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Circe’s Understanding of Rape Victims in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses, XIV*

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I. INTRODUCTION: PREDATOR AS READER

Violence in idyllic settings crafts a type of informal “education” by which characters of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* learn from previous stories how to (re)act and how to understand their situations and roles within the narrative. The goddess Circe receives such an education from successful and unsuccessful rapes committed by divine or semi-divine beings on others who travel in idyllic scenery. In this paper I argue that Circe exploits this understanding in order to make her attempt on Picus, thus “reading” the *Metamorphoses* to achieve her victory over and metamorphical rape of her love-prey.

The idea of a female character reacting to the narrative based on her “understanding” of previous stories in the *Metamorphoses* originates in the work of John Heath. He identifies a narrative pattern of a virgin huntress who is devoted to Diana and who sets aside her weapons in a pleasant spot (*locus amoenus*) to rest from

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1 This paper is based on an earlier, briefer paper given at the CANE conference on March 7, 2014. I would like to thank Wolfgang Haase, Derick Alexandre, and Teresa Ramsby for their input on earlier versions of this paper.
the day’s sporting activities and the midday heat, only to be assaulted. This maiden huntress becomes a potential or an actual rape victim as she wanders in the woods, and she undergoes metamorphosis either as a means to escape or as a result of her attack. According to Heath, the narrative elements of a virgin huntress devoted to Diana, of wandering in the woods, and of resting from the exhausting hunt and midday heat inform Diana how to respond to the perceived threat of her own rape. Heath suggests that Diana is a “reader” of the *Metamorphoses* who, when her bath is disturbed and her virgin nakedness becomes visible to male eyes, “reacts to the only paradigm pattern she understands, that of the narrative pattern which makes her open to assault.” Like female victims in previous tales, the goddess exudes vulnerability because of her intact virginity, her unarmed state, and her respite in a *locus amoenus* during the midday heat. Actaeon also qualifies as a potential rape victim since his narrative possesses the elements that lead to sexual attack: he, a hunter, sets aside his weapons and wanders in a shady *locus amoenus* in order escape the midday heat. Diana, however, “is not aware of the similar patterns which have established Actaeon as an object of erotic attack as well,” and thus misinterprets the “unintentional voyeurism” of Actaeon “as an attack on her virginity.” According to Heath, Diana is “reading” the *Metamorphoses*, utilizing previous stories of assaults on maidens to anticipate her own possible rape.

Although Heath’s formulation of the idea of Diana as reader succeeds, he errs by assigning the narrative pattern only to the virgin huntress, despite his own obser-

3 Ibid. (pp. 238–239).
5 For a valuable discussion of women as readers in another Ovidian work, the *Heroides*, see Fulkerson: “I will argue throughout this book that Ovid conceived of his literary creations as incorporating prior and contemporary texts into their poetry and that, like himself, some of them are remarkably sophisticated and astute readers. Often, however, inexperience and a tendency to privilege family connections lead them to allude to texts dissimilar to their own in key respects or to construe literature in dangerous and misleading ways. Reading, then, figures centrally in the corpus insofar as the heroines base their own words on their interpretations of the stories of other abandoned women in their community. To this extent they read “resistantly,” seeking from canonical poetry information it does not offer. Yet at the same time, to use a different critical vocabulary, they also “misread” (a Bloomian sign of the powerful poet).” (2005, pp. 4–5).
7 Ibid. (p. 242).
8 Ibid. (p. 242).
vation that Io is not a hunter,\textsuperscript{9} noting that her narrative adds the important element of the danger of midday.\textsuperscript{10} Her example proves that the victim in the rape narrative pattern is not limited to the vocation of huntress/hunter.\textsuperscript{11} Whereas many of the rapes/attempted rapes discussed in Heath and this paper do concern hunters, the narrative elements of traveling without custodes/comites (this element may also lead to the additional element of stopping to rest from the midday heat and hunt for hunters) on foot in a locus amoenus and of being sexually unwilling or unavailable (ei-

\textsuperscript{9} Ibid. (p. 234).
\textsuperscript{10} Ibid. (p. 233).
\textsuperscript{11} Hunters are indeed important to the understanding of the narrative economy in that their vocation signifies for the poet and audience a rejection of amor. Hunters (Daphne, Syrinx, Arethusa, Callisto, Narcissus, Picus) equal non-lovers, and lovers (Salmacis, Echo, Circe) equate to non-hunters. “By concentrating on the love/hunt antinomy, we are in effect selecting a sub-group of love-stories in which at least one of the two actors, Lover or Beloved is pictured as a hunter.” (Davis 1983, p. 15).

The object of the lover-hunters differs from that of real hunters: for the latter it is animal prey, for the former love prey. While hunters do trigger for the reader the motif of the non-lover, the non-hunting victims also reject and attempt to flee love. This anti-sexuality (for Picus, extra-marital sexuality) stance is an important characteristic for both hunting victims and the other rape victims in this discussion. Like Daphne before them, Cupid presumably has shot these non-hunters with a lead-tipped arrow that causes them to flee love. Both hunting and non-hunting victims figuratively become the hunted in the love chase; they become both the prey of Cupid’s archery and of that divinity’s lust. In addition to the rejection of amor, hunting and non-hunting victims also share other attributes: devotion to chastity, rejection of many suitors, intolerance of opposite-sex company, the roaming of trackless paths (which are “virginal” like the chase victims who travel them and which prefigure violence (see Parry 1964, p. 276) and exceptional beauty (see Davis 1983, pp. 43–71, for these attributes of Daphne, not all of which the other hunter-nymphs possess). The narrator gives little detail of Io prior to her rape, but her identification as a nymph and a virgo (I.589) signals her subsequent rejection and attempted flight of amor, since the Ovidian narrative thus far has indicated virgin nymphs reject amor, despite no explicit mention of Io as huntress devoted to Diana. She is a Naiad, an implicit signification that she is devoted to chastity (and perhaps also the hunt) as it is only Salmacis who solaque Naiadam celeri non nota Dianae (IV.304; Echo is another pro-love nymph, but she is an Oread, rather than a Naiad, and thus sola Naiadum nota Dianae does not apply to her). In her brief account of her rape, the Crow informs us of her status as a regia virgo, her many suitors (presumably rejected since she remained a virgo), her beauty that causes her harm, and her roaming on trackless paths (the beach) (II.570–573). The fact that Minerva, a virgin goddess, although not the virgin goddess of the hunt, answers the maiden’s prayer to no one in particular by preserving her virginity, may suggest the Crow’s devotion to chastity. Hermaphroditus’ upbringing by Naiads connects him with the Ovidian nymthic devotion to chastity witnessed thus far, and may explain his rejection of Salmacis’ advances. As a son of Venus and Hermes, he also possesses exceptional good looks. Although he does not wander trackless paths (roads less traveled by anyone) as a hunter, he travels in places unfamiliar to him. Scylla, a virgo, rejects many suitors and the company of men, instead preferring the company of Nereids (XIII.734–737). Scylla also wanders on trackless paths, the dry sands of the beach (XIII.901).
ther through devotion to virginity or chastity) are essential to the pattern of sexual assault. The paradigm of travel without companions in an idyllic place informs Circe in her understanding of successful and unsuccessful rapes. As they did for Diana before her, these previous stories illustrate how Circe must react. Unlike Diana who perceives herself as victim, however, Circe understands and “reads” herself as masculine aggressor whose utilization of situational possibilities will determine the final outcome.

These narratives reverse gender roles: the males are effeminized as they fail to demonstrate and exercise their imperium over feminine bodies through penetration, while females become masculinized as they physically violate male victims through the destruction of their form and identity. Those who are masculine “rape”; those who are effeminate/feminine fail in rape or are “raped.” Unlike their male counterparts, female predators cannot force sexual rape on their love-prey, so they must dominate their male victims through mutilation of the body. Circe violates the human nature of Picus to demonstrate her imperium over him. As a bird, he must live under the control of Circe in the woods that border her realm (Circaea … arva, XIV.348).

12 Davis likewise observes this element of sexual unavailability: “... it is not so much the technically defined condition of the recruit that matters (virgin/non-virgin spouse) as the underlying mental commitment (avoidance/non-avoidance of amor).” (Davis 1983, p. 136, n. 139). Most of the victims are described as attracting or rejecting suitors (Daphne, I.478; Syrinx, II.692-694; the Crow, II.371, Narcissus, III.353-355; Scylla, XIII.735; Picus, XIV.326-332). No suitors are mentioned in the Io episode, but Jupiter calls her virgo (I.589), thus indicating her devotion to chastity. Note the similarity between Daphne, multi illam petiere (I.478) and Picus, illum fontana petebant (XIV.2327). This echo of phrasing, in conjunction with the theme of amor-rejecting hunters, connects the two rape episodes.

13 Trackless paths could also be added to this group of narrative elements. Many of these victims travel on trackless paths – roads not often traveled, or pathless walkways (such as the beach): Daphne: nemora avia (I.479); Callisto: cum subit illa nemus, quod nulla ceciderat actas (II.418); Crow: summa ... barena (II.573); Narcissus: devia rura (III.370); Hermaphroditus: ignotis ... locis (IV.296); Sylla: bibula ... barea (XIII.901). The narratives that do not make explicit mention of these trackless paths can be assumed since these episodes occur in the wooded groves or off-the-path fields.


15 “A reversal of this ideal dominion of Roman men over women was held to be especially shocking,” (Williams 2010, p. 150).

Circe’s attack on Picus, the last story of near-rape in the *Metamorphoses*, displays learning from previous rape stories. Circe receives information from Glaucus about his own attempted rape of Scylla when he wishes to gain her herbal aids, and she is also the daughter of the “all-seeing” Sun. Circe uses this description herself when she addresses Picus: *et socerum qui pervidet omnia Solem/acipe* (“accept as your father-in-law the Sun who sees all things,” XIV.375-376). Circe’s (re)actions indicate

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17 For the problem of Circe as Picus’ *coniunx* in the *Aeneid*, see Moorton (1988). In Vergil, Circe changes Picus into a woodpecker (*Aen.* VII.187-191), although here she is also his wife. Servius (ad *Aen.* VII.190) mentions another source that writes that Picus is married to Pomona and Circe punishes Picus with transformation into a woodpecker because of rejection (Moorton 1988, p. 254). For a discussion of erotic love triangles in the *Metamorphoses*, including Glaucus–Scylla–Circe and Picus–Circe–Canens, see Nagle (1988a). The love triangle between Picus–Circe–Canens appears to be original to Ovid (Myers 2009, p. 112). Canens also appears to be an invention of Ovid (Papaioannou 2012, p. 115). For a discussion of Ovid’s *Aeneid/Odyssey* see Ellsworth (1986 and 1988).

18 The story of Pomona and Vertumnus does not end in rape: *vimque parat, sed vi non est opus, inque figura/ capta dei nymphe est et mutua vulnera sensit* (“he prepared violence, but there was no need, and the nymph was seized by the beauty of the god and felt mutual wounds,” XIV.770). See Davis (1983, pp. 66-71) for a discussion of Pomona as a nymph who is able “to transcend the anti-sexual norm and become a mature participant in a mutual love.” (1983, p. 67). See also Murgatroyd (2000) for three stages in rape narratives in the *Metamorphoses*.

19 The narrator reminds his readers of the Sun’s ability to see all and his past history of telling on the gods in the phrase *seu Venus indicio facit hoc offensa paterno* (XIV.27), a line from the narrative when Circe falls for Glaucus. The narrator uses this phrase to explain the two possible causes of Circe’s nature: “for no woman has a nature (*ingenium*) more suited to such flames, whether the cause of this being in her herself, or whether Venus brings this about, offended by her father’s informing,” (XIV.25-27). Circe’s ignited passions may be punishment from Venus for her father’s tattle-taling about the love goddess’ affair on her husband. Although this phrase refers to the affair of Venus and Mars, its meaning and significance can be extended to the love/rape stories in the *Metamorphoses*. As the divinity in charge of love, Venus (or her son Amor, since he must obey his mother’s commands) is responsible for those who fall in love with these victims. The “all-seeing” Sun has seen all the (near-) rapes, the work of Venus and Cupid, and possibly has disclosed this information to his daughter, Circe. Thus the phrase *indicio offensa paterno* refers not only to Venus’ affair with Mars, but also to the affairs/rapes she or her son Amor have inflicted on others which the Sun has reported to his daughter. The first “love story” of Daphne and Apollo shows that the shafts of Cupid are the ultimate cause of Apollo’s love for Daphne and Daphne’s rejection of the god. As Stephens rightly acknowledges “Cupid’s first appearance, then, serves to emphasize his great superiority over the gods, who are as far below him as mortal beings are below the gods.” (1958, p. 290). The Venus of the *Metamorphoses* also enlists her son to strike Pluto with his arrows, which brings about the rape of Proserpina and Venus’ and Cupid’s victory over all realms (V.346-384 for episode). See Johnson for a discussion of the importance of the role of Venus in Persephone’s rape and its connection with Augustan ideology (1996, pp. 125-149). This story of the rape of Proserpina “is told to show Cupid’s power, for after his mother’s appeal he once more asserts his supremacy by overcoming Dis and, through him, Proserpina.” (Stephens 1998, p. 291). The rapes do not leave Cupid or his mother Venus in a positive light since all victims are virgins, many are devoted to Diana, and some would be victims of extramarital affairs. Although, as Stephens observes, Cupid is not mentioned in most of the
she has pilfered useful knowledge from the previous episodes, whether through her father or through a metaphorical reading of the poem. From past mistakes and successes in the *Metamorphoses*, Circe understands that she must get Picus on foot, remove his companions, and utilize her power of magic.

II. LESSON ONE: GET THE LOVE-PREY ON FOOT

Circe ascertains from attempts on unwilling lovers that she must deprive a victim of the aid of any beast of burden which would quicken his flight. All victims of rapes and attempted rapes are on foot, usually in an idyllic place such as the woods or the beach. In the first “love” story of the *Metamorphoses*, Daphne sets the theme of unrequited love in the epic: *protinus alter amat, fugit altera nomen amantis* (“Instantly he loves, she flees the name of lover,” I.474). Like Callisto, Syrinx, and Arethusa, Daphne is a follower of Diana and devotes herself to woodland haunts and trophies of beasts (I.475-476). She wanders the pathless groves (*nemora avia lustrat*, I.479). All other victims are traveling in a *locus amoenus* when their attacker catches sight of and lusts for them: Io is returning from her father’s river when Jupiter sees her

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love stories, “there is no reason to doubt his activity in them,” and “his specific denial of responsibility for Myrrha’s passion (X.311): *ipse negat nocuisse tibi sua tela Cupido*, indicates that in most cases he is accountable.” (1998, p. 291). Cupid does make an appearance in a later love/rape episode, but in the sense of “desire.” In the episode of Glaucus and Scylla, the god remains rooted to his spot when he sees the girl because of *cupido*: *Glaucus adest visaeque cupidine virginis haeret*, (“Glaucus is present and, having seen the maiden, is rooted to the spot with desire for her,” XIII.906). *Cupido* controls the aggressor, as Amor controlled Apollo’s reaction to Daphne, with his arrow, here causing him to stay rooted in his spot, similar to when someone stricken by love loses all ability to speak to the object of his affection. It would seem that Venus, then, is responsible for the *flamma amoris* that occurs in the aggressor, either through her own doing or through her son’s arrows, although the pair are not always explicitly mentioned as the *causae amoris*. In most episodes, rapists are described with fire or burning terminology when they see their victims: Apollo (I.495-496); Jupiter (II.409-410); Neptune (II.574); Echo (II.370-374). Cupid’s torch would be the cause of these flames, burning, and heat. Similarly in the *Aeneid*, “Vergil described Cupid’s work to create in Dido love for Aeneas entirely in the metaphorical terms of fire.” (Anderson 1995, p. 192).

20 Circe may have received her information from *Fama*, who sees all things (XII.62-63). *Fama* has thus “published” the narratives of earlier rapes and Circe has “read” diligently that she may succeed in her own rape.

21 All translations in this discussion are my own. Text is OCT, Tarrant (2004).

22 For a starting bibliography for the rape episodes mentioned in this discussion, see: Barnard (1975); Cairns (1981); Creese (2009); Edwards (2002); Francese (2004); Fulkerson (2012); James (1986); W.R. Johnson (1996); Gildenhard and Zissos (2000); Hollis (1996); Keith (1993); Knox (1990); Lowe (2011); Mader (2009); Milowicki (1996); Murgatroyd (2000); Murgia (1984); Musgrove (1998); Nagle (1988b);
(I.588-589); Syrinx is returning from the Lycaean Hill when Pan sights her (I.698-699); Callisto is lying down in a grove when Jupiter, disguised as Diana, attacks her (II.418-425); the Crow, in her previous form of a royal maiden, is strolling on the beach when the sea god pursues her (II.573-576); Narcissus is wandering through de-via rura (III.370) when Echo begins to follow him; Hermaphroditus has been wandering in unknown places (IV.294-295) when he stumbles upon a pond where the nymph Salmacis catches sight of him; Arethusa is returning from the Stymphalian wood (V.585); Scylla either wanders on the sand without clothing, or finds a place to rest in a secluded recess of the sea (XIII.900-903) when Glaucus sees and desires her.

These previous attacks set a precedent for Circe - she must force her victim Picus on foot. Ovid helps the witch by changing “Vergil’s augur-Picus to hunting Picus,” as Hardie notes. The poet also specifically situates Picus within hunting scenery, and as no previous source “specifies that the transformation took place during a hunting expedition,” Ovid does so in order to connect the king with the previous hunter-rape victims whose narratives thereby foreshadow his vulnerability and victimization. Picus also remains vulnerable because he lacks experience in war, as Hardie observes: “There is no suggestion that Ovid’s Picus has actually gone to war; rather, the adolescent hunter recalls Vergil’s Ascanius (also Lausus), hunting boar to train for war and manhood, his behavior echoing the youthful impetuosity of his Vergilian antecedent.” Picus’ martial inexperience, to which we will return later in this paper, makes him a defenseless target for the masculine and aggressive Circe.

23 Ovid often names or indicates the actual idyllic locations where victims live and/or travel. For example: Daphne and Io live in the Vale of Tempe; Syrinx lives and Callisto hunts in Arcadia; Arethusa travels in Arcadia. Hinds observes: “By far the most notable concentration of landscape descriptions anywhere in Ovid occurs in the poem’s first five books: Daphne, Io, Callisto, Actaeon, Narcissus and Echo, Pyramus and Thisbe, Salmacis and Hermaphroditus, the Muses, Proserpina, Arethusa – all these act out their stories in essentially interchangeable loca amoena.” (2002, pp. 127-128). These stories (with the exception of Pyramus and Thisbe) have not only interchangeable loca amoena, but also similar rape narratives.


26 Hardie (2010, p. 15).
While in the woods collecting herbs, Circe catches sight of Picus hunting on horseback in the Laurentine countryside, but she cannot speak to him: “The running of the horse and his surrounding bodyguard made it so that she could not approach him” (ne posset adire/ cursus qui fecit circumfususque satelles, XIV.353-354). She thus must find a way to get her love-prey alone. As Segal recognizes, Circe is aggressive because “she invades hitherto peaceful places”27 – here, Picus’ Saturnian woods. Whereas other literary Circes must lure their victims by song or hearth smoke, Ovid’s Circe does not limit herself to her palace and its immediate surroundings.28 Instead she instigates and initiates the victim’s danger,29 just like the other rapists in the *Metamorphoses*. In order to lure Picus and get him on foot, Circe uses magic to form the likeness of a boar with no body (effigiem nullo cum corpore falsi/ fingit apri, XIV.358-359), which goes into a grove too thick for Picus’ horse (XIV.359-361). Picus wastes no time in leaving his horse behind and hunting his quarry, not knowing that he himself is becoming another’s prey:

haud mora, continuo praedae petit inscius umbram
Picus equique celer spumantia terga relinquit
spemque sequens vanam silva pedes errat in alta. XIV.362-364

Without delay, Picus, ignorant, immediately seeks the shadow of booty and he quickly abandons the sweating back of his horse and following a vain hope he wanders on foot in the deep woods.

Circe thus continues the modus operandi of previous attackers in seeking prey who do not have the assistance of a quick beast. All the rape stories demonstrate that a *locus amoenus* promises not safety but violence for the one wandering or alone.30 Circe now has Picus where she wants him: on foot in the woods and surrounded by thickets that make escape difficult. As a disciple of those rape stories, Circe knows that she needs to do more than get Picus on foot, she must also remove his *comites*.

27 Segal (1968, p. 441).
28 Perhaps, in line with Fulkerson’s thinking, Circe has “read” herself in other texts and decides that a more aggressive approach would yield more rewarding results (2005; see note 5 above).
29 Ibid.
III. LESSON TWO:
REMOVE ANY AND ALL COMPANIONS

In all previous examples of the *Metamorphoses*, the narrator mentions only the presence of the victim and attacker, and the description of the chase or attack does not describe any viewers or other participants. In fact, Ovid removes companions to victims who should have them; it would be unusual for hunters and royal/nympthic maidens not to have companions, guardians, or attendants. In the chase of Daphne, she must call to her father (and Tellus) for help. In the story of Io, the narrator describes how Jupiter sees her returning from her father’s river alone, and Jupiter utilizes the adjective *sola* (I.593) when he tries to persuade Io to enter the lairs of the beasts. Moreover, Jupiter benefits from the lack of any witnesses who might report his crime to his wife, just as he does in his attack on Callisto. She has entered a grove and is relaxing on the grass when Jupiter appears to her as the goddess Diana. The narrator observes that she is alone when Jupiter sees her with the words *custode vacantem* (II.422). Syrinx is described as returning from the Lycaean Hill when Pan spots her. But it is not until she flees and reaches her *liquidas sorores* (I.704) that other companions are mentioned. These sisters provide her safety by transforming her into marsh canes.\(^{31}\) The Crow’s use of the first person singular verb *spatiarer* (II.573) reveals that she walks by herself on the beach.\(^{32}\) After the sea god prepares violence and pursues her, she flees and her call for help reveals that she does not have a companion, attendant, or guardian with her at the time. In the story of Narcissus, the narrator explicitly states that the boy is alone: *puer comitum seductus ab agmine fido* (“the boy split up from his loyal band of companions,” III.379). When Hermaphroditus leaves home and wanders in unknown places, the narrator mentions only him, and the scene with his attacker Salmacis includes no references to observers. In the episode of Arethusa and Alpheus, Arethusa uses first-person singular verbs (*revertebar*, V.585; *invenio*, V.587; *accessi, tinxi*, V.592, etc.) to indicate that she travels alone. Scylla has companions only before her attack; Galatea has finished her story and the gathering disperses. The Nereids depart, swimming in the waves (XIII.898–899), and

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\(^{31}\) The sisters most probably answer her entreaty and transform her into marsh canes. Anderson observes that there is no “specific divine agent,” although it seems safe to assume the sisters transformed Syrinx (1995, p. 217).

\(^{32}\) Caenis also travels on the beach, and Neptune successfully rapes her: *litora carpens/ aequorei vim passa dei (ita fama ferebat)* (“passing by the shore, she suffered the violence of the sea god (so the story goes),” XII.196–197). Because no details are given to the events leading up to the rape, the episode has been left out of the present discussion.
then Scylla returns, wandering on the sand, alone and vulnerable.  

As the last rapist of the *Metamorphoses*, Circe has diligently observed from preceding stories that the victims are without *custodes* and *comites* when attacked.

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33 It is interesting that Scylla fails to learn from Galatea’s tale of spurned love the lesson that jealousy can release such destruction. Spurned by Galatea, Polyphemus takes revenge on her lover Acis. Scylla, in turn, spurns Glaucus, who then rejects Circe. She, like Polyphemus, takes her revenge on her innocent rival. Nagle observes: “Scylla’s similarity to Acis finds a verbal echo in their respective transformations.” (1988, p. 83, n. 11). See XIV.59 and XIII.893 in which they are both described as standing waist-deep in the water.

34 Although it would seem that (attempted) rapes in myth and history occur when no witnesses are present, that is not always the case in Ovid. Not all rapes take place without witnesses: Cyane witnesses Pluto’s rapture of Proserpina, and she herself is metaphorically raped by Pluto with Proserpina present; Nessus attempts to rape Deianira with her husband Hercules present; and Eurytus makes an attempt on Hippodame at her own wedding festival. The attempted rapes of Nessus and Eurytus are unsuccessful because the rapists were not able to remove the *custodes* of their intended victim, as Pluto “removes” the obstruction (Cyane) to his rape. The female rape victims, like many *parthenoi* in Greek myth (see Decy 2002), are attacked when they, as female hunters, either reject the *oikos* and male social control and thus live without its protection, or, as non-hunters (Io, the Crow, and Salmacis in their walking), when they temporarily stray from the *oikos* and its protection. The male hunting victims (Narcissus and Picus), whose chastity is not protected by an *oikos* like that of females, lack protection from attackers when their hunting retinue is absent. A hunter, as Davis acknowledges in his discussion of the nymph-huntress, is not “an isolated individual but a member of a *comitatus*.” (Davis 1983, p. 59). Hunters have companions with them, and Ovid’s removal of them in the narrative is significant. “The physical isolation of the hunter from his companions is a motif cadence that Ovid utilizes” in the episodes of Daphne, Callisto, Narcissus, Arethusa, and Syrinx (Davis 1983, pp. 90–91). Like Deianira and Hippodame, Picus has *custodes* present to protect him from any violence. Ovid uses *comites* to describe these men but its meaning here additionally as “attendant, bodyguard,” is qualified by *custodia* in the same line (XIV.371) and by *satelles* in line 354. Ovid purposely creates vulnerability for these hunters by removing their hunting companions. He creates the same vulnerability for non-hunters who should be with peers or guardian attendants. The removal of Io’s female companions, the Naiads, reduces her as sexual prey not only with no one to aid her, but also with no witnesses of Jupiter’s affair. Used to the company of the Naiads who raised him, Hermaphroditus leaves their safety to fulfill his desire for *Wanderlust*, which for Davis, “may be interpreted as having a generative function analogous to the chase.” (1983, p. 84). This feminized male, like female victims, strays from his *oikos* (the company of his foster-mother Naiads) and so lacks protection from an attack on his chastity. The removal of his companions allows Salmacis the opportunity to satiate her own desires since his foster-mothers are not present either to protect him or to warn him that Salmacis is no ordinary Naiad. When Scylla departs from her nymphic companions, the Nereids, she loses the safety found in numbers. The Crow, as a royal maiden, is strangely without any attendants, bodyguards, or companions as she strolls on the beach. Ovid has purposely removed her necessary attendants in order to ensure her vulnerability. Sexual union also occurs with the absence of *comites* on a hunting expedition in Vergil: Davis points out that the isolation of Dido and Aeneas from their *comites* and their forced intermission from the hunt in *Aeneid* IV leads to their sexual union. (Davis 1983, p. 154).
Picus remains the only one of all the victims who has attendants with him when the attacker sees him. Circe must thus separate her love from his companions in order to make her entreaty to him. She utilizes her magic to accomplish her rapacious goal:

\[
\text{concipit illa preces et verba prequantia dicit}
\]
\[
\text{ignotosque deos ignoto carmine adorat,}
\]
\[
\text{quo solet et niveae vultum confundere lunae}
\]
\[
\text{et patrio capiti bibulas subtexere nubes.}
\]
\[
\text{tum quoque cantato densetur carmine caelum}
\]
\[
\text{et nebulas exhalat humus, caecisque vagantur}
\]
\[
\text{limitibus comites, et abest custodia regis.}
\]

XIV.365-371

She conceives her prayers and speaks praying words and worships unknown gods with an unknown song, with which she is accustomed to disturb even the face of the snowy moon, and to throw absorbent clouds over her father’s head. Then too, the sky is thickened as she sang her song and the earth breathes out mists, and his companions roam on blind paths, and the guard of the king is absent.

Circe creates mists so that Picus’ comrades are forced to wander blindly in the woods. She has therefore made them future victims, as they themselves wander, possibly separated from one another, without a possible pathway,\(^35\) until they do indeed become Circe’s victims, transformed like Ulysses’s men into beasts (XIV.412-415), after Picus’ transformation. Circe has gained the knowledge from the case of Callisto that, when guardians are not present, \((\text{custode vacantem, II.422})\), the prey is more easily accessed. She has also learned from the Crow, who calls to gods and mortals for help, that she must remove any mortal obstacles to her intended goal. Picus is alone now and she can do as she pleases with him. At first she entreats him, informing him of her status as goddess and as daughter of the Sun while proposing marriage. When he rejects her, she punishes him with magic. One lesson Circe has clearly

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\(^35\) Circe may have “learned” from her father himself the lesson of removing \textit{custodes}. The Sun god rapes Leucothoë (IV.190 ff.) by coming to her disguised as her mother. He sends away the servants in order to have a private conversation with the “daughter,” thereby removing any \textit{custodes} and allowing the rape to proceed. Since the episode takes place inside a bedroom, it is not considered in this discussion.
gathered from the successful rapes is to utilize her magic. Those attackers who did not use their power as divinities or semi-divine creatures lost their prey in one form or another. The secondary narrator Macareus retells the story of Circe’s famula, the primary narrator, who introduces the story as an example of the formidable potentia of Circe: “accipe,” ait “Macareu, dominaeque potentia quae sit/ hinc quoque disce meae; tu dictis adice mentem.” (“Listen,” she said, “Macareus, and learn from this too what power my mistress has; pay attention to my words,” XIV.318–319). This maidservant interestingly commands Macareus to learn from this metamorphical rape of Picus, just as Circe has read and learned from the previous rapes, which therefore informs her response to the narrative as it unfolds.

IV. LESSON THREE: UTILIZE (ONE’S OWN) POTENTIA

Prey’s use of numen

In unsuccessful rapes, victims utilize the power of a divinity or divine source to obtain safety. Even though successful rapists initially may use their physical strength in pursuit or struggle, they finally employ divine power to obtain their prey. Apollo is effeminized not only because he fails to penetrate his victim, but also because he himself is under the imperium of Cupid. He (and later Pan with Syrinx) attempts to restore and resecure his masculinity by holding imperium over Daphne’s transformed state.36 Apollo fails not only in demonstrating his masculinity, but also in using his divine powers. In the first “love story,” Apollo’s powers are greatly diminished by Cupid’s arrow: his skills with the bow are of no avail and the god of archery is defeated at his own game (certa quidem nostra est, nostra tamen una sagitta/ certior, in vacuo quae vulnera pectore fecit, I.519–520); his gifts of prophecy deceive him (suaque illum oracula fallunt, I.491); and his power of healing can do nothing to cure the wound inflicted by Amor (ei mibi, quod nullis amor est sanabilis herbis/ nec

36 Apollo fails to kiss Daphne, but succeeds in molesting her as a tree with kisses (I.556). Tarrant also notes Apollo’s partial success and observes: “The case of Apollo is of particular interest in that both his failed and successful approaches to Daphne are expressed in formal speech ... but what most distinguishes the two speeches is the shift from self-praise to tribute and the substitution of honor for marriage as the object sought. (A question of generic propriety may also be involved, since both speeches use clear elements of hymnic style: there is perhaps something indecorous in Apollo’s pronouncing in effect a hymn to himself, whereas a hymn addressed to Daphne has at least some chance of eliciting a gracious response.” (1995, p. 70, n. 22).
prosunt domino, quae prosunt omnibus artes! I.523-524).” Yet Apollo, at first, even fails to utilize his divine physical strength to its full potential. Instead he spends his time admiring Daphne’s beauty and entreaty her, and, so that she will not harm this beauty by falling in her escape, says, moderatius insequar ipse (“I shall pursue more moderately,” I.511). The god’s worry about possible injury to her beauty hinders him from catching his game. Instead of stopping her flight, as Jupiter does with Io, Apollo begs her to flee more moderately to match his own restrained pace. His entreaty to Daphne is twenty-one lines long, long enough so that Daphne can flee. Apollo then chases after her at a gallop with his pace no longer controlled (admisso sequitur vestigia passu, I.532) and pennis adiutus Amoris, (“helped by the wings of Love,” I.540). Instead of sapping his divine powers, love now gives him more divine physical strength. Apollo, however, still fails in obtaining his prey. Instead of overcoming Daphne with divine force, either in the form of physical strength or power (numen) from his father or another divinity to subvert nature to his needs, Apollo fails in his rape because his intended victim does utilizes divine power, the power of her father, to provide her safety:

‘fer, pater,’ inquit, ‘ope, si flumina numen habetis;
qua nimium placui, mutando perde figuram.’

I.546-547

‘Bring help, father,’ she said, ‘if your waters, you have divine power: destroy by transforming my form by which I have pleased too much.’

Apollo is too swept up in his own praises and self-love and thus loses his prey. Nicolas Gross notes, “Just as in the courtroom where a defendant often delivers a plea containing implications of his virtue, so too the lover can help his cause by


38 For unsuccessful attempts at persuasion in erotic contexts in Ovid’s Amores, Metamorphoses, and exile poetry, see Tarrant: “Whatever the particular reasons, it remains true that nowhere in the Metamorphoses is love successfully initiated by formal speech; by contrast, when Ovid describes the beginning of mutual love he presents it as a gradual and unspoken process.” (1995, p. 71).

39 And/or Tellus. “In fact, Ovid does not say which deity, if either, answered the prayer. But the transformation into a tree (and the later confusion as to Peneos’ reaction to the change, 578) imply that Tellus alone has acted with her earthly powers.” Anderson (1995, p. 199). For a brief description of the manuscript problem of Tellus, see Knox (1990, pp. 183-202).
suggesting his own good qualities. But while an ardent young man might be expected to suggest his worthiness, Apollo exaggerates his own praises.” Apollo, in fact, does more than praise himself: he ‘hymns’ himself in the first person by naming his sanctuaries, emphasizing his parentage, and cataloging his \textit{technai} in prophecy, music, archery, and medicine (I.515-521). Apollo wastes too many words on his victim, exerts too much physical energy in the chase, and does not use the power (\textit{numen}) of his father and other gods. Although love propels Apollo in the chase, he loses because he does not employ \textit{numen}. Apollo simply lacks, or, more accurately, does not utilize the divine power of Jupiter or craftiness of Mercury.

Divine aid also plays a central role in the story of Syrinx. Syrinx spurns Pan’s entreaty (though we do not have a record of his words as we do with Apollo), and she flees to her \textit{liquidas sorores}, begging them to transform her (\textit{hic illam cursum impedientibus undis/ ut se mutarent liquidas orasse sorores}, “here she had begged her liquid sisters to transform her when her flight was hindered by their waters,” I.703-704). Again, the victim invokes the divine power of a source of water, this time the stream of Ladon. Too late and foolishly, Pan thinks that Syrinx is pressed against him (\textit{Pan-aque, cum prensam sibi iam Syringa putaret}, I.705). He is not quick enough to embrace her in human form and so resorts to transforming her into the first Pan-pipe, (just as Apollo could only use the laurel for his rites, not Daphne for his desires), thereby “recovering” his masculinity through the dominion over Syrinx’s new form.

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40 Gross (1979, p. 306).
41 Williams (1981, p. 251).
42 Gods have obtained help from other divinities to attain their goals: Mercury helps Jupiter in the Europa episode and again in the Io episode when he defeats Argus. Goddesses also utilize aid from other divine powers: Juno from Somnus in the Alycone episode and Ceres from the Fames in the Erysichthon episode, to name a few.
44 See Murgatroyd (2001) for a discussion of Ovid’s and Mercury’s narrations.
45 Feldherr rightly acknowledges: “Apollo’s response to Daphne’s metamorphosis in a sense completes the processes of the transformation by converting her form into a symbol, yet a symbol that recalls not so much who Daphne was as who Apollo is.” (2002, p. 173). He rightly adds: “Perhaps Daphne’s will has been masked completely by her new form, and the attempt to claim her participation in this future as though she were still there marks merely the final stage in her possession.” These thoughts can also apply to Pan and Syrinx.
46 Apollo kisses Daphne’s transformed self (I.556). Although the text does not explicitly state that Pan gives kisses to Syrinx’s new form, it can be understood that when he places his lips to the pipes to play, he is “kissing” his metamorphosed victim.
The Crow, too, obtains divine aid to prevent her attack. Like Apollo and Pan, the sea god wastes his time entreating the royal maiden with flattering words, a situation alluded to by the Crow’s employment of the word, *absumpsit* (II.575). The story of the Crow describes her own experience and perspective, so little detail is given to Neptune’s thoughts or actions. She tells us, *vim parat et sequitur*, (“he prepares violence and pursues me,” II.576). Like Apollo and Pan, the attacker relies on his physical strength to attain his booty; like Daphne and Syrinx, the Crow is saved by divine power. She calls on gods and men, though mortals do not hear her, and Minerva then transforms her from a maiden into a crow. The Crow no longer narrates information about Neptune, and we must assume his frustration since he does not possess the maiden even in a transformed state.

Echo, on the other hand, loses her love-prey Narcissus for different reasons. She does not have the power of speech to attempt entreaty, the first resort of all rapists so far discussed. The narrator tells us this is indeed her wish: *o quotiens voluit blandis accedere dictis/ et molles adhibere preces!* (“Oh how many times she wished to approach him with flattering words and to apply soft prayers!” III.375-376). However, she can only wait for sounds and send back words (*illa parata est / exspectare sonos, ad quos sua verba remittat*, “she was prepared to wait for sounds, to which she could send back her own words,” III.377-378). She is able to dupe Narcissus for a short time by “robbing” his “words of their meaning,” thereby illustrating her sexual aggression through reused and recycled words. She is the first of the unsuccessful attackers who gets her hands on her love: *ibat, ut iniceret sperato bracchia collo* (“She went, to throw her arms on the hoped-for neck,” III.398). So she succeeds for a short time and in a limited way, displaying masculinity as the aggressor in this fruitless attack. But her inability to speak her own words not only prevents her from adequately entreating her love prey but also from calling for aid from another divine source, using incantations, or invoking a curse on Narcissus, all of which could have aided her in gaining dominion. Instead of conquering her love-prey, Echo herself is vanquished, as the boy’s rejection of the nymph causes her to lose her own body and form through wasting away.

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47 The connection between Echo and Narcissus is not otherwise attested to in extant literature. A Callimachean epigram connects, “a much admired youth with Echo in a subtle articulation of poetic program.” (Keith 2002, p. 255).


49 Narcissus’ response, *manus complexibus aufer* (III.390), indicates that she has been able to put her hands on him.
The episode of Alpheus and Arethusa echoes that of Apollo and Daphne, not only in action, but also in imagery and language. Like the Delphian god, Alpheus fails to obtain his love-prey because he only utilizes divine physical strength and not divine power, thereby allowing his victim to find safety in the numen of another god. A huntress devoted to Diana, Arethusa exhibits more vulnerability than Daphne since she bathes nude in Alpheus’ waters; yet she gives her own narrative perspective, which is lacking in the Daphne episode.

She tells us that she senses a murmur in the middle of the water (nessioquod medio sensi sub gurgite murmur, V.597) and is frightened. Arethusa flees in the wake of the murmur (V.599-601), so the god, instead of entreating her, asks her where she is hurrying. Thus, the chase begins and Arethusa points out that although Alpheus is not swifter than she (V.609), she knows that her physical strength will soon be surpassed by his: sed tolerare diu cursus ego viribus impar/ non poteram, longi patiens erat ille laboris (“but I, unequal in strength, was not able to bear the chase for long, but he was able to endure long exertion,” V.610-611). Arethusa can feel the god’s breath on her as he catches up: ingens/ crinales vitas adflabat anhelitus oris (“a huge panting from his mouth breathed on my hair bands,” V.616-617), a situation that recalls Ovid’s imagery in the Daphne episode crinem sparsum cervicibus adflat (“he breathed on her hair which was scattered on her neck,” I.542). Arethusa makes an identical appeal for help as Daphne, fer opem (V.618), but differs from her in that she entreats, not her father (or Tellus), but Diana: “armigerae, Diana, tuae, cui saepe dedisti/ ferre tuos arcus inclusaque tela pharetra” (“Diana, bring help to your armor-bearer, to whom you often gave your bows and arrows enclosed in your quiver,” V.619-620). Using her divine powers, Diana encloses Arethusa in a mist and the maiden is turned into water, but that does not prove sufficient to keep her from Alpheus. Diana must break the earth in order to prevent her huntress from mingling with the god in liquid form, stopping Alpheus from having Arethusa in a metamorphosed form. (Perhaps Diana has “learned” from the stories of Daphne and Syrinx to prevent submission to the god even in a new metamorphosed form). While Pan and Apollo violated their metamorphosed victims, Alpheus fails to ravage Arethusa in her human or metamorphosed liquid form due to the powerful numen of the goddess Diana.50 He

50 Barchiesi notes: “only here in the whole mythological tradition is the rape frustrated.” (2002, p. 191) and mentions, “there is a discordant note in the epithet Alpheias at 5.487” (2002, p. 191, n. 22). I suggest that Alpheias serves as a “wink and nod” to Ovid’s readership, illustrating that he knows the traditional version of Arethusa’s unsuccessful escape although he has decided to allow Arethusa safety from her rapist. He may also be using it to deter the reader’s expectation of how the rape will end. Ovid uses it as an epithet for Arethusa when she informs Ceres about Proserpina’s rape. The epithet thus serves to
thus does not recover his masculinity.

Like many of his male unsuccessful predecessors, Glaucus uses words to try to detain his victim’s flight: *et quaecumque putat fugientem posse morari / verba refert.* (“And he says whatever things he thinks can delay her as she flees,” XIII.907-908). Scylla, who has found safety on the top of the mountain, does flee; however, Glaucus speaks to her from the sea.\(^{51}\) He spends almost fifty lines describing his past life as a mortal and his subsequent divine transformation, distracted by his own tale.\(^{52}\) Though it contains elements of magic – when he bites magic grass, he becomes a sea creature – he does not recognize the need for magic or divine power\(^{53}\) to capture Scylla until it is too late and she escapes. Glaucus then goes to Circe to obtain herbal help from her. Circe notes from her “reading” of these attempted rapes that long entreaties (and recitations of one’s recent transformation) allow the victim to flee, so she allows herself only four and a half lines to compliment the beauty of Picus, inform him of her great birth, and propose marriage. Likewise, she learns from the successful rapes to use her power – her magic.

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\(^{51}\) For Glaucus as a better narrator than Apollo, see Nagle (1988b, pp. 40-42).

\(^{52}\) Nagle observes the connection between the Scylla and Daphne rape episodes: “Scylla leaves Glaucus, as Daphne did Apollo, with his mouth open . . .*dicturum plura reliquit / Scylla deum* (966-967; “Scylla deserted the god as he was going to say more”); cf. *plura locuturum timido Peneia cursu / fugit* (I.525-526; “the daughter of Peneus fled him as he was going to say more”). (1988a, p. 82, n. 10).

\(^{53}\) Glaucus has prophetic powers in *Pausanias* 9.22.6 and *Euripides* *Orestes* 364, and in the *Aeneid* he is the father of the Sibyl (Myers 2009, p. 52). His failure to use his powers or magic aligns him with the other unsuccessful rapists, though perhaps Ovid has decided to strip him of these prophetic powers since he does not foresee Scylla’s terrible transformation: “Ironically Glaucus does not guess that Circe’s magical herbs may have the same transformative effect on Scylla as did those that turned him into a piscine sea god” (Myers 2009, p. 57).
Predator’s use of numen

Like the unsuccessful attempts, the successful rapes have educated Circe to utilize divine power to complete domination. Jupiter is an exemplar as he succeeds twice, raping both Io and Callisto. Jupiter first offers Io “safety” in the groves with the greatest of gods as protection (I.590-596), trying to entice Io to an area where a hunter would repose and where, as the episode of Callisto shows, violence occurs in the Metamorphoses. Io flees from him, but Jupiter employs his divine powers to hide the lands with a mist and thus stop the flight of the maiden: *cum deus inducta latas caligine terras/ oculuit tenuitque fugam rapuitque pudorem* (“when the god brought in a mist and hid the wide lands and seized her modesty,” I.599-600). For the first time a victim’s flight has been stopped by the pursuer’s divine powers, and thus Jupiter achieves the first successful rape.\(^{54}\)

Prior to his rape of Callisto, Jupiter creates the *locus amoenus* necessary for the violent narrative, as Stephen Hinds excellently observes: “the refurbishment of the earth’s landscapes necessitated by the cosmic conflagration of Phaethon allows Jupiter to recreate, as something both familiar and new, the archetypical Arcadian *locus amoenus* in which he will visit his erotic violence upon” Callisto.\(^{55}\) Jupiter again uses deceit to fulfill his lusts: he disguises himself as the goddess of the hunt, Diana: *protinus induitur faciem cultumque Dianae* (“he at once put on the face and dress of Diana,” II.425).\(^{56}\) Callisto has entered a grove and is relaxing on the grass when Jupiter—

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\(^{54}\) Perhaps Diana has also “read” and thus learned from his use of the mist so that she can prevent a rape. The goddess produces a “magical” mist to effect the nymph Arethusa’s escape: *mota dea est spissisque ferens e nubibus unam/ me super iniecit; lustrat caligine tectam/ amnis et ignarus circum cava nubila quaerit* (“the goddess was moved and taking one of the thick clouds, threw it over me: the river went around me hidden in the mist and ignorantly searched around the hollow clouds,” V.621-623). This stops Arethusa’s pursuer in his tracks for a short time, until she becomes water and he returns to his liquid form in order to mix with her and Diana must then effect another escape for the transformed huntress. Alpheus changes back into liquid form in order to mix with Arethusa (*vertitur in proprias, ut se mibi miscet, undas*, “he changed into his own waters in order to mix with me,” V.638); however, the purpose clause indicates only his plan and not its success. Arethusa also uses the singular passive verb *advehor* (V.640), which indicates that she alone was conveyed to Ortygia, rather than being accompanied by Alpheus. Procris may also be a reader of Jupiter’s rapes in pleasant hunting settings (VII.796-862). As Bernstein observes: “As a good reader of Roman poetry, she also assumes that the pleasant landscapes in which her husband hunts are suitable locations for adultery.” (2011, p. 80).


\(^{56}\) Sale notes: “Zeus’ disguising himself as Artemis in order to lull Callisto is expressly attributed by Eratosthenes to the comic poet Amphis (Hyginus *P.A.* 2.1).” (1965, pp. 14-15). In his discussion of Pomona and Vertumnus, Davis observes: “The god Vertumnus, in his turn, eventually transcends the dynamic of seduction through disguise and confronts the beloved in *propria persona* . . . It is only when
ter appears to her as her goddess Diana. While he entreats Io only briefly towards the shady groves, Jupiter does not entreat Callisto at all because his disguise as a female divinity allows him to question her as Diana might (II.426–427, quoted above). Although the maiden fights back, she cannot win against Jupiter (II.436–438). He is *victor Iuppiter* (II.437–438).

In a similar way, Hermaphroditus cannot win against Salmacis, although his opponent is a nymph. Though Salmacis prematurely announces, “*vicimus et meus est,*” (“I have won and he is mine,” IV.356), she will ultimately win by eternal rape. The nymph herself, similar to Echo, performs the role of the licentious god; and Salmacis and Hermaphroditus reverse female–male roles, which foreshadows their androgynous transformation. In an inversion of the traditional gender roles in epic discussed by Keith, Hermaphroditus becomes the object of a female’s gaze. Like Echo before her and Circe after her, Salmacis “wrests control of both gaze and epic model from Hermaphroditus,” in a passage that models Odysseus in the *Odyssey, 6.149–59.* Her speech “echoes that of Odysseus to Nausicaa very closely (cf. *Od.* 6.149–185), yet is in spirit more an extreme form of Nausicaa’s sly suggestions of marriage.” She entreats him in only eight and a half lines, with far better brevity than that of Apollo and Glaucus. Salmacis’ focus is on Hermaphroditus, his background, and her ultimate goal of sex, not on self-praise through long narratives or descriptions of her lineage and history. Her entreaty produces a blush on the boy’s face, for the nymph asks for sex at the end (*haec tibi sive aliqua est, mea sit furtiva voluptas, / seu nulla est, ego sim, thalamumque ineamus eundum,* IV.327–328; “if you have someone, let my pleasure be secret, or if you have no one, let me be she, and let us go into the same bedroom”). Not until the nymph puts her hands on the boy’s neck (like Echo) and insists on sisterly kisses does the boy first demand that she stop and then threaten to flee (IV.334–336). Salmacis pretends to leave but secretly spies on the boy bathing, and then she becomes the second attacker who succeeds in taking kisses and touching her victim. Echo attempts an embrace, but her inability to speak (and female sex) prevents her

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he renounces deception that he wins over the nymph.” (1983, pp. 70–71).


from fulfilling a complete rape. Hermaphroditus does resist and refuses the nymph the realization of her lusts, but she invokes the gods with a prayer to prevent separation. Thus Salmacis is able, with divine power, to hold Hermaphroditus in an eternal rape, a physical violation and devastation of his male form:

“pugnes licet, improbe,” dixit,
“non tamen effugies. ita di iubeatis, et istum
nulla dies a me nec me diducat ab isto.” IV.370-372

“Although you fight, cruel one,” she said,
“nevertheless you will not flee. May you gods so order it, and let no day separate him from me or me from him.”

Salmacis does more than merely rape: she engineers another type of physical violation by destroying the male gender of Hermaphroditus and perverting him into a dual gender to satisfy her own desires. As Keith observes, she also prevents “Hermaphroditus from achieving full manhood, condemning him instead to a perpetual youth construed as transexuality.” Victims such as Daphne, the Crow, Syrinx, and Arethusa rely on divine aid to release them from danger through transformation of form. Salmacis utilizes it to further violate Hermaphroditus and transform him not into a creature of nature, but into a perversion of nature. Like the unsuccessful male predators Apollo and Pan, the victim Hermaphroditus tries to reestablish his masculinity by attempting “to reassert his control over the gaze and concomitant mastery over the narrative trajectory by praying that all men who enter the spring

60  As a female, Salmacis also cannot “usurp control of the gaze from the male; and as a toponym, she is reduced in the end to nothing more than a place, plot-space.” (Keith 1999, p. 219).

61  Keith points out: “The sexual union of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus not only emasculates the latter, but erases the former’s subjectivity altogether, leaving her merely an inert toponym: ‘the cause lies hidden, but the violent effect of the spring is very well known’ (4.287; cf. 15.319.).” (2009, p. 364).


63  “Here, however, unnamed gods assist not the victim but the author of the rape, and their assistance is all the more marked in that the object of the rapist’s attention is none other than the child of two Olympians, Mercury and Venus.” Robinson (1999, p. 221).
be emasculated in its waters.” Interestingly enough, in answer to Hermaphroditus’ prayer to make the waters produce effeminacy, his parents employ magic: *et incesto fontem medicamine tinxit* ("and both tinged the spring with an impure drug," IV.388). Segal remarks, “As in the case of Circe’s magic, both in Homer and in Ovid, magic is a threat to masculine identity and sexual dominance.” By punishing and transforming Picus with her magic, Circe destroys his masculinity and retains sexual dominance over him through metamorphical rape.

**V. APPLYING THE LESSONS: CIRCE VIOLATES PICUS**

Circe takes her cue from both Jupiter and Salmacis. She uses her power of magic (as Jupiter used his divine powers) to subjugate and physically dominate her prey. When Picus spurns her heart, she uses magical powers to destroy her lover’s beautiful form and violate his body through metamorphical rape, as Salmacis does to Hermaphroditus through her prayers to the gods. Circe also understands Jupiter’s lessons in divine power (creating a mist) and disguise, and applies them by forcing Picus to be on foot. Although she does not disguise herself as the boar, she employs the false image to get her victim off his horse and surrounded by thick shrubbery.

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64 Keith (1999, p. 219).

65 Segal (2002, pp. 9-10).

66 Apollo and Mercury both rape Chione (XI.301 ff.), but the narrative does not indicate an idyllic setting or specify any place, which places it outside of this discussion. Apollo and Mercury both use their power; Mercury employs his staff that brings sleep: *virgaque movente soporem/ virginis os tangit: tactu iacet illa potenti/ vimque dei patitur* (“and with his staff producing sleep, he touched the face of the maiden: at its powerful touch she lay down and suffered the violence of the god,” XI.307-309). Apollo disguises himself as an old woman, perhaps learning from his father’s disguise as Diana.

67 Segal notes: “The metamorphoses that constitute the poem’s subject rarely result from magic but rather from the power of the gods or from supernatural instruments, like Medusa’s head in the Perseus episode or the bush into which the nymph Lotis has been transformed in the Dryope episode. Where divinities do employ magical devices, these seem to be extensions of their power.” (2002, p. 9). Segal also observes that Minerva uses both an herb and the shuttle as a wand on Arachne. (2002, p. 10). For the distinction between supernatural/divine powers and magic in the transformations of the *Metamorphoses*, see Tüpet (1976, pp. 394-396). Tüpet cites the herb used in Athena’s transformation of Arachne as an agent of magic, but emphasizes the role of the divine actor: “Peut-être l’herbe donnée par Hécate, avec laquelle Pallas change Arachné en araignée, doit-elle être considérée comme un agent magique, mais surtout à cause du caractère de la donatrice, car ces diverses transformations ne nécessitent, semble-t-il, aucune préparation, aucune opération technique. Bien mieux, l’instrument ne paraît pas vraiment indispensable: c’est, le plus souvent, la seule volonté du dieu qui agit.” (1976, p. 395).
Just as Jupiter’s Latonian disguise belies the safety of virginity, Circe’s deceit of the boar gives Picus the impression that he is the hunter, and not the hunted. From Jupiter’s use of mist to successfully end a quarry’s flight, she is inspired to envelop the earth in a mist and to thicken the sky, forcing the companions of Picus to wander blindly and leaving him alone to face his attacker.

Salmacis imparts to Circe the ideas that her victim must not escape (in his present form), and that forced metamorphosis can achieve physical violation and domination of his form. Salmacis says to Hermaphroditus, “Although you fight, cruel one, nevertheless you will not flee” (IV.370-371). Circe states a similar fate for her love:

‘non’ ait ‘effugies, vento rapiare licebit,
si modo me novi, si non evanuit omnis
herbarum virtus nec mea carmina fallunt.’ XIV.355-357

‘You will not flee, although you are seized by the wind,
if only I know myself, if all the power of my herbs has not vanished
and my songs do not fail me.’

These two terrible masculinized women, who both attempt to usurp the epic male’s gaze, are also connected through language. Salmacis and Circe begin their sentences with non and use the verb effugies. By beginning their speeches with a negative, they send the message that they will not take “no” for an answer. Salmacis uses a concessive clause to emphasize that Hermaphroditus’ resistance is futile, similar to Callisto’s resistance to Jupiter. Whereas Salmacis must rely on the gods’ powers (ita di iubatis, IV.371), Circe’s conditional clause demonstrates her reliance on her own powers. Circe also uses a conditional clause to indicate that Picus will not be able to escape because of her previously successful magical powers. This conditional clause recalls the one used in Glauclus’ plea for help at the beginning of Book XIV (at tu, sive aliquid regni est in carmine, carmen/ ore move sacro; sive expugnacior herba est/ utere temptatis operasce viribus herbae, “But may you, if there is some power in a magical song, begin a song with your sacred mouth, or if a herb is more potent, use the tested strength of a powerful herb,” XIV.20-21). Scylla’s transformation has proven that there is regnum, vis, potentia in Circe’s magical herbs and songs, and so Circe has confidence in her magic. The conditional clause, which recalls Glauclus’ statement and her subsequent success over Scylla, thus confirms her eventual victory
over Picus. The phrase *vento rapiare licebit* foreshadows Picus’ transformation into a bird, for then the wind will seize him, i.e., the wind will blow through his wings in his flight. *Rapiare* also conjures the idea of sexual violence, connecting Circe to the male rapists in the *Metamorphoses*. Picus will be forced to submit to an avian form and will be compelled to feel the wind beneath his wings. In this statement Circe recognizes that the power of her magic will produce victory, not physical pursuit on foot, as Apollo, Glaucus, Neptune, and Pan attempt to do. Whereas Salmacis needs to rely on the gods’ divine powers, Circe can rely on her own powers.

Salmacis also serves as a precedent to Circe as the defiler and violator of a man’s physical body. Salmacis selfishly prays to the gods that no one separate her and Hermaphroditus, thereby producing a dual gender and violating Hermaphroditus’ very nature. Although Circe also does not sexually rape Picus, she still physically violates his body by changing his form into a bird, thus accomplishing a metaphoric rape. Circe also prevents Picus from attaining full manhood, compelling him to grow old in his avian form. Circe performs Picus’ transformation as punishment, not as aid, so Picus does not consent. The transformations of Daphne, Syrinx, the Crow, and Arethusa are a result of their call for help to escape sexual rape. Since they call out for help, their metamorphoses can be understood as “consensual.” As Parry recognizes, “Transformation is itself a ritual death, since something essentially characteristic of the living creature has been destroyed.”

The young Latian king suffers from a feminized form of metamorphic “death” since he is defeated not by sword or spear on the battlefield, but by transformation into a bird though a woman’s magical arts. Two great heroes in the *Metamorphoses*, Cyncus and Caeneus, also suffer a female manner of death through suffocation and transform into birds after their defeat: Cyncus, by being choked by Achilles, and Caeneus (who, as a female, was raped by Neptune), by being smothered as the Centaurs pile stones and trees on him. As Keith explains, “not only should real men die by the sword (or spear or even arrow) in epic warfare rather than by suffocation, but suffocation itself is a form of death reserved ... for the female in the classical imagination. Even the final avian transformation that Nestor

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68 “Violence against the body stands for rape.” (Richlin 1992, p. 165). Violence to the body equates to sexual penetration. Philomela serves as an excellent example of both actual and symbolic rape. Her brother-in-law Tereus rapes her and cuts out her tongue. The sword is the raping phallus of masculine penetration (modified from Sharrock, “The spear is the raping phallus of masculine penetration,” (2002, p. 97)). Tereus violently removes Philomela’s hymen with his penis, and brutally amputates her tongue with his sword. Both orifices are penetrated against her will, the latter’s organ mutilated so that the victim cannot voice the crime against the first organ violated.

69 Parry (1964, p. 274).
claims to have seen (12.525-6) may retain a trace of the feminine: Nicole Loraux has recently argued that in Greek myth the suffocated woman ’is like a bird.’ ”70 Picus suffers a feminine death not only because he does not die by the sword or spear, but also because his avian transformation can be understood metaphorically as the womanly death of suffocation. This complete mutilation of his human form causes Picus to lose his ability to speak about Circe’s crime,71 which is triggered by her rejected amor, the cause of her subsequent ira.

Circe’s spurned amor for Picus metamorphosizes into ira, which incites Circe to “rape” Picus’ human form and inflict punishment on him. Betty Nagle discusses how the gods of the Metamorphoses produce suffering because of their amor, and the goddesses inflict punishment in order to gratify their ira.72 She argues that a goddess’s amor spurned can result in ira: “When a goddess’s love is not reciprocated, a second dangerous pattern of amor and ira results, in which the goddess’s ira is provoked, not by a god’s successful amor, but by her own frustrated amor; that is, her own amor turns to ira.”73 She rightly cites Circe as an exemplar, both because of her revenge for Glaucus directed at Scylla, and because of her transformation of Picus. Like Salmacis, Circe and these other spurned goddesses, “can punish rejection, but they cannot force compliance,” and as females they are unable to obtain their true objective74 by


71  Miratur is used in describing both Picus’ and Actaeon’s reactions to their transformation (XIV.389 and III.198-199). Like Picus, Actaeon also loses his voice in his new form as a stag. Williams notes: “Transformed into a stag who is killed by his own hounds, Actaeon is exquisitely tortured by his voicelessness: as the animals that he knows so well relentlessly track him down, he is powerless to call off the very hounds that are devoted to him.” (2009, p. 164). Sharrock, in reference to Daphne, Io, and Syrinx, observes how “loss of humanity, autonomy, and speech is tied in with sexuality for women” and that “the changed woman is made to acknowledge her domination, by an act of para-speech that accentuates her loss of voice.” (2002, p. 100). This acknowledgement of domination by use of para-speech can be applied to Philomela, since she must use her skills in weaving to communicate her violation. She acknowledges her domination, both sexual and lingual, through the weaving of her tale. She no longer has the freedom to speak her thoughts and is forced to manipulate art to act as her voice. Picus expresses and communicates his anger at the domination of his physical form through pecking trees: sequae novam subito Latiis accedere silvis/ indignatus avem, duro fera robora rostro/ figit et iratus longis dat vulnera ramis (“and resentful that he was being added suddenly as a new bird to the Latian woods, thrusts his hard beak in the wild oaks and angrily gives wounds to their long branches,” XIV.390-392).


73  Ibid., p. 241.

74  Ibid., p. 242.
physical force as their male counterparts can.Rejected by both Glaucus and Picus, Circe cannot resort to the direct rape available to a male god whose words have failed to persuade and so she is restricted to feeling insulted and then to using her magic to punish. Nagle convincingly argues, “By contrast, the goddesses’ resources are limited to persuasion, and their divine identity is essential to their attempt at persuasion. Erotic rejection becomes the equivalent of an insulted divinity because the goddesses themselves must present their case in those terms.”

When Glaucus rejects the goddess, she does not employ magic to harm him (and she cannot harm him as he is a god), but instead projects her anger and hatred on Scylla, whose form Circe transforms with magic herbs:

indignata dea est, et laedere quatenus ipsum
non poterat (nec vellet amans), irascitur illi
quae sibi praelata est; Venerisque offensa repulsa
protinus horrendis infamia pabula sucis
conterit et tritis Hecateia carmina miscet XIV.40-44

The goddess was angry, and in as much as she could not hurt the god himself (nor would she want, loving him), she was angry at the one who was preferred to herself; and offended by the rebuff of her love she immediately ground infamous grasses with horrible juices and mixed Hecatean songs with the beaten mixture.

Circe seems to have learned from this previous experience. So when Picus rejects

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75 Interestingly, Aurora abducts Cephalus against his will (VII.703-704). However, Davis indicates that Cephalus is not such an innocent victim: “In view of the fact that the isolation of the venator from the comites is often a prelude in the poem to the appearance of an amator, Cephalus’ voluntary isolation is a subtle foreshadowing of a willed encroachment of Eros.” (Davis 1983, p. 142). Perhaps Cephalus, reading the poem thus far, realizes that a sexual encounter will occur if he hunts without companions. His claim that he was Aurora’s unwilling victim is false, then, and he has in fact committed adultery. Curran also notes that violence in Cephalus’ “rape” is “virtually absent.” (Curran 1978, p. 216).


77 Ibid., p. 242.
her, she does not protect him as she did with Glaucus because she desires to harm Picus directly. Poor Picus does not fare so well as Glaucus who goes away (physically, though not emotionally,) unscathed: ‘non impune feres neque’ ait ‘reddere Canenti,/ laesaque quid faciat, quid amans, quid femina disces.’ (“‘You will not bear impunity,’ she said, ‘nor will you be returned to Canens, and you will learn what a hurt woman, what a lover, what a woman does,’” XIV.383-384). Ovid allows his antagonist this punishment, but denies Picus any defense.

VI. UNMANNING PICUS:
OVID STRIPS PICUS OF DEFENSE

Ovid chooses to strip Picus of self-defense, unmanning him in a way that should not surprise the reader at this point in an epic that reduces masculine heroism into a “display of heroic ineptitude.” Picus is just another of Ovid’s inept heroes, one in stark contrast with Odysseus. The latter’s ten years of fighting experience precludes Circe from dominating him; instead, the Homeric hero places his sword against the witch’s wand in a display of his courage and mortal resolution (X.321-324). Similarly in Ovid, Ulysses, protected by moly and divine warnings, strikes Circe’s wand with a drawn sword (XIV.291-296). He is able to resist Circe’s powers with his own counter-magic, introduced to him by the god Hermes. Segal observes: “Recognizing the danger for what it is, he sees Circe as his men cannot. Hence he meets the goddess on her own terms: the counter-magic of Hermes against her potions, his sword against her wand.”80 In the Metamorphoses, however, “Encounter with the female . . . inevitably results in the unmanning of the Ovidian epic hero.”81 Picus is effeminated because he does not fight back as Odysseus/Ulysses does, but instead yields to Circe’s imperium and thus is dominated by her. Picus has started his hunting with two spears (laevaque hastilia bina ferebat, XIV.344), also weapons of the battlefield, yet he uses them neither to strike the goddess’ hand in order to force her to drop

78 See also II.474 (Juno-Callisto) and XI.207 (Neptune-Laōmedon) for similar wording. Like Circe did with Scylla, Juno destroys the human form of her female rival. Here, Circe has decided to destroy the beloved, rather than the rival, though she indirectly causes Canens’ wasting away by effecting Picus’ absence, which produces destructive grief for the nymph.

79 Kenney (2009, p. 148). Nestor is one of these unheroic heroes. See also Keith (1999) for a discussion of epic masculinity in the Metamorphoses.

80 Segal (1968, p. 425).

81 Keith (1999, p. 139).
her wand, nor to stave off her wand as Homer’s hero does with his sword. Since the spear functions as a sexual metaphor for the penetrating penis, the faithful but effeminized Picus does not penetrate Circe physically or metaphorically. He does not dominate his enemy with his penis or sword, as a (Roman) male who displays adequate masculinity should. After the mist clears his companions, however, do attempt to harm the witch: *vimque ferunt saevisque parant incessere telis* (“they bore violence and they prepared to assault her with savage spears,” XIV.402). Picus only finally uses his “weapon,” i.e., his beak, after Circe has transformed him into a woodpecker: *seque novam subito Latiis accedere silvis/ indignatus avem, duro fera robora rostro /figit et iratus longis dat vulnera ramis* (“and resentful that he was being added suddenly as a new bird to the Latian woods, thrusts his hard beak in the wild oaks and angrily gives wounds to their long branches,” XIV.390-392).

Picus’ young age, martial inexperience, and identification as an elegiac lover may explain his inability to defend himself. The narrator introduces Picus as courageous (*par animus formae*, XIV.324), though still very young (*nec adhuc spectasse per annos / quinquennem poterat Graia quater Elide pugnam*, “and he could not yet through his years have watched the quadrennial contest in Greek Elis four times,” XIV.324-325). Based on these lines, Hill reckons Picus’ age to be between 12 and 15 years old. Ovid’s Picus, recalling Vergil’s Ascanius, lacks experience in war, and hunting boar trains him for war. He has never experienced a human enemy, though the narrator assures us of his courage. Far more important is Picus’ description, when he responds to Circe’s entreaty, of his relationship with his wife Canens. Picus appropriates for himself traditionally feminine traits: loyalty, devotion, subservience, and submissiveness; Circe, on the other hand, exhibits more masculine attributes of dominance, hard-heartedness, self-absorption. The young king frames the re-

82 See Adams (1982, pp. 19-21) for weapons as sexual metaphors.

83 The exact meaning of *animus* here is uncertain since Ovid does not qualify the word for us. McDonnell explains in his extensive research on *virtus* that “Animus is often associated with the emotional states, and when used to denote martial courage it perhaps corresponds to the psychological and physiological effects of adrenaline. In this sense it might be thought of as a close to, or even as a component of *virtus*. But unlike *virtus*, courageous *animus* is transient in nature and therefore unstable,” (2006, p. 60). Because Picus takes on the phantom wild boar I take *animus* to mean courage in facing dangers associated with hunting wild beasts. Boar were “traditionally one of the hunter’s most dangerous antagonists.” (Davis 1983, p. 111).

84 Hill (2000, p. 183).

85 Traits taken from Williams (2010, p. 171), in a quote of Barbara Gold.
relationship in a manner reminiscent to an elegiac lover: 86 ‘non sum tuus; altera captum/ me tenet et teneat per longum, comprcor, aevum/ nec Venere externa socialia foedera laedam,’ (“I am not yours; another holds me prisoner and may she hold me, I pray, throughout a long lifetime nor shall I harm our marriage pact with an outside love,” XIV.387–380). The term captus recalls the elegiac lover’s stance as a servus amoris, imbued with an eternal love that leads Picus to pray that he will remain Canens’ captive for the rest of his life. His term for their marriage, socialia foedera, strongly recall Catullus’ description of his relationship with Lesbia. 87 His distaste and rejection for another love mimics the elegiac pledge of loyalty to his mistress, though here Canens presumably remains faithful to her lover, a characteristic often prayed for in elegy. His subservience to his wife is also revealed in the narrator’s statement: ille colit nymphen (“he worships the nymph,” XIV.333). Picus not only is a slave to Canens, but also worships her like a goddess. As Fulkerson observes, Roman elegists “use their poetry to win over their puellae in a way they identify as similar to love magic: poetry, like magic, has the power to open locked doors.” 88 Picus cannot use his weapons, or magic, to restore himself to his wife.

To further prevent Picus from defending himself, Ovid strips him of any magical powers that he may have had. In the Fasti, he (along with Faunus) appears as a god who uses magic to elicit Jupiter for Numa (III.289–324). 89 Ovid appears to have transferred Picus’ magic powers to his wife Canens, who seems to be an Ovidian invention. Perhaps Ovid leaves out this magical knowledge because the king does not acquire it until after his apotheosis. Alternately, the poet may wish to strip Picus of his powers to equate him with the vulnerable virgin maidens attacked while traveling in idyllic scenes who must rely on divine power instead of their own.

The reliability of the narrators should be considered in the attempt to under-

86 Circe’s speech to Picus also contains vocabulary drawn from love poetry, for example, quae mea ceperunt (XIV.373), supplex (374), durus (376), ferox (377).

87 For brief discussions of foedus in elegy, see Ross (1960, pp. 84–85; 93); Lyne, (1980, pp. 33–38); Laigneau (1999, pp. 276–282); James, (2003, pp. 43–48). The only other instances of sociale foedus appear in Silius Italicus (Punica, 16.168; 16.274), in Livy (34.57.9; 45.25.9), and in Ovid’s Heroides (4.17). In the first two authors, the phrase means “alliance treaty,” and does not refer to marriage. It is only Ovid, both in the Heroides and here in the Metamorphoses, who utilizes it to signify a marital union. In Epistula 4.17, the heroine Phaedra describes her relationship with Theseus as a socialia foedera. Phaedra’s use of this phrase designates her marriage as an alliance between two peoples, the Athenians and the Cretans.


89 Myers states: “The chronological problem of his appearance at this much later date in non-avian form obviously did not bother Ovid.” (2009, p. 112). It may not have bothered Ovid, but why such a difference between the two Ovidian Picuses?
stand Picus’ lack of self-defense.90 Macareus is a Greek telling the first Italian story in the *Metamorphoses*.91 As a Greek, he has motives to “unman” this Italian legendary king in order to enhance his own Greek hero’s (Odysseus’) masculinity. This fictional Odyssean castaway also hears the story from one of Circe’s maidservants, and so we must question not only the accuracy of Macareus’ retelling, but also her original narrative. Her gender may distort her version of the story (if Macareus has not edited it) because it depicts female dominion and victory over a male; she thus challenges epic expectations by subjecting Picus not only to the gaze of the female antagonist, but also to that of the reader, who views Picus through the lens of Circe. The maidservant also transfers to the female the epic male’s prerogative to dominate, thereby disrupting gendered norms. She amends the passive female role to that of the aggressive agent of violence upon another’s body, and revises the active male role to that of passive victim. Circe’s aggressive behavior masculinizes her, but Picus’ inaction effeminizes him, a perhaps far more revolting crime for Ovid’s Roman audience.

**VII. CONCLUSION**

Heath’s intriguing idea of Diana as “reader” of the *Metamorphoses* compels us to consider Circe as “reader” of the rape episodes. In her perception of herself as a potential rape victim and of Actaeon as the aggressive predator, Diana reacts to the situation according to the observed narrative pattern. The rape stories of Daphne, Io, Syrinx, Callisto, the Crow, Narcissus, Arethusa, Hermaphroditus, and Scylla illustrate for Circe, as they did for Diana before her, how she must react. She has learned from previous episodes in the *Metamorphoses* that she must get her love-prey on foot, remove his companions, and use her power of magic to violate her prey in a metamorphical rape. Applying lessons learned from successful and unsuccessful rapists, Circe responds as aggressor with Picus. Unlike Homer’s Circe, Ovid’s goddess travels outside her home and aggressively seeks out her love and punishes him for rejection. Circe employs her magic to create mists that leave the king without guard and horse. She has ascertained from the previous rapes or near-rapes that she must rely on powers, not only on physical strength, to catch prey. For example, Zeus creates a mist, much like Circe later does, to halt Io and rape her. Jupiter trains Circe

90 For a narratological catalogue of the stories in the *Metamorphoses*, see Nagle (1989).

91 Myers notes that Macareus appears to be an invention of Ovid (1994, p. 104).
in the best way to catch love-prey by using his divine power (creating a mist) and power of false images (disguises). Salmacis imparts to Circe the ideas that her victim must not escape (in his present form), and that forced metamorphosis can achieve physical violation and domination of his form. Although Circe does not succeed in raping Picus, she physically attacks him through violation of his human form. Despite Macareus’ narrative description of Picus as courageous in hunting, Ovid effeminizes his character even as he masculinizes Circe. Ovid creates an elegiac lover in Picus who does not fight his enemy, but instead allows himself to be dominated at the cost of his epic masculinity. His faithfulness and devotion to his wife Canens conjures the image of the elegiac lover, servus amoris, whose battlefield is that of Cupid, not of Mars. Deprived of his magical abilities found in the Fasti, Picus fails to defend himself with the hunting weapons he carries, thus penetrating the goddess neither with phallus nor with spears. Forced to play the role of elegiac lover rather than epic hero, Picus cannot dominate Circe and is violated through forced metamorphosis. As Callisto realizes, the violence (of rape) on her self forever transforms her body, internally and outwardly changed by another’s force and power, and she no longer can see or care for the woods in the same way. Picus’ transformation also causes internal and external change, as he no longer can be his wife’s human lover, and the woods no longer bring the same delight to him as they did when he was a hunter. Power, not love, conquers all.
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