AN INTERTEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF THE NOVEL *GIRL MEETS BOY* AND THE USE OF FEMINIST AND QUEER THEORY BY ALI SMITH IN HER RECEPTION OF THE TALE OF IPHIS FROM OVID'S *METAMORPHOSES* (9.666-797)

by

HOLLY ANNE RANGER

A thesis submitted to
University of Birmingham
For the degree of
MPHIL (B) CLASSICS

INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY
AND ANTIQUITY
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND LAW
UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM
NOVEMBER 2012

ABSTRACT

In this thesis I discuss Ali Smith's reworking of Ovid's tale of the girl-boy Iphis from his *Metamorphoses* (9.666-797) in her 2006 novel *Girl meets boy.* I examine how Smith has brought Ovid to life for twenty-first century readers, first through an exploration of feminist and queer critical readings of Ovid and the influence of those theories on Smith's method of classical reception, and secondly through an analysis of intertextual references. My matrix of interpretation draws upon the theories and experimental writing of Julia Kristeva, Monique Wittig and Judith Butler, alongside an examination of intertextual allusions to Ovid himself, Virginia Woolf, John Lyly and William Shakespeare. I argue that Ovid readily lends himself to feminist readings of his work, and that by combining critical theory and creative writing, Smith establishes a new and liberating queer feminist model for classical reception.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

In this thesis I discuss Ali Smith's reworking of Ovid's tale of the girl-boy Iphis from his *Metamorphoses* (9.666-797) in her 2006 novel *Girl meets boy.* I examine how Smith has brought Ovid to life for twenty-first century readers, first through an exploration of feminist and queer critical readings of Ovid and the influence of those theories on Smith's method of classical reception, and secondly through an analysis of intertextual references. My matrix of interpretation will draw upon the theories and experimental writing of Julia Kristeva, Monique Wittig and Judith Butler, alongside an examination of intertextual allusions to Ovid himself, Virginia Woolf, John Lyly and William Shakespeare. I argue that Ovid readily lends himself to feminist readings of his work, and that by combining critical theory and creative writing, Smith establishes a new and liberating queer feminist model for classical reception.

Intertextuality

The term 'intertextuality' was coined by Julia Kristeva (1969b) to describe the way in which texts interact with each other. Meaning more than simple influences or allusions within one text to another, intertextuality is suggestive of the ways that texts relate to one another, both forwards and backwards in time. A text can therefore no longer have a static, monolithic meaning or reading passed down through time in a linear fashion, but its readings change over time as new texts are written and add to its meaning. Kristeva suggests, in fact, that it is *only* in relation to other texts that any one work attains a meaning. For feminist classicists this is of particular importance as it challenges the traditional notion and status of canonical texts.

1

Social context and contemporary dominant social narratives influence the readings or rewritings we make of texts, and Kristeva argues that a new text is not so much created as deciphered.[1] Intertextuality appears in its most extreme form in Roland Barthes' 'La Mort de l'auteur',[2] where the author is no longer the origin of the text, but a text's subjectivity is deconstructed and reconstructed over time through language (which, as I discuss in further detail in Chapter One, is a product of social discourse and prevailing dominant narratives). Barthes thought that this 'ever-expanding potential for re-writing' was a characteristic of the thoroughly modern, or 'writerly' text; as we surprise ourselves with ever-new readings of Ovid, we can view him as a postmodern two thousand years before his time.

Ali Smith is aware of intertextuality and views stories that we have received through an intermediary (for example, Ovid through Lyly) as 'a[nother] pleasure in the handshake between sources'.[3] When quoting the creation myth from the *Metamorphoses*, Smith says, '[well, that is] how Ovid, metamorphosing into Ted Hughes, saw the start of all things'.[4] Further, Smith believes that:

> Books [are understood] always in correspondence with the books which came
>
> before them, because books are produced by books more than by writers;
>
> they're a result of all the books that went before them. Great books are
>
> adaptable; they alter with us as we alter in life, they renew themselves as we

---

[1] 'Il *parle* moins qu'il ne *déchiffre*', Kristeva 1969a: 125.
[2] Barthes 1984 (essay first published in 1967).
[3] Smith 2012: 201
[4] Smith 2012: 65

change and re-read them at different times in our lives. You can't step into the

same story twice. (Smith 2012: 31)

With this is mind, in Chapter One I establish the theoretical framework for Smith's

alternative vision of Ovid.

CHAPTER ONE – OVID AND FEMINIST CRITICISM

In this chapter I examine how and demonstrate why feminist theory is an important tool both to criticise Ovid's poetry and to examine Ali Smith's interpretation of the tale of Iphis. Through a bibliographic survey I provide an outline of the key debates and trends within feminist and feminist-influenced classical scholarship, discussing how feminists have contributed to and sparred with traditional (male) classical scholarship; it is written with particular reference to how feminist literature has broadened our understanding of Ovid, and will provide the theoretical framework for my readings of both Ovid and Smith. My aim is to examine how feminist scholarship has been particularly concerned with the concepts of 'the gaze', 'the voice', and 'the body' in Ovid, and has opened up new ways of examining the representations of women, gender and sexuality in his poetry. Feminist literary theory aims to resist the traditional male literary canon, and therefore Ovid must be examined by feminists either to dismantle his work and 'to break [his] hold over us'[5] or to rescue Ovid for twenty-first century women.

Early feminist classical scholarship

Until the twentieth century women were all but denied a classical education (see, for example, Virginia Woolf's 1925 essay, 'On Not Knowing Greek'), but with the rise of women classical scholars in the mid-1970s influenced by second-wave feminist thought, classical scholarship underwent a paradigm shift: the way to 'do' Classics would never be the same again. Classics had previously been a male-dominated and positivist discipline, focusing on

---

[5] Cox 2011: 12

the examination of facts, texts and material objects, and there had been little in the way of theories and methodologies as used by disciplines such as anthropology. Alongside a general academic turn within Classics to interdisciplinary theory, feminist classical scholars influenced by feminism, post-structuralism and psychoanalysis began to develop methodologies for the study of women in the ancient world and to explore issues of sexuality and gender. Although the interpretations drawn are still very much debated, alongside movements such as post-structuralism, feminist theories have transformed classicists' understanding of how literary criticism can be practised.

Before the 1970s, 'male citizen' was taken to be the normative status of ancient individuals. Feminists advanced that classicists had therefore deliberately omitted or overlooked a whole range of data relating to ancient women, and proposed that feminist theories and methodologies had the potential to offer a fuller picture of ancient life.[6] Pioneering studies in this field were led by a 1973 special women's edition of the journal *Arethusa*,[7] and Sarah B. Pomeroy's *Goddesses, Whores, Wives and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity* in 1975, which aimed to reconstruct the lives of women from ancient papyri. In 1981 the first collection of essays specifically on women in the ancient world was published in America in Helene P. Foley's *Reflections of Women in Antiquity*, along with two early works written with an explicit feminist agenda and using feminist methodologies, Amy Richlin's *The Garden of Priapus*[8] and Eva C. Keuls's *The Reign of the Phallus*.[9]

---

[6] Skinner 1987b
[7] Sullivan 1973
[8] Richlin 1983
[9] Keuls 1985

By the mid-1980s, feminist scholars had progressed from attempting to recover the 'real' lives of ancient women to examining the ways in which 'woman' was constructed as a category, heavily influenced by the work of Michel Foucault on the socially constructed nature of gender.[10] Among the first of these studies were Foley's 'Conception of Women in Athenian Drama'[11] and Froma Zeitlin's 'Playing the Other: Theatre, Theatricality and the Feminine in Greek Drama'.[12] Much of this early scholarship, however, followed Foucault's focus on Greek sexuality, eliding Roman experiences of these as being the same, and it would be over 10 years before Hallett and Skinner's *Roman Sexualities* appeared.

Michel Foucault and social constructionism

Over the next decade studies on ancient women evolved into investigations of sexuality and gender. Heavily indebted to Foucauldian thought, written from gay and feminist standpoints, and all appearing in 1990 were David Halperin's *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality*, John J. Winkler's *The Constraints of Desire*, the volume *Before Sexuality*, edited by Halperin, Winkler and Zeitlin, and a special edition of the feminist cultural studies journal *Differences*, Greece and Rome.[13] Feminists who follow Foucault include Lin Foxhall[14] and Marilyn Skinner,[15] who argue that Foucault's analysis of power relations and his notion of knowledge production through discursive practices are invaluable tools for feminist classicists aiming to develop a feminist epistemology.

---

[10] Foucault 1978, 1985 & 1986
[11] Foley 1981
[12] Zeitlin 1985
[13] Konstan & Nussbaum 1990
[14] Foxhall 1994
[15] Skinner 1996

One criticism of early feminist classical scholarship is its uncritical adoption of theories such as Foucault's; the theory of social constructionism is problematic due to its deterministic perspective and its androcentric bias in its assumption that (male, patriarchal) society imposes itself upon the (female, passive) body.[16] Foucault has his critics amongst feminist classicists, the most vocal of whom is Amy Richlin. Richlin, however, is a radical feminist and believes not just in theory but in praxis, and she cannot fight for the rights of 'woman' if under Foucault the category of 'woman' no longer truly exists as a biologically determined entity.

Foucault was also heavily criticised by traditional (male) classical scholarship, which dismissed *The History of Sexuality* for its arbitrary use of classical sources that were often taken out of context. Yet the theory of social constructionism itself and its implications for gender theory were revolutionary, and Foucauldian theory is crucial to Smith's interpretation of the tale of Iphis and to a feminist reading to Ovid. For example, Monique Wittig proposes in 'One Is Not Born a Woman' that our social systems reinterpret neutral physical features based on cultural marks;[17] in Iphis' case, Ovid tells us that these were her male clothes, ambiguous name and an androgynous beauty (*Met.* 9. 709-712). Both Smith and Ovid highlight the cultural, social and physical markers that 'construct' sex and gender, and explore the consequences for those who do not fit into such rigid culturally determined categories.

---

[16] Meskell 1998
[17] Wittig 1997: 266

Although it may be argued that it is anachronistic to apply modern theories to ancient texts, Foucault can help us to explain Ovid's entire *œuvre* as a comment on Roman constructions of masculinity as throughout his poetry he subverts the traditional markers of sex and gender.[18] For example, throughout the *Amores* the usual Roman male-female power balance is reversed; the mistress is *domina*, and in *Amores* 1.9, 5-6 it is the *puella* who plays the *dux* on the battlefield of love. Ovid's 'lover-poet' persona describes himself as a lover not a soldier, positioning himself against both Augustus and Virgil's *Aeneid* from the very first word of *Amores* 1.1, *arma*;[19] in *Amores* 1.9 Ovid even goes so far as to assert that the life of a lover is as hard as that of a soldier[20], and in *Amores* 1.6 Ovid claims to be now so wasted thin through love sickness that he would be able to slip through even the tiniest chink in his mistress' closed door (*quod precor, exiguum est – aditu fac ianua parvo/ obliquum capiat semiadaperta latus,* 'What I pray is only small – see to it that the door is just half-open, so that it may receive me sideways through the small crack.' (2-3)).

---

[18] It is of great regret that Ovid's *Medea* is lost to us, for it would be fascinating to see how the poet had constructed his version of one of tragedy's most formidable and empowered heroines, a character that so challenges traditional notions of the feminine.

[19] *Amores* 1.1 forms Ovid's *recusatio*, his rejection of masculine epic poetry in order to write love poetry, and in this he follows his elegiac predecessors Tibullus (3.3) and Propertius (1.7). Both Tibullus and Propertius write their *recusatio* as a *literary* gesture; they invoke Apollo, the god of poetry and a god with whom Augustus closely associated himself, and make quite earnest apologies to Augustus for not writing epic poetry – Propertius later goes on to write Augustan encomia. Although Ovid's *recusatio* is still primarily a literary gesture, one strengthened by the appearance of the personified Elegy at *Amores* 3.1, through his invocation of Cupid instead of Apollo, and his apparent rejection of Augustan moral standards, Ovid's *recusatio* can be viewed as a political as well as literary gesture.

[20] Ovid details the *militia amoris*: whilst the soldier must endure the cold of the battle-field, the lover must endure the cold door-step of his mistress' closed door; both lovers and soldiers must battle down enemies (or, love-rivals); and both must traverse the earth for their *dominus/ domina*.

<u>'The Gaze'</u>

In the 1990s, feminist classical scholarship began to reflect the specific preoccupations of the feminist movement and Ovid provided a particularly fertile ground for discussion as many of these areas of debate were already key themes within his work. Feminist film theory brought the notion of 'the gaze' to Ovidian scholarship, and feminist classicists were influenced by criticism such as Laura Mulvey's ground-breaking work 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema',[21] Susanne Kappeler's *The Pornography of Representation* (1986), Susan Gubar and Joan Hoff's 1989 *For Adult Users Only: The Dilemma of Violent Pornography*, and E. Ann Kaplan's 'Is the Gaze Male?'.[22] These critics had been influenced by Lacanian psychoanalytic notions of scopophilia (the pleasure one takes from the act of viewing), the objectification of visual sights, and the idea that there is a male/ female power distinction between the viewer and the viewed. Pornography was defined by feminist film scholars as that which included representations of women that are fetishized under a male gaze and which depict violence against women, thus reinforcing the patriarchal societal norm and the oppression of women.

This notion of 'the (male) gaze' and the definition of pornography is of particular relevance to Ovid's *Metamorphoses* because of his depictions of rape; a male character *sees*, then attacks. An episode that has gathered concentrated attention from feminists is Ovid's description of the rape of the Sabine women at *Ars Amatoria* 1.99-134. Amy Richlin finds this evidence enough to label Ovid himself a misogynist, but Julie Hemker, in 'Rape and the Founding of Rome' (1985), argues that Ovid is in fact 'anti-rape'; for example, when Ovid

---

[21] Mulvey 1975
[22] Kaplan 1983

jokes that he would gladly join Romulus's army if his reward for being a soldier was gaining a woman, Hemker thinks that - as it is Ovid after all - he is making far too ridiculous a statement to be taken seriously, while Curran thinks that Ovid's descriptions of the fear of the victims displays empathy.[23]

Pornography and Representation

We may compare two feminist works on the nature of 'the gaze' in Ovid to illustrate how the poet has held a problematic fascination for feminist classicists and how his poetry lends itself to a variety of receptions and interpretations. The first of these is Amy Richlin's now seminal work of feminist classical scholarship from 1992, *Pornography and Representation in Greece and Rome*, and the second, Patricia B. Salzman-Mitchell's *A Web of Fantasies: gaze, image and gender in Ovid's* Metamorphoses.[24] Both authors are indebted to feminist film theory for the debate surrounding the nature of 'the gaze', and both examine how the nature of the viewer/ the viewed is constructed in Ovid to reflect his constructions of the male/ female (following Mulvey).

Richlin positions her work within cultural studies, as written for both classicists and feminists, and unlike earlier scholarship she tackles a mixture of Greek and Roman sources that are specifically concerned with sex and sexuality. It is a radical feminist text in opposition to earlier feminist scholarship, which was heavily (and, Richlin thinks, to its

---

[23] Curran 1984. Further important work on the symbolic aspects of rape and the female body in Latin literature can be found in Sandra Joshel's 'The Body Female and the Body Politic: Livy's Lucretia and Verginia' (Joshel 1992) and Patricia Joplin's 'Ritual work on human flesh: Livy's Lucretia and the rape of the body politic' (Joplin 1990).
[24] Salzman-Mitchell 2005

detriment) influenced by Foucauldian theory. In contrast, Richlin wanted to focus on the 'sameness rather than difference'[25] between classical and contemporary cultures. Taking the radical feminist standpoint on 'pornography' outlined above, Richlin argues that Ovid's poetry, and particularly the *Metamorphoses*, are pornographic.

Salzman-Mitchell's *A Web of Fantasies* develops Richlin's discussion of representation and the (pornographic) gaze by examining whether gaze can be gendered. She situates her book as a work of feminist studies, rather than Classics, and this is reinforced by her political use of the pronoun 'she' throughout the work to refer to any imagined reader. On issues surrounding the construction and fluidity of gender, she has been influenced by more recent queer theory written by scholars such as Judith Butler (to whom I return in more detail in Chapter Two in my discussion of gender fluidity in *Girl meets boy*).

Salzman-Mitchell moves on from Richlin's belief that it is always women who are 'the viewed' and thus in a position of powerlessness, to examine instead the *exchange* of gazes within the *Metamorphoses* (although Richlin's theory did, however, fit in with Rome's patriarchal ideology, as questionable as it was). She notes that, 'in accordance with its protean nature, the poem cannot be framed in only one way of understanding the gaze'[26] (as Richlin had done), and she attempts to re-appropriate the gaze for women in a more positive way. Although she is concerned predominantly with constructions of the feminine as an isolated issue, her work is of relevance to Ovid's tale of Iphis and Ianthe, for theirs is an

---

[25] Richlin 1992: xiv
[26] Salzman-Mitchell 2005: 12

equal gaze; Ovid notes that *hinc amor* *ambarum* *tetigit rude pectus et* *aequum/ vulnus utrique dedit*, with the *ambarum… aequum* highlighting how 'love touched them both equally', 720-21.

A criticism that can be levelled at both Richlin and Salzman-Mitchell is their transference and use of theory based on visual culture to text, as opposed to applying feminist literary criticism alone. However, as the feminist agenda is to challenge existing (male) notions of how to 'do' literary criticism, and as Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is an evocatively visual poem, the use of feminist film theory here on the nature of 'viewing' has raised questions and produced new readings that traditional scholarship could not.

Although *Pornography and Representation* was of great importance in the history of the development of feminist classical scholarship, Richlin's application of contemporary notions of sexuality and gender trans-historically was not methodologically sound, nor was her attempt to apply the feminist debate on the nature of pornography retrospectively on to Greek and Roman sources. Richlin should not say with such confidence that any difference between now and antiquity 'made very little difference in the bottom line for women',[27] for we cannot ignore such great temporal differences in context; thus one must question the legitimacy of her conclusions in this book. (In contrast, Ali Smith is very much aware of the differences between Ovid's world and twenty-first century Britain and has her character Robin address this dilemma of reception and context when she re-tells Iphis' story in the novel at pages 88-100).

---

[27] Richlin 1992: xxi

Richlin's assertions about the nature of pornography are essentialist and reductive as they perpetuate the patriarchal concept that there is one ideal, non-violent female sexuality. She also does not distinguish in texts between the literal and the figurative, arguing, for example, of the trope of 'lover-as-soldier' throughout Ovid's work, that 'metaphors often convey a literal perception, and a poet who sees love as comparable to battle might well see violence as part of love.'[28] Richlin's agenda thus creates great bias in her use of sources and blinds her to alternative readings (for example, the theory discussed below that Ovid's *puella* may be a poetic construct or device), forcing the source material to conform to her theory.

However, her treatment of the rape of the boy Hermaphroditus by the nymph Salmacis at *Metamorphoses* 4.285-388 deserves comment as the episode's conclusion has implications for Ovid's treatment of the myth of Iphis.[29] Richlin argues that the reversal of traditional roles in the Hermaphroditus story is shown by Ovid to be abhorrent as it 'results in a permanent and threatening confusion of gender',[30] not only for Hermaphroditus and Salmacis, but for all future male bathers in their pool, who Hermaphroditus prays will be turned into *semiviri* (eunuchs, 386). Richlin comments:

> We see male rapists who dress as women, even a male raped because he is
>
> dressed as a woman, and these events turn out well; when a female acts male,

---

[28] Richlin 1992: 168
[29] Richlin 1992: 165-6
[30] Richlin 1992: 165

the result is the unmanning of all men, and the narrative makes it clear that this is a bad thing (e.g., 4.285-86).[31]

When we then come to the story of Iphis five Books later, we are mindful of this 'permanent and threatening confusion of gender', and so perhaps understand why Iphis' biological sex must change in order for there to be a happy ending to her tale.

Pornography and Representation brought a radical feminist perspective to Classics and certainly demonstrates what a feminist agenda in Classics might achieve, although this is at the expense of a balanced argument. Even if one cannot agree with Richlin, her use of feminist theory in Classics does provoke new and interesting questions for our readings of Ovid. Furthermore, the imaginative writing of Terri Marsh's epilogue to Richlin's volume is a radical departure from traditional positivist (male) classical scholarship and is a creative way of bringing Hélène Cixous's *écriture féminine* to Classics;[32] a move that is later paid homage to in Vajko and Leonard's 2006 volume *Laughing With Medusa: Classical Myth and Feminist Thought*, whose final chapter is a short work of feminist fiction by Elizabeth Cook.[33] Feminist fiction itself can be an act of classical reception, and there is a growing trend of women writers engaging with the classics (see, for example, Fiona Cox's comprehensive introduction to Virgilian presences in contemporary women's writing, *Sibylline Sisters*) and of which Smith's *Girl meets boy* is a part.

---

[31] Richlin 1992: 166
[32] Cixous 1986
[33] Cook 2006

Feminist critics more sympathetic to Ovid's representations of women under the male gaze include Molly Myerowitz, who argues that pornography can objectify men, too,[34] Florence Verducci,[35] Genevieve Liveley[36] and Mary Gamel.[37] Leslie Cahoon attempts to pardon Ovid's sexism by drawing an important distinction between poet, persona, and style,[38] while Froma Zeitlin concludes that it is in error that feminists label Ovid a misogynist.[39] Phylis Culham (1990) argues that during the feminist mission to recover the lives of ancient women, when these women were not found, feminists focused too heavily instead on the negative images seen in male-authored texts, while Mary Desmond (1993) defends Ovid with her gendered reading of his Dido in the *Heroides*.

Ovid's *puella* as political and literary metaphor

Ellen Greene analyses *Amores* 1.7 to conclude that Ovid's apparently playful attitude concerning violence toward women can be read instead as a clever analysis of power relations within Rome at that time.[40] Barchiesi contends that Ovid is positively interested in women, pointing out that if we read Ovid's entire literary career as a reception of Virgil's *Aeneid*, he tends to circumvent Aeneas to focus instead on the women of the story. The many tales of erotic violence may simply hint at alternative and subversive ways of reading

---

[34] Myerowitz 1985
[35] Verducci 1985
[36] Liveley 2005
[37] Gamel 1989
[38] Cahoon 1985
[39] Zeitlin 1990 (Although Euripides has been accused of misogyny from the start!). As readers we cannot assume a link between negative or misogynistic representations of women and the voice of the author. We may quote Ovid himself here, who complains in *Tristia* 2.1 that the poetry has been mistaken for the man: *deme mihi studium, vitae quoque crimina demes;/ acceptum refero versibus esse nocens*, 'Take away my poetry, and you will take away the crime; I lay the blame on those verses.' (9-10).
[40] Greene 1999

the *Aeneid*,[41] and may be a questioning on Ovid's part of the problematic Roman constructions of femininity and masculinity.

Later feminist scholarship ceased to debate whether Ovid is 'for' or 'against' women and tends to agree with Barchiesi that Ovid's representation of women predominantly reflects his poetic concerns with genre (as well as with ancient constructions of gender), and have highlighted the dangers involved in trying to find 'real' women in Ovid's poetry. For example, we may compare *Amores* 1.1 with Propertius 1.1; while Propertius' first word is the name of his mistress, Cynthia (for she is the focus of his affections and will be the focus of his poetry), Ovid's own declaration of intent becomes a lengthy debate over genre, the final word of which is *pedes*, referring to the 'feet' or metre of his poetry (we also meet the personified mistress Elegy in 3.1, limping on to the scene with her uneven 'feet'). For Ovid, his primary concern is with genre rather than a specific mistress, and indeed when he does find a woman to write his poems about, she is given a name that derives from the Greek word for girl, *kore*, Corinna: she could be any generic girl at all.[42]

Through the character of Robin, Smith cleverly touches on this issue when Robin explains that through her metamorphosis into a boy, Iphis becomes:

---

[41] See Barchiesi 1997, Hinds 1992a & 1992b

[42] For further discussion on Ovid's use of women as a comment on genre rather than gender, see, for example, Maria Wyke's 'Mistress and Metaphor in Augustan elegy' (Wyke 1989) and Barbara Gold's '"But Ariadne was Never There in the First Place": finding the female in Roman poetry' (Gold 1993). However, Corinna is also the name of one of the few known Greek women poets, and one who explicitly addressed the question of whether women could compete with men in poetry. Thus, choosing this name may form part of Ovid's fascination with the dissolution of generic boundaries and the dissolution of identities, between his persona as poet, the persona of the *puella* (a strong female poetic voice), and the poetic text itself.

Exactly the boy that she and her girl needed to be... And [exactly the boy] the particular historic era with its own views on what was excitingly perverse in a love story needed. And [exactly the boy] the writer of Metamorphoses needed, who really, really needed a happy love story to carry him through the several much more scurrilous stories [of Book X]. (99-100)

As always, Smith shows us that nothing in life is simply black and white: Ovid's poetry is a matter of gender *and* story-telling.

'The Body'

As well as spurring debate on gender, feminists have inspired interest in the categories of sex and the ancient body, using Hélène Cixous's notion of 'writing the body' and theories of embodiment advocated by Judith Butler and Monique Wittig. Such influences can be seen particularly in Maria Wyke's *Parchments of Gender: Deciphering the Body in Antiquity* (1998), Porter's Foucauldian volume *Constructions of the Classical Body* (1999) and Rebecca Resinski's 'Constituting an Adorned Female Body' (1997). Earlier scholarship on the ancient body did exist, but it tended to examine only medical texts[43] and the 'facts' of the body, rather than using 'the body' as a theoretical space. In *Making Sex: body and gender from the Greeks to Freud*,[44] Thomas Lacquer writes from a Foucauldian (male) feminist standpoint and concludes that gender and sex are both culturally constructed phenomena. His work actually predates Judith Butler's *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* by three years, which also argues for the socially constructed

---

[43] Hanson 1990
[44] Lacquer 1990

nature of biological sex. Unfortunately, however, like other male feminists such as Halperin, the Marxist historian Peter Rose, and more recently Kirk Ormand, Lacquer's work has been overlooked and criticised by radical feminists as speaking 'for' women and simply perpetuating the phallogocentric norm, excluding female voices from the debate.

In relation to Ovid, Lynn Enterline explores the relationship between the body and voice as signifiers of differing male and female experiences in *The Rhetoric of the Body from Ovid to Shakespeare* (Enterline 2000). Enterline positions herself within the 'already well-developed feminist critical tradition in which the question of how to read rape has become central to the question of how to read the *Metamorphoses*'[45] and engages with the associated debate on Ovid's juxtaposition of literary style with sexual violence.[46] Enterline admits that in order to fully understand the female in Ovid we must also examine the male, and draws on the notion of 'embodiment' and the lived experience of being 'woman' as discussed by feminists such as Hélène Cixous and Judith Butler, as well as post-structuralist theory and feminist film theory.

Returning to Richlin's debate on the place of rape in the *Metamorphoses*, Enterline reflects scholarship by Judith Butler on the idea of 'interpellation'[47] when she suggests that 'rape' may in fact be the action that interpellates the female subject; that is, in Ovid, we know how to spot a woman in the poem because she is/ will be raped. This corresponds to Richlin's reading of Ovid's representation of women that 'incitement to lust [is] inherent in

---

[45] Enterline 2000: 10

[46] For discussions on the juxtaposition of (stylised) pastoral landscapes with sexual violence in Ovid, see, for example, Segal 1969 & Gentilcore 1995

[47] Butler 1993

the women'.[48] Although feminists such as Luce Irigaray criticise psychoanalysis for being a phallocentric discourse,[49] Enterline argues that psychoanalytic thought *can* be of use for feminist criticism when reading the *Metamorphoses*, particularly its idea that identity is never as certain as it imagines itself to be.[50]

In the introduction to *Changing Bodies, Changing Meanings*,[51] Dominic Montserrat notes that earlier investigations of the ancient body were often subsumed within women's studies and theorisation about sexuality and gender, and so positions his collection as an investigation into 'the body' as an historiographical category in its own right. The influence of both Foucault and Butler respectively can be seen in the stated aims of Montserrat's book to explore how bodies convey ideologies, gender and power negotiations, and to explore 'the plurality of the ancient body'. Contributors to the volume bring a range of interdisciplinary theories and methodologies to their work, from post-structuralist philosophy and a Foucauldian archaeology of the body to a Lacanian psychoanalytical approach, to investigate how the 'changed or aberrant body [is] a means of speaking'.

Penelope Murray's chapter in Montserrat's volume, 'Bodies in Flux: Ovid's *Metamorphoses*', investigates the status of humanity within the changing body in the *Metamorphoses* and contains elements of Luce Irigaray's difference feminism in her exploration of Io's embodied experience and the revelation of seeing herself as 'Other' when

---

[48] Richlin 1992: 172

[49] Irigaray 1985

[50] Further use of a post-Freudian psychoanalytic approach to Ovid's depictions of women by a feminist can be seen in Page duBois' *Sowing the Body: psychoanalysis and ancient representations of women* (duBois 1998). In Chapter Two I discuss how the notion of the fluidity of identity in psychoanalytic theory (and in feminist and queer theory) is picked up by Smith in the recurring water imagery throughout *Girl meets boy*.

[51] Montserrat 1998

gazing upon her reflection as a heifer. Murray does not, however, directly address the issue of masculinity/ femininity within the changing body, and I discuss this in Ovid's tale of Iphis with reference to theories of the social construction of gender and identity in Chapter Two; Iphis' biological sex changes, but she, and her love object, remain the same.

<u>'The Voice'</u>

A third keen area of feminist debate has been the quest to find the female 'voice' in ancient literature, to determine whether feminists can recover genuine female voices from the past and what feminists are to make of ventriloquized voices, when male authors 'speak' for/ as women (for example, as in Ovid's *Heroides*). Feminist classicists have attempted both to find the voices of the women that have been silenced in traditional (male) histories, and to re-imagine those voices, as Smith does with Iphis.

Early discussions on the female voice used a sociolinguistic approach to attempt to reconstruct female voices (see, for example, Gilleland 1980 & Adams 1984); the weakness in this thought however was that 'women's speech' is a prediscursive category (a deterministic and reductionist theoretical approach), and tended to be limited to lamentations. Later works attempted instead to be discursive in their approach, see for example Lardinois & McClure (2001) and Enterline (2000). Feminist discussions on 'transvestite ventriloquism' in Ovid include Sara Lindheim's *Mail and Female*[52] and Efi Spentzou's *Readers and Writers in Ovid's* Heroides*: transgressions of genre and gender* (2003), although I disagree with their subordination of Ovid's authorial voice to those of his fictitious heroines, treating the female

---

[52] Lindheim 2003

voices in the poems as the voices of 'real' women.[53] Alison Sharrock (1991) sees this device

of speaking 'for' women as narcissistic on the male author's part, as do Kennedy (1993) and

Myers (1996), although Habinek (1998) argues that Ovid is highlighting the place and plight

of women in Roman society.

Two episodes from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* have gathered particular attention from

feminist classical scholars debating 'the voice' of women in history: indeed the tales of

Philomela and Echo, each robbed of their voices, have become emblematic for feminists.

Since its use by Virginia Woolf in *Between the Acts* as a feminist metaphor for men's

silencing of women, Ovid's version of the story of Philomela (whose tongue is cut out by her

rapist, Tereus) has been embraced by classical and feminist scholars alike. Important uses of

this metaphor include Patricia Joplin's 'The voice of the shuttle is ours',[54] which uses a

structuralist approach to demonstrate that even myths of violence against women can be re-

appropriated to empower feminist classicists, Elissa Marder's 'Disarticulated Voices:

Feminism and Philomela' in the feminist journal *Hypatia*[55] and Jane Marcus (1984). The story

of Echo at *Metamorphoses* 3.355-401, condemned to repeat the words of others but never

to make speech of her own, is also examined in detail by feminists such as Spivak (1993),

Berger (1996) and Sharrock (2002).

---

[53] Further discussions include Elizabeth Harvey's 'Ventriloquizing Sappho: Ovid, Donne, and the erotics of the feminine voice' (Harvey 1989) and Gutzwiller and Michelini's 'Women and other strangers: feminist perspectives in classical literature' (Gutzwiller & Michelini 1991).
[54] Joplin 1984
[55] Marder 1992

Richlin acknowledges that the *Metamorphoses* was completed by Ovid in exile, which would give strong support to an argument that all those silenced voices in the poem are in fact Ovid himself, but from her feminist standpoint she focuses instead on the implications of the possibility that all these voices are female. Segal counters her argument that the Philomela episode is emblematic of men's silencing of women, to argue instead that the episode is emblematic of the horrors of male violence and tyranny Ovid witnessed under Augustus.[56] Ovid's obsession with the dissolution of identities and voices can be read as proto-feminist in its examination of the fluidity of the body and gender, and as reflecting Augustan concerns about the uncertain ability to control one's own voice under a dictatorship.[57]

The legacy of feminist Classics

The lasting influence of feminist thought in Classics has been the post-structuralist examination of sex, sexuality and gender, which I use in my examination of *Girl meets boy*. Scholarship in the last decade has also started to reflect postfeminist concerns with race and intersectionality,[58] queer theory,[59] and the fluidity of gender, rather than investigating sex and gender as binary opposites (for example Victoria Rimmel's *Ovid's lovers: desire, difference and the poetic imagination*, which aims to explore 'how gendered subjects converse, complete and co-create'[60]). Specifically feminist volumes are still few and far

---

[56] Segal 1994
[57] Further important examinations of the association of women with silence in Ovid include Judith de Luce's 'O for a thousand tongues to sing: a footnote on metamorphosis, silence and power' (De Luce 1993), James's 'Slave rape and female silence in Ovid's love poetry' (James 1997), and Hardy's 'Ecphrasis and the male narrator in Ovid's Arachne' (Hardy 1995).
[58] Konstan 2000
[59] Ormand 1996
[60] Rimmel 2006: 41

between, but feminist Classics has now at least established itself as a mode of reception in its own right, as early scholarship often fell in between mainstream literature within 'Classics' or 'feminism'. Important collections include *Classics and Feminism: Gendering the Classics*, edited by Barbara McManus, and Ronnie Ancona and Ellen Greene's *Gendered Dynamics in Latin Love Poetry*; these volumes aim to look beyond the rapes in Ovid that have been so problematic for feminists and address instead how he plays with gender roles, particularly in his adoption of the feminised guise of the male poet subservient to his mistress.

Feminist literary critical ideas of resisting, releasing and rewriting classical texts have rescued ancient texts for feminist classicists, and inspired new ways of reading texts for all classical scholars. Feminist classical reception has also started to include fiction as well as theoretical writing. In Chapter Two I apply more recent gender theory and queer theory to Ovid and to Ali Smith's *Girl meets boy*, demonstrating how the combination of fiction and theory can create (or perhaps uncover) a subversive reading of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

CHAPTER TWO – *GIRL MEETS BOY:* SMITH'S ALTERNATIVE VISION OF OVID

In Chapter One I traced the burgeoning use of feminist critical theories in Classical methodologies, tracking the development from examinations of women in the 1970s, through analyses of gender in the 1980s to the influence of contemporary post-feminist and queer theories from the 1990s onwards. The aim of this chapter is to examine the representation of gender in *Girl meets boy* with particular reference to the direct influence of queer critic Judith Butler's theoretical work *Gender Trouble*, a quote from which appears as an epigraph to Smith's novel. I also discuss affinities of style with the lesbian experimental writing of Monique Wittig.

Smith's version of the tale of Iphis is located in a socio-historical context two thousand years apart from Ovid's, when there was no term to define what we now call lesbianism; indeed it would be anachronistic to label Iphis a lesbian. Yet Smith uses her reception of Ovid to queer the text and to give voice to a female desiring subjectivity that is an impossibility in Ovid's version and which is almost wholly missing in the texts of antiquity.

In Ovid's original, ambiguities of gender are hinted at; that is, that if it were not for the wedding, Iphis would be able to continue living her life as a 'male' despite her biological sex, perhaps hinting at the idea that gender performance may be primary to sex in identity. Examined from a postmodern perspective, these ambiguities disrupt the normative

categories of sex, gender and sexuality and allow for pluralities of identity and sexual subjectivity.

Although a radical feminist perspective would claim that Ovid has rendered the female homoerotic experience invisible to us, a Foucauldian analysis of gender allows Ovid to invite us to speculate on the love that could be between the two girls,[61] but, in his tale and Roman context Iphis' biological sex must change for there to be a happy ending. The Roman phallocentric gender model does not allow for any other notions of sexuality based on sexual object-choice, and Iphis' bodily transformation into a boy ultimately shuts off the possibility of an alternative sexuality.[62]

Robin (Iphis) addresses this difference in context as she narrates the tale from the *Metamorphoses* to her lover Anthea (Ianthe). Her comments function at a meta-fictional level as well as applying to her version of the tale, particularly when she notes that she is 'imposing far too modern a reading on it' (91) and that a lesbian sub-text is 'debatable. But it's not in the original story' (95). Robin says of Ovid's tale that his version was simply 'the way of the world' (91) two thousand years ago, and that 'he can't help being the Roman he is, he can't help fixating on what it is that girls don't have under their togas, and it's him who can't imagine what girls would ever do without one.' (97)

---

[61] Kirk Ormand notes that this love would be one of equality and mutuality – they are the same age, they have received the same education, and they are equally in love. This certainly would be a rarity by the Roman model of marriage! In fact, theirs would have the equality and mutuality of power associated with modern lesbian relationships (Ormand 1996).

[62] The description of Iphis' transformation into a man is an excellent demonstration of how the Romans constructed the masculine gender; longer strides, deeper voice, beard, greater strength (786-790).

As Chris Beasley notes, 'gender in Western society refers to a binary division… to the point of this division even being construed as oppositional',[63] and often, I would add, mutually exclusive. Feminists remain divided over the issues of sex and gender, as whilst Susan Bordo (1990) believes that politically there is a need for such a unifying identity category as 'woman' (despite the fact that constructions of gender vary considerably across cultures and time), feminist Linda Nicholson (1994) thinks that such categories exclude those who do not fit so definitively into them. Elizabeth Spelman (1988)[64] and poststructuralist queer theorists such as Judith Butler (1999) and Ann Ferguson (1990) believe strongly in the fluidity and instability of gender categories and suggest that we should discard gender categories altogether.

Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble*

In *Gender Trouble*, Butler argues against any set notions of a binary division of 'man' and 'woman' based on essential qualities and draws on the theories of Michel Foucault to argue that humans are simply social products organised by societal discourses and power relations.[65] Discourses are expressions of power as they have the power to define individuals in particular ways and the power to oppress people because they do or do not fit into particular categories, but these discourses vary according to time and place. Thus, as a continuous discursive practice and an effect of social discourse, gender is an unstable

---

[63] Beasley 2005: 11

[64] Spelman (1988) and Chandra Mohanty (1991) examine the futility in attempting to separate 'gender' from any other aspect of a person's identity, e.g., race and class.

[65] Amy Wharton (2005) also posits that 'gender' exists externally to the individual; society creates gender roles which are then wrongly ascribed to individuals.

category; that one becomes a gender through these discursive practices Butler terms 'performativity'.

Girl meets boy, as well as being a lesbian retelling of a classical myth, can be read as a fictional account of Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble*; key points of her gender theory are acted out for us by the characters, demonstrating the true instability of gender categories - particularly over time - and the fallacy of the existing rigid, binary model of gender that assigns aspects of a person's behaviour or attributes to one of two definitive genders. Smith's Iphis and Ianthe 'trouble' received notions of gender and sexuality and demonstrate the fluidity of gender categories espoused by queer theorists. Butler herself wonders how best we can begin to transform and 'trouble' set notions of gender and sexuality[66] and I want to suggest that Smith in effect answers Butler's call to arms. As Butler states in the preface to the second edition of *Gender Trouble*:

> I sought to counter those views that made presumptions about the limits and propriety of gender and restricted the meaning of gender to received notions of masculinity and femininity… I opposed those regimes of truth that stipulated that certain kinds of gendered expressions were found to be false or derivative, and others, true and original… the aim of the text was to open up the field of possibility for gender… Is the breakdown of gender binaries… so monstrous, so frightening, that it must be held as definitionally impossible...?
> (Butler 1999: viii-ix)

---

[66] Butler 1999: xxx

This troubling of gender and of the notion that gender follows biological sex can be seen most strongly in the character of Robin in *Girl meets boy*, and is highlighted particularly at two points.

'Troubling' gender

The first is a scene between Robin and Imogen, Anthea's sister, which plays out Foucault and Butler's theory that language and definitive naming categories of gender and sexuality are societal devices of control and power to enforce compulsory heterosexuality.[67] Imogen has been mentally wrestling with her sister's apparent transformation from 'straight' to 'lesbian', and has been struggling to 'name' her sister, to find a category into which she can be placed.[68] Concerned with Robin's androgynous name (Smith 2007: 55) Imogen asks Robin to tell her what the 'correct' word for her is ('I need to know it. I need to know the proper word.' 77), to which Robin replies, 'The proper word for me… is me.'[69] Through Imogen, Smith is exploring the desire to classify; Imogen is not trying to impose heterosexuality here, but *is* looking for a definition, and in doing so exposes to the reader the inadequacies of language to do this.[70] Through Robin, Smith is also playing with the notions of subjectivity and subject knowledge, a topic I return to in my discussion of Wittig in Chapter Three. In contrast, Ovid's Iphis *cannot* find a name for herself, and feels that she is

---

[67] Butler 1999: 24

[68] Butler challenges society's need for definitive categories: 'What does "transparency" keep obscure' (Butler 1999: xx), in a society 'where the price of not conforming is the loss of intelligibility itself' (xix)?

[69] Robin resists definition, nor does she care for definitions, she 'is the kind of person who does not really care what she is wearing or what she looks like' (75).

[70] Previously, Imogen can only bring herself to say 'it', to call her sister 'it' (61-2). Cf. 'Is that the right way to say it, a gay? Is there a correct word for it?' (50), and, 'Aw. She doesn't like not knowing the politically correct terms for things.' (67) 'There are so many words I don't know for what my little sister is.' (70) (We also recall Magritte's *Ceci n'est pas une pipe*, a work that visually demonstrates the absurdity and inadequacy of language to describe anything at all).

prodigiosa novaeque ('monstrous and new', *Met.* 9.727), nor can she find an example of

herself in myth[71] (although we must remember that Iphis' subjectivity is being constructed

for her by a male author).

The second important scene that 'troubles' received notions of gender is Anthea's

description of Robin, which celebrates the undefined 'grey areas' of sexuality and gender

and challenges the notion of 'gendered attributes'. Personal attributes and behaviours are

normally labelled 'male' or 'female' according to the current binary gender model, but Smith

subverts the usual labels to show that such attributes are not really gendered at all. By doing

so, Smith challenges the existing gender model, not the behaviour:

> The grey area, I'd discovered, had been misnamed: really the grey area was a
>
> whole other spectrum of colours new to the eye. She had the swagger of a girl.
>
> She blushed like a boy. She had a girl's toughness. She had a boy's gentleness.
>
> She was as meaty as a girl. She was as graceful as a boy. She was as brave and
>
> handsome and rough as a girl. She was as pretty and delicate and dainty as a
>
> boy. (83-4)[72]

Smith is following the ambiguity and androgyny in Ovid here, where Iphis is described as

'beautiful whether judged as a girl or a boy' (*facies, quam sive puellae/ sive dares puero,*

---

[71] Sappho is conspicuous by her absence in this list, although as Kirk Ormand astutely points out, Ovid knows that Iphis' real problem under the Roman system is not her love for another woman, but *marriage* (Ormand 1996).

[72] Likewise, a description of an old photograph of Anthea and Imogen's grandparents shows their grandfather 'smooth, sweet-faced, almost girlish', whilst their grandmother looks 'strong, clear-boned, like a smiling young man' (21).

fieret formosus uterque, 712-3). Iphis' very survival depends on this fluidity of gender, and her androgyny creates the dynamic of Ovid's story, as does our introduction to Robin that 'She was the most beautiful boy I had ever seen in my life' (45). Ovid himself also troubles the notion that gender follows biological sex; Iphis' sex may be female, but her gender is male – she has been given a unisex name, has been raised and dressed as a boy (709-712), and loves a girl. This is part of a larger comment throughout Ovid's work on Roman ideas of masculinity; Ovid sympathises with Iphis' plight of not 'fitting' her sex, for as a self-styled lover rather than a soldier he presented himself in his poems as not conforming to the Roman male ideal. As Robin says (of society's rigid categories of sex and gender) 'It's easy to think it's a mistake, or you're a mistake… when everything and everyone you know tells you you're the wrong shape…' (97), directly recalling Ovid's *prodigiosa.*

Butler states that society controls gender categories through 'the regulation of [personal] attributes along culturally established lines of coherence' (Butler, 1999: 33), and thinks that the fact that one can describe a man as having feminine attributes or a woman as having masculine attributes without disturbing the integrity of their gender demonstrates that gender identity does not follow automatically from biological sex, which itself is also discursively constructed.[73] Whilst I agree with Butler that the notion of fixed gendered attributes is a fallacy, we unfortunately live in a society using gendered binary language, so subverting this language as Smith has done is certainly a good start at breaking down these

---

[73] Butler continues: 'It is of course always possible to argue that dissonant adjectives work retroactively to redefine the substantive identities they are said to modify and, hence, to expand the substantive categories of gender to include possibilities that they previously excluded. But if these substances are nothing other than the coherences contingently created through the regulation of attributes, it would seem that the ontology of substances itself is not only an artificial effect, but essentially superfluous.' (Butler 1999: 33-4)

gendered adjectives and assumptions. We can compare this with Monique Wittig's feminisation of nouns and adjectives that would normally be masculine in French throughout *Le Corps Lesbien*, from the very first 'body' of the title: the male noun *le corps* is subverted with the incongruous qualifier *lesbien*, here in a masculine form. The title is incongruous as a lesbian body can only be a woman's body, yet Wittig claimed that lesbians are not women as female bodies are defined as the Other in the phallocentric, heterosexual paradigm of sex and gender, a paradigm that lesbians are outside of.[74]

Further subverted images and similes can be found throughout Smith's novel, for example, the graffitied sign at Pure is described as having been 'very prettily defaced' (30), and Daniel Craig in *Casino Royale* is described as 'rising out of the water like that goddess on a shell' (83). We must start to mix up gendered descriptions to highlight their irrationality and to include those individuals who do not fit into the simple either/or categories of 'male' and 'female', thus can we bring about a change in society as Wittig had hoped to do, using her writing as a means to a political end.

Ultimately, Butler thinks that gender is a performance, 'tenuously constituted in time[75]… a constituted *social temporality*… structured by repeated acts that seek to approximate the ideal of a substantial ground of identity, but which, by their occasional *dis*continuity, reveal the temporal and contingent groundlessness of this "ground"' (Butler

---

[74] 'Suddenly giving me a big laugh… two words came in [to my head]: *Lesbian Body*. Can you realize how hilarious it was for me? … 'lesbian' by its proximity to 'body' seemed to me to destabilize the general notion of the body.' Wittig 2005: 46

[75] 'Gender ought not to be construed as a stable identity… rather gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time' is quoted in the epilogue to *Girl meets boy*.

1999: 191-92). Those persons who, like Robin, play with these discontinuities are the ones who can truly begin to transform society's fixed notions of gender. Butler does not believe that gender performance is *consciously* done, but uses drag performance as an example to illustrate how everyone puts on the clothes and behaviour that society deems suitable for their sex. In Smith we see more such examples; Anthea is 'tired of having to be anything at all', worried that she is solely a social construct made up of her online identity on Facebook and MySpace pages (23), and she consciously puts on 'the right kind of clothes' (25) to go to work; and we see multiple examples of characters wearing the 'wrong' clothes, including Robin wearing a boy's kilt (43) and Bonnie Prince Charlie disguised in women's clothing.[76]

Gender fluidity in *Girl meets boy*

Putting on the 'wrong' clothes is one way of being fluid in one's gender, and the sympathetic characters in the story all display a certain fluidity in their gender; for example, the opening words of the novel are the kindly grandfather's words 'Let me tell you about when I was a girl' (3), and Imogen tells Paul (the only nice character working at their employer Pure) that one of the reasons she loves him is because he seems quite female to her (130). Positive examples of fluid gender categories are seen throughout *Girl meets boy* and are contrasted to the negative portrayals of those who are rigid in their performance of 'male' or 'female'. We see the Suffragette "Burning" Lily dressed as a message boy to evade the police (15); Anthea's description of Robin when she sees her for the first time ('She was the most beautiful boy I had ever seen in my life.' 45) and of herself after meeting Robin as

---

[76] See Chapter Five, Footnote 117; Smith has also read Ovid through the works of John Lyly and William Shakespeare, and so these references to the 'proper' clothes for your sex also recall sixteenth-century Statutes of Apparel and the cross-dressing practices of the Elizabethan theatre.

having 'taken a whole new shape' (81), again recalling Ovid; and Robin and Anthea variously

tag their graffiti as 'the message girls' and 'the message boys' (133-143).

<u>Water imagery</u>

We see a metaphor for gender fluidity in the water imagery throughout *Girl meets boy*. Anthea watches the river flow and change before her ('It laughed and it changed… As it changed, it stayed the same.' 28); this reminds us both of Ovid's theme of metamorphosis, and the fact that Iphis' body changes while she, and her love object, remain the same (her gender performance is primary to her sex in her identity). We see images of transgressed boundaries that are symbolic of transgressed gender behaviours, for example, Anthea decides to go and sit by the riverbank, but people walking on the bridge above look at her as if she is mad ('Clearly nobody ever went down to the riverbank. Clearly nobody was supposed to.' 26); no one dares trouble gender, except Anthea, who is beginning to explore the 'grey areas'. Smith is using the water imagery here and the riverbank to a similar effect as Shakespeare used woodland in plays such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Cymbeline* as a symbol for a place where the 'normal' rules of love do not apply (I discuss further how Smith views Ovid through a Shakespearean lens in Chapter Five).

Water imagery is a trope in feminist theory and literature as a metaphor for gender fluidity (for example Michèle Roberts' people who are as fluid as water, flowing past each other in peace and letting each other alone.'[77]) and to describe the rolling 'waves' of feminism, which Genevieve Liveley notes is a metaphor that conveys how each successive

---

[77] Roberts 1987: 82

'wave' of feminism is different, yet also inherently the same.[78] Robin says of Ovid that he is 'very fluid' (97), and Ovid's Iphis describes herself as 'thirsting in the midst of water' (*mediis sitiemus in undis*, 761); she is lost in the midst of both the waves of passion and of gender confusion. These images of fluidity are contrasted to the identically dressed and coiffured male employees of Pure whom Anthea cannot tell apart (19); the gender stereotypes that appear on a poster for a dating website, consisting of faceless cartoons ('A nurse (female) and a policeman (male). That was one couple. A sailor (male) and a pole-dancer (female). A teacher (female) and a doctor (male)... The difference between male and female was breasts and hair.' 31); Imogen's rigid 'female' role at the start of the novel in her quest to be thin and her submissiveness in the face of men, and the misogynistic CEO of Pure, Keith, who only promotes Imogen because her perceived 'feminine' qualities would be good for the business ('your natural instinctual caring talent... your ability to look good, look right', 120-21). Imogen is a caricature of female submissiveness and subjugation, and Keith of male misogyny; Smith has employed gender stereotyping here to make a point that those who try to be 'all male' or 'all female' risk lapsing into parody.

Parody

Parody can also be used as a mode of gender disruption, and Ovid employs parody, too; in Iphis' appeal to myth, he jokes that Pasiphae may have loved a bull but at least it was still a male able to give her satisfaction (*femina nempe marem*, 736).[79] We can compare this to Dom's comments: 'See, that's what I don't get... there's no way they could do it, I mean,

---

[78] Liveley 2006

[79] Parody is an essentially Ovidian tactic; Quintilian described him as *lascivior*. As Classicists we tend to read Ovid's subversion of Augustan themes and Propertian elegy as parody because of his relentless playfulness, but perhaps there is a more serious, 'troubling' agenda behind his poetry.

without one... I mean, when men do it... at least it's real sex they have, eh? But women... how can they?' (69-70). 'Freud defined it, Norman says,... as a state of lack. A state of lacking something really, you know, fundamental.' (69), and Anthea puns, 'A lass and a lack' (76). (Ovid also jokes that when Iphis is turned into a boy her 'strength grows', *vires augentur*, 788 – readers of Ovid's love poetry will recognise the euphemistic *vis/ vires*, itself a subversion of Augustan masculinity - a joke later picked up by Apuleius who has Lucius' only consolation upon being turned into an ass that *natura crescebat*, Ap., *Met*. 3.24[80]). Robin says that Ovid is fascinated by what Iphis doesn't have under her toga (97), and in her soliloquy Iphis laments that her hope of ever loving Ianthe is foolish (*stultos*, 746), for she will never be able to touch her bride (*nec mihi contingit*, 761), and at the marriage 'the one who leads is lacking' (*quibus qui ducat abest*, 763); her love is therefore even more insane than Pasiphae's monstrous liaison (*furiosior*, 737).

It is important to note here that Ovid often uses mythological exempla that comically serve to undermine his argument. For example, in *Amores* 1.9 Ovid argues that all soldiers, indeed the greatest soldiers, are also lovers, citing Achilles, Agamemnon and Mars as exampla. Yet these are terrible examples, as in each case the soldiers left the battlefield or neglected their duties as a result of a woman (Briseis, Cassandra and Venus, respectively). In his choice of Pasiphae, Ovid thus shows us that Iphis' love for another girl is, in fact, far from 'monstrous'.

Characteristically creating tension whilst being incredibly flippant, a few lines later

---

[80] See Halperin (1990) for an in-depth discussion of the Roman construction of sexuality as having two roles, the passive, and the penetrative.

Iphis is at her lowest, cursing the fact that not even Daedalus, with all his arts, could change her form from girl to boy (743-4). Sarah Annes Brown thinks we are meant to laugh at Iphis' lament to nature and particularly at her appeal to Daedalus,[81] and yet although such rigid gender categories are laughable to modern feminists and gender theorists (we are also meant to scoff at the misogynistic Dominic in *Girl meets boy*), we must always remember the potentially fatal consequences for those who do not conform to these categories.

Lesbian literature

Smith's standpoint as a lesbian author has shaped both the theory behind her rewriting of Ovid and her writing style, and I will examine the theory first. Lesbian literary criticism looks at how a woman's sexuality influences her writing style; Bonnie Zimmerman (1981) attempts to define the characteristics of lesbian criticism and writing, and we can detect the elements she identifies both in the work of Monique Wittig (whom I discuss in Chapter Three) and Ali Smith. She wonders if lesbian feminist criticism (and literature, I would add) is 'a kind of imagination that can see beyond the barriers of heterosexuality [and gender] role stereotypes' (Zimmerman 1981: 360), and this can clearly be seen in Smith. For example, the descriptions of the fluidity of gender quoted above; and, after Anthea and Robin have made love, Anthea says that they were 'both genders, a whole new gender, no gender at all' (Smith 2007: 104).

Often, lesbian literature is concerned with removing the stigma attached to lesbianism by associating it with positive and desirable attributes; here, the heroines of the

---

[81] Brown 2005: 32

tale are same-sex lovers, while those with homophobic attitudes are portrayed negatively (for example, the boorish Pure employees Dominic and Norman who call Robin a 'fucking dyke', 68), and the happy ending to the tale aims to dissolve some of the stigmas attached to gay culture voiced by the character Imogen, that gay people are melancholy (56) , 'are always dying all the time' (58), and that her sister will have 'a terrible sad life with no real love' (56). As well as re-writing Classical myths, Smith is also re-writing the socially constructed twentieth-century myths about gay people. As a weary-sounding Smith notes in an interview with Isobel Murray:

I know what happens to gay characters. I know what happens to them in soaps; I know what happened to them in A. L. Kennedy's *Everything You Need*, I know what happens to them in books; I know what happened to them in Alan Spence's marvellous *Way To Go*, which is that the gay character dies. The gay character dies, the gay character dies, the gay character dies. (Murray 2006: 226)

Some lesbian literature is overtly political, connecting lesbianism to resistance to patriarchy, and whilst *Girl meets boy* is predominantly a love story, Robin and Anthea are feminist political activists, painting feminist slogans that highlight the statistics of domestic violence, wage discrepancies and female infanticide. We also see recurring images of female resistance and strength throughout the novel, for example, Flora MacDonald, and the war memorial in London where the empty men's clothes hint at the form of the women beneath that once wore them, leaving their traditional domestic roles to help the war effort (114-15).

Smith rewrites Ovid here with a feminist agenda, for if we ignore the pun and take Ovid literally here, Iphis' father Ligdus had claimed that girls 'lack strength' (*uires fortuna negat*, 677), and when Iphis is turned into a boy she gains strength, suggesting that this is what distinguishes boys from girls – yet Smith's girls all exhibit strength, and even Imogen stands up to her boss in the end.

Zimmerman further argues that lesbian feminist criticism/ writing's exploration of the flexible boundaries of gender has often led to a fascination with costuming, that is, putting on the dress 'suitable' for a boy or a girl (conscious gender performance). *Girl meets boy* contains many of these references; the story itself is a retelling of a tale about a girl dressed as a boy to save her life; the novel opens with a story about girls dressing as boys to help a political fugitive escape; in Anthea's hometown of Inverness a statue to Flora MacDonald recalls her dressing Bonnie Prince Charlie in girls' clothes to aid his escape; the first time we meet Robin in the text she is wearing a boy's kilt, the quote from John Lyly in the epilogue is taken from his play *Gallathea*, a story about two girls disguised as boys to save them from a religious sacrifice, and the character 'Imogen' recalls the Imogen of Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*, yet another girl disguised as a boy for protection.

These repeated images of costuming are bound in with stories of escape and rescue that warrant our attention, and may be explained by Zimmerman's analysis that lesbian writing has repeated imagery of imprisonment, 'images of violently imposed barriers, the closet'. She asks, 'is there a dialectic between freedom and imprisonment unique to lesbian

writing?'[82] We see this interplay between freedom and imprisonment throughout *Girl meets boy*; Imogen feels trapped by the female role that society expects of her, but later feels elation when she quits her job and joins her sister's campaign of political activism; Anthea and Robin are literally imprisoned for their feminist graffiti slogans, and the characters debate the morality of bottling water (symbolic in *Girl meets boy* of bottling the imagination, or restricting one's definitions of love, sexuality and gender).

At the conclusion of Iphis' tale in Ovid, her dilemma is solved by a *deus ex machina* and her sex is reconciled to her gender by the goddess Isis, but Smith subverts both gender stereotypes and literary conventions in the resolution of her novel. In the final chapter the two lovers are married, the conventional conclusion to any comedy of errors. However, as the feminist literary critic Jean Kennard (1978) demonstrated, the marriage which typically ends such works 'indicates the adjustment of the [female] protagonist to society's values, a condition which is equated with her maturity' and as a consequence the heroine sacrifices precisely those 'virtues of independence and individuality… we have been invited to admire' (Kennard 1978: 14).

Kennard sees all literature as inevitably inscribed with the social institutions and power relations of its socio-historical context, and sees literary conventions such as a concluding marriage working to show 'the inferiority and necessary subordination of women' in the past. For example, the works of the Brontë sisters and Jane Austen are often hailed by feminists as seminal proto-feminist texts in their use of female protagonists and

---

[82] Zimmerman 1981: 366

their depiction of the universal female voice, yet their characters are still ultimately subordinated through marriage. Smith both plays to convention and defies it in Robin and Anthea's wedding as here the power relationship is balanced. In fact it is the characters around them that have reached maturity, particularly Imogen, who finally accepts her sister and herself for who each of them really are. Such a marriage is directly contrasted to the ending of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* with the subverted line, 'Reader, I married him/ her.' (149)

Monique Wittig

I will now examine aspects of Smith's style in her rewriting of Ovid. The scene describing Anthea and Robin's lovemaking (101-105) is strikingly similar to Monique Wittig's *Le Corps Lesbien* and is a beautiful example of lesbian experimental writing as outlined by Zimmerman above. Smith's style in this scene becomes more like poetry than prose as conventional methods of punctuation are discarded and the vivid images pour out in a continuous stream of consciousness. The words raise the reader up and lower them down, mimicking the rhythms of their lovemaking.[83] Like *Girl meets boy*, *Le Corps Lesbien* is a love story, and also makes use of feminised mythical characters, for just as Smith's Iphis remains a girl, Wittig's Osiris is a woman.[84]

In her essay 'Some remarks on *The Lesbian Body'*, Wittig admits to borrowing from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* for her own imagery, as it is a work 'assimilated into the reader's

---

[83] Julia Kristeva (1984) argues that by mimicking the rhythms of the body, feminist writing breaks down patriarchal society and its rigid binaries of male/ female.
[84] Other mythical figures also appear in the feminine: Ulyssea (Wittig 1973: 23), Achillea and Patroclea (34), Christa (35) and Archimedea (159).

mind with violence' (Wittig 2005: 46). She notes that in Ovid, as with 'all the great lovers of heterosexual culture', the lovers are rapists or murderers, 'for what is total ecstasy between two lovers but an exquisite death?' (46-47). Like Smith, Wittig thus borrowed yet subverted Ovid's violence, as from the violence of passion the lovers merge/ emerge and create a new being; both Wittig's and Smith's lovers are resuscitated and rescued.

Wittig's work is a paean to the female body, and makes use of a range of poetic forms and moods throughout the book, from highest passion to deepest rage. The violence and dismemberment throughout Wittig's text is also symbolic of the tearing apart of the normative categories of sex, gender and sexuality, and the disruption of the male language to create this new woman's writing; Smith employs dissonant adjectives and fluid gender roles to similar effect. We can compare the following two passages to demonstrate this unconventional grammar, the broken syntax and passages of prose poetry, and which both contain similar images of the lovers united, merging into one being (again recalling Ovid – a lesbian version of Hermaphroditus):

You turn m/e inside out, *I* am a glove in your hands, gently firmly inexorably holding m/y throat in your palm, *I* struggle, *I* am frantic, *I* enjoy fear, you count the veins and the arteries, you retract them to one side, you reach the vital organs, you breathe into m/y lungs through m/y mouth… (Wittig 1973: 86)

I was a she was a he was a we were a girl and a girl and a boy and a boy, we were blades, were a knife that could cut through myth, were two knives

thrown by a magician, were arrows fired by a god, we hit heart, we hit home,

we were the tail of a fish were the reek of a cat were the beak of a bird were

the feather that mastered gravity were high above every landscape then deep

down in the purple haze of the heather were roamin in a gloamin in a brash

unending Scottish piece of perfect jigging reeling reel can we really keep this

up? (Smith 2007: 103)

Susan Wolfe proposes that 'lesbian literature is characterised by the use of the continuous

present [tense], unconventional grammar and neologism… it breaks boundaries between art

and the world, between events and our perceptions of them, and between past, present and

the dream world.' This is not a definitive rule, but there sometimes is a strong correlation

between lesbian and experimental writers. Although Smith is using the past tense in this

scene, the same sense of continuous action as in Wittig is conveyed through her extended

sentences. We can also compare Ovid's repeated use of participles and the present

subjunctive tense in Iphis' speech (*roganti,* 9.752; *fiant,* 9.753; *laborent,* 9.754); again the

sense of immediacy and on-going action strengthens Ovid's creation of Iphis' subjectivity

and pulls the reader into her world.

Judith Butler writes that if, as Monique Wittig argued 'gender itself is naturalized

through grammatical norms… then the alteration of gender at the most fundamental

epistemic level will be conducted, in part, through contesting the grammar in which gender

is given' (Butler 1999: xx). As such, Wittig's 'I', *j/e*, is split, and as their love-making winds-

down Anthea finishes her flowing prose poetry with the proclamation that they were 'both genders, a whole new gender, no gender at all' (104).

Wittig was a materialist feminist who believed that language is 'a material, transformative element of social praxis', and as such wanted to break away from Cixous' *écriture féminine* (which she felt still bound women to conventional notions of the female body as a site of biological reproduction) and create her own revolutionary writing, a 'material production, a transformative act of labour and a conscious intervention within history'.[85] Through her experimental creative writing Wittig creates a lesbian subjectivity that she felt had not been represented before; for Wittig, desire *is* identity, and desire creates subjectivity – her desiring subjectivity is primary to her sex or gender. Her self-positioning as a lesbian writer is an attempt to find subjectivity 'beyond the categories of sex'.[86] Smith, too, is using her writing to change public perceptions of gender and sexuality, and Robin herself says that her life only began, her subjectivity created, when she fell in love with Anthea (85).[87] In exploring the fluidity of gender categories Smith 'move[s] beyond a 'feminist' response, to create responses that transcend gender'.[88]

Wittig wanted to write about the wholeness of the female body and female erotic experience, so rather than using the conventional markers of desirability in male discourse

---

[85] Birkett 1996: 95. Birkett points out the influence on Wittig of Herbert Marcuse, who explored the role of the aesthetic as a catalyst of revolutionary change in his work.
[86] Wittig 1997: 270
[87] There is an element of meta-narrative here, also, as Robin does not exist in the novel until Anthea catches sight of her at page 42.
[88] Cox & Theodorakopoulos (forthcoming). This article also drew my attention to an interview with Ali Smith in which she claims herself to be 'intergender' (Denes 2003). I am extremely grateful to Elena Theodorakopoulos for her generosity in allowing me to see this chapter prior to publication.

such as breasts and hips (as she felt Cixous had done), she writes of organs, of veins, of hands. Likewise, Smith does not use these conventional markers of female desirability. For example, Wittig writes:

> You are m/y glory of cyprine m/y tawny lilac purple one, you pursue m/e throughout m/y tunnels, your wind bursts in, you blow in m/y ears, you bellow, your cheeks are flushed, you are m/yself you are m/yself (aid m/e Sappho) you are m/yself, *I* die enveloped girdled supported impregnated by your hands infiltrated suave flux infiltrated by the rays of your fingers… (Wittig 1973: 50)

and we can compare Smith:

> … I wasn't sure whose hand that was by my head, was it hers or mine? … Her hand opened me. Then her hand became a wing… her smile so close to my eyes that there was nothing to see but the smile… Her beautiful head… her teeth… her tongue… my whole insides… I was sinew… the scent came into my head and out of my eyes, my ears, out of my mouth, out of my nose… I was eyes… chin… the insides of a mouth… (Smith 2006: 101-4)

The repeated mention of hands in both of the pieces is an important use of symbolism, for hands are both the means of sexual pleasure and the tool of creative writing;[89] Wittig is

---

[89] Birkett 1996: 111

rewriting the lesbian body as Smith is rewriting Ovid (the word 'hands' appears seven times in Smith's lovemaking scene). The double pages throughout *Le corps lesbien* of capitalised body parts demonstrate the many parts and thus the wholeness of the female body and both adds a literal structure to the work and creates a theoretical framework of the female body.

CHAPTER THREE – VIRGINIA WOOLF

As well as containing many elements of Wittig's writing, a more direct influence upon Smith's style has been the work of Virginia Woolf.[90] After writing her PhD thesis, Smith held a post at Strathclyde University where she lectured on Woolf's use of water imagery in her writing. This is of particular note due to the use of water imagery throughout *Girl meets boy* in a way that recalls Woolf and adds layers of meaning to Smith's words.[91] Smith has also described Woolf as one 'who knew the novel form differently, being one of the few people successful in remaking it', and so I also look at the influence of Woolf's style on Smith's own writing. I discuss Woolf's use of water imagery both as a feature of style and as a political metaphor.

---

[90] We know that Woolf was familiar with the Classics and with Ovid; *Between the Acts* contains multiple references to the story of Philomela and Procne in the *Metamorphoses* (heightened by the strong presence of swallows throughout the book), and Mrs Ramsey in *To The Lighthouse* can be read as a contemporary Persephone.

[91] Smith also chooses to include two passages from Woolf in an edited volume of her favourite writing by other authors, including a section of Woolf's diary and a scene from *Orlando*; Smith 2006. Although I have used Woolf here predominantly to explore the use of water imagery in *Girl meets boy*, Woolf's metabiographical novel *Orlando* (1928) is another crucial intertext containing both an exploration of the fluidity of gender and the blurring of generic boundaries. As well as purporting to be the autobiography of a young man who one day wakes up as a woman, many of the novel's characters display both female and male attributes (Sasha), change sex (Shelmerdine), or wear the clothes of the opposite sex (Archduke/ Archduchess Harry/ Harriet), and boundaries are blurred between fiction and biography, author and creation. Orlando's story is framed by two recurring Ovidian tales from the *Metamorphoses*, those of Daphne and Apollo, and Salmacis and Hermaphroditus. That both of these tales also appear in Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* suggests that this was a mediating text for Woolf in her reading of Ovid. Woolf uses gender fluidity and Ovid's particular brand of metamorphosis (that something of the original character is maintained post transformation) in *Orlando* to explore the very different roles and expectations of men and women in 1920s Britain. The opening line of *Orlando* reads: 'He – for there could be no doubt of his sex…' (5). This statement immediately makes the reader question the veracity of this assertion and foreshadows the unstable gender categories that we meet throughout the novel, and we are also reminded of Ovid's own characteristic tendency to subvert statements that he has just presented as fact. The line also pleasingly foreshadows Ali Smith's own assertion that 'She was the most beautiful boy I had ever seen in my life' (Smith 2006: 45).

For Woolf, water represented creativity and writing, and was also specifically associated with femininity (she may have been influenced by psychoanalytic thought, which sees water imagery as representative of creativity and the subconscious). Woolf's protagonists, as well as important events in their lives, are always closely linked with water. For example, throughout *Mrs Dalloway*, the experiences of Clarissa and Pete are often described using water imagery, and in *To The Lighthouse*, the sound of water psychologically emboldens the characters; we see Lily's growing confidence that she does want the married life that the other women in the novel seem to aspire to. Woolf's references to water peak in the 1920s, the time of her greatest literary output, and in her diaries and novels she often used metaphors of swimming and diving to describe the writing process. Water also stood for fluidity, and was representative of the stream-of-consciousness style of writing that Woolf adopted later in her career, of which the ground-breaking *The Waves* (1931) is the pinnacle.

Whilst writing *The Waves* (1931), Woolf notes in her diary that this novel will be her most experimental yet, fluid, 'prose yet poetry, a novel and a play' (D3: 128), and this mingling of genres is of particular importance when considering Smith's work. Smith says on experimental writing that it is something 'which you absolutely shouldn't do in traditional male scholarship',[92] and for her thesis she refused to write 'like a man'; as a result of its fluid, experimental style Cambridge University refused to mark Smith's PhD. In her latest

---

[92] Murray 2006: 204-5

novel *Artful* - which, as a lecture series written as fiction is itself a mixing of genres - Smith quotes Woolf in *A Room of One's Own*:

> It is fatal to be a man or woman pure and simple; one must be woman-manly
> or man-womanly.

Smith describes this as Woolf's comment on the 'vital importance of being more than one gender', and we recall the parodic caricatures of Smith's characters who try to be 'all male' or 'all female'. This fluid style and attempt to transcend gender as a writer is also a hallmark of Monique Wittig's writing, as discussed above, and Ovid's career, too, was founded on playing with genre; Iphis' elegiac lament jumps out at the reader from the epic hexameters of the *Metamorphoses*.

Woolf saw poetry as arising out of a *dialogue*, and we see a striking image in *The Waves* of the writer who unites many voices in one: '(while they talk) [the writer will] let down one's net deeper and deeper and gently draw in and bring to the surface what he said and she said and make poetry' (217). As Patrizia Muscogiuri notes:

> Woolf's materialist understanding of creative language as emerging from a sea
> of human beings engaged in common conversation radically subverts
> traditionalist hierarchic notions of poetry and more generally, literature as a
> higher form of language which is rather received than produced by the

majority of people, along with the political and social implications of this view.

(2011: 104)

This method is adopted by Smith throughout her work, and is seen particularly in *Girl meets boy* when Robin and Anthea create their own version of the story of Iphis in dialogue. In *Artful*, Smith quotes Saramago, who describes the writer jealous of opera, for in text he can never re-create the effect of multiple voices singing their own stories simultaneously; Smith notes that she also finds this 'annoying'![93]

Muscogiuri highlights Woolf's use of the sea as particularly interesting in terms of a choice in style and imagery when contrasted with the views of her contemporary Joseph Conrad. In *The Shadow Line*, Conrad describes the sea as a 'still void' (Conrad 1917: 148), characterised by a disappointing 'indolent silence' (244); it is 'monstrous' and 'barren' (184). Woolf notes in her diary one contemporary reviewer's negative comments on her style, that it 'is now so fluent and fluid that it runs through the mind like water' (D3: 203). In her work Woolf makes a conscious effort to write against such masculinist criticism and the mainstream (read: 'male') modernism advocated by critics such as T.E. Hulme, who looked for 'dry hardness' in literature (Hulme 1924: 127). That is, linear, teleological, masculine writing; anything that deviates from this is a 'disease' (same unnamed reviewer as above).

In Woolf, water imagery has philosophical and political connotations as well as being an aesthetic choice; Woolf uses her watery style to breakdown the phallocentric order of the

---

[93] Smith 2012: 32-3

logos and to highlight 'the voice of the sea' (Diaries 3: 209) that is normally 'obscured and concealed under the other sounds' (*TTL*: 30). The voice of the sea reclaims what is kept out of the male discourse, 'nursery rhymes, street cries, half-finished sentences and sights' (*The Waves*: 279). The unnamed critic, Joseph Conrad and T. E. Hulme, cannot hear - or do not want to hear - the voice of the sea; Woolf is 'the woman writer, whose voice recites/ resites the voice of the sea' (Muscogiuri 2011: 106).

The voice of the sea also represents the inner voice, the voice of the 'other' self,[94] another language. In *To The Lighthouse* Lily achieves transcendence by finally hearing the voice of the sea (219-220); she hears its 'message' and abandons all restraints, metaphorically immersing herself in its waters (295). Finally, perhaps, through Woolf, Ovid's Iphis can quench her thirst. We see further examples of Woolf's political use of water in *Mrs Dalloway*, where water imagery is used as a way of undermining patriarchal institutions such as marriage, and David Bradshaw sees the sea as a representation of 'the silenced and marginalised position of women'. Muscogiuri views the recurring image of the sea in Woolf as a radical metaphor for women as bearers of an alternative politics and argues that Woolf's use of the sea shows an awareness of its use in the past to justify dominant discourses.[95] Gillian Beer postulates that Woolf's fondness for water imagery 'may be related to her search for a way out of sexual difference', and this is of particular note for *Girl meets boy*, where water is used by Smith as a metaphor for the imagination and for the fluidity of sexuality and gender.

---

[94] Muscogiuri 2011: 105
[95] See Muscogiuri: 2002 & 2006. On the sea as a metaphor for love and sex in ancient literature, see Murgatroyd 1995.

As well as representing femininity and the feminine voice, water imagery is part of a larger theme within Woolf on the natural world, and can perhaps even be labelled as proto-eco-feminist. Eco-feminism remains a strong characteristic of feminist writing, seen particularly in the work of Margaret Atwood (*The Handmaid's Tale, Oryx and Crake*) and the politics influencing Janet Lembke's translation of Virgil's *Georgics*. In Smith, the characters debate the politics of bottling water ('RAIN BELONGS TO EVERYONE', 145). Echoing Woolf's use of water imagery allows Smith to achieve doing multiple goals (politically) with her reception of Ovid, and the ever-changing sea will also always represent metamorphosis.

CHAPTER FOUR – OPENNESS AND INTERTEXTUAL DIALOGUE IN SMITH'S READING OF OVID

Genevieve Liveley (2006: 18) argues that Classics is the ideal subject for feminist study as it provides the necessary temporal distance for it to be interpreted afresh by this relatively modern form of analysis. One can draw on this distance in order to reject the gender ideology of the 'original' text, and it is as important for Classics as it is for feminism that we find and listen to unfamiliar voices in the texts. In this chapter, I refer to literary theory on closure to demonstrate how Ovid readily invites a feminist re-telling of his work, and I examine affinities between Ovid and Smith to show how Smith regularly employs an Ovidian style throughout her work.

Returning to the ideas of Kristeva and Barthes on intertextuality and 'writerly' texts as outlined in my introduction, the *Metamorphoses* is the perfect re-writable text as the poem itself questions the notion of authority and stability; it is open to and survives through intertextuality and re-imaginings. This questioning of authority and the continuing refusal throughout the *Metamorphoses* to come to a 'proper' end (the apparent conclusion of one episode leads the reader through to the next episode) can be interpreted by modern literary theory as a particularly feminine trait of a text, and so lends Ovid especially to feminist re-writings of his works. I will now discuss the theory of closure, or 'proper' endings as masculine and open endings as feminine.

<u>Closure as masculine</u>

Foucauldian criticism sees definitive closure as an expression of power, and, Don Fowler notes, specifically an expression of male power. On the power play within the *Aeneid* he writes that the constant new beginnings until the 'right' end is achieved is also 'projected onto another opposition that has been central to modern thought about ends, that of gender',[96] for it is always the goddess Juno who restarts the story in the poem. Virgil's *Aeneid* thus can be read as the masculine epic of closure against Ovid's feminine epic of change and powerlessness, a poem full of voiceless female victims who have no power over their own endings.

Feminists often construct their own discursive practices as 'open' – for example Cixous and Irigaray – and this feminine refusal to come to a 'proper' end became the 'necessary rhetoric of any group challenging existing power' (Fowler 1997: 10). Feminist criticism at first adopted this strict opposition in literary criticism between 'open' and 'closed' texts in their approaches to ancient texts, and was divided between those who saw texts as shutting off female voices, and those who saw texts as spaces to be opened up and re-read to find a woman's voice.

Julia Kristeva believed that the speaking subject could be an alternative to this male closure and that female speaking subjects could offer resistance to their own endings. This is seen most explicitly in Ovid's *Heroides*, where the heroines resist and re-write the (male) closure of their 'original' or 'proper' stories. This personal expression and resistance is in

---

[96] Fowler 1997: 9

'fundamental contrast' with the 'monologism of epic' (Spentzou 2003: 1), so although it may be more demonstrative of Ovid's concerns regarding genre, and although, like Juno in the *Aeneid* the heroines cannot avert their fate, a space for female subjectivity and creativity has been created. As Fowler notes, 'There is always more than one story to tell, more than one possible beginning, middle and end.' (1997: 16) On voices and endings, Spentzou quotes Ovid's Phyllis, who says, *careat successibus, opto,/ quisquis ab eventu facta notanda putat!* ('Let them come to nothing, I pray, those who think they know a deed by its result.' *Heroides* 2.85-6):

> What Phyllis is actually saying is that not everything in literature is about the end of the story. The end is in some obvious and practical ways decisive, but it cannot erase the middle and the ideas and challenges that it offers. (Spentzou 2003: 10)

Ovid, Smith and openness as feminine

Smith wrote *Girl meets boy* as part of the publisher Canongate's *Myths* series, where modern authors were invited to re-tell ancient stories, and it differs significantly from the other typically second-wave re-tellings, such as Margaret Atwood's *The Penelopiad* and Jeanette Winterson's *Weight*, because Smith does not see the 'original' text (the hypotext) as 'closed' or as a discursive instrument of a repressive regime that needs to be completely re-written.[97] Instead, she sees it as an 'open', empowering myth that has the potential to celebrate difference and indefinability. The dialectic between openness and closure creates

---

[97] See, for example, Atwood's reliance upon the controversial theories of Robert Graves' *Greek Myths* on pre-Minoan matriarchal societies (Atwood 2005: 197).

the dynamic of a text, and readers versed in the classics can sense the playful tension between Ovid's ending to the Iphis myth and Smith's avoidance of that very ending.[98] Through her openness, Smith explicitly references the 'authority' of Ovid by quoting his version of the story, but also defends him.

Smith herself thinks that the open-ended story is the most 'natural' and a characteristic of Smith's work is that she often writes in two or more voices. Her novels unfold in the form of a dialogue between two or more narrators, each presenting their own perspective of events (see Fowler, above: a characteristic of openness is the use of more than one voice, or presenting more than one side of the story). Although Ovid's Iphis is one of the few girls of the Metamorphoses to be given a voice, Smith gives Iphis two voices, each with a different version of the tale to tell:

I love more than one voice. I love the coming in of all the voices: there's no such thing as a single voice… There's never one voice, one story, one way to tell or see things. This is crucial. (Murray 2006: 220)

For example, Smith's novel *Like* is split in two, each half told by one of the protagonists, and *Girl meets boy* is divided into five chapters entitled 'I', 'you', 'us', 'them' and 'all together now', the narration therein split between the two sisters Anthea and Imogen. By using this

---

[98] Fowler notes that the endings of stories or texts are not the only 'endings' in society; as the dominant social narrative divides the world into definitive categories, each category is marked with a boundary, or ending - for example, definitive categories of gender or sexuality (Fowler 1997: 13). In her rewriting of both the *Metamorphoses* and Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* in *Girl meets boy*, Smith blurs and 'opens up' not just literary endings but cultural ones.

structure Smith follows Woolf's vision of poetic dialogue and consciously rejects the idea of canonical texts and the notion that there are 'original' or 'proper' versions of a story.

This 'democratic'[99] approach to literature is seen best in the episode where Robin and Anthea discuss Ovid. Although Ovid's version of the Iphis story is paraphrased for the reader unfamiliar with Classics (86-88), Smith also has Robin and Anthea re-tell and re-create Iphis' story in a way that functions on a meta-narrative level as a comment on Smith's approach to reworking Ovid and as a comment on her distinctive writing style (88-101). Robin does not simply transmit the text to Anthea in an authoritative and linear fashion, but, through a dialogue full of interjections that touch on childhood memories, past holidays and love affairs, the two young lovers create the story together - it becomes *their* story. Smith shows the reader the processes of intertextuality and reception at work; each reader colours and even changes the original text with her own experiences and opinions, reading new meanings into old stories or diverting the story on a new tangent.

Smith and Classical reception

Classical references – as well as a strong brand of feminism - are found throughout Smith's work. There is a free translation of the Iphis story from the *Metamorphoses* in *Girl meets boy* and in *Like* we meet the Cambridge Classicist Amy. There are mythical references scattered throughout *The Accidental* (already by page 9 Smith has referenced Oedipus and

---

[99] Cox & Theodorakopoulos: forthcoming.

Medea), and in 'True short story' Smith re-tells the story of Echo as she appears in Ovid as a commentary on anorexia and as an analogy for cancer.[100]

Two episodes in particular highlight Smith's approach to classical reception, and also demonstrate how she has experimented with different approaches to reception. In the collection *The Whole Story and other stories*, a woman falls in love with a tree and 'experiences all of Sappho's symptoms';[101] here, in a typically second-wave approach to classical reception, Smith gives a voice to the silenced Daphne, reversing her usual position as the object of the male gaze, and strengthens her female voice and desiring subjectivity through Sapphic allusions.

Secondly, in *Like*, there is a scene where the protagonist Amy throws away a set of tourist postcards of the frescoes in the Villa of the Mysteries; when her daughter Kate wants to keep the postcard with a picture of a deer on it, Amy rips the postcard in half and discards the half depicting a frightened woman in flight. Fiona Cox and Elena Theodorakopoulos note that this scene is illustrative of Smith's belief that the fragment is more important than the whole,[102] but it is also an act emblematic of Smith's feminist reception of the classics, for like Amy, Smith is discarding the disturbing depictions of women and writing them afresh. We can also see how Smith's approach to reception has developed over time as she begins to find and use the 'open' elements of Ovid's story, rather than completely re-writing the tale;

---

[100] Smith 2008
[101] Murray 2006: 222
[102] In *Artful*, Smith notes that the earliest story we have (and, by extension, therefore perhaps the model for all stories) only exists in fragments, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, as does the work of Sappho (Smith 2012: 23-5).

in *Like*, Classics divides the two protagonists, yet in *Girl meets boy* it is the classical story of Iphis that brings the two lovers together.

Smith breaks away from Ovid and yet stays faithful to the Latin text by referencing his style, vocabulary and irreverent approach to storytelling. Just as Arachne's tapestry functions as a miniature version of Ovid's epic poem, so too does Smith create a miniature *ekphrasis* symbolic of her approach to rewriting Iphis' story. In this *mise en abyme*, Imogen recalls an incident from her schooldays where she was coerced by peer pressure into writing homophobic graffiti onto Robin's school jotter (72-3). 'We watch to see Robin Goodman's response', she says, 'I see her shoulders tense, then droop.' (73). This sentence represents the second-wave feminist response to Ovid, that he is offensive to women and that his poem should be scribbled over or erased. Yet Robin/ Smith rescues him for us:

> Imogen: When I go past her at the end of the period and glance down at the book on her desk I can see she's made [the] arrow into the trunk of a tree and she's drawn hundreds of little flowerheads, all around the letters L, E and Z, like the letters are the branches of the tree and they've all just come into bloom. (73)

Smith positions herself and her approach to reception here in opposition to Winterson and Atwood (as outlined above) and instead sees Ovid as a starting point from which to create something new and beautiful; indeed she finds the seeds for her new version within Ovid himself.

<u>Ovidian presences in *Girl meets boy*</u>

I previously discussed the notion of gender as a cultural construct made up of physical attributes and behaviours that society prescribes as 'feminine' or 'masculine'. Ovid was aware of these cultural markers and explores the idea of gender as performance throughout his work by playing with Roman ideals of masculinity and femininity; it is these 'seeds' that Smith uses to draw her own flowerheads around Iphis' dilemma.

For example, the *Ars Amatoria* is devoted exclusively to instructing readers 'how to be a man', or 'how to be a woman', with advice on what to wear and how to play those roles. Katharina Volk notes that although Ovid sees sexual intercourse as a natural act (*Ars.* 2.477-80, the first humans 'found what to do themselves. No teacher/ Was needed.'), everything leading up to this act is a game of cultural norms and behaviour, or *ars*.[103] In Iphis' soliloquy (IX.726-63), to which Ovid tellingly devotes a quarter of this episode (33 lines out of the total 131), the 'nature' versus 'culture' debate is played out before our eyes as our heroine attempts and fails to reconcile her feelings with what society dictates that she 'ought' to feel (*debes*, 748). Although Iphis feels that her love for Ianthe is real and true, *at non vult natura* ('yet nature does not want this', 758), the close repetition of *vult* three times in two lines emphasising her burning yet futile desire (757-8).

In an attempt to position her feelings within known examples of love and sex, Iphis makes a mock-tragic 'appeal to myth', listing the 'natural' order of coupling: cows to bulls, mares to stallions, etc. (731-4), female to male. She laments (in a typically Ovidian and

---

[103] Volk 2010: 91

subversive manner) that even the wretched Pasiphae fell in love with a male, *femina nempe marem* (737), albeit a bull.

Perhaps Imogen's desire to go running and to think about her sister's new girlfriend surrounded by nature and water is her attempt to remind herself of the 'natural' order of things. In contrast, we see Anthea's relationship to nature and water as one that frees and represents the fluidity of life, gender and love; to Anthea, the river laughs, and it is on the riverbank that the two lovers finally marry.

That Smith believes that Ovid was aware of the lack of any certain 'natural' or 'proper' desire when it comes to love can be seen in her comic summation of Ovid's version of events:

Good old Ovid, giving it balls, I said.

Even though it didn't need them. (101)

Iphis' desperate situation is an exploration by Ovid of the Roman construction of sexuality as based around active and passive partners. She complains that *nec mihi continget* ('I will not [be able to] touch her'/ 'I will not grasp this love', 761) and *quibus qui ducat abest* (lit., 'the one who leads is absent', i.e. 'for whom there is no one there to be the husband', 763), reasoning that as there is no active or dominant partner in this relationship, under Roman ideals, her love cannot be.

Iphis' soliloquy in Book IX contains specific phrases and ideas that Smith has reused and often subverted in her particular method of reception. In *Girl meets boy* Iphis' speech is not voiced by Iphis/ Robin, for Smith's Iphis is happy and in love, and (as I have shown above) confident in her identification as a desiring individual. Instead, Smith transfers the soliloquy to Anthea's sister Imogen as she wrestles with conflicting personal and social attitudes and Iphis' speech is used to explore the prejudices and myths in society that still remain around homosexuality.

Ovid employs a heavy use of anaphora and repetition to provide an insight into Iphis' psychological state; she is confused, distraught and her thoughts jump between the way that she feels and the way that society dictates that she ought to feel. Her speech starts *quis… quam… quam…?* (726-7), followed by the repeated:

> *Si di mihi parcere vellent,*
>
> *parcere debuerant; si non, et perdere vellent* (728-9)
>
> ('If the gods wish to spare me, then they ought to spare me; if not, and they
>
> wish to destroy me…')

Likewise, Ovid off-sets the repeated *licet… licet* ('allow'/ 'let it be', 741-2) against *quod fas est… quod debes!* ('what is right… what you ought to do', 748), tragically sandwiching yet separating the two lovers' names between the two oppositional ideas (*Ianthe*, 744, *Iphi*, 745). This balance between wishes and social obligation reoccurs throughout Iphis' speech and becomes the main structure for Imogen's soliloquy in *Girl meets boy*.

Through pages 49-62 Smith shows Imogen mentally wrestling between her thoughts (shown in brackets) and the dominant social narrative that she is trying to convince herself of, and just like Iphis, we see her struggling to reconcile the two. For example, although Imogen thinks that her sister is now 'abnormal' (56), she also believes that it is wrong that homosexuality is illegal in some countries (61). Likewise, her thought that her dad was 'a bit sexist' to say that she earned very good money 'for a girl' ('because gender is nothing to do with whether you are good at a job or not', 57), is contrasted to her statement that she 'would rather give up any career than not have [children]' (53). Through Imogen, Smith explores the extent to which all of us play our roles, and we see Imogen struggling to meet the demands of a society whose cultural myths expect women to be thin, beautiful, and subservient, as well as good workers and mothers.

The anaphora, repetition and broken syntax throughout Iphis' speech are also picked up by Smith. The alliterative patterns of negatives *Nec… nec… nulla… Ne non…*(731-5), *Num me… num te* (743-4) and *Non… nec… non… non… nec… nec… nunc… nulla* (750-5) are used by Ovid to continue his mock-tragic theme and create an *anagnorisis*, Iphis' moment of recognition that she is doomed. The negatives also add an element of pathos, however, as from birth her fate was taken out of her hands; poor Iphis is in love and absolutely terrified. As Robin comments:

I was terrified, too, when I was twelve and wanted to marry another girl. (96)

Iphis spits out short, angry questions to the gods in between her tears, *quid?... quin?... quid?* (743-7) that are emphasised by the matching alliteration of the following *quod… quod* at line 748 and the effect is further heightened by the repetition of the harsh 'c', 'q' and 'p' sounds (729ff), and the frequency of one- and two-syllable words in lines 729-32. This confused, broken line of questioning is also seen in Imogen's speech:

(is that the right way to say it, a gay? Is there a correct word for it?)

(How do you know if you are it?)

(Does our mother know about Anthea being it?)

(Does our father know?) (50)

Smith's method of reception is to turn that which is potentially negative into that which is positive, and so she also uses elements of Iphis' tragic speech in the lovemaking scene at pages 102-105, employing Ovid's style and imagery to describe the happy lovers. Iphis' list of animal pairings reappear as Anthea describes herself and Robin as birds, foxes, snakes, and as animals with pelts and hooves,[104] and so, too, does Iphis' questioning style ('Was that…? Was that…? Was I…? Would I…? Was I…? Was I…? Was I… was I… was I… was I…?', 102), turning a desperate turmoil into an ecstatic confusion.

Lovers are often cast as confused or in turmoil in Latin literature, and Stephen Harrison compiled a list of occurrences of the metaphor of 'the waves of passion' as signalled and expressed using two words, *fluctus* and/ or *aestus* (Harrison 2005). Harrison

---

[104] The animal imagery used in this scene also recalls Puck's list of his various transformations in *MND* (3.1) [Puck ↔ Robin].

tracks the use of 'the waves of passion' from Homeric epic through *De Rerum Natura*, Catullus 64 and the *Aeneid*, all three of which Ovid alludes to extensively. Harrison numbers eleven examples of this metaphor in the *Aeneid* and notes that '[in] all these Vergilian examples we find this imagery used of heroic passions of important characters, dignifying with a powerful image from the elemental world of nature the psychological surges and dilemmas of heroic action.' (2005: 168). Harrison then goes on to list the occurrences of this metaphor in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*;[105] I would like to add to this list Ovid's use of a loose variation of this metaphor in the Iphis episode that has important implications for his depiction of Iphis' 'unnatural love'.

Of interest to Iphis' soliloquy in Book IX is one specific recurring use of this metaphor of 'the waves of passion'. In Catullus 64, Ariadne's despair at Theseus' abandonment of her is described as *magnis curarum fluctuat undis* (line 62), and in the *Aeneid*, Aeneas' mental turmoil whilst contemplating the impending war is described as *magno curarum fluctuat aestu* (VIII, 19-20). Directly recalling the balanced four-word sentence structure of the example above from Catullus 64, and similarly employing watery imagery with the protagonist grammatically surrounded by the waves, at line 761 Iphis says that *mediis sitiemus in undis*, 'in the midst of waves I will thirst'; she is in the midst of the waves of passion, yet cannot sate her thirst for her love. This is emphasised shortly afterwards by Ovid's use of *aestuat* as the first word of line 765 to describe the burning passion of the lovers. The use of this image here is of great importance in describing Iphis as love sick and in the terms of the elegiac poet and Virgil's heroic passions. As well as playfully subverting

---

[105] IV, 64; VI, 623; VIII, 470-4; IX, 465; XIII, 867; XIV, 700.

epic imagery, Ovid also shows us that Iphis' love is no malady - this is love as a great hero or poet would feel for a woman. This metaphor of the waves of passion is recalled in Smith's dense use of water imagery in the love-making scene; Anthea describes them variously as the sea, as briny, as salty water, as a fountain, and as water passing through stone (104). Smith, through the prism of Virginia Woolf's liberating sea, re-writes and rescues Iphis from her thirst.

In Ovid, Iphis describes her love as *desperat* ('doomed', 724), a sentiment that is picked up by Lyly's Phillida, who says that in loving Gallathea she 'will lead a melancholy life' (4.4, 46-7), and developed in more detail by Smith in Imogen's thoughts ('My little sister is going to have a terrible sad life', 56). Just as Iphis wishes that the gods had struck her instead with *naturale malum* ('a natural malady', 730), so too does Imogen exclaim of her sister's love:

(Dear God. It is worse than the word cancer.) (56)

Iphis' words *Vellem nulla forem!* ('Oh that I had never been born!', 735) are echoed by Gallathea ('Oh that the gods had not made me as I am!', 2.1,4-5) and playfully turned around by Smith as Imogen tries to work out 'why' her sister is gay:

(… She always was weird. She always was different…)

(It is the fault of the Spice Girls.) (51)

The adjective *stultos* ('foolish', 746) is also picked up in John Lyly's *Gallathea* (Neptune describes the girls' love as 'foolish', 5.3, 139) and when Imogen thinks about her sister's 'outrageous happiness' (57), it is a word that I think Smith has chosen to carry through the connotation of madness that we find in Ovid and the confusion running throughout the Elizabethan plays I discuss in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER FIVE – SMITH'S SHAKESPEAREAN LENS

In her approach to re-working the *Metamorphoses* Smith has also viewed Ovid through the lens of Elizabethan drama, reading Ovid through two Renaissance playwrights' eyes. A number of plays from this period have plots that involve cross-dressing and gender confusion that play with Elizabethan theatrical conventions whereby young boys took on female roles, but Smith has been influenced particularly by the plays of John Lyly, whom I examine first, and William Shakespeare.

John Lyly (c. 1553 – 1606)

Lyly produced a series of plays 'designed specifically to exploit the talents of the boy actors'[106] who performed at the Blackfriars theatre where he was based: *Campaspe*, *Sappho and Phao*, and *Gallathea*. It is his *Gallathea* that I now focus on, a quote from which appears on the first page of Smith's *Girl meets boy*: 'Practise only impossibilities' (2.2, 9).

Gallathea[107] (most likely first performed in 1588 and first published in 1591) tells the story of two girls, Gallathea and Phillida, who are disguised as boys by their fathers to save them from being ritually sacrificed to a sea monster. The two girls are sent into the woods to hide, where they meet and fall in love, at first both under the impression that the other is a boy. Over the course of the play they come to realise that the other is the same as herself, a

---

[106] Scragg 1997: viii

[107] Gallathea is the name of the mother in Antoninus Liberalis' story of the girl-boy Leucippus that Ovid used as the basis for his Iphis. Alfred Harbage, in his *Annals of English Drama*, records a lost play from an unknown author written between 1591 and 1615 entitled, *Iphis and Iantha: or, A Marriage Without a Man*. Interestingly, this title hints that perhaps there was no metamorphosis of sex at the resolution of this play, but it also tells us of a contemporary pique of interest in this story from Ovid.

girl dressed as a boy, but at the conclusion of the play they announce their love and swear

loyalty to one another. After a subplot involving Cupid disguising himself as a girl to trick

Diana's nymphs, in the final scene the goddess Venus appears (5.3, 155-56), and proclaims

that just as she did for Ovid's Iphis and Ianthe, so will she change the sex of one of the girls

to a boy so that they can marry (although at the happy ending of the play the lovers are still

both girls). From this explicit reference to Ovid in Venus' speech we know that Lyly's

Gallathea itself is a re-writing of Ovid, and we can also detect a Virgilian presence

throughout the play; many of the characters' names are from Virgil's poems (for example,

the fathers' names Melebeus and Tyterus are taken from *Eclogue* 1), and Gallathea closes

the play with the famous edict from *Eclogues* 10, 69 that *omnia vincit Amor* ('Love

conquereth all things', Epilogue, 12-13).

Laurie Shannon's analysis of this ending, where same-sex love is apparently

condoned (Venus: 'I like well and allow it.' 5.3, 143), is based upon Elizabethan

homonormativity, that is, the concept of 'kinds', and the notion that one should stick to

one's own kind (girls to girls, boys to boys).[108] There are indeed several references

throughout the play to 'kind' and the girls see boys as a 'different kind' to themselves. This

follows Ovid's Iphis and Ianthe, who were deemed a suitable love match because of their

likeness; they are of the same age, equally attractive, and they have been educated

together.[109] Gallathea and Phillida are also alike; they are both equally attractive (both are

chosen to be sacrificed as the fairest maidens of the town), are equally uncomfortable in

---

[108] Shannon 2000
[109] 9. 718-719.

boys' clothing and think that their disguises will not work,[110] and they are shown to be in agreement on everything.[111]

This idea of sticking to one's own kind is strengthened further by the negative and vulgar portrayals of male-female relationships we see in the play, particularly those of male violence enacted upon women. There is the monster Agar, eater of virgins, whose sacrificial victim Hebe laments that 'men will have it so, whose forces command our weak natures' (5.2, 14-15. We can read Smith's monstrous boss Keith as an Agar figure, preying on Imogen); Gallathea's father Tyterus accuses Phillida's of displaying an affection towards his daughter 'more than fatherly' (4.1, 40-1), his response to which is to say that Tyterus should not be so shocked to see 'so young a piece' actually his wife, 54-56; and the Alchemist who 'saw a pretty wench come into his shop, where with puffing, blowing and sweating he so plied her that he multiplied her' (5.1, 20-22). However, the alternative, female-female relationships, seem at first also to be doomed; we may cite Cupid's curse upon Diana's nymphs that after rejecting him they should fall in love with one another and 'practise only impossibilities'. Smith subverts Cupid's curse and explores the suggested endings to both Ovid's and Lyly's stories, that the girls could be happy together as girls.

As well as directly referencing Ovid in Venus' speech there are many other Ovidian elements throughout Lyly's play. Love is described in elegiac terms as an invasion upon one's self, as 'a heat full of coldness, a sweet full of bitterness, a pain full of pleasantness' (1.2, 18-

---

[110] Gallathea: 'the disguising [is] hateful' (1.1, 96-7); Phillida: '[man's apparel] will neither become my body nor my mind.' (1.3, 15-16).
[111] For example, 'These boys are both agreed' (2.1, 58).

19), and as a 'wound' (1.2, 36; 5.3, 50), or as the affected person having been scorched (3.1, 24). Throughout the *Metamorphoses* we witness the futility of attempting to escape a god's affections, and so, too, in *Gallathea* do we see that not even Diana's chaste nymphs can escape Cupid. Just as Ovid himself renounces *Arma* at the start of the *Amores* (1.1, 1) so, too, does the nymph Telusa put down her bows and arrows in the face of love ('break thy bow, Telusa', 3.1, 14), and she remarks upon her 'pale face' (30), 'so pale, so sad' (35). Eurota also describes herself in terms that we recognise as those of the lover-poet:

> I feel my thoughts unknit, mine eyes unstayed, my heart I know not how
>
> affected (or infected), my sleeps broken and full of dreams, my wakeness sad
>
> and full of sighs, myself in all things unlike myself. (3.1, 52-5)

All the youths affected are confused by love's symptoms (e.g. 'I confess that I am in love, and yet swear that I know not what it is.' 51-2), as Shakespeare's youths in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* mistake the symptoms of the magic potion of love. We can compare Lyly's characters and their experience of love with Smith's Anthea, who wonders if Iphis and Ianthe felt love as she does:

> Did their hearts hurt? I said. Did they think they were underwater all the time?
>
> Did they feel scoured by light? Did they wander about not knowing what to do
>
> with themselves? (94)

Throughout *Gallathea* there are many references to metamorphoses, particularly in the subplot of the mercenaries who ply various trades; the alchemist most obviously (for metamorphosis is his trade), but also the astronomer, who promises that by studying the stars 'thy thoughts shall be metamorphosed' (3.3, 84). While trying to convince Gallathea to wear her male disguise, her father references Ovid to argue: 'to gain love the gods have taken shapes of beasts, and to save life art thou coy to take the attire of men?' (1.1, 98-99).[112] This is also picked up by Smith, who makes reference to metamorphosis throughout *Girl meets boy* (e.g. '[the river] laughed and it changed as I watched. As it changed, it stayed the same', 28).

In Lyly we see Ovid's joke that Iphis could never properly consummate her marriage with Ianthe re-written in Elizabethan terms: Gallathea (like Iphis) says that her love is 'foolish' and 'nothing' (2.4, 13), playing on the Renaissance topos of female genitalia as 'nothing';[113] this is later commented on by Smith when Ovid 'can't help fixating on what it is that girls don't have underneath their togas' (97). Likewise, while Ovid has his Iphis complain that she will never be able to 'touch' her bride, Gallathea and Phillida welcome the idea of a change of sex for one of the pair so they may 'embrace' and 'enjoy' one another (5.3, 157-158).

Iphis' soliloquy in Ovid is split between Gallathea and Phillida in Lyly, each voicing different parts of her lament to the gods, and in Smith the speech is placed on the mouth of

---

[112] This is repeated by Shakespeare in *A Winter's Tale*: 'The gods themselves, /… have taken/ The shapes of beasts upon them…' (4.4, 25-35).
[113] Shannon 2000: 204

Imogen, 'Ianthe''s sister. In Lyly, we have seen Gallathea lament her foolish love (picking up 'stultos', *Met.* 9. 746), and Phillida says, 'how desperate is thy case! … For if she be a maiden, there is no hope of my love… I will after him or her, and lead a melancholy life, that look for a miserable death' (4.4, 44-47). The ambiguous gender of the beloved is picked up by Smith when we first meet Robin ('She was the most beautiful boy') and Iphis and Phillida's concerns about this are echoed when Imogen worries that her sister 'is going to have a terrible sad life' (56) as 'gay people are always dying all the time' (58). Just like Iphis' exclamation, 'Oh, that I had never been born!' (735), so Phillida cries out, 'Poor Phillida, curse the time of thy birth!' (2.5, 1), and Gallathea wishes 'Oh, would the gods had made me as I seem to be, or that I might safely be what I seem not!' (2.1, 4-6).

There are further echoes of Ovid in Lyly; for example, when Gallathea's father says that he thinks 'it better to use an unlawful means… than intolerable grief' to save his daughter (1.1, 71-72), we are reminded of Telethusa's 'loving lie' to save Iphis (*pia mendacia*, 711), and just as Iphis is described as 'fair whether judged as girl or boy' (*facies, quam sive puellae/ sive dares puero, fieret formosus uterque,* 712-13), so Phillida describes Gallathea as 'a pretty boy and a fair. He might well have been a woman.' (2.1.21-22)

John Lyly put his own twist on classical styles with his frequent use of the 'appeal to myth' trope, often seen in Tragedy, and which Ovid uses mostly to comic effect (for example, in Iphis' appeal to myth [see my discussion on Pasiphae and parody above in Chapter Two]). Lyly uses classical analogies but sets them up in antithesis to each other; he is interested in the play of different voices that 'develop a widening circle of oppositions that move the

reader progressively further from certainty or closure' and 'open up a vista of alternative avenues' (Scragg 2003: x). Lyly liked to represent an unknowable world, and the sexual ambiguity running throughout *Gallathea* starts from the opening line of the play when a 'boy' is addressed by a girl's name. Leah Scragg notes that these 'ambivalences admit a rather more sceptical interrogation of ideological issues than is frequently assumed', indeed:

> Above all the emphasis upon change, and upon the inherent ambivalence of
> all human experience, works against the overt celebration of an immutable,
> peerless authority [Diana/ Queen Elizabeth] – inviting the audience to delight
> with the dramatist in the endless possibilities of an unstable world. (xxii)

This unknowable, unstable world is what interests Smith, and this particular feature of Lyly's style and the interplay of different perspectives is also a hallmark of Smith's work. Smith likes to explore difference, and 'the idea of what happens if you let something which seems anarchic into your world'.[114] The quote from *Gallathea* that Smith has chosen to open *Girl meets boy* ('Practise only impossibilities', 2.2, 9) is emblematic of her reception of Ovid via Lyly; the 'impossible' elements of Iphis' story that are only ambiguities in Ovid (i.e. same-sex love) are briefly explored in Lyly (his Venus declares: 'never shall it be said that Nature... shall overthrow Love and Faith', 5.3, 144-45.), and are finally fully realised by Smith's lovers.

---

[114] Murray 2006: 195

<u>William Shakespeare</u>

Both Ovid and Lyly greatly influenced the works of William Shakespeare and this is seen particularly in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*[115] and *Twelfth Night*.[116] The two plays have specific references and links to both the *Metamorphoses* and *Gallathea*, have complicated plots and subplots involving cross-dressing and gender confusion,[117] and conclude with the promise of a future wedding. The confusion in Lyly's play is greatly exaggerated to comic effect in Shakespeare; girls fall in love with boys who later turn out to be girls (Olivia-Cesario/Viola, *TN*), boys fall in love with girls (Lysander-Helena, Lysander-Hermia, Demetrius-Hermia, Demetrius-Helena, *MND*), and boys fall in love with boys who later turn out to be girls (Orsino-Cesario/Viola, *TN*). We even see a girl fall in love with an ass (Titania-Bottom, *MND*), recalling all the strange loves of the *Metamorphoses*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* concludes with a performance of another Ovidian tale, that of Pyramus and Thisbe (*Met*. IV, 55-166).

In her analysis of the affinities between *Gallathea* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Scragg argues that the strongest evidence for Shakespeare having used Lyly as his model can be seen in the choice and use of the word 'translated' Scragg (1977: 133). In Lyly, 'translated'

---

[115] Most likely first published in 1600, first performed 1605.

[116] First performed 1602, first published 1623.

[117] A note on intersectionality: due to the rigid social structure of the Elizabethan audience, the cross-dressing elements would have represented to them obvious transgressions of class as well as gender. The English Sumptuary Laws (The Statutes of Apparel) made it illegal to wear clothes of a style or fabric above your class, and an amendment was made in 1574 so that theatre companies could obtain licences for their actors to wear the costumes of a king, etc. The case that the confusion of class, rather than gender, is the most important dynamic of *Gallathea* is argued by Wixson (2001). I disagree with Wixson as although the girls can be read as gaining status by wearing male costumes, the closing scene explicitly discusses the same-sex nature of Gallathea and Phillida's relationship as the issue to rectify. However, I do think that class must be noted as an important dynamic in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, where, for example, the fairy Queen Titania is bewitched to fall in love with the lowly Bottom.

appears once and is used in the sense of 'transformed' when Rafe asks if he will be 'translated from this mortality' (3.3, 83); the word appears twice in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in the same sense and context when Bottom, newly transformed into an ass, is described as 'translated' (*MND* 3.1, 19), and when Puck informs Oberon that he left Pyramus 'translated there' (3.2, 1064). This word that links the two Elizabethan plays not only recalls the transformations of the *Metamorphoses*, but also represents the nature of classical reception and the inter-relationships between all the works that I have discussed so far; each translation or re-working of Ovid is also a transformation. As Smith notes, these translations and transformations are 'the story of nature itself, ever-inventive, making one thing out of another, and one thing into another' (160).

In *Twelfth Night*, when questioned on her birth and history by the Duke Orsino, Viola - disguised as the page-boy Cesario - replies, 'I am all the daughters of my father's house/ And all the brothers too' (*TN* 2.4, 120-1). This directly recalls the following riddling exchange from Lyly:

Phillida. Have you ever a sister?

Gallathea. If I had but one, my brother must needs have two.

     But, I pray, have you ever a one?

Phillida. My father had but one daughter, and therefore I could have no sister.

                           (3.2, 41-45)

Also, like *Gallathea*, *Twelfth Night* ends with talk of a marriage after the conclusion of the play while notably leaving Olivia still 'as a man'; in fact, she is instructed to keep on the name and the act of Cesario until she receives her 'woman's weeds' back from the imprisoned sea-captain (*TN* 5.1, 273-386). Again, a play ends where the couple is ostensibly of the same sex, and this is another example where 'like', or 'kind', has been attracted to like.

An examination of Lyly, Shakespeare and Smith together also highlights the striking structure of the Elizabethan plays that Smith has adopted for her novels and is a distinctive feature of her writing style. That is, Lyly's *Gallathea* is structured around four groups of characters (categorised as 'gods', 'fathers', 'lovers' and 'artisans'; Scragg 1977: 127) that for the majority of the play are mutually exclusive and often function in opposition to one another; it is only in the final Act that all four groups cross paths. While Shakespeare follows Lyly's structure and basic plot directly,[118] Smith's chapters are split between the opposing viewpoints of the two sisters, and she creates three groups of characters following Lyly that I categorise as 'lovers', 'sisters' and 'artisans'.

In *Gallathea* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* the 'artisans' are the merchants, or mercenaries (in *Twelfth Night*, the servants); these groups are characterised negatively, frequently portrayed as vulgar and self-assured despite their obvious ineptitude or foolishness (for example, the inability of Lyly's mercenaries to successfully ply a trade, despite their many attempts, and Bottom/ Malvolio's belief that Queen Titania/ Countess

---

[118] For a full discussion of the mirrored plots and structural similarities between *Gallathea* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, see Scragg 1977.

Olivia is in love with them). In *Girl meets boy*, the 'artisans' are the corporate executives who create the modern myths and dominant social narratives of advertising.[119]

The title of Smith's final chapter, 'all together now', playfully references the structure of these Elizabethan plays and the purpose of the final Acts in bringing about a resolution between the separate groups. In this final chapter, Smith also knowingly yet light-heartedly introduces the fourth group so far missing from her novel as gods and mythological characters arrive to witness Robin and Anthea's wedding.[120] From Lyly, we meet Venus, Artemis [Diana] and Cupid (153-54), and a minor character from *Girl meets boy*, Chantelle, swears eternal celibacy and goes down to the riverbank with Artemis to shoot arrows (154). From Ovid, we meet Juno and Isis (who - referencing the new body she created for Ovid's Iphis - Smith tells us 'spent the whole reception making fine new guests out of clay', 155), and Iphis and Ianthe themselves make an appearance:

> A beautiful Greek couple came graciously up and shook our hands; they were newlyweds themselves, they said, and how had the run-up to the wedding been? was it as nervewracking as it'd been for them? They'd never thought they'd make it. But they had, they were happy, and they wished us all happiness. They told us to honeymoon in Crete, where their families would make us welcome. (155-6)

---

[119] Smith quotes J. G. Ballard's statement that 'we now live in a world of myths' (Smith 2012: 35).

[120] The name of Smith's Iphis character, Robin Goodman, references the mischievous Puck, or Robin Goodfellow, from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Like Puck, we first meet Robin practising mischief as she is pulled down from a ladder by security guards for disrupting the 'proper' order of things and spraying graffiti on the Pure corporate signage.

Daedalus ('the clever artist', 156) and Orpheus ('the legendary red-faced fiddler who played at all the best weddings', 157) are also subtly alluded to, with Orpheus' song an emblem for the novel itself: 'It was the song of the flow of things, the song of the undammed river' (157). In her reception of Ovid in this final chapter Smith also blurs Classical myth with local myth when apologies for non-attendance at the wedding arrive from the Loch Ness Monster and John Knox (154).

CONCLUSION

In their introduction to the volume *Translation and the Classic*, Lianeri and Zajko note that 'Classic texts are those that continue to be valued by reading communities other than those whose appreciation could have been originally predicted' (Lianeri & Zajko 2008: 5). Smith's feminist reading of the Iphis story has liberated Ovid from the traditional male literary canon, which in the past has perpetuated negative stereotypes of women and silenced the voices of women speaking to us from the ancient world. Instead, *Girl meets boy*'s feminist classical reception has established Ovid in a new tradition of 'classic' texts that appeal to new communities previously excluded from the canon; with her credible lesbian feminist mixed-race Iphis, Smith broadens Ovid's relevance to contemporary society in a way that a work like Ted Hughes' *Tales from Ovid* simply cannot. Smith both questions and 'troubles' the dominant narrative and restores Ovid to his true, open-ended, playful and subversive self.

Contemporary women writers such as Smith are engaging with Classics in a new way, not simply to demonstrate a classical education (as male authors have tended to do), or to establish themselves within the male literary tradition, but to further feminist politics and to 'reclaim' authors like Ovid for women, for the gay community, for non-white communities and for the young. Theoretical work by early feminist classicists such as Amy Richlin may have been counterproductive, for, whilst greatly important in the development and advancement of feminist classical thought, what she perceived as the ancient negative portrayals of women were then propagated and publicised. By reclaiming Ovid for women

and lesbians as Smith does, *Girl meets boy* can prevent the *Metamorphoses* from continuing to be seen – and used - as a tool of the dominant social discourse.

A charge often levelled at academics is that abstract theories such as those proposed by Michel Foucault or Judith Butler have no practical application in society, yet by uniting a fictional account and tangible demonstration of Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* with a reworking of Ovid, Smith has bridged the gap between theory and praxis. Alongside the literary allusions, the rich intertextual dialogue throughout *Girl meets boy* also brings a strong brand of politics to her re-imagining of Ovid's Iphis, introducing her readers who are classicists to feminism, and her readers who are feminists to Classics. As well as the overt references to contemporary feminist issues, Smith's use of the dialogue form to create her novels, and in particular her use of dialogue in the scene that re-tells the Iphis story in Ovid, is a political statement as well as a feature of style. Smith's dialogue style questions the very notion of a monolithic 'canon'.

Charles Martindale contends that a work of translation should be examined from an aesthetic perspective only;[121] this is a reductive way to view translation and classical reception, however, and in *Girl meets boy* Smith has shown Ovid – to misquote William Morris – to be both beautiful *and* useful.[122] Through a tapestry of intertextual references that span over two thousand years, *Girl meets boy* is not only a model for future classical reception, but is a history of the reception of Ovid and a feminist call to arms. Smith has rescued Ovid for feminists, and shown us that he even has a place in feminist activism today.

---

[121] Martindale 2008

[122] 'Have nothing in your houses that you do not know to be useful, or believe to be beautiful' (Morris 1880).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, trans. J. A. Hanson [Loeb Classical Library], 1 (Cambridge, MA 1989)

Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, ed. R. J. Tarrant [Oxford Classical Texts series] (Oxford 2004)

Smith, A. 2007. *Girl meets boy*, Edinburgh.

Adams, J. N. 1984. 'Female Speech in Latin Comedy', *Antichthon* 18, 43-77.

Ancona, R. & Greene, E. (eds) 2005. *Gendered Dynamics in Latin Love Poetry*, Baltimore.

Atwood, M. 2005. *The Penelopiad*, Edinburgh.

Barchiesi, A. 1997. *The Poet and the Prince: Ovid and Augustan Discourse*, Berkeley.

Barthes, R. 1984. 'La Mort de l'auteur', in R. Barthes, *Le Bruissement de la langue*, Paris, 61-67.

Beasley, C. 2005. *Gender and Sexuality: Critical Theories, Critical Thinkers*, London.

Beer, G. 1996. *Virginia Woolf: The Common Ground*, Edinburgh.

Berger, A. E. 1996. 'The latest word from Echo', *New Literary History* 27.4, 621-40.

Birkett, J. 1996. 'Sophie Ménade: The Writing of Monique Wittig', in A. Hughes & K. Ince (eds), *French Erotic Fiction*, Oxford & Herndon, 93-119.

Bordo, S. 1990. 'Feminism, postmodernism and gender-scepticism', in L. J. Nicholson (ed.), *Feminism/ Postmodernism*, New York, 133-156.

Bradshaw, D. 2009. 'The Purest Ecstasy: Virginia Woolf and the Sea' in L. Feigel & A. Harris (eds), *Modernism on Sea*, Amsterdam and London, 100-115.

Brown, S. A. 2005. *Ovid: Myth and Metamorphosis*, London.

Butler, J. 1993. *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"*, Abingdon, New York.

---------- 1999. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (2nd edn), New York.

---------- 1999. 'Subject of Sex/ Gender/ Desire', in J. Butler, *Gender Trouble* (2nd edn), New York, 3-14, 18-22.

Cahoon, L. 1985. 'A Programme for Betrayal: Ovidian Nequitia in *Amores* 1.1, 2.1 and 3.1', *Helios* 12, 29-39.

---------- 1988. 'The Bed as Battlefield; erotic conquest and military metaphor in Ovid's *Amores*', *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 118, 293-307.

Cameron, A. & Kuhrt, A. (eds) 1983. *Images of Women in Antiquity*, Abingdon.

Cixous, H. 1986. 'Sorties', in H. Cixous & C. Clément (eds), *The Newly Born Woman*, trans. B. Wing, London, 63-132.

Cook, E. 2006. 'Iphigenia's Wedding' in V. Zajko & M. Leonard (eds), *Laughing With Medusa: Classical Myth and Feminist Thought*, Oxford, 399-410.

Conrad, J. 1917. *The Shadow-Line,* Turin.

Cox, F. 1999. *Aeneas Takes The Metro: The Presence of Virgil in Twentieth-Century French Literature*, Oxford.

---------- 2011. *Sibylline Sisters: Virgil's Presence in Contemporary Women's Writing*, Oxford.

Cox, F. & Theodorakopoulos, E. (forthcoming). 'Female Voices: the democratic turn in Ali Smith's reception'.

Culham, P. 1990. 'Decentering the Text: the Case of Ovid', *Helios* 17, 161-70.

Curran, L. C. 1984. 'Rape and Rape Victims in the *Metamorphoses*', in J. Peradotto & J. P. Sullivan (eds), *Women in the Ancient World: The Arethusa Papers*, Albany, 263-86.

De Luce, J. 1993. 'O for a thousand tongues to sing: a footnote on metamorphosis, silence and power', in M. DeForest (ed.), *Woman's Power, Man's Game. Essays on Classical Antiquity in Honor of Joy K. King*, Wauconda, 305-21.

Desmond, M. 1993. 'When Dido reads Vergil: gender and intertextuality in Ovid's *Heroides* 7', *Helios* 20, 56-68.

duBois, P. 1998. *Sowing the Body: psychoanalysis and ancient representations of women*, Chicago.

Enterline, L. 2000. *The Rhetoric of the Body from Ovid to Shakespeare*, Cambridge.

Ferguson, A. 1990. 'Is There a Lesbian Culture?', in J. Allen (ed.), *Lesbian Philosophies and Cultures*, Albany, 63-88.

Flax, J. 1990. 'Postmodernism and Gender Relations in Feminist Theory', in L. J. Nicholson (ed.), *Feminism/ Postmodernism*, New York, 39-62.

Foley, H. P. 1981. 'The Conception of Women in Athenian Drama', in H. P. Foley, *Reflections of Women in Antiquity*, New York, London, Paris, 127-68.

Foucault, M. 1978. *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1: Introduction*, trans. R. Hurley, New York.

---------- 1979. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. A. Sheridan, New York.

---------- 1985. *The History of Sexuality: Volume 2: The Use of Pleasure*, trans. R. Hurley, New York.

---------- 1986. *The History of Sexuality: Volume 3: The Care of the Self*, trans. R. Hurley, New York.

Fowler, D. 1997. 'Second Thoughts on Closure', in D. H. Roberts, F. M. Dunn & D. Fowler (eds), *Classical Closure: Reading the End in Greek and Latin Literature*, Princeton, 3-22.

Foxhall, L. 1994. 'Pandora Unbound: A Feminist critique of Foucault's History of Sexuality', in A. Cornwall & N. Lindisfarne (eds), *Dislocating Masculinity: Comparative Ethnographies*, New York, London, 133-46.

Frederick, D. 2002. *The Roman Gaze*, Baltimore.

Gamel, M. K. 1989. 'Non sine caede: abortion politics and poetics in Ovid's *Amores*', *Helios* 16, 183-206

Gentilcore, R. 1995. 'The landscape of desire: the tale of Pomona and Vertumnus in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*', *Phoenix* 49.2, 110-20.

Gilleland, M. 1980. 'Female Speech in Greek and Latin', *American Journal of Philology* 101, 180-83.

Gold, B. K. 1993. '"But Ariadne was Never There in the First Place": Finding the Female in Roman Poetry', in N. S. Rabinowitz & A. Richlin (eds), *Feminist Theory and the Classics*, New York, London, 75-101.

---------- 1997. 'Feminism and Classics: Framing the Research Agenda', *American Journal of Philology* 118.2, 328-32.

Gubar, S. & Hoff, J. (eds) 1989. *For Adult Users Only: The Dilemma of Violent Pornography*, Bloomington.

Gutzwiller, K. & Michelini, A. N. 1991. 'Women and other strangers: feminist perspectives in classical literature', in J. E. Hartman & E. Messering-Davidow (eds), *(En)gendering Knowledge: Feminists in Academe*, Knoxville, 66-84.

Habinek, T. N. 1998. *The Politics of Latin Literature: Writing, Identity, and Empire in Ancient Rome*, Princeton.

Hallett, J. P. & Skinner, M. B. (eds) 1997. *Roman Sexualities*, Princeton.

Halperin, D. 1990. *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality*, New York, London.

Halperin, D. M., Winkler, J. J. & Zeitlin, F. I. (eds) 1990. *Before Sexuality: The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World*, Princeton.

Hanson, A. E. 1990. 'The Medical Writer's Woman', in D. M. Halperin, J. J. Winkler & F. I. Zeitlin (eds), *Before Sexuality: The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World*, Princeton, 309-38.

Harbage, A. & Schoenbaum, S. (ed.) 1989. *Annals of English Drama 975-1700*, London.

Hardy, C. S. 1995. 'Ecphrasis and the male narrator in Ovid's Arachne', *Helios* 22, 140-8.

Harrison, S. 2005. ''Waves of Emotion': An Epic Metaphor in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*', in S. Frangoulidis, S. Harrison & M. Paschalis (eds), *Metaphor and the Ancient Novel*, Groningen, 163-76.

Harvey, E. 1989. 'Ventriloquizing Sappho: Ovid, Donne, and the erotics of the feminine voice', *Criticism* 31, 115-38.

Hemker, J. 1985. 'Rape and the Founding of Rome', *Helios* 12, 41-47.

Hinds, S. E. 1992a. '*Arma* in Ovid's *Fasti* Part 1: genre and mannerism', *Arethusa* 25, 81-112.

---------- 1992b. '*Arma* in Ovid's *Fasti* Part 2: genre, Romulean Rome and Augustan ideology', *Arethusa* 25, 113-53.

Hulme, T. E. 1924. 'Romanticism and Classicism' in H. Read (ed.) *Speculations*, London and New York.

Irigaray, L. 1985. *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. G. Gill, Ithaca.

James, S. L. 1997. 'Slave rape and female silence in Ovid's love poetry', *Helios* 24, 60-76.

Joplin, P. K. 1984. 'The voice of the shuttle is ours', *Stanford Literary Review* 1, 25-53.

---------- 1990. 'Ritual work on human flesh: Livy's Lucretia and the rape of the body politic', *Helios* 17, 51-70.

Joshel, S. 1992. 'The Body Female and the Body Politic: Livy's Lucretia and Verginia' in A. Richlin (ed.) *Pornography and Representation in Greece and Rome*, New York, Oxford, 112-30.

Kaplan, E. A. 1983. 'Is the Gaze Male?', in A. B. Snitow, C. Stansell & S. Thompson (eds), *Powers of Desire: the politics of sexuality*, New York, 309-27.

Kappeler, S. 1986. *The Pornography of Representation*, Minneapolis.

Kennard, J. E. 1978. *Victims of Convention*, Hamden.

Kennedy, D. 1993. *The Arts of Love: Five Studies in the Discourse of Roman Love Elegy*, Cambridge.

Keuls, E. C. 1985. *The Reign of the Phallus: Sexual Politics in Ancient Athens*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London.

Konstan, D. & Nussbaum, M. (eds) 1990. *Greece and Rome*

Kristeva, J. 1969a. 'Le Texte clos', in J. Kristeva (ed.), *Σημειωτικη: Recherches pour une sémanalyse*, Paris, 113-42.

---------- 1969b. 'Le mot, le dialogue et le roman', in J. Kristeva (ed.), Σημειωτικη: *Recherches pour une sémanalyse*, Paris, 143-73.

---------- 1980. 'Word, Dialogue and the Novel', in L. S. Roudiez (ed.) *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, New York, 64-91.

---------- 1984. *Revolution in Poetic Language*, trans. A. Jardine, New York.

Lacquer, T. 1990. *Making Sex: body and gender from the Greeks to Freud*, Cambridge, MA.

Lardinois, A. & McClure, L. (eds) 2001. *Making Silence Speak: Women's Voices in Greek Literature and Society*, Princeton, Oxford.

Lefkowitz, M. & Fant, M. (eds) 1982. *Women's Life in Greece and Rome,* Baltimore.

Lianeri, A. & Zajko, V. (eds) 2008. *Translation and the Classic: Identity as Change in the History of Culture*, Oxford.

Lindheim, S. H. 2003. *Mail and Female: Epistolary Narrative and Desire in Ovid's* Heroides, Madison, London.

Liveley, G. 2005. *Ovid: Love Songs*, Bristol.

---------- 2006. 'Surfing the Third Wave? Postfeminism and the Hermeneutics of Reception', in C. Martindale & R. F. Thomas (eds), *Classics and the Uses of Reception*, Oxford, 55-66.

Lyly, J. *Gallathea*, in L. Scragg (ed.) 2003: 131-189.

Marcus, J. 1984. 'Still Practice, A/Wrested Alphabet: Towards a Feminist Aesthetic', *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 3.1/2, 79-97.

Marder, E. 1992. 'Disarticulated Voices: Feminism and Philomela', *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy* 7.2, 148-66.

McClure, L. (ed.) 2002. *Sexuality and Gender in the Classical World: Readings and Sources*, Oxford, Malden, MA.

McManus, B. F. 1997. *Classics and Feminism: Gendering the Classics*, New York.

Meskell, L. 1998. 'The Irresistible Body and the Seduction of Archaeology' in D. Montserrat (ed.), *Changing Bodies, Changing Meanings: Studies on the human body in antiquity*, London, 139-161.

Mohanty, C. 1991. 'Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses', in C. Mohanty, A. Russo & L. Torres (eds), *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*, Bloomington, 51-80.

Montserrat, D. (ed.) 1998. *Changing Bodies, Changing Meanings: Studies on the human body in antiquity*, London.

Morris, W. 1880. 'The Beauty of Life', lecture given to the Birmingham Society of Arts and School of Design, 19th February 1880.

Mulvey, L. 1975. 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', *Screen* 16.3, 6-18.

Murgatroyd, P. 1995. 'The Sea of Love', *Classical Quarterly* 45, 9-25.

Murray, I. 2006. 'Ali Smith', in I. Murray (ed.), *Scottish Writers Talking: Vol. 3*, Edinburgh, 186-229.

Murray, P. 1998. 'Bodies in Flux: Ovid's *Metamorphoses*', in D. Montserrat (ed.), *Changing Bodies, Changing Meanings: Studies on the human body in antiquity*, London, 80-98.

Muscogiuri, P. A. 2002. 'Cinematographic seas: metaphors of crossing and shipwreck on the big screen (1990-2001)', in K. Bernhard (ed.), *Fictions of the Sea. Critical Perspectives on the Ocean in British Literature and Culture*, Aldershot and Burlington, 203-220.

----------2006. *The Sign of the Breaker. Shipwreck, Sea and Language in (Post)Modernity*, Salford.

---------- 2011. '"This, I fancy, must be the sea": Thalassic Aesthetics in Virginia Woolf 's Writing', in K. Czarnecki & C. Rohman (eds), *Virginia Woolf and the Natural World: Selected Papers from the Twentieth Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf*, Clemson, 101-107.

Myerowitz, M. 1985. *Ovid's Games of Love*, Detroit.

Myers, K. S. 1996. 'The poet and the procuress: the *lena* in Latin love elegy', *JRS* 86, 1-21.

Nicholson, L. 1994. Interpreting *Gender. Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 20.1, 79-105.

Ostrovsky, E. 1991. *A Constant Journey: The Fiction of Monique Wittig*, Carbondale.

Pomeroy, S. B. 1975. *Goddesses, Whores, Wives and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity*, New York.

Porter, J. I. (ed.) 1999. *Constructions of the Classical Body*, Michigan.

Rabinowitz, N. S. & Auanger, L. (eds) 2002. *Among Women: From the Homosocial to the Homoerotic in the Ancient World*, Austin.

Rabinowitz, N. S. & Richlin, A. (eds) 1993. *Feminist Theory and the Classics*, New York, London.

Richlin, A. 1983. *The Garden of Priapus*, New Haven.

---------- 1991. 'Zeus and Metis: Foucault, Feminism, Classics', *Helios* 18.2, 1-21.

---------- (ed.) 1992. *Pornography and Representation in Greece and Rome*, New York, Oxford.

Rimmel, V. 2006. *Ovid's lovers: desire, difference and the poetic imagination*, New York, Cambridge.

Roberts, M. 1987. *The Book of Mrs Noah*, London.

Salzman-Mitchell, P. B. 2005. *A Web of Fantasies: gaze, image and gender in Ovid's* Metamorphoses, Columbus.

Scragg, L. (ed.) 2003. *John Lyly: Selected Prose and Dramatic Work* (2nd edn), Manchester.

---------- 1977. 'Shakespeare, Lyly and Ovid: The Influence of *Gallathea* on *A Midsummer Night's Dream*', *Shakespeare Survey* 30, 125-34.

Segal, C. 1969. 'Landscape in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*: A Study in the Transformations of a Literary Symbol', *Hermes Einzelschriften* 23.

---------- 1994. 'Philomela's Web and the Pleasures of the Text: reader and violence in the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid', in I. J. F. de Jong & J. P. Sullivan (eds), *Modern Critical Theory and Classical Literature*, Leiden, 257-80.

---------- 1998. 'Ovid's metamorphic bodies: art, gender and violence in the *Metamorphoses*', *Arion* 5, 9-41.

Shakespeare, W. 1907. *Collected Works*, London.

Shannon, L. 2000. 'Nature's Bias: Renaissance Homonormativity and Elizabethan Comic Likeness', *Modern Philology* 98.2, 183-210.

Sharrock, A. R. 1991. 'Womanufacture', *JRS* 81, 36-49.

---------- 2002. 'Gender and Sexuality', in P. Hardie (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Ovid*, Cambridge, 95-107.

Skinner, M. B. 1985. 'Classical Studies vs. Women's Studies: duo moi ta noemmata', *Helios* 12, 3-17.

---------- 1996. 'Zeus and Leda: The Sexuality Wars in Contemporary Classical Scholarship', *Thamyris* 3.1, 103-23.

---------- 1987a. 'In Response to Thomas Fleming, "Des dames du temps jadis", CJ 82 (1986) 73-80. Des Bonnes Dames et Méchantes', *The Classical Journal* 83.1, 69-74.

---------- 1987b. 'Classical studies, patriarchy and feminism: The view from 1986', *Women's Studies International Forum* 10.2, 181-86.

Smith, A. 1998. *Like*, London.

---------- 2003. *The Whole Story and Other Stories*, London.

---------- (ed.) 2006. *The Reader: Ali Smith*, London.

---------- 2008. 'True short story', in A. Smith, *The first person and other stories*, London, 1-17.

---------- 2012. *Artful*, London.

Spelman, E. 1988. *Inessential Woman*, Boston.

Spentzou, E. 2003. *Readers and Writers in Ovid's* Heroides*: transgressions of genre and gender*, Oxford.

Spivak, G. 1993. 'Echo', *New Literary History* 24, 17-43.

Sullivan, J. P. (ed.) 1973. *Arethusa* 6.1

Verducci, F. 1985. *Ovid's Toyshop of the Heart: Epistulae Heroidum*, Princeton.

Volk, K. 2010. 'Women', in K. Volk (ed.), *Ovid: Blackwell Introductions to the Classical World*, Oxford, 81-93.

Wharton, A. S. 2005. *The Sociology of Gender: An Introduction to Theory and Research*, Oxford.

Winkler, J. J. 1990. *Constraints of Desire: anthropology of sex and gender in ancient Greece*, New York, London.

Wittig, M. 1975. *The Lesbian Body*, trans. D. Le Vay, Boston.

---------- 1997. 'One is Not Born a Woman', in L. Nicholson (ed.), *The Second Wave: A Reader in Feminist Theory*, New York, 265-271.

---------- 2005. 'Some Remarks on *The Lesbian Body*', in N. Shaktini (ed.), *On Monique Wittig: Theoretical, Political and Literary Essays*, Urbana and Chicago, 44-48.

Wixson, C. 2001. 'Cross-dressing and John Lyly's *Gallathea*', *SEL Studies in English Literature* 41.2, 241-56.

Wolfe, S. 1978. 'Stylistic Experimentation in Millett, Johnston and Wittig', at the Modern Language Association (MLA) convention, New York, December 1978, cited in Zimmerman 1981: 355.

Woolf, V. 1925a. *Mrs Dalloway*, London.

---------- 1925b. 'On Not Knowing Greek', in V. Woolf, *The Common Reader*, London, 39-59.

---------- 1927. *To The Lighthouse*, London.

---------- 1928. *A Room of One's Own*, London.

---------- 1931. *The Waves*, London.

Wyke, M. 1989. 'Mistress and Metaphor in Augustan elegy', *Helios* 16, 25-47.

---------- 1998. *Parchments of Gender: Deciphering the Body in Antiquity*, Oxford.

Zajko, V. & Leonard, M. (eds) 2006. *Laughing with Medusa: Classical Myth and Feminist Thought*, Oxford.

Zeitlin, F. 1985. 'Playing the Other: Theatre, Theatricality and the Feminine in Greek Drama', *Representations* 11, 63-94.

Zeitlin, F. 1996. *Playing the Other: Gender and Society in Classical Greek Literature*, Chicago, London.

Zimmerman, B. 1981. 'What has never been: an overview of lesbian feminist criticism', *Feminist Studies* 7.3, 341-366.

WEB ARTICLES

Konstan, D. 2000. 'Women, Ethnicity and Power in the Roman Empire', http://www.stoa.org/diotima/essays/konstan1.pdf

Ormand, K. 1996. 'Positions for Classicists, or Why Should Feminist Classicists Care about Queer Theory?', http://www.stoa.org/diotima/essays/ormand96.shtml

Resinski, R. 1997. 'Constituting an Adorned Female Body--from Pandora to Livy's Lex Oppia', http://www.stoa.org/diotima/essays/resinski.shtml