

THE LANDSCAPE OF DESIRE: THE TALE OF POMONA AND VERTUMNUS IN OVID'S *METAMORPHOSES*

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The tale of Pomona and Vertumnus in Book 14 occupies a significant place in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* as the last love-story of the poem. It has also been called the first exclusively Latin tale.¹ This tale has been interpreted by David Littlefield as representing the movement from rape to mutual desire effected through an ordered Italian setting. He finds in it the disavowal of rape, fraud, and the arts as means of winning amorous consent.² Similarly, others, such as Fantazzi, read the tale as a final affirmation of mutual love.³ Yet, I propose that the diction, the imagery, and the narrative strategies employed argue for a new interpretation. The dominant presence of deception, of metamorphosis as a means of persuasion, of images of violation, and of the threat of violence encourages us to read this tale as an example of seduction rather than of mutual love and as a contribution to the theme of love as a destructive force. In this final amatory tale landscape and character merge via diction and imagery. Pomona, a hamadryad, becomes part of the landscape of fruit trees which she tends. Through the sexual images of the enclosed garden and of ripe apples, Pomona is made synonymous with the landscape. Significantly, Pomona herself is objectified through the tale and never speaks. The ability of man to control nature and to subjugate it to his wishes, as in Vergil's *Georgics*, finds an analog in Vertumnus' seduction of Pomona.⁴ The theme expressed here is that of the violent and destructive nature of love—one at the heart of many tales in the poem.⁵ This theme as it appears in Ovid's Pomona and Vertumnus tale is reinforced by the story of Iphis and Anaxarete told by Vertumnus to Pomona. The inset tale affords a vivid example, both literally and figuratively, of narrative as seduction.⁶ Vertumnus' narrative does not persuade Pomona but instead focuses our attention on parallels between the failed strategies of both lovers. The dangers of excessive passion are illustrated both in the

¹Charles Fantazzi, "The Revindication of Roman Myth in the Pomona-Vertumnus Tale," in N. Barbu et al. (eds.), *Ovidianum* (Bucharest 1976) 283–293, at 288.

²David Littlefield, "Pomona and Vertumnus: A Fruition of History in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*," *Arion* 4 (1965) 470.

³See Fantazzi (above, n. 1) 289.

⁴Eleanor Winsor Leach, "Georgic Imagery in the *Ars Amatoria*," *TAPA* 95 (1964) 142–154, at 149, has observed that Ovid employs georgic imagery for erotic purposes in the *Ars Amatoria*.

⁵One important example is Venus' instigation of Cupid to wound Hades in Book 5 as a means of reasserting her slighted powers.

⁶Betty Rose Nagle, "A Trio of Love-Triangles in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*," *Arethusa* 21 (1988) 79–98, at 89, n. 20.

inset tale and in the embedding narrative. In this paper I undertake a close textual reading of the tale and examine it from a narratological standpoint to explore *how* it employs myth. This tale provides a good example of how Ovid uses landscape and narrative to convey meaning.⁷

Pomona's relationship with nature is made clear from the start of the tale. She is the most skilled of the Latian hamadryads in garden cultivation, especially in the care of fruit trees. Indeed, we are told, *unde tenet nomen*, "from this she took her name" (626). This etymological association of the name Pomona with *poma* encourages us to link the woman with the cultivated landscape. Of course, her identity as a hamadryad means she is by nature both a woman and the spirit of a tree. Pomona, however, does not care for woods or rivers but instead, *rus amat et ramos felicia poma ferentes* ("loves fields and branches bearing delicious apples" [627]). She prunes, grafts, and waters the trees herself; *nec sentire sitim patitur bibulaeque recurvas/ radicis fibras labentibus inrigat undis* ("nor does she allow them to suffer thirst but waters the curving fibres of the thirsty root with flowing streams" [632–633]). We are told *hic amor, hoc studium; Veneris quoque nulla cupido est./ vim tamen agrestum metuens pomaria claudit/ intus et accessus prohibet refugitque viriles* ("this was her love, this was her pursuit; nor did she have any desire for love, nevertheless, fearing violence from rustics she closed herself inside her orchard and kept away and avoided the approach of men" [634–636]). Shunning amorous love and fearing rural violence, Pomona shuts herself in her enclosed orchard, her *pomaria* (635). The words *pomaria*, *Pomona*, and *poma* thus link the dryad with the fruit of the trees and with the enclosure. By secreting herself, Pomona keeps away the aggressively amorous satyrs, Pans, Silvanus, and Priapus (637–641). Significantly, the only other place Ovid uses the word *pomaria* in the *Metamorphoses* is in his retelling of the Perseus myth in 4.604–803. Atlas is described as having enclosed his *pomaria*, his orchard, of golden apple trees to keep the apples from being stolen by Jove's son, as an oracle had predicted (646–648). Perseus, of course, succeeds by revealing the Medusa's head and turning Atlas into a mountain (655–662). Although the apples and the orchard are not erotic symbols here, they do represent the protection of something valuable and its eventual plundering. The situation of Pomona and her apples provides us with an intratextual echo of this scene and alerts us as to its probable outcome. It is significant that one of Vertumnus' disguises before seating himself within the garden as an old woman is that of an apple-picker. In addition, when he assumes the disguise of an old woman Vertumnus speaks like a gardener (the Latin

⁷I would like to thank A. M. Keith for her encouragement and for her valuable suggestions on an earlier draft of this article and two anonymous reviewers for their helpful and detailed comments. Unfortunately, K. Sara Myers's paper, "*Ultimus Ardor: Pomona and Vertumnus in Ovid's Met.* 14.623–771," *CJ* 89 (1994) 225–250, came out too late for me to consult. My arguments and interpretation were arrived at independently.

word is *pomarius*), drawing *exempla* from viticulture and fruit-cultivation, as we shall see. It is in this form that he is most well known according to Propertius 4.2.41–46 and best suited to his task of winning the garden-loving Pomona. Vertumnus, we are told, surpassed all these rural inhabitants in love, but he was no more fortunate than they. The *neque erat felicior* in 642 picks up and contrasts with the *felicia poma* in 627 which are the real objects of Pomona's affections.

Contrasting the peaceful and fruitful, albeit threatened, world of the *pomaria* is the wild, sexual side of nature embodied by the male figures whom Ovid lists, ending with Vertumnus. The fact that Pomona is sought by many and (according to the disguised Vertumnus) would have more suitors than Helen, Hippodamia, or Penelope if she desired marriage (*Helene non pluribus esset/ sollicitata procis, nec quae Lapitheia movit/ proelia, nec coniunx timidi aut audacis Ulixei* [669–671])⁸ situates her firmly within the *topos* of the eligible but reluctant young woman as the object of affection and/or the prize in a contest. The repetition of *nec* and *non* in 623–632 reinforces this role. Thus, Pomona is further objectified in the narrative. Ovid plays with this *topos* by having Vertumnus in all of his disguises (not transformations, significantly) equal to a throng of suitors. As unsuccessful as the other suitors, Vertumnus tries to win Pomona through disguise.

Throughout the tale Ovid emphasizes the deceitfulness and falseness of Vertumnus. When he brings her a basket of grain, Vertumnus is described by means of an oxymoron as being *veri[] . . . messoris imago* ("the image of a real reaper" [644]). Ovid makes frequent use of the noun *imago* in this poem, especially to describe the discrepancy between reality and appearance. In several places it is used of a disguise put on by a deity for erotic purposes.⁹ Use of this word or of its synonyms alerts the reader to the fact that things are not what they seem (the victim usually remains ignorant), that one kind of metamorphosis has already taken place. We are to expect another. This word is used seven times in both Books 13 and 14. Twice in the latter it is used of statues. It is the statue of Picus with a woodpecker on his head which leads to the story of Picus' refusal of Circe and his subsequent transformation into a woodpecker (*imagine* occurs in 323). In the tale of Anaxarete, she is turned into stone and is also commemorated with a statue (*imagine* occurs in 759). In both cases their true forms are contrasted with these images. Moreover, both of these statues are harsh reminders of the dangers of scorning a suitor. Appearing

⁸This is a *locus desperatus* in the text. For different emendations see the critical apparatus in the Teubner edition, William S. Anderson (ed.), *P. Ovidii Nasonis Metamorphoses* (Leipzig 1985).

⁹The word *imago* is used by Ovid sixty-four times in the poem. In addition to its use in the Pomona-Vertumnus tale it is used of gods disguised for erotic purposes in 3.1, 6.103, 6.110, 6.122, and 8.122.

with a garland of fresh hay, we are told that Vertumnus *desectum poterat gramen versasse videri* ("could seem to have turned the new-mown grass" [646]).¹⁰ *Versare* provides a verbal link with Vertumnus' name, reminding us of his ability to change form and thus deceive. Again, in 648, when he arrives with an ox-goad, *iurares fessos modo disiunxisse iuvenco*s ("you would swear he had just unyoked his weary cattle"). Vertumnus "could seem" to be a reaper and "you would swear" he was a cattle herd. Ovid here ironically underscores Vertumnus' deceptions while asserting the convincing nature of his disguises. We are told that for his ultimate disguise Vertumnus *adsimulavit anum*, "imitated an old woman" (656). As an old woman, Vertumnus enters the garden and even gives Pomona several kisses *qualia numquam/ vera dedisset anus* ("such as an old woman would never have given" [658-659]). Vertumnus' name itself expresses his character as a changer or turner,¹¹ an etymology at the heart of Propertius' poem about Vertumnus, 4.2. Ironically, Vertumnus disguised as an old woman recommends Vertumnus as a suitor because he can readily change into any form. This is presented as a positive attribute to Pomona but not to the reader aware of Vertumnus' dissimulation.

One of Vertumnus' disguises is that of a harvester arriving with a ladder on his shoulders in such a way that *lecturum poma putares* ("you would think he was about to pick apples" [650]). The connotation is an erotic one intensified by the identification of Pomona with the ripe fruit. Apples were a common symbol of love in classical myth and literature.¹² The apples which Venus gives to Hippomenes as a means of defeating Atalanta in a footrace and thus winning her in marriage are one of the best known examples of apples as erotic symbols, particularly for Ovid's readers, who would recall the poet's version of this myth as told by Venus to Adonis in *Metamorphoses* 10.560-707. Poems 2 and 65 of Catullus afford other well-known examples. The picking of apples is often a symbol of the taking of an individual's virginity. Here, Ovid describes Vertumnus as seeming about to pick the apples. As Richardson points out, Vertumnus as a gardener would naturally pick the newly-ripened fruit and, similarly, as a deity he would receive the

¹⁰Lines 645-646 perhaps echo Propertius 4.2.25-26.

¹¹Littlefield (above, n. 2) 471. See the etymologies in Propertius 4.2.10 and 11-18. As Richardson observes (L. Richardson, Jr. [ed.], *Propertius Elegies 1-4* [Norman, Oklahoma 1977] 424) these are popular etymologies and are not philologically sound. Propertius' poem refers to a statue of Vertumnus that stood on the *Vicus Tuscus* and that appears from the poem to have been dressed up in various guises on different occasions.

¹²A. R. Littlewood, "The Symbolism of the Apple in Greek and Roman Literature," *HSCP* 72 (1968) 147-181, has collected Greek and Latin textual references to apples. He finds numerous references to apples in connection with Aphrodite and as erotic symbols. Littlewood concludes that apples in our oldest sources are connected with marriage and the fertility associated with it.

first and choicest fruits as an offering.¹³ So, too, Ovid's Vertumnus says he is the first to have the fruits (688). We are told, in addition, that through his many disguises Vertumnus gained access to Pomona so that *caperet spectatae gaudia formae* ("he might seize the joys of her admired form" [653]). The voyeuristic aspect of Vertumnus' actions here is repeated when he looks approvingly (*probavit*) at the elm with its grapes in the orchard (662). Although he denies that he falls in love with every woman he sees (*vidit*) as most suitors do (681-682), the idea of looking is a motif in the tale. It occurs most obviously when Vertumnus tells Pomona that Salamis still has a statue of Anaxarete and a temple in honour of Venus Prospiciens (759-761). The sexual imagery continues with Vertumnus' admittance into the enclosed garden, another image of virginity. This is a symbolic act which hints at the outcome of the tale.¹⁴ The crossing of the border which demarcates her *pomaria* metaphorically represents Pomona's rape. Catullus 62 provides another example of the enclosed garden as a symbol of virginity (39-47). The adjective *gaudia* picks up the *felicia* used to describe apples earlier. The association of Pomona with the apples strengthens the force of the verbs *legere* and *capere*; Vertumnus will not be satisfied by looking, he must pick the fruits. Vertumnus' intentions and the linking of Pomona with the fruit become explicit when Vertumnus in his disguise as an old woman enters the well-tended garden, admires the fruit, and exclaims *tanto . . . potentior* ("how much more striking are you!" [657]). The disguised Vertumnus uses the apples as a means of gaining access to the unsuspecting Pomona. Once admitted he employs other means to gain her.

Vertumnus, once in the *pomaria*, attempts to gain Pomona by citing an *exemplum* from nature. In the guise of an old woman Vertumnus sits on the grass and gazes at the *pandos autumnni pondere ramos*, "branches bent with the weight of the autumn fruit" (660). He then turns his attention to a beautiful elm tree opposite which is full of shining grapes. Vertumnus' speech makes plain the analogy between nature and marriage. He tells Pomona that the elm would have no value if it were *caelebs* (663), just as the vine, *non iuncta* (666), would lie upon the ground. But, Vertumnus complains to Pomona, *tu tamen exemplo non tangeris arboris huius/ concubitusque fugis nec te coniungere curas*, "you are not touched by the example of this tree and shun lying together and do not desire to unite in marriage" (667-668). The *coniungere* here (668) and the *iungere* in 675 pick up *iuncta* used of the vine in 665. The analogy between the vine and the elm tree and marriage is one which Catullus employs similarly in Poem 62.49-58. Prop-

¹³Richardson (above, n. 11) 427.

¹⁴Charles Paul Segal, *Landscape in Ovid's Metamorphoses: A Study in the Transformations of a Literary Symbol* (Wiesbaden 1969) 69.

ertius associates Vertumnus with the change produced by grafting, *insitor hic soluit pomosa vota corona,/ cum pirus invito stipite mala tulit* ("here the grafter fulfilled his promise with a garland loaded with fruit when the pear bore apples on its reluctant branch" [17-18]). Ovid's use of the analogy here is one example of the way in which he weds georgic and erotic imagery throughout the Pomona and Vertumnus tale.

References to the Alban hills and to Latian hamadryads, as well as the tale's placement in Book 14, make it clear that it is a Roman georgic setting that is depicted here. Writing of Pomona's georgic pursuits, Ovid states in a Vergilian echo, *hic amor, hoc studium*, "this was her love, this was her desire" (634). Care and devotion are necessary for the successful husbandman, as Vergil makes clear in his *Georgics*. The latter part of the hexameter, *Veneris quoque nulla cupido est* ("nor did she have any care for love") contrasts her love for fruit cultivation with her neglect of human love. The two are not only contrasted, but, as often in the *Metamorphoses*, pitted against one another. As with Daphne and other virgins in the poem, it is the woman's desire for a life of chastity which frequently results within in the narrative in her becoming a victim of pursuit and rape. The words *colere*, *rus*, and *hortus* are just a few examples of how Ovid adopts a georgic diction to describe Pomona and her pursuits. While Pomona cultivates gardens (*coluit hortos*, 624) we are told by Vertumnus in disguise that he does not wander all over the world but dwells in this great place (*haec loca magna colit*, 681). The repetition of *colere* links Pomona's cultivation of her garden with Vertumnus' cultivation of her. The merging of georgic and sexual imagery and the identification of landscape with Pomona is most prominent in Vertumnus' speech. Pointing out that their tastes are similar, the disguised Vertumnus asserts, *quae tibi poma coluntur,/ primus habet laetaque tenet tua munera dextra* ("the fruit which you so cherish [or cultivate] he [sc. Vertumnus] is the first to have and with joyful hands he lays hold upon your gifts" [687-688]). The ambiguity of the word *coluntur* emphasizes the link between landscape and desire. Immediately following this, however, Vertumnus vows that he does not desire the fruits of her trees but her alone. In order to persuade Pomona to marry him, Vertumnus pretends to cherish the apples, whereas his language betrays his real desire for Pomona. In an article on georgic imagery in the *Ars Amatoria*, Eleanor Leach argues that the narrator's advice on love is delivered in a language that suggests an analogy between seduction and the practices by which man extends his dominion over nature.¹⁵ Likewise, we find here that Ovid makes Vertumnus' seduction of Pomona analogous to the ability of man to control nature and to subjugate it to his wishes.

¹⁵Leach (above, n. 4) 148.

After Vertumnus' (i.e., the old woman's) pleas on his own behalf he tells Pomona a cautionary tale warning of the effects of rejecting a lover. Ovid's narrative strategies are important in understanding both the "framing" story and the "embedded" tale within it. Vertumnus' disguise as a harmless old woman has enabled him to penetrate Pomona's *pomaria*, to kiss her, to flatter her, and to advance his own suit. "He is not better known to himself than he is to me" (*neque enim sibi notior ille est/ quam mihi*), the old woman asserts in 679–680 and entreats Pomona to "believe that he himself who desires you is making his suit in person through words of mine" (*ipsum,/ qui petit, ore meo praesentem crede precari* [691–692]). His disguise also allows him to narrate a tale to Pomona under the pretense of giving motherly advice. Vertumnus' telling of the tale is a literal example of narrative as seduction. He is narrating the story in order to persuade her to reciprocate his affections; she implicitly agrees to listen, presumably to hear the old woman's advice. The physical setting of the narration within the garden symbolizes the progress of Vertumnus' courtship.

The Iphis and Anaxarete tale which Vertumnus proceeds to narrate is both Greek and urban in setting in contrast to the Roman rustic setting of the Pomona-Vertumnus tale.¹⁶ Because Vertumnus intends the story to be a warning of the dangers of rejecting a suitor, the parallels with their own situation are resonant. Vertumnus tells Pomona to beware of the avenging gods and Venus and Nemesis. "In order that you may fear the more," he adds, "I will tell you a story well-known all over Cyprus by which you can learn to be easily persuaded and to become soft of heart" (*quoque magis timeas . . ./ referam tota notissima Cypro/ facta, quibus flecti facile et mitescere possis* [695–697]). In the subsequent narrative Ovid draws upon and parodies the world of Roman erotic elegy, particularly the *paraclausithyron*.¹⁷ Iphis is the type of the *exclusus amor*, the unhappy lover shut outside his beloved's door; Anaxarete that of the cruel woman who spurns him unjustly. As in elegy, it is Anaxarete's hardness of heart that is stressed through the frequency of adjectives such as *dura*, *ferrea*, and *saeva*. For the narrator, Vertumnus, one comparison is not sufficient; Anaxarete is *saevior illa fretu surgente cadentibus Haedis,/ durior et ferro, quod Noricus excoquit ignis,/ et saxo, quod adhuc vivum radice tenetur* ("more savage than the waves rising at the setting of the Kids, harder than iron tempered in Noric fire, or rock which still living is held by its base" [711–713]). This recalls Vertumnus' warning to Pomona concerning Venus who detests the hard of heart (693). Indeed, as cited above, Vertumnus tells

¹⁶Segal (above, n. 14) 69.

¹⁷Joseph B. Solodow, *The World of Ovid's Metamorphoses* (Chapel Hill 1988) 21. Solodow (179–180) compares Ovid's version of the Iphis-Anaxarete myth with that of Hermesianax as preserved in Antoninus Liberalis. He notes how Ovid changes the details of the tale to make the transformation of Anaxarete grow out of her character.

the tale to make Pomona soften her heart (697). In the cautionary tale this image is at the center of the situation itself. Iphis begs Anaxarete's nurse not to be hard towards him (704) and the hard threshold of Anaxarete's door is contrasted with Iphis' soft body lying upon it. Iphis resolves to kill himself and cries before Anaxarete's closed door, *ferrea, gaude* ("rejoice, iron-hearted" [721]), saying that he himself will announce his death *corpore ut exanimi crudelia lumina pascas* ("that you may feast your cruel eyes upon my lifeless body" [728]). Iphis then proceeds to kill himself, an act which the rejected suitor of elegy threatens to do but, of course, never carries out. But the diction here undercuts any emotional response on the part of the reader to Iphis' suicide. Vertumnus describes Iphis' death thus:

... *ad postes ornatos saepe coronis
umentes oculos et pallida bracchia tollens,
cum foribus laquei religaret vincula summis,
"haec tibi sarta placent, crudelis et impia?" dixit
inseruitque caput, sed tum quoque versus ad illam,
atque onus infelix elisa fauce pendit.* (733-738)

... raising his moist eyes and pale arms
to the door he had often decorated with garlands,
he tied the cord of a noose to the highest beam
and exclaiming, "are these wreaths pleasing to you,
you cruel and heartless girl?" he inserted his head into the noose.
But even then he turned towards her and, a wretched weight,
he hung there with his neck broken.

His choice of death by hanging (an unmanly form of suicide) further diminishes his stature in this tale.¹⁸ Ironically, Anaxarete's door is only opened in death as Iphis' hanging form knocks against it. The focus on Anaxarete's hardheartedness prepares us for her metamorphosis. Seeing Iphis on the bier, she stiffens and *paulatimque occupat artus, / quod fuit in duro iam pridem pectore, saxum* ("gradually that stony nature took possession of her body which had been in her heart all along" [757-758]). Ovid's mockery of the elegiac genre reaches its height in Anaxarete's literal transformation into a stone. In elegy, as we have seen, the lover frequently complains of his mistress's hardheartedness; Ovid actualizes this image.¹⁹ Ovid is able to take the light humour of this self-consciously literary genre a step further via his theme of physical metamorphosis.²⁰ In the same way, Ovid gives

¹⁸Nicole Loraux, *Tragic Ways of Killing a Woman* (Cambridge, Mass. 1987) 9-11. Although her book concerns Greek tragedy, some of her observations apply to Roman beliefs.

¹⁹Solodow (above, n. 17) 179.

²⁰For the idea of erotic elegy as inherently humorous see Paul Veyne, *Roman Erotic Elegy: Love, Poetry and the West*, tr. David Pellauer (Chicago 1988) 38 ff.

the figure of the elegiac lover/poet a certain reality within Vertumnus' narrative of Iphis.²¹

Ironically, Vertumnus told the tale to warn Pomona of the dangers of rejecting love, but the other message which we as readers receive is of the destructive power of love and the dangers of all-consuming passion. Ovid's mockery of the elegiac genre enhances the development of this theme with respect to Vertumnus in the main narrative. In his telling of the tale we learn more about Vertumnus' nature and his suffering than we do about scorned love or about his beloved, as is true of Roman erotic elegy as a genre. The inset tale ridicules obsessive love and the failure of the tactics to which Iphis resorts, especially his ultimate attempt to please Anaxarete through his death. His fate (and the consequent fate of Anaxarete) represents the failure of elegiac poetry both as a model for how the lover may succeed in love and as a vehicle of persuasion. Vertumnus fails by citing and emulating Iphis' actions. He too attempts to persuade his beloved to reciprocate his affections; he admonishes her when she does not respond favorably; and he likewise plans to resort ultimately to violence. Amatory elegy and narrative are two of Vertumnus' most critically unsuccessful seduction strategies. Like most cautionary tales in the *Metamorphoses*, this one fails. At the end of his narrative Vertumnus asserts the validity of the tale and makes explicit its relation to Pomona's situation, telling her to be mindful of the lesson and to put away her scorn, *quorum memor, o mea, lentos/ pone, precor, fastus et amanti iungere, nymphe* ("be mindful of these things, my nymph, I pray, and put away your stubborn disdain and unite with your lover" [761-762]). Once again, Vertumnus equates her with the apples, *sic tibi nec vernum nascentia frigus adurat/ poma, nec excutiant rapidi florentia venti* ("so may late spring frost never nip your budding fruit, and may no fierce winds scatter them in their flower" [763-764]).

The fact that Vertumnus' narrative is ineffective reveals the fundamental failure of the strategies of disguise and story-telling. Even the report of Anaxarete's metamorphosis fails to persuade. How is it then that Pomona finally yields? Once more the language and imagery are revealing. Vertumnus puts away his womanly disguise and appears to her, *qualis ubi oppositas nitidissima solis imago/ evicit nubes nullaue obstante reluxit* ("as when the sun's most beaming face has conquered the opposing clouds and

²¹Peter E. Knox, *Ovid's Metamorphoses and the Traditions of Augustan Poetry* (Cambridge 1986, Cambridge Philological Society Supp. 11), observes in reference to Ovid's telling of the Narcissus tale, that in the *Metamorphoses* "the depiction of love as a distorting power is accomplished largely by developing the themes already prominent in subjective elegy" (21). He adduces Ovid's treatment of the Narcissus myth as an elegiac love affair and as a consuming madness to demonstrate how Ovid reinterprets erotic motifs familiar from the tradition of Augustan poetry in his narrative throughout the *Metamorphoses* (23).

shines out with nothing obstructing it" [768-769]). We are then told that Vertumnus was preparing to use force, *vimque parat*, but that there was no need for force and *figura/ capta dei nympha est et mutua vulnera sensit* ("the nymph, seized by the beauty of the god, felt answering wounds" [770-771]). The description of the god Vertumnus as *imago solis* reminds us of the use of the noun *imago* in connection with Vertumnus' disguises. In the *Metamorphoses* violence and rape are often the end result of such deceptions. Indeed, despite the fact that he reveals to her his true form, Vertumnus is still described in comparison to something else. And despite the fact that the sun has conquered the opposing clouds, Vertumnus is still preparing to use force, as Ovid makes clear in the same sentence. As Hugh Parry has pointed out, in Ovid the sun is often suggestive of danger and violence and is "a masculine symbol of unbridled, primitive energy."²² In the Pomona and Vertumnus tale symbolism replaces literal description. Pomona is *figura capta dei* and *mutua vulnera sensit* (770-771). She is at last overcome by the appearance of the real Vertumnus but, appropriately for Ovid, the metaphor is one of seizing and wounding not one of joyous love. The symbolism of the sun and the clouds and of wounds should not be read to mean that violence is disavowed. Rather the poet is subtly conveying the motives and action through multi-layered, ambivalent symbols which the careful reader is left to interpret on the basis of the imagery and vocabulary which informs the tale. The language of the hasty resolution itself is significantly ambivalent and is made more so by what we know of

²²Hugh Parry, "Ovid's *Metamorphoses*: Violence in a Pastoral Landscape," *TAPA* 95 (1964) 268-282, at 277. Leucothoe, whose seduction in Book 4 has several parallels with this one, is simultaneously terrified and overcome by the radiance of the Sun (228-233). The danger inherent in a god's epiphany is most vividly conveyed in Jupiter's appearance to Semele and her resulting incineration, which Ovid narrates at 3.298-312. The bright rays of the sun conquering the clouds are a sexual symbol, one that is also found in Ovid's telling of the Actaeon story. When Actaeon comes upon Diana naked, Ovid writes, *qui color infectis adversi solis ab ictu/ nubibus esse solet aut purpureae Aurorae,/ is fuit in vultu visae sine veste Dianae* ("as red as the clouds stained by the opposing rays of the sun or of the rosy dawn were the cheeks of Diana as she stood without clothes in full view" [3.183-185]). Hinds interprets Ovid's description of the sun's rays in the Persephone episode (5.388-389) as forming an image of striking associated with the arrows of Phoebus and thus indicative of the erotic violence to follow (Stephen Hinds, *The Metamorphoses of Persephone: Ovid and the Self-Conscious Muse* [Cambridge 1987] 31-32). Both the Persephone passage and this one concerning Diana use the word *ictus*. As Charles Segal points out in his study of landscape in the *Metamorphoses* (46), Ovid makes use of the imagery of fruit changing its colour as a sexual symbol. In the Narcissus myth, for example, his beating of his breast is compared to an apple that is part white and part red or to unripe grapes taking on a purple hue (3.482-485). Similarly, Segal has observed (51) that the white fruit of the mulberry tree in the Pyramus and Thisbe tale turns deep purple with the death of Pyramus (4.120-127). The god Vertumnus is himself associated with the change in the colour of fruit as it ripens (Propertius 4.2.13-16).

the duplicity of Vertumnus. In the Pomona-Vertumnus tale Ovid focuses our attention on the means of seduction and the nature of erotic love much more than on the end result.

We have seen how Ovid in the Pomona-Vertumnus episode employs patterns of imagery and diction which associate Pomona with landscape and therefore with something to be controlled and harvested by man. Vertumnus invades this metaphoric landscape and attempts to seduce Pomona through disguise, persuasion, the citing of an *exemplum* which is ironically from nature itself, and ultimately through narrative. The Iphis-Anaxarete inset tale, which is used by Vertumnus as a seduction strategy, instead demonstrates the failure of the rhetoric and tactics of the unrequited lover, and through Vertumnus' use of them, of the elegiac genre itself. Finally, Vertumnus' threat of violence as a final strategy confirms the status of the tale as a depiction of devious means of amatory pursuit. This negative portrait of love is set alongside several other mythological tales which together form patterns of violence and destructive passion.

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