

THE BOGUS TEACHER
AND HIS RELEVANCE FOR OVID'S
ARS AMATORIA

The thesis of the present paper comes in several parts, of which the initial one, since it traverses the least familiar territory, is accorded the most extended treatment. It goes as follows: first, it is possible to identify in Latin literature the stock figure of a bogus teacher or sermoniser who dispenses arguments or instruction that are in some way false, misleading or vitiated; second, that the speaker of Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* is patterned to a significant degree upon the typology of the bogus teacher with which the first section of the paper is concerned, and must be taken account of in any discussion of the sources that feed into the literary weave of Ovid's poem, in particular those which contribute to the construction of the didactic *persona*; third, if the argument of part 2 is accepted, it lends support to the view of Durling, E. F. Wright, Myerowitz and others that, in the *Ars*, Ovid deliberately constructs his speaker as an incompetent or ineffectual *praeceptor* who at every turn discloses his ineptitude:¹ conversely, it tells against the more recent contention of Eric Downing and Katharina Volk² that the teacher of the *Ars* represents both himself and his instruction as a success.

1) R. M. Durling, *The Figure of the Poet in Renaissance Epic* (Cambridge, Mass. 1965) 26–43, E. F. Wright, *Profanum sunt Genus: the Poets of the Ars Amatoria*, PQ 63 (1984) 1–15, M. Myerowitz, *Ovid's Games of Love* (Detroit 1985). Cf. also J. M. Fyler, *Omnia vincit amor: Incongruity and the Limitations of Structure in Ovid's Elegiac Poetry*, CJ 66 (1971) 196–203 and E. D. Blodgett, *The Well Wrought Void: Reflections on the Ars Amatoria*, CJ 68 (1973) 322–33.

2) E. Downing, *Artificial I's: The Self as Artwork in Ovid*, Kierkegaard and Thomas Mann (Tübingen 1993) 39, K. Volk, *The Poetics of Latin Didactic* (Oxford 2002) 157–95. While not going nearly so far as Downing and Volk, A. Dalzell, *The Criticism of Didactic Poetry* (Toronto 1996) 132–64, lays emphasis on the fact that Ovid strives to give the impression of being in control of the art which he professes. Most recently, Rebecca Armstrong, *Ovid and his Love Poetry* (London 2005) 138 also edges towards Volk's position.

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The various instances of the bogus teacher or sermoniser around which the discussion is built are these: the Damasippus, Cadius and Davus of Horace, *Satires* 2,3, 2,4 and 2,7; the teacher of rhetoric Agamemnon and the incompetent poet and moraliser Eumolpus of Petronius' *Satyricon*; the astrologer Horus of Propertius 4,1b; the hypocritical moneylender Alfius of Horace's second *Epode* who sings the praises of traditional life on the land; Priapus, the comically erotodidactic speaker of Tibullus 1,4; and the procuresses of Propertius 4,5 and Ovid, *Amores* 1,8, who dispense instruction on the *meretricius quaestus* to unidentified *puellae*. This list could be augmented by additional examples from Roman literature³ and extended into the terrain of Greek literature.⁴ But it is on the instances just catalogued that the discussion which follows will concentrate.

Before essaying a profile of the bogus teacher, some prefatory remarks are in order. The emergence of such a stock figure is hardly a surprise, given two factors: first, the interest in the systemisation of teaching and the personalities of famous teachers which is attested by Suetonius' *De Grammaticis et Rhetoribus*⁵ as well as several works of Plutarch;⁶ second, a widespread awareness that the teachers' methodologies could sometimes leave much to be desired.⁷ One might add that, in fashioning the figure of the bogus teacher, the authors in question were consciously playing with the influential idea of literature's protreptic function, canonically ex-

3) The Pythagoras of Ovid, *Met.* 15,60–478 has sometimes been viewed as an instance (n. 84), but the episode is too long for discussion here. Another case is the interpretation of the Zodiac dish given by Trimalchio in Petronius, *Satyricon* 39.

4) A possible example is the account of the evil eye given by Calasiris in Heliodorus' *Aethiopica* 3,7–9, which M. Dickie, Heliodorus and Plutarch on the Evil Eye, *CPh* 86 (1991) 17–29 argues is meant to be treated as a confection of nonsense.

5) Note particularly here the gossip and strictures, mostly moral, against certain teachers recorded by Suetonius, *De Grammaticis*, chapters 16, 22 and 23, all of which, if true, impacted adversely on their qualifications and credibility as *grammatici*. See R. Kaster, *Suetonius De Grammaticis et Rhetoribus* (Oxford 1995) on *Gramm.* 23,2.

6) G. Roskam, From Stick to Reasoning. Plutarch on the Communication between Teacher and Pupil, *WS* 117 (2004) 93–114.

7) Cf. Hor. *Sat.* 1,6,72 ff., Tac. *Dial.* 35, Pers. 3,46 *non sano . . . magistro*.

pressed by Horace:⁸ that is to say, while creating a figure who alleges that what he says is *utile*, that *utile* is paradoxically metamorphosed for the readership into the *dulce* by the revelation that the lessons being taught are – amusingly – useless or of minimal value. In fact, it is the very pervasiveness of the protreptic ideal in Greco-Roman literature that lays the basis for the emergence of the bogus teacher. For as Peter Toohey has noted,⁹ numerous passages of ancient literature standing outside the formal tradition of didactic poetry have an explicitly or implicitly instructional flavour: this provides the stage for the sham *praeceptor*.

The key features of the sham teacher are, it is proposed, as follows, though not every feature will be present in every instance or attain the same degree of prominence in all cases. Nor are these seven characteristics to be thought of as watertight: on the contrary, there is a degree of confluence between them which contributes to a composite picture of the *praeceptor* as sham.

1) The advice which the *praeceptor* gives is generally fatuous, incompetent or inept.

2) This last consideration deflects the reader's attention away from the precepts and onto the personality and self-presentation of the *praeceptor*.

3) The sham teacher in Latin contexts has significant affiliations with the ἄλαζών of Greek Old Comedy, defined as follows by MacDowell: "the ἄλαζών is a man who ... professes expertise which, he claims, makes him superior to other men; he exploits it, normally in speech ... but what he says is actually false or useless."¹⁰

4) The authority of his teachings is typically vitiated by the moral or physical standing of the *praeceptor*.

5) The bogus teacher is characterised by a certain portentousness of diction.

6) The teachings dispensed are often – though not invariably – at second or third hand, thereby undermining their authority and validity.

8) Hor. *Ars* 333–44, especially 333–4 *aut prodesse uolunt aut delectare poetae, / aut simul et iucunda et idonea dicere uitae*. Cf. also Volk (n. 2) 36.

9) P. Toohey, *Epic Lessons. An Introduction to Ancient Didactic Poetry* (London/New York 1996) 232–7.

10) D. MacDowell, *The Meaning of ἄλαζών*, in: E. M. Craik (ed.), 'Owls to Athens' (Oxford 1990) 287–92 at 289.

7) The ineptitude of other practitioners against which protests are directed in the didactic tradition is, by an ironic reversal, embodied in the figure of the bogus teacher.

ad 1) Self-evidently, the determining feature of the bogus teacher is a manifest incompetence or ineptitude which deprives of authority his or her protreptics. Consequently, of the various characteristics just listed, this dimension of the *praeceptor* calls for the most extended notice, both immediately below and in the second part of the paper. A case in point is the teacher of rhetoric Agamemnon in Petronius' *Satyricon*. As the surviving part of the novel opens, Agamemnon responds to a hackneyed attack on the evils of the contemporary educational process by advocating an equally clichéd, fatuous and hyper-traditional *cursus*: these sentiments are expressed in iambic, then hexametric, verses of staggering banality (Sat. 5). And not only is Agamemnon painted in broad terms as an educational *laudator temporis acti*, but, as H. L. W. Nelson has demonstrated, the worth of what Agamemnon says is further undermined by two considerations:¹¹ Agamemnon, himself a teacher of the proletariat, advocates an extreme aristocratic educational ideal ("ein extremes aristokratisches Bildungsideal") having only limited relevance to his own pupils; and he gives primacy in his *cursus* to the reading of Greek literature, although the vogue for this had probably passed its zenith at the time when Petronius was writing. All in all, Agamemnon comes off as an inept, to whose guidance no judicious parent would entrust his offspring.

Moving back a century or so, let us next consider the sermonising Damasippus of Horace, Satires 2,3, a failed financier now converted by Stertinius to a proselytising Stoicism. Damasippus likewise forfeits his protreptic credibility in a variety of ways. In the first place, he opens the poem by accusing Horace of compositional indolence:¹² a charge which the poet invalidates by his response, which is to write by far the longest of the *Satires*. Further, the message which Damasippus preaches, that all but the sage are mad, is patently hyperbolic nonsense of the doctrinaire Stoic type already condemned on that score by Horace in Satires 1.¹³ Worse,

11) H. L. W. Nelson, Ein Unterrichtsprogramm aus ernerischer Zeit (Amsterdam 1956) 7.

12) Lines 1–16.

13) Satire 1,3,76 ff., which attacks as absurd the Stoic credo that all offences are equal.

Damasippus' application of the just-mentioned dogma, which he has picked up from Stertinius,¹⁴ is tendentious and self-serving;¹⁵ he deploys it as a verbal cudgel with which to belabour others, and not, as was intended, for purposes of moral improvement. Further, Damasippus the preacher engages in multiple self-contradictions. Not only is the activity enjoined by him at the commencement of the satire, viz. poetic composition, stigmatised by Damasippus at the close as "madness",¹⁶ but Damasippus emerges as a crazy zealot who is himself condemned as mad by the poet in the concluding verses.¹⁷ Add to this Damasippus-Stertinius' disingenuousness and ludicrous overpainting of exhortatory *exempla*, and the impression with which one is left is of a ranting diatribist risibly divested of his philosophical clothes.

There is one dimension of Damasippus' sermonising which serves above all to cast doubt on the value of what he has to say. This is the intellectual casuistry of which Stertinius, whose preachings make up the bulk of Damasippus' speech (38–295), is guilty, in particular his sophistic and flawed deployment of *exempla* to support his contention that those who are not wise are mad. The importance of this point for the case being argued in the present paper can scarcely be overstated. First, the *exemplum* had an absolutely vital corroborative function in structuring an argument and lending it credibility: consequently, any infelicity in using this most basic of argumentative tools will tend ipso facto to convict the speaker in question of ineptitude. Second, and to anticipate, one of the key stratagems by which the *praeceptor* of the *Ars Amatoria* undermines his didactic authority is likewise by adducing *exempla* which conspicuously "fail to fulfil their ostensible, corroborative function."¹⁸ This connection between the bogus teacher and the *praeceptor* of the *Ars* will be taken up later, but for the moment we must focus on Stertinius' misemployment of the mythological *exem-*

14) Lines 32–46.

15) Cf. F. Muecke, *Horace Satires II* (Warminster 1993) 130–1. Of particular note here are Damasippus' revealing remarks at 296–9.

16) 321–2 *adde poemata nunc, hoc est, oleum adde camino* [sc. *furoris tui*], / *quae si quis sanus fecit, sanus facis et tu.*

17) 326 *o maior, tandem parcas, insane, minori!* The theme is already announced in lines 27–31, where Horace raises the possibility that Damasippus has simply replaced one form of madness with another: see Muecke (n. 15) on 27–30.

18) P. Watson, *Mythological Exempla in Ovid's Ars Amatoria*, CPh 78 (1983) 117–26 at 120.

plum. Two examples in particular stand out. At 128–141 Stertinius, advancing the thesis that crime provoked by avarice is madness, cites as illustration the murder for profit of a wife or mother. To establish that such an action is truly insane, he uses the analogy of Orestes' matricide, claiming, gratuitously, that Orestes was mad long before he killed Clytemnestra; *an tu reris eum occisa insanisse parente / ac non ante malis dementem actum Furiis quam / in matris iugulo ferrum tepefecit acutum?* (134–6). But the just quoted terms in which Stertinius rebuts the usual version of Orestes' madness advert so closely to the canonical account, namely that Orestes was driven insane by the Furies after murdering his mother on Apollo's orders, that the speciousness of his argumentation is disastrously exposed for all to see. And a similar casuistry vitiates the lengthy passage at 190–223, where Stertinius proposes that vaulting ambition is another form of madness. The claim is exemplified by the case of Agamemnon, who, in an act of crazy-self-aggrandisement, sacrificed his daughter Iphigeneia, "instead of a heifer" (*pro uitula*), in order to release the Greek fleet from the adverse winds which detained it at Aulis. In fact, the argument continues, Agamemnon's insanity is worse than Ajax's: the latter was at least deranged when he slaughtered the sheep, whereas Agamemnon's mad action was perpetrated in cold blood. So far, so logical, but Stertinius now continues *abstinuit uim* [sc. *Ajax delirans*] / *uxore et gnato: mala multa precatu Atridis / non ille aut Teucrum aut ipsum uiolauit Ulixen* (202–4), completely destroying the basis of his argument. Not only is the detail of Ajax's wife and son completely extraneous to the episode of the hero's madness, but mention of Ajax's sparing of Ulysses (because engaged on a delusional slaughtering of the sheep) obtrusively shunts aside the fact, noted only a few lines earlier (197–8), that in killing the sheep Ajax thought he was killing Ulysses and Menelaus. If we test Stertinius' reasoning against the cardinal principle that the dialectical effectiveness of an *exemplum* was keyed to the closeness of the parallel between it and the point which it was intended to illustrate,¹⁹ it fails on all counts. In other words, his rhetoric here is so patently opportunistic and self-contradictory as to be voided of all credibility. And he rounds off his arguments (214 ff.) with a non-mythological paradigm which is so ludicrously overpainted as to be utterly risible: an analogy for mad behaviour

19) Cf. J. Martin, *Antike Rhetorik* (Munich 1974) 120.

in the shape of a lamb called Rufa or Posilla carried round in a litter and furnished like a beloved daughter with clothes, maids and gold. An argument so fatuous cannot but drastically compromise the credibility of the party who advances it.

To the foregoing instances of the inept preaching which is the major identifying feature of the sham teacher one more example may be appended. This is the usurer Alfius of Horace's second *Epode*, who subjects an implied audience to a super-hyperbolic and implicitly protreptic laudation of the joys of life as a smallholder: but his account is so radically out of kilter with rural realities in contemporary Italy that Alfius forfeits much of his credibility long before the final unmasking of him as a *faenerator* more interested in lucre than the land. It would surely be impossible for a contemporary reader not to measure Alfius' words against the actualities of life on the land in the 30s B. C. – the violence which was pervasive in the countryside, the ruthless triumviral dispossessions which began in 41 B. C., agricultural disruption on a large scale and the gradual disappearance of the smallholder whose life is held up as a traditional ideal by Alfius.²⁰

ad 2) It was suggested under the second of the points listed above that, by exposing the fallibility of the bogus *praeceptor's* teachings, attention is diverted from the content of what he says to the characterisation of him as an inept. This is an omnipresent feature of texts where the bogus teacher surfaces: to look no further, Damasippus, Catus and Davus in Horace, Satires 2, and Eumolpus the manic poetaster and moraliser of Petronius, are all strongly characterised as feckless. One detailed illustration of the principle may suffice here. The ultimate source of the amatory lore dispensed in Tibullus 1,4 is a personage who is portrayed as notably inept and risible: Priapus, an undignified rustic divinity,²¹ who, notwithstanding his phallocentricity and purported authority in matters of love, is in his literary realisation typically doomed to erotic frustration.²² In

20) Detailed discussion of these points in L. Watson, *A Commentary on Horace's Epodes* (Oxford 2003) 80–4.

21) Cf. Tib. 1,4,1–6, Hor. Sat. 1,8,1–7, Priapea 10 etc. V. Buchheit, *Studien zum Corpus Priapeorum* (Munich 1962), has noted that, in contrast to Greek poetry, Priapus in Latin poetry is almost invariably a figure of fun.

22) Indeed a recent study of the *Carmina Priapea* (N. Holzberg, *Impotence? It Happened to the Best of Them! A Linear Reading of the Corpus Priapeorum*, *Hermes* 133 [2005] 368–81) has argued that, as the book progresses, the eponymous deity is portrayed as increasingly afflicted by erection problems.

the poem under discussion he complains, one assumes from bitter experience, of the venality of boys (57–72) and transmits to Tibullus paederastic precepts to relay to Titius. These are however nullified by the intervention of Titius' wife, marriage to whom renders them redundant;²³ and the authority of the god's pronouncements is doubly diminished by their human recipient and conduit, Tibullus. The latter, while enjoining those *quos male habet multa callidus arte puer* to celebrate him as their *magister*, "master", in matters of love (75–6: cf. 79–80), feebly owns himself to be in no better case than his pupils, tormented as he is by Marathus, with the result that his *artes* and his *doli* fail (81–2): consequently he becomes a laughing stock for his *uana magisteria*, "empty teachings"; the very picture, as Ovid put it in a similar context, of the physician who cannot heal himself (*Remedia* 314).²⁴

ad 3) It was proposed under point 3) that the bogus teacher shares important traits with the *ἀλαζών* of Old Comedy. This is an individual who, as MacDowell phrases it, typically "claims credit for some professional expertise which is actually non-existent or useless ... who claims to possess some skill or quality which he does not possess in fact."²⁵ Of particular note for the subject of the sham *praeceptor* is that Isocrates several times uses the verb *ἀλαζονεύεσθαι* of teachers who make extravagant promises, who assert that their instruction will yield better results than is really possible.²⁶ In this connection one may profitably consider the mysterious astrologer Horus of Propertius 4,1 (who, like many a bogus instructor, bursts upon his addressee with unsolicited advice). Astrology was, in the view of many, pseudo-scientific nonsense, a fact which immediately brings it into the ambit of *ἀλαζονεία*.²⁷ Whatever the precise function of Horus in this difficult poem, it seems clear that for Propertius he is a composite of *ἀλαζών* and purveyor of useless knowledge. While vaunting his prescience and tout-

23) Notionally redundant, at any rate. See Catull. 61,126 ff., with K. F. Smith, *The Elegies of Albius Tibullus* (New York 1913), on Tib.1,4,74 for the situation here.

24) Cf. Prop. 2,1,57–8 *omnis humanos sanat medicina dolores: / solus amor morbi non amat artificem*.

25) MacDowell (n. 10) 288, 290.

26) Isocr. 13,1.10: cf. 12,20.74; 13,19; 15,75.195.224.

27) Cf. Cic. Div. 2,98 f., F. H. Cramer, *The Expulsion of Astrologers from Ancient Rome*, CM 12 (1951) 9–50 at 14–23, T. Barton, *Ancient Astrology* (London / New York 1994) 35–7, 52–7.

ing the virtues of astrology over its divinatory rivals (103–119),²⁸ he offers little of substance to establish his prophetic *fides*:²⁹ scarcely more than the success of his resoundingly banal advice to pray to Juno Lucina when Cinara's labour was unduly prolonged (99–102), and a rundown of Propertius' career (121–46) which mainly involves stating at inordinate length what readers of books 1–3 already know. In short, the substance of Horus' pronouncements conspicuously fails to match the pretentiousness of *certa feram certis auctoribus, aut ego uates / nescius aerata signa mouere pila* (75–6) and his impressive-sounding but palpably bogus descent from various astrological luminaries (77–8). Horus' speech of advice to Propertius about the future trajectory of his poetic career concludes, in a classic of ἀλαζονεία, with what Goold aptly describes as “a factitious piece of astrological hocus-pocus, for an explanation of which we shall look in vain.”³⁰ Horus is, in sum, a charlatan, who combines arrant self-promotion with claims to divinatory expertise which he cannot substantiate: in the latter respect he resembles the Chaldaean Diophanes of Apuleius, who makes a tidy living out of dispensing false prophecies while unable to foresee his own disastrous shipwreck (*Met.* 2,12–15), or the splendidly named seer Bogus of Silius Italicus, who misinterprets bird-signs relating to the outcome of the Second Punic War and dies in battle ruing his misinterpretation of omens which seemed to promise a long life.³¹

ad 4) Under the fourth point noted above, it was posited that the authority of the bogus *praeceptor*'s teachings is typically diminished by his moral or physical circumstances. Thus, for example, the urgings of Petronius' Agamemnon that the young person who is embarking upon the *ars seuera* of oratory should not sully his integrity “by soliciting suppers with prodigals” (*Sat.* 5,5) are undercut by the revelation that this is exactly how Agamemnon himself behaves (*Sat.* 52,7). In much the same way, the diatribes of Petronius' Eumolpus about the derision and poverty to which

28) In the view of A. D. Nock, *Essays on Religion and the Ancient World* (Oxford 1972) 496–7, Horus perceives himself as a hierophant.

29) According to his own account he does however correctly foretell the death of Arria's twin sons on campaign (89–98).

30) G. P. Goold, *Propertius: Elegies* (Cambridge, Mass. 1990) 369.

31) Silius, *Pun.* 4,101–33; 5,401–9. Thanks to Marcus Wilson for bringing Bogus to my attention. Also worth a mention here is Alexander of Abonoteichus, the false prophet of Lucian's extended satire.

artists are subjected by a world more interested in money than in virtue (Sat. 83–4, 88) are unmasked as the tralatitium and self-interested rantings of an egregious and phallogocentric hypocrite by being made to frame the outrageous story of the Pergamene boy, in which Eumolpus violates every canon of the teacher's code (ibid. 85–7). Similarly, the insufferable Trimalchio, blithely unaware of the inconsistency, utters a versified tirade against the evils of sumptuous dining and other types of *luxuria* (Sat. 55,6), despite himself indulging in the most egregious forms of gastronomic excess. Now the criticisms of Agamemnon, Eumolpus and other of Petronius' characters against deteriorating literary and ethical values are, taken in the abstract, by no means devoid of worth:³² on the contrary, they are echoed in satiric, rhetorical and moralising writings of the first and second centuries A.D.³³ and, at one level,³⁴ the author of the *Satyricon* seemingly expects his readers to concede that they have some substance. Nonetheless, the discrepancy between what the likes of Encolpius and Agamemnon say and what they actually do reveals them to be outrageous frauds: by embracing the very faults which they excoriate, they emerge as part of the problem, not the solution. In short, the validity of their criticisms and preachings is, within the narrative fabric of the novel,³⁵ drastically compromised by the moral vacuity and cynicism which lies

32) To take one example among many, the criticism of Encolpius that the histrionic and unrealistic *cursus* fed to pupils in the rhetorical schools is no preparation for the actual experience of pleading in the courtroom (*ut cum in forum uenerint, putent se in alium orbem terrarum delatos* Sat. 1,2) reflects a notorious and revealing incident recorded by both Seneca the Elder and Quintilian (Contr. 9, praef. 3; Inst. 10,5,18): that the celebrated declaimer Porcius Latro, when arguing a real case in the forum, suffered a crisis of nerves so acute that he only regained his confidence when the presiding magistrate agreed to transfer the hearing to the confines of a nearby basilica.

33) Scrupulously documented in the footnotes to Gian Biagio Conte, *The Hidden Author. An Interpretation of Petronius' Satyricon* (Berkeley 1996).

34) Conte (n.33) argues that the *Satyricon* must be read on more than one level: first, from the perspective of what he styles "the hidden author", who, standing as it were in the wings and writing in satiric vein, invites his readers to share to a degree the criticisms of a world unhinged which are, ironically, expressed by deeply flawed dramatic creations (*ridentem dicere uerum*); second, at a narrative level, whereby consumers of the novel are expected to relish the relentless self-dramatisation and spectacular inconsistency between word and deed which is the most distinctive feature of Petronian characters. For the latter point, see Conte, *passim*, especially 117ff., 133 and 138.

35) See the preceding note.

at the heart of the individuals selected to articulate them, as also by a passion for rhetorical grandstanding which lacks any ethical base to underpin it. For it is difficult indeed to ascribe any authority to a figure who in effect preaches 'do as I say, not as I do.'

Moving on now to consider the physical situation of the sham *praeceptor*, let us examine how this may reflect adversely on that individual's standing as teacher. Good instances are furnished by the procuresses of Propertius and Ovid's *Amores*. In Ovid, *Amores* 1,8 serious doubts are insinuated about the value of the *lena's* teachings on how to turn a profit as a *meretrix* by the disclosure that her credentials as procuress and witch (1–20, 105) cannot avail to lift her out of poverty: that she in fact belongs to that well-known category of despised females, the drunken and disreputable old woman (2–4, 111–14).³⁶ Similarly the unnamed *lena* of Propertius 4,5, though allegedly *docta* enough to overturn the legendary chastity of an Hippolytus or a Penelope (5–8) and deeply versed in magic arts, cannot translate this skill into financial emolument,³⁷ but dies the death of a destitute, dipsomaniacal consumptive (63–78): hardly a retrospective advertisement for her expertise, notwithstanding metapoetically-based assertions to the contrary by K. Sara Myers.³⁸

ad 5) The fifth of the characteristics of the bogus teacher catalogued above was a tendency to pomposity of diction. At one level,

36) For the type, see E. Courtney, Three Poems of Propertius, BICS 16 (1969) 80–7, P. Zanker, Die trunkene Alte: das Lachen des Verhöhnnten (Frankfurt am Main 1989) and K. S. Myers, The Poet and the Procuress: the *lena* in Latin Love Elegy, JRS 86 (1996) 1–21.

37) Cf. also the elderly Scapha ('Drinking Vessel') of Plautus' *Mostellaria*, who, in a lengthy episode of *erotodidaxis*, instructs Philematium on the *meretricius quaestus* (157–312), but compromises the message by admitting that, in her younger days, she failed to follow the advice which she is now dispensing, namely that the younger woman should spread her favours as widely and as profitably as possible (194–203). In a similar diminution of authority, the Oenothea of Petronius, Sat. 134–8, although not precisely a teacher, does claim the prestige of a priestess of Priapus and consummate witch: a dignity laughably nullified by the revelation that she lives the life of an impoverished Hecale (135,8,15–16), and by her risible failure to cure Encolpius' impotence.

38) Myers (n. 36) sees the figure of the *lena*, in that she gives instructions on extracting money from lovers, as disempowering the elegiac poet and depriving him of his literary programme, which elevates the value of poetry over cash. But in my opinion Myers fails completely to take into account the diminished circumstances in which the poets depict the *lenae* as existing, which quite divests them of esteem: elderly, drunken witches are not authority-figures.

this is a function of the sham *praeceptor*'s ἀλαζονεία, discussed under 3). Thus the locutional preciosity with which the self-styled *uates* Horus announces himself in Propertius 4,1

*Quo ruis imprudens, uage, dicere fata, Properti?
non sunt a dextro condita fila colo.
accersis lacrimas cantans, auersus Apollo:
poscis ab inuita uerba pigenda lyra.
certa feram certis auctoribus, aut ego uates
nescius aerata signa mouere pila.
me creat Archytae suboles Babylonius Orops
Horon, et a proauo ducta Conone domus.
di mihi sunt testes non degenerasse propinquos,
inque meis libris nil prius esse fide.*

Prop. 4,1,71–80

has – to take one example among many – an obvious correlate in the bombastic and nonsensical verbiage with which the ἀλαζών Meton bursts in upon Peisetaerus in Aristophanes' *Birds* (992 ff.).³⁹ On the other hand, the gap which unfolds, as the poem progresses, between the verbal panache of Horus and the paucity of his content subserves a larger strategy: the use of dictional means to portray the sham teacher as one who takes himself and his prescriptions much too seriously. We discern the same clash between pomposity of form and paucity of content in Horace, *Satires* 2,4, where the lecturer whose discourse Catus is reporting questionably declares himself a gastronomic πρῶτος εὐρητής (*pis-cibus atque auibus quae natura et foret aetas / ante meum nulli patuit quaesita palatum* 45–6; *primus et inuenior piper album cum sale nigro / incretum puris circumposuisse catillis* 74–5)⁴⁰ and hijacks the idiom of philosophy for gastronomic purposes;⁴¹ in the process employing highly overheated language⁴² such as *immane*

39) Fully discussed in the commentary of N. Dunbar, *Aristophanes. Birds* (Oxford 1995) ad loc.

40) C. J. Classen, *Horace – a Cook?*, *CQ* 28 (1978) 333–48 at 338 notes that the first 'discovery' was not in fact new, the second not very grand.

41) Hor. *Sat.* 2,4,19 *Doctus eris uiuam musto mersare Falerno*, 44 *fecundae leporis sapiens sectabitur armos*, 47 *sunt quorum ingenium noua tantum crustula promit*, with Muecke (n. 15) on 44 and 46.

42) Cf. also *est operae pretium duplicis pernoscere iuris / naturam* 63–4.

est vitium dare milia terna macello / angustoque uagos piscis urgere catino (76–7) and *neglectis flagitium ingens* (82), to describe mere culinary faux pas. As a result, the opening characterisation of the sermon to follow as *res tenuis tenui sermone peractas* (9) can be read, not just straightforwardly as praise of the ‘subtlety’ of the discourse, but ironically, as dispraise of the ‘slightness’ of the subject-matter,⁴³ in conspicuous disharmony with the unselfconscious preciosity of the speaker.

ad 6) My sixth point was that the wisdom of the bogus teacher is sometimes at second-hand, calling into question its authority and validity. This characteristic expresses itself in two forms. First, it can simply involve the mouthing of tired and tralatician sentiments. It was, for example, suggested above that the utterances of Petronius’ Agamemnon on the subject of education represent the vapid and clichéd mouthings of a stereotypical rhetor. Much the same might be said of the rantings of the down-at-heel poet Eumolpus on the decline of contemporary epic (Petr. Sat. 118). And in similar vein, Francis Cairns has suggested that in the *laudes uitae rusticae* of Horace’s second *Epode* we “hear the hypocrite, Alfius, not just praising the countryside in an insincere fashion, but doing so in the bombastic and stylised language of a rhetor. The hollowness of Alfius’ sentiments is echoed by the meaningless conventionality and standardised form of his utterance.”⁴⁴

An alternative, more dramatically effective way of characterising the bogus teacher’s wisdom as borrowed is to have him relay lectures or doctrines of questionable worth which he has literally picked up at second hand from others. Horace, Satire 2,7 will conveniently exemplify the procedure, which has already been touched upon a propos of Tib. 1,4 and the Damasippus-Stertinus of Hor. Sat. 2,3. It was a recognised dogma of the Stoics that ‘every fool is a slave’, that is to say, that individuals are in thrall to passions which they cannot master and hence, like real slaves, lack control over their own lives.⁴⁵ But in Sat. 2,7 we have the convoluted situation that Horace’s slave Davus, taking advantage of Sat-

43) Classen (n. 40) 336.

44) F. Cairns, Horace, *Epode* 2, Tibullus, 1,1 and Rhetorical Praise of the Country, MPhL 1 (1975) 79–91 at 87.

45) Cf. Cic. *Paradoxa Stoicorum* 5, A. Erskine, *The Hellenistic Stoa* (London 1990) 43–63.

urnalian licence,⁴⁶ harangues his master on the thesis ‘every fool is a slave’, which he has picked up from the slave-doorkeeper of the Stoic Crispinus. The doctrines of Crispinus, whom Horace had stigmatised in Satires 1 as a demented ideologue, are hence filtered through not one but two slaves – the second of whom has a vested interest in demonstrating that Horace is quite as much a slave as he, and goes about establishing his case with a tendentiousness and an exaggeration which further undermine the credibility of Davus’ arguments (cf. characteristic 4 above). The point is readily illustrated from lines 46–71. Here Davus offers a highly overdrawn and derivative⁴⁷ picture of clandestine visits by Horace to another’s wife in which, Davus alleges, his master not only behaves figuratively like a slave but disguises himself as one.⁴⁸ When, in verse 72, Davus anticipates Horace’s objection “I am not an adulterer” – a perfectly reasonable one on the basis of what the poet had already said in Satires 1,²⁴⁹ – Davus continues, in a masterstroke of casuistic *occupatio*, “ah, but you would commit adultery if the risks were removed” (72–4). Although, as Rudd and Muecke⁵⁰ note, this argument has a legitimate Stoic flavour, since for persons of this philosophical persuasion a wicked intention was as bad as the actual deed, it is clear that Davus has a considerable axe to grind, and the relish with which he next proclaims *tu, mihi qui imperitas, alii seruis miser atque / duceris ut nervis alienis mobile lignum* (81–2) confirms it. This is followed by another grossly overdrawn and equally derivative account of Horace’s alleged moral servility.⁵¹

46) Hor. Sat. 2,7,4–5 ‘age, libertate Decembri, / quando ita maiores uoluerunt, utere narra.’ For the suggestion that the spirit of the *Saturnalia* colours the ethos of *Satires*, book 2 as a whole, see S. Sharland, *Saturnalian Satire: Proto-Carnavalesque Reversals and Inversions in Horace, Satire 2,7*, *Acta Classica* 48 (2005) 103–20.

47) The scene at 58 ff. is taken straight from the popular mime. See R. W. Reynolds, *The Adultery Mime*, *CQ* 40 (1946) 77–84, E. Fantham, *Mime: the Missing Link in Roman Literary History*, *CJ* 82 (1988/9) 153–63.

48) Note particularly 70 *o totiens seruus!*

49) Where Horace expressed a preference for liaisons with freedwomen on the grounds that adultery is much too dangerous a business, painting the attendant dangers in much the same terms as Davus employs here.

50) N. Rudd, *The Satires of Horace* (Cambridge 1966) 192, Muecke (n. 15) on 72–4.

51) In lines 88 ff. Davus continues his attack on Horace, still cleaving to the subject of sex but this time drawing his colours from a generic scene straight out of New Comedy, “a woman asks you for five talents, torments you, drives you from her door and drenches you in cold water, then invites you back. Snatch your neck

Accordingly, it is no surprise when, after a further, rapid-fire survey of the poet's purported moral failings (111–15), Horace loses his temper and threatens Davus with his being added to the servile chain-gang on the poet's Sabine farm. In sum: the fact that the doctrine which Davus preaches is transmitted at third hand, in a garbled and casuistic version by a disgruntled slave who uses it, not with any improving purpose, but in order to score points against his master, has the dual effect of compromising its validity in its immediate context and (point 2) directing attention away from the message and back onto the messenger: in terms of diction and appetites a typical comic slave,⁵² whose slavish character ipso facto makes what he says untrustworthy,⁵³ and who expropriates a Stoic paradox in order to indulge in a self-serving, impertinent and disingenuous rant against Horace.

A further satire in book 2 in which one speaker relays the words of another is 4, where Catius reports the culinary precepts of an 'authority' whose identity he declines to reveal (11). The unintentional self-deflation and – in terms of subject matter – uncalled-for pomposity of the anonymous *magister* has been discussed above. It remains to add that the fatuities of the *magister* are replicated in miniature by his pupil. At the opening of the satire, Catius proclaims that his precepts will surpass Pythagoras (associated with vegetarianism!), Socrates and Plato (2–3): precepts which are bathetically revealed as gastrosophic not philosophic. Following the grandiloquence of the proemial *ipsa memor praecepta canam, celabitur auctor* (11), Catius continues *longa quibus facies ouis erit, illa memento, / ut suci melioris et ut magis alba rotundis, / ponere*: absurdly combining, in an egregious piece of stylistic indecorum, the high-style *memento*⁵⁴ with the banal topic of the best shape for eggs. All in all, as Classen conclusively shows, Catius comes across as a fool,⁵⁵ the *doctrina* which Horace ironically ascribes to him (88) consisting of no more than an over-hyped *ars coquendi*.⁵⁶ In sum,

from the degrading yoke and be free . . . you can't" (89–92). But five talents is a monstrous exaggeration of the price for a *meretrix*, and the obtrusive literariness of the vignette further distances it from reality.

52) Muecke (n. 15) 212.

53) According, that is, to the stereotype of the comic slave.

54) Classen (n. 40) 336 n. 21.

55) Classen (n. 40).

56) Classen (n. 40) 340 compares the excessive seriousness with which cooks in Comedy speak of the culinary *ars*.

the doctrines which master and pupil relay are nugatory, and the insubstantiality of the first's teachings is compounded by the vacuousness of his pupil, who relays them at second hand.

Before quitting the discussion of feature 6), it is important to note that, among the sources studied in the present paper, the pattern whereby the bogus teacher relays borrowed 'wisdom' is confined to the fictional⁵⁷ speakers of Tibullus 1,4 and poems 3, 4 and 7 of Horace, Satires 2. Plainly it does not apply to the *lenae* of Propertius 4,5 and Ovid, Amores 1,8, whose *erotodidaxis* is based, like that of Scapha in Plautus' *Mostellaria*, on their previous experience as prostitutes.⁵⁸ Similarly excluded from the procedure is the speaker of the *Ars Amatoria*, who announces in the preface to the work *usus opus mouet hoc: uati parete perito* (1,29), thereby combining in his person the characteristically authoritative tones of the didactic poet with a claim to amatory expertise acquired in his previous literary realisation as the elegiac lover of the *Amores*.⁵⁹

ad 7) This paper began by adumbrating the suggestion that the self-undercutting *praeceptor* of the *Ars Amatoria* – if he is so read – was not merely parasitic upon the authorial voice in serious didactic poetry, but was also informed by the stereotypical figure of the bogus teacher conveying in a flawed or compromised manner ideas or doctrines of questionable worth; a figure who, this paper has argued, led an independent existence outside the generic parameters of didactic verse. Before proceeding, in the next section of the paper, to test this hypothesis against the speaker of the *Ars Amatoria*, I should like to advance one final suggestion in regard to the sham teacher: that the literary traffic was not all one way, specifically, that the figure of the bogus teacher may, by an ironic inversion, embody the folly or misguided doctrines of others which are so often attacked in didactic poetry. The tradition of

57) Although Damasippus (Sat. 2,3) and Catius (Sat. 2,4) seem to have been real individuals (Muecke [n. 15] 134, 167–8), the characterisation of them is entirely in Horace's hands. Horace may conceivably have had a slave called Davus (Sat. 2,7), but he is so much the *seruus callidus* that he is best regarded as a fictional construct.

58) For the tendency of ex-prostitutes to become procuresses, see H. Herter, tr. L. De Long, *The Sociology of Prostitution in Antiquity*, in: M. Golden and P. Toohey (edd.), *Sex and Difference in Ancient Greece and Rome* (Edinburgh 2003) 57–113 at 64–5.

59) For the *Ars Amatoria* as a representative of elegy, cf. Volk (n. 2) 63.

polemic begins early in didactic verse,⁶⁰ and often takes the form of expressing scorn for the circumscribed or inadequate viewpoint of others. One thinks here of the highly colourful outbursts against culinary inadequates⁶¹ which pepper the surviving lines of Archestratus' *Hedypatheia*, including the remarkable ἀλαζονοχουνοφλόωροι "empty-headed nonsense-talking pseud";⁶² or of Lucretius' typically abrasive *o miseris hominum mentis, o pectora caeca!* (2,14) and unabashed criticism of those, rival schools included, who are deficient in comprehension or fail to view the physical world from his philosophical standpoint.⁶³ In the same strain is the lengthy diatribe of the *Aetna*-poet against those who, beast-like (224–5), have no interest in the operations of the physical universe, but are merely concerned with the quotidian pursuit of profit (222–73).⁶⁴ But intolerance of other systems or viewpoints is also a defining feature of many a bogus teacher: Horus, for example, denigrates other divinatory methods while lauding his own pseudo-science of astrology (Prop. 4,1,103–18), Damasippus insists with a proselyte's zeal that all but the Stoic sage are mad (Hor. Sat. 2,3): similarly Petronius' Eumolpus fulminates about the decline of the arts and the ruin of contemporary poetry with a doctrinaire insistence that is in ironic counterpoint to the utter banality of what he actually says (Sat. 88, 118). It may be that, in investing their bogus teachers with a polemicising dogmatism, their creators are picking up a hint from the self-assured and, on occa-

60) For Hesiod in the *Works and Days* both his brother Perses and the corrupt Βασίληες are νήπιοι, "fools" (lines 286, 397, 633, 40: cf. also for the term 131, 218, 456). Less stridently, but still in keeping with the *lex operis*, an aetiological passage of Nicander's *Theriaca* (343 ff.) denounces the earliest human beings as ἄφρονες, "witless" for their incapacity to recognise the benefit of eternal youth. In the same strain, but much less trenchant, is Virgil's *ignarosque uiae mecum miseratus agrestis* (Georg. 1,41), which is based on the presumption (or rather the pretence) that his addressees are sorely in need of enlightenment.

61) Particular targets are the ignorance of contemporary palates, the vegetarianism of Pythagoreans and the incompetence of cooks. Cf. frgs. 24,13–20; 39,3–5; 46,10–14; 47,2–4; 59,12–14 Olson-Sens.

62) Frg. 59,12 Olson-Sens.

63) E. g. Lucr. 1,635 ff.690–711.845–6.1068–9; 2,167–81; 4,469 ff.

64) The logic here is a little difficult to follow, in that 228–51 appear to advocate the pursuit of astronomical knowledge as *diuina . . . animi ac iucunda uoluptas* (251), while 252 ff. represent astronomy as an inferior subject of study to the inner workings of the earth. Possibly, as Toohey (n. 9) 189 suggests, 252 ff. represent "an attack on the theocratic Manilius and his astrological, Stoic material."

sion, combative authorial personality which is such a pronounced feature of didactic poetry.⁶⁵

The Bogus Teacher and the Ars Amatoria

Now that a profile of the bogus teacher has hopefully been erected, it is time to move on to the second stage of the paper, and to consider whether such a profile can be productively aligned with the didactic voice in the *Ars Amatoria* and the *Remedia Amoris*,⁶⁶ a procedure that has not, to the best of my knowledge, hitherto been attempted.⁶⁷ A possible reason is that discussion of the literary models which underlie the *Ars Amatoria* has long tended to proceed along well-established lines. A popular approach has been to read the work as an extended spoof of serious didactic poetry: scholars point to imagery, stylistic features and authorial stances expropriated from more sober representatives of the genre such as Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura* or Virgil's *Georgics*.⁶⁸ A second approach relates the *Ars Amatoria* to the more frivolous or light-hearted strain of didactic poetry represented by Arcestratus' *Hedypatheia*, a treatise on gastronomy composed in epic hexameters,⁶⁹ or trivialising didactics on the art of gambling, board games,

65) Cf. Toohey (n. 9) who page 15 et passim regards the development of "a strong, singular, and persuasive voice" as one of the determinants of successful didactic poetry.

66) In this section of the paper, the main focus will be on the incompetence of the didactic *persona* in the *Ars Amatoria* – hence the title of the piece – but some attention will be given to the same phenomenon in the *Remedia Amoris*, for the most part however in the footnotes rather than the body of the text.

67) Durling (n. 1) comes closest, when he discusses the speakers of Horace, Satires 2 and the voice of the *magister amoris* in the *Ars Amatoria* in the first and second parts respectively of his chapter two (13–43).

68) Cf. E. J. Kenney, *Nequitiae Poeta*, in: N. I. Herescu (ed.), *Ovidiana. Recherches sur Ovide* (Paris 1958) 201–9, E. W. Leach, *Georgic Imagery in the Ars Amatoria*, *TAPhA* 95 (1964) 142–54, Myerowitz (n. 1) 63–4, 147, M. Steudel, *Die Literaturparodie in Ovids Ars Amatoria* (Hildesheim 1992), Dalzell (n. 2) 147–8. N. Holzberg, *Ovids erotische Lehrgedichte und die römische Liebeslegie*, *WS* 15 (1981) 185–204 lists 191 other proponents of the view – which he (192, 204) does not share – that the *Ars* and *Remedia* are a parody of serious didactic poetry.

69) Text and full commentary in S. D. Olson and A. Sens, *Arcestratos of Gela. Greek Culture and Cuisine in the Fourth Century BCE* (Oxford 2000), whose numeration of the fragments is here followed. Still useful on the literary texture of the work are the earlier editions by P. Brandt, *Corpusculum poesis epicae*

ball-playing and the like⁷⁰ with which Ovid, as part of his self-exculpation for the offending *carmen*, aligns his *Ars* in *Tristia* 2,471–96.⁷¹ Of particular note here are lines 493–4 *his* [sc. *carminibus huius generis*] *ego deceptus non tristia carmina feci, / sed tristis nostros poena secuta iocos*, where the poet in effect accuses Augustus of flawed critical judgement for taking far too seriously what was, Ovid claims, like its literary congeners no more than a didactic *jeu d'esprit*.⁷² A third line of analysis connects the *Ars* with the 'ludic' strain in Latin literature, didactic included,⁷³ reference being made to Jan Huizinga's "Homo Ludens",⁷⁴ on play as cultural artefact and one of the most fundamental of human activities: the most notable representative of such a reading is Molly Myerowitz's "Ovid's Games of Love", a title derived from Ovid's subscription to the three books of the *Ars Amatoria*, *lusus habet finem* (3,809).⁷⁵ As Myerowitz puts it, love in the *Ars Amatoria* is treated as a sophisticated game with elaborate rules to which the participants must readily submit themselves, never deviating from these irrespective of personal inclinations.⁷⁶ A fourth, frequently analysed,

Graecae ludibundae vol. 1 (Leipzig 1888) 114–93 and H. Lloyd-Jones and P. Parsons, *Supplementum Hellenisticum* (Berlin/New York 1983) 46–75 (frgs. 132–92). See also the introduction to J. Wilkins and S. Hill, *The Life of Luxury* (Totnes 1994).

70) B. Effe, *Dichtung und Lehre. Untersuchungen zur Typologie des antiken Lehrgedichts* (Munich 1977) 234–48 lumps Arcestratus and Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* and *Remedia Amoris* together as "spielerisch-parodistische Formen der Lehrdichtung". For the *Ars* and the *Remedia* as belonging to the frivolous strand of didactic poetry described in *Tristia* 2, see A. S. Hollis, *The Ars Amatoria and Remedia Amoris*, in: J. W. Binns (ed.), *Ovid* (London 1973) 84–115 at 91. *Ars* 3,353–68, listing the various games which the *puella* needs to master, seems to allude to this strain of didactic and simultaneously to offer a sample of how to go about composing on such insignificant (*parua* 353) topics. See R. K. Gibson, *Ovid Ars Amatoria Book 3* (Cambridge 2003) 242–4.

71) Dalzell (n. 2) 137 refers by way of example to two hexameters quoted by Isidore, *Etym.* 18,69 from a poem on ball games by Dorcaeus.

72) Cf. A. Barchiesi, *Insegnare ad Augusto: Orazio, Epistola 2,1 e Ovidio, Tristia II*, in: A. Schiesaro, P. Mitsis, J. S. Clay (edd.), *Mega nepios; il destinatario nell'epos didascalico*, *MD* 31 (1993) 149–84.

73) Toohey (n. 9) 18, 66–7, 84, 103, 119 ff., 140, 166 ff. sees an element of play as central to didactic poetry in general, not just to its more lighthearted representatives like Ovid, though at times he presses his case too far.

74) J. Huizinga, *Homo Ludens. A Study of the Play Element in Culture* (London 1950, repr. Boston 1955).

75) For Myerowitz see n. 1. A similar approach to the *Ars* is adopted by Toohey (n. 9) in his discussion of the poem 162–9.

76) Myerowitz (n. 1) 35–6, after Huizinga (n. 74) 11–12 and 211.

influence comes in the shape of the (often unsuccessful) *erotodidaxis* which is pervasive in the Roman love elegists: a standard approach is to view the *Ars Amatoria* as consolidating in the figure of a single *praeceptor* the erotic instruction which is routinely conveyed, either explicitly or implicitly, in that genre.⁷⁷

All the literary influences just noted help to establish the ethos of the *Ars Amatoria* as playful. Collectively, they contribute to a feeling that neither the teacher nor the teachings of the *Ars* are to be taken seriously. But because of the diversity of Ovid's sources for the *Ars*, the character of the authorial voice has tended to be studied piecemeal, with reference to one or other literary model which is given primacy when assessing its contribution to a particular dimension of the didactic *persona*. For example, the often flawed mythological *exempla* with which the speaker of the *Ars* ineffectively buttresses his amatory teachings are seen in particular as burlesquing the serious use of *exempla* in mainstream didactic;⁷⁸ the inability to implement his own precepts which the speaker of the *Ars* confesses is viewed as a direct inheritance from the failed *erotodidaxis* of Priapus in Tibullus 1,4;⁷⁹ or again, the markedly self-ironising voice of the *Ars* is seen as parasitic of the authoritative tones typically assumed by the speaker in serious didactic poetry.⁸⁰ While not for a minute denying the validity of such individualising approaches, I submit that they can benefit from supplementation by a more homogeneous methodology, one which synthesises the multiple incompetencies of the speaker of the *Ars* under a single rubric: the figure of the bogus teacher, who, as we have seen, extends his operations well beyond the parameters of di-

77) Cf. A. L. Wheeler, Propertius as Praeceptor Amoris, CPh 5 (1910) 28–40 (good on the distinction in Propertius between explicit and implicit *erotodidaxis*), id., Erotic Teaching in Roman Elegy and the Greek Sources. Part 1, CPh 5 (1910) 440–50, Part 2, CPh 6 (1911) 56–77, E. Romano, *Amores* 1,8; l'elegia didattica e il genere dell'*Ars Amatoria*, Orpheus 1 (1980) 269–92. A somewhat different approach to the relationship of Roman elegy with the *Ars* and *Remedia* is taken by Holzberg (n. 68): while arguing that the influence of elegy is of paramount importance for the genesis of the two poems, he sees Ovid as working consciously in the *Ars* to humanise the extreme harshness of the relationships between lover and *puella* that are characteristic of elegy.

78) See e.g. P. Watson, *Praecepta Amoris: Ovid's Didactic Elegy*, in: B. W. Boyd (ed.), Brill's Companion to Ovid (Leiden 2002) 141–65 at 151–2.

79) Cf. A. S. Hollis, Ovid *Ars Amatoria* Book 1 (Oxford 1977) xviii.

80) For this approach see e.g. W. Kroll, Lehrgedicht, RE XII (1925) 1842–57 at 1856.

dactic poetry, belonging rather to the broader tradition of literary didaxis.⁸¹

It is widely recognised that throughout the *Ars Amatoria* Ovid undercuts the authority of his didactic *persona* in a variety of ways:⁸² inter alia by self-contradiction, by paradoxically claiming to impose order on the irrational phenomenon of love,⁸³ by deliberately drawing attention to instances in his own amatory career where he signally neglected to follow his own advice, and by representing himself as a sporadic inept in the lists of love. It is the contention of this paper that most, if not all, of the means by which Ovid undermines his preceptive authority in the *Ars* have a correlate in the various dimensions of the sham teacher which were examined above.⁸⁴ Since the self-undermining of the didactic voice in the *Ars* has been extensively discussed,⁸⁵ some of the material to be considered below will inevitably be familiar, though other observations may be less so. But it must be emphasised that the novelty of what follows, such as it is, is keyed to looking at the *persona* of the *Ars* through a different literary prism from usual, that of the bogus teacher.

81) It hardly needs stating that a work of literature need not belong formally to the genre of didactic in order to adopt a didactic stance: cf. M. Heath, *Hesiod's Didactic Poetry*, CQ 35 (1985) 245–63 at 253–4 and the *praecepta amoris* scattered throughout Roman elegy (cf. Wheeler [1910: n. 77] 28–40). Other cases in point: the paraenetic elegies of Theognis or Horace's *Satires*, in which the exposure of certain philosophical viewpoints as excessive performs the implicitly didactic role of recommending a more moderate stance. In another example, Longus' *Daphnis and Chloë* asserts a propaedeutic aim: according to the prooemium (2) the novel τὸν ἐρασθέντα ἀναμνήσει, τὸν οὐκ ἐρασθέντα παιδεύσει.

82) These matters are discussed below. Various instances are noted by P. Watson (n. 78).

83) Cf. Ter. Eun. 61–3 *incerta haec* [sc. *uaria ad amorem pertinentia*] *si postules / ratione certa facere, nihilo plus agas / quam si des operam ut cum ratione insanias*. Cf. also the near quotation of Eun. 57–63 at Hor. Sat. 2,3,265–71.

84) Because the *Ars* is so much longer than the passages in which the bogus teacher usually surfaces, the speaker of the poem can expose his ineptitude more expansively than is possible in the texts discussed above. The other main exception to this pattern whereby the bogus teacher is usually a study in miniature is also Ovidian, the proselytising vegetarian Pythagoras in Met. 15,60–478, if he is regarded as a figure of fun: for this view of him, see W. R. Johnson, *The Problem of the Counter-Classical Sensibility and its Critics*, CSCA 3 (1970) 123–51 at 137–48, G. K. Galinsky, *The Speech of Pythagoras at Ovid, Metamorphoses 15.75–478*, PLLS 10 (1998) 313–36.

85) See n. 1 and the articles by P. Watson cited in nn. 18 and 78.

It is appropriate to commence the discussion of the *Ars Amatoria* by focussing on what is for our purposes the most pertinent characteristic of the Ovidian teacher, his manifest incompetence or fecklessness. With ironic pomposity Ovid proclaims himself, at the outset of book 1, the *praeceptor Amoris*, as Chiron was once the *magister* of another refractory child, Achilles (1,11–18).⁸⁶ The poet however proceeds to deploy a battery of stratagems which drastically undermine the magistral authority which he here asserts so forcibly.⁸⁷ A particular favourite is the obtrusive undercutting of his own advice. Two examples among many may suffice by way of illustration. At *Ars* 1,399 ff. the *praeceptor* counsels the student to commence his wooing of a *puella* on a *dies infaustus* such as the anniversary of the Allia and to avoid at all costs days on which a present might be expected. But given Roman superstitiousness about the need for auspicious beginnings,⁸⁸ the choice of the *dies Alliensis* strikes a distinctly inauspicious note, and the infelicity of the advice is underscored by the immediately following concession that, try as one may, the *puella* will still contrive to extract a gift, female artifice outsmarting male *ars* (*cum bene uitaris, tamen auferet: inuenit artem/femina, qua cupidi carpat amantis opes* 419–20). Again, at *Ars* 3,660 ff., the *praeceptor's* warning to his female addressees to beware of erotic betrayal by treacherous friends or *ancillae* is torpedoed by his own admission that he has often successfully evaded the precautions which he is enjoining: the suspicion is fuelled that, while purportedly advising *puellae* on the successful conduct of love affairs, the speaker still retains in book 3 the perspective of the predatory male.⁸⁹ Here, as so often in the *Ars*, Ovid blends the voice of the teacher, who dispenses instruction, with the *persona* of the elegiac *amator*, who seeks his own erotic

86) The comparison associates the *Ars* with the tradition of didactic epic, in the shape of the Χείρωνος ὑποθήκη, ascribed in Antiquity to Hesiod and purportedly containing the lessons given by Chiron to Achilles.

87) Cf. also the self-description, in the mouth of Apollo, *lascini . . . praeceptor Amoris* *Ars* 2,497.

88) Cf. Cic. *Div.* 2,84 with Pease. A good instance is Augustus' refusal to commence any matter of importance on the Nones, because of the ominous sound of the word (*Suet. Aug.* 92: on the underlying principle, see most recently D. Lateiner, *Signifying Names and other Ominous Accidental Utterances in Classical Historiography*, *GRBS* 45 [2005] 35–57).

89) Other places in *Ars* 3 where the speaker retains a selfishly male-centred perspective on *amor*: 59 ff., 463–6, 683–6, 797–8, 805–6.

advantage.⁹⁰ The result is a clash of cultures which has as its effect the destabilisation of the authority of the didactic voice.

The tactic of self-undercutting which has just been discussed, important as it is to the Ovidian *praeceptor's* diminution of his didactic *auctoritas*, does not have a precise correlate in the means by which the bogus teacher typically undermines his standing. But most of the manœuvres executed by the teacher of the *Ars* in order to effect that end are mirrored in the ways whereby the sham teacher diminishes the credibility of what he has to say. It has already been noted that inept deployment of *exempla* was a characteristic of at least one bogus teacher, Horace's Stertinius. An especial ploy of the self-ironising Ovidian *praeceptor* is likewise the deliberately inapposite or inept *exemplum*.⁹¹ A notorious case is the Daedalus and Icarus episode from the beginning of *Ars* 2, which ends with Icarus plunging to his death in the sea after flying too close to the sun and melting the wax on his fabricated wings. Not only does the *tertium comparationis*, the aerobic skills of Amor, and Daedalus and his son, negate the overall message of the *Ars Amatoria*, that by artifice Cupid can be pinned down and controlled;⁹² but the tale of Daedalus and Icarus ultimately represents a signal instance of the failure of *ars*, the eponymous keynote of Ovid's poem.⁹³ Another instance of the apparently self-defeating use of *exempla* comes in the lengthy section of *Ars* 1 (269–344) which argues that the girl of one's choice can readily be caught, on the grounds that female desire is much stronger than the male's.⁹⁴ But Ovid illustrates this

90) The continuation of the elegiac tradition in the *Ars Amatoria* is signalled by, among other things, the choice of the elegiac metre rather than the hexameter, the usual verse medium for didactic poems. Cf. Remedii 379 *blanda pharetratos Elegia cantet Amores*. For other didactic poems in non-hexametric metres, see Toohey (n. 9) 128, Volk (n. 2) 59–60, 163 n. 15.

91) In general on this see P. Watson (n. 18).

92) Bk. 1, init., 2,98 *ipse deum uolucrum detinuisse paro*. Cf. also *Ars* 3,436 *errat et in nulla sede moratur Amor*, where however the reference is specifically to gigolos, against whose attentions the *puellae* are being warned.

93) For this reading of Daedalus and Icarus see Myerowitz (n. 1) 151–67. As Myerowitz 162–3 additionally notes, the tale represents the failure of *praecepta* too, for Daedalus is in a sense a *praeceptor*. Along similar lines to Myerowitz, A. Sharrock, *Seduction and Repetition in Ovid's Ars Amatoria 2* (Oxford 1994) 87–195 treats the episode as a meditation on the nature of *ars*.

94) Cf. 281–2 *parcior in nobis* [sc. *maribus*] *nec tam furiosa libido; / legitimum finem flamma uirilis habet*, 342 *acrior est nostra* [*feminea libido*] *plusque furoris habet*.

idea with a barrage of mythological paradigms⁹⁵ in which female lust is shown to have run to such criminal, bizarre or incestuous extremes that it is easy to imagine the reader being deterred rather than encouraged in his amatory pursuit!⁹⁶ Finally in this connection should be noted Ovid's favourite tactic of buttressing an argument with trite mythological *exempla* from which salient details are so obtrusively omitted that the outcome is not to reinforce the *praeceptor's* advice but instead to destabilise it by focussing attention on his casuistic and sophistic deployment of the paradigm; a fault of which, as we have noted, Horace's Stertinius was equally guilty.⁹⁷ To cite two representative instances:⁹⁸ at *Ars* 2,397 ff., to illustrate the point that, if the *amator* openly cheats on his girl, she will respond in kind, the example of Clytemestra is cited (*dum fuit Atrides una contentus, et illa / casta fuit; uitio est improba facta uiri* 399–400). But what reader would not think at once of the detail which Ovid pointedly fails to mention, that Clytemestra's taking Aegisthus as her lover was provoked not just, as the poet alleges 401–8, by Agamemnon's parading of Chryseis, Briseis and Cassandra as his concubines, but was equally a gesture of outrage at her husband's brutal sacrifice of their daughter Iphigeneia? Similarly, in a convoluted passage which twins the idea of *fama*, bestowed by poets, with the necessity of the *puella's* leaving the house in order to attract potential lovers, the speaker observes *quis Danaen nosset, si semper clusa fuisset / inque sua turri perlatuisset anus?* (*Ars* 3,415–16). But the rhetorical question, while foregrounding self-interestedly the capacity of poets to ennoble their *puellae*, signally ignores the fact that Danae, while remaining locked in her tower, did manage to acquire a lover, in the shape of Zeus, who descended to her in a shower of gold: thus the message

95) 1,283–340, most particularly the inordinately long Pasiphae-episode 289–326.

96) Cf. P. Watson (n. 78) 159 n. 73.

97) A further example of this is the *lena's* tendentious recontextualisation at Ovid, *Amores* 1,8,45–8 of the archery contest in Homer, *Odyssey* 21. As with many a seemingly virtuous female, Penelope's preservation of her chastity, she asserts, was merely a sham: the contest was not a precondition for winning Penelope's hand (so *Od.* 21,68 ff.), but an attempt on her part to test the sexual prowess of potential bed-mates.

98) Other examples of such an obtrusively partial and self-serving use of mythology: *Ars* 1,457–8,509–11,647 ff. with Hollis (n. 79) on 655, 1,713–14; 2,5–8,121–42,399 ff.; 3,631–2, *Rem.* 465–86, 589–90.

is nullified that public exposure is necessary if a girl is to win an admirer.

Sometimes the didactic ineptitude is more obtrusive still. It was remarked above that the sham teacher was given to vacuous or risible observations or arguments. In similar fashion, the advice of Ovid's *praeceptor* is at times downright fatuous. For example, at *Remedia* 169–98, as one of three possible ways to avoid *otium*, which is a seed-bed for *amor* (143–4), the fugitive from love is enjoined to retreat to the country and there to immerse himself in the sights and sounds of the ideal landscape. But the passage in question is so replete with reminiscences from Virgil's *Eclogues* and Tibullus⁹⁹ that the reader cannot help reflecting that the country in Tibullus was the setting for love, and that Virgil's *pastores* lived a life of *otium* in which their songs were of ἔρωϛ.¹⁰⁰ Thus the exquisite literariness of the whole section has the self-contradictory effect of imploding the very message which it ostensibly teaches.¹⁰¹ Again, at *Ars* 1,711 ff., to illustrate the principle that, to attain possession of the girl sexually, the male must do the asking, the speaker states *Iuppiter ad ueteres supplex heroidas ibat; / corrumpit magnum nulla puella Iouem*. Here it is not just the idea of mythological heroines trying to seduce (*corrumpere*) Jupiter that is intentionally ridiculous,¹⁰² but the very mention of seduction: Jupiter, as everyone knew, overpowered his victims by a combination of male violence and sexual predation which he regarded as a divine prerogative. To cite one final example of fatuous advice, at *Ars* 2,229, as a gesture of *obsequium*,¹⁰³ the lover is enjoined to go to his girl if she summons him to the country. But this is immediately followed by the absurd *si rota defuerit, tu pede carpe uiam*, which conjures up a picture of a pedestrian *amator* trudging weary miles to his rural rendezvous.¹⁰⁴

99) Systematically noted in the commentary of A. A. R. Henderson, P. Ovidi Nasonis *Remedia Amoris* (Edinburgh 1979) ad loc.

100) For the recognition that the countryside too could offer amatory temptations, cf. Prop. 2,19,27–32.

101) Cf. P. Watson (n.78) 165.

102) Hollis (n.79) ad loc.

103) For the concept, cf. Wheeler (1911: n.77) 61–4.

104) Somewhat surprisingly, Niklas Holzberg, *Ovid. The Poet and his Work* (Ithaca/London 2002) 99 views the examples of *obsequium* recommended in this section of the poem (2,223–32), including the advice to travel to the girl under the Dog Star or through the snows, as less exacting than those enjoined in comparable

Nor does the incompetence of the Ovidian *praeceptor* end here. To the foregoing bêtises may be added (purposive) instances of self-contradiction, which has been noted above as a hallmark of the bogus teacher, exemplified in Damasippus-Stertinius, and, one might add, Horace's Alfius.¹⁰⁵ Instances of such self-contradiction in the *Ars* include the claim that women rarely deceive (*Ars* 3,31–2), which obtrusively belies what was said at 1,645–6 *fallite fallentes; ex magna parte profanum / sunt* [sc. *femineum*] *genus: in laqueos, quos posuere, cadant*. Again, at *Ars* 2,613–14 the *exemplum* of the naked Venus covering her pubic region *semireducta manu* deliberately undercuts the argument which it purportedly illustrates, that sex should be conducted, not openly in the manner of beasts (615–6), but instead privately (611–12, 621–4), in half-light and with the sexual organs decently veiled (612, 617–20); for the goddess's gesture, as everyone knew¹⁰⁶ and as *semireducta* intimates, was consciously provocative, not an attempt at modest concealment.¹⁰⁷ Other examples of obtrusive self-contradiction in-

passages of elegy. Other instances of fatuous advice: 2,203 ff., massage the *puella's* ego by taking care to lose to her at dice, and hence make sure always to turn up a *canis* (the lowest throw). But how is such an outcome to be guaranteed in a game of chance where vast sums could be gambled and lost, *Pers.* 5,57? 2,506 *qui bibit arte, bibat*, a *reductio ad absurdum* of the Delphic maxim γνῶθι σεαυτόν; the advice 3,456 *ianua fallaci ne sit aperta uiro* (but despite the description in the preceding verses of types to avoid, how is the *puella* to know in advance of the event that her *uir* is *fallax*?).

105) Who, while eulogising the delights of the simple rustic lifestyle, increasingly, as the poem progresses, reveals a concern with a more luxurious and wealth-driven *δῆματα*.

106) Cf. *Apul. Met.* 2,17 on Fotis, who is replicating Venus' gesture, in particular, *in speciem Veneris, quae marinos fluctus subit, pulchre reformata, paulisper etiam glabellum feminal rosea palmula potius obumbrans de industria quam tegens uerecundia*, further A. Stewart, *Art, Desire and the Body in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge 1997) 103 on the designedly ambivalent, in fact arousing nature of the gesture. I am further encouraged in the view that the positioning of Venus' hand was self-contradictory, intended to focus attention on her genitalia rather than to conceal them, by the existence of the parallel gesture on the part of Titian's so-called 'Venus of Urbino', on display in the Uffizi Gallery, on which the Official Guide (Gloria Fossi: 4th rev. edn., Florence 2005) comments "her left hand resting over the pubic area as if to hide it is in fact ambiguously inviting" (126).

107) Other instances of self-contradiction: *Ars* 2,357 ff. (the moral drawn here is at odds with the immediately preceding *exemplum* of Ulysses); the advice that the man who is *cultus* and vain about his appearance can easily be trapped into thinking that a *puella* loves him (*Ars* 3,681–2) runs counter to the earlier precept

clude the claim in *Ars* 2,14 that winning a girl is a matter of *casus*, “chance”, which flatly gainsays the message of book 1, which treats the process as the outcome of *ars*; or the advice to the lover to give only modest presents (*Ars* 2,261–2), which is immediately negated by the admission that modern-day *puellae* are not satisfied with such (268). Furthermore, what is one to make of a *praeceptor* who does not balk at insulting his addressees, in defiance of the principle of *captatio benevolentiae*? This is precisely what the speaker does at *Ars* 3,251 ff., on concealment of physical shortcomings, where the practical advice begins with the wonderfully debunking *si brevis es, sedeas, ne stans uideare sedere* (263). Now it is certainly the case, as the speaker points out in lines 251–62, that very few women are so naturally beautiful that they have no need of instruction on minimising corporeal disadvantages. In that sense, then, the advice which the speaker gives here appears salutary, since it is aimed, as he notes, at those women, the majority of his addressees, who most require it. But the uncompromising bluntness with which he proclaims how sorely the generality of females stand in need of his teachings is hardly calculated to make them lend a ready ear to his instructions (*turba docenda uenit, pulchrae turpesque puellae: / pluraque sunt semper deteriora bonis* 255–6; *rara tamen menda facies caret* 261): as Gibson observes, “Ovid speaks frankly and with little softening of the blows about female imperfections”¹⁰⁸ and it is the idea of womanly ugliness (cf. *turpes*) that predominates in this section. And the self-defeating tactlessness of the speaker might be thought increased, if one recalls earlier remarks that most women maintain an illusory belief in their own beauty (*sibi quaeque uidetur amanda; / pessima sit, nulli non sua forma placet* 1,613–14); a belief here rudely dissipated. And while it would be excessive to claim ignorance of the need for tact as a

that such males are to be avoided, as they are cynical and predatory (3,433 ff.); *Remedia* 421–2 and 419–20 with Henderson (n. 99) for the illogic entailed by 421–2; *Remedia* 577 ff. (Ovid complains that his poetic vessel has been deprived of guidance in mid-course, but immediately proceeds purposefully to a fresh topic); *Remedia* 750, the flippant remark that it’s not worth becoming poor in order to escape the effects of passion drastically undercuts the thrust of the preceding lines (741–9), that poverty is a valuable if inadvertent strategy for escaping love, since the *amator* lacks the means to support the cost of an affair (749).

108) R. K. Gibson, *Meretrix or Matrona? Stereotypes in Ovid Ars Amatoria* 3, *PLLS* 10 (1998) 295–312 at 308: for Ovid’s model in lines 263 ff., cf. Alexis frg. 103 K.-A.

'Merkmal' of the *doctor ineptus*, it is worth noting, in the present connection,¹⁰⁹ that the disquisitions of both Damasippus and Davus conclude by provoking an outburst of temper on the part of their addressee Horace.¹¹⁰

We have already seen that a patent self-interest which invalidates the worth of what they have to say is characteristic of the preachings of Horace's Damasippus and Davus; the trait is in fact repeated in most if not all the bogus teachers studied in this paper, notably the two elegiac *lenae* and Petronius' Eumolpus: the diatribes of the poetaster upon the contempt in which the arts are nowadays held are plainly underpinned by a wish that he should receive due financial recognition for his talent. Self-interest is likewise a keynote of Ovid's *praeceptor*, notwithstanding the assertion that by the teachings contained in *Ars* 3 he is arming the female enemy against himself:¹¹¹ it has already been noted that certain of the *praeceptor*'s mythological *exempla* are presented in such a self-serving and opportunistic fashion as to overturn their ostensible function of persuading to a given course of amatory action. Now the ethos of erotic self-advantage which infuses the Ovidian *erotodidaxis* as a whole¹¹² does not per se qualify the value of the *praeceptor*'s teachings: but the picture looks somewhat different when one reflects that the *Ars*, which parades masculine self-interest so obtrusively, will also attract a female readership, in the shape of the very *puellae* whom the poem strives to outmanoeuvre. Here, as elsewhere, the comedy of ineptitude is in part dependent upon the conflicting priorities of two voices in the *Ars*, that of the teacher, whose task is to dispense counsel, and that of the elegiac *amator*, who seeks gratification of his erotic desires.

In regard to their self-fashioning as preceptorial inepts, one final connection between the bogus teacher and the speaker of the *Ars* must be registered. This concerns *erotodidaxis*, the common topic of *Tib.* 1,4 and the *Ars*; specifically, the incapacity of the self-proclaimed teachers of love to implement successfully the amato-

109) Cf. also *Ars* 3,103–4 *forma quota quaeque superbit? / pars uestrum tali munere* [sc. *forma*] *magna caret*, and 3,287–90 for remarks on the female appearance that tip over into tactlessness.

110) *Sat.* 2,3,323–6; 2,7,116–18.

111) *Ars* 3,1 ff. Cf. 577–8, where Ovid plays the role of the treacherous Tarpeia, 589–90, 667–72.

112) Notable instances: *Ars* 1,633 ff.721–2; 3,533 ff.

ry advice which they proffer with such assurance. The case of Propertius and Tibullus in Tib. 1,4 has been discussed above. Similarly, the speaker in the *Ars* will sometimes foreground his own incompetence as *amator* and autodidact, deliberately pointing up the difficulty, in his realisation as elegiac lover, of following his precepts and calling into question the practicality of the objective announced in *Ars* 1,4 *arte regendus amor*.¹¹³ For example, the advice at *Ars* 2,173–4 *at uos, si sapitis, uestri peccata magistri / effugite et culpa damna timete meae* is hardly calculated to inspire confidence on the part of the speaker's pupils. And the confession at 2,547–8 is even more damning, *hac ego, confiteor, non sum perfectus in arte; / quid faciam? monitis sum minor ipse meis*, a nice example of the speaker shooting himself in his didactic foot.¹¹⁴

The foregoing discussion has suggested that significant resemblances exist between the bogus teacher and the *praeceptor* of the *Ars*, and that these resemblances are not just confined to a general incapacity to convey their respective messages in a cogent and persuasive fashion. Rather, they extend to similarity of didactic faux pas and dialectical bêtises whereby both undermine the credibility of their teachings. Now that this cardinal point has, hopefully, been established, the remaining points of convergence between the two figures can be more briefly dealt with. I turn accordingly to the second characteristic of the bogus teacher listed at the commencement of this paper and its realisation in the *praeceptor* of the *Ars*. The effect of the argumentative incompetence just described in Ovid and (exempli causa) in Tibullus is to focus attention on the *persona* of the teacher, in particular upon the ineptitude and fallibility of his teachings:¹¹⁵ at the same time, attention is diverted

113) Contrast Propertius 2,1,58 *solus amor morbi non amat artificem*. Other instances, in addition to those cited immediately below in the text, where the *praeceptor* admits explicitly or implicitly his inadequate mastery of the *ars amandi* which he professes: *Ars* 1,615–16; 3,43.245–6.573 (*heu*), *Remedia* 314, 620, 683–6, 768.

114) As P. Watson (n. 78) 151 observes, Ovid undermines himself even further in the following lines by citing an instance from his own experience where he neglected to follow the advice which he is proffering (to tolerate a rival with equanimity), and by further admitting that the failure was not an isolated one (*non semel hoc uitium nocuit mihi* 553).

115) Somewhat similarly, the stridency and excesses of the authorial voice in Juvenal, documented in W. S. Anderson's classic studies (collected in his *Essays on Roman Satire*, Princeton 1982) have the effect of throwing attention back onto the flawed nature of the satiric speaker and away from the content of his attacks, so that the satirist becomes, as it were, the target of his own satire.

away from the substance of the instruction which he conveys. As regards the *Ars Amatoria*, this throwing of the spotlight on the teacher has well-established generic precedents. To name only two, Hesiod notoriously in the *Works and Days*, and Empedocles likewise in his didactic verse consciously foregrounded and invested with a conspicuous singularity the authorial voice.¹¹⁶ On one level, then, the artfully delineated speaker of the *Ars Amatoria* can be seen as a direct inheritor of that tradition – but with the crucial difference that the Ovidian voice is a deliberately comic and self-ironising one.¹¹⁷ And to explicate this latter dimension of the Ovidian *persona* the literary-historical net must be cast more widely. It seems best to regard the preceptorial voice of the *Ars* as fusing the obtrusive *persona* of didactic poetry with the incompetence of the bogus teacher, who is typically a miniaturised study in folly of one kind or another (rather like the *Characters* of Theophrastus),¹¹⁸ but always having as common denominator the questionable nature, or the complete invalidity, of what he is saying.

It was proposed above under 3) that the bogus teacher shares important traits with the ἀλαζών of Old Comedy; it was also noted that the verb ἀλαζονεύεσθαι is, significantly, used of teachers who make extravagant promises, who affirm that their instruction will yield better results than is possible.¹¹⁹ The *persona* of Ovid's *praceptor* likewise agrees in no small measure with such types. At the beginning of the work he announces, with a bombast redolent of the ἀλαζών,¹²⁰ *usus opus mouet hoc: uati parete perito; / uera canam* (*Ars* 1,29–30). And he concludes book 2 with a comparable piece of professional self-aggrandisement, claiming to be the supreme exponent of the *ars amandi*, as Podalirius was of the healing art, Calchas of extispicy and so on (2,735–40). Yet, just as the ἀλαζών is typical-

116) Cf. n. 65 supra.

117) To anticipate a possible objection here, it may be that the advice in didactic poetry is sometimes impractical, as in Hesiod's *Works and Days* (Toohey [n. 9] 23). But serious didactic poets do not set out deliberately to create an impression of incompetence, as Ovid does in the *Ars*.

118) See e. g. the demonstration of Classen (n. 40) that the Catus of Horace, *Satires* 2,4 is depicted as an utter fool.

119) Cf. n. 26.

120) Compare e. g. the pompous language with which the ἀλαζών Meton announces himself to Peisetarus in Aristophanes' *Birds* (992, with Dunbar [n. 39] ad loc.).

ly unmasked as a pretentious fraud,¹²¹ so too the Ovidian *praeceptor's* grandiose, at times wildly exaggerated,¹²² claims of amatory expertise are consistently undermined by insinuated or explicit exposés of his fallibility as both teacher and practitioner of love (see above); similarly, his assertions of vatic authority¹²³ – and the *uates* is a figure of somewhat ambivalent status¹²⁴ – are negated by the degrading admission that poets nowadays are held in derision, not just by rapacious *puellae*, but by the world at large (*Ars* 2,273–80; 3,403–12; 3,533–52).¹²⁵ Once again then the bumptious *praeceptor* whom we discern in Ovid's amatory treatise has a typological congener in the broader literary canvas, and cannot merely be traced to an humorous bastardisation of the didactic tradition.

It was suggested above under point 4) that the authority of the bogus *praeceptor's* teachings is typically compromised by his moral or physical circumstances, a further instance of the former being the *Catius* of Horace, *Satires* 2,4.¹²⁶ As regards the speaker of the

121) Again compare Meton in Aristophanes' *Birds* (992–1020), who proposes to practise geometry in the air rather than on a land-surface (995) and to 'square the circle' (1005).

122) Cf. particularly the opening of *Ars Amatoria* 1, in which the absurd claim is made that the irrational phenomenon of love can be reduced to a system of rules which will successfully trammel and constrain it; see also *Remedia* 55–68, where it is, fantastically, alleged that, had they had the benefit of Ovid's instruction, a range of literary-mythological personages (Dido, Medea, Tereus etc.) would have been cured of their infatuation, with its varied but disastrous consequences. Lines 63 ff. give a sample of the manner: *da mihi Pasiphaen, iam tauri ponet amorem; / da Phaedram, Phaedrae turpis abibit amor. / redde Parin nobis, Helenen Menelaus habebit / nec manibus Danais Pergama uicta cadent*. In the same exaggerated vein is *Ars* 3,33 ff. (Medea, Ariadne and other heroines were abandoned by their lovers because they did not know the *ars amandi* which Ovid teaches). For the propensity of the Ovidian *persona* in the *Ars* to make extravagant claims for his powers, cf. J. Barsby, *Ovid. Greece and Rome New Surveys in the Classics* 12 (Oxford 1978) 19–20.

123) Vatic authority claimed: *Ars* 1,29–30.267–8.525; 2,11.535–6.739–40, *Remedia* 377, 767 (other, less loaded occurrences of the term *Ars* 2,165; 3,347.408.539.547). Cf. also the discussion below of pompous speech.

124) See e.g. A. Cavarzere, *Vate me: l'ambiguo sigillo dell'epodo XVI*, *Aevum Antiquum* 7 (1994) 171–90.

125) Cf. also the final piece of advice on wooing given by Apollo to Ovid, *Ars* 2,508 *nec sua non sanus scripta [puellae] poeta legat*.

126) Who discourses to a deadpan Horace on the *arcana* of gastrosophy, blithely unaware of the philosophical tradition which condemned as unhealthy an obsession with gourmet foodstuffs (Classen [n. 40] 341, L. and P. Watson, *Martial: Select Epigrams* [Cambridge 2003] 213–14) and attacked on moralising grounds

Ars Amatoria, we learn nothing of his physical circumstances, but he is divested of moral *gravitas* in the eyes of his pupils by his abovenoted use of arguments that are patently self-serving, tendentious or disingenuous, to which may be added one more instance: the advice that *puellae* should treasure the love of poets because the art which they cultivate has made them more trustworthy and morally upright than the generality of mankind (*Ars* 3,533–50): an impertinent and outrageous claim belied by the ethos of the *Ars* as a whole, in which the vatic speaker reduces *amor* to a system of rules and stratagems in which artifice and deceit are paramount.

Whereas the compromising of the Ovidian *praeceptor*'s didactic *auctoritas* is effected more by his deliberately contrived argumentative incompetence (point 1) than by diminution of his moral standing (point 4), the fifth characteristic of the bogus teacher catalogued above, a propensity for pomposity of diction, is more productive for analysis of Ovid's *magister amoris*. Examples of comic grandiloquence are not far to seek in the *Ars Amatoria*. At the level of the individual word there is the use of the dignified future imperative characteristic of serious didactic texts,¹²⁷ but contextually inappropriate to an *ars amandi*, or the *praeceptor*'s insistent characterisation of himself as a *uates*, the elevated term for poet,¹²⁸ with its implications of acting as a god's mouthpiece;¹²⁹ an idea exploited to the hilt by Ovid, as in the mock-portentous *quod nisi dux operis uatem frustratur Apollo, / aemulus est nostri maxima*

writers of gastronomical guides such as Archestratus, tendentiously associating his *Hedypatheia* with the erotic manual of the notorious Philaenis, on the basis that both writers preached a reprehensible indulgence in sensual pleasure: cf. Olson and Sens (n. 69) xliv–v, *testimonia* 4, 5, 9, also Ath. 116 f (frg. 39) Ἀρχέστρατος μὲν ὁ περιπλεύσας τὴν οἰκουμένην τῆς γαστροῦς ἕνεκα καὶ τῶν ὑπὸ τὴν γαστέρα.

127) Cf. R. K. Gibson, *Didactic poetry as 'popular' form: a study of imperative expressions in Latin didactic verse and prose*, in: C. Atherton (ed.), *Form and Content in Didactic Poetry* (Bari 1997) 67–98. As Gibson (n. 70) shows in a separate treatment of the *-to* imperatival termination (on *Ars* 3,207–8), the statistics in regard to the use of this archaic form in didactic poetry and prose do not yield a clear picture, but Ovid employs it to a far greater extent than other didactic poets, evidently in an effect of mock-pomposity.

128) Hollis (n. 79) ad loc.

129) Cf. H. D. Jocelyn, *Poeta and uates*. Concerning the Nomenclature of the Composers of Verses in Republican and Early Imperial Rome, in: L. Belloni, G. Milanese, A. Porro (edd.), *Studia Classica Iohanni Tarditi Oblata* vol. 1 (Milan 1995) 19–50 (earlier bibliography at 23 nn. 18–19).

causa mali (Remedia 767–8).¹³⁰ More substantial instances of pre-emptive speech include the amusingly self-aggrandising *magna paro, quas possit Amor remanere per artes, / dicere, tam uasto per-uagus orbe puer* (Ars 2,17–18); couplets such as *quid moror in paruis? animus maioribus instat; / magna cano: toto pectore, uulgus, ades* (Ars 2,535–6), in which the vein of *de haut en bas* is reminiscent of a Theognis or a Solon addressing a poetic *δημηγορία* to the assembled citizenry; or 1,589 *certa tibi a nobis dabitur mensura bibendi* where the poet speaks “in the pompous tone of some medical writer laying down the exact amount for a prescription.”¹³¹

Of course these and similar passages can legitimately be seen as parodying the style and mannerisms of didactic poetry,¹³² much as the *Hedypatheia* of Arcestratus spoofs the diction of its more serious generic cousins¹³³ (one example among many is frg. 53 Olson-Sens *μόρμιυρος αἰγιαλεύς, κακὸς ἰχθὺς οὐδέ ποτ' ἔσθλος*, a clear parody of Hesiod's description of his hometown, Ἄσκη, χεῖμα κακῆ ... οὐδέ ποτ' ἔσθλη).¹³⁴ At the same time, the mock-pre-emptive or parodic diction which has been discussed in this and the preceding paragraph ultimately resolves itself into a self-ironising attempt on the part of the didactic poet, expressed primarily at the dictional level, to project himself as one who takes himself and his prescriptions much too seriously. And in keeping with the pattern

130) Other instances where Ovid figures himself as a god's mouthpiece: Remedia 251, 489, and the two scenes where the poet receives instruction from a divine epiphany, Ars 2,493–510, Remedia 555–76. Cf. also Ars 2,541–2 *haec tibi non hominem sed quercus crede Pelasgas / dicere; nil istis ars mea maius habet*.

131) Hollis (n.79) ad loc. Other instances of pompous speech: Ars 2,511–12.667–8, Remedia 69–70.

132) See e.g. Hollis (n.79) on Ars 1,459 or Gibson (n.70) on Ars 3,789–90.

133) For parody in Arcestratus, see conveniently the lemmata cited under the relevant fragments in the edition of Brandt (n.69) 140–71. Cf. also Effe (n.70) 234–7.

134) Other examples include frg. 16,3–4 Olson-Sens, where the addressee is instructed to buy the boar-fish in Ambracia *κἄν ἰσόχρυσος ἔη, μή σοι νέμεσις καταπνεύσῃ / δεινὴ ἀπ' ἄθανάτων* and frg. 24,4, which employs the Homeric locution *φίλη κεφαλή* in a discussion of fish-seasoning. Such parody forms part of the attempt to build up an humorous authorial *persona* in a work which combines a serious interest in gastronomy with the ludic strain that is never far from the surface in didactic poetry (cf. n.73), a comic vein which is evident in advice such as one finds in frgs. 22 (get hold of the thresher-shark in Rhodes, even if you must die for seizing it by force) and 23,7 (suck down the pig-fish eagerly enough to choke yourself), where Arcestratus appears to be sending himself up for his excessive devotion to ὄψα.

which we have already discerned, the attendant pomposity of diction may be seen, in the case of Ovid's *praeceptor* at least, not just as a parodic distortion of the didactic register, but rather as an amalgam of this with the pretentious speech which characterises the sham teacher.

It was noted earlier, a propos of point 6), that, in contrast to a number of the bogus teachers examined in this paper, the didactic speaker of the *Ars* is not depicted as expropriating *praecepta* from others and relaunching them at second-hand: instead, like the *lenae* of Prop. 4,5 and *Amores* 1,8, he claims to be speaking from personal experience (*nec mihi sunt uisae Clio Cliusque sorores / seruanti pecudes uallibus, Ascra, tuis: / usus opus mouet hoc: uati parete perito; / uera canam* 1,27–30). The absence from the Ovidian *persona* of one of the characteristics attributable to some – not all – of the sham *praeceptores* under discussion should not prove a significant stumbling block to the thesis here advanced, that the multiple incompetencies of the Ovidian *praeceptor amoris* are mediated through the figure of the bogus teacher. But it is worth noting that, at this point in the *Ars*, Ovid has more pressing priorities than stigmatising his speaker as a purveyor of second-hand knowledge. The most important of these is to establish at the outset, by a representative instance, that blend of didactic and elegiac modalities which is so integral to the literary texture of the *Ars Amatoria*. Thus the Hesiodic allusion in lines 27–8 simultaneously encodes a bow to the didactic tradition and disassociates the *Ars* from the archaic view that the poet was a passive conduit for information relayed to him by the gods, the speaker's teachings being instead informed by elegiac *usus*,¹³⁵ personal experience.¹³⁶ Similarly, the dogmatism of *uera canam* and *uati parete* is reminiscent of the self-confident assertiveness of a Lucretius; but the addition of *perito* conjures into play the world of elegy, with its evocation of Propertius' profession of erotodidactic authority *me dolor et lacrimae merito fecere peritum* (1,9,7) and implication of amatory expertise hard won in the school of elegiac knocks.¹³⁷ These few lines neatly encapsulate

135) Cf. also *Ars* 3,791–2 *si qua fides, arti, quam longo fecimus usu, / credite*.

136) A claim subsequently withdrawn, *Tristia* 2,349 ff.

137) In a further piece of literary sophistication, it is likely that *uati ... perito* incorporates a jesting side-swipe at the so-called metaphrasts, didactic poets such as Aratus and Nicander, who, using prose treatises as the basis for hexametric compositions upon subjects with which they were not closely familiar, wrote, as it were,

that blending of the didactic voice with the *persona* of the elegiac *amator* which is such a defining feature of the *Ars Amatoria*.

Under point 7) it was tentatively proposed that the ignorance and miscomprehension of which the didactic poet often accuses his addressees is ironically projected onto the figure of the bogus teacher, who thus embodies the false doctrine or misleading opinions against which didactic poetry protests. Whether or not this suggestion is accepted, it is attractive to suppose that Ovid designedly amalgamated in his didactic *persona* the magisterial and self-assured tones of an Hesiod or a Lucretius with the flawed doctrines of which these complain, and which, it is suggested, are hypostasised in the figure of the bogus teacher. In other words, Ovid, combining professed expertise with pronounced didactic shortcomings has consciously figured his didactic speaker with comic intent as a sophomoric *praeceptor*.¹³⁸

Conclusions

This paper has suggested that, in investigating the literary currents from which the humour of the *Ars Amatoria* derives, it is not enough to invoke the traditions of didactic poetry and Ovid's playful manipulation of these, or, a supplementary point, the comic tension which arises from the embodiment in the speaker of two personages with differing priorities, the *magister amoris* and the elegiac *amator*. The amusingly inept *persona* of the Ovidian *praeceptor* is additionally and powerfully informed by the typologised and intrinsically absurd figure of the sham teacher who has an extensive presence in texts standing outside the di-

in borrowed intellectual clothes (cf. Volk [n. 2] 54–5, D. A. Kidd, Aratus: *Phaenomena* [Cambridge 1997] 26). See further D. Konstan, introduction to Schiesaro, Mitsis and Clay (n. 72) 16.

138) Might Ovid have taken a hint here from Hesiod's para-didactic (Toohey [n. 9] 21) *Theogony*, in the prologue to which Hesiod, shepherding his flock on the slopes of Mt. Helicon, is taught the craft of song by the Muses, but not before being subjected (26–8) to a highly insulting address by the goddesses: ποιμένες ἄγραυλοι, κάκ' ἐλέγχεα, γαστέρες οἶον, / ἴδμεν ψεύδεα πολλὰ λέγειν ἐτύμοισιν ὁμοῖα, / ἴδμεν δ' εὖτ' ἐθέλωμεν ἀληθέα γηρύσασθαι? One implication of this puzzling passage seems to be that Hesiod was formerly a μῶρος; now, with the assistance of the Muses, while still lacking the divine capacity to distinguish truth from falsehood, he can become a sophomore.

dactic genre. As a coda to this, some further conclusions may be tentatively appended.

First, by figuring himself as an incompetent *praeceptor*, Ovid helps to lay bare the spuriousness of his professed aim in the *Ars*, to rein in and lay down guidelines for the control of *amor*; for this is a clearly intractable force of nature, despite the poet's insistence on the virtuosity of his *ars* in controlling it.¹³⁹ The *artifex's* project, to tame *amor*,¹⁴⁰ would only be realisable if love as presented in the *Ars* were homogeneous in conception. But plainly it is not. Rather, it is a composite of the art of seduction, in which the pupil disingenuously¹⁴¹ follows a carefully plotted series of strategies laid out for him by the *magister*,¹⁴² and *amor* as familiar from Roman comedy and elegy, which sweeps away the senses and banishes all possibility of rational self-control. Thus the *ars amandi* which Ovid professes in his treatise on loving is grounded in a paradox, a point which Ovid forces on the reader's attention in passages where the mutually irreconcilable ideas of love's controllability and insusceptibility to control are pointedly juxtaposed. The paradox is neatly encapsulated in lines such as *Ars* 1,21–2 *et mihi cedit Amor, quamuis mea uulneret arcu / pectora, iactatas excutiatque faces* or 1,611–16 *est tibi agendus amans imitandaque uulnera uerbis ... saepe tamen uere coepit simulator amare; / saepe, quod incipiens finxerat esse, fuit*.¹⁴³ Thus the intrinsic unrealisability of the ostensible *raison d'être* of the *Ars*, to teach the art of loving, works in tandem with the obtrusive fallibility and incompetence of the didactic *persona*, to reveal the poem as a spectacular instance of preceptorial ἀλαζονεία in the sense noted above from Isocrates, namely the making of much larger claims for one's teaching than can ever be substantiated in reality.

A second hypothesis can be briefly added to the preceding. The stratagem of fashioning an inept teacher may be Ovid's particu-

139) For the latter claim, see particularly *Ars* 1,1–24 and the repeated insistence on the need to love wisely, i.e. in keeping with the *magister's* precepts (1,663.760; 2,145.501.511.553).

140) *Ars* 1,7 *me Venus artificem tenero praefecit Amori*.

141) For dissimulation as intrinsic to the love preached by Ovid's *magister amoris*, cf. *Ars*. 1,611–12 *est tibi agendus amans imitandaque uulnera uerbis; / haec tibi quaeratur qualibet arte fides*, 1,149–52.721–2; 2,311–14.

142) *Ars* 3,27 *per me discuntur amores*.

143) For the inherent paradox in the notion that love can be controlled, see also *Ars* 2,17–20; 3,41–2.

lar contribution to exposing the contradiction that lay at the heart of didactic poetry, the fact that in many cases the *didaxis* is only notional, a mere facade, not pragmatic in any meaningful sense.¹⁴⁴

Lastly and most importantly, the profile of the bogus teacher examined here, by making reference to a typology external to the poems, adds support to the views of those who, after internal analysis of the *Ars* and *Remedia*, have come to view Ovid as deliberately constructing an inept and self-contradictory *persona* as the vehicle for his amatory teachings.¹⁴⁵ It conversely casts doubt upon the opposing stance, most recently embraced by Volk, that the *praeceptor* of the *Ars* is effective, in that his pupils are represented as putting his teachings successfully into practice as the poem progresses. This reading of the *Ars* ultimately derives from Volk's perception that a seminal feature of didactic poetry is what she calls poetic simultaneity,¹⁴⁶ "the illusion that the poem is really only coming into being as it evolves before the readers' eyes, that the poet/persona is composing it 'as we watch'";¹⁴⁷ a process underpinned by the use of "progress imagery", whereby the onward movement of the poem is assimilated to the racing of a chariot or the voyage of a ship¹⁴⁸ and by dramatic markers such as *haec ego cum canerem, subito manifestus Apollo / mouit inauratae pollice fila lyrae* (2,493–4) which create the impression of a poem in the making. An important consequence of this stratagem for the *Ars* is that teaching and execution are represented as taking place at the same time.¹⁴⁹ These are valid insights, but Volk's next move, which is to gloss 'execution' with 'successful', is open to question. Volk holds that, when Ovid concludes *Ars* 2 with *finis adest operi: palmam date, grata iuuentus, / sartaque odoratae myrtea ferte comae* (733–4) or opens it with *dicite 'io Paeon' et 'io' bis dicite 'Paeon': / decidit in casses praeda petita meos. / laetus amans donat uiridi mea carmina palma / praelata Ascraeo Maeonioque seni* (1–4), these remarks are indicative of unconditional success on the part of both *prae-*

144) See e.g. A. S. F. Gow and A. F. Scholfield, *Nicander* (Cambridge 1953) 18, Hollis (n. 70) 85. Of particular relevance here is the observation of Heath (n. 81) that a good deal of didactic poetry is 'formal', that is to say, more interested in the trappings of such compositions than in conveying instruction ('final' didactic).

145) Cf. n. 1.

146) Volk (n. 2) 13–24, 39–41 et passim.

147) Volk (n. 2) 13.

148) Cf. *Ars* 1,39–40.263–4.771–2; 2,9–10, Volk (n. 2) 173–82.

149) Volk (n. 2) 184.

ceptor and pupils; “the possibility of failure does not come into the picture; both teacher and students of the *Ars Amatoria* are unequivocally successful.”¹⁵⁰ This appears to the present writer special pleading; it shunts aside the possibility that the speaker is engaging in disingenuous self-aggrandisement and ignores the many modifying factors and contingencies, discussed in extenso above, with which the *praeceptor* hedges about his professions of didactic competence. In fact the lines which immediately follow *Ars* 2,1–4 neatly encapsulate the flaw in Volk’s methodology. These compare the pupil who, with the *praeceptor*’s guidance, has won his *puella* to Paris making off with Helen from Sparta and the victorious Pelops riding off in the chariot with Hippodamia. But the upshot of both tales was so unsettling that it is surely illegitimate to insulate lines 1–4, as Volk effectively does, from the implications of disaster, erotic or otherwise, attendant on the myths. In sum, it seems possible to take at face value the Ovidian *praeceptor*’s claims of undiluted erotodidactic success only by decontextualising such remarks as those just quoted and isolating them from the larger fabric of the poem. One final point may be noted here. A reading such as Volk’s ignores the existence of the *Remedia Amoris*. For that work is, in a sense, predicated on the assumption that the teachings conveyed in the *Ars* have been a notable failure:¹⁵¹ that the *praeceptor*’s *discipulus*, instead of emerging heart-whole and physically gratified from the educational *cursus* laid down for him in the *Ars*, has succumbed to *amor* in its ruinous and passionate elegiac guise, and is urgently in need of extrication from this situation, an extrication which the *Remedia* seeks to provide. A point explicitly brought out in the preamble to the *Remedia*: *discite sanari, per quem didicistis amare: / una manus uobis uulnus opemque feret* (43–4). For had Ovid’s pupils successfully played the emotionally disengaged game of love enjoined in the *Ars*, there would have been no call for *sanatio* or *remedia amoris*.

Sydney

Lindsay C. Watson

150) Volk (n.2) 186.

151) I owe this point to Patricia Watson.