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READING RESISTANCE IN THE GALATEA EPISODE OF OVID'S METAMORPHOSES*1

PATRICIA SALZMAN-MITCHELL Montclair State University, NJ (USA)

Resumen. El siguiente trabajo trata del discurso de cortejo de Polifemo (relatado por Galatea) y propone que tanto Polifemo como Galatea son tipos de lector del poema de Ovidio y de la elegía latina, si bien muy diferentes. Mientras el Cíclope percibe el texto de Metamorfosis y la figura elegíaca de la dura puella desde una perspectiva masculina, la diosa, se opone a este tipo de lectura. La autora argumenta que Galatea rechaza la construcción que de ella hace el Cíclope y que de este modo se opone también a una lectura simplista de las figuras femeninas en las *Metamorfosis* y en la elegía amorosa latina, convirtiéndose así en un lector que se opone a las lecturas masculinas sesgadas de la epopeya de Ovidio y la poesía amorosa. Se sostienen además los tres puntos siguientes: Galatea rechaza la cosificación de las mujeres en su animalización y asimilación al paisaje erotizado; rechaza, por otra parte, el estereotipo literario de la dura puella en el que el discurso del Cíclope intenta encasillarla, y comprende que el Cíclope desea privarla de su propia naturaleza e identidad y asimilarla completamente a su propio mundo.

Summary. This paper discusses the wooing speech of Polyphemus (re-told by Galatea) and proposes that both Polyphemus and Galatea are readers of Ovid's poem and of Latin Elegy, yet very different ones. While the Cyclops reads the text of *Metamorphoses* and the elegiac figure of the *dura puella* from a male-centered perspective, the goddess, resists this type of reading. I argue that Galatea rejects the construction of herself that the Cyclops shapes and that in this way she also resists the way the oaf reads images of women displayed throughout *Metamorphoses* and in Latin love elegy, thus becoming a resisting reader of male-biased readings of Ovid's epic and amatory poetry. Further, three contentions are made, that Galatea rejects the reification of women in their animalization and assimilation to eroticized

^{*} Dirección para correspondencia: P. Salzman-Mitchell, Assistant Professor of Classics, Department of Classics and General Humanities, Montclair State University, Normal Ave., Montclair, New Jersey 97043, USA, e-mail: salzmanp@mail.montclair.edu.

¹ I borrow the phrase "Reading Resistance" from Liveley's paper on Pygmalion (1999). I would like to thank Prudence Jones and Jean Alvares for helpful suggestions to this paper.

landscape, that she also rejects the literary stereotype of the *dura puella* in which the Cyclops' speech tries to encase her, and that she realizes that the Cyclops wishes to deprive her of her own nature and identity and to assimilate her completely to his own world.

Palabras clave: Ovidio; Galatea; Polifemo/ Cíclope; *Metamorfosis*; narrador femenino; lector femenino; resistencia en la lectura; teoría literaria; crítica literaria feminista; mito. **Key words**: Ovid; Galatea; Polyphemus/ Cyclops; *Metamorphoses*; female narrator; female reader; reading resistance; literary theory; ferminist literary criticism; myth.

In Book 13 (738-897) of Ovid's epic, while the nymph Scylla combs her hair, the sea goddess Galatea narrates how she was wooed by the Cyclops Polyphemus though she was in love with the boy Acis. The setting of Galatea's speech then is "girl talk," as Mack puts it. Galatea rejects the love of Polyphemus and the Cyclops, angered at the sight of the lovers in embrace, throws a rock at Acis to destroy him. Galatea, however, saves the boy by turning him into a river god. Galatea's speech, as many other female discourses in the poem, consists of lamentation and self-pity and seems to represent man as monster and woman as victim. As Tissol indicates, the figure of Galatea narrating the story is an Ovidian innovation with respect to the model in Theocritus' poem 11, the most direct source for the episode.³ The tale then provides a feminine perspective, as all we know about the Cyclops and Acis is what we hear through Galatea's focalisation. When Telemus warns Polyphemus that someone will take away his one eye, the giant replies: 'altera iam rapuit [lumen]' (Met.13.775).⁴ These words are significant because, although in appearance Polyphemus is simply using a common amatory topos, they can be read metaphorically as an allusion to Galatea's stealing of the Cyclops' perspective and point of view in the narrative 5

This paper discusses the wooing speech of Polyphemus (re-told by Galatea) and proposes that both Polyphemus and Galatea are readers of Ovid's poem and of Latin Elegy, yet very different ones. While the Cyclops reads the

² Mack, 1999, p. 56. On the narrative sequence in which the episode is placed and the narrative situation see Nagle, 1988a, p. 76.

³ See Tissol, 1997, p. 113. For an excellent discussion of the Theocritan intertext see Farrell, 1992. For Homeric and Virgilian intertexts in the story see Mack, 1999.

⁴ For Polyphemus' use of elegiac language here see Tissol, 1997, p. 20. One must of course note the amatory variant of captivation with the eyes in Propertius 1.1.1: *Cynthia... me cepit ocellis*.

⁵ It is a typically Ovidian irony that Galatea can only control the vision of a defective viewer who has just one eye.

text of *Metamorphoses* and the elegiac figure of the *dura puella* from a male-centered perspective, the goddess resists this type of reading. I argue that Galatea rejects the construction of herself that the Cyclops shapes and that in this way she also resists the way the oaf reads images of women displayed throughout *Metamorphoses* and in Latin love elegy, thus becoming a resisting reader of male-biased readings of Ovid's epic and amatory poetry. Further, three contentions are made, that Galatea rejects the reification of women in their animalization and assimilation to eroticized landscape, that she also rejects the literary stereotype of the *dura puella* in which the Cyclops' speech tries to encase her, and that she realizes that the Cyclops wishes to deprive her of her own nature and identity and to assimilate her completely to his own world.

2. Re-reading Metamorphoses:

Ovid's *Metamorphoses* offers a large variety of female narrators embedded in a larger male-authored narrative poem. How to read this diversity of voices is a highly problematic issue. Some argue that there is a single author, while others see many voices; still others try to find a middle ground. The crucial question seems to lie in deciding whether to consider these internal narratives as productions of a greater and 'unique' authorial voice or to give these discourses and their narrators independence and value free from the authority of the external author.⁶

Two different modes of reading, which are particularly important when dealing with female readers, have been developed in literary criticism: releasing and resisting. Releasing reading is a strategy that essentially allows women's voices to speak despite the author. It is a reading of the female voice in male-authored texts as independent from the male authorial intention. This is a more recuperative method that replaces the authority of the author with that of female characters, which is well exemplified by Spentzou's reading of the *Heroides* as women writers and critics, who awaken from their literary lethargy and assume their own artistic voices. Releasing is, in essence, a shift of focus away from the author that allows agency to the female (and male) characters.⁷ In this sense, the control of the text is not entirely under the command of the main narrator.

Liveley's approach to Pygmalion and the Propoetides is also partly

⁶ Some important discussions of the internal narrators in *Metamorphoses* are Keith, 1992, pp. 4-5, Segal, 1971, and 1978, Nagle, 1983, 1988*a*, 1988*b*, 1988*c*, and 1989, Gamel 1984, Knox, 1986, pp. 48-64, Ahl, 1985, pp. 202-4, Hinds, 1987, pp. 91-93 and 121-132, Janan, 1988, Barchiesi, 1989, Konstan, 1991, Myers, 1994, pp. 61-132 and Wheeler, 1999.

⁷ See Spentzou's work on the *Heroides* (2003).

realising, yet at the same time resisting. While at first she unmasks the male bias in the apparent authorial (of Ovid, Orpheus, and Pygmalion) judgement of them in the poem, she proceeds to analyze the episode from a feminine perspective. She allows the ivory maiden some subjectivity and female agency. Also, a rather recuperative approach can be found in Marder's work on Philomela. Marder sees that in the silence of Procne and Philomela and their vengeance there are a refusal to speak the language of the father and a violation of his laws. She likens the women in the tale striving for an alternative "disarticulated" language with the struggles of feminism "to find a discursive vocabulary for experiences both produced and silenced by patriarchy."

In this paper I will take Galatea's speech as an independent verbal production of a woman and inquire about what the female voice has to say, rather than subordinate it to the larger authorial voice of the male narrator. I will also see the Cyclops as an independent character capable of his own readings of *Metamorphoses* and Latin elegy, though of course, our perception of *his* readings is here sieved through Galatea's voice. In this sense, my reading will be releasing.

Reading as resistance began with Fetterly's *The Resisting Reader*, where the author attempts to appropriate a feminine reading by questioning the authority of the male author and critic and by exposing the patriarchal strategies of the texts. 10 Fetterly also recognizes that the woman reader is forced to adopt a male point of view for male-biased texts and that readings of texts tend to present the masculine experience as universal. However, this mode of reading, as sympathetic to feminists as it appears, is not entirely unproblematic, as Fetterly's project, as some critics have recognized, risks replacing one monoview with another and does not "give sufficient credit to the multiplicity of perspective in the act of reading." To escape this bind, critics like Devereaux – who also argues for "reading against the grain, re-reading or revision" of traditional male texts – remark that to react against patriarchal conceptions of art and art products, two solutions are possible. On the one hand, feminists have created countercultural works, a strategy that strives to create a 'female voice'. On the other hand, one can develop methods of dealing with existing texts by 'resisting' them. Or, as Richlin puts it, there are three things that one can do with male authored/biased texts: "throw them out, take them apart, find female based ones instead."12 The strategies of the resisting reader have the aim both of critique and

⁸ Liveley, 1999.

⁹ Marder, 1990, pp. 162-163.

¹⁰ Fetterly, 1978.

¹¹ Sharrock, 2002, pp. 271-272.

¹² Richlin (1992), 161 and Devereaux, 1990, pp. 346-347.

re-appropriation, thus providing an alternative to the male point of view.

Within the scholarship of those who see themselves as resisting readers, there are two trends. Some see misogyny in the texts and authors themselves and others find it not necessarily in the texts but in the received male-biased readings of those texts. As Liveley clearly explains: "It is not the texts in and of themselves that exclude the woman reader and deny the possibility of a female perspective, but rather the readings of those texts, through which 'only one reality is encouraged, legitimized and transmitted'." It is on this last type of reading resistance that my paper will focus.

Students of *Metamorphoses* have gone in both directions. Richlin is an obvious resisting reader of 'Ovid'. She sees an intrinsic misogyny in the poem and believes that one should resist the male-biased orientation of the text itself. In part, Shaw Hardy's piece on Arachne also follows this critical position. She maintains that although Ovid is being sympathetic to women and female victims, we actually see an erasure of them in favour of the transformed gods. Therefore, Arachne's voice is somewhat silenced even before metamorphosis. Joplin resists the "misogyny" of psychoanalysis and sees in Ovid and some of his interpreters a "silencing" of women in the tale of Philomela that feminists must fight and expose. Instead, Cahoon takes the richness and multiplicity of voices and female characters in *Metamorphoses* as a sign that the poem is open to multiple perspectives, including that of a female reader. Thus, she does not see an inherent male-bias in Ovid's epic but states: "I find that I become a far more 'resisting reader', even more of a hostile reader, in response to much modern male-authored criticism that I am to Ovid's plural discourse."

Indeed, many critics have seen in Ovid a poet that is sympathetic to the suffering of women, who only displays scenes of rape to expose and criticize the oppression of the weak. Curran, in particular, in his seminal work on rape in

¹³ Liveley, 1999, p. 199. Gamel, 1989, makes the distinction that 'male reading' and 'female reading' do not necessarily equate with the biological sex of the reader. Thus "gender readings are culturally produced, and female readers who identify with malestream culture will read as males." (186).

¹⁴ Richlin, 1992. Leach, 1964, also sees misogyny in the *Ars Amatoria*, as the narrator, she argues, constantly equates the conduct of women with that of animals and other natural phenomena.

¹⁵ Shaw Hardy, 1995, pp. 145-146.

¹⁶ Joplin, 1984.

¹⁷ Cahoon, 1996, p. 46: "Both Calliope and Hinds make me a 'resisting reader' (Fetterly 1978) with a vested interest in daughters (and in mothers when they seek to help their daughters."

¹⁸ Cahoon, 1996, p. 54 n. 21.

Metamorphoses, believes that through the exploration of rape, Ovid certainly gains "an insight into their [women's] plight as rape victims" and that he "exhibits a sympathy which, if sometimes patronizing or obscured by lightness of surface or tone and by his love of burlesque and exaggeration, is fundamentally genuine and well conceived." While such a complex text as *Metamorphoses* is certainly open to multiple readings, the narrator, however, puts forward constructions of women, who for internal and external readers and viewers can entice erotic desire. An example of this male-biased type of reading of female images is found in Elsner's description of the reader's experience, who, he believes, identifies with Pygmalion: "Pygmalion loves and desires, so the reader loves and desires..."²⁰ Would a female reader also identify with Pygmalion's love and desire for the statue? Or would she rather align with the ivory maiden and perhaps feel her creator's hands all over her body, while she is trapped in her immobility and unable to react? Likewise, Otis, referring to the Apollo-Daphne episode, notes that "Daphne is really nothing but the determined virgin whose single role is to thwart the infatuated lover. It is on him that our attention is focused: his thoughts and words that we share."²¹ Otis here identifies with Apollo, the lover, the voyeur, and reads *like a man* who probably shares not only the gods' "words and thoughts" but possibly his desire as well. Whether the narrator offers this display of female images to empathize with them or to delight in their sexualized bodies, the images are still there and how one reads them is, as the previous discussions show, a matter of interpretation. In this paper I see *Metmorphoses* as a text that offers reifving and thus oppressive views of women.

I will propose that Galatea is a resisting reader in Fetterly's sense, as she criticizes and tears apart the views of women presented in Polyphemus' speech. In a sense, by choosing an affair with the boy Acis, a more comfortable, balanced and compatible relationship, in which one partner does not seem to overpower the other and where affection appears to be mutual, she also replaces the male-oriented view with a more female-oriented one.

2. Re-reading Metamorphoses:

Galatea, while resting in Acis' arms, eavesdrops on the Cyclops' song and then becomes narrator of what she has heard. Polyphemus begins by praising Galatea:

¹⁹ See Curran, 1978, p. 237, and *passim*. For Ovid's sympathy towards the plight of women in elegy see also Hemker, 1985, and James, 1997.

²⁰ Elsner, 1991, p. 164.

²¹ Otis, 1970, p. 103.

Candidior folio nivei Galatea ligustri, floridior pratis, longa procerior alno, splendidior vitro, tenero lascivior haedo, levior adsiduo detritis aequore conchis, solibus hibernis, aestiva gratior umbra, mobilior damma, platano conspectior alta, lucidior glacie, matura dulcior uva, mollior et cycni plumis et lacte coacto, et, si non fugias, riguo formosior horto (Met.13.789-97).

'Galatea, whiter than the leaves of a snowy privet, more full of flowers than the meadows, taller than an alder, more radiant than crystal, more playful than a tender kid, softer than shells smoothed by the constant waves, more pleasing than the winter sun and summer shade, more nimble than a doe, more beautiful than a lofty plane-tree, clearer than ice, sweeter than ripe grapes, softer than a swan's down and curdled milk, and, if only you would not flee from me, more beautiful than a well-watered garden.'

Galatea relates what Polyphemus said about her image and in this retelling there is, I suggest, a realization of the ways in which males often read images of women in controlling and oppressive ways. This awareness is for the goddess the first step towards resistance. The long list of comparisons that describe Galatea tend to assimilate her to landscape, which has much to do with femininity in the *Metamorphoses*. Many women in the poem are incorporated into natural scenery in one way or another. Some, like Diana or Arethusa, appear as pleasant images in loci amoeni and others, like Dryope or Daphne, are incorporated to nature with their transformations. This reification into landscape feeds the voyeuristic pleasure of male readers and viewers – for instance in the cases of Actaeon and Apollo- and generally makes women into visual spectacles.²² Although this pattern is not without its complexities – males are not always entirely successful in their control of women – it does in general present images of women fixed in textual canvases as part of descriptions. Polyphemus constructs his idealized image of Galatea on the basis of his own readings of this particular feature of *Metamorphoses*. Polyphemus is also an internal reader of the poem who enjoys this visual reification of women, thus focalizing with such male internal viewers as Apollo or Actaeon. At the time of constructing his ideal woman, he adopts this same reading stance and tries to read Galatea's body as a

²² On the gaze, vision and gender in *Metamorphoses* see Salzman-Mitchell, 2005.

collection of sexualized images he has found in Metamorphoses.

First, in line 789 of the previously quoted passage, the semantic sphere of candidus is noteworthy. Many characters in Metamorphoses who are eroticized and visually reified are said to be dazzling white. Atalanta, the erotic object of Hippomenes' gaze (spectator, Met. 10.575), for example, is candida when her lover sees her (Met.10.594). While Atalanta is at first a woman who holds a certain power over men (she can run faster than any opponent), by the end of the episode she has become domesticated. At the beginning of Proserpina's story, the maiden is said to be picking white lilies (candida lilia, Met.5.392), which are symbols of the maiden herself. Like Atalanta, Proserpina is made a wife, a queen of the Underworld who responds to a new and powerful lord. The adjective niveus, alluding to Galatea's whiteness also recalls the color of such virgins as Pygmalion's maiden who begins her existence as niveum ebur 'snowy ivory' (Met.10.247-8). Pygmalion is the viewer in control and the object of his gaze eventually becomes a wife and a mother (Met.10.29-31).²³ Thus, Atalanta, Proserpina and Pygmalion's maiden all end up under the sway of a dominant male in their respective narratives.²⁴ While one may read these stories as a condemnation of rape, Polyphemus, however, appropriates imagery that sexualizes the female body and incites male desire.

The fact that Galatea is also compared to privet links her to other female characters who are transformed into vegetation. Flowers are important elements related to women and virginity and Proserpina's rape in a field of flowers is most emblematic (*frigora dant rami, Tyrios humus umida flores, Met.*5.390).²⁵ Polyphemus, by saying that Galatea is *floridior pratis*, literally transforms her body into a pleasant landscape open to violation and thus associates himself with the gaze of the rapist god in the episode, since it is in this landscape that Pluto sees her, loves her and takes her away (*paene simul visa est, dilectaque raptaque Diti. Met.*5.395).

In *longa procerior alno* Galatea is seen as a tall alder and in *platano* conspectior alta (note conspectior in particular, placing Galatea as spectacle) she is compared to a plane-tree. There are several cases in *Metamorphoses* in which

²³ In Curran's, 1978, words, "The Pygmalion can be read as an enactment of the male fantasy of possessing a wife who is so docile and complaisant that she might as well be his own creation." (213).

²⁴ The use of *niveus* and *candidus* can be found in the episode of Narcissus, a rather powerless and doomed *puer*: *et in niveo mixtum candore ruborem* (*Met.* 4.423). In this group of dazzling white women we can also include the image of Andromeda tied to a rock and described as a work of marble (*marmoreum opus... Met.* 4.675).

²⁵ For the symbolism of flowers in the Proserpina story see Segal, 1969, p. 34 n. 65, Parry, 1964, and Barkan, 1986, p. 16.

women are eroticized and changed into trees. The most memorable is Daphne, who after fleeing from Apollo is transformed into the laurel tree. While this may be an alternative to the violence of rape, transformation deprives Daphne of her identity as a woman and even after the change, she – with or without her consent Decomes Apollo's tree. Indeed, the god affirms his desire to possess her when he asserts: "at quoniam coniunx mea non potes esse, arbor eris certe" dixit "mea" (Met. 1.557). By comparing Galatea to a tree, Polyphemus recalls Apollo's desire to 'have' Daphne in this form. Lotis becomes a tree while fleeing from Priapus (Met.9.347-348), the Heliades, Phaethon's sisters, are transformed into poplars out of grief for his death. Myrrha ends up as the myrrh tree, thus escaping the world of the living and the world of the dead, as she prays (Met.10.485). While metamorphoses into trees are often alternatives to death or rape, and thus represent a somewhat positive outcome for women, they nevertheless contain elements of entrapment and deprive women of their individuality and humanity.

With *splendidior vitro* the Cyclops recalls the comparison of Hermaphroditus' body swimming in the crystal-clear pool of Salmacis to ivory figures or white lilies encased in translucent glass (*ut eburnea si quis/ signa tegat claro vel candida lilia vitro, Met.*4.353-535). Although Hermaphroditus is a male, he is problematically feminized and here his body is visually reified and turned into erotic object for the viewer's consumption. The assimilation of Galatea's body to shining glass has a similar effect.²⁹ Her comparison to shells smoothed by constant water (*laevior adsiduo detritis aequore conchis*) reminds us of the pervasive association of women with water in the poem. Diana, for example, is bathing naked in the pool when Actaeon sees her (*Met.*3.161-2), and Arethusa not only *is* a pool (*Met.*5.573-5) but is also attracted to a pool (*Met.* 5.587-589).

Both tenero lascivior haedo and mobilior damna raise some intriguing nuances since the semantic sphere of lascivia appears frequently in erotic elegiac

²⁶ Some may see in this episode a critique of the oppression of the weak by the powerful, emblematized in Apollo's reference to Rome's military might in *Met*.1.560-561.

²⁷ Farrell, 1999, pp. 135-136, actually notices that the implied 'consent' of Daphne to become Apollo's tree (her nodding) many be no more than a fantasy of the focalizer Apollo, while she might be actually expressing rejection. Farrell's is a releasing reading that assigns agency to the female subject.

²⁸ Apollo in fact even tells Daphne how he will 'use' her: ('mea! semper habebunt te coma, te citharae, te nostrae, laure, pharetrae, Met.1.558-559).

²⁹ Splendidior vitro is a borrowing from Horace, Ode 3.13.1. Gross, 2000, p. 65, in his article on Book 13 notes that this is the only Latin borrowing among many Greek allusions.

contexts³⁰ and is here referring to *haedo*, a kid, a particularly 'pastoral' animal familiar to Polyphemus, which he says he owns later in his speech (*Met*.13.828).³¹ These elements add to the recurrent animalization of Galatea and evoke animal imagery applied to women in erotic contexts in the poem. *Mobilior* suggests the wild nature of women, developed first by Virgil (*varium et mutabile semper femina*, *Aen*.4.569-570) and continued with Calpurnius Siculus (*mobilior ventis*, *o femina!*, *Buc*.3.10),³² that women are inconstant and always changing, unpredictable and thus uncontrollable in some way. Yet curiously, does and goats are scorned by Polyphemus later as too common pets for Galatea (*damnae lepores caperque*³³, *Met*.13.832). Instead he offers her two young bears, and in so doing, commits a faux-pas, first comparing Galatea with does and kids and then saying that they are not worthy pets. Galatea, as an attentive reader, is probably aware of this inconsistency and even amused by it.

The reference to the pleasant climate is, as we know, characteristic of *loci amoeni* and it is in this pleasant setting, as both Polyphemus and Galatea have read, that many characters in *Metamorphoses* are first visually objectified, controlled and even sometimes raped (as with Proserpina in *Met*.5.385-391 and Diana in *Met*.3.155-162). ³⁴ If Galatea is a sagacious reader of Polyphemus' speech, then she will know that by converting her into a *locus amoenus*, in a veiled way, he is anticipating sexual violence over her. Likewise, when Polyphemus later lists his own possessions he says that in his caves the climate is as pleasant as in a *locus amoenus*: *sunt mihi, pars montis, vivo pendentia saxo/antra, quibus nec sol medio sentitur in aestu,/ nec sentitur hiems, Met*.13.810-811). Through this comparison, Polyphemus newly assimilates Galatea to one of his possessions and thus conveys his wish to turn her into one of them.

Two comparisons to food are also noteworthy: matura dulcior uva and mollior... lacte coacto. First, Polyphemus affirms that among his possessions, which he offers as gifts to Galatea, there is always plenty of milk (lac mihi semper adest niveum: pars inde bibenda/ servatur, partem liquefacta coagulo

³⁰ Cf. Tib.1.10.7, Am.1.4.21, Am.3.1.43 and Am.3.7.10.

³¹ *Haedo* is present in Horace *Ode* 3.13.3, a passage that also describes a landscape, where the poet tells that the Bandusian Fountain will be honored with a kid (*cras donaberis haedo*).

³² See also Cat.70.3-4: *sed mulier cupido quod dicit amanti/ in vento et rapida scribere oportet aqua*. There are in fact etymological links between *muto* and *moveo*. See Ernout Meillet, 1985, '*muto*'.

An *haedo* is a young goat, a kid or a *caper* is a he-goat and just a goat.

³⁴ See also Narcissus in *Met.* 407-412. On Ovid's reversal of the placid connotations of *loci amoeni* see Spencer, 1997, p. 21 and Segal, 1969, p. 82. For *locus amoenus* in general see also Curtis, 1953, pp. 195-200.

durant, *Met*.13.829-830). Indeed, Galatea's very name evokes milk. The idea that Galatea is like milk and cheese and that these are things that Polyphemus owns, transmits his own desire to incorporate her to what he already controls.

Regarding fruit imagery, one recalls the episode of Pomona and Vertumnus.³⁵ Pomona is, as her name indicates, linked to fruit (*Met.*14.625-626) and when Vertumnus comes to woo her he often brings fruits and acquires the image of a reaper (ready to pluck his fruit!) (Met.14.650). The god, disguised as an old lady, even tries to persuade her to wed by pointing at the example of grapes 'married' to a tree ("at si staret" ait "caelebs sine palmite truncus,/ nil praeter frondes, quare peteretur, haberet, Met.14.663-664). Pomona, assimilated to grapes, is finally sexually conquered and, as Gentilcore demonstrates, her enclosed garden is now symbolically open and violated.³⁶ Thus, when Polyphemus compares Galatea to grapes he echoes the fate of Pomona as controlled and possessed by Vertumnus. Finally, the reference to Galatea (si non fugias!), as riguo formosior horto, seems to support this intratextual reference to Pomona's garden, which can be seen as a metaphor for her body and her physical integrity. Interestingly, among the gifts that Polyphemus later wishes to bestow upon Galatea, there are several kinds of fruits, including grapes and apples (sunt poma gravantia ramos, /sunt auro similes longis in vitibus uvae, sunt et purpureae, Met.13.13-15). Again, Polyphemus not only identifies with the internal male lover Vertumnus but also likens Galatea to his own possessions.

3. Resisting the dura puella:

The second part of Polyphemus' speech, in which he shifts from praise to blame, displays a new set of comparisons:

Saevior indomitis eadem Galatea iuvencis, durior annosa quercu, fallacior undis, lentior et salicis virgis et vitibus albis, his immobilior scopulis, violentior amne, laudato pavone superbior, acrior³⁷ igni, asperior tribulis, feta truculentior ursa,

³⁵ While the story of Pomona and Vertumnus comes after the episode of Galatea in Book 14, in a releasing reading nothing prevents us from seeing Galatea as reader of the whole *Metamorphoses* and not just of what has come before the book in which she appears.

³⁶ See Gentilcore, 1995. Jones, 2001, however, does not see sexual violence – in fact, the violent language of Virgil is mollified in Ovid – in the episode and implies that Pomona accepts Vertumnus' love convinced by his good looks.

³⁷ In Tibullus 2 6 15 *Amor* is called *acer*

surdior aequoribus, calcato inmitior hydro, et, quod praecipue vellem tibi demere possem, non tantum cervo claris latratibus acto verum etiam ventis volucrique fugacior aura (Met.13.798-807)

"Yet you, the same Galatea, are more savage than untamed heifers, harder than aged oak, falser than water, tougher than willow-twigs and white vines, more immovable than these rocks, more violent than a stream, prouder than a praised peacock, more cruel than fire, sharper than thorns, more savage than a she-bear with young, deafer than the sea, harsher than a trodden snake, and, what I would most of all like to take from you, swifter not only than the stag driven before the baying hounds, but also than the winds and the fleeting breeze!

This shift from praise to blame recalls the shift in the approach to love and the puella from Ars Amatoria to Remedia Amoris. In much of this passage the Cyclops portrays Galatea as the dura puella who does not surrender to the lover. This new set of comparisons reminds us of other moments of Metamorphoses when women recall the figure of the hard and unresponsive mistress of elegy. Here Galatea is said to be crueller than an untamed heifer and in this respect one can think about the cruelty of harsh Atalanta, who in Propertius 1.1.6 is assimilated to the difficult elegiac girl that the poet must pursue (Saevitiam durae... Iasidos). In 1.3.18, Propertius recognizes that he has suffered Cynthia's saevitia before (Expertae metuens iurgia saevitiae) and Tibullus directly calls the girl saeva (Uror, io! Remove, saeva puella, faces! Tib.2.4.6). We can suggest then that Polyphemus not only reads Metamorphoses and the durae puellae he finds in it, he also reads Latin erotic elegy as a male, identifying with the *poeta/amator*. The reference to a heifer is also noteworthy, because it continues the animal imagery that describes Galatea; and heifers are creatures commonly found in the pastoral settings that the Cyclops knows so well. In Met. 13.821 Polyphemus even says that he has a lot of pecus 'cattle' with distended udders full of milk. The adjective *indomitis* is also significant since in elegy, the *amator* repeatedly refers to the mistress as *domina*, for she cannot be dominated by the lover. Fallacior undis harks back to the deceptive quality of the elegiac mistress who is always cheating in one way or another.³⁸ Yet the allusion to waves recalls Galatea's very own nature as a Nereid.

The phrase dura puella is perhaps the most famous coinage of Latin

³⁸ As in *Tib*.1.2.15: *Tu quoque ne timide custodes, Delia, falle*. Love itself in elegy is said to be *fallax*. See for example *Corp.Tib*.3.12.112.

elegy³⁹ and thus the comparison of the unresponsive Galatea to a hard tree puts her image closer to the literary stereotype of the elegiac mistress. Galatea is asperior tribulis in Met.13.803 and when Daphne runs away from Apollo's courtship the god warns her that she is entering harsh regions: aspera, qua properas, loca sunt (Met.1.510), which could be understood as an allusion not just to the physical landscape where the nymph is running but to a metaphorical hardness of the girl and her actions. But this, of course, is only Apollo's perspective, with whom the Cyclops reads. Just as Galatea is durior annosa quercu, Daphne's soft body is hardened into a tree, which, nevertheless, continues to reject the lover (Met.1.556).40 Daphne is eventually enclosed by "libro" (bark/book), a word that as critics have recognized can be read as her 'literalization', her inclusion in the book of *Metamorphoses*, her becoming a piece of literature like the *dura puella*. Just as Daphne is 'encased' in the laurel bark, Polyphemus as male-biased reader of Apollo, not only encases Galatea into the image of trees, as mentioned before, but also into the literary stereotype of the dura puella. Interestingly, Polyphemus now calls Galatea immobilior his scopulis, which could appear to contradict her previous 'mobile' character, but again refers to the stubbornness of a capricious girl. Yet we should bear in mind that Polyphemus is likely to encounter many of these things (trees, rocks, thorns, etc.) in his roaming of the woodlands, where his cattle wander, Met.13.821-822). Finally, Galatea is also said to be violent, just like Ovid's mistress Corinna in the Amores (Facie violenta Corinna est, Ovid, Am. 2.17.7).

Many of the elements in this set of comparisons also bring to mind different eroticized women in *Metamorphoses*. The reference to a *iuvenca*, recalls Io as a cow (*Met*.1.568-746), though she does not seem as difficult to dominate as Galatea. Indeed, later in the episode Polyphemus compares his size and might to Jupiter's (*Met*.13.842-843) and Galatea describes his rage at the loss of his beloved as that of a furious bull when a cow has been taken from him (*ut Taurus vacca furibundus adempta*, *Met*.13.871). Women are often associated with water in the poem and the phrase *surdior aequoribus* here makes us think of Arethusa who is 'deaf' to the love of Alpheus. The she-bear (*ursa*) with young reminds us of Callisto. Comically, Polyphemus, after telling Galatea that she is more savage than a bear, plans to give her two young bears as gifts. Finally, the mention of Galatea's speed evokes several fleeting virgins who run to escape rape, like Daphne and Sirynx. Speed is the trait that defines Atalanta, which all the competitors in the race try to surpass until Hippomenes manages to 'delay' her

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³⁹ See for instance Ovid, Am. 1.9.7 and Prop. 2.1.78.

⁴⁰ Later Syrinx rejects Pan's favors and hardens into a reed pipe.

and make her his wife. 41 Speed is exactly what Polyphemus says he most wants to take away from Galatea, just as – he has read – Hippomenes does with his own *puella*.

In lines 808-839 Polyphemus lists his possessions, which he would put at Galatea's service if she would only consent to his love, perhaps because, as Mack suggests, he realizes that his strategy of wooing her with comparisons will not lead to a successful seduction. Indeed, these comparisons by means of which he constructs Galatea come from his biased readings of the poem and Latin elegy and this type of understanding of the texts is precisely what Galatea 'resists'. These gifts make us think once more about the gifts that the elegiac lover often bestows upon his mistress, in addition they evoke Pygmalion's gifts to the ivory maiden in Book 10 (*Met*.10.259-263) and, in particular, Propertius' gifts to Cynthia in 1.3.24-25, which include fruits. The mention of several kinds of fruits as gifts, such as apples and grapes, as we discussed before, also points to the Pomona episode in which Vertumnus tries to court her with such offerings. We see Pomona herself identified with apples about to be snatched by the god (*lecturum poma putares*, *Met*.14.650, and *vimque parat: sed vi non est opus*, *Met*.14.770).

Finally, the scene in which Apollo reminds Daphne of his virtues (Met.1.512-524) is also present as intertext. Thus, Polyphemus tries to conquer her with gifts that appear in his description of her and Galatea finds this ridiculous. Most of the episodes Polyphemus alludes to in his speech can be experienced by the reader who identified with the rapists in terms of sexual violence and a desire of the lover to posses the beloved, in most cases against the girl's will. Galatea rejects this type of persuasion and sexual pursuit. The Nereid also becomes aware of the many connections between the way the Cyclops depicts her and his own possessions, which he now offers to her. While Galatea may have rejected Polyphemus for his ugly looks from the beginning, she goes to great lengths to retell his speech. She does this, I suggest, because she wants to both mock it and give a critical opinion of its content and his way of reading women in Latin poetry. A wooing speech that offers to make a woman one more of the lover's goods should be rejected and criticized.

4. A female reading:

As we have seen, and as the Cyclops himself recognizes, Galatea rejects him and his wooing speech. The daughter of Nereus, however, has a choice, and

⁴¹ On narrative delay and gender in this episode see Salzman-Mithcell, 2005, pp. 84-89.

⁴² Mack, 1999, p. 53.

she chooses the sixteen-year old Acis over the Cyclops:

Atque ego contemptus essem patientior huius, Si fugeres omnes, sed cur Cyclope repulso Acin amas praefersque meis complexibuis Acin? (Met.13.859-861)

"But I would more patiently suffer your scorning, if you would flee from all suitors. But why, having rejected the Cyclops, do you love Acis and prefer him to my embrace?"

The jealous Cyclops reacts to the loss of his beloved as many male characters in the *Metamorphoses* who, blinded by love, wish to exert violence. This way of reading the poem and the fact that the oaf mirrors the violent reaction of male rapists provokes Galatea's disgust with him, both as potential lover and reader. Instead, she chooses Acis. While up to now we have been focusing on Galatea's 'resisting' reading, let us for a moment concentrate on what she proposes instead. Rather than a relationship based on rape, male dominance and female compliance, she opts to read certain stories in Metamorphoses which provide an alternative model of erotic relationships. 43 In particular, she bases her own choice of love affair with Acis on stories of goddesses and young men. Venus and Adonis specifically.⁴⁴ The goddess Venus is accidentally pierced by Cupid's arrow and falls in love with the beautiful youth Adonis, son of Myrrha and his own grandfather Cinyras. The language of the Cyclops' (Galatea's) speech shows similarities with this myth. First, just as Galatea prefers (praefers) Acis, Venus prefers Adonis over Olympus (caelo praeferetur Adonis, Met. 10.532). Likewise, both goddesses seem to peacefully lie in the embrace of their lovers, Venus while she utters a speech and Galatea while listening to one:

Datque torum caespes: libet hac requiescere tecum (et requievit) 'humo' pressitque et gramen et ipsum Inque sinu iuvenis posita cervice reclinis Sic ait ac mediis interserit oscula verbis (Met.10.556-559)

"The grass offers itself as couch: I wish to rest here with you on this earth (and

⁴⁴ The most popular stories presenting affairs between a goddess and a mortal man are Aphrodite and Adonis, Demeter and Iason, Harmonia and Cadmus, Callirhoe and Chrysaor, Eos and Thitonus, Eos and Cephalus, Aphrodite and Phaethon, Medea and Jason, Psamathe and Aicaos, Thetis and Peleus, Aphrodite and Anchises, Circe and Odysseus and Calypso and Odysseus. See Stehle, 1990, p. 91.

⁴³ On relationships between goddesses and young men see Stehle, 1990.

she reclined) and pressed both the grass and him, and reclining her head in his breast thus she spoke and mingled kisses with words."

Cf: ...latitans ego rupe meique

Acidis in gremio residens procul auribus hausi

Talia dicta meis auditaque mente notavi: (Met.13.786-788)

"I, hiding under a rock and resting in my Acis' arms, heard from afar such words and kept the words I heard in my mind:"

Poignant as well is the fact that Galatea herself recalls the power of Venus only a few lines before (quanta potentia regni/ est, Venus alma, tui! Met. 13.759). Finally, both goddesses lose their lovers to unwanted transformations, after the gruesome attack of shaggy, savage creatures (the wild boar and Polyphemus). Galatea then models the presentation of her relationship with Acis on that of Venus and Adonis, she proposes a more equal and calm relationship where the focus is placed on the image of the lovers in embrace (in gremio, in sinu) rather than on the erotic ardor of the male partner. She looks for concordia (Met.13.875) and harmony rather than oppression and acceptance. Or, as Stehle suggests, this type of relationship between goddess and young man "keeps a space open for fantasies of sexual encounter not controlled by the location of the phallus... the young man is neither clearly possessor nor clearly object of the phallus" but rather he is imagined as a "responsive participant."

Throughout his speech, the Cyclops assimilates Galatea to landscape and nature. He sees her as water, trees, heifers, kids, bears, deer, thorns, flowers, gardens. This is, no doubt, the world that the Cyclops as shepherd knows and thus it is expected that he will sing about it. Polyphemus is a man of nature, not of culture. Yet, his life is all about taming nature. In his song, by comparing Galatea to landscape and animals, he tries to assimilate her to what he is, a man of pastoral and wild nature, and hence he does not recognize her own nature and individuality. The text mentions at the beginning of the episode that Galatea belongs to the sea (at mihi cui pater est Nereus, quam caerula Doris/ enixa est, quae sum turba quoque tuta sororum, Met.13.741-742) and that Polyphemus is associated with the harsh landscape of rocks, caves and mountains. The giant sings his love song sitting on a cliff surrounded by water, whose shape has phallic overtones (prominent in pontum cuneatus acumine longo/ collis (utrumque latus circumfuit aequoris unda): huc ferus ascendit Cyclops mediusque resedit, Met.13.779-780). Galatea says that she is far away from her suitor when she hears

⁴⁵ Stehle, 1990, p. 100.

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his love song (*Acidis in gremio residens procul*... *Met*.785-786), a distance that can be interpreted as a metaphor for Galatea's feelings, but also as marking the difference in their ways of reading and understanding the world.

The Cyclops does not seem to recognize their differences as perhaps a positive feature in their relationship, but he is constantly trying to assimilate her to his own world and asking her to abandon her own, for instance, when he begs her to raise her head from her waters and abandon the sea (*Iam modo caeruleo nitidum caput exere ponto*,/ *iam Galatea*, *veni*, *nec munera despice nostra! Met*.838-9). Polyphemus, as tamer and controller of the natural world is trying to bring Galatea to the world that he knows, and the affirmation that his father controls her waters (Polyphemus himself cannot because he is a creature of land, thus Neptune is a surrogate) shows his desire to overpower the goddess (*Adde, quod in vestro genitor meus aequore regnat, Met*.13.854). Galatea, as a sensitive and intelligent female reader, recognizes the implications of these words and thus only a few lines later she is enraged (*tua fulmine saevior est ira*, *Met*.13.858).

When Polyphemus loses his patience and gives up words to persuade her. just like when Apollo gives up words to start chasing after Daphne (Met.530-532), in a burst of anger he throws a rock – the rock itself a very hard and dry element that acts as a projection of Polyphemus himself – at Acis, who "assumes his ancestral powers" and turns into a river-god, but keeps his own name (Met.13.895-7). Interesting also is the fact that Acis begs for help from his parents, just as Daphne asks Peneus to aid ("fer opem, Galatea, precor mihi! Ferte, parentes'," Met.13.880 and "'fer, pater,' inquit 'opem, si flumina nomen habetis'" Met.1.546). If transformation in Metamorphoses is a sort of return to or manifestation of characteristics that were already ingrained in a character (i.e. Arachne's weaving is preserved in the spider), Acis' watery nature, even as a family trait, must have been there before transformation. Thus, it is not surprising that Galatea has chosen him as erotic partner and not the rocky and dry Cyclops. Polyphemus' choice of words to refer to their union (concordia, Met. 875) is very appropriate. Just as other mythological erotic tales have the lovers still united in transformation (like Ceyx and Alcyone or Pyramus and Thisbe), at the end of the story in Book 13, both Acis and Galatea return to water, Acis through transformation and Galatea by diving into a nearby sea, motivated by fear of Polyphemus (ast ego vicino pavefacta sub aequore mergor, Met.13.878). But perhaps one should wonder whether by turning Acis into water, Galatea herself is not doing the same as the Cyclops tried to do with her: transforming him into what she herself is.

To conclude then, Polyphemus assumes the male point of view of male lovers/rapists without questioning them, and as Fetterly would say, we see here

the universalization of the male experience. Galatea, however, does not adopt this view, and by rejecting Polyphemus as lover she re-reads the Woman that he constructs. Both Galatea and the Cyclops are readers of *Metamorphoses* and Latin elegy, but very different ones. While the blockhead Cyclops provides a pastiche of female typecasts he has read and takes as valid, Galatea instead deconstructs his seemingly innocent and neutral praise of women and proposes a re-vision with a feminist outlook. Thus, by reacting to these representations of women, she invites female readers to think critically about them. By preferring to have a more compatible affair with a young boy over whom she can have some sexual power, the Nereid offers an alternative model of erotic relationships for women.

In her reading of Polyphemus' speech, Galatea becomes aware of the Cyclops' desire to transform her essence into a tamed pastoral creature that he can and must control in order to love. Galatea, who is already in love with Acis and dislikes the oaf's gruesome looks, repeats his song to show the female audience that this type of desire should be rejected. Yet, Polyphemus in his speech not only uses vocabulary related to the world he knows, but also re-enacts the domineering way in which male-biased readers and viewers see the poem. As we have observed, some critics see violence in Ovid's depiction of women, while others argue that Ovid may be showing the plight of female characters to empathize with their suffering. In either case, the Cyclops is not perceptive of the complexities of the text and shows Galatea that he reads as a man. He, indeed, identifies with the male gaze of the characters, or as Otis would put it: "it is their mind and words that [he] shares." In the first part in particular, Polyphemus borrows the narrator's language and imagery and uses it to construct the figure of Galatea. The second part of her depiction also conveys the way in which the Cyclops reads Roman elegy and its echoes in *Metamorphoses*. He presents Galatea with many characteristics of the unresponsive and harsh elegiac *puella*. The elegiac mistress, an established literary type of Latin erotic poetry, appears frequently in Metamorphoses. The dura puella, however, is a rather fixed and one-dimensional figure, especially by this time in Roman literary history (Ovid is the last of the Latin elegists and probably not writing amatory elegy any more at the time of the composition of *Metamorphoses*). Galatea's rejection of Polyphemus as a lover and her loathing of him may have to do not only with the fact that he is an "ugly and uncivilized giant" but also with the fact that his speech represents a reading of women that Galatea despises. Galatea is an independent goddess and a talented narrator who looks for the comfort of sisterhood in her audience. She knows that Woman is something much more complex than "pastoral being," "pretty picture" or "literary stereotype" and thus she would never be seduced by a song that knows only these dimensions.

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