of the book as mourner grow two more specific roles in the book's performance repertoire. First, the bookroll is configured specifically as a female object of pity, an image brought to the fore in the final details of the bookroll's description, the dishevelled hair and tears (*passis ... comis, lacrimis*, *Tr.* 1.1.12, 14) which transform the bookroll into a distraught and mourning woman.⁴² Beyond the comparison of Ovid's exilic situation with the abandoned women of his *Heroides*,⁴³ and especially in the context of Ovid's conflict with Augustus and the current book's task of petition and pleading, this imagery of a distraught female more particularly suggests an analogy to the Sabine women, those paradigmatic figures of pathetic appeal. Indeed, dishevelled hair, tears and funereal garb are consistent and defining components of the Sabine women's appearance at the moment of their intervention in the conflict between their husbands and fathers throughout Latin literature, features which Ovid himself employs in his own description of the Sabine women when they enter the fray at *Fasti* 3.213–14:

crinesque resolvunt
maestaque funerea corpora veste tegunt.

They undo their hair and cover their mournful bodies with funereal garb.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ See Lattimore (n. 39), 68–74 and Carroll (n. 39), 54–5. The appeal was so common that it was often abbreviated *S T T L*.

⁴¹ Note, too, that with *lenito Caesare* removed the phrase *sit mea ... poena levis* matches *sit tibi terra levis* in wording, thought and rhythm (each being a hemistich). Often, as well, in another parallel to Ovid's situation, epitaphs dwell upon the injustice of the deceased's fate, e.g. *CLE* 1007.1–2: *Praeteriens quicumque legis consiste viator | et vide quam indigne raptus inane querar* ('Whoever you are who pass by, stop, traveller, and see how, though snatched away undeservedly, I complain in vain').

⁴² See Olson (n. 35) on tears, undone hair and dishevelled clothing as standard tokens of female mourning throughout antiquity. For a discussion of these physical markers, particularly the undone hair, in Ovid's elegiac poetry, see R. Hälikkää, 'Sparsis comis, solutis capillis: loose hair in Ovid's elegiac poetry', *Arctos* 35 (2001), 23–34, who also details instances in other authors. Hälikkää comments at 31 on the 'unusual metaphor' of the bookroll with undone hair in *Tr.* 1.1.11–12: 'The book is described in terms of a grieving woman with loose hair.'

⁴³ See e.g. Rosenmeyer (n. 14).

⁴⁴ Livy too emphasizes their undone hair and torn garb (*crinibus passis scissaque veste*, 1.13), and the Sabine parents also make a sorrowful appearance which prefigures the women's own: *sordida veste lacrimisque et querellis* (1.10). In the *Ars amatoria*, as well, Ovid dwells on the Sabine women's lamentable state at the moment when they are seized. Among other acts of hysteria, they tear their hair and weep (*pars laniat crines, lacrimis*, *Ars am.* 1.122, 129).

The book as Ovid configures it here plays the role of the Sabine Women, interceding for peace in the midst of his own deadly conflict – with a consequent hint, or hope, on Ovid's part of the happy ending that the Sabine women effectuated.

Notably, too, in the Sabine women episode of the *Ars amatoria* Ovid employs a rhetorical strategy of negative description akin to the anti-ekphrasis of the bookroll in *Tr.* 1.1. He emphasizes the simple and primitive qualities of early Rome and its people by dwelling on the luxurious appointments that the theatre then lacked: marble, awnings, rich colour, while, like Ovid's hirsute bookroll, the people in turn were notable for their shaggy hair:

tunc neque marmoreo pendebant vela theatro,
nec fuerant liquido pulpita rubra croco;
illic quas tulerant nemorosa Palatia frondes
simpliciter positae scena sine arte fuit;
in gradibus sedit populus de caespite factis,
qualibet hirsutas fronde tegente comas.

At that time awnings did not hang from the marble theatre, nor were the stage-boards red with moist saffron; there the branches which the Palatine groves had borne were placed simply and became an artless stage; the people sat in rows made of turf, any frond they could find covering their shaggy hair.
(*Ars am.* 1.103–8)

The lack of adornment of the bookroll matches these sorts of rustic elements: the bookroll is *incultus* (3), it lacks the luxury of *purpureo vaccinia fuco* (5) and is *hirsutus passis ... comis* (12), the term *hirsutus* being a particularly redolent marker for primitive humanity.⁴⁵ Yet, however resonant the association which is thus suggested between the bookroll and iconic female figures of grief, the gender difference between such figures and the poet once again complicates the equation between the (male) poet and the (female) poem, and underscores the performative, imaginative nature of the poet's and the book's identities.⁴⁶

The book as a figure of pathetic appeal in the mode of the Sabine women becomes particularly suggestive given the poem's implicitly forensic context. Indeed, the forensic setting actually becomes explicit in the lines immediately following the description of the dishevelled bookroll, when Ovid first refers to his *crimina* (*Tr.* 1.1.23) and describes himself as a defendant in a public suit (*publicus ... reus*, *Tr.* 1.1.24). The book thus takes on another role, becoming an analogue for the defendant in a court case and his supporters who appear with all the tokens of mourning to signal their support and to express their dismay at the defendant's situation.⁴⁷ Much like the supporters of Cicero, that other famous exile, who put on mourning garb in sympathy for his situation, Ovid's book comes before the public – his readers and, in particular, Augustus – in rags, dressed in mourning

⁴⁵ OLD s.v. *hirsutus* 1. Ovid elsewhere describes the inhabitants of Tomis as long-haired. See n. 13 above.

⁴⁶ Ovid is, of course, well known for his explorations of gender and gender role playing. See, among many, A. Sharrock, 'Womanufacture', *JRS* 81 (1991), 36–49, M. Wyke, *The Roman Mistress: Ancient and Modern Representations* (Oxford, 2002) and M. Wyke (ed.), *Parchments of Gender: Deciphering the Bodies of Antiquity* (Oxford, 1998).

⁴⁷ My discussion of the final role that the bookroll plays – Ovid's child – is reserved for the next section where I focus on the implications of this conceptualization in relation to the *Ars amatoria*.

to evoke pity and mercy.⁴⁸ In this legal setting, however, Ovid concedes that the book has no defence to make, that his case is hopeless: *neu te defendas, quamvis mordebere dictis; | causa patrocínio non bona maior erit* ('Don't defend yourself though you are bitten by words; the case is not good and will be too much for a patron's advocacy', *Tr.* 1.1.25–6).⁴⁹ If the word *patrocinium* is accorded its full force in this context as the 'performance as a patronus in a court of law',⁵⁰ the reader is presented with a paradoxical inversion of the book's presumed subservient status vis-à-vis the poet. Here, Ovid once again reconfigures his relationship to the bookroll, but this time in diametrically opposite terms to those earlier relationships of *dominus* to *servus* or *patronus* to freedman *cliens*. If the book were to speak in Ovid's defence, it would be playing the role of *patronus* to himself as *cliens*.

It is also within this imagined forensic context that Ovid comments on the supposedly poor poetic quality of this new work and gives his first explicit discussion in the poem of how to evaluate poetry, anticipating the aesthetic criticism which he expects the new book to receive. Ovid speaks of the 'duty of a judge' (*iudicis officium*, *Tr.* 1.1.37) and explicitly argues for leniency from a 'fair-minded judge' (*iudex ... aequus*, *Tr.* 1.1.45). In particular, Ovid asserts that a judge must consider both the *res* and the *tempora* when evaluating a charge: *iudicis officium est ut res, ita tempora rerum | quaerere* ('the duty of a judge is to consider both the facts (*res*) and the circumstances (*tempora*) of the matter', *Tr.* 1.1.37–8).

Occurring in the midst of Ovid's discussion of the poetic quality of his poem, these forensic terms themselves demonstrate how texts can be read in two different (that is, literal or metaphorical) ways: here, the language of forensic judgment when occurring in a literary discussion serves as poetic terminology. Not simply the criteria for judicial evaluation, the *res* and the *tempora* also describe elements of poetry: the content (*res*) and the metre (*tempora*).⁵¹ The double meanings of each of these terms are in play at the same time: in asking a *iudex* to consider the *res* and *tempora* of his current poetry, Ovid structures the debate as a discussion of how to evaluate both a *crimen* and a *carmen*.⁵² With these shifts in the meanings of words, Ovid not only, and quite literally, shifts the terms of the debate, but at the same time he once again demonstrates the mutability of meaning in a text.

⁴⁸ For the convention of the defendant and his supporters appearing in public in physical and sartorial squalor as though in mourning, see L. Bablitz, *Actors and Audience in the Roman Courtroom* (New York, 2007), 84–5. Cicero repeatedly boasts that the senate and populace took on mourning clothing as a sign of their support, e.g. *Cic. Sest.* 14: *erat igitur in luctu senatus, squalebat civitas publico consilio veste mutata* ('Thus the senate was in mourning and the citizenry by public consent adopted squalid clothing'). For a detailed discussion of Ovid's poetic responses to Augustan power in the exile poetry, see now M. McGowan, *Ovid in Exile: Power and Poetic Redress in the Tristia and Epistulae ex Ponto* (Leiden, 2009). McGowan, however, does not discuss *Tristia* 1.1 at length.

⁴⁹ While Ovid makes an oblique defence of his *œuvre* in *Tr.* 1.1 by articulating a sophisticated model of reading, as I am arguing here, we have to wait until *Tr.* 2 for a more comprehensive, overtly forensic defense, for which see the introduction to S.G. Owen (ed), *P. Ovidi Nasonis Tristium Liber Secundus* (Oxford, 1924).

⁵⁰ OLD s.v. *patrocinium* 2.

⁵¹ OLD s.v. *res* 9 and *tempus* 13.

⁵² Within this 'forensic' section of the poem, Ovid's insistent repetition of forms of the word *carmina* may hint at the technical use of *carmen* as 'a legal formula or pronouncement' (OLD s.v. *carmen* 1e). In other words, the meaning of the very word *carmina* is itself provisional and mutable.

III. TWO KINDRED POEMS: *TRISTIA* 1.1 AND THE *ARS AMATORIA*

As a special book for a special reader, the *Tristia* occupies a position analogous to the *Ars Amatoria*, that book about love written for would-be lovers, as Ovid makes clear in its opening lines:⁵³

siquis in hoc artem populo non novit amandi,
hoc legat et lecto carmine doctus amet.

If anyone in this multitude does not know the art of loving, let him read this and, once he's read the poem, let him love like an expert. (*Ars am.* 1.1.1–2)

The *Ars amatoria* could not be far from the thoughts of any reader of *Tristia* 1.1 who knows the circumstances of Ovid's exile, and indeed Ovid reminds the reader of that work even before it is encountered on his bookshelf at lines 67–8. That first line of the *Ars amatoria* by which Ovid frames his potential and proper readership is closely mirrored at *Tristia* 1.1.17 when, after the description of the bookroll, Ovid sends the new bookroll off to Rome and describes the potential readership it will find there: *siquis, ut in populo, nostri non inmemor illic* ('if anyone in the multitude is not unmindful of me there', *Tr.* 1.1.17). Ovid's appeal to an unknown, yet self-selecting, reader is effectively repeated (*siquis in hoc ... populo ~ siquis ut in populo*)⁵⁴ and underscores the conjunction between the two poems in Ovid's mind and in the mind of his readership: not to know the *Ars amatoria* (*artem ... non novit amandi*)⁵⁵ is not to be mindful of Ovid (*nostri non inmemor*) – and the reverse is also true: to know the *Ars amatoria* is to be mindful of Ovid.

In addition to being poems meant for particular eyes, Ovid configures the *Tristia* and reconfigures the *Ars amatoria* as objects unsuited for public display. They are furtive creatures who must conceal themselves, the *Tristia* sneaking into Rome in disguise and the *Ars amatoria* hiding in the shadows of the bookcase (*obscura latitantes parte*, *Tr.* 1.1.111). Like the *Ars amatoria* Ovid constructs the character of the *Tristia* as another kind of illicit poem for a specific and willing audience. At the very point when Ovid tells the book to be silent, the second half of the line (*quaerenti plura legendum*, 'he who seeks must read more', *Tr.* 1.1.21) challenges the reader to actively consider the act of reading and his own responsibility for that act.⁵⁶ The reader is forewarned: read on if you are curious, but it is *your*

⁵³ The select nature of the intended audience of the *Ars amatoria* becomes an explicit and important part of Ovid's defence in *Tristia* 2 (cf. *Tr.* 2.245–54 and 301–12). See Williams (n. 9, 1994), 201–9. The *Ars amatoria*, understandably, is a strong preoccupation in the exile poems. In addition to the mention of the *Ars amatoria* here and in *Tristia* 2, see Nagle (n. 25), 61–8 on the incorporation of erotic diction into Ovid's descriptions of exile, and Williams (n. 9, 1994), 66 on the transformation of erotic *exempla*.

⁵⁴ R. Tarrant, 'Ovid and ancient literary history', in P. Hardie (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Ovid* (Cambridge, 2002), 13–33 at 30 notes the parallel; however, he calls it simply one of the exilic Ovid's 'minor-key rewritings of earlier programmatic statements'.

⁵⁵ As A.S. Hollis, *Ovid. Ars Amatoria. Book I* (Oxford, 1977) at 31–2 notes, the phrase *artem amandi*, occurring in the first line, is effectively equivalent to the title: 'the nearest approach to the poem's title that dactylic verse will allow' (31).

⁵⁶ On the implications for the act of reading suggested in this line and elsewhere in the exile poems, see Casali (n. 27) and S.J. Huskey, 'Quaerenti plura legendum: Ovid on the necessity of reading in *Tr.* 1.1.21–2', *Latomus* 12 (2005), 234–49.

choice. However, the paradox that arises in juxtaposing the fictive status of the *Tristia* with the actual status of the *Ars amatoria* lies in the *licit* content of Ovid's putatively illicit poem from exile. The reader's expected reception of the poem as the product of the shunned author, and so a work to be shunned, highlights the rupture between the content of the work and how the reader responds to it, between its assertions and its effects.

Indeed, Ovid's mention of his *crimina* at line 23 in the midst of a discussion of his *carmina*, a discussion which becomes a central concern in the following lines,⁵⁷ raises the question of the relationship between this poem and the earlier *Ars amatoria* where Ovid had famously asserted that 'there will be no *crimen* in my *carmen*' (*inque meo nullum carmine crimen erit*, *Ars am.* 1.34), a line which he uses again in his defence at *Tristia* 2.250. In the *Tristia* the only misdeed that Ovid discusses, or is able to discuss, at any length is the *Ars amatoria* itself: those *carmina* are his *crimina*. In fact, however, the juxtaposition which Ovid makes between these two words exposes the deficiency in equating the two by lexically miming Ovid's argument that his *carmina* can only become *crimina* if they are misread. Turning the word *carmina* into *crimina* is an imperfect and corrupting process: in order to become *crimina* the poet's *carmina* must not only be rewritten (by rearranging the letters of *carmina* into *crimina*) but also, in fact, misread (since the letters of *carmina* are not identical to those of *crimina*).

Here, moreover, Ovid playfully demonstrates how a text can get away from an author and say things that the author does not want said. Ovid warns the book: *ne, quae non opus est, forte loquere, cave! | protinus admonitus repetet mea crimina lector* ('beware that you don't by chance say what there is no need to: as soon as the reader is reminded he will recall my *crimina*', *Tr.* 1.1.22–3).⁵⁸ The text seems to be out of Ovid's control: in the midst of advising his book what not to say, Ovid ironically says it, thus producing exactly the result which he professes not to want. Precisely because the reader is reading these lines, the reader is reminded of Ovid's *crimina*.⁵⁹ These admonitions to the bookroll telling it to remain silent and at the same time telling it what to remain silent about establish a particularly ironic disjunction between express authorial intent and the actuality of the poem's reception, especially if the poem was experienced aurally in a performative reading, as was common.⁶⁰

It is the most important reader of his poetry, however, whom Ovid dwells upon in the latter half of the poem. Augustus, too, must be approached with an appreciation of place and circumstances (*consilium resque locusque dabunt*, 92). When and where poetry can and should be read is something that applies to Augustus especially: Augustus should read this work 'at his leisure', when he is not engaged in serious matters (*vacuus*, *Tr.* 1.1.93). Ovid is particularly concerned that Augustus' anger will colour his reading of this new poem, that Augustus will

⁵⁷ Note how often the word *carmina* is repeated thereafter: *Tr.* 1.1.28, 39, 41, 43, 55, 63 and 118.

⁵⁸ I retain the manuscripts' *cave* where Hall (n. 1) emends to *dato*.

⁵⁹ The same effect occurs at *Tr.* 2.207 where Ovid mentions the *error* but declines to identify it. As Ingleheart (n. 27) at 65 says, 'Ovid's *praeteritio* of the *error* serves to draw attention to, rather than minimize, it'.

⁶⁰ See n. 20 above.

misread the *Tristia*.⁶¹ Thus, Ovid suggests through the very example of Augustus that any reader's own situation – the baggage that the reader brings to the text – factors into the reader's response to a piece of writing; this is, moreover, a factor beyond the control of the author. In turn, by asserting that reading poetry is a leisure activity, just as writing poetry is (*carmina ... otia quaerunt*, *Tr.* 1.1.41), Ovid recognizes a hierarchy which subordinates the reading and writing of poetry to more serious endeavours and thus diminishes the importance of poetry and its effects generally.

Ovid and the *Tristia*'s relationship to his earlier *Ars amatoria* becomes the central focus of the poem when the reader arrives at lines 67–8 and the new book arrives at Ovid's library, there to meet the poet's previous works.⁶² Ovid instructs the book:

‘inspice’, dic, ‘titulum: non sum praeceptor amoris;
quas meruit, poenas iam dedit illud opus’.

Say: ‘Look at my title. I am not the teacher of love; that work has already paid the penalty which it deserved’. (*Tr.* 1.1.67–8)

The *Ars amatoria*, ‘as everyone knows, teaches how to love’ (*quod nemo nescit, amare docent*, *Tr.* 1.1.112), and Ovid tells the new book to announce that it is not the *praeceptor amoris*. But it must be remembered that in the *Ars amatoria* it was Ovid who taught love: at *Ars am.* 1.17 it is the authorial persona itself that says *ego sum praeceptor Amoris*, a defining conceit that is repeated throughout that poem.⁶³ By putting the phrase *non sum praeceptor amoris* into the mouth of the book at *Tristia* 1.1.67, Ovid shifts the role of *praeceptor amoris* from himself the author, as articulated in the *Ars amatoria*, to the *Ars amatoria* itself, transferring the function, and the responsibility, from the poet to the poem.⁶⁴ As Ovid says, it is the poem, not the poet, that has (or should have?) paid the penalty: *poenas iam dedit illud opus*. So too at *Tr.* 1.1.115–16 Ovid even goes so far as to warn his new book not to love that earlier one, ‘even if it teaches you itself’:

deque tribus, moneo, si qua est tibi cura parentis,
ne quemquam, quamuis ipse docebit, ames.

⁶¹ Cf. *Tr.* 1.1. 94: *si vires fregerit ira suas ...* (‘if his anger has lost its force ... [then approach him]’).

⁶² See Hinds (n. 5) for a discussion of this scene and Ovid's reinterpretation, or recharacterization, of his earlier poetry in it.

⁶³ For other instances in the *Ars amatoria* of Ovid identifying himself in these terms, cf. *Ars am.* 1.7, *me Venus artificem tenero praefecit Amori* (‘Venus made me the skilled master of tender Love’) and *Ars am.* 3.43, *nunc quoque nescirent: sed me Cytherea docere | iussit* (‘women now too would not know [how to love], but Cytherea ordered me to teach them’).

⁶⁴ Cf. *Tr.* 3.1.4 where Ovid again ascribes love-teaching to the book (rather than himself): ‘no verse on this paper teaches love’ (*nullus in hac charta versus amare docet*). Indeed, even at *Ars am.* 1.17 Ovid plays on the potential meanings of *praeceptor amoris*. The full line reads: *Aeacidae Chiron, ego sum praeceptor Amoris* (‘Chiron was Aeacides’ [i.e. Achilles], I am Love's [i.e. Cupid's] tutor’. As *praeceptor* Ovid does not teach about love but actually teaches Love. See Hollis (n. 55) at 33: ‘We expect [these words] to mean “a teacher of love” ... So it is a surprise that Ovid means here “the tutor of Cupid”’. Although Hollis discounts a play on the two senses of *amoris* as both love and Cupid for syntactic reasons, both meanings are surely in play here.

I warn you, if you have any concern for your father, don't love anyone of those three [books of the *Ars amatoria*], even if it teaches you itself.

Once again the book, not Ovid, teaches love.

This warning occurs in the midst of Ovid's final reconfiguration of his relationship to his bookroll. As this last quote highlights, together with the shift in attention to the *Ars amatoria*, Ovid also and importantly conceives of the book in a new role: no longer Ovid's slave, or messenger, or mourner, or intercessor, or advocate, the *Tristia* is now his child and the brother of his other books.⁶⁵ By reimagining the books of the *Ars amatoria* as his children, Ovid shifts the emphasis from, and indeed transforms, the sexual, illicit love of the *Ars amatoria* into the parental, licit love of the *Tristia*.⁶⁶ So, too, the line *ne quemquam, quamvis ipse docebit, ames* is not only a wry renunciation of Ovid's earlier amatory pedagogy, but once again a recasting of the terms: it is not erotic but fraternal love that the poet warns against. Moreover, read with an eye to Augustus' anxiety over the sorry state of the Roman family and the dearth of procreation, Ovid facetiously positions himself here as a follower of Augustus' moral programme: Ovid, like a good Roman, rejects immorality and has a large number of children, although one turned out bad.⁶⁷ This last notion is remarkably cheeky since it implicitly equates Ovid to, of all people, Augustus. The emperor, of course, had banished his own disappointing daughter and granddaughter, the elder and younger Julias, and Ovid's enigmatic *error*⁶⁸ may have been connected to the scandal surrounding one of them.⁶⁹

IV. CONCLUSION

Ovid's focus on the fictional appearance and imaginative roles of this first poem in the *Tristia* collection provides a means of exploring the relationship of the

⁶⁵ Ovid's other books are explicitly called the *fratres* of the *Tristia* in line 107. One might say that Ovid's *libri* are now his *liberi*. It is worth quoting Claassen (n. 5, 2008), 47–8 on Ovid's manipulation of the conceit of his books as his children: 'Such apparently contradictory inversion is typically Ovidian ... As always, our poet has managed to evoke a multiplicity of meanings with a single play. Ovidian wit delights in the conceit, regardless, or perhaps even because of, the contradictions inherent in its literal application'.

⁶⁶ Note too how, in the lines subsequent to the above quote, Ovid recalls the *Metamorphoses*, those 'thrice five books of changed forms' (*sunt quoque mutatae, ter quinque volumina, formae*, *Tr.* 1.1.117), and there he reverses the logic of analogy which identifies a book with its author. Now Ovid's life imitates those metamorphoses, and his real life can take its place among those tales: *inter mutata referri | fortunae vultum corpora posse meae*, *Tr.* 1.1.119–20). Ovid's reality is absorbed into his fiction.

⁶⁷ In the Augustan moral context which overshadows this poem, the analogy of books as children and, in particular, Ovid's emphasis on himself as the father of the three (*tres*, line 111; *tribus*, line 116) books of the *Ars Amatoria* wittily implies that Ovid is entitled to the *ius trium liberorum*, that honour for prolific parents established by Augustus himself.

⁶⁸ As Ovid famously calls it at *Tr.* 2.207: *perdiderint cum me duo crimina, carmen et error*.

⁶⁹ J.C. Thibault, *The Mystery of Ovid's Exile* (Berkeley, 1964) surveys various hypotheses about Ovid's exile, laying out at 38–49 the possible connections to the scandal of the elder Julia (although his identification of Julia with the Corinna of Ovid's *Amores* is questionable), and at 55–9 those to that of the younger Julia. It is often pointed out that Ovid's relegation occurred in the same year (A.D. 8) as the younger Julia's banishment. For a recent discussion of Ovid's *error*, which wisely refrains from 'solving' the mystery, see Ingleheart (n. 27) with bibliography.

poet to his product and of the reader to both. The ontological autonomy of this object once it leaves the hands of its author raises the very questions faced by Ovid in *Tristia* 2 regarding his previous output. Is the poet responsible for how his poetry is read? Is the poet his poetry? Ovid's answer at the beginning of the *Tristia* is yes: this book is as I am. However, through the insistent fictionality of the bookroll's description and the disparity thus created between the poet's assertions and the material reality of the ostensible poem-object, Ovid manages both to construct and to deconstruct, *at precisely the same time*, the analogic relationship between the writer and his work.

In turn, over the course of the poem, Ovid playfully explores the very notion of identity and identification of poet and poem by presenting the bookroll in a multiplicity of roles and relationships to the poet. At its opening, the bookroll seems to be the physical instantiation of the poet, the medium for his voice and the vehicle through which he will communicate to the world. However, like Pygmalion and the other artist-craftsmen of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the poet's act of reification, of turning the object into a person, gives the poem a life and voice of its own beyond the artist's control. Indeed, in admonishing the book to 'take care that you do not say what you should not' (*ne, quae non opus est, forte loquere, cave!*, *Tr.* 1.1.22), Ovid accords the book the capacity to speak independently of the poet's own desires. In bringing his poem to life and having it perform multiple roles, however facetious or not we wish to consider the poet's intentions, Ovid insists upon the multivalent nature of literature: books play many, but always imagined, roles, and it is a mistake to read without appreciating that complexity, to suppose that fiction has the quality and weight of reality.

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