THE SEARCH FOR AN *ALTER ORBIS* IN OVID'S *REMEDIA AMORIS*

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I

AS PART OF HIS EFFORT to help the "recovering lover" avoid a relapse, the *praeceptor* of the *Remedia Amoris* warns his pupil to stay away from his former girlfriend: *alter, si possis, orbis habendus erit* (630). In the immediate context, the *alter orbis* denotes a circle of friends that does not include the *domina*, which should be reasonably easy to find. However, if we remember that much of the poem tries to help the reader find a world where love does not hurt too much, the qualifying conditional becomes more significant. Ultimately, despite the attempts of the *praeceptor* to reassure his suffering pupil, the *Remedia* demonstrates in many ways that painful love may be very difficult or impossible to escape, especially for women, and that a cure may sometimes be more painful than the disease. This essay will concentrate on the poem's mythological *exempla*, which deserve closer critical attention than they have previously received,[1] but will also survey the non-mythological evidence that a cure is rarely *facile* and sometimes not even *utile* or *laudabile*.[2]

Even the opening dialogue invites skeptical reading. Amor, without being brought on stage or described, is stated in the first word to have read the poem's title, on the basis of which he jumps to a negative conclusion: *legerat huius Amor titulum nomenque libelli / 'bella mihi, video, bella parantur' ait* (1–2). The *praeceptor* assures his interlocutor that he does not intend to end happy love affairs, only those which might lead to suicide (3–38, esp. 13–22), and Amor promptly encourages him to proceed (40).

Aside from the apparent haste of Amor's judgments, certain details of the *praeceptor*'s reply raise suspicion in those who have read Ovid's earlier poems. The *praeceptor* claims not to be undoing his earlier work: *nec nova praeteritum Musa*

[1] For example, Henderson (1979: xx–xxii) analyzes the "Structure and Contents" of the poem in terms of *praecepta*, with no reference to *exempla*. More attention has been paid to the complex or ironic use of mythological *exempla* in the *Amores* and *Ars Amatoria* than in the *Remedia*: see, for example, Davis (1980) and Watson (1983). Weber (1983: 186–189) offers general conclusions about the argumentative, didactic, psychological, structural, and parodic functions of myths in the *Ars* and *Remedia*. Although Weber suggests that the incongruities of some of the narratives invite the reader to examine critically the poet's apparent interpretation of the myths, he does not closely examine any narrative from the *Remedia* in this light. For a preliminary consideration of this issue in the *Remedia*, see Davisson 1993: 219–221.

[2] Throughout this essay I use terms such as *utile* and *laudabile* because they are useful descriptions of what is said in much of the *Remedia*, not because I imagine that Ovid referred constantly to *Rhet. ad Her.* 3 or any similar work while composing this poem. See below, n. 46.

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retexit opus (12). However, the precise nature of this "earlier work" remains open to question. Could not the *Ars Amatoria* itself be considered a declaration of war against Cupid, since the *praeceptor* there proposed to punish the god (1.24)? If so, should Cupid be pleased that the sequel will be similar in spirit? Although the *praeceptor* denies that the *Remedia* is an attack on Cupid, he does characterize the *praeteritum opus* as a poem which changed *impetus* to *ratio* (*Rem. Am.* 10). Even if we set aside some readers' objections to this characterization of the *Ars*, can we be certain that the god who [*Nasonem*] *violentius ussit* (*Ars Am.* 1.23) wants love to continue to be systematized?[3]

More generally, experienced readers know Ovid as a poet whose disclaimers, such as the claim in *Ars* 1.31–34 not to be writing for married women, cannot be taken literally.[4] We know also that he delights in undoing his *praeteritum opus*. Among his shorter poems, *Amores* 2.8 reverses 2.7 (on the *amator* and Cypassis), and 3.4 reverses 2.19 (on guarding women). Furthermore, both the *Amores* and the *Ars* in large part reverse the elegiac convention of *servitium amoris*—itself a reversal of the normal Roman male authority over women.[5] In maneuvering through the hall of mirrors which constitutes Ovid's elegiac corpus, we should be skeptical about the possibility of a poem which contains no elements of reversal, although we may not always agree on what is being reversed.[6]

Second-time readers of the *Remedia* itself will find even more to question in the *praeceptor*'s reply to Cupid. The *praeceptor* proposes to cure only those love affairs which could cause fatalities, yet elsewhere in the poem he will cite supposedly exemplary characters whose amatory behavior was fatal for themselves or their loved ones. The diction of 29–30 is especially curious: *tu cole maternas, tuto quibus utimur, artes, / et quarum vitio nulla fit orba parens*. The most obvious interpretation is: "Cultivate your mother's arts [i.e., the arts of Venus], which we use without risk, and which are to blame for no mother's bereavement." However, Ovid could surely have said something about safe amatory techniques

[3] For skepticism about the success of the *praeceptor amoris* in taming *amor*, see, e.g., Durling 1958: 159, arguing that the *praeceptor*'s claim that Amor should be docile like the young Achilles (*Ars Am.* 1.11–18) actually reminds us that Amor, like Achilles, may grow to be a formidable adult (as he is in *Ars Am.* 2.741–742). Cf. Verducci 1980: 39 *et passim*.

[4] For example, Williams (1978: 72) points out that "what Ovid does [e.g., in the story of Helen and Paris, *Am.* 2.359–372, and the story of Mars and Venus, *Ars Am.* 2.561–594] is to undercut his iterated claim [e.g., 1.31–34] that *Ars Amatoria* is addressed to *heterae*."

[5] On the Roman elegiac inversion of the traditional relationship between men and women, see, e.g., Luck 1969: 68–69, 128–129 and Lyne 1979: 117–130. For limits to *servitium amoris* set by the *praeceptor amoris*, see *Ars Am.* 1.51–56, 1.417–418, 2.193–196, 2.335–336.

[6] Even in a relatively literal reading, the precise relationship between the *Ars* and the *Remedia* is complicated. One can sometimes lose track of the *praeceptor*'s claim to cure only unhealthy love rather than all love, since the later poem often seems to reverse the earlier one. For example, in the analysis of Henderson (1979: xvi), fourteen of the forty *praecepta* in the *Remedia* reverse *praecepta* in the *Ars*—although three injunctions in the *Remedia* actually repeat the advice of the *Ars* (and line 487 enjoins the pupil to re-read the *Ars*). On the complex relationship between the two poems, see further Prinz 1914: 36–48 and Lucke 1982: 36.

without referring to motherhood twice in one couplet. Motherhood will prove significant in the *Remedia*: several mothers (as well as fathers) lose or kill their own children because of amatory behavior described and sometimes advocated in this poem of "safe" love. Moreover, lovers in need of comfort are sometimes compared to mothers in need of comfort: maternal love appears surprisingly often in a poem professing to teach the calculated abandonment of love. Curiously, the *praeceptor* proposes numerous ways for men to distract themselves from love but none specifically for women; one might hypothesize that motherhood is the female equivalent of the forum and the battlefield, were it not for the fact that the mere existence of offspring is often a reminder of erotic love.

The issues of the possibility and desirability of a cure will not become fully apparent until later in the poem, but this opening address to Cupid at least raises questions about the nature of the *praeteritum opus* and the claim that the former work is not being undone. The *praeceptor*'s address to his pupils raises more doubts. One might expect him to single out those lovers who did not play the game safely because they foolishly failed to read the *Ars*. However, the *praeceptor* clearly acknowledges that the *decepti iuvenes* (41) learned love from him (43–44).

The rest of the exordium shows incongruities typical of the poem as a whole. First the *praeceptor* cites Telephus, who was cured by the same spear which wounded him (47–48).[7] Next he assures his audience that he is giving *arma* (50) to women as well as to men: *e quibus ad vestros [puellarum] si quid non pertinet usus, / at tamen exemplo multa docere potest* (51–52). In fact, as other readers note, he will offer very little to help women directly or indirectly.[8] The *praeceptor*'s choice of a figure from the male world of war as his first example of healing anticipates the male bias which will later become much more conspicuous.

The exordium continues with a lengthy catalogue of lovers whom the *praeceptor* could have cured (55–68), after which he shifts his address yet again, from the *decepti iuvenes* (41) to Phoebus, the *carminis et medicae . . . repertor opis* (76). The *praeceptor* prays: *tu pariter vati, pariter succurre medenti* (77), but the poem as a whole—and the first catalogue in particular—show the difficulties of being both a *medens* of lovers and a credible *vates*. The poetic tradition offers little encouragement that love can be cured, and the first catalogue illustrates this lack of precedents.[9] The *praeceptor* does not offer positive examples of healing from his own experience, nor even claim generally that (as in *Ars Am.* 1.29) *usus opus*

[7] By contrast, in Prop. 2.1.59–64 Telephus and Philoctetes (see *Rem. Am.* 111–114) frame a list of characters whose medical histories do not demonstrate that love may be cured but rather *contrast* with the impossibility of curing love.

[8] See, e.g., Henderson 1979: 42; Green 1982: 404; and Pinotti 1988: 104. I do not claim that women can never learn from male examples (and vice versa), but I shall argue below that the male bias of both the *exempla* and the recommended distractions from love is too systematic to be ignored.

[9] On the evident improbability of curing love, see Lenz 1969: 4. Conte (1994: 65) concludes that "the *Remedies against Love* present themselves as a cure for those in love, but in fact they function as a remedy against a form of literature," i.e., Roman love elegy. Neither discusses in detail the *praeceptor*'s conspicuous difficulties when he turns to poetic tradition in search of encouraging examples of cures.

movet hoc. Instead, he cites as "credentials" eight mythological lovers who would have avoided disaster if they had read his teachings.

Because this catalogue anticipates many significant characteristics of *exempla* in the *Remedia*, it merits close consideration. Phyllis would have completed more than nine trips if she had had me (the *praeceptor*) as *magister* (55–56); Dido would not have been dying as Aeneas left (57–58); Medea would not have killed her children to punish her husband (59–60); Tereus would not have been turned into a bird because of his *facinus* (61–62); give me Pasiphae and Phaedra (as students), and they will lay aside their passions (63–64); Paris will leave Helen to Menelaus, and Troy will not fall (65–66); Nisus would have kept his purple lock if Scylla had read my books (67–68).

The most obvious feature of this catalogue is that it is a catalogue, with no fewer than eight myths. Although catalogues occur throughout the Ovidian corpus,[10] catalogues of short examples are particularly conspicuous in the *Remedia*, which in contrast to the *Ars* contains just three examples longer than ten lines, and none longer than twenty-six.[11]

Two other features are apparent even before we scrutinize individual *exempla*. First, the *praeceptor* cites only cures which *would have* happened. The lack of positive examples of actual cures in the tradition is emphasized by the contrary-to-fact subjunctives in the first four examples and the last.[12] The imperatives and future indicatives in the three intervening examples—give me So-and-so (as a student), and a particular event (such as the fall of Troy) will not happen—underline the absurdity of his boasts within the context of the contrary-to-fact subjunctives. The passage simply does not prove that self-help books are effective. Here, as elsewhere in the poem, an abundance of contrary-to-fact clauses raises doubts about the *praeceptor*'s claims.[13]

[10] On catalogues in the *Met.*, for example, see Galinsky 1975: 195, rightly pointing out that some but not all of Ovid's catalogues are humorous in effect.

[11] The longest *exemplum*, the story of Circe, occupies twenty-six lines (263–288). The *exemplum* of Agamemnon, Chryseis, and Briseis occupies twenty lines (467–486), but may strike the reader more as part of the catalogue beginning in 453 than as an independent longer example. The third longest, the story of Phyllis, occupies just eighteen lines (591–608). The *Ars* contains six longer *exempla* involving the behavior of lovers (i.e., one fewer per book than the *Remedia*, if we classify *Rem. Am.* 263–288, 467–486, and 591–608 as longer examples) but these average about thirty lines (1.295–326, 1.527–564, 1.681–704, 2.123–142, 2.561–594, 3.685–746); moreover, the *Ars* includes a seventh long *exemplum* (2.21–98) involving the *praeceptor* himself. The *Remedia* thus devotes significantly fewer lines to lengthy examples.

[12] *Vixisset* (55), *isset* (56), *vidisset* (57), *armasset* (59), *meruisset* (62), *legisset* (67), *haesisset* (68). Pinotti (1988: 106) comments on the evident impossibility of the situations hypothesized in 55–68 and on the absurdity of this sort of self-recommendation, but not on the pluperfect subjunctives themselves.

[13] The following *exempla* use contrary-to-fact subjunctives (usually pluperfect) to describe what would have been a more expedient result if some character had acted in conformity with the *praeceptor*'s instructions: 55–56 (two subjunctives), 57–58 (one), 59–60 (one), 61–62 (one), 67–68 (two), 99–100 (one pluperfect and one imperfect), 605–606 (two); cf. 745 (two, involving circumstances more

Second, six of the eight characters who should have behaved more prudently are female. This statistic also anticipates the trend of the rest of the poem: female *exempla* are so often negative (*quod vites*, in the terms of Livy pref. 10) as to undercut the hope that women can be cured as readily as men.

An additional characteristic of this catalogue might strike second-time readers of the poem: at least half the examples anticipate the tendency of the *Remedia* to illustrate, both directly and indirectly, the disruption of parent-child relationships which often results from passion. Medea killed her children, Tereus was tricked by his outraged wife into eating his son, Phaedra's pursuit of her stepson caused his father to curse him, and Scylla betrayed her father to the enemy she loved. One might add Pasiphae, whose passion resulted in a monstrous offspring.[14]

Details of individual examples support Henderson's (1979: 43) conclusion that Ovid is "burlesquing" catalogues here and also anticipate features of *exempla* elsewhere in the poem. First, the catalogue demonstrates a curious mixture of directness and allusiveness. We are told that under other circumstances Dido would not have died when Aeneas left, and, more graphically, that Medea would not have killed her children: *nec dolor armasset contra sua viscera matrem* (59). However, the only explicit consequence Phyllis would have avoided is being limited to nine trips (56). Scylla is not said to suffer anything herself; rather, her father lost his purple hair (68). The consequences at the beginning and end of this catalogue would sound superficial or nonsensical if Ovid's intended audience did not know that Phyllis killed herself after running to the shore nine times in search of her lover, and that Scylla removed the purple lock which gave her father strength because she loved his enemy.[15] Numerous other *exempla* in the poem will require us to supply our own knowledge of a myth cited only briefly.

Second, the three examples which use imperatives deserve particular scrutiny: *da mihi Pasiphaen, iam tauri ponet amorem; / da Phaedran, Phaedrae turpis abibit amor. / redde Parin nobis, Helenen Menelaus habebit, / nec manibus Danais Pergama victa cadent* (63–66). The *praeceptor* seems to be gaining self-confidence: in 63–64 he can dispose of two victims of love in one line apiece, whereas each previous victim required a whole couplet, and he has changed from contrary-to-fact subjunctives to imperatives and future indicatives. With Paris, he keeps the imperative-indicative syntax but demands our attention by a return to the

than behavior). Cf. *debuerat* (112), *debueras* (574), *Argolides cuperent fugere* (735), and below, n. 27. Although the *Ars* contains several contrary-to-fact subjunctives, only one instance describes what would have been a more desirable outcome if someone had behaved more prudently: *Troia maneret, / praeceptis Priami si foret usa sui* (3.439–440). Ovid could have used contrary-to-fact verbs in 2.359–372, 2.399–400, 2.561–594, and 3.685–746, but preferred other constructions. The relative frequency of contrary-to-fact sentences in the *Remedia* is, therefore, striking.

[14] Ovid was obviously aware of these implications; cf. *Met.* 7.396 and below, n. 33 (Medea), 6.619–665 (Tereus), 15.500–532 (Phaedra), 8.1–95 (Scylla), 8.131–137 (Pasiphae).

[15] On Phyllis' nine trips to the shore, see Hyg. *Fab.* 59; Henderson (1979: 114) believes that this detail probably appeared in Callim. *Aet.* On Scylla and Minos' hair, see Aesch. *Cho.* 613–622, Apollod. *Bibl.* 3.15.8, and *Met.* 8.6–151.

couplet structure as well as by the absurdity of his claim. Most of Ovid's educated contemporaries would accept the fall of Troy, if not the story of Helen, as an historical event with enormous consequences (including the founding of Rome), and the *praeceptor*'s future indicative claim that he will prevent this is patently ludicrous.[16] His return to contrary-to-fact subjunctives at the end of this catalogue may be an implicit acknowledgment that he has been carried away. The passage should alert us to expect humorous exaggerations and absurdities elsewhere. In addition, we need to bear in mind that Paris' behavior is here presented as something to be avoided; second-time readers will remember that Paris, like Tereus, is held up as a *positive* example later in the poem (457–460, 709–712).[17]

In this first catalogue, then, we find parody of catalogues as such, contrary-to-fact verbs, a disproportionately negative treatment of women, disrupted parent-child relationships, allusiveness which requires us to supply our own knowledge of the tradition, interpretations which clash with other treatments of the same myth, and a direct reference to the Trojan War, despite a later claim that such topics are not suitable for elegiac couplets (381). All of these features recur in the *Remedia*. The incongruous treatments of certain myths and the hypothetical nature of some *exempla* weaken our belief in the possibility of a cure, while the use of women as negative examples, the use of the Trojan War tradition as source material, and the references to tragedies involving children present a particularly bleak picture to female readers. To illustrate these characteristics, I shall discuss at length one supposedly positive catalogue of male examples and two negative female examples, with briefer intervening references to other *exempla*.

II

Perhaps the most absurd catalogue in the poem appears in lines 453–460, supplemented by a longer example in 467–486. After advising his reader to cool his ardor by dividing his love between two girls (441–444), the *praeceptor* offers a list of male characters who did *not* in fact divide their time between two girlfriends but betrayed a wife or fiancée for another woman. The first *exemplum* is Minos, who betrayed Pasiphae for Procris (453) without obvious negative consequences. However, the next two characters suffered dreadful consequences, which the *praeceptor* passes over in silence, leaving the sophisticated reader to supply them from his or her knowledge of the tradition. Phineus (454) was tricked by his new love into blinding his sons, and Alcmaeon (455–456) was killed by the brothers of his old love. The following two examples, Paris and Tereus (457–460), should be questioned by even the most naive reader, since they were used earlier as negative examples (61–62, 65–66). Furthermore, virtually every reader would know that

[16] For the assumption that the Trojan War was historical (even if Homer could not be entirely trusted), see Thuc. 1.3, 9–12, Livy 1.1, and Feeney 1991: 253.

[17] Mankin (1984) pointed out the *praeceptor*'s inconsistent treatment of Paris.

Paris' obsession with his second love caused the Trojan War, and many would also know that in one tradition Oenone, the woman whom Paris abandoned, later refused to heal his fatal wound. Similarly, Ovid's intended audience would know that Tereus, after raping and mutilating his wife's sister, was tricked into eating his own son.[18]

By the conclusion of this catalogue, the consequences suffered by the unfaithful males and their victims have become serious indeed. Paris' behavior brings death to many others besides himself; Tereus' crime and his punishment are particularly gruesome. Even if we ignore the sufferings of the women involved, it would be a gross understatement to say that, for all the men except Minos, the recommended cure is worse than the disease.[19] In contrast to the first catalogue in the poem, this one lists events rather than hypothetical situations. If we accept mythological tradition, men have succeeded many times in abandoning one woman for another, and even if we do not believe these myths we can easily accept infidelity as realistically *possibile*—a phenomenon which most readers will have observed in their own experience.[20] Yet the catalogue does not prove that leaving one's wife for another woman is *utile*—it actually implies the opposite to the reader familiar with mythology—and it proves nothing whatsoever about the *praeceptor*'s original advice to have two *mistresses* at the same time.

[18] On Procris: see, e.g., Apollod. *Bibl.* 3.15.1, *Met.* 7.690–862, and Fontenrose 1980. On Phineus: Apollod. *Bibl.* 3.15.3. On Alcmaeon: Apollod. *Bibl.* 3.7.5. On Paris and Oenone: Apollod. *Bibl.* 3.12.6. On Tereus: Apollod. *Bibl.* 3.14.8, and *Met.* 6.647–666.

[19] Oenone is *laesa* (458), which can refer to betrayal by an unfaithful lover or spouse, to a wound, or to pain in general. The adjective is provocative because Paris was physically *laesus* when Oenone refused to help him. Having been reminded of the suffering of one of the women in this passage, we are perhaps justified in recalling that Philomela and Procne suffered greatly, although this is not spelled out in 459–460. Procris' relationship with Minos, in some traditions, contributed to a pattern of mutual distrust in her marriage with Cephalus, although again this link is not mentioned in either *Rem. Am.* 453–454 or *Ars Am.* 3.685–746. Fontenrose (1980: 289), refuting Green's characterization (1979: 24) of Procris as a "trollop," insists that Ovid "'does not want us to take into account any feature of a tradition which he does not mention'." (Fontenrose borrows this wording from Fraenkel 1950: 2.97.) I find it difficult to apply such a principle consistently to the *Remedia*, which blatantly omits such well-known features as the ultimate fate of Tereus and the traditional causes for Aegisthus' adultery (see 161–168 and below, n. 28); not everyone will agree with my interpretation of every Ovidian example, but few modern commentators fail to find humor or some other point in the contrast between Ovid's Aegisthus and Aeschylus', or between Homer's treatment of the quarrel over Briseis and Ovid's (*Rem. Am.* 465–486 and below, n. 21). Similarly, if the author of a modern *Ars* advised the reader to take women on late-night drives, just as Ted Kennedy did on Chappaquidick, surely we would draw on our own knowledge and question this example. Since not one but several of the men cited in *Rem. Am.* 453–486 suffered for infidelity, the cumulative effect is to encourage us to question the *praeceptor*'s recommendation; and it is possible, if less certain, that the word *laesa* invites us to remember the sufferings of the women as well.

[20] It may seem superfluous to specify the reactions of readers who do and do not "believe" in mythology, since much Latin poetry passes over in silence the issue of the necessity to suspend disbelief. However, Ovid does sometimes disrupt a mythological passage with an explicit reference to its fictional nature: see *Am.* 3.12.41–42; Davis 1980: 415; *Tr.* 1.5.79–80; and Davisson 1993: 227.

Although this catalogue is not long by Ovidian standards, the *praeceptor* seems to acknowledge its absurdity, for he breaks off with: *quid moror exemplis, quorum me turba fatigat?* (461). However, he adds another example at greater length, which does not explicitly involve infidelity to a wife (although Agamemnon was married), but which is equally absurd. Lines 467–486 turn the great quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles into an elegiac rivalry. Ovid's intended audience knew that Homer's Agamemnon was not seeking a cure for lovesickness when he took Briseis, he did not help himself by this behavior, and indeed he greatly harmed his fellow Greeks. Aspects of the *praeceptor*'s account, such as his contemptuous apostrophe to Chryses (471–472) and Agamemnon's silly comment on the similarity between the names of Chryseis and Briseis (475–476), trivialize the entire episode.[21] Thus, in both the shorter and the longer examples our knowledge of the full tradition compels us to question the *praeceptor*'s explicit advice to keep two mistresses, as well as his implicit recommendation to abandon a wife or fiancée for another woman. Nor need our skepticism depend entirely on this tradition: the *praeceptor*'s own rhetorical question in 461 raises doubts.

Toward the end of the poem, three briefer catalogues raise similar problems. One implies that love is extremely difficult to escape, one blatantly fails to support the associated *praeceptum*, and the third does both. In encouraging the lover to avoid places associated with the beloved, the *praeceptor* moves from a negative example, the Argive sailors who failed to avoid Nauplius' trap (735–736), to an apparently positive example, the sailor who rejoices to avoid Scylla (737). However, the *praeceptor*, after mentioning two other dangerous spots (the gulfs of Syrtis and the sea near Acroceraunia), concludes with Charybdis (739–740). Ulysses, who should already be in our minds by lines 735–736 as the principal cause of Nauplius' anger, was able to avoid Scylla or Charybdis but not both.[22] Therefore, the catalogue as a whole is not encouraging about the feasibility of avoiding all dangerous places.[23] The next catalogue is supposed to demonstrate the role of *casus* (742), but the claim that Phaedra and Pasiphae would not have fallen in love had they been poorer (743–746) is unconvincing, since it was other aspects of their circumstances which exposed them to temptation; and the idea that poverty protected Hecale and Iros from unhappy love (747–748) has no basis

[21] Pinotti (1988: 225, 228) sees a conflation and banalization of *Il.* 1.74–91 and 430 ff. and finds the emphasis on the similarity of the two women's names particularly absurd. Cf. Lenz 1969: 5.

[22] On Scylla and Charybdis, see *Od.* 12.101–120. Henderson (1979: 128–129) reminds us of the connection between Nauplius, who was Palamedes' father, and Ulysses; see Eur. *Hel.* 766–769, Virg. *Aen.* 2.81–93, and Serv. on *Aen.* 11.260.

[23] In a related injunction, the *praeceptor* urges his pupil to hurry by the house where his rival might be with his mistress (785–788), adding: *illo Lotophagos, illo Sirenas in antro / esse puta* (789–790). Again, if we think of Homer's Odysseus, the implications are mixed: Odysseus abstained from lotus (*Od.* 9.82–104), but was able to hear the Sirens while escaping them (physically) through a device (*Od.* 12.154–200) which might be envied by the *praeceptor*'s pupil, who would doubtless rejoice to find a trick through which he could enjoy his girlfriend's attractions without being permanently caught. On other difficulties in 785–788, see below, n. 50.

in extant literature. Even if we accept the *praeceptor*'s interpretations of these characters, they do not suit the larger context, which emphasizes what actions can prevent a relapse (609–611), not what sort of people can avoid love altogether.[24] Finally, the catalogue of men whose love was strengthened by jealousy (771–784) offers little hope of escaping this *nostri maxima causa mali* (768). The *praeceptor* introduces this catalogue with the injunction not to *rivalem ... fingere*, most naturally translated "to imagine a rival" (769). However, Orestes, Menelaus, and Achilles had actual rather than imagined rivals. Indeed, the catalogue ends with a humorous assurance that Agamemnon certainly slept with Briseis despite his oath (779–784). The examples are irrelevant to the injunction not to *fingere* a rival, unless we conclude that *fingere* here means "to visualize" a rival who is all too real.[25] Since rivals are the "greatest cause of trouble," relapse seems almost inevitable.[26]

Isolated instances of brief mythological *exempla* show many of the features found in the catalogues. Shortly after his first catalogue of contrary-to-fact *exempla*, the *praeceptor* states that Myrrha and Philoctetes (99–100, 111–112) should have nipped their respective problems in the bud (although the *praeceptor* admits, 113–114, that Philoctetes was cured after many years). The *praeceptor* uses contrary-to-fact subjunctives for Myrrha and a comparable construction, *debuerat ... praesecuisse*, for Philoctetes, presumably because—as in his first catalogue—he cannot think of any traditional figures who cured themselves in a timely manner.[27] Proceeding from advice on timing to a recommendation to keep busy, the *praeceptor* explains Aegisthus' adultery with Clytemnestra: *in promptu causa est: desidiosus erat* (162). The humorously abrupt wording invites us to question this interpretation of the myth, and indeed the notion that those who fought at Troy escaped amatory problems is contradicted elsewhere in the poem (467–486,

[24] Henderson (1979: 129–130) finds no intelligible guidance on falling out of love in 743–744, 747–748. In Henderson's scheme, lines 601–688 and 697–798 should show how to prevent the renewal of love; lines 743–750 present the "precept" that "being poor is a help" (p. xxi). Even if we label these lines, less schematically, as a comment on the importance of luck at any point in one's love life, rather than a direction about preventing a relapse, the *exempla* are unconvincing: Phaedra's precise financial worth was not a traditional factor in her unhappy love. Henderson rejects lines 745–746, which are usually taken to refer to Pasiphae, but these lines are accepted by Lenz (1969), Kenney (1961), and Pinotti (1988: 313–314), who compares the juxtaposition of Pasiphae and Phaedra in *Rem. Am.* 63–64.

[25] Henderson (1979: 133) does not examine the word *fingere* but does contrast the existing rival of this passage with the possibly imaginary rival of 543–544. *Fingere* is translated "imagine" by Melville (1990), but Green (1982)—perhaps thinking of the *exempla* which follow—chooses "picture," a verb which does not establish the truth or falsehood of the rival's existence.

[26] Note that this discouraging passage appears nearly at the end of the poem, supporting the hypothesis that the author (as opposed to the *praeceptor*) understands the extreme unlikelihood of a permanent cure. See above, n. 9.

[27] On *debeo* used in the past to indicate what someone should have done (but by implication did not), see Woodcock 1959: 94–95. The force of the past potential subjunctive *cuperent* (735) is similar to that of the pluperfect contrary-to-fact verbs found elsewhere in the poem.

777–784).[28] The traditional reasons for the lovers' anger against Agamemnon, including an ancestral feud (itself arising partly from adultery) and Agamemnon's sacrifice of his daughter, are not mentioned.[29]

Another Trojan War figure, Paris, is used in a variety of ways. We have seen that (like Tereus) he was a negative *exemplum* in the catalogue of hypothetical cures (61–66), but allegedly positive in the catalogue of second attachments (457–460): this inconsistency recurs later. Lethaeus Amor, after listing various practical worries which can distract the pupil from love (551–572), concludes with one negative mythological example: Paris should have learned to reject Helen by contemplating his brothers's deaths (573–574).[30] In fact, these deaths are unlikely to distract Paris from love, since this passion caused the war which killed his brothers; and to classify the casualties as counter-irritants is an odd way to evaluate the greatest war in Greek mythology. Later, the Judgment of Paris, which gave rise to his passion for Helen and thus to the war, is commended as an example of comparing one's girlfriend to others in order to perceive her weaknesses (709–712). Here, as in the catalogue of men who found new attachments, the *praeceptor* has ignored the tragedy of the Trojan War, which he appears to deplore elsewhere. Furthermore, since Paris at the time of the Judgment was not specifically looking for the weaknesses of any human or divine female, the *praeceptor* humorously fails to convince us that making comparisons can help us recover from passion.

Before we turn to the two most fully developed negative examples, both of which are female, it may be useful to underline two trends in the examples discussed so far. First, numerous *exempla*, both positive and negative, are drawn from the Trojan War tradition.[31] This pattern both contradicts the claim that such

[28] Geisler (1969: 227) comments on the "travesteriende Behandlung" of this tragic tale and reminds us that *Ars* 2.399–408 offers an entirely different explanation of the adulterous affair (Clytemnestra's jealousy of Chryseis, Briseis, and Cassandra). Hollis (1973: 111–112) sees additional humor in the importation of an anachronistic Roman concern about idleness into this Greek legend.

[29] Ovidian speakers often add an amatory emphasis *not* present in the original version of a story, as when the *praeceptor amoris* casts Achilles and Agamemnon as rivals in primarily amatory terms (*Rem. Am.* 777–784; cf. 467–486 and *Tr.* 2.259–262, 371–376, etc.). In the case of Aegisthus, the *praeceptor amoris* conspicuously overlooks a readily available amatory explanation for the background to Aegisthus' adultery (one element of the ancestral hostility between Aegisthus and Agamemnon was Thyestes' seduction of Atreus' wife, Eur. *El.* 719–721), thus revealing an incomplete comprehension of the dangers of amatory entanglements. Moreover, the *praeceptor* never specifies a direct object for *amavit* (167); his emphasis suggests that Aegisthus went to bed with someone out of sheer boredom, not that he was gripped by the sort of dangerous passion for a particular woman which the *praeceptor* set out to cure in 15–22.

[30] In a different context, *ut posses odisse tuam, Pari, funera fratrum / debueras oculis substituisse tuis* (573–574) could mean that Paris should have convinced himself not to abduct Helen by contemplating the bloodshed which would probably result. However, the rest of Cupid's speech advises the pupil to distract himself from existing passion with existing worries, not to avoid amatory entanglements by contemplating the new worries which may result. Therefore, I assume that Cupid's *exemplum* refers to some time after the abduction of Helen and the deaths of some of Paris' brothers.

[31] See 57–58 (Dido and Aeneas), 65–66 (Paris and Helen), 111–114 (Philoctetes), 161–168 (Aegisthus and Clytemnestra), 263–288 (Circe and Ulysses), 457–458 (Paris and Helen), 467–486

subjects do not belong to elegy (381, discussed further in Section III) and seems to shortchange female readers. Second, although many male figures are characterized negatively, many others are said to be exemplary: *quod capias*, in Livy's terms (pref. 10).[32] Admittedly our knowledge of the tradition will frequently discourage us from imitating these examples, but the contrast with female characters is nonetheless striking. With the dubious exception of Hecale (747), the *praeceptor* offers only one positive female *exemplum*: we should not be afraid to burn love-letters, since Althaea burned her child by means of (burning) the log (721–722). Whereas the positive male *exempla* usually required us to supply the negative consequences from our own knowledge, here the *praeceptor* is so blunt—*Thestias absentem succendit stipite natum*—as to give us pause for thought before imitating this most unmaternal mother. The passage is immediately followed by a typically negative female example. We should get rid of the wax images (as well as the letters) of the beloved, something Laodamia fatally failed to do (723–724). While the anachronistic suggestion that Laodamia was gazing on *ceras* may encourage a skeptical reaction to the entire passage (Henderson 1979: 127), the *exemplum* typifies the tendency to cite women negatively.

The two longest negative *exempla* in the poem both feature women. In his rejection of magic as a cure for love, the *praeceptor* first cites Medea (261–262) but does not elaborate.[33] He devotes twenty-six lines (263–288) to Circe, turning

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(Agamemnon, Achilles, and Briseis), 573–574 (Paris and Helen), possibly 589–590 (since Pylades helped Orestes during troubles which resulted from the war), 591–608 (Demophoon and Phyllis), 676 (Penthesilea and Achilles), 711–712 (Judgment of Paris), 724 (Laodamia and Protesilaus), 735–736 (Nauplius and the Greek sailors), 737–740 (Scylla and Charybdis), 747–748 (Iros), 771–772 (Orestes and Hermione), 773–776 (Menelaus and Helen), 777–780 (Achilles and Briseis), 789–790 (Lotus-eaters and Sirens).

[32] Men who should have behaved differently include Tereus (61–62), Paris (65–66, 573–574), Philoctetes (111–112), Aegisthus (161–168), the unsuccessful sailors (735–736), Orestes (771–772), Menelaus (773–776), and Achilles (777–778), giving a total of nine negative male examples if we count Paris twice. One might add as a tenth instance those who succumbed to lotus or to the Sirens (789–790; cf. above, n. 23), although the *praeceptor*'s comment that the proximity of the mistress's threshold is as dangerous as lotus and the Sirens is perhaps too brief to be considered an actual *exemplum*. Exemplary males include Telephus (47–48), the six unfaithful men (453–486), Orestes (589–590), Paris (711–712), successful sailors (737–740), and perhaps Iros (747), giving a total of eleven positive male examples if we include Iros. I am not sure how to categorize the terse reference to Penthesilea: *vincenda est telo Penthesilea tuo* (676). Achilles succeeded in conquering Penthesilea physically, but was himself conquered emotionally, since he fell in love with her (Apollod. *Epit.* 5.1). The pupil needs to conquer his passion but is not being advised to conquer his former mistress physically; we must reverse the terms of the original example if we are to consider it positive. In any case, the number of male positive examples is roughly equal to the number of male negative examples, in contrast to the mostly negative female examples.

[33] Ovid may have chosen not to elaborate on Medea in the *Remedia* because magic did in fact help her win Jason, if only temporarily, and later helped her punish his infidelity, whereas magic was useless to Circe in her relationship with Ulysses; or because he had already treated or was planning to treat Medea elsewhere, in his lost play, in *Her.* 12, and in *Met.* 7.1–424. In *Her.* 12.163–172, Ovid has Medea explicitly lament the inability of her otherwise powerful magic to retain Jason or to cure love.

the dignified Homeric goddess into a character reminiscent of the *Heroides*, who initially tries to detain or to forget Ulysses through magic and later pleads with him awkwardly. We are told first that she tried everything to prevent his departure, and then that she tried everything to subdue her pain (265–268). Presumably these efforts included magic, since the *praeceptor* comments that she was able to transform the shapes of men but not her *animi* . . . *iura* (269–270). Magic, of course, was Circe's means of transforming the shapes of men in the *Odyssey*, but she was not able to transform Odysseus himself, nor did Homer's Circe attempt by any means to detain him when he had resolved to leave (cf. *Od.* 10.318–319, 489). The idea that she used magic in an effort either to secure or to forget him may have originated with Ovid.

Apparently forgetting his emphasis on magic, the *praeceptor* gives Circe a twelve-line speech. Like Briseis and Dido in the *Heroides*, the love-stricken daughter of the sun offers to settle for less than marriage—even for a mere postponement of Ulysses' departure (273–278; cf. *Her.* 3.69, 7.167–180). Having perhaps lost some dignity by this offer, Circe turns from the *dignum* (*digna videbar*, 275) to the *utile*. Here again she resembles Ovid's Briseis, Dido, and Laodamia in that her excessive emphasis on the safety of her beloved may make Ulysses appear cowardly. You should fear the sea, she argues; you need not flee, because no new Troy threatens you here (279–282).[34] Circe concludes with a strained allusion to the convention that love and war are separate yet analogous worlds: *hic amor et pax est, in qua male vulneror una, / tutaque sub regno terra futura tuo est* (283–284).[35] This reminder that a woman can be "wounded" even in peace is significant in a poem which specifies war and other primarily masculine activities as distractions from love. Of course, we know from other *exempla* that men can suffer the pains of love in both war (467–486, 775–784) and peace (161–168), but in this instance the juxtaposition of the feminine and singular (both semantically and grammatically) adjective *una* with the passive verb emphasizes the woman's role as the unique victim, appropriately in a poem where female *exempla* are predominantly negative.

After Circe's speech, which does not dissuade Ulysses from leaving, the *praeceptor* devotes just one couplet to her use of her *adsuetas* . . . *artes*, presumably magic, in an attempt to assuage her love (287–288). Such shifts of emphasis between rhetoric and magic as equally ineffective means, like the shift between detaining and forgetting Ulysses as equally unattained ends, obscure the original point that magic cannot cure love.[36] The *praeceptor*'s conclusion is intriguing:

[34] For a suggestion that the male addressee is cowardly, see *Her.* 3.115–116 (Briseis); for an emphasis on safety, see *Her.* 7.48, 7.74 (Dido), 13.70 (Laodamia). On inconsistencies and infelicities in Briseis' pleas in *Her.* 3, see Verducci 1985: 117 *et passim*.

[35] Pinotti (1988: 178) finds that this pointed couplet "lascia poco spazio all' ἐλεεινόν."

[36] Prinz (1914: 49) criticizes the inconsistencies of Circe's *suasoria*. Geisler (1969: 289–292) says that Ovid is less concerned with thematic consistency than with creating an interesting scene; he decided to combine many of the standard elements of the departure scene with a scene involving

ergo, quisquis opem nostra tibi poscis ab arte, / deme veneficiis carminibusque fidem (289–290). The literal context indicates that *carmina* are magic spells. However, coming almost immediately after Circe's unsuccessful speech, these lines may slyly warn us against trusting poems. Words and art often do not detain a lover, and they may equally fail to cure love.

The second relatively long negative female *exemplum* is juxtaposed with a briefer positive male *exemplum*, typifying the unequal treatment of men and women in this poem. First, the *praeceptor* exhorts his patient to avoid solitude and always to have a friend who will care for him, just as Pylades cared for Orestes (589–590). Green (1982: 418) finds this example grimly humorous: the only love which Pylades helped Orestes cure was filial, and matricide (Aesch. *Cho.* 900–902) seems a drastic prescription. In any case, readers of the *Ars* know that it is foolish to hope for friends as loyal as Pylades (1.743–750).

The *praeceptor* offers no positive example of a friendship curing erotic love, but turns to yet another contrary-to-fact *exemplum*, once more involving a woman whose conduct should not be imitated. Phyllis, when abandoned by Demophoon, would not have killed herself (*non flesset positis Phyllida silva comis*, 606) had she not been alone (591–608). In several ways she behaves like the deserted women described in Catullus 64, the *Heroides*, and the *Ars*: she rushes about wildly (593–596), laments her lover's treachery (597), addresses a deaf environment (597), and contemplates suicide (601–604).[37] However, unlike heroines of similar episodes, she remains focused on her lover: she does *not* mention her family or regret her isolation.[38] By contrast, in Ovid's own *Heroides* Phyllis regrets alienating her fellow Thracians (2.81–82). Moreover, she is clearly *not* unaccompanied (*ancillis excipienda cado*, 130) yet is nonetheless resolved to die.

It is also instructive to compare this passage with the Circe *exemplum*. The Circe of the *Remedia* is noteworthy for behaving *more* like a traditional, pleading elegiac heroine than the Homeric tradition leads us to expect. The *praeceptor*'s

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magic, and he was influenced by Homer's Calypso, Hellenistic poetry, and Virgil's Dido. Pinotti (1988: 172) cites also the influence of the association of Circe with Medea in Theocr. 2.15–16, Tib. 2.4.55, and Prop. 2.1.53–54. Pinotti concludes that the inefficacy of magic is here contrasted with poetry; however, the potential ambiguity of *carmina* in 290 weakens her argument. None of these commentators suggests that the inconsistencies of the passage remind us that the efficacy of words in general is limited.

[37] For wild rushing about, see Catullus 64.124–129 (Ariadne) and *Her.* 2.121–128 (Phyllis). For complaints about the lover's treachery, see Callim. *Aet.* fr. 556 Pfeiffer (Phyllis), Catullus 64.132, *Ars Am.* 1.536 (Ariadne), and *Her.* 2.26, 65, etc. For the unresponsiveness of the environment, see Catullus 64.164–166 and *Ars Am.* 1.531. For plans to commit suicide, see *Her.* 2.133–148 and 7.181–196 (Dido).

[38] For references to absent or deceased relatives and to isolation, see Catullus 64.177–187 and *Her.* 10.59–60, 119–120 (Ariadne), 14.117–118 (Hypermnestra). Lenz (1969: 7–8) finds the Phyllis scene to be generally pathetic, but sees humor in the emphasis of the *praeceptor* on solitude as her real problem (592, 605). He does not discuss in detail what the episode actually proves about the advantages of company for the *praeceptor*'s pupils.

criticism of Circe's alleged reliance on magic is undercut both by the pleading speech he assigns to her and by the discrepancies between the Homeric Circe and the elegiac mold into which he tries to fit her. Phyllis was already an elegiac figure in *Heroides* 2, and she shows many traditional elegiac characteristics in the *Remedia*.[39] However, the latter poem conspicuously omits the one conventional feature of abandoned women's laments, a complaint about solitude, which would support the *praeceptor*'s claim that friends can help one avoid passionate extremes.

In summary, the *exempla* of the *Remedia* tell us how not to behave more often than how to behave.[40] When the *praeceptor* does exhort us to imitate someone, his interpretation is so often inconsistent with the tradition or with his own words elsewhere that we may still doubt whether genuine precedents exist for a cure from love. Those characters who apparently did escape one passion usually suffered or inflicted some horrifying fate, raising doubts about whether escape is the best choice. Finally, the poem offers almost no positive models for female readers.

III

Many non-mythological passages, which I shall consider more briefly, support the hypothesis that an escape from love is extremely elusive and sometimes harmful. In considering the possibility of escape, we may note that no place or activity seems safe from love. The *praeceptor* commends the Forum and legal activities as a distraction (151), yet in *Ars* 1.79–80 the Forum was a place to fall in love, not to escape it. Later, a pun (*si te causa potens domina retinebit in urbe, Rem. Am.* 291) underlines the reality that one tends to meets one's mistress in the city, and later still the *praeceptor* warns us that litigation against one's former beloved may revive passion (659–672). Battlefields are also said to offer a place of escape, yet conquering Cupid is compared to conquering the Parthians (153–158)—who, we soon learn, find safety in flight (224).[41] More importantly, we have seen

[39] Ovid was doubtless influenced by Callimachus' treatment of Phyllis, but the one-line fragment (556 Pfeiffer) does not allow us to assess this influence.

[40] To recapitulate the *exempla* discussed above, we should imitate Telephus (47–48), Minos (453), Phineus (454), Alcmaeon (455–456), Paris (457–458 and 711–712), Tereus (459–460), Agamemnon (467–486), Orestes (589–590), Althaea (721–722), sailors who avoid danger (737–740), perhaps Achilles (675–676; see above, n. 32), and perhaps Hecale and Iros (747–748; see above, 247–248 and 250), for a total of at most fourteen positive examples. We should not imitate Phyllis (55–56), Dido (57–58), Medea (59–60), Tereus (61–62), Pasiphae (63), Phaedra (64), Paris (65–66), Scylla (67–68), Myrrha (99–100), Philoctetes (111–112), Aegisthus (161–168), Medea (261–262), Circe (263–288), Paris (573–574), Phyllis (591–608), Laodamia (723–724), the victims of Nauplius (735–736), Phaedra (743–744), Pasiphae (745–746), Orestes (771–772), Menelaus (773–776), and Achilles (777–784), and those who succumbed to lotus or to the Sirens (789–790; I count this as a single example because the allusion is so brief), for a total of twenty-three negative examples. I have surveyed the examples offered to the pupil as models or warnings, but have not discussed every mythological reference in the poem: for example, the distinction which the *praeceptor* draws between himself and Diomedes (5–6) is not offered to guide the reader's behavior.

[41] Indeed, "the reader would remember that it was when running away that the Parthians were at their most dangerous" (Henderson 1979: 62).

that the *praeceptor* is inconsistent in his subsequent claim that fighting in Troy would have prevented Aegisthus' difficulties (161–168), since Troy was the scene of amatory problems elsewhere in the poem (467–486, 777–784). The *praeceptor* next suggests the countryside as a place to farm, hunt, fish, catch birds, and escape love (169–212), yet the diction recalls Tibullus and Ovid's own *Ars*.[42]

More generally, shortly after being admonished to avoid *loca sola* (579), we are warned to avoid the *contagia* (613) which may affect us if we encounter *cupidos . . . amantes* (611). The subsequent injunction to find an *alter orbis* (630) seems, as I said in my introduction, to refer to avoiding the *domina* (*occursum dominae non tulit ille suae*, 622). However, if we are trying obediently to find a world which on the one hand contains no lovers yet on the other hand is not deserted, the *orbis* we seek may be elusive indeed.

A safe *orbis* would be particularly elusive for Ovid's contemporary female readers, who could not have found distraction by arguing in the courts, serving in the army, farming in the fields, or hunting in the forests. One might expect the *praeceptor* to recommend motherhood as a comparable distraction for women; after all, Virgil's Dido indicated that a *parvulus Aeneas* (*Aen.* 4.328–329) would have alleviated the pain of separation. However, motherhood is never said in the *Remedia* to make an escape from love *possibile*. Indeed, as we are explicitly reminded in the *exemplum* of Medea (59–60), the mere existence of offspring can anger a woman who has been hurt in love.[43]

Moreover, the *praeceptor* repeatedly draws analogies between the erotic love he is trying to cure and maternal love, traditionally considered more loyal and less erratic. Just as we do not try to soothe a bereaved mother until she has had time to mourn, so cures for erotic love must be carefully timed (127–130); the pupil should distract himself with a second girlfriend, because a bereaved mother is less miserable if she has other children (463–464); he should avoid fear and

[42] Agriculture was a metaphor for love in *Ars Am.* 1.359–360, 401, 450, 2.513, 2.652, etc., and Tib. 2.6.21–22; it was also an activity which might be shared with the beloved in Tibullan fantasy (1.2.71–75 and 1.5.21–34). Specifically, to *Rem. Am.* 173–174 cf. *Ars Am.* 2.513 and Tib. 2.6.21–22; to 189–190 cf. Tib. 1.5.24 (the adjective *nudo* is Ovid's addition); to 195 cf. *Ars Am.* 2.652. Of course, Lucretius, the *Eclogues*, and the *Georgics* are also important for this passage; see further Henderson 1979: 60–67. Hunting and fishing, prescribed in 199–210 as distractions from love (cf. Virg. *Ecl.* 10.56–69 and Prop. 2.19.17–32, although neither poem is optimistic about a cure), were metaphors for love in *Ars Am.* 1.45–48, 263–270, 391–393, 761–766, etc.

[43] Cf. Procne, who uses her child to punish his unfaithful father (*Met.* 6.519–660); Clytemnestra, whose wrath is attributed by Aeschylus to both her daughter's death and her husband's infidelity (*Ag.* 1417, 1438–47, 1525–29, 1555–59), and who is punished by her own unhappy son; and Althaea, whose anger at her son is caused by behavior arising from his own passion (*Met.* 8.317–525). All of these figures appear, at least by implication, in the *Rem. Am.* (Procne in 459–460 and by implication in 61–62; Clytemnestra by implication in 161–168 and perhaps 589; Althaea in 721). However, the *Remedia* spells out the connection between love and the suffering children of the angered mother only in 59–60. The notion that children can remind their mother of unhappy love is explicit in the *Heroides*: *forsitan et gravidam Didon, scelerate, relinquas, / parsque tui lateat corpore clausa meo* (7.133–134); *nate, parum fausti miserabile pignus amoris* (11.113: Canace).

distrust in love, because the mother who fears for the safety of a son in battle winds up loving him more than her other son (547–548).[44] Admittedly, Roman mothers were expected to face bereavement more stoically than American mothers today.[45] Nevertheless, the analogies between erotic love and a more committed, praiseworthy love suggest that escape from the former is not *facile* and perhaps not *honestum*.[46]

Particularly noteworthy is the context of the claim that a bereaved mother is less upset if she has other children. This comment interrupts the catalogue of second attachments, supposedly commendable but mostly disastrous, which the *praeceptor* himself called tiring (461), and it is followed by Agamemnon's attempt to substitute Briseis for the similarly named Chryseis (467–486). Some readers may recall that Agamemnon's own wife, who cited her daughter's death (Aesch. *Ag.* 1417, 1525–29, 1555–59) as well as Agamemnon's infidelities (Aesch. *Ag.* 1438–47; cf. *Ars Am.* 2.405–406) to explain her anger, was notoriously *not* consoled by the existence of other children. In any case, just as the mythological *exempla* involving maternal sorrow and anger remind us that erotic involvement may have painful and lasting results, not easily escaped, so the non-mythological passages associating erotic with maternal love weaken the notion that the former ought to be begun and ended at will.

[44] Henderson (1979: 108), citing these passages as well as line 30 (*et quarum* [*artium*] *vitio nulla fit orba parens*), states that "the image of the sorrowing or anxious mother seems to have had a powerful, and not very readily understandable, appeal for Ovid in this poem." However, the image is more understandable if we consider the relationship between amatory passion and the existence of offspring, as well as the possible suggestion that erotic love, like maternal love, should have an element of commitment. To Henderson's list of passages on motherhood, one might add 184, on the cow lamenting her lost calf. Another worried parent appears in 571, but here we find a father (the pronouns in the passage whose gender is unambiguous are masculine) worrying about a *filia nubilis* rather than a son in danger.

[45] Ovid's contemporary female readers faced not only a higher infant and child mortality rate than we do today, but also the knowledge that they might lose their sons through war or through adoptions arranged by their husbands, their daughters through marriages (often at an early age) arranged by their husbands, and their children of either sex through divorce, since the children would belong to the divorcing father. Ovid's contemporaries would undoubtedly be appalled by the notion of television shows which encourage those in grief to parade or even to exaggerate their feelings. Nonetheless, the loss of a child was at least sometimes considered to require consolation (Cic. *Fam.* 4.5–6, Sen. *Marc.* and *Helv.*), and was not the subject of a flippant handbook in verse. Evans (1991: 172–177) summarizes the "current debate" over the extent to which the relationship of "parent and child witnessed a profound change [i.e., parents became more emotionally attached to children] . . . in the Republic and . . . during the first decades of the Principate" (174). Golden (1988) concludes after a survey of the evidence that "we should assume the ancients cared when their children died unless there is some compelling reason to doubt it."

[46] The *explicit* emphasis of the poem, as Henderson (1979: 42) notes, is on the *utile* (line 53), not the *honestum*. For example, when the *praeceptor* recommends friendship and cites Pylades, he does not praise Pylades' honorable behavior but rather points out that *hic quoque amicitiae non levis usus erit* (590). I am suggesting only that the poem's repeated references to maternal love allow us to think of less utilitarian considerations.

Literature—any literature—offers no safer protection from love than other supposed distractions. The *praeceptor* attempts to distinguish between genres. For instance, he defends the *licentia* of the *Remedia* on the basis that different topics suit different meters (371–372): in particular, *Callimachi numeris non est dicendus Achilles* (381). However, Achilles appears in three *exempla* in the *Remedia*, which also cites numerous other examples from the Trojan War.[47] Later, the *praeceptor* tries to protect his pupils by exhorting them to avoid *teneros poetas* (757), specifically Callimachus, Philetas, Sappho, Anacreon, Tibullus, Propertius, Gallus, and himself (759–766). Yet if the *Remedia* itself is any guide, anyone who confined himself to reading Homer, the Epic Cycle, and the tragedians could scarcely avoid encountering love and jealousy.[48]

If *caelum, non animum mutant* (Hor. *Epist.* 1.11.27) and perhaps *libros, non animum mutant* apply to some followers of the *praecepta* discussed above, *cibum, non animum mutant* might characterize the concluding *praecepta* on food and drink (795–810). Not all agree with Green's judgment that Ovid "was out of fuel" at this point.[49] However, in the immediate context the rather mundane passage offers a striking contrast to the anxious lines on the rival (767–794), the *maxima causa mali* (768), a passage which contains probable *doubles entendres* even in its advice to hurry by the house where the rival is presumably enjoying the beloved (785–788).[50] In the context of the poem as a whole, advice on aphrodisiac and anaphrodisiac food seems of limited use, since the pupil is not being trained to suppress all sexual urges. Indeed, he was enjoined in 399–404 to wear himself out with *quamlibet invenias* (403) before visiting his beloved, in 441–488 to have two girlfriends, and in 531–542 to disgust himself by means of a *copia* (541) of sexual activity with his girlfriend. What the pupil is supposed to learn is to change his attitude toward a particular woman, a change which diet may not effect.

In addition to inconsistencies about the dangers of places, activities, literary genres, and physical impulses, the *Remedia* reveals the *praeceptor*'s limitations even more directly. He acknowledges that some unspecified number of readers are in need of healing precisely because they read his *Ars* (41–44), that some of his medical *praecepta* will strike his readers as *dura* (225, on leaving town; cf. 523), and that he has suffered from the same infirmity which he is now trying to heal in others (313–314). This last confession introduces a personal

[47] Achilles: 467–486, 676, 777–780. Other Trojan War *exempla*: above, n. 31. On Ovid's "creative transgression of the expected bounds of elegy" even as he draws attention to "the fundamental importance . . . of generic criteria," see Hinds 1987: 117, 132 *et passim*.

[48] In 751–756, the *praeceptor* warns his pupil against pantomime, not tragedy; see Henderson 1979: 131.

[49] Green (1982: 425) suggests that the section on diet gives "the impression . . . that Ovid . . . was out of fuel"; Henderson (1979: 136) acknowledges that "to modern taste . . . [the section] may . . . seem . . . anti-climactic," but justifies it on the basis of the conventions of medical treatises, as does Pinotti (1988: 333).

[50] See Green 1982: 424 on the use of *limina* (786) and the allusions to *Ars Am.* 2.725–726, 731–732 (on sexual technique). On other difficulties in this passage, see above, n. 23.

anecdote: the *praeceptor* once tried to forget a girlfriend by dwelling on her imperfections, but the first three allegations were untrue (318, 320, 321), and the fourth imperfection, her greed, provoked his hatred (322) rather than the indifference advocated elsewhere (655–658).

Furthermore, the advice on cataloguing or exaggerating imperfections is followed by the suggestion that the pupil drop in on his mistress before she has finished her make-up, but this is qualified with a curious warning: *non tamen huic nimium praecepto credere tutum est: / fallit enim multos forma sine arte decens* (349–350). In the immediate context, the couplet warns male readers that their attempt to be disgusted by seeing girlfriends without make-up may backfire. In the poem as a whole, the couplet also reminds us that precepts are not foolproof and that attraction may occur independently of any system. One might compare the double-edged comments about Circe: while the immediate context indicates that the *adsuetas ... artes* (287) and *carmina* (290) which could not change the laws of her own nature (*animi ... iura tui*, 270) were magic spells, the passage may also warn us against expecting either techniques or poetry to change our own nature.

Of course, Ovid is not the first poet to acknowledge that his topic is difficult and that no system can cover every contingency. For example, Lucretius admits that his subject matter is formidable and obscure, and that its bitterness needs sweetening (1.410, 1.933–950, 4.7–25). Virgil comments that victims of the plague were actually harmed by *quaesitae ... artes*, and that the experts were helpless (*G.* 3.549–550).[51] However, the *praeceptor* of the *Remedia* goes far beyond his counterparts in the *De rerum natura* and *Georgics* in displaying the limitations of his own *ars*. After all, neither Lucretius nor Virgil states that his own earlier poem has caused his pupils' difficulties, neither resorts to eight blatantly hypothetical *exempla* as credentials, and neither claims to be tired of his own examples.[52]

[51] On medical writings which may have influenced the *Remedia*, see Pinotti 1988: 16–20. Ovid might have been skeptical about the practical usefulness of such works as Nicander's *Theriaca* and *Alexipharmaca*. On possible limitations in Nicander's knowledge, see Gow 1953: 24. After reading graphic descriptions of the sufferings specifically caused by each of many snakes (e.g., *Ther.* 235–257, 271–281, 298–308, 338–342, 424–437), one would like some guidance as to which of the numerous remedies described in 493–956 is appropriate for a given species. Before consuming the head of the snake which had poisoned me, I would prefer my adviser to be more definite about whether I should take it with wine or water (see 622–624); I might hesitate to take coriander (874), said to be poisonous in *Alex.* 157; and I might question the value of weighing out medicinal "cakes" (κύκλους δραχμαίους, 954–955) since the poet gives no proportion or weights for the twenty-six ingredients. *Alexipharmaca* does list specific antidotes separately after describing each poison, but nonetheless offers a bewildering variety of choices in most cases. Ovid may, therefore, have found some precedent for poems which pose as medical handbooks but in fact have some other purpose. However, Nicander at least offers no precedent for repeated confessions by the *praeceptor* of his limitations, nor for mythological *exempla* which contradict either the preceding *praecepta* or poetic tradition.

[52] Commenting on *quid moror exemplis?* (461), Henderson (1979: 99) cites such phrases as *longum est* (Lucr. 4.1170) and *quid referam?* (Virg. *G.* 2.118). However, Henderson rightly notes that Ovid's

Is the *Remedia* a didactic failure? It is not a reliable self-help book, but the limitations of the *praeceptor* teach us to watch for the serious implications of what seems to be a game, as well as for humorous implications of what seems deadly serious at the time.[53] (Perhaps the Trojan heroes would, after all, have behaved differently if Ovid had been present to point out or to invent the ridiculous aspects of their behavior.) Does the poem rework, deform, kill, or provide a remedy against amatory elegy?[54] Conte argues that the *praeceptor*'s reply to Cupid's opening complaint "almost seems to say, 'Never have I really written elegy (especially starting with the *Ars*); if elegy is for the most part suffering, . . . I have always sought a different elegy'."[55] The opening may indeed imply that, in Ovid's corpus at least, games rather than suffering are generic to elegy. The rest of the poem, however, shows the dangers of the game as clearly as Ovid's elegiac predecessors, even while it seems to defy elegiac tradition (e.g., Prop. 2.1) by claiming that love can be cured after all, that an elegiac poet can be a *vates medens* (cf. 77).[56]

The *Remedia* goes beyond mere parody of didactic and elegiac conventions. It frustrates, not occasionally but systematically, our search for a comprehensive system, for an *ars* guaranteed to devise an end to an affair which, even if intended to be expedient, has grown painful. The phrase *quid moror exemplis?* (461) illustrates the co-existence of parody and warning. It parodies a didactic technique, the catalogue of examples, but also—particularly since it is immediately followed by a frivolously treated example of a disastrous second attachment—it raises doubts about the possibility of finding *exempla* to prove seriously the *praecepta* of the *Remedia*. The poem is not, of course, a humorless sermon on what is currently termed "responsible sexuality," although considerations of space have precluded extensive discussion of Ovid's humor here.[57] However, this very entertaining poem, a fine demonstration of the pitfalls of trusting *carmina* to *animi vertere iura*

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line is an "exaggerated extension" of such expressions; neither Lucretius or Virgil adds anything comparable to *quorum me turba fatigat*.

[53] Cf. Myerowitz 1985: 178 on playfulness and seriousness in the *Ars*: to read the poem, we must "play with, *rather than attempt to live by* [emphasis added], the illusion that it is possible to arrive at any real end other than death."

[54] See Barsby 1978: 7 on reworking elegy; Durling 1958: 158 on killing elegy; Verducci 1980: 36 on deforming elegy; and, with specific reference to the *Remedia*, Conte 1994: 65 on the poem as "a remedy against a form of literature."

[55] Conte 1994: 58. The extent to which "elegy is for the most part suffering" (as opposed to, for example, a series of poses calling attention to themselves) in Catullus, Propertius, and Tibullus is, of course, a subject of critical controversy, but most readers see a qualitative distinction between Ovid and his predecessors.

[56] On Prop. 2.1, see above, n. 7.

[57] It is impossible to do justice to Ovid's humor in a single essay, particularly an essay emphasizing other aspects of his poetry. Cf. Cahoon 1991, a response to Boyd 1987, which had criticized Cahoon 1984. Cahoon (1991: 368) responds in apparent frustration that "I must first confess to the unintended humourlessness of my own earlier argument. I had imagined that Ovid's witty, charming, and ingeniously funny poem had been so long recognized as such that there was no need for me to

(270; cf. 290), does repeatedly invite us to question the *praeceptor*'s claims and advice.

I have argued above that many such questions are motivated by the poem's *exempla*. The precise degree of our skepticism obviously depends not only on the nature of the examples but also on what we bring to the poem. If we bring common sense alone, we will question the handling of certain *exempla*. Agamemnon's emphasis on the similarity of two girls' names (475–476) is almost surely irrelevant in his decision and certainly does not help those who do not have a choice of two similarly named girlfriends. Circe's inconsistencies about means and ends (265–288) call into question the *praeceptor*'s original point about magic as a means (to be avoided) and about forgetting love as an end. If we bring a reasonable alertness to context and to the poem as a whole, we will question specific inconsistencies, such as the use of Tereus and Paris, who are negative examples in 61–66 but supposedly protreptic examples in 457–460. More generally, we may notice the large number of contrary-to-fact examples, the interest in motherhood implied by both mythological and non-mythological passages, and incongruities in non-mythological passages, such as those recommending "safe" places and genres: the cumulative effect is to raise doubts about the possibility of escape, especially for women. If we bring a basic competence in the literary tradition, which Ovid assumed, we will question eccentric interpretations, such as the emphasis on Aegisthus' idleness (161–168), and perhaps those passages which commend Homeric figures while ignoring the tragic consequences of the Trojan War. If, in addition, we bring familiarity with Ovid's own earlier works, we should approach all his *exempla* with a healthy skepticism. Although it is the later *Metamorphoses* which offers the most explicit instances of examples that fail to convince, the *Amores* and *Ars* include numerous examples whose handling is flippant or far-fetched.[58]

Ovid's *Remedia amoris* is more than a second entertaining investigation of the limits of *ratio*. It does not undo the *Ars*, but it does go beyond the earlier poem in its exploration of the consequences of the system presented in the *Ars*. Love turns out to be both ubiquitous and dangerous. Risks abound, not only in the undisciplined type of love which the *Ars* should have precluded, but also in the calculating amatory strategies which would be pursued by obedient readers of the *Ars* and *Remedia*. With its conspicuous paucity of straightforward positive examples and its high frequency of examples from outside traditionally erotic subjects, the *Remedia* repeatedly reveals the lasting effects of lovers' behavior on themselves, their families, and even international politics. Non-mythological evidence confirms the limited efficacy of *ars*, which was already evident in the *Ars Amatoria*, and the pervasive power of love, which becomes more apparent in

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acknowledge its humour. The result, I now see, was a rather priggish and moralistic tone .... So yes, *Amores* 2.6 is very funny."

[58] See Davisson 1993: 217–219.

the *Remedia*. More characteristic of the *Remedia* than the *Ars* is the suggestion that not only is an easy escape from painful love extremely improbable, but also a casual escape from love may be undesirable because of the pain which may result for the lover himself or for others. The evidence for this rests on those examples which imply or (as in 60) spell out the consequences of infidelity, as well as on the analogies between erotic love and the traditionally praiseworthy love of a mother for a child. After reading the *Remedia*, we may not even want to be cured of love; and no system is likely to work without the cooperation of the patient.[59]

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