AN ASPECT OF LATIN COMPARISON
CONSTRUCTION

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Synonyms and word repetitions are used extensively in the *Argonautica* of Valerius Flaccus to provide verbal links between poetic comparisons and the surrounding narrative. These links occur with such regularity and are at times fashioned with so much ingenuity that one suspects the poet's practice may reflect some rule or convention of comparison construction.[1]

Only twenty-eight of the *Argonautica*'s one hundred and fourteen extended comparisons lack synonym or repeated word bonds between comparison and narrative.[2] Many of these verbal connections seem to be a natural product of the comparison form; they express verbally the basis of the comparison. Thus in Book 3 Hercules' rush (*sic furiis accensa gerens Tirynthius ora | fertur* 590–91) is compared to that of a lion (... *leo murmure fertur* 588). The similarity of the compared actions is signified by the use of the same word to describe both (*fertur*).

Usually, however, the verbal links are blended more subtly into the narrative. For example in Book 5 the Argonauts concerned over Tiphys' sickness are compared to children weeping over their sick father. Synonymous phrases convey the fearful prayers of each group: the Argonauts *cunctique pavore | attoniti fundunt maestas ad sidera voces* (15–16) and the children *trepidique precantur* (23). *Precor* had already

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[1] For Latin comparison construction see R. M. Gummere, *De variis similitudinum generibus apud poetas Latinos ante aetatem Augusteam*, unpub. diss. (Harvard University, 1907); R. B. Steele, "The Similes in Latin Epic Poetry," *TAPA* 49 (1918) 83–100; Marsh H. McCall, Jr., *Ancient Rhetorical Theories of Simile and Comparison* (Cambridge, Mass., 1969).

[2] For Valerius Flaccus' similes see Walter C. Summers, *A Study of the Argonautica of Valerius Flaccus* (Cambridge 1894); H. E. Butler, *Post-Augustan Poetry* (Oxford 1909) 195–97.

occurred four lines above in the Argonauts' prayer for Tiphys.   Both groups pray for the same boon, that their guardian (whether of ship or livelihood) will survive the approaching doom; *duret* (24), *superesse* (26), *fata* (21), *sorte* (22).   These last two words appear contrasted in two successive lines.   Finally, both Argonauts and children are portrayed as weeping, *lacrimas* (13), *flens* (8), *flet* (23).   In this passage Valerius has carefully demonstrated the similarities between the parts of his comparison through synonyms and word repetitions.   It might be maintained here that the close parallelism of the situations compared make the use of synonyms unavoidable.   This is in fact a just assessment of many of the observed instances of synonym and word repetition.   So the elaborate comparison of the fear of the Argonauts' first night upon the sea to the fear of a wayfarer overtaken by night (Argonauts: *auxerat hora metus* 2.38; wayfarer: *noctisque metus niger auget utrimque | campus* 45 f.), or the comparison of a mother's nourishing of her son to a farmer's care of his olive (mother: *nutrierat* 6.710; farmer: *educat* 712, *alentem* 713), or of men entangled in their chariots to deer with intertwined antlers (men: *haerent* 6.416, *implicitos* 418, *revinctos* 418; deer: *haerentes* 421, *constrictos* 422), or the comparison of the Lemnian women's lying next to their husbands to Tisiphone's lying next to Phlegyas and Theseus (the women: *discumbitur* 2.190, *adiacet* 192; Tisiphone: *adcubat* 193), or Jason raging and slaughtering, compared to a lion (Jason: *ferox* 6.615, *caede* 615, *furit* 616, *saevo | ense* 616–17; the lion: *saevit* 613, *cruores* 614).   In all of these examples similar situations or states are compared and so the occurrence of synonyms may not be surprising.   Valerius however takes equal pains to point up verbally the comparable aspects of comparisons of very dissimilar things.   In Book 7 there occurs a double simile comparing the firebreathing bulls to two flashes of lightning or two winds, forces quite different from bulls, magic though they be:

> ... omnisque Aeetia tellus
> fulsit et ardentes stabula effudere tenebras.
> ac velut ex una siquando nube corusci
> ira Iovis torsit geminos mortalibus ignes,
> aut duo cum pariter ruperunt vincula venti
> dantque fugam: sic tunc claustris evasit uterque
> taurus et immani proflavit turbine flammas
> arduus atque atros volvunt incendia fluctus.   (565–72)

The comparison is carefully woven into the narrative through vocabulary links.   First the poet prepares for the comparison by referring to the bulls metonymically in terms of their glowing breath, *ardentes tenebras*,[3] alluding to the aspect (their fire) most related to lightning, and by using *fulsit* to describe the result of their action—a word often employed to refer to the action of lightning.   In the comparative part, or protasis, *ignis* is used of the lightning rather than a more precise term in order that it may be picked up by *flammas* and *incendia* in the apodosis.   In fact nine lines after this use, *ignis* is used as a metonymical reference to one of the bulls (578).   Valerius dwells on the fire of the bulls, admittedly their most singular quality, but also that which allows him to link verbally the comparison and the narrative. In the second comparison synonym alternation is even more noticeable. Both the winds and the bulls break their barriers (*vincula, claustris*) and flee (*dant fugam, evasit*) and, lest the comparison be missed, a metaphor is used in the next line to emphasize it (*turbine*).   Valerius uses synonyms and word repetition as often in comparing unlike things as like.

And even more significantly he employs such bonds when they play no role in indicating the ground for a comparison.   It appears that verbal connections were important to the poet for their own sake beyond any aid they could offer in formulating explicit comparisons. Valerius' practice takes two forms.   He may merely include word or synonym repetitions in both parts of the comparison which have no bearing on the comparison being made, or he may couch an aspect of both parts of the comparison in terms which could, or would, be synonyms in another context or removed from a particular context— but which are not synonyms in the context in which they occur. These synonyms will be called "false" synonyms.   For example, in the comparison of the Argonauts to the wayfarer quoted above, *oculis* occurs in both the apodosis (2.40) and the protasis (45) of the comparison, as do the related words *quies* and *quiescit* (41, 44).   Neither repetition has any importance for the comparison, but their use increases the appearance of close similarity.   Or in the comparison of the bulls (7.565–71) quoted above, the terms *ardentes . . . tenebras* and *una ex nube corusci* occur in two successive lines.   In context *ardentes . . . tenebras* refers, metonymically, to the bulls whereas *nube* denotes a

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[3] Cf. R. W. Garson (*CQ* N.S. 20 [1970] 182) on the phrase *ardentes . . . tenebras*.

cloud distinct from and contrasted with the two thunderbolts of the image, but anyone familiar with Valerius' vocabulary realizes that in some contexts *nubes* and *tenebrae*, and *ardens* and *coruscus* would be synonyms. Their use again produces an effect of similarity that is closer than the sense would warrant. Such "false" synonyms occur frequently throughout the poem. *Iugum* provides several examples. In Book 8 Medea is compared to a Thyiad; the action of each woman is expressed in similar terms: *tollit in arces* (446) and *iugis se virgo ferebat* (448). The poet has chosen a word for rowing benches (*iugis*) which can and often does refer to mountains. He thus suggests visually and verbally a relationship between *arces* and *iugis*, and implies a similarity between the compared actions which does not semantically exist. Again in Book 4 Pallas and Juno struggling with the crashing rocks (*scopulos*) are compared to a man *qui robore tauros | sub iuga et invito detorquet in ilia cornu* (684–85). This is a comparison of two very unlike situations. Only the verbs could be synonymous, but *coercet* (683) and *detorquet* (685) are not synonyms. But the poet has not abandoned his usual practice, for *iuga* is a "false" synonym with *scopulos* (683). It is, in fact, used as a synonym with reference to the rocks in this episode, *iugis* (692). Another example follows ten lines after this one. Valerius compares the Argonauts' escape from the rocks to that of Hercules and Theseus from the underworld. The focus of the comparison is on the Argonauts' not permitting themselves to rest until they had passed the *litora* (698) of Rheba, nor the heroes until they met, *primis amplexi luminis oris* (702). Valerius has expressed his reference to the upper world in the Lucretian idiom in order to imply a greater similarity between the compared actions, by the use of the synonyms *orae* and *litora*, than actually exists. The comparison of Medea to a sick dog in Book 7 provides another example of the use of "false" synonyms in a comparison:

> . . . subitoque parentibus haeret
> blandior et patriae circumfert oscula dextrae,
> sic adsueta toris et mensae dulcis erili
> aegra nova iam peste canis rabieque futura
> ante fugam totos lustrat queribunda penates.
> tandem etiam molli semet sic increpat ira: (122–27)

The comparison is an implied one; the poet suggests that Medea is like a lapdog sick with a new and deadly disease—her love of Jason. This comparison, unique in Valerius Flaccus, harks back over one hundred lines for verbal ties which make explicit the basis for the comparison between Medea and the dog.[4] The initial picture of Medea in this book corresponds closely to this description of the lap-dog.   The similarity of vocabulary is especially noticeable: *aegra* / *aegra* 5, 125; *toros* / *toris* 5, 124; *questus* / *queribunda* 6, 126; *malo* / *peste* 7, 125. Yet Valerius was not content with these distant ties, for although the sense does not warrant it he has expressed the actions of the apodosis and protasis in synonyms.   Medea covers (*circumfert*) her father's hands with kisses; the dog wanders (*lustrat*) through the house.   Two very different actions but stated in words which out of context or in another context could mean "to move round."   In religious terminology the words are close synonyms, a connection which might be felt here.[5]

A similar case of "false" synonymy occurs in Book 1 where Pelias is compared to Thyoneus (724–28).   The basis for the comparison is the anger experienced by both.   Again the poet employs verbal synonyms meaning "to turn or twist" to describe the action of each character (*versat* 725, *torsit* 727).   But the words actually refer to two quite different actions, for Pelias is "turning" something over in his mind, and Thyoneus performing the physical action of "directing" his horns.

Mental action is the subject matter of another simile where Valerius uses this same kind of play on words.   In Book 5 Aeetes' growing anger is compared to a swelling ocean wave: *ceu tumet atque imo sub gurgite concipit austros / unda silens, trahit ex alto sic barbarus iras* (521 f.). By using the substantive *alto* to refer to the depths of the mind, Valerius

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[4] Vergil's simile comparing Dido to a deer (*A.* 4.69–73) functions in this way.   Verbal repetition in Vergil's comparisons has often been noted.   See, for example, F. L. Newton, "Recurrent Imagery in *Aeneid* IV," *TAPA* 88 (1957) 31–43; Viktor R. Pöschl, *The Art of Vergil* (Ann Arbor 1962) 78–81, 110; Brooks Otis, *Virgil: A Study in Civilized Poetry* (Oxford 1963) 71–76, 373; Michael J. Putnam, *The Poetry of the Aeneid* (Cambridge, Mass., 1965) *passim*; David West, "Multiple Correspondence Similes in the *Aeneid*," *JRS* 59 (1969) 40–49.   West in this excellent article examines in *Aeneid* 2 the close correspondence between similes and the surrounding narrative.   He notes the occurrence of "irrational correspondence" which is analogous to our "false bonds."

[5] *ThLL* s.v. *circumfero*, vol. 3, 1141, 79; cf. Non. 261, *circumferre est proprie lustrare.*

has chosen a word that has often been used to refer to the depths of the sea, and he thus implies a similarity between *ex alto* and *imo sub gurgite* and between the situations which they describe that is not valid. The verb also contributes to the deception, for *concipit* is a word often used of mental action. In concluding the discussion of this kind of "false" synonymy a few instances of *agmen* will be observed. In Book 7, Jason fighting with the ever-increasing hoards of earthborn men is compared to Hercules faced by the ever-renewed coils of the hydra (*hydrae* / *agmina*, 623 f.). The use of *agmina* for coils echoes its use eight lines above as a reference to the earth-born troops. The repetition stating both men fought with *agmina* brings the comparison into a closer verbal balance than the facts would authorize. In Book 3, the Cyzicenes are compared to a storm cloud (*caeruleo . . . agmine nubem*, 91). This phrase is almost duplicated in a later reference to the Cyzicenes' rush, the thing to which the cloud was initially compared: *sic agmine caeco* / *incurrit strictis manus ensibus* (110 f.).

The second kind of "false" verbal bonding (repeating words or synonyms between the parts of a comparison which have no importance to the comparison being made) can be seen very clearly in the comparison of Medea to Orestes in Book 7. The basis of the comparison, which is unstated in the epic is concisely expressed by Langen: "Ex somno excitata Medea eodem modo rerum veritatem agnoscit atque Orestes, cum Furiis agitari desiit."[6] The protasis of the comparison is diffuse and only slightly related to the narrative. But upon closer examination a number of word and synonym repetitions can be observed between the protasis and the narrative: *raptata* / *corripit* 146, 148; *formidine* / *pavoribus* 144, 147; *agit* / *agens* 143, 151; *saevior* / *saevae* 142, 148; *turbat* / *turbidus* 143, 147; *miserata* / *miserae* 142, 152. None of these words has any bearing on the comparison being made and yet inevitably by their mere appearance they create a sense of similarity between the protasis of the comparison and the narrative situation in which it occurs. Similarly in Book 3 Cyzicus delaying his doom (*fata trahens* 221) is compared to Coeus dragging his chains (*trahens . . . catenas* 225). The identical modifier does not highlight comparable aspects of the characters, but again serves to imply by vocabulary a

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[6] P. Langen, *Argonauticon* (Berlin 1896). Cf. 7.147.

closer correspondence between them than the actual sense of the words warrants.

These examples testify to Valerius' consistent efforts to forge synonym or word repetition bonds between his comparisons and their surrounding narrative.   One can best explain his regularity and persistence in this practice as an attempt to adhere to some rule or convention of comparison construction.   If this were the case, similar signs of conscious verbal linkage of comparisons to narrative might be expected to appear in other Latin epic poets.   The comparisons of Vergil, Statius, and Ovid were examined for such signs.

In the *Aeneid*'s seventy-nine extended similes, only eight show no verbal correspondences between simile and narrative.[7]   Most of Vergil's correspondences serve to stress the basis for the comparison. Examples of this kind of repetition are very numerous.   The fall of a boxer is compared to the fall of a tree: *concidit, ut quondam cava [pinus] concidit aut Erymantho* (5.448).   The flame of passion (*flammam* 8.389, *calor* 390) running (*cucurrit* 390) in a god's bones is compared to a flash (*ignea rima* 392) coursing (*percurrit* 392) through the clouds.   Camilla reveling in the slaughter (*exsultat* 11.648) with her band is compared to Amazons exulting (*exsultant* 663).   Vergil makes his comparison of Aeneas to comets or Sirius explicit by a double correspondence: *ardet* (10.270) used to describe Aeneas' helmet anticipates *Sirius ardor* and the *vasti . . . ignes* of the shield are matched by the *cometae sanguinei* (272–73). Similarly the progress of Dido accompanied by her companions (*incessit* 1.497, *stipante caterva* 497) is compared to that of Diana (*glomerantur* 500, *gradiens* 501).

All these correspondences could arise naturally from the comparison form but the precision of some of them suggests that Vergil was consciously trying to underline the basis for his comparisons by verbal correspondences.   For example, in the simile comparing Rome to the Berecyntian mother in a rather complicated and diffuse comparison the poet has taken pains to state the ground for the comparison in analogous terms.   Rome, *felix prole virum* (6.784), is compared to the Great Mother, *laeta deum partu* (786).[8]   Likewise in another long simile

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[7] A list of Vergil's similes was derived from Michael Coffey, "The Subject Matter of Virgil's Similes," *BICS* 8 (1961) 63–75.

[8] Cf. West (above, note 4) 46.

comparing Mezentius to Orion the repetition in the phrases *ingreditur campo* (10.763) and *ingrediturque solo* (767) specifically points to the ground for comparison.

Even clearer testimony to Vergil's attempt to connect through vocabulary the parts of his comparison is seen in several uses of the word *volo*. In four similes involving birds the action of the person to whom the bird is compared is referred to by the use of this verb. In the least metaphoric example Mercury flying to Libya (*volabat* / *litus harenosum* 4.256 f.) is compared to a bird (*circum litora* / . . . *volat* 254 f.). In this simile both are actually flying; however this is not the case in Book 12 where a swallow flying through a rich man's house (*pervolat* 474) provides a comparison for Juturna's chariot rush (*volans* 478, *volat* 480). By the repeated metaphoric use of *volo*, the poet has suggested a similarity of action in the parts of the comparison which does not semantically exist. The same play upon *volo* occurs in Book 5 when Vergil uses a bird (*fertur in arva volans* 215) as a comparison for Mnestheus' ship (*illam fert impetus ipse volantem* 219). Again in Book 11 a man who has snatched up (*dereptum* 743) an enemy and sped on (*volat* 746) is compared to an eagle flying (*volans* 751) with a snake he has caught (*raptum . . . draconem* 751). The figurative use of *volo* in the apodosis of each of these comparisons, by providing a verbal (and mental) correspondence with the protasis, strengthens the sense of the appropriateness of the comparison.

In all the Vergilian examples examined so far the verbal similarities have focused upon the point of comparison between the objects being compared and, whether by statement or metaphor, have stressed the appropriateness of Vergil's similes. Therefore although most of Vergil's comparisons do have verbal connections with the narrative, it has not yet been clearly demonstrated that verbal connections in themselves were thought to be desirable. Such evidence can be supplied only by examples of comparisons with verbal bonds essentially unrelated to the point of comparison. Such verbal similarities not dependent on "true" similarities do exist in Vergil, yet they are neither so numerous nor so obvious as in Valerius.

David West has supplied a number of instances of such practice. To cite just a few of his examples he notes in the comparison of Androgeus to a man stepping on a snake in Book 2 the verbal play involved in Vergil's use of *repressit* and *pressit*:

>   obstipuit retroque pedem cum voce repressit
>   improvisum aspris veluti qui sentibus anguem
>   pressit humi nitens . . . (378-80)

The use of these two words suggests a greater similarity between the actions in each part of the comparison than their sense would warrant.[9] West also points to Vergil's use of detail in the narrative which would be more appropriate in the comparison. Thus he explains that the unexpected description of Mezentius in Book 10 *dentibus infrendens et tergo decutit hastas* (718) is a result of his having just been compared to a boar caught in nets:[10]

>   postquam inter retia ventum est
>   substitit infremuitque ferox et inhorruit armos
>   nec cuiquam irasci propiusque accedere virtus
>   sed iaculis tutisque procul clamoribus instant (710-13)

West also cites the many "irrational correspondences" in the comparison of Amata driven mad by Allecto to a top spun by boys in Book 7.[11] He suggests that Vergil has depicted Allecto using the goads of Bacchus (*stimulis agit undique Bacchi* 405) in order to have this description correspond to that of the top (*volitans sub verbere* 378, *actus habena* 380, and *dant animos plagae* 383). West further suggests that the rather odd description of the empty halls in which the boys play (*vacua atria circum* 379) can be explained as an attempt to provide a correspondence between them and the desolate haunts of beasts (*deserta ferarum* 404) through which Amata is driven.

Thus Vergil as well as Valerius took pains to provide synonym and word repetition links between his comparisons and the narrative in which they occurred. Usually Vergil's verbal ties emphasize the points of comparison between the parts, but there is evidence that the desire to provide verbal bonds sometimes surpasses this consideration and results in the creation of "false" verbal bonds.[12]

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[9] *Ibid.* 43.

[10] *Ibid.* 48.

[11] *Ibid.* 49.

[12] The presence of "false" synonyms may help to explain certain instances of puzzling diction which occur within comparisons. For example in Book 2's comparison of Pyrrhus to a snake the description of the snake as *tumidum* (472) has often caused problems. It might be suggested that Vergil has included this word in his description in order for it to act as a false synonym with *exsultat* (470), the word used to describe

Statius in the *Thebaid* can also be seen to observe this practice of verbal binding. For although Statius' comparisons are on the whole longer, more diffuse, and less closely connected in subject to the narrative than Valerius', or Vergil's, their construction demonstrates the same effort to provide verbal bonds between the parts as was observed in the *Argonautica*. Of the 130 extended comparisons in the *Thebaid* only seventeen have no verbal bonds.

Again, many of the verbal or synonym repetitions could be a result of the inherent similarity between the objects or situations compared. Thus Tydeus leaving Thebes (*linquit* 2.476) is compared to a wild boar leaving (*linquens* 473) his victims. Or the ill-starred Lemnian feast (*epulas* 5.255) is compared to that feast (*epulae* 262) attended by the Lapiths and the Centaurs. So Chromis' chariot is described holding Hippodamus' (*tenet* 6.481) as the tide holds a Sicilian ship (*tenet* 483). In similarly constructed similes runners rubbed with oil are said to shine (*nitescunt* 6.577) as stars shine (*nitent* 580); warriors issue from the seven gates of Thebes (*septem* 8.352) as the Nile pours forth seven tempests (*septem* 360); a warrior falls (*procumbit* 9.532) as an oak does (*procumbit* 532); their townsmen exhort warriors to protect Thebes (*hortantur* 10.572) as bees exhort each other to protect their hive (*hortantur* 576); a lion exulting (*gaudens* 7.673) is compared to Capaneus (*gavisus* 675); Menoeceus' mother sadly sits in her chamber (*sedet* 10.817) after his death as a tigresss deprived of her young lies in her cave (*accubat* 822), her anger abated (*sedit* 823).

Nor should such repetitions be thought accidental; there is every indication that the poet consciously repeated words in order to stress the ground for a comparison. This can be clearly seen in several comparisons of animals to people. For example, when Eurydice mourning for her child is compared to a wild animal (*fera* 6.188) both are referred to by the same word (*parens* 189, *parenti* 182). Similarly, Atalanta and the lion to which she is compared are both termed *mater* (9.737, 739). In another place the cubs to whom her son is compared and Parthenopaeus himself are both denoted by the same word (*natum*

Pyrrhus. For in some contexts (e.g., *Aeneid* 10.21) *tumidum* can also connote boastfulness and pride, although in this context it most likely means no more than swollen (Cf. R. G. Austin, *Aeneidos Liber Secundus* [Oxford 1964], on line 472).

4.310, *natis* 315).   When Antigone is compared to a lioness, a term is
used of the lion (*virginis* 12.357) which would suit the girl and is in fact
used to denote her six lines later (362).   And *agmen* is employed to
refer to the departure of an army's troops (*agmina linquebant* 5.2) and
the troops of birds to which they are compared (*agmina decedunt* 12).
Such instances manifest Statius' efforts to offer the parts of his com-
parisons in parallel terms.

The desire for verbal bonds seems in Statius as in Valerius and Vergil
to exceed, at times, the limits of semantic similarity.   Thus in Book 2
Eteocles awakened by the ghost of his grandfather is compared to a
tiger roused from sleep by the sound of hunters.   Several words appear
in both parts of the comparison: *somnum* / *somnos* 124, 129; *cruorem* /
cruentis 126, 131; *excutiens* / *excussit* 127, 129; *horret* / *horruit* 127, 129.
But of these repetitions, only *somnus* denotes an actual correspondence
between the situations compared—both Eteocles and the tiger are
disturbed from sleep.   The other three repetitions merely create a
sense of visual similarity between the parts which is not mirrored in
their semantic use.   *Horreo* actually appears in opposed meanings in its
two uses.   In the first instance, *horret avum*, Eteocles is afraid and
shrinking from his grandfather; in the second the word describes the
tiger standing erect confronting the hunters' nets (*tigris* / *horruit in
maculas*).   Nor do the instances of *excutio* depict related actions.
Excussit somnos is used figuratively and corresponds to *rupta quies* (125)
not to Eteocles' attempt to shake off the blood poured on him in his
dream, *vanumque cruorem excutiens*.   This type of unrelated repetition
occurs frequently in Statius' comparisons.   *Cado* is repeated in a
comparison of hurled weapons to a storm.   In its first instance it is
used to refer to the fall of weapons (*cadunt* 5.388), in the second to the
fall of birds (*cadunt* 392), an effect of the storm and not an essential part
of the comparison.   Similarly, Polyxo calling the Lemnian women to
murder (*vocat* 5.98) is compared to a Thyiad whom the sacred rites
call (*vocant* 93).   These repetitions have no bearing upon the ground
for comparison, yet the repetition of the same word in each part of
the comparison conveys a sense of correspondence.   Again when
Statius compares the dry land in which the warriors are caught to
other hot regions (*ceu flavam Libyen desertaque pulveris Afri* / *conlustrent
nullaque umbratam nube Syenen* 4.737 f.) he echoes his description of this

land just above (*tunc pulvere tellus / exhalat calidam nubem* 728 f.).   The
repetition of *pulvis* and *nubes* produces a purely visual, verbal similarity
between comparison and narrative.

So far the examination of Statius' practice has been limited to word
repetitions which are employed very frequently.   However, synonym
repetitions are used to provide verbal bonds in the *Thebaid* as in the
Argonautica.   For example, Tydeus' lifting a boulder (*sustinet* 2.562) is
compared to Pholus' lifting his goblet (*erexit* 563); Menoeceus lying
on his pyre (*accubat* 12.66) is compared to Hercules laid out on Mount
Oeta (*iacuit* 67); Capaneus' carrying the fallen Melanippus back to his
father (*reportat* 8.747) is likened to Hercules' returning home with the
boar (*intulit* 750); a horse trampling his rider (*calcat* 8.541) is compared
to a fallen tree which crushes the vine growing upon it (*proterit* 547).

Statius also employs synonyms in "false" bonding.   Thus in the
comparison of Capaneus' arrogance to that of the Titans, the hero is
described climbing the walls (*surgit* 10.849).   This verb in another
context would be synonymous with that describing the growing height
of Oeta (*cresceret* 850).   Book 7 provides an even clearer example of
the use of "false" bonding.   Here warriors' actions during an earth-
quake are compared to sailors' when a storm occurs during a sea battle:
sic ubi navales miscet super aequora pugnas ... (7.804).   After the simile
the poet returns to the narrative with the phrase *talis erat campo belli
fluitantis imago* (808).   The poet has chosen here a phrase *belli fluitantis*
which could describe a sea battle as well as a battle during an earth-
quake, thus stressing verbally the basis for his comparison.   Similarly
in Book 5 Lycaste balking at murdering her brother is compared to a
wild animal gentled by a kind master who refuses to return to his
former ferocity.   Statius has described the girl *exarmata* (226) and the
animal *tardius arma movet* (232).   By using these last words figuratively,
he has taken pains to convey visually the similarity between the com-
pared girl and animal.

Statius also uses language metaphorically in order to contrive verbal
correspondences between the parts of his comparisons.   He describes a
rain of weapons *ferrea* ... *hiems* (5.385–86) or *exundant saevo* ... *nimbo*
(10.535) anticipating their comparison to a storm.   He depicts a force
of horses *alipedum* ... *acies* (6.298) anticipating their comparison to
birds, *praepete cursu / volucres* (298–99).   And by choosing *fervor* with

its connotations of heat to describe the nature of Adrastus' horses (*multa monens ubi fervor equo* 6.317) the poet perhaps prepares for their comparison to the horses of the sun.   From these examples it appears that Statius was as intent as Valerius and Vergil to connect verbally his comparisons to the narrative in which they occur.

Ovid also appears to have followed this practice in the *Metamorphoses*.   In 69 extended similes only nine have no verbal bonds.   In Ovid's comparisons the basis for comparison is usually much more obvious than in Statius'; he compares situations or actions with a clear similarity which is expressed in both parts of the comparison by the use of synonyms.   Often the basis for the comparison is carefully underlined by the use of several synonym bonds.   In Book 8, for example, Erysichthon's appetite is compared to that of the ocean for rivers or a fire's for fuel.   There are several explicit points of comparison stressed by the use of synonyms.   Nourishment is the desire of both man and the fire (*alimenta* 837, *cibus* 841).   Yet neither he nor the ocean can be satisfied however much they consume (*non sufficit* 833, *nec satiatur* 836). In fact both Erysichthon and the fire are made more hungry by feeding; the more they consume the more they seek (Erysichthon: *inque epulis epulas quaerit* 832 and *plusque cupit, quo plura suam demittit in alvum* 834; the fire: *quo copia maior | est data, plura petit turbaque voracior ipsa est* 838 f.).   Again in the comparison of the spontaneous creation of living things from the earth to that similar creation of creatures from Nile mud, the cause of both creations is expressed by synonyms *ab igne | percaluit solis* 1.417 f., *exarsit sidere* 1.424.   Synonyms also signify the material of the creations (*caenum* 418, *limus* 424).   Similarly in the comparison of a hill's formation by the underground pressure of winds to the inflation by breath of a bladder or skin, related words express the swelling of the hill and the ball (15.303 *extentam*, 304 *tendere*).   The cause of the swelling, the puffs of wind (*flatibus* 302) and the inflater's breath (*spiritus* 303), are also referred to by synonyms, perhaps in this case "false" ones.

There are numerous examples in the *Metamorphoses* of synonyms used to point up the ground for comparison.   Notice the close correspondence between the expression of Mercury's action and that of a bird to which he is compared: *in orbem curvat* 2.715, *flectitur in gyrum* 718. Care is taken to provide synonyms in each part of the double comparison

of Lichas' hardening into a rock to rain becoming snow and snow turning into hail: *induruit* (9.219), *concrescere* (220), *glomerari* (222). Philomela shivers (*tremit* 6.527) like a dove at a hawk (*horret* 530); the gods tremble (*contremuere* 1.199) at Jove as the human race did at Caesar's murder (*perhorruit* 203); Thisbe trembles (*exhorruit* 4.135) like the sea stirred by a breeze (*tremit* 136); a god burns with love (*uritur* 1.496) as do fields or hedges with fire (*adolentur* 492, *ardent* 493); Mercury burns (*exarsit* 2.727) as does a bullet heated in flight (*incandescit* 728); Narcissus melts with love (*attenuatus amore / liquitur* 3.489 f.) as yellow wax melts (*intabescere* 487); Philomela's cut-off tongue quivers (*palpitat* 6.560) as does the severed tail of a snake (*salire* 559); brains ooze from a smashed head (*fluit* 12.436) as liquid flows through a sieve (*manat* 438).

Ovid does not use word repetition as frequently as Statius does to provide verbal bonds. But such links do occur. For example, Apollo follows the footsteps of Daphne (*vestigia* 1.532) as a Gallic hound does those of a rabbit (*vestigia* 536). Salmacis entwines herself around her beloved (*implicat* 4.362) as a snake around the wings of a bird (*implicat* 364). The sound of blood hissing in a wound (*stridore* 12.276) is compared to the sound of a hot iron plunged into water (*stridet* 279). Or Philomela, *dives . . . paratu* (6.451), is compared to Naiads or Dryads, *si modo des illis cultus similesque paratus* (454). In this last example the repetition of *paratus* is obviously supererogatory, included perhaps simply to provide a verbal connection between the parts of the comparison. For although examples of "false" bonding are not frequent in Ovid (most of the verbal links are justified), there are sufficient examples to suggest that Ovid like Statius, Vergil, and Valerius Flaccus was concerned with providing verbal bonds above and beyond the help they could offer in making the grounds for a comparison clear. So in Book 11, waves rushing against a ship are compared to a lion's rush upon the weapons of hunters:

> utque solent sumptis incursu viribus ire
> pectore in arma feri protentaque tela leones
> sic, ubi se ventis admiserat unda coortis
> ibat in arma ratis multoque erat altior illis.   (510–13)

The action and object of both rushes is expressed by similar phrases: forms of *eo* and *in arma*. But in each instance *arma* bears a different

meaning, the first literal, the second metaphorical.   The poet by using the same word has conveyed visually a greater similarity between the actions than actually exists.   Similarly Phaethon, carried by the run-away chariot, is compared to a helmsman who has given up control of his ship.   The poet describes the helmsman's actions figuratively (*cui victa remisit | frena suus rector* 2.185 f.) choosing terms more applicable to a charioteer, terms which in fact anticipate their use five lines later to describe Phaethon's lack of action (*nec frena remittit* 191).   A different use of "false" synonyms can be seen in the repetition of *theatrum* (11.22, 25) and use of the synonyms *volucres* (21) and *aves* (24) in the comparison of the Maenads' attack on Orpheus to that of birds upon an owl, or that of dogs upon a stag in the theater.   The use of words has no con-nection with the comparison, and yet serves to supply verbal similarities between the parts of the comparison.

Such examples amply demonstrate that Ovid also was concerned to establish links *per se* between the narrative and the comparisons in-cluded in it.

It was then the practice of all four poets, Valerius Flaccus, Vergil, Statius, and Ovid to provide verbal correspondences.   Moreover the use by all four of "false" correspondences indicates that the verbal connections themselves were sought and not merely their aid in ex-plicating the grounds for comparisons.

This uniformity of practice seems to support the thesis that it was a principle of Latin comparison construction to bind comparisons to narrative by verbal correspondences.   However this thesis would be further bolstered if some documentary testimony for the practice could be produced.[13]   Such evidence may exist in the *Ad Herrenium*.[14] Clarke cites this as the work which "best represents the traditional rhetoric of the schools, the sort of thing that was taught by the ordinary rhetorician in Rome."[15]   In the third book the author deals with

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[13] Our evidence will be from rhetorical writings.   But the inter-relation of poetry and prose criticism in the rhetorical schools is well known.   Cf. H. North, "The Use of Poetry in the training of the Ancient Orator," *Traditio* 8 (1952) 2; Marsh McCall, Jr., *Ancient Rhetorical Theories of Simile and Comparison* (Cambridge 1969) X.

[14] The questions of this work's author and date are discussed by H. Caplan in his introduction to (Cicero) *Ad. C. Herennium de Ratione Dicendi* (Cambridge, Mass., 1954). Also cf. McCall 52.

[15] M. L. Clarke, *Rhetoric at Rome* (London 1953) 24.

stylistic matters, including the construction of comparisons. He concludes his consideration of the purposes and method of the four types of comparison with certain remarks on comparison in general which begin:

> in similibus observare oportet diligenter ut, cum rem adferamus similem cuius rei causa similitudinem adtulerimus, verba ad similitudinem habeamus adcommodata. Id est huiusmodi: Ita ut hirundines aestivo tempore praesto sunt frigore pulsae recedunt ... Ex eadem *similitudine* nunc per translationem verba sumimus: item falsi amici sereno vitae tempore praesto sunt, simul atque hiemem fortunae viderunt, devolant omnes.
>
> (4.48.61)

The author observes that in comparisons the subject part of the comparison should be offered in words suited to the likeness emphasized in the comparative part. That is, the words themselves (*verba*) should establish a relationship between apodosis and protasis. His example demonstrates his meaning quite clearly. *Praesto sunt* repeats in each part of the comparison. The periphrasis *sereno tempore vitae* is used to make plain its analogy to *aestivo tempore*, just as the metaphor *hiemem* is employed to echo *frigore*. Synonyms also express the actions of the birds and the false friends (*recedunt, devolant*). *Devolant*, more strictly applicable to the action of birds, is used metaphorically for the action of friends.[16] In this example the two parts of the comparison are closely bound together by verbal correspondences. Here then is the type of recommendation which we might have expected from the often observed practice of verbal bonding. It requires that the parts of comparisons should be linked by verbal correspondences. Roman writers took precepts of composition seriously.[17] If it were generally taught in the rhetorical schools, as Clarke suggests, that the wording (*verba*)[18] of the subject part of the comparison ought to reflect the comparative part Latin poets might be expected to make every effort to comply with this prescription. As indeed they have

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[16] This is the same metaphor observed so often in the apodoses of Vergil's comparisons to birds.

[17] Cicero, *De Or.* 1.28.

[18] For the emphasis here is on wording (*verba*), not as McCall 75 would have it on imagery.

been observed to do in the examples from Valerius Flaccus, Vergil, Statius and Ovid.[19]

Moreover the appearance of such anomalies as "false" synonyms might reflect typical statements (like the above) of the prescription. For it is noteworthy that the emphasis of the *Ad Herennium*'s instruction is on the necessity for parallelism of diction without giving any explanation for this necessity. This could explain why, although it is the usual practice of Roman poets to use their verbal correspondences to make their comparisons explicit (the obvious reason behind the instruction to use equivalent diction), they were not above employing "false" synonyms or word repetitions if no "true" ones were available. They could thus offer the parts of their comparisons in equivalent diction thereby complying with literary prescription.

[19] Quintilian at 8.3.77 may also be referring to this convention of comparison construction when he describes the best method of attaching protases to apodoses: *cum re, cuius est imago, connectitur, collatione invicem respondente quod facit redditio contraria, quae* ἀνταπόδοσις *dicitur.* The examples of this "reciprocal representation" in 8.3.79–81 exhibit many close verbal correspondences between the parts of the comparison.