WORD PICTURES: VISUALISING WITH OVID*

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ABSTRACT

Ovid verbally portrays three different modes of 'seeing'. In the *Metamorphoses* readers mentally 'watch' his various protagonists seeing or being seen. In the elegiac poetry readers are often induced to share the field of vision of his protagonists. In *Amores* 3.2 and *Ars Amatoria* 1.135ff., readers 'look' with the lover and his mistress during 'a day at the races', virtually becoming both protagonists. In the exilic poems Ovid is sole viewer. 'Something he saw that ruined him' looms large in his imagination. The exile begins to rely solely on mental vision, 'seeing' the sights of Rome, conjuring up distant friends into his presence. Readers 'see' the lonely exile being comforted by his own inner vision.

Introduction

> Videmus natura, spectamus voluntate, intuemur cura, aspicimus ex improviso.
>
> We see naturally, we look voluntarily, we watch something with care, and we inspect something if we have been surprised by it.
> (Ps.-Fronto, *Gramm.* 7.520.18 K = Charis. *Gramm.* P. 388.26)

The four Latin verbs quoted above illustrate the fact that visual perception has various modes, which may be roughly characterised as the differences between the semantic implications of their approximate English equivalents 'seeing', 'looking', 'watching' and 'scrutinising'. The four verbs chosen by Pseudo-Fronto for differentiating various modes of vision

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may justly be reduced to three (*videre,*[1] *spectare,*[2] *tueri*[3]) for *aspicere*, 'inspect', 'examine', essentially refers to the same mode of vision as its cognate *spectare* and may be collapsed into the 'look'-category.'[4] Basically, these three different concepts indicate differences in the intensity of the subject's engagement on a scale starting with mere 'ocular activity' *per se*, whether fleeting or continuous, purposeful or random ('seeing'), moving next to an implication of *intention* where the eyes are purposely directed at something ('looking'), and ending with a studied, drawn-out, intense scrutiny *that has an external aim* ('watching'). Such intensity implies *another activity* that may be as neutral as purposeful enjoyment (as in 'watching a play'), but may involve prevention by the viewer of another from carrying out an intended action, or facilitation of a following action.

The implications of Pseudo-Fronto's *videre*, *spectare* and *tueri* (translated here, respectively, as 'see', 'look' and 'watch'),[5] are in fact more

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[1] *Videre* is related to the Sanskrit root *vid*, 'to know', as in *veda*, 'sacred books'; also to the Greek ιδ, Ϝιδ, as in ἔιδον, 'I saw' and οἶδα, 'I know'; cf. English *wit*, *wot*, 'to see', 'perceive'; a synonym is *cerno*; so Lewis & Short s.v. *video*. Varro (*Ling.* 5.159) identified *video* with *visus* and Macrobius (*Sat.* 1.15.16) related it to the Greek ἰδεῖν both without further specification; Maltby 1991 s.v.

[2] *Spectare* is the frequentative of *specere*, 'to see', i.e. 'seeing repeatedly', both verbs being related to Sanskrit *spaç*, 'see'; so Lewis & Short s.v. *specio*. Varro (*Ling.* 6.82) correctly derived *spectare* and its cognates from *specio*; Maltby 1991 s.v.

[3] *Tueri* is derived from the root *tu-*, as also the adjective *tutus*, safe'; so Lewis & Short s.v. *tueor*. The English word 'watch' also may have the implication of 'keeping safe', as in 'watching over'. It is related to 'wake', '(be) arouse(d)', 'sleepless state' (*OED*). The two concepts blend in the Latin root *vigil-*, as *vigil, -is*, *vigilantia*, *vigilia* etc., which, together with their English derivative 'vigilant', can also imply 'watching for the sake of guarding'. The lemma for *tueor* in Maltby 1991 s.v., cites lemmata for various Latin words, from *aedituor*, to *templum*, to *titulus*, *Titus* and *tutulus*, some more fanciful than others.

[4] These and other similar words are often subsumed under the feminist concept of 'male gaze'. See Rimell 2006 *passim* on '*male scopophilia*' in the Ovidian context. 'Vision'-words often serve as synonyms for 'understanding'.

[5] Colleagues have occasionally disagreed with my interpretation of the words 'see', 'look' and 'watch' in English, which, however, is supported by recourse to any English dictionary, such as the *Oxford Concise English Dictionary* or the Webster. The primary semantic field of each verb is clearly differentiated. **See**: 'have or exercise the power of discerning objects with the eyes' (*OCED*), 'to perceive with the eye, behold, view' (Webster). **Look**: 'use one's sight, turn eyes in some direction, direct eyes at' (*OCED*), 'to have or exercise the visual sense, to direct the eyes for seeing' (Webster). **Watch**: 'remain awake for a purpose, be on the watch …, be vigilant …, exercise protecting care over' (*OCED*), to be awake …,

difficult to arrange on such fixed scale than his adverbial modifications (*natura*, *voluntate*, *cura*, *ex improviso*) seem to imply. The potential for an interchange of usages of these words, even slippage of meaning, is important in the context of the study of the usage of the full semantic field relating to *vision* by any particular Latin author: in the case of this paper, by the poet Ovid.[6]

The intensity-scale of Pseudo-Fronto's 'seeing'-words needs some recalibrating when we consider Ovidian 'vision'-verbs. With Ovid, another aspect of visual perception needs stressing. Critics generally agree that Ovid writes 'visually', involving his readers in mentally envisioning what he conjures up verbally.[7] These readers may be 'notional' (Ovid's contemporaries for whom his poems, presumably, were meant) or 'real' (empirical readers of the 21st century, enjoying Ovid's poems today).[8] Beside the 'seeing, looking and watching' by the poet's *protagonists*, his *readers* always simultaneously perceive a book or poem in at least two ways: the ancients most often with their ears (whilst attending a *recitatio*); modern readers with their eyes (whilst reading the words); and both sets of readers, mentally, with their imagination, while they visualise the story as it is presented to them in the poet's words.[9] Feldherr (2010:162) makes the point that '… a text's power to evoke the visual is one of its supreme fictions', enabling its readers '[t]o imagine that one sees what is so evidently not there.' It goes without saying that no appreciation of literature can take place without such envisioning, but the visualisation evoked by our poet's words is supremely and crucially central to readers' enjoyment of Ovid's poetry. He is one of those authors who simplify the

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deep vigil, to be attentive, vigilant, be on the lookout …, to keep guard …' (Webster).

[6] A referee suggested comparing Ovid's 'vision'-words with verbal usage in Vergil and Propertius, and wanted the paper to concentrate on only one of Ovid's genres, but that would have changed this article into a different one.

[7] Feldherr 2010:241-341 ('Ovid and the Visual Arts'), concentrates on Ovid's verbalisation of Roman material culture, while simultaneously 'celebrat[ing] a Roman "now" or a lost Greek past' (252).

[8] See Claassen 1999b:13-15 and 260 nn. 17 and 252, for discussion of Ovid's notional and empirical readers. Cf. Habib 2005:708-36 on reader response theory.

[9] A referee suggested that, for the ancients, envisioning by readers would have been aided by the onomatopoeic quality of the poet's verbal music. Schmitz 2007:94-96 (on Wheeler's 'reader-response' analysis of the *Metamorphoses*) argues for a suspension of disbelief that would persuade Ovid's readers of their being the audience of a bard. To this I would add, '… or, better, spectators at a dramatic performance.'

process. Masterly descriptions and frequent ecphrases facilitate readers' mental envisaging.[10]

In sum, this paper will examine examples of Ovid's frequent specific references to vision, of the act of seeing by his various protagonists, and of allusions to their eyes as medium of perception. Analysis of the reception of, and readerly participation in, Ovid's portrayal of the visual will follow, that is, analysis of 'natural' *versus* 'studied' or 'careful' sight will be expanded with consideration of the *degree to which his readers become involved* in the 'seeing' that Ovid depicts. The paper does not pretend to a chronological examination of Ovid's *oeuvre*, from youth to age, but concentrates on the phenomenon in three clearly distinguishable genres (epic, love elegy and exilic poetry)[11] to show that differences in focalisation evoke variant responses in Ovid's readers.

Readers' involvement changes from work to work in Ovid's *oeuvre*. His narrative techniques in the *Metamorphoses* keep readers at a certain remove. In this lies, perhaps, one of the clearest of the 'epic' characteristics of a work that is notoriously difficult to pin down generically. Here, as in traditional epic, readers mentally 'watch' while protagonists 'see' or 'look' and then 'do'.[12] Third person verbs predominate, as discussion below will illustrate.[13] In Ovid's elegiacs readers are more directly involved, being frequently addressed as the poet's notional interlocutors.[14] *Amores* 3.2 and *Ars Amatoria* 1.135-62 will together serve as examples of a case where

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[10] The reader sees with the descriptive 'eyes' of the narrator; so Barchiesi 2001:138; cf. Habib 2005:719-21; Schmitz 2007:86-97. Fowler 2000:64-73 cites Lessing's discussion of how verbal description of events directs readers' attention more intensely than plastic portrayal directs the attention of viewers. See Feldherr 2010:262 on Ovid's 'emphasis on problems of seeing and the simulation of a visual image' as reframing his readers' sense of identity.

[11] Although Roman elegiac love poetry shares its metre with Ovid's new creation, Roman exilic lament, there is a generic difference. See Claassen 1999b:11-15 on 'exilic literature' as genre. Focalisation of vision in *Fasti* and *Heroides* could be classed, respectively, with the narrative implications of the *Metamorphoses* and the monologues of the exilic poetry.

[12] In contrast, Feldherr 2010:305 argues for the reader as an 'internal spectator' in the tale of Niobe with *videres* ('you would see', *Met.* 6.296), turning him or her into the 'seeing Niobe'. The petrified Niobe herself becomes a 'work of art' that invites viewing.

[13] Orpheus and Eurydice (10.1-147), Jupiter and Io, in which is imbedded the tale of Mercury and Argus (1.588-746), Jupiter, Callisto and Diana (2.401-507), Hades and Proserpina (5.385-437), Echo and Narcissus (3.341-510), Polyphemus and Galatea (13.738-897), Perseus, the Graiae and Medusa (4.663-803).

[14] Ovid is not alone in this ploy, a typical feature of Roman love poetry.

readers are brought to mentally share the literal viewpoint of the poet-lover. *Amores* 3.2 involves a lover's monologue when he and his *puella* are watching the races. In the *Ars* version, the reader stands in for a tyro being instructed by the accomplished *praeceptor amorum* on how to exploit opportunities for seduction when taking a girl to the races.

When Ovid is exiled, 'vision' is depicted as experienced by the solitary author as the only protagonist. The exilic poems, both 'letters' and monologues, require a readership (either 'notional' or 'real') to bring the poetry to life. This readership is constantly invited to share the poet's *own* mental envisioning as he depicts both his Roman past and his hated exilic present. Here, first person verbs predominate. Intermittent use of the second person turns Ovid's readers into 'hearers', even interlocutors.[15] Yet, Ovid's readers stay at a remove, merely observing the exiled poet as both 'having formerly seen' and as 'now seeing'. There is virtually no invitation for us to envision ecphrastic evocations of Ovid's place of exile. Now it is the poet himself who practises the envisioning that he formerly expected of his readers; Ovid's references to 'sight' increasingly reflect his own mental vision, whereby the exiled poet sees and enjoys the sights of *Roma interdicta*.

Ovid himself was, clearly, always very much aware of the phenomenon of mental envisioning. The Renaissanace poet Arthur Golding translates Ovid's lines from *Met.* 4.200-01 (from the story of Helios and Leucothoë), *uitiumque in lumina mentis | transit*,[16] as 'the fancie of thy faultie minde infectes thy feeble sight.' For Braden (2009:448), the passage 'gives things a spin not evident in the Latin … that is, the sun god's love-sickness sometimes darkens his beams.'[17] Hence, according to Braden, 'Golding sees in the juxtaposition *lumen/mens* a contrast between faculties of perception.' That is, 'real' and 'mental' vision are contrasted. It would seem that the latter faculty grew in importance in our poet's own outlook.

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[15] Hardie 2002:301 shows that *videris* in the context of *Tr.* 5.2.43-44 may mean *both* 'you will see to it' and 'you will see' and, in the same line, *invisus*, 'hated' can also mean 'invisible' – Ovid thinks himself into the presence of both his wife and the emperor. The pun is repeated at *Tr.* 5.3.6; cf. Hardie 304. Green 2005 *ad loc.* accepts the variant (third person) *viderit*, 'Let him (sc. Caesar) look to it, then', which also works in context.

[16] Literally, 'and the flaw in (your) mind goes across to/enters (your) eyes.'

[17] Braden postulates imitation in Shakespeare's 'Love lookes not with the eyes, but with the minde: | and therefore is winged *Cupid* painted blind' (*Midsummer Night's Dream* 1.1.234-35).

First, however, before applying Pseudo-Fronto's adage to our poet, a brief overview of the most frequent of his 'vision'-words is required. There are 939 occurrences of variant forms of the 'seeing'-verb *videre* within Ovid's whole *corpus*. Against these we have only 185 versions of *spec-* or 'looking'-words (*specto, spectator, spectaculum, spectabilis*),[18] but this meagre total is enhanced by the addition of occurrences of compounds with the stem *spic-* (45 occurrences in total of forms of *conspicio* and *perspicio*). *Respicere* ('looking back') is still more common, with 58 occurrences; Pseudo-Fronto's *aspicere* is even more so, with 174 instances, making the grand total for 'looking' 462. This is just about half the number of occurrences of *videre*, but with these we may consider variant words for 'eyes': *oculi* (246) and *lumina* (182), which are most often coupled with verbs indicating purposeful gaze.[19] To expand on our grammarian's list: Ovid frequently uses *cerno* ('distinguish', 'perceive') as a synonym for *video*, but some of the 84 occurrences of this word throughout his *oeuvre* relate to *mental*, rather than *ocular*, activity, that is, *cernere* is more aptly translated as 'understand'.[20] Versions of *tueor* ('watch', implying 'guarding', 'keeping safe', as in its cognate *tutus*) total a meagre 65 occurrences throughout Ovid's works. This represents a relative frequency of only 7% of the 'seeing'-words. *Contemplo* ('watch', 'consider'), does not feature, and its cognate noun *contemplatus* ('consideration') occurs only once, at *Tr.* 5.7.66. Yet these statistics cannot mean that Ovid's protagonists are largely passive viewers. Within the *Metamorphoses*, in particular, plain 'seeing' frequently leads to further consequences, especially in stories that feature the actions of gods.[21]

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[18] A prime example of *spec*-words as denoting conscious 'looking' occurs in *Ars* 1.99: *spectatum veniunt, veniunt spectentur ut ipsae* ('Girls come to look at plays so that they themselves may be looked at'). Word counts in all cases were done from listings in the Ovid concordance of Deferrari *et al.* 1968.

[19] Verbs used with these nouns to indicate 'looking' are most frequently *flectere* or (*de*)*figere*. Some few instances of *lumina* merely refer to 'light'. Even discounting one-third of occurrences, the combined total 367 for *lumina* and *oculi* brings Ovid's use of 'looking'-words to the grand total of 655. *Imago* ('vision', 'image'), although also frequent, is a special case, and will be considered below.

[20] There are 39 instances of *cernere* in *Met.*, three in the love poetry and 25 in Ovid's exilic poetry. In three cases the word is coupled with the passive *videri*, 'seem', as in *Ex P.* 2.8.19: *videor mihi cernere Romam* ('I seem to myself/am seen by myself to be seeing Rome'); cf. *Ex P.* 2.4.8 and 4.4.27.

[21] When Helios declares himself to Leucothoë, he identifies himself as 'the one *who sees* all, *and* by whose doing *the earth sees* all things, the eye of the world, *mundi oculus*', *Met.* 4.226-28. His statement serves as a prelude to rape.

Metamorphoses

Ovid seems sensitive to the 'scale of intensity' in Latin 'seeing'-words as formally postulated, some centuries after him, by Pseudo-Fronto. In some of Ovid's tales in the *Metamorphoses*[22] there is a discernible, consciously-drawn differentiation between modes of vision, with our poet deliberately playing with the three degrees of ocular activity. In the story of Orpheus, Ovid deliberately differentiates between 'looking' and 'seeing'. The protagonist's actions (*looking* in order to *see*) together prove fatal. When Orpheus loses his bride Eurydice to the netherworld, he braves a journey to Hades to fetch her back (*Met.* 10.1-147). The Lord of the Underworld grants his request, on condition that Orpheus *not look back* until he and his wife leave the passageway to the world of humans: ... *legem Rhodopeius accipit Orpheus | ne flectat retro sua lumina* ('Thracian Orpheus accepts this ruling: that he not look behind him' = lit. 'turn his eyes backwards', 50-51). Just before they reach the top, for fear lest she stumble, but also, significantly, being *avidus videndi* ('eager to see her', 56), the loving husband looks back: *flexit amans oculos* (lit. 'turned his eyes', 57).[23] And this backward look, as we next learn, proved fatal. Eurydice fell back, and was lost forever.

Let us next consider a case of conscious 'watching' that follows on several instances of 'seeing' and 'looking' within a single tale. In a tale from *Metamorphoses* 3 our author's care with different modes of sight is clearly illustrated. 'Love at first sight' appears to be taken as a given. The nymph Echo is doomed by Juno only to repeat what others say, as punishment for detaining her (Juno) in idle chit-chat, thereby allowing Jupiter to dally unobserved with other nymphs. But Echo sees, and falls in love with, the handsome Narcissus (*vidit et incaluit*, 'she saw and started burning with passion', 3.355, 371). Narcissus hears her repeating his words and looks back (*respicit*, 383), but rebuffs her when she runs to fling her arms around him. Mournfully Echo retires to a cave on the mountain, her love growing even greater after her rejection. Her sap is drained by endless watches (*vigiles*). Ultimately, there is only a voice: Echo has become invisible (*nulloque in monte videtur*, 400). 'Seeing' continues to doom the pair. Narcissus, still rejecting all overtures from susceptible nymphs, including Echo, sees himself in a pool of water. He falls in love with his

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[22] Here forms of *video* occur 447 times, *lumina* + *oculi* 175, *cernere* 39, *spic-*/*spect*-words 18, *tueor* 14.
[23] Rimell 2006:104 refers to 'the malevolent, irresistible power of looking.' See Claassen 2007:12-16 for discussion of the phrase in Ovid, Seneca and Boethius.

own reflection: *visae correptus imagine formae | spem sine corpore amat.* He too becomes 'hope without a body', for the object of his desirous gaze is his own, immaterial, mirrored image. At the last, 'incessant watching' wears away Narcissus' vain life. He spends eternity poring over the image reflected in the waters of the Styx: *Postquam est inferna receptus, | in Stygia spectabat*[24] *aqua* (505). The deaths of both Echo and Narcissus result from the foiling of a desirous gaze.[25]

Ovid uses the concept of reflection in other stories as well. The Cyclops Polyphemus falls in love with the nymph Galatea and, in an attempt to improve his appearance, he watches his own face reflected in a pool, arranging his features into a more pleasing expression: *et spectare feros in aqua et componere vultus* (*Met.* 13.767).[26] In *Met.* 4 reflection is crucial to the success of Ovid's hero Perseus, who managed to cut off the head of the Medusa which would literally petrify all who looked at it. Perseus held up his polished shield as a mirror in which he could view it.[27] This enabled him to sever the monster's neck and carry off the fatal head unscathed.[28]

Direct sight is, however, stronger and more dangerous than mere reflection. Perseus could now transfix all enemies by holding up the Medusa's head, at sight of which they turned to stone. This fate befell the vicious monster that threatened the beautiful Andromeda strapped to a rock off the African shore, a girl 'whom to see was to love' (4.673-75). Perseus' love at first sighting her beauty renders him figuratively transfixed and he almost forgets to flap the wings strapped to his ankles, his desire both ignited and nearly foiled by sight of her: *et stupet et visae correptus imagine formae | paene suas quatere est oblitus in aëre pennas*

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[24] The inadequacy of 'equivalence of meaning in translation' is here made clear: *spectare* is more happily translated as 'watching' or 'staring at' than as merely 'looking at'.

[25] Cf. Hardie 2002: ch. 5 *passim*, especially 145-56, on 'the doors of perception' and 'echo and reflection; the comedy of the senses'. Pavlock 2009:14-37 interprets Narcissus as our poet's metaphor for the self-reflection and pathos of Roman love elegy.

[26] Elsewhere, a single eye gives sight to two weird sisters. At the end of *Met.* 4 Perseus briefly recounts how he foiled the daughters of Phorcys (generally known as the *Graiae*), whose single eye was regularly passed from one to the other, while he was seeking the Medusa (*Met.* 4.776).

[27] Feldherr 2010:326 shows reflection as 'break[ing] down the distance between viewer and viewed.'

[28] See Spentzou 2009:391-430 on the mirror as indicator of visual reciprocity in the *Metamorphoses*; also Rimell 2006: Index, *mirrors* s.v.

(676-77).[29] Sight of Perseus soaring overhead enrages the monster that savagely attacks the hero's shadow it sees flitting over the ocean surface: *umbra viri visa est, visa fera saevit in umbram* (713). Perseus is almost bested in his fight with the creature, but he descries (*conspexit*, 731)[30] a rock on which to brace himself. With a series of fatal blows Perseus rescues his beautiful beloved.

In the *Metamorphoses* 'seeing' and 'doing' are often conflated. Jupiter saw Io, daughter of the river-god Inachus, and brought her to a shady grove for shelter from the midday sun: and excuse for the initiation of rape. To cover his nefarious deed, he drew a curtain of darkness over the earth. But Juno *saw* (and 'saw through', *dispexit*, *Met.* 1.601) the unwonted darkness, guessed the reason for it, and started to *look for* her husband (*circumspicit*, 606). By now Jupiter had 'fore-sensed' (*praesenserat*, 610) her intervention and had changed the unfortunate Io into a dear little heifer. Juno saw and liked the little animal and demanded it as a gift. Her philandering spouse was obliged to give way and handed over the heifer to his suspicious wife.

This was by no means the end of the affair; hundred-eyed Argus is appointed by Juno to guard her prey, lest Jupiter steal her back. With ninety-eight eyes he continues to *watch* (*spectabit ad Io*, 628); two eyes at a time go to sleep. In this way Io remained *within* Argus' sight (*ante oculos Io*, 629). But divine comedy gives way to high tragedy. Io *looked* at her own reflection in her father's waters, *saw* her horns (*conspexit in unda | cornua*, 640-41) and fled, terrified.[31] The unsuspecting Inachus tried to pet the unfamiliar little creature. His bovine daughter licked his hands; then traced the letters of her name in the dust (a subtle pun, for the letters spell both her name and the Latin onomatopoeic exclamation of pain '*io*!', also familiar in its Greek form 'ἰώ'.[32] Ovid here does not spell

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[29] Sight of Andromeda as 'statue' nearly petrifies Perseus himself, who until now has acted like a second Augustus, populating his surroundings with stone images; see Feldherr 2010:326, whose Chapter 7 (291-341) offers a complex analysis of 'how Ovid places his text in dialogue with the public display of images by the emperor' (293).

[30] Not a frequent word; 35 *in toto*: twelve in the *Metamorphoses*, three in *Ars Amatoria*, eight in the exilic poems, none in the *Amores*. Depending on context, it may be interpreted as 'see', 'look at' or 'watch'.

[31] Feldherr 2010:121 refers (in a chapter titled '*Homo Spectator*') to the 'visual uncertainties produced by metamorphosis.' Readers of this episode mentally watch Io viewing herself in a form of double envisioning, or 'shifting focalisation', that involves both external and internal visualisation (154-55).

[32] Also, possibly, the hortative subjunctive of the Greek for 'I go': 'let me go!'

out the father's act of 'seeing', merely implying that Inachus had instantly understood his daughter's sad indication of her bodily change (*corporis indicium mutati triste*, 650).

A further generic shift introduces a familiar fairy-tale device. Mercury, sent by Jupiter to get rid of Argus, puts on a 'magic cap' and flies *unseen* to earth, then puts away his wings and cap. The poem now shifts into pastoral mode. While driving along a herd of goats, and playing on his reed pipe, Mercury charms Argus into inviting him to relax in the shade. No matter how hard he tries, however, all hundred eyes cannot be made to nod off simultaneously. Story-telling in the end does the trick: as Argus listens to the tale of Syrinx's flight from Pan, all his eyes close in slumber. Now the pastoral scene is ruptured. The sudden and violent decapitation of the vigilant guard veils all hundred eyes in death (*centumque oculos nox occupat una*, 721). The watcher no longer guards Io. Next, a Fury is sent by Juno to torture the poor little heifer. Io flees to Egypt, where she begs the gods for aid. Jupiter *sees* her misery (733). Juno is cajoled into relenting and Io's human shape is restored. In time Epaphus is born as the fruit of this dangerous liaison (748).

Epaphus had a contemporary, also the child of a god, Phaethon, the son of Helios and the nymph Clymene. Phaethon's attempt to ascertain his true descent led to the fateful bolting of his father's horses, causing widespread destruction over the lands of the Mediterranean. When order is restored, Jupiter *carefully inspects* (*perspicit*) the damage, in particular in Arcadia, where he sees and ravishes Callisto (*Met.* 2.405). The virgin goddess Diana sees and calls the nymph without noticing her guilt and confusion. Ovid adds that the other nymphs, being more worldly-wise, probably *did* notice. Only after the passage of nine full moons does Diana see that Callisto is pregnant, when she strips, laying bare 'both her body and her guilt' (462). The girl is turned into a bear, and, ultimately, a constellation.

Sightings, fatal or love-inducing, recur frequently throughout the *Metamorphoses*. In our imagination we mentally see these scenes as we read. Our last example underlines the manner in which Ovid elicits readerly visualisation by means of a brief depiction of ocular activity that leads to further, and devastating, actions. The dark god Hades on occasion inspects the island of Sicily for fear that an earthquake will tear open the earth to let sunlight into his ghostly kingdom. On this trip he sees Proserpina, and, delighted by her charms, rapidly snatches her away – in just four words: *visa est, dilectaque raptaque* (*Met.* 5.385). Here again, mere seeing causes a predatory god to act. In this horrific portrayal of the overture to a rape, Ovid's terse formulation aids his readers in envisaging

the selfish brutality of such an attack, where seeing, feeling and doing are virtually simultaneous.

Elegiac vision

Ovid's 'visual' writing is not limited to his *carmen perpetuum*. Also in his love poetry the sight of various protagonists is involved.[33] Here also, the envisaging power of his readers is summoned by the poet's words. Ovid's famous description of the appearance of Corinna in *Amores* 1.5 is a masterpiece of sensual evocation, the fond lover recalling the beauties his bemused gaze dwelled upon. We are invited to imagine the joys his eyes lingered over.

In other cases Ovidian portrayal of sight leading to action is more distressing. 'Love at first sight' as a spur to rape occurs among humans as much as with Ovid's gods. In the *Ars Amatoria* the cynical *Magister Amoris* extols the advantages of the theatre to find suitable prey for his pupil's amatory advances (and advancement). Readers are invited to become vicarious participants. Ovid's version of the tale of Romulus' initiation of nation-building is both shocking and funny. At a theatrical performance to which the neighbouring Sabines and their daughters have been invited, Romulus and his men look around and each takes note with his eyes of the girl he desires to take physically (*respiciunt, oculisque notant*, 1.109). Here the brutality of rape is softened by the comforting words of each 'lover' to his chosen girl: that he will be to her (a husband) as her father is to her mother (1.130). Yet, the episode delimited by these two lines offers a disturbingly cynical portrayal of women in distress over their treatment by their male violators. Ovid's readers are invited to picture the scene and are encouraged to view the girls' panic as something that enhanced their attractiveness to Romulus' men, and also to his notional readership, the tyros that the 'master of love' is instructing: *et potuit multas ipse decere timor* ('and fearfulness itself could make many of them look more attractive', 1.126).

In at least two other instances in the love poetry 'looking' serves as a means towards seduction (*Ars Amatoria* 1.135-62; *Amores* 3.2). Our involvement as readers is strongly elicited and here we are induced to stand, as it were, *within* the scene portrayed. In both passages the lover and his *puella* are together watching a third party: the participants in a

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[33] Again, we have the full spectrum of degrees of intensity (and intention) in vision. Combined figures for the *Amores* + *Ars Amatoria* are: *video* 110 times, *lumina* + *oculi* 36, *cernere* 3, *spic-/spect-* words 65, *tueor* 10.

public festival. In one instance, the *puella* is Ovid's 'notional interlocutor'; in the second, his inexperienced 'pupil' receives instruction from the 'master-lover'. In both cases second-person verbs and imperatives predominate; in both 'looking' ensures the success of both poem and lover, and in both Ovid's readers are invited to share his protagonists' viewpoint. Ovid's empirical readers participate in the scenes portrayed, 'looking' *with* his protagonists and 'seeing' mentally what they are 'watching'.

Amores 3.2 is a 'running commentary' on the chariot races that two lovers are attending. In *Ars Amatoria* 1.135-62 the same material is couched as instructions by a master-lover to his apprentice on how to exploit such a situation.[34] While the girl is encouraged to watch the races, he explains, the lover must watch out for every opportunity to further his cause. Here the 'notional' reader is the aspirant lover who is draining the master's font of profound knowledge; Ovid's 'real' (or 'empirical') reader-ship can be any reader that picks up his text, even today. The lover's running commentary in *Amores* 3.2 is more overtly amusing. Description turns Ovid's readers into fellow-spectators; we mentally enjoy with the lover and his girl the sights the lover discusses. This means that Ovid's 'master-class' in the *Ars* blatantly spells out what needs to be deduced from the lover's patter in the *Amores*: each new topic (that is, fresh 'sight') takes the lover a step closer to his ultimate goal of seduction.

When the two passages are read together, the *Ars* appears as a rather cynical gloss on the apparently guileless conversation of the besotted lover of the *Amores*. In the latter the lover starts by explaining to his *puella* that he has come to enjoy her company, not the excitement of the race: 'You look at the races, I gaze on you' (*tu cursus spectas, ego te*, *Am.* 3.2.5). The patter continues with an exhortation that both must extend their happy viewing, to 'feast their own eyes' (*oculos pascat uterque suos*, 6). Had the lover taken part in such a race, he would have crashed, he asserts, if he had caught sight of her while he was driving (*si mihi currenti fueris conspecta*, 13). Such an assertion needs a mythological illustration: just so the lover Pelops nearly caused his horses to stumble while looking at his beloved's face in the midst of his race for Hippodamia's hand (*dum spectat vultus, Hippodamia, tuos!*, 16).

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[34] The two texts appear as in dialogue with each other, an Ovidian intertextual (here more precisely, *intratextual*) practice that creates 'a pathway between texts', Barchiesi 2001:26. Casali 2009:345 quotes Rosati on the inhabitants of fiction as '[acknowledging] an existence of their own that they have already lived in ... other texts.'

Spectators are next enjoined not to crush the young lady, to give her room. The lover pretends to notice that her shawl is trailing on the ground. He offers to gather it up for her. His words indicate that he has managed to sneak a glance at her legs (27). The urbane master of the *Ars* similarly advises his pupil to gather up a trailing cloak. One of the advantages of such gallantry is a more than passing glimpse of her legs, to which the young lady will herself not be averse: *protinus, officii pretium, patiente puella | contingent oculis crura videnda tuis* ('straightway, as reward for your service, the girl will give you a chance to see her legs', 155-56). In the *Amores* poem, this glance becomes a protracted look. The personified garment is berated for having invidiously kept such a feast from the lover's eyes. The more he looks, the 'meaner' the shawl appears to have been (*quoque magis spectes – invidae vestis eras!*, 28). The two second-person verbs here function differently: the present subjunctive *spectes* indicates a potential action with an indeterminate subject, usually rendered in English as 'if one were to look'; the imperfect indicative *eras* implies that the wrap itself is being addressed and berated for its past meanness in having hidden the girl's beautiful legs for so long. Use of the imperfect may also serve as an indicator of irreality, for the use of *invid-*, 'hateful' (from the concept of 'looking askance/casting an evil eye') may be a subtle pun: *in-* before the *vid*-stem could, by straining the rules of participial formation, be taken also to mean 'not seen', implying that the lover would prefer the cloak to be invisible, to allow free visual access to the young lady's lower limbs. Two mythological illustrations are now required to do justice to these marvellous limbs: she has the legs of an Atalanta or of a Diana with skirt tucked up (29-32).

The apparently ingenuous lover of the *Amores* does not blush to confess that the sight of his beloved's legs will inflame his passion:

> His ego non visis arsi; quid fiet ab ipsis?
> in flammam flammas, in mare fundis aquas.
> (*Am.* 3.2.33-34)

> When I hadn't seen them I burned [with passion]; what will happen now that I've really seen them? You're adding flames to flames, water to the sea!

What other wonders lie concealed by her delicate gown is the next object of speculation (35-36), with the implication that those delights, too, will be revealed in time.

The ardent lover next offers to fan the young lady, implying that the summer heat is actually caused by his ardour (37-40). A speck of dust on her dress comes to his attention, and his patter suggests that he is brushing it away with his hand. Our master-lover is here more explicit and cynical: 'as happens, if some dust should settle on the girl's lap, flick it off with your fingers', but also – and this will further the pupil's plan of seduction – *et si nullus erit pulvis, tamen excute nullum* ('and if there isn't any dust, flick away nothing anyway', *AA* 1.151).[35]

The ingenious lover of *Amores* 3.2 finally turns his girl's attention (and that of Ovid's readership) away from her person to the spectacle before them. His running commentary conjures up for the readers' imagination the procession trooping before the eyes of the young couple: carts with images of the gods; first Victory followed by Neptune, then Mars, Phoebus and Minerva and others, with a couplet or verse devoted to each (45-54). The longest passage is, of course, devoted to the image of Venus (55-62). In direct apostrophe of the goddess, the lover offers a prayer that she will favour his suit. We must envisage the unsteady trundling of the goddess's cart in his assertion that the image appears to be nodding. The shaking of the image is taken by the lover as a sign that he has won the goddess's favour: *adnuit et motu signa secunda dedit* (58). But this is only an image: he turns to the living woman beside him and pleads that she would become his *domina* forever; for him, she will be the greater goddess (*tu dea maior eris*, 59-62).

The *magister* has a more concise approach: when the procession comes into sight, he says, the aspirant lover must applaud the 'Venus of his *domina*' with great fervour. So, too, when the race starts, he advises his students that any lover must adhere to a proven plan: whatever horses she may like, he must favour the same nags (*Ars* 1.145-46). This is exactly what the lover of *Am.* 3.2 does, but first several verses of his monologue pay attention to the need for the girl to be seated in proper comfort when the race starts. Watching the horses is of much less concern to him than watching to see which one is favoured by the girl: *cui studeas, video* (67).

The suitor's monologue again aids readers in mentally conjuring up what the two lovers are watching. Description is alternated with voluble abjuration, ending with the demand that the spectators must demand a recall by flapping their togas (*Am.* 3.2.69-74). The watching citizenry obliges and this offers the lover a new opportunity for intimacy: *ne turbet toga mota capillos, | in nostras abdas te licet usque sinus* ('lest a flapping toga mess up your hair, you can hide your head in the fold of mine!', 75-

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[35] Typically of Ovid's illusionary poetics, sight and non-seeing are conflated.

76). Again, he offers a rapid word-picture of the race; this time the girl has backed a winning team. The favoured charioteer receives the palm (79-82). The girl's prayer has been answered; the lover's prayer remains, but her brightly shining eyes appear voluble, promising something that will be veiled from the gaze of all others (83-84).[36] As implied in the conclusion of *Amores* 1.5, not even Ovid's readers will be privileged to view what will follow.[37]

Before exile: a fatal sight

After Ovid's relegation to Tomis on the Black Sea (AD 8/9), he continues producing reams of elegiac verse, but now with a very different tone. Vision remains of paramount importance when our poet is exiled.[38] 'Sight' lies even more central to Ovid's exilic *persona* than in the works we have so far considered. *Tristia* 2.207 famously asserts that two 'charges' (*crimina*) had been brought against the poet, 'a song and a mistake' (*carmen et error*). Leaving aside the first charge,[39] let us consider the second. Nowhere does Ovid admit that his *error* was a 'crime', in the English sense of 'offence'. Ovid's 'mistake' that gave rise to his banishment was a visual transgression, 'seeing' something, inadvertent yet unforgivable. Ovid's protestations show him as the victim of accidental ocular activity. The exile had merely *seen*, had not purposely *looked at* and had never intended to *watch*, whatever it was that his glances had fallen upon. There had been no intention to view, and hence no culpability in his viewing of the matter.

This sight is not to be mentioned lest the emperor's wounds be raked open, but Ovid endlessly hints at it. Early on in *Tristia* 2, the topic is broached in a series of rhetorical questions:

Cur aliquid vidi? Cur noxia lumina feci?

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[36] *Risit, et argutis quiddam promisit oculis*, 83. *Argutis* is usually translated as 'bright', but in certain contexts the word *argutus* can mean 'voluble', so that the Loeb translation by G. Showerman (in Goold & Showerman 1931) is more satisfactory: '... with speaking eyes promised – I know not what' than Green's (1982) 'she smiled, eyes bright, inviting'.

[37] Our poet's innuendo is equally voluble, his authorial voice becoming an eye through which we behold the unspoken.

[38] In the exilic poetry (excluding the *Ibis*) forms of *video* occur 172 times, *lumina* + *oculi* 108, *cernere* 25, *spic-/spect-*words 70, *tueor* 21.

[39] For recent discussion of *carmen*, see Claassen 2008:78-84.

Cur imprudenti cognita culpa mihi?
(*Tr.* 2.103-04)

Why did I see anything? Why did I allow my eyes to be harmful?
Why did recognisable blame attach itself to me without my foreseeing it?

A brief retelling of the Actaeon myth (105-06) illuminates this lament: this unfortunate man unwittingly caught a glimpse of Diana without her clothes.[40] Notwithstanding a lack of intent, he was torn apart by his own hounds. The exile is a metaphorical Actaeon. He, too, inadvertently saw something that sealed his fate.

This trend continues throughout. Whenever our poet refers to his misdeed, there is reference to his having 'seen something'. This thing, whatever it was, was, however, not a crime. Variations on this assertion are endless: *lumina viderunt* ('my eyes saw'); *inscia lumina* ('unwitting eyes'); *error ... causa exsilii mei* ('a mistake ... the cause of my exile'); *non facinus ... sed ... error* ('not a misdeed, but a mistake'); *qua perii culpam, scelus esse negabis* ('you will deny that the fault whereby I perished, is a misdeed'); *negabis ... mali* ('you will deny ... any evil [intent]'). Such protestations continue in similar vein.[41]

Speculation on what it was that Ovid saw is not the focus of this paper. The modern consensus tends to ascribe a political, rather than a sexual, transgression to our poet.[42] Such speculation may be set aside in favour of examination of what Ovid claims to see at Tomis, and his manner of seeing it. Here the focus is almost exclusively on the author as protagonist.[43] Ovid no longer has a live audience, as at the public *recitationes* that he used to hold at Rome. His contemporary audiences are

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[40] Ovid's longer version of the tale (*Met.* 3.155-252) has Actaeon wandering through an unknown grove (*per nemus ... errans*, 175), totally innocent of any intention to spy on the goddess. For Ovid, the myth has become a ghastly reality that blurs the boundaries between fantasy and fact.

[41] See also *Tr.* 3.1.51-52; 3.5.51-52; 3.6.25-26; 3.11.33-34; 4.1.23-24; 4.4.37-38; 4.9.89-90; 4.10.93-100; 5.4.18; 5.8.23-24; *Ex P.* 1.6.21-22 and 25; 1.7.39-40; 2.2.15-16; 2.2.55-61; 3.3.71-74; 4.9.19. With the passage of years these hints decline in frequency; Claassen 2008:130-31.

[42] Ovid's choice of individual 'vision'-words is of no help in gaining insight into the nature of the transgression. For a brief summary of trends in speculation, see Claassen 2008:232-34 and 250.

[43] Yet, on occasion vision is imputed even to an inanimate entity, the city of Tomis: 'this place either sees or fears the unseen enemy' (*aut vidit aut metuit locus hic, quem non videt, hostem*, *Tr.* 3.10.69).

reduced to a readership-at-remove, placed on the same footing as his modern-day readers. This composite readership, contemporary and modern, becomes the envisioning audience of an author who has moved from his former role as *creator of visions* to the *object* of his own creative narration. This protagonist sees both physically and mentally, with increasing focus on internal vision. While mentally watching the exiled poet himself assuming the envisioning role elsewhere entrusted to his readership, we are drawn into aspects of both his Roman past and his Tomitan present.[44] Few details of his present physical surroundings are given; the poet retreats into his imagination.

Ovid's envisioning has a further aspect: changes of mood. Pictures of his immediate past are sad and of his present are frightening, but in his loneliness the poet on occasion imagines a bright future for himself when his pleas for remission of sentence are to be answered. Pictures of his distant past are equally bright, bathed in a golden glow of nostalgia. The lonely exile increasingly ignores his uncongenial surroundings, returning in his mind to the happy sights of his youth.

Exilic seeing: the sights of Tomis

The picture drawn of Ovid's place of exile is, at best, nebulous. We are required to see him as the sole toga-bearer amongst hordes of weapon-bearing savages, the origins of Tomis as a Milesian colony with a strong Greek background totally suppressed. A high degree of suspension of disbelief is expected of Ovid's readership in most of what he claims to see at Tomis. Believably pathetic vignettes, such as of local peasants being carried off by marauding hordes from across the Ister (*Tr.* 3.10.60-70) are alternated with ridiculous pictures of a shepherd piping, helmet on head, to sheep trembling in fear of war (*Tr.* 5.10.25-26) or of 'rooftops bristling with arrows' (*Ex P.* 1.2.21). 'Perpetual snows' keep the area (a mere 240 km further north than Rome, and generally sharing the meteorological characteristics of the Mediterranean area) in a frozen thrall, with savage, skin-clad inhabitants, icicles tinkling in their beards, hospitably offering guests chunks of frozen wine to suck (*Tr.* 3.10.21-24). Not much of Ovid's 'eye-witness' portrayal of his surroundings can be accepted as literally true; exiled or not, our creative poet keeps to his former trade, that of weaving fantastic, mythical tales. The exile's own inner turmoil is reflected in a portrayal of fantastic externals that convey his abject state.

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[44] Feldherr 2010:160 writes of 'the poet looking at Rome position[ing] himself at both ends of the telescope.'

The disgraced Roman poet has become a larger-than-life, heroic combatant against the ills of malevolent nature.[45]

Envisaging Augustus in Rome and at Tomis

The exile's vengeful persecutor is on occasion vividly drawn as potential object for the envisioning powers of his readers, as for example at *Tr.* 4.4.15-20. The exile is making a case for the argument that Caesar is 'public property' (this more literal translation for *res publica* is more appropriate than the usual 'the state'). As such, Caesar allows himself to be featured in poetry, as does the great god Jupiter. The *Tristia* makes great show of the idea of 'danger' to the poet's addressees if their names were to become known. But, with the example of these two superior beings, Ovid's addressees should not fear exposure in his verse. These divine beings, he says, are personages *quorum hic aspicitur, creditur ille deus* ('of whom this one is seen, and the other is believed to be a god', 20).

Close attention to schoolbook rules of translation shows us that a subtle gibe is involved. *Hic* is physically the nearest on the page to the word *Iuppiter* (in verse 17), and must therefore be translated as 'the latter', that is, the god Jupiter. Hence *ille* (which always refers to the person whose name occurs literally 'farther away' on the page – *Caesar* in verse 15),[46] refers to Augustus. The literal but counter-intuitive interpretation of the verse must then be: 'Jupiter is *seen* to be (*not* 'looked upon as') a god and the emperor is accepted as (believed to be) one.' Most translators tend towards an interpretation that makes Augustus Caesar the visible *praesens deus*, but strict attention to conventional rules of translation exposes the subtle twist to the line: the statues of Jupiter erected all over Rome clearly show him as god, whereas Augustus, here termed *Caesar*,[47] is merely deemed to be one – such belief is far from proof.[48]

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[45] On Ovid's portrayal of his surroundings, see Claassen 1999b:190-204.

[46] See Herbert-Brown 2011 on Ovid's 'name games' in his use of *Caesar* vs. *Augustus* in the *Fasti*.

[47] At Tomis he is, of course, literally 'absent', but time and again Augustus is addressed as if there, the exile imagining himself into the presence of his persecutor, e.g. *alloquor en absens absentia numina supplex* ('alas, I address absent gods as supplicant while I am far away', *Tr.* 5.2.45). Cf. Hardie 2002:300-03.

[48] See Hardie 2002:315-17 on Ovid's role in the promotion of 'poetic and imperial feignings'.

However we may interpret this passage, for the exile, Augustus is not a visible *praesens deus*; the emperor is in Rome and Ovid is at Tomis.[49] Yet, on one occasion our poet pretends to experience an epiphany of the great god, asserting that the emperor himself is one of a triad of gods that have been 'returned to him'. *Ex Ponto* 2.8 ostensibly thanks Ovid's friend Cotta Maximus for a gift of silver images of Augustus, Tiberius and Livia.[50] The poet's readers mentally watch the exile's (surely feigned) transports of joy at the 'visible proof' that the imperial family have appeared as *praesentes divi* at Tomis. During the course of the poem readers are invited to imagine that the exile is seeing Rome itself embodied in the silver visages (19-20). The trio of faces regard the exile sternly (21-22). The exile abjectly implores the chief imperial deity for remission of sentence (23-38). Elaborate prayers are extended with a series of *hypomneses* introduced by *per* (25-34). These include reference to Tiberius as 'visibly similar in virtue' to his father and 'recognisable by his character as the emperor's son' (31-32). Towards the conclusion the exile claims to be much comforted by a 'visible softening' of the three stern expressions (71-76).

A waking vision and two prophetic ecphrases

Waking visions arise: one night a bedraggled and decrepit *Amor* appears. The god has come to clear his former subject of all accusations (*Ex P.* 3.3.13-20).[51] The apparition arrives in circumstances suspiciously similar to the earlier happy arrival of Corinna, when the poet-lover one afternoon lay drowsily in a half-dark room (half-light, a shuttered window, a prostrate dreamer, *Am.* 1.5), but now the apparition is grotesquely different.[52] This warning figure looks more like the demi-god Charon from Vergil's *Aeneid* 6 than like the playful Cupid of the *Amores*:[53]

> Horrida pendebant molles super ora capilli

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[49] Scott 1930 (particularly 50-63) on Augustus as *conspicuus deus* is still of value. Galasso 1995:345 considers that the actual absence of the 'human god' aids Ovid in assimilating the emperor to 'other' gods.

[50] Possibly coins or medallions; Claassen 1999b:126-29; Hardie 2002:318, 322.

[51] See Claassen 2008:59-61, 64-75.

[52] See Casali 2009:349, quoting Hinds, on intertextuality in *Am.* 1.5. Self-referential intratextuality is the literary process at work in *Ex P.* 3.3.5-8.

[53] As unreal, and a far cry from Vergil's strident monster from *Aeneid* 4, is the disembodied voice of *Fama*, which speaks to the lonely exile as he walks on the beach (*Ex P.* 4.4).

> et visa est oculis horrida pinna meis.
> (*Ex P*. 3.3.17-20)

> His soft hair hung down around his bristling jaw
> And his feathers seemed to my eyes to be all ruffled.

The apparition stays long enough to calm the terrified sleeper and predict a great triumph for Tiberius. It then disappears, leaving him to imagine the scene that it has predicted (85-92). This poem offers an example of the manner in which Ovid switches focalisation in mid-narrative. In the words of Fowler (2000:72) '[the question of] "who sees?" is raised with particular and obvious force by description', but description here morphs into 'prophecy'. Multiple envisioning is hence involved. Ovid has invited his readers to visualise his terror when the apparition manifested itself, and mentally to watch the poet himself envisaging the triumph which it predicts.

The very next poem, *Ex P*. 3.4, is even more strongly concerned with 'who sees?' Our poet addresses the issue of the difference between merely *hearing about* a past occurrence and *seeing* it happen in 'real time':

> Spectatum vates alii scripsere triumphum:
> est aliquid memori visa notare manu.
> (*Ex P*. 3.4.17-18).

> Other poets wrote about a triumph they had [actually] looked at;
> it's something else to note down with the hand of memory things
> 'seen' [long before].

The exile continues by explaining that Rumour has become his eyes (*oculi fama fuere mei*, 20): he has to use the reports of others to write up the projected triumph. After a long digression, once again proclaiming his innocence, Ovid ends with a brief evocation of the triumphal scene (95-112) in the form of an ecphrastic apostrophe of Livia, couched in 'eye-witness' terms, but set in the future. Ovidian irony turns this imaginary future event into a scintillating present through the envisioning power of his descriptive words. His readers mentally 'watch' the poet envisioning the scene.

Oculi mentis

In spite of Ovid's strictures on memory as a poor substitute for actual presence, his powers of mental vision grow in importance. Far from

Rome, the poet increasingly employs an inner vision that is not merely metaphorical, but also metaphysical. That is, his evocative descriptions of 'normal' life at Rome serve as anti-symbol of all he now experiences, yes; but, more importantly, the exile now lives a vicarious life within his own mind *and* within the minds of his correspondents. Ovid 'sees' and enjoys the sights of Rome with his 'mind's eye'; in return, his former companions must 'look for' their absent friend in his poetry. Even today, we can appreciate his poetry only by becoming willing collaborators in this mental exercise.

The first exposition of Ovid's mental vision strikes a note of tragedy. Soon after the unfortunate poet's enforced removal from Rome, his readership is presented with the 'very sad image' (*imago*),[54] the vivid memory, of his last night at home. It rises before him, a sight that he contemplates with tears in his eyes: *cum subit illius tristissima noctis imago | qua mihi supremum tempus in urbe fuit, | … labitur ex oculis nunc quoque gutta meis* (*Tr.* 1.3.1-4). This poem purports to have been composed along the way to the exile's hated destination. A shifting series of impressionistic views sketches the consternation and disarray into which the poet's household was thrown. There is little factual detail, much emotional outpouring: 'a Troy in miniature', falling by deceit, every corner of the house awash with tears: *inque domo lacrimas angulus omnis habet* (24-26). A serene moon imperturbably drove her nocturnal steeds, ignoring the despairing poet's desperate pleas offered to the implacable home of the gods on the Palatine (27-40). The picture is painted in gloomy colours. Its weeping narrator invites his readers both to envision the scene and to share his grief at the memory.

Imago largely remains the exiled poet's favourite word for representing his own envisionings. The haunting image of his sad lot continually stands like a spectre, a body made visible, before him (*Tr.* 2.8.35-36). Later, when Ovid hears of the death of Celsus, the image of the departed

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[54] *Imago* has as first meaning in Lewis & Short s.v., 'imitation', which shares with it the root *im-*, as in *similis* and *aemulus*, recognised as such by Paul. Fest. 112; Augustin. *In Epist. Ioh.* 4:9; so Maltby 1991 s.v. The word is less easy to pin down than its English derivatives 'image' and 'imagination'. Further 'equivalents' are 'copy, likeness', but also 'apparition, ghost, phantom' and 'a representation of sound', also 'a conception, thought, idea' and (in rhetoric) 'figurative represen-tation, comparison' and, finally, 'a mere form, semblance or shadow', and even 'a representative, reminder'. With Ovid, it most often represents either a 'mirrored representation, reflection' or (chiefly in the exilic poetry) 'the object of his mental vision'; Claassen 2008:130-31. Cf. Van Schoor 2011 *passim* on *imago* as contrasted with *logos*.

constantly stands before his eyes, 'as if he were present': *ante meos oculos tamquam praesentis imago | haeret, et extinctum vivere fingit amor* (*Ex P.* 1.9.7-8). Affection depicts his friend to Ovid as if still alive. Such mental envisioning brings great comfort, also when the presence of living friends is conjured up. For example, the exile tells his correspondent Atticus that this friend's image constantly stays with him: *et videor vultus mente videre tuos* ('and I seem to see your face with my mind', *Ex P.* 2.4.9). The shift from passive to active, from object to agent, in *videor ... videre* (literally 'I am seen to see') nicely opens up the question of shifting focalisation in Ovid's portrayal of himself as both object of and actor in (mental) ocular activity.

We get the first hint of a more positive slant to Ovid's 'inner vision' at *Tr.* 3.4.53-63, where the exile explains that his *patria* and his *carissima coniunx* are always with him, for: *sunt animo cuncta videnda meo* ('I can see everything in my mind', 56).[55] The image of his wife stands before him *sicut praesentis*, 'as if she were present' (59), both aggravating and alleviating his burden (60-61). His friends live in his heart (63). Reciprocally, distant friends can imagine the absent poet *into* their presence: in *Ex P.* 2.10 Macer is begged to pause and remember their youthful travels together, for then, *absim licet, omnibus annis | ante tuos oculos, ut modo visus, ero* ('even though I am absent, I shall stand before your eyes looking just as I appeared before', *Ex P.* 2.10.43-44). The exile manages to keep Macer with him, summoning him at will; Macer must do the same and imagine Ovid's visiting him in happier circumstances: *istic me memori pectore semper habe* ('keep me there always, in your heart that remembers me', 52).

Ovid's allusions to his inner vision, some negative, others positive, continue throughout, becoming both more frequent and more consistently optimistic.[56] In *Tristia* 4.2 the poet celebrates in *words*, but with strong visualisation, the triumph over Germania in which he portrays the emperor's adopted son, Tiberius, as celebrating in *fact*.[57] Green (2005:

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[55] *Animus* and *mens* seem largely interchangeable surrogates for the exile's eyes; either sometimes refers to the exile's emotions, as in *Tr.* 5.2.7-8: the illness of his mind, *mens ... aegra*, is ascribed to the condition of his spirit, *affectus ... animi*. References to 'seeing with the mind' occur only six times outside the exilic poetry, once in *Her.*, five times in *Met.*; Claassen 1999a = 2001:160 n. 64.

[56] For statistical analysis, Claassen 2008:131-32 and 261-64.

[57] Feldherr 2010:162 argues for Ovid's *Metamorphoses* as a similarly literary version of the spectacular fictions of Augustan Rome where 'who you were was determined by what and how you saw.'

257) designates this projection 'anticipatory wishful thinking', aimed at 'mak[ing] atonement for the mocking or parodic tone of earlier triumphal set pieces.' For Green, the poem 'achieves a vivid and detailed realism.' Such realism helps us, as Ovid's modern readers, to envision the sights and scenes of a jubilant Rome, but it served a similar purpose for its creator. A subtle play of layered envisioning (or 'multiple focalisation') invites the reader to 'watch' the poet mentally, who, in his turn, is mentally 'looking' at an imaginary spectacle, which, in Rome, would represent to the citizenry a victory that they themselves had not seen, for it had taken place at a distant remove.[58] The poet's *mens* gains complete control over his eyes. With his sight turned ever more inward, his mind 'leads his eyes to the centre of the city' (61). So his spirit will be able to watch the procession and *sic certe in patria per breve tempus ero* ('and so I shall really be home for a short while', 64). Ovid as author has become an imagined 'first citizen', a second-order 'emperor' on whom all eyes settle, through whose eyes all eyes see.[59]

However, in an almost Tibullan *volte face*, the poet arrests his own specious hopes: the fortunate populace will enjoy the real spectacle (65), whereas the exile can enjoy these pleasures in his imagination only. He must listen 'with distant ears' (67-68). If a messenger were to arrive with news of the real triumph, what he now projects will already be long past. Such temporal disruption is what exile brings. Yet, even then, a triumph told at second-hand will still dispel his sadness (69-74).[60] So Ovid's mental vision frequently conjures up not only his friends and family, but also quotidian Roman civic activities.

The Paelignian fields of the exile's youth, in all their rural splendour, rise constantly before Ovid's mental vision (*Ex P.* 1.8.31-48).[61] This poem, to his friend Severus, portrays the exile in Vergilian pastoral terms. Like a

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[58] Triumphal spectacles bring 'the *orbs* within the walls of the *urbs*' (Hardie 2002:310). Hardie (307-11) discusses imperial spectacles as projections of *what is not seen*: even when watched at first hand by the inhabitants of Rome, they are essentially 'a parade of feignings, images ... pictures, tableaux, personifications, imitations which supply the matter for the second-order fictive imitations of the poet' (309). Cf. Hardie's Chapter 9 (283-325), on 'absent presences' at Tomis.

[59] This observation I owe to one of the anonymous referees.

[60] *Ex P.* 3.4.15-22, to Rufinus, discusses the distant author's problems with the suitable writing up of a triumphal procession he has not witnessed: other poets write of what they actually saw, whereas *oculi fama fuere mei* ('my eyes were rumour', 20), translated by Green 2005 *ad loc.* as 'Report has been my eyes.'

[61] Ovid's mental vision recurs with increasing frequency: as *Ex P.* 3.5.49-52; 4.4.45-46; 4.9.41; 4.15.37.

dispossessed Meliboeus, our urbane poet fancifully laments that fruit from trees that he himself planted and tended will be enjoyed by another (45-48). Then Ovid experiences a 'new vision', of a remote future in which he develops into a gentleman-farmer on the 'Stygian shores' of Tomis, pasturing his goats and sheep, ploughing the fields, sowing seeds, weeding and irrigating his garden and learning to swear in Getic as he drives his own cattle (49-60). This future vision, with its Vergilian overtones (*non et nostra poma legenda manu; glaeba colenda; pendentis ... rupe capellas; baculo ... nixus; spargere semen humo*) is again disrupted, in quasi-Tibullan mode, with a bleak picture of his present surroundings: here the enemy is a constant threat behind the walls and portals of a beleaguered town (61-62). These contrasting scenes alternately attract Ovid's vision as he composes, and he induces his readers mentally to watch both with him.

In yet another shift of tone and mood, we are transported with the poet (but in space rather than in time) as a new mental picture arises: with Ovid we watch his addressee Severus moving from the Campus Martius, to a shady Roman portico, to the Forum, to Umbria, or along the Appian Way to his Alban property, travelling so rapidly that the axles of his carriage grow hot (65-68). The exile pictures his friend, sitting in his Italian country villa, wishing that the emperor's 'just anger' would be suppressed so that Ovid could join him there (69-70). Yet, this vision also fades. Severus is told 'reef in the sails of your prayers!' (*voti ... contrahe vela tui*, 72) and pray for a safer place, nearer home, that will end the greater part of the exile's ills (73-74).

What Ovid sees mentally increases in importance over time. He explains to his friend Graecinus that only his mind remains untouched by exile: *mente tamen, quae sola loco non exulat, utar* ('I shall use my mind, which alone is not exiled to this place', *Ex P.* 4.9.41). His mind carries the poet to Rome. In his imagination Ovid can enjoy watching his friend serving as consul, dispensing justice to the people. With this our creative poet has merged himself with his readership. Coalescence of poet and readers enables us, at the remove of two millennia, to see Ovid's distant Rome with Ovid's own *oculi mentis*. Each new generation 'watches' the poet and his friends with its imagination. Ovid's word magic has awakened our own *oculi mentium*. Long may such mental envisioning continue!

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