## WOMEN READING MEN: THE FEMALE AUDIENCE OF THE *ARS AMATORIA*

The female readership of the *Ars amatoria* has been for two millennia a subject fraught with problems both historical and theoretical.[1] For example: in antiquity, did respectable women read the poem?[2] Almost certainly, and they were almost certainly expected to. Were they intended to? Here less certainty is possible, not only because of the problem of divining authorial intention. Did non-respectable women, the real-life analogues to the poem's fictive courtesans, read the *Ars*? Some of them – the elite ones – must have, but lower-level courtesans would have had less opportunity to acquire copies of the poem. On the textual, rather than historical, level, other questions remain, most of them unanswerable, such as the sincerity of the poem's disclaimers to *matronae*, the No-Wives-Allowed signs.[3] The deliberate textual confusion between *matrona* and *meretrix* in *Ars* 3 blurs clear distinctions and makes it impossible to tell if the *praeceptor Amoris* anticipates or seeks respectable, elite women, in addition to his declared readers, the courtesans.[4]

I sidestep such questions here, in favour of a concern about the fictive female readers of the *Ars*, namely the effect on them of reading books 1 and 2. Here I mean the woman identified by the *praeceptor Amoris* as his primary textual female, the young courtesan. Though the *Ars* seems to include non-prostitutes among its female readers,

[1] This paper is dedicated to the memory of the late Shilpa Raval. It began as a paper for a special panel held in her honour at Yale University in February 2005. I knew Shilpa only slightly, but had looked forward to long and better acquaintance over the coming decades. Her untimely death was a tragic loss to classics and to the fields of Latin poetry and gender studies in particular. I hope she would consider this paper a fitting tribute.

[2] On the education of upper-class Roman women see Hemelrijk (1999).

[3] Each book contains at least one such warning: *este procul, uittae tenues, insigne pudoris, | quaeque tegis medios instita longa pedes* (1.31–2); *en iterum testor: nihil hic nisi lege remissum | luditur; in nostris instita nulla iocis* (2.599–600); *nupta uirum timeat, rata sit custodia nuptae: | hoc decet, hoc leges iusque pudorque iubent* (3.613–14). This last remark does not forbid reading of the *Ars*, but it marks the legitimate wife as off-limits to elegiac love. A further, inevitable, concern is how stable that category can actually be, given that unmarried citizen girls, widows and divorcées were not wives but were still strictly governed by the Julian laws.

In general, I use the OCT of Kenney (1995) here, but at 3.614 I read *iusque* for *duxque* with R. Gibson (2003) and Pianezzola (1991). Translations throughout are my own, and deliberately literal.

[4] On the confusion, or near-merger, of *meretrix* and *matrona* see R. Gibson (1998b), (2003) 32–6, (2006) 138–9 and (2007) 113–14. Most scholars now agree that the 'elegiac woman', in the term of Wyke (2002), is a courtesan. The strongest argument for this view is probably my own, in James (2003). See discussion below. The politics of Ovid's own anticipated readership (as opposed to the *praeceptor*'s anticipated readership), which as I have noted must have included respectable women, are beyond my scope here. R. Gibson (1998b) provides an insightful investigation into this confusion of women and class. On larger issues of Ovid's poetry and the problems of reading see Sharrock (1994b) and B. Gibson (1999).

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its advice on grooming and etiquette cannot be aimed at a large crowd of married or marriageable women, as R. Gibson demonstrates.[5] I am interested here in the generic textual female of *Ars* 3 and the generic female imagined by the poem as a whole, who belongs to the courtesan class, as indicated by remarks like *sacrilegas* ***meretricum*** *ut persequar artes* (1.435 'so that I could explain the unholy arts of **prostitutes**'). Though the *praeceptor* acknowledges, in the very act of forbidding them, that respectable women can read his poem, he himself marks his intended textual female as the kind of woman who can legally and successfully be captured by his male pupil.[6] As I will argue here, the *praeceptor*'s concepts of his readership are confused and unstable, but he does consistently and primarily envision a type of young woman already seen in elegy and New comedy: a courtesan able to play the necessary games of strategy that elegiac-type love affairs require.[7] His penultimate instruction to this woman, namely the injunction against post-coital requests for gifts (*Ars* 3.805–6) touches upon precisely the point of the courtesan's professional compensation and echoes his acknowledgment, some 250 lines earlier, that his primary textual addressee will inevitably seek material rewards in her sexual relationships (*Ars* 3.551–4, where he advises women not to be openly greedy in the beginning of an affair). Though the *praeceptor* himself, and Ovid behind him, allows for slippage between categories of women, his concern with this unavoidable commerce marks the courtesan, who is the counterpart to the *puella* of prior love elegy, as what we might call his female textual target.

My question is this: how does the reading experience of *Ars* 1–2 affect this particular female reader?[8] The *Ars* implicitly acknowledges that women can read books 1–2, though the target readership for those books is male: *quo magis, o, faciles imitantibus este, puellae* (1.617 'so, all the more, girls, be easy for fakers'); *ecce, rogant tenerae sibi dem praecepta puellae: | uos eritis chartae proxima cura meae* (2.745 'look, the tender girls are asking me to give them lessons: | you shall be the concern of

[5] See esp. R. Gibson (1998b) 302–3 and (2003) 32–6.

[6] The concept of the Ovidian speaker in the *Ars* and *Remedia* as an assumed poetic persona, the *praeceptor Amoris*, originates with Durling (1958), slightly revised in Durling (1965). It is now common practice to speak of the *praeceptor* as a character independent from the historical poet Ovid. (See, contra, Mayer (2003), Davis (2006) and P. Green (1982) 59–71, with specific focus on Ovid's love poetry.) I proceed here on the principle that an adopted persona, the *praeceptor Amoris*, is the speaker of the *Ars*. I do so in large part because, as I shall argue here, that speaker is not in complete control of either his instruction or his own concept of his intended pupils. I do not venture to measure any precise distance between poet and speaker, who does after all have the historical poet's name. Guessing at how closely to identify Ovid and his eponymous speaker is half the fun of reading Ovid's love poetry. For more on the issue of poetic persona see also Armstrong (2005) 21–43, Clay (1998) and, as Mayer (2003) 57 points out, Dover (1964) before him. See further discussion below.

[7] On these elegiac erotic chess-matchups, see Romano (1972).

[8] On the relevance, for understanding elegy, of reading from the viewpoint of the genre's internal female audience see my arguments in James (2003). Kennedy (2006) discusses the way this female reader might study the *Heroides*, as she is instructed to do at *Ars* 3.345.

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my next book').[9] Indeed, at *Ars* 3.341–2, the *praeceptor* includes *Ars* 1 and 2 in the required reading for the women of *Ars* 3: *atque aliquis dicet 'nostri lege culta magistri | carmina, quis partes instruit ille duas'* ('and somebody will say, "read the cultured songs of our teacher, | in which he readies the two parties"'.) In addition, and perhaps most importantly, this instruction consistently depicts its two parties as being at odds, even as being enemies (*Ars* 3.3 *ite in bella pares*) or as hunter and prey (*passim* in *Ars* 1 and 2). Their goals are presumed to be different, though the differences are never spelled out.[10] So we may well ask how the women will read the material aimed at the men.[11] I propose here not a detailed analysis of this reading, but a general review grounded in this structure of opposition and engagement.

Most readers notice that the lessons of the *Ars* do not work. This failure is generic and inevitable, given the low success rate of elegiac erotodidaxis.[12] But there are at least two other reasons, as well: first, the *praeceptor* does not control his instruction, which is constantly self-contradictory and, second, human passion proves immune to regulation throughout the poem. I will argue here that the failure of the *Ars* is also built in on the other end – not in the *praeceptor* alone but also in its constructed imaginary audiences, which are not merely improbable but impossible.[13] That is, the internal poetic audiences themselves are so fully incoherent as to be even a literary or theoretical impossibility, as unstable as the fantastical buildings in fourth-style Roman wall paintings. This deliberate[14] impossibility is more probable for the male poetic readers than the female, as I shall argue shortly.

[9] As Holzberg (2006) 42 notes of this couplet, 'we may infer that a reader response is being staged at this point'. He further comments ((2006) 42–3 n. 7), attributing the point to Steven Green, that these readers, the *puellae*, are taking a critical attitude toward the *praeceptor*.

[10] On the necessity of partnered opposition for elegiac-type love see Romano (1972), Myerowitz (1985) 29, 122–6, James (2003) 7–9, 122, Armstrong (2005) 93.

[11] As Miller (1994) points out, the *praeceptor Amoris* begins book 3 by addressing men (3.5–28; see also R. Gibson (2003) 20–1, 85–96). Miller (1994) 240 argues that even in book 3, the *praeceptor* has a primarily male readership in mind: 'his expressions of reluctance, regret and surprise ... seem aimed at an exclusively male audience'. Sharrock (1998) 113–14 notes that the 'descriptive–prescriptive' formulations in *Ars* 3 allow 'a double address' that lets the *praeceptor* 'wink at the male reader over the head of the female reader'. Thus, during the women's lessons, the male readers can learn about 'the deceptive ways of women'. Armstrong (2005) 79 and 177 n. 75 also notes the way women may read *Ars* 1 and 2. On the 'join' between *Ars* 2 and *Ars* 3, and the inevitability, even in *Ars* 1, of instruction for women see Henderson (2006).

[12] Elegiac erotodidaxis is designed to fail; see Wheeler (1910–11). As Sharrock (2005) 254 notes, elegy itself 'has failure deeply embedded in it', an erotic failure that underwrites the *praeceptor*'s authority (cf. also Dalzell (1996) 140). On the failure of the *Ars* see Sharrock (2002) 160–1. On the failure of the *Remedia* see Sharrock (2002) 161 and Fulkerson (2004).

[13] As Kennedy (2000) 173 notes, the very opening of the poem – *si quis… non nouit* – 'raises the possibility that this act of *didaxis* may lack an essential element … an audience ignorant of its subject'. Kennedy further cites *Tr.* 1.1.112 on the *Ars*: *nemo nescit … amare*.

[14] I say deliberate because the errors of the *praeceptor Amoris* are not those of the historical author himself. The *praeceptor*'s errors, in fact, frequently reveal a poorly hidden animus against women, which turns out to be a characteristic of the *praeceptor*, if one not consciously recognised by him, throughout the poem. See further discussion below.

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## *Prolegomena: identifying the readers and the poetic speaker*

### 1. Distinguishing fictive readers

Some definition of terms is in order, regarding the terms 'audience' and 'readers'. I am interested here, as noted above, in the audience and readers of the *Ars* that are purely textual properties, rather than any definable or even probable historical readership. This fictive reader is best captured in the concept of the narratee, as defined by Gerald Prince ((1987) 57): 'The one who is narrated to, as inscribed in the text ... a purely textual construct … [that] must be distinguished from the real reader or receiver [and] ... also ... from the implied reader: the former constitutes the narrator's audience and is inscribed as such in the text; the latter constitutes the implied author's audience (and is inferable from the entire text).' The distinction can be very clear, as when 'the narratee is also a character'. Thus when the *praeceptor* imputes a question to a male reader – *quaeris an hanc ipsam prosit uiolare ministram?* (1.375 'are you asking if it's useful to rape this very agent?') – he characterises his narratee as a person who is expected to be interested in forcible sex with the female slave who is helping him to pursue the chosen *puella*.[15] As Prince notes, the 'ideal reader' of a text is not to be equated with the narratee.[16] The ideal reader of the *Ars* would have to be educated and alert enough to catch its many jokes and internal contradictions, not to mention genuine puzzles. The poem's male narratee cannot fit that description, as we shall see.

The *Ars amatoria* presupposes a reader familiar with elegy, and with Ovidian elegy in particular.[17] This is one of the points at which the difference between textual and actual readers can be most clearly seen. It also exposes some of the structural instability of the *praeceptor*'s imagined male narratee: anyone who would read this poem has most likely read other poetry, specifically elegy, but anyone who has read elegy has little need of the *praeceptor*'s teaching.[18] The *praeceptor*, however, never

[15] Brandt (1902) *ad loc.* notes the casual nature of the question – a further implicit characterisation of the narratee of *Ars* 1.

[16] Sharrock (1994a) is essential for any consideration of the poem's internal and external audiences. She uses the term 'Reader' to invoke 'the notional addressee' (Sharrock (1994a) 7). Her discussion (1–20) of these types of readers and audiences is especially acute on the way the poem's external readers observe its internal Reader. Prince (1971, 1973, 1980, 1985) provides more information about the narratee.

[17] The re-used material of *Amores* 3.2, in *Ars* 1.135–62, is offered without comment or identification. The reader is expected to be able to offer some amatory speech (perhaps, as noted above, *sponte sua*, perhaps from other forms of observation) – see *Ars* 1.609–12, esp. 611 *est tibi agendus amans imitandaque uulnera uerbis*. At *Ars* 2.169–72 the *praeceptor* seems to refer to the events of *Amores* 1.7, but again without acknowledgment. Only in book 3, speaking to the women, does the *praeceptor* list prior love poetry, identifying his own as well as that of Propertius and Tibullus (denoted via the names of their poetic beloveds, Cynthia and Nemesis).

[18] As Miller (1994) 232 says, Ovid's 'intended readership, the cultivated upper crust of Roman society, was already well-versed in the matters that the *praeceptor Amoris* teaches' (citing Effe (1977) 241). Certainly Ovid's historical readers were so versed, but the *praeceptor*'s textual audience, the narratee, is not so erudite.

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recognises this catch-22. He persists in writing as if to an audience of men who have inexplicably decided to pursue elegiac love without ever having read elegy.

We might posit hordes of careless readers who decide to charge into the erotic fray, precisely under the influence of elegy. But by the time of the *Ars*, such young men would be under the rule of the Julian laws, and would thus be violating the spirit of the *lex de maritandis ordinibus*, if not the letter of the *lex de adulteriis coercendis*. The lover–poet speaks at *Am.* 2.17.28 of numerous female readers and in 3.12 tells his rivals to discredit his poetry, which has prostituted his girlfriend. In Prop. 3.25 the lover claims that he has been a laughing-stock for years because of his devotion to Cynthia, recorded in poetry and disseminated throughout the city (see also 2.3.3–4 and 2.24a). But nothing in elegy suggests a mass of real-life reader–lovers attempting to imitate its art. Sharrock (1994a) 1–20 discusses other aspects of the male narratee of the *Ars*. Young men in Rome who fancied themselves both poets and lovers can hardly have been populous enough to match up to the numberless females cited by the poem. The level of knowledge or understanding of elegy among his pupils (not to mention the actual male readers of Ovid's *Amores*) remains unclear throughout the *Ars*.

## 2. The female narratee

The female narratee, too, poses problems. *Ars* 1 and 2 address themselves to men, but acknowledge that women can read them, as cited above. Women thus form a secondary fictive audience to those two books. The narratee of *Ars* 3, of course, is female. The woman I am concerned with here, as noted above, is the independent courtesan, who cannot be a slave–prostitute. The question is whether such a woman actually needs instruction at her profession. The *praeceptor* evades this question by refusing to acknowledge, most of the time, that he is addressing courtesans.[19] Both comedy and elegy have already offered somewhat improbable scenes of erotodidaxis in which an elder woman, usually a *lena*, instructs a younger courtesan in the rules of the game.[20] For these scenes to retain any plausibility, the young women must be constructed as fairly new at their professions, not yet fully hardened into the demanding women often named Bacchis or Thais. That is, the female pupil for erotodidaxis must be a young woman beginning her career as a courtesan, but still entertaining romantic ideas about

[19] He caves in at certain points, most obviously at *Ars* 1.435, with the phrase *sacrilegas meretricum … artes* ('the unholy arts of prostitutes'). In *Ars* 3 he tells his female pupils to let poets give only poetry (3.533–47) and not to be too demanding at the very beginning of an affair (3.553–4). See also the end of *Am.* 1.10.

[20] See, for instance, the opening scene of *Hecyra* and the long scene between Philematium and Scapha in *Mostellaria*, as well as *Amores* 1.8 and Propertius 4.5. The discussion between Philaenium and Cleareta in *Asinaria* is also relevant, as is Herodas' first mime. Miller (1994) 233–4 notes that 'the women of Book 3 are not *tabulae rasae* like their male counterparts'. That is, they are not utterly unpractised at their profession. Philaenium is a useful example: a young courtesan, she is actually in love with Argyrippus, but can still flirt expertly not only with his father's slaves but eventually with his father as well.

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true love. For the instruction of *Ars* 3 to make minimally plausible sense, even on its absurd surface, such must be the status of its female narratee.

## 3. The male narratee

In constructing its male pupil, its primary narratee, the *Ars* takes a major step back from the structures of prior elegiac love. Elegy is, first and foremost, poetry, and limits its view of lovers to mythic characters and poets, with a strong preferential interest in the love-life of poets. But the fictive male pupils – the narratees – of the *Ars* cannot be poets. As Barchiesi (2006) 98 puts it, the *Ars* 'begins as the most demotic text in the history of Augustan poetry'. He goes on to point out that the *Ars* not only opens itself up to the broadest possible readership (*si quis in hoc ... populo*), but – uniquely among ancient didactic verse – lacks a named addressee and dedicatee. Such a vision of readership reaches well beyond the relatively limited number of poets.[21] As Volk (2006) 237 suggests, the apparent primary shared characteristic for the male pupils of the *Ars* is that they are young men.

In addition, the male narratees need a surprising amount of instruction, and can hardly be described as having refined sentiments. R. Gibson rightly notes that 'a naïve and ignorant character is generally attibuted' to the *praeceptor*'s male addressees in *Ars* 1 and 2.[22] They must be elite enough for the pursuit of expensive women, though the *praeceptor* assumes that they are not wealthy and are thus interested in love at a discount (*Ars* 2.161–5). They must be both inclined for such adventures and utterly at a loss as to how to prepare for the engagement. They must be able, willing, or even ready to overlook the *praeceptor*'s peculiar and persistent characterisation of women as things or material, on the one hand, and wild animals on the other hand.[23] If they are to read the whole *Ars* and then try to put its precepts into action, they must be dullards of some kind: they would have to overlook the repellent, even alarming, depictions of women like Scylla, Myrrha, and especially Pasiphae. They will also

[21] In any case, erotodidaxis of poets takes the form of the instruction to Ponticus in Propertius 1.9 'you'd better start writing soft and sweet love songs now, because girls don't like epic'. Books 1 and 2 of the *Ars* are notably lacking in such poetic instruction.

[22] (1998a) 95–6. R. Gibson (1998a) 88 argues that Latin didactic verse presents itself as a 'popular' form rather than an elite, rarefied form. The *Ars* particularly does so, especially when the *praeceptor* says such things as 'I come here not as a teacher for rich men ... I'm a teacher for poor men because as a lover I was impoverished' (*Ars* 2.161–8) and gives special instruction for the *pauper amator*.

[23] Things or material: ***quod** amare uelis* (1.35), ***materiam** longo amori* (1.49), ***quod** ames* (1.91, 263). Wild animals: *passim*, esp. 1.45–6 *scit bene uenator, ceruis ubi retia tendat, | scit bene, qua frendens ualle moretur aper* ('The hunter knows well where to spread nets for deer and in what vale the foaming-mad boar hangs out'). On the hunting motif in the *Ars* see C. M. C. Green (1996). Hollis (1977) on 35 and 49 notes the 'dry and unemotional' treatment of love. Such lines notoriously embody a paradox: passion (*amare*, *amori*, *ames*) for a virtually inanimate or inert object (*quod*, *materiam*, *quod*). Such an attitude denatures elegiac love – consistently a goal of the *praeceptor*. It is hard to imagine a young man, ignorant but enthusiastic, who takes this attitude before reading the poem.

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have to overlook the disastrous conclusion to the *praeceptor*'s tale of Daedalus and Icarus in book 2, an example that bodes ill for their instruction by him. Even such unobservant types should notice, as Verducci (1980) 33 comments, that they are told first to look tanned and manly, and then shortly after to be wan and weak enough to make their lovesickness obvious.[24]

The *praeceptor* asserts at *Ars* 1.609–10 that speech appropriate for hopeful lovers will arise of its own accord and thus needs no instruction: *non tua sub nostras ueniat facundia leges; | fac tantum cupias, sponte disertus eris*. Such a principle suggests that men do not need to study poetry before they go out on the town to find a girl – their passion is all they need. In theory – or in the *praeceptor*'s lesson plan – the pupil will learn carefully from his tutor and will develop into a discerning, controlled expert on both *Amor* and women. The *Ars* carries its instruction from finding the perfect woman to courting her, moving on to intercourse and, ideally, a settled relationship. At the end of the process, the studious narratee should have developed some familiarity, if not outright expertise, with the pursuit of love. But the poem does not rely on the reading, let alone the writing, of love poetry as a prerequisite for its pupils.[25]

In *Ars* 2 the *praeceptor* does seem to raise the issue of poetic composition:

quid tibi praecipiam teneros quoque mittere uersus?
ei mihi, non multum carmen honoris habet.
carmina laudantur sed munera magna petuntur:
dummodo sit diues, barbarus ipse placet. (*Ars* 2.273–6)

Why should I instruct you to send soft verses as well?
Alas for me, poetry does not have much honour.
Poems are praised but great gifts are sought:
as long as he's rich, even a barbarian is appealing.

sunt tamen et doctae, rarissima turba, puellae,
altera non doctae turba, sed esse uolunt.
utraque laudetur per carmina; carmina lector
commendet dulci qualiacumque sono;
his ergo aut illis uigilatum carmen in ipsas
forsitan exigui muneris instar erit. (2.281–6)[26]

[24] Be tanned and manly: *forma* ***uiros*** *neglecta decet* (1.509); ***fuscentur*** *corpora Campo* (1.513). Be pale and wan: ***palleat*** *omnis amans: hic est color aptus amanti* (1.729). Instruction follows on how to be thin and sickly-looking as well (1.732–8).

[25] On the narrative development of the *Ars* and the forward progress of its amorous pilgrims see Sharrock (1994a), (2006) and Volk (2002). The *Remedia* forbids the reading of love poetry for anyone trying to fall out of love (757–66), but no prior opposed instruction in the *Ars* tells the men to study poetry of any kind.

[26] The phrase *muneris instar* is, as Janka (1997) on 2.286 notes, a regular term in Ovid, appearing also at *Ars* 1.676 and *Am.* 3.14.42.

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There are, however, educated girls, an extremely rare crowd,
 and another crowd, those not educated – but they want to be.
Let each be praised in song; let the reader offer songs,
 whatever kind they are, with a sweet-sounding voice;
for either the latter group or the former, a paraclausithyron for
 themselves will perhaps have the appearance of a small gift.

Thus, there are a few erudite girls but many more who are uneducated (281–2). Both should be praised in poetry, and such poetry might have the equivalent worth of a small gift. Such a conclusion places no confidence on the value of poetry in the courtship of courtesans. This passage seems to suggest that some of the *praeceptor*'s readers might be poets, but if so, they are not constructed as love poets, for they need to be told to compose a paraclausithyron or to perform it sweetly.[27] Anyone – poet or reader – versed in love poetry, especially elegy, hardly needs such instruction. The overall impression of the section is the *praeceptor*'s regret that poetry is not of more use in wooing women. It is of a piece with his further comment on the value of poetry, in *Ars* 3, where his self-serving motives are clearer: *carmina qui facimus, mittamus carmina tantum* (*Ars* 3.533 'let us, who write poems, send only poems') and *uatibus Aoniis faciles estote, puellae* (547 'be easy to Aonian bards, girls').[28] We would expect a great deal more instruction on poetry if the *praeceptor* anticipated a large number of poets among his pupils.

Gian Biagio Conte has described the *Remedia* as 'love without poetry',[29] a designation that extends to the *Ars amatoria*, at least in terms of its vision of its narratee, its anticipated male pupil – *l'aspirante seduttore*, as Pianezzola (1991), on *Ars* 1.269–70, describes him. Since the *praeceptor* does not count on his army of students to be poets, he advises the use of letters, written in plain but soft style, in approaching the target: *ergo eat et blandis peraretur littera uerbis* (1.455). He further recommends some legal training, for the purposes of learning persuasive speech. But this training is of little professional use or advantage. Its purpose is sexual persuasion alone:

disce bonas artes, moneo, Romana iuuentus,
 non tantum trepidos ut tueare reos:
quam populus iudexque grauis lectusque senatus,
 tam dabit eloquio uicta puella manus. (1.459–62).

[27] If they are actually poets, they are not constructed as very good at poetry. R. Gibson (2003) 231 notes, in passing, of *Ars* 2.283ff., 'Ovid's low opinion of the poetry of his male addressees', and refers to Labate (1984) 185, who comments that most of the women here are constituted not as true lovers of poetry and that poets among the *praeceptor*'s student body will not be *Callimachi romani*. As he points out, of lines 283–4, expertise in performing poetry to a girl will be more useful for the *praeceptor*'s pupils than the quality of the poems themselves.

[28] On this self-serving advice see Volk (2002) 165–6 and Myerowitz (1985) 115–16.

[29] Chapter title in Conte (1994) 35–65.

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Learn the liberal arts, I'm telling you, Roman youth,
not only so you can defend fearful clients:
the hand that the people and serious judge and chosen senate
will give, the same hand a girl will give, conquered by eloquence.

This passage presents another problem in the construction of the male narratee: does he already have training at law, or is he being told to acquire it? What relationship would we expect between a course of study in law and acquisition of some poetry along the way? I leave aside this unanswerable question and point instead to the obvious, namely that this passage assumes neither poetic talent nor familiarity with poetry among its male narratees. Indeed, in book 2 the *praeceptor* feels obliged to tell his pupils to take the trouble to learn a second language: *nec leuis ingenuas pectus coluisse per artes* | *cura sit et linguas edidicisse duas* (2.121–2 'and don't let it be a light concern to your heart | to study the liberal arts and to learn two languages').[30]

By contrast, the women of *Ars* 3 are expected to acquire a great deal of literary expertise. The *praeceptor* assigns a near-Ph.D. reading list: the *puella* must know Callimachus, Philetas, Anacreon, Sappho, Menander, Propertius, Gallus, Tibullus, Varro, Vergil and Ovid himself – *Ars* 1 and 2, *Amores* and *Heroides* (3.329–46). The ideal *puella* already appreciates and knows a considerable amount of love poetry, as this passage shows, but as noted above, she is a rarity, according to the *praeceptor*: *sunt tamen et doctae, rarissima turba, puellae* (2.281). On the other hand, as it turns out in the next line, apparently many *puellae* actually want to be learned: *altera non docta turba, sed esse uolunt*.[31] Presumably, the *praeceptor*'s prescription of that lengthy reading list will allow a *puella* to graduate from the latter group into the former. This educational and intellectual imbalance would create real gaps between the courtesans and their suitors, and is thus relevant to our consideration of the way the *praeceptor*'s target female audience reads the first two books of the *Ars*.

The *praeceptor*'s contrary precepts raise two further possibilities. The first is that he urges an education in love poetry for relatively selfish purposes, as he elsewhere advises women about the advantages that poets offer and deserve (*Ars* 3.531–4 and 547–52, passages that include some nonsense about how poets are not treacherous, conniving, ambitious, materialistic or philandering). The second possibility is that the instructional processes of the men and women will take them in opposite directions: we must wonder if such erudite women would be interested in men who must be told to take the trouble to learn a second language and to keep themselves only minimally

[30] On these lines see Sharrock (1994a) 47–50.

[31] R. Gibson (2003) 227 notes the degradation here of female learning ('doctitude', in the term of Habinek (1998) 124). On *Ars* 3.320, he notes, '*docta* refers to Ovid's regimen and is not the term of praise often found in love poetry'. I am not fully persuaded that *docta* in the *Ars* means no real understanding of poetry, but its degeneration here, to a convenience for male pursuit of women, marks a step down from elegy's much-proclaimed attitude that poetry is the loftiest of realms. In *Ars* 3 the primary function of doctitude seems to be to make women more amenable to poets come a-courting. Such poets are not, as we have seen, among the male pupils trained in books 1 and 2.

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kempt.[32] But the *praeceptor Amoris* claims to be aiming his instruction at long-lasting love affairs,[33] so we may reasonably infer that he assumes some sort of compatibility between the partners. One of our concerns here will be whether or not he is correct to make that assumption, given the disparity between his two poetic audiences, a disparity increased by his own teachings.[34]

## 4. The *praeceptor Amoris* as a poetic character

A few final remarks, on the the *praeceptor Amoris* himself. As I noted above, the designation and construction of this character remain controversial. The majority of scholars on the *Ars* now distinguish between the historical poet Ovid and his eponymous speaker. I am interested here in analysing the *praeceptor*'s concept of his readers and putting those imagined readers to an examination. The inconsistencies and self-contradictions shown throughout the *Ars* must be considered if we are to try to understand the poem's speaker, as well as its possible male pupils.[35] He proposes, for example, at 1.269–346 that all woman are highly sexed, but then at 3.9–24 asserts that most women are actually chaste. Another reversal follows immediately, in which he points out that he is not teaching chaste women (3.25–9). This set of contradictions can be explained, as Armstrong (2005) 83 notes, if we recall that his audience has changed in book 3, from men to women. More mystifying internal contradictions are found in, say, the opposing instructions about personal appearances, as noted above – tanned at 1.513 but pale and wan at 1.729, a difficult reversal. These contradictions cannot be ignored. To many readers they raise a red flag, a warning about the *praeceptor*'s stability and perspective.[36]

[32] Of course courtesans cannot be too choosy, as comedy demonstrates when it shows them managing such distasteful men as soldiers and proverbially repulsive aged *senes*.

[33] *Ars* 1.38 *ut longo tempore duret amor*, *Ars* 2.12 *arte mea capta est, arte mea tenenda est.*

[34] See also Dalzell (1996) 152–4 for an extended description of the narratees of the *Ars*. It will already be evident that I consider the way that poem's internal readers understand it a necessary part of the poem's structure. (See, contra, Volk (2002) 195, who sees this issue as a red herring.) I hope to have shown here that so much remains unclear, when it comes to the *praeceptor*'s conception of his male pupils, that in fact we *must* ask whether the *praeceptor*'s narratees notice his contradictions. The very principle of instruction in love requires asking what people might actually need such methodical instruction – a consideration that requires us also to ask what kind of readers they might be.

[35] Again see, contra, Volk (2002) 195; see also O'Hara (2004) 457–8 on this aspect of Volk's argument.

[36] *Ars* 2 contains a famous about-face, where the *praeceptor* goes from telling men to hide their infidelity (409–24) to telling them to reveal it (425–66). But he devotes eight lines (425–32) to pointing out his reversal, which, as it turns out, has a purpose: to make the *puella* jealous. That lesson overrides the previous instruction and fits with the *praeceptor*'s consistent desire to witness female sexual jealousy (fully articulated at 447–54, on which see below, and reverted to at 3.675–8). The male narratee will not be put at a loss by this clearly explained contradiction, but he may never figure out if he is supposed to be tanned or pale. A minor point, perhaps, but hardly a trivial one, given this poem's interest in appearances and given its speaker's insistence on his own authority and reliability. Wright (1984) argues that the *praeceptor* intentionally deceives readers, a view I do not take here.

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Other problems for seeing the *praeceptor* as fully in control of himself and his art arise, famously, at *Ars* 1.645–58, where the young lover is advised to torment his chosen girl by lying and cheating, because most women are simply vile (645–6 *ex magna parte profanum* | *sunt genus*). The open hostility to women in this passage must be accounted for, if one is to see the *praeceptor* as having control over his material.[37] The same goes for the instruction to rape at 1.664–706 – force being in fact antithetical to the poem's proclaimed enterprise of persuasion and seduction.[38] The *praeceptor*'s 'self-contradictions, failures, and moments of confusion' (Volk (2002) 193) can be funny, but the hostility toward women in such passages – not to mention the delight in their unhappiness that can be glimpsed both in them, and in *Ars* 2.445–54, where the lover is to make his beloved tearful, enraged and violent – rests uneasily in a poem purporting to be about mutual love.[39] The model of a controlled speaker, allowing himself to be the object of amusement even for his imagined readers, does not account for the regular intrusion of resentment and violence into the instruction. As I hope to demonstrate here, the reading *puella* will be particularly alert to those moments in the text, and she will not find them humorous.[40]

## *How women read Ars 1 and 2*

What does the female narratee learn from reading *Ars* 1 and 2? To begin with, she should certainly notice the *praeceptor*'s strong desire for revenge, inscribed into the text as motive for both writing and teaching: *quo me fixit Amor, quo me uiolentius ussit,* | *hoc melior facti uulneris ultor ero* (1.23–4 'as much as Love has pierced me, as much as he has violently burnt me, | to that degree I will be a better avenger of the wound he has made'; on these lines, see James (2003) 194–6). If she is reading carefully, she may ask how Cupid is to be punished by a poet, and she may begin to suspect even here that she, rather than the flighty boy, will be the one to suffer. She will then see herself described as inert material or wild animals to be captured, as cited above; the frothing boar will probably particularly catch her attention. She will notice that the *praeceptor*'s first lesson is that Rome has countless women like herself and that she is therefore interchangeable with all the others (1.55–66).

[37] Armstrong (2005) 21 calls the *praeceptor* 'an insecure and ineffectual teacher of love'. On the *praeceptor*'s hostility to women see James (2003) 198–211.

[38] Watson (2002) 159 notes that such passages 'display a cynical attitude to women which is not entirely engendered by the immediate context'. This particular instance of cynicism requires an accounting of some kind, if it is to be fitted into a poem that purports to enable heterosexual relationships and that extends to at least pretending to help women achieve those relationships.

[39] See especially 451–3 *ille ego sim, cuius laniet furiosa capillos*; | *ille ego sim, teneras cui petat ungue genas*, | *quem uideat lacrimans*. See further discussion below.

[40] My thanks to Cameron Paterson for reminding me that the female reader will not laugh at such points in the text.

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Once the preliminary review of conditions for girl-hunting is completed, the *praeceptor* begins his instruction with an overall principle: all girls can be caught:

> prima tuae menti ueniat fiducia, cunctas
> posse capi: capies, tu modo tende plagas. (1.269–70)

> First, let faith come to your mind, that all women
> can be caught. You'll catch one – you just spread your nets.

Why is the professor so confident? Because sexual passion is stronger in women than in men – women cannot control themselves:

> parcior in nobis nec tam furiosa libido;
> legitimum finem flamma uirilis habet. (1.281–2)

> Our passion is more sparing and not so wild;
> men's flame has a rational limit.

He goes on to list numerous examples of mythical females whose sexual passion – often incestuous or abnormal – destroyed themselves and others: Byblis, Myrrha, Pasiphae, Aerope, Scylla, Clytemnestra, Medea, Phaedra. The depiction of women in this passage is both overtly ridiculous and so unpleasant as to make one wonder what man would really want to pursue such unappealing and dangerous animals.

But our question here is how the *puella* might read. She knows that she is not a mythical heroine, but a courtesan in Rome. Her job requires her to exploit male sexual attraction, which not coincidentally puts her at risk of pregnancy – a condition both dangerous and professionally hazardous (see James (2003) 173–83). Pregnancy necessarily suspends professional activities for some time and leaves physical marks, vestiges that elegy considers more than merely unattractive, as the *puella* will notice when she eventually reads these lines in *Ars* 3:

> adde, quod et partus faciunt breuiora iuuentae
> tempora: continua messe senescit ager. (3.81–2)

> Add the fact that births also make the times of youth shorter:
> the field grows old because of continuous harvest.

> tu quoque, cui rugis uterum Lucina notauit. (3.785)[41]

> You also, whose belly Lucina has marked with wrinkles.

[41] See also Prop. 2.15.21–2 *necdum inclinatae prohibent te ludere mammae: | uiderit haec, si quam iam peperisse pudet.* I use the Teubner text of Fedeli (1984).

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Thus part of the courtesan's job is actually to avoid intercourse, as she needs both to prolong her suitors' interest and to prevent pregnancy. Thus she must participate actively when she actually does have sex, as ancient theories of conception recommended female immobility during intercourse for achieving conception, and mobility for avoiding it. Lucretius (4.1263–78) describes both the logic and effect of this programme, clearly distinguishing the sexual mobility of the working girl from the relatively static behaviour of the legitimate wife:

> et quibus ipsa modis tractetur blanda uoluptas.
> id quoque permagni refert ... (4.1263–4)

> and the ways in which the sweet work itself is conducted.
> That too is very important.

> idque sua causa consuerunt scorta moueri,
> ne complerentur crebro grauidaeque iacerent,
> et simul ipsa uiris Venus ut concinnior esset;
> coniugibus quod nil nostris opus esse uidetur. (1274–7).

> And so for their own sake prostitutes learn to be mobile,
> so that they not be fully filled up and lie about pregnant,
> and also so that the sex itself be more pleasing to men.
> There is no need at all for our wives to do this.[42]

The courtesan's active behaviour during sex is easily interpretable as a sign of passion, just what the *praeceptor* seeks (2.683–92, 3.793–804; cf. also Prop. 2.15 and 3.8). But her suitors may be misreading the *puella*'s commitment to them: what appears to be passionate sexual engagement could well be professional and practised attempts to prevent pregnancy instead. The reading *puella* will have a dissenting response to the *praeceptor*'s depiction of her sexuality as wild, animalistic and voracious. Since this precept is the most important of *Ars* 1 – a lesson without which the learning can hardly continue – she will notice this construction of herself and at the least be forewarned that her suitors will consider her irrationally lustful.

The next lesson for the *puella* to notice is that her putative suitors are instructed to approach via her *ancilla* (1.351–98), whom they may assault sexually. The *praeceptor* in fact expects his male pupils to feel so inclined: *quaeris an hanc ipsam prosit uiolare ministram?* (375 'are you asking if it may be advantageous to violate this very agent?'). This section begins and ends by assuming that forcing an *ancilla* into sex will be advantageous for male suitors (see particularly *prosit* in 375 and 397–8, where the maid will be forced to spy upon her mistress).[43] Here the *puella* will deduce

[42] On this passage see Brown (1987) *ad loc.* I use the OCT of Bailey (1954) here.
[43] On the lover and the *ancilla* see both Henderson (1991/1992) and James (1997), with citations.

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that her beaux are also having sex with her trusted staff. (This lesson acquires official status at *Ars* 3.665–6, when the *praeceptor* warns his female pupils not to have too beautiful a maid, as he has often given in to temptation on that account.) Of course, *Amores* 2.7 and 2.8 have already dramatised this phenomenon, as the *puella* will see if she eventually reads the *Amores* (she will be instructed to do so at *Ars* 3.343). Here she sees rape of her maid actually recommended to the young men. Its ultimate effect should be to make her wary of both lover and *ancilla*.

Recovering from the shock of learning the advantages for men of raping her maid – and here we must not presume that a *puella* would sympathise with her *ancilla* – the female reader will go on to the next unit, which reviews at length the lover's instruction for avoidance of gift-giving:

> promittas facito: quid enim promittere laedit?
> pollicitis diues quilibet esse potest. (*Ars* 1.443–4)

> Go ahead and lie: for how does it hurt to lie?
> Anybody at all can be rich in promises.

> si dederis aliquid, poteris ratione relinqui (*Ars* 1.447)
> If you should give something, you could be dumped for cause.[44]

> at quod non dederis, semper uideare daturus (*Ars* 1.449).
> What you haven't given, always seem about to give.

> hoc opus, hic labor est, primo sine munere iungi;
> ne dederit gratis quae dedit, usque dabit. (*Ars* 1.453–4)[45]

> This is the struggle, this is the task, to be joined without giving a gift first;
> so that she not have given for free, she'll keep on giving.

In this passage, which contains some strong cursing against women, the reading *puella* might well learn a few new tricks for getting men to spend money on her, but she will not fail to notice its conclusion, where the young men are taught to make false promises and to tantalise her with future gifts. The *puella* will here be clearly advised of her suitors' intent and should be put on guard against facile promises by them.

Following this eye-opening precept is the segment on letter-writing, in which the lover is advised to send wheedling missives, so that he can put off giving gifts. The *puella* can hardly avoid noticing, at the end of this passage, a repetition of the earlier

[44] Brandt (1902) *ad loc.* notes drily that this abandonment would take place 'on good grounds, with complete and total justification'.

[45] On this stratagem see also *Am.* 1.10.63–4 *nec dare, sed pretium posci dedignor et odi; | quod nego poscenti, desine uelle, dabo* ('it isn't giving, but being asked for a reward, that I disdain and despise; | what I refuse to the girl who asks, stop wanting and I'll give').

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precept about female insatiability – women say no, but they mean yes: *quod rogat illa, timet; quod non rogat, optat, ut instes* (*Ars* 1.485 'what she asks, she fears; what she doesn't ask, she wants – for you to persist'). Shortly after, at line 611, the *praeceptor* tells the young men to fake their infatuation because girls will always believe a man loves them, such is the female ego:

> est tibi agendus amans, imitandaque uulnera uerbis.
> ...
> nec credi labor est: sibi quaeque uidetur amanda;
> pessima sit, nulli non sua forma placet. (*Ars* 1.611–14)

> You must act the lover, and imitate his wounds in your speech.
> ...
> It isn't hard to be believed: each woman seems lovable to herself;
> she may be hideous, but there's none who isn't pleased by her own beauty.

Hardly a flattering remark. A *puella* might well ask herself, after reading this: does any of my suitors actually consider me beautiful, or are they all lying? She would then wonder why a man would continue to pursue a woman he didn't consider attractive. (If so, she will become caught in one of the hall-of-mirrors effects that regularly derive from the contradictory instruction of the *Ars amatoria*.) At 631–58, she will find first a repetition of the instruction to lie and deceive her shamelessly, and then a further justification of deceit, here based not in her professional greed (as in lines 399–458, on how to avoid giving gifts), but in her very nature as a female:

> ludite, si sapitis, solas impune puellas.
> ...
> fallite fallentes: ex magna parte profanum
> sunt genus: in laqueos quos posuere, cadant. (*Ars* 1.643–6)

> You can safely cheat, if you're smart, only on girls.
> ...
> Deceive the deceivers: for the most part they're a cheating tribe:
> let them fall into the same nets they have put out.

> ergo ut periuras merito periuria fallant,
> exemplo doleat femina laesa suo. (*Ars* 1.657–8)

> So, as lies rightly deceive lying women,
> let a woman grieve, wounded by her own example.

If she hasn't already figured it out, she will now know that the *praeceptor* is seeking revenge against women, rather than against Cupid, as he had claimed in lines 23–4.

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Whether she resents being generically constructed as a liar, simply because she is female,[46] or focuses on the suffering planned for her in words like *laesa* and *doleat* (658), the *puella* will by now have noticed that the *praeceptor* presents the love affair as a structure of opposition and deceit, from false praise of her beauty to false promises somehow revealed, so that she may be put through her misery (a stratagem revisited in *Ars* 2; see below). Such a lesson inevitably prepares the *puella* to read with ever-greater suspicion, and to become increasingly wary of her suitors.

On the heels of this charming precept comes one yet more alarming. The young men are told to learn to weep on command, in order to steal kisses, even against the girl's will. Notoriously, the tears may be faked, if they don't turn up on time (661–2).[47] The weeping should be accompanied by sweet talk, and followed by kissing and force:

> quis sapiens blandis non misceat oscula uerbis?
>   illa licet non det, non data sume tamen.
> pugnabit primo fortassis, et 'improbe' dicet:
>   pugnando uinci se tamen illa uolet. (*Ars* 1.663–6)

> What smart guy doesn't mix kisses with soft words?
>   Suppose she doesn't want to give them, take the ungiven kisses anyway.
> Maybe she'll fight back at first, and say 'Naughty!'
>   She still wants to be conquered while she's fighting.

> oscula qui sumpsit, si non et cetera sumet,
>   haec quoque, quae data sunt, perdere dignus erit. (*Ars* 1.669–70)

> Whoever has taken kisses, if he doesn't take the rest too,
>   deserves to lose even those kisses/things that were given.

But is she really unwilling? Not according to the *praeceptor*: women actually like to be forced:

> uim licet appelles: grata est uis ista puellis;
>   quod iuuat, inuitae saepe dedisse uolunt.
> quaecumque est Veneris subita uiolata rapina,
>   gaudet, et improbitas muneris instar habet.
> at quae, cum posset cogi, non tacta recessit,
>   ut simulet uultu gaudia, tristis erit. (*Ars* 1.673–8)

[46] Here her falseness is owed to her sex, not to her profession, as in the *sacrilegas meretricum ... artes* of 1.435.

[47] See Kennedy (2006) 65–6 on how the well-read *puella* will already know the literary history of tears produced for an occasion.

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You can call it force: girls like that force.[48]
  They often like to have given unwillingly what is pleasing.
And the one who's been violated by a sudden theft of sex
  takes delight, and the offence takes the form of a gift.
But the one who goes away untouched, when she could have been forced,
  though she pretends delight on her face, will be sad.

scilicet, ut pudor est, quaedam coepisse priorem,
  sic alio gratum est incipiente pati. (*Ars* 1.705–6)

Naturally, just as it's shameful for a girl to start in first,
  so it's pleasing to experience it when somebody else has initiated.

She may be embarrassed or ashamed to take the lead, but she's happy when he forces her. The *puella* will certainly draw the correct inference here, namely that her refusal will be interpreted as permission. In other words, the *praeceptor* here leaves her no room to say no. What she is to do about this problem is unclear. It is always risky to let a man indoors, and this passage underscores that risk.[49] Once in position, he will believe he not only can but should force her into sex. For the second time in book 1, the *praeceptor* has given men permission to commit rape – and this time the *puella* will certainly recognise it as such.[50]

What is more, this precept tells the men that they do a woman a favour when forcing her into sex, because women like that form of violence. Here, as her 'no!' is translated into 'yes', her subsequent distress is interpreted as rejoicing. Since *gaudium* in Latin poetry often means sexual climax,[51] these lines may have a particularly chilling effect on the reading *puella*: *gaudet* at 676 punningly suggests that the rape will actually

[48] This line could also be translated: 'you can apply force; girls like that force'.

[49] New comedy shows that violence against the *meretrix* in her own home is not uncommon: *Adelphoe* 120–1, *Eunuchus* 771–816, *Persa* 569. Apropos of Horace, *Ode* 3.26, Copley (1956) 56–8 discusses the appropriate weaponry for such assaults. See James (2003) 196. Astaphium in *Truculentus* (96–111) details the thieving behaviour of young men in the courtesan's house. A more personal danger of course is sexual. Chaerea in *Eunuchus* (382–7) articulates a rationale for revenge against courtesans, but in his case the revenge will be taken out on the young woman's body rather than her belongings. On sexual violence in elegy see James (2003) 184–97 and Fredrick (1997).

[50] Myerowitz-Levine (2006) 267 argues that this passage is not really about rape, but about 'an act of male initiative against feigned female coyness'. The courtesan reading these lines will know whether or not she is being coy. The evolutionary and scientific studies cited by Myerowitz-Levine (ibid. and *passim*) do not apply to a situation in which – as noted above – for the sake of their very livelihoods, women must actively avoid pregnancy, as all sex workers in antiquity, and perhaps especially the elite and elegant Roman literary courtesan, needed to do.

[51] Adams (1982) 197–8 lists Hor. *Ode* 3.6.28, Catull. 61.110, Tib. 2.1.12, *Am.* 3.7.63 (on which he cites Brandt (1911) *ad loc.*). To his list could be added Lucr. 4.1106, Tib. 1.5.39, *Ars* 2.459 and 689 and *Ars* 3.798 and 805.

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guarantee her pleasure.[52] Such a suggestion further authorises the male narratee's impetus to force, but it can hardly make the *puella* sanguine about her future sexual encounters with her educated lovers.

The next lesson of special interest comes in book 2, beginning at line 145, where the *praeceptor* advises flattering talk and sycophantic behaviour. This *obsequium* is needed because the lover doesn't have much money or doesn't want to pay, as noted above – the rich man needs no art, but the poor man does (2.161–5). The *praeceptor* spells out why the poor lover needs flattery and sycophancy: *pauper amet caute, timeat maledicere pauper, | multaque diuitibus non patienda ferat* (2.167–8 'let the poor man love cautiously and avoid harsh language | and put up with many things not tolerated by the wealthy'). He openly advises *obsequium* at 179–84 and particularly instructs the young men to take their cues from the *puella*'s behaviour – argue, agree, approve, disapprove, laugh, weep, all at her command (199–201).[53] Other than mimicking her facial and verbal expressions, *obsequium* takes the form of physical service – carrying umbrellas, helping to put on shoes, holding up mirrors, running errands – and suffering common to both *militia amoris* and *seruitium amoris*: cold weather, harsh conditions, dangerous terrain, especially rooftops that must be traversed for secret rendezvous (209–50). *Obsequium* also requires a man to court the *puella*'s household staff and give them small gifts (251–60). Women don't value poetry over material goods, but sometimes an elegiac-type performance will pass for a small gift, *exigui muneris instar* (2.286).[54] Any generous act – setting a slave free, or letting one off from a beating, for example – the lover should say is inspired by her, to appeal to her emotions (287–94). The smart *puella* will be suspicious of such behaviour after reading this point. Gross flattery of her beauty is advised, but must be done with caution, so that she will not catch her suitor faking his praise (295–314). Waiting on her when she's unwell has its uses (315–36), another form of *obsequium*.

Shortly after this lesson, the *praeceptor* turns to the subject of cheating, which turns out to be so exciting for the male teacher and pupil that any reading *puella* must sit up and take notice. The central section of *Ars* 2 provides instructions to the male lover for cheating on his beloved. The first principle: a man does not have to limit

[52] The echo of *gaudet* in 678 (*simulet uultu gaudia*) both plays against the pun at 675, by using *gaudia* in its standard sense of gladness, and also looks forward, here punning with its sexual dimension, to the frigid woman at the end of *Ars* 3, who must fake her pleasure. See especially 798 *dulcia mendaci gaudia finge sono*. The reading *puella* will be sensitive to these various word-plays and will recognise here a politics of force and orgasm – a politics not in her favour. Might she have to pretend a climax in order to bring a rape to its end?

[53] This passage echoes the instructions of Acanthis at Propertius 4.5.45 (*in mores te uerte uiri*) and raises the strong possibility that everybody in elegy – lover and beloved alike – is acting, that nobody's behaviour expresses genuine emotion.

[54] I omit comment about how the reading *puella* might react to seeing her literary sensibilities disparaged. She will almost certainly note that *exigui muneris instar* unsettlingly echoes *Ars* 1.676, where the girl who has been forced into sex actually rejoices: *gaudet, et improbitas muneris instar habet* ('she rejoices, and naughtiness has the appearance of a gift'). This echo and its resulting connection, in the *Ars*, between poetry and rape will probably not escape her notice.

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himself to a single girl – not even a bride should expect that kind of fidelity (*Ars* 2.387–8). At first, the *praeceptor* says, the student should hide his cheating; then he changes his mind and advises the young would-be lover to flaunt it, so that he can make his girlfriend jealous, because there is no aphrodisiac like an enraged and jealous girlfriend. Fortunate indeed is the young man whose girlfriend weeps over his cheating (445–50). The *praeceptor* virtually wallows in a fantasy of this unhappy woman:

> ille ego sim, cuius laniet furiosa capillos;
> ille ego sim, teneras cui petat ungue genas,
> quem uideat lacrimans, quem toruis spectet ocellis,
> quo sine non possit uiuere, posse uelit. (2.451–4)

> May I be the one whose hair she shreds in a rage;
> may I be the one whose tender cheeks she scratches with her nails,
> whom she sees through her tears, whom she stares at with swollen eyes,
> without whom she couldn't live, if she wanted to.

Read carefully, this passage proves very revealing. Its primary lesson for the female reader is that men are excited by female jealousy manifested in the form of her rage and unhappiness. And indeed the *praeceptor* tells his female readers the very same thing at the end of *Ars* 3, as the most important precept of all: make us believe we are loved – and it's easy – by acting jealous.[55] The *puella* will not need the lesson by the time she has read *Ars* 2, as she will certainly figure out that if her suitor shares the *praeceptor*'s proclivities, all she has to do is accuse him of cheating on her. (Dipsas and Acanthis, of course, have already made the same suggestion, in *Amores* 1.8 and Propertius 4.5.) This is an important lesson for the *puella*, though it requires care in enacting.[56]

The next lesson that the *puella* may find useful to know: lovers should not criticise their girls (641–62). It will take time to get used to her physical defects, gentlemen, says the *praeceptor*, so you need to practice euphemism. If she's fat, call her *plena*; if she's a stringbean, call her *gracilis*; and so forth. This precept leads directly into the next: don't embarrass women by asking their age (663–6). But the subject of female age raises an interesting and unexpected issue, just as the reading *puella* may be beginning to wonder how sincere her lover's praise is.

The issue raised by the subject of female age? The woman of thirty-five or so is more sexually successful than the younger woman, and more likely than a younger woman to reach a climax – and the *praeceptor* hates a woman who is lukewarm in bed (683–8). He wants his women fully engaged:[57]

[55] See *Ars* 3.673–82, which begins *efficite (et facile est) ut nos credamus amari*. As R. Gibson (2003) *ad loc.* notes, this instruction 'does not work solely in the interests of the *puellae*'.

[56] True anger in a woman is unappealing (*Ars* 3.503–11) and inconvenient. After reading *Ars* 3, a *puella* will know that she must put on a persuasive, yet attractive, act, without distorting her features repulsively.

[57] He is not unique in elegy, on this point, as the Propertian speaker feels the same way: see esp. Prop. 3.8.

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me uoces audire iuuat sua gaudia fassas,
utque morer meme sustineamque rogent.
aspiciam dominae uictos amentis ocellos;
langueat et tangi se uetet illa diu. (689–92)

I like to hear her expressing her enjoyment,
asking me to slow down and hold back.
May I look upon the conquered eyes of my maddened mistress;
may she lie back exhausted and for a long time forbid herself to be touched.

He wants a wild and crazy girl, and he wants to see her worn out by the whole business. He argues for such a powerful mutual experience that both partners should reach the goal at the same time, after which they can both apparently pass out (2.725–30). This passage suggests a form of sexual egalitarianism and an interest in female sexual pleasure, a reading undercut by the caveat that if time is short, the man must dig his spurs in and ride his horse hard to the finish line:

cum mora non tuta est, totis incumbere remis
utile, et admisso subdere calcar equo. (2.731–2)

When delay is unsafe, it's useful to lean in with
all your oars and spur your horse on.

The *puella* will hardly fail to notice that sexual equality is a function of the liberality of time. If there's no hurry, then she is to enjoy herself, but if *tempus fugit*, her pleasure will be considered needless. Still, she will certainly figure out that the *praeceptor* likes to see women put on a big show. And once again, he says the same at the end of *Ars* 3:

sentiat ex imis Venerem resoluta medullis
femina, et ex aequo res iuuet illa duos. (*Ars* 3.793–4)

Let a woman feel Venus, loosened, deep in her bones,
and let the business please both equally.

Here again he says that he prefers to see his partners enjoy themselves, but if they can't, they should do a believable con job:

dulcia mendaci gaudia finge sono. (*Ars* 3.798)
Fake your sweet pleasures with a false sound.

tantum, cum finges, ne sis manifesta, caueto. (*Ars* 3.801)
Only, when you're faking, be careful that you're not too obvious.

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So both *Ars* 2 and 3 end with a lesson that the *puella* cannot forget. She must act passionate in bed and at least pretend to reach a climax, because her lover will be expecting her to, because his ego demands it. Of course there is no guarantee that every pupil will share his teacher's preferences, but they are expressed here in didactic form, and emphatically so.[58]

When the *puella* reads *Ars* 1–2, she will see that her lovers have no real concern for her, will cheat on her, will take pleasure at seeing her in tears, will feel authorised to rape her because she doesn't mean it when she says no. She will take instruction in how to manipulate men, in how they prefer to get their manipulation, and in how she must not trust them. Despite the *praeceptor*'s suggestions that women should trust and go easy on poets, as at *Ars* 3.531–4, she may well find poets the least trustworthy men of all. By the end of her review of *Ars* 1 and 2, the *puella* is fully prepared for war: the instructions for the men tell her everything she needs to know.[59]

## *Returning to the readers*

To revert to my original concern, namely the probability factor of the poem's fictive readers: I remain uncertain how likely it is that there are enough *puellae* who are new to their profession, and thus somewhat naive, to make the poem's erotodidaxis even minimally necessary, even in the unrealistic poetic world of Ovidian elegy. Many readers have noticed that the instruction of *Ars* 3 amounts to something like this: hide your defects from us men; sit still, so we can catch you; pretend you're crazy about us, but not so much as to inconvenience us; make sure we think we've satisfied you; don't ask for gifts. This instruction benefits not the women but the men.[60] That is, its real interest is in getting women to keep men interested without costing them too much. It is unclear whether any courtesans would find this instruction enlightening. It also remains unclear how many men should be presumed to exist who might fit the necessary description of the narratee of *Ars* 1 and 2. It does seem clear, however, that once a *puella* has finished reading the first two books of the poem, she hardly needs to read book 3, and she will certainly have lost any romantic illusions she might

[58] The echoes of *gaudia* at 2.689 and 3.798 should recall the complex politics of force, orgasm and pretence at 1.673–8, as discussed above. The reading *puella* may well be unsure how she should act, but she will certainly figure out that her own physical experiences will be closely monitored and interpreted in ways that may not favour her interests, or even her physical sanctity.

[59] Sharrock (2006) 28 remarks of the female readers of *Ars* 3 that 'it is hard to resist the feeling that what they are actually being taught is how to let their men have it all ways. They should love their men to distraction, but let them get away with playing around and any other bad behaviour'. The woman reading *Ars* 1 and 2 will have observed that the *praeceptor* in fact actively teaches his male pupils – her putative partners in love – precisely to 'have it all ways', to cheat, lie and exploit.

[60] See also Miller (1994) 240–1, on how the *praeceptor*'s interests and allegiances even in *Ars* 3 are with the men rather than with his official narratees, the women. Kennedy (2006) 64 notes that the female pupil, having gleaned lessons from both the *Ars* and the *Heroides*, will 'embark upon playing her role'.

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have begun with, about the possibility of real love.[61] Hence the failure of the *Ars* is, as I suggested above, built into its imagined audience as well as in its unstable narrative speaker, the Professor of Love. The *praeceptor* himself unwittingly destabilises, even destroys, his desired type of female audience: by revealing too many secrets about men to his reading women, he transforms them into the hardened and cynical women that elegy perpetually resents, the demanding women that he himself consistently deplores.[62]

I have noted that the *praeceptor*'s concepts of his male and female readers are not only implausible but unstable. His persistently contradictory instructions to the two groups both underscore that instability and implausibility, on the one hand, and on the other hand mean that the *Ars* is doomed because it teaches men and women to move in opposite directions – in other words, to become incompatible. Erudite women and ignorant men may be unable to maintain lasting love, especially when they are already at odds financially. Worse, by exposing his female readers to the disingenuity, violence and cheapness of their lovers, the *praeceptor* destroys the chance of creating successful love and successful erotodidaxis. He lets the women see too much. Even the hypothetical naive young courtesan, just beginning her career, will be made more wary and more cynical by her reading of *Ars* 1 and 2. In Jonathan Swift's satirical poem 'The lady's dressing room', the besotted young lover Strephon is so horrified by what he sees in his beloved's boudoir, that he runs off swearing to have no more to do with women.[63] The poem's women cannot afford this attitude, but they may well swear off just the kinds of ideas about love that their instructor constantly extols. By allowing his female readers to see too much in *Ars* 1 and 2, the professor unwittingly corrupts his own pupils and thereby condemns his own art to failure.[64]

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[61] An anonymous referee has suggested to me that the concept of lasting 'real love' – independent of marriage or financial concerns – is inapplicable in Roman antiquity, a fact that might well render irrelevant the question of real status or real people. This can of worms is too big for me to open here and it would set me fishing in another stream entirely. I content myself first with reiterating that the *praeceptor Amoris* claims he will help to bring about lasting 'real' love and, second, with noting that such young professionals as Philaenium of *Asinaria* and Thais of *Eunuchus* do in fact claim to love men who can neither marry nor financially support them. Their contexts make it impossible for such love to last. I consider 'real' status and 'real' people at least somewhat relevant because the *Ars* so insistently places itself in contemporary Rome, under the Julian laws – precisely where Ovid's historical audience was reading the poem.

[62] *Ars* 1.419–36, 2.277–80, *Rem.* 301–306, 317–21. See also *Amores* 1.10. This precise situation creates what I have called 'the elegiac impasse' (James (2003) 14). This impasse engenders much of elegy's contents.

[63] Jim O'Hara has reminded me that in this poem, Swift is drawing directly from Lucretius, as well as Ovid himself. Cf., *Ars* 3.209–34 and *Rem.* 351–6.

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