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Protean Forms: Three Studies in Poetry and Dance

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Protean Forms:

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οὔπω καταπαύσομεν
Μούσας, αἵ μ᾽ ἐχόρευσαν.

"I will never restrain
the Muses who have set me dancing."

Euripides

Dedication

For Lance Tomas and Eric Ragan

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Gratias vobis imo ex animo.

Table of Contents

Introduction

The literary culture of moving and transforming bodies in the ancient world is rich. The overarching focus of this project lies in the relationships between these bodies and the texts they inhabit, concluding with a look at the genre of ancient pantomime dance, and its impact on dance in modernity. As will be argued, pantomime dancers and the two Roman poets examined in this project create art using the same basic principle, namely, textual embodiment, albeit with different artistic mediums (one being text, and the other, the human body). The philosophy of ancient pantomime dance, and therefore the duty of the pantomime dancer, revolves around embodying text by using the written word as the basis for bodily expression and transformation. This principle of embodying text, although not put into explicit words until beyond Horace and Virgil's time, nonetheless serves as a means by which we can read earlier literature concerned with bodies, and understand how pantomime, a genre deeply enmeshed within the literary tradition, may have originated out of these kinds of texts.

This project represents a relatively uncommon approach to reading both ancient poetry and dance, yet one which should be of interest both to classicists and dancers. Having trained in classical ballet since I was very young, I often find myself reading ancient literature with a mind to how the author represents physicality and movement. For that reason, I was drawn to Horace and Virgil, who both create intricate tapestries of moving and transforming bodies in their poetry. This project will attempt to perform three studies in the analysis of moving bodies as vessels by which the artist conveys meaning and narrative: first in epic poetry, then in lyric, and finally, in somewhat of a departure from the first two chapters, in dance. This is by no means a comprehensive survey of moving bodies in antiquity. However, I have chosen to place Horace

and Virgil in conversation with Lucian (whose treatise on pantomime we will examine in depth), because I believe that their poetry demonstrates the literary basis of metamorphosis and metatextuality out of which pantomime originated. From there, we will trace pantomime's legacy forward into eighteenth century Europe, where it took root and fundamentally transformed ballet. I hope that my project will shed new light on both the hidden dimensions of transformation in early Roman poetry, and the little-known importance of ancient dance theory to classical ballet as we know it today.

Transformative Intertextuality in Virgil's *Georgics*:
A Resurrection of Bodies and Words

Introduction

"While it may be an exaggeration to cite the *Georgics* as the most allusive poem of antiquity, such a claim would not be essentially misleading."[1] So writes Joseph Farrell in his introduction to *Virgil's* Georgics *and the Traditions of Ancient Epic*. The *Georgics*, likely published in 29 BCE[2], stands chronologically in the middle of Virgil's three works, as the immediate predecessor of the *Aeneid*. It is simultaneously the most practical and fantastical of the three, combining pragmatic farming advice with a sweeping aetiological narrative, all within the framework of an epic poem. Although Virgil does draw on mythology in framing the goals of his text in Book I, the remainder of the text deals with how best to perfect the arts of cultivating crops, harvesting, animal husbandry, and finally in Book IV, apiculture. He draws heavily on the ancient literary landscape in crafting the *Georgics*, which is rife with literary allusion throughout. Virgil's use of intertextual allusion comes to a head in Book IV, which bursts into the fictionalized narrative of Aristaeus at its close. This miniature epic is framed as an aetiological explanation of an Egyptian ritual by which dead bees can be resurrected. The character Aristaeus, a beekeeper, seeks the advice of the seer Proteus, who narrates for him the tale of Orpheus and Eurydice, an embedded narrative which itself is full of bodily transformation and cyclical rebirth. Aristaeus then performs the necessary sacrifice to bring back his bees, and Virgil concludes the *Georgics* with a remarkably short eight-line *sphragis* which briefly references Octavian.

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[1] Farrell 1991: 3
[2] Putnam 1979: 5

As has been stated in the introduction, this project is concerned with the relationships between written texts and the bodies which inhabit them. Reading the *Georgics* with a mind to bodies and text uncovers a web of literary allusions and transformations, both within the context of the poem and the characters who populate it. The abrupt foray into epic-style myth in Book IV feels jarring, and, at first glance, completely out of place in a poem that up until now has taken the form of an almanac full of practical advice with real-world applications. However, upon further reflection, the Aristaeus narrative, or *Aristaeia*,[3] serves as a perfect encapsulation of the cyclical processes of renewal and rebirth that the *Georgics* seeks to explain to its readers. The story is highly concerned with bodies in flux, and Virgil uses these bodies as vehicles by which he transplants and transforms text. The poem's intertextual quality, which is so important to the *Georgics* as a whole, in Book IV becomes grounded in the bodies that populate it, and these bodies themselves make up the narrative fabric of the story that Virgil is telling. Virgil realizes transformation specifically through allusion. He does this in two ways: first, through the repetition of language at different points in the narrative, which creates loops in which the same sequences of events are repeated with different characters, and second, through the use of language from other texts. The first kind of allusion is particularly important to the characterization of Virgil's Orpheus, while the second kind is crucial in giving life to Proteus. By recycling the same moments at various points across the *Georgics*, Virgil is rebirthing them in different bodies and in different temporal spaces.

The Reanimation of Proteus

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[3] This term is taken from Putnam 1979 and Thomas 1988.

Proteus in particular, with his dual abilities of transformation and storytelling, emerges as a touchstone figure of Book IV who helps us navigate multiple different modes of text and performance, all contained within his kaleidoscopic body. The mythological shape-shifting sea god, who first appears in Homer's *Odyssey*, is absolutely central to the concluding book of the *Georgics* and to its themes of transformation and renewal. Most readings of Book IV have dealt with Proteus as a figure with primarily intellectual repercussions, without acknowledging the full weight of his physicality or his role as an agent of transformation. Llewelyn Morgan reads the narrative at the close of Book IV as "an *epyllion*, that is, a short mythological epic of a type favoured in the Hellenistic period which contains, characteristically, a digression from the main narrative."[4] In this reading, Proteus' inclusion serves to echo the *Odyssey*, an earlier and more famous epic for the contemporary reader, and by extension, to connect Virgil to Homer. Putnam, Farrell and Ross[5] all understand Virgil's extensive discussion of apiculture as an allegory for Roman civilization, and consider Proteus' prophetic abilities much more important than his physical ones in their respective interpretations. In their readings, Proteus represents a storehouse of knowledge that Aristaeus must conquer in order to fulfill his hero's journey. In Putnam's *Virgil's Poem of the Earth: Studies in the Georgics*, he reads Aristaeus' victory over Proteus as a metaphor for the larger themes of man's domination over the natural world that takes shape in Books I-III: "by violence he must tame nature's quixotic changeableness and master her infinite substantiality to the patterning demands of civilization."[6] Although Putnam latches onto Proteus' shapeshifting abilities as an essential aspect of his character, the main significance he assigns to

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[4] Morgan 1999: 17
[5] Ross 1987
[6] Putnam 1979: 290

them is as "the personification of nature's metamorphic ability;"[7] that is, a representation of the

processes of nature that permeate the *Georgics*. However, Proteus' transformative nature is

essential to his essence as a textual being; he is perfectly suited to embody the multilayered

identity that Virgil crafts around him. He therefore serves not only to highlight the epic tradition

on which Virgil is drawing, and to echo the agricultural subject matter of Books I-III. He is also

an embodied, physical symbol of the most important themes of the *Georgics*: renewal, rebirth,

and the cycle of life and death.

Proteus first appears in extant Greek and Latin literature in Book IV of the *Odyssey*,

when Menelaus, in identical fashion to Aristaeus, wrestles with the seer for answers concerning

his divinely wrought misfortune. In both texts, a female deity advises the hero to attack Proteus

as he rests after tending to his flocks of seals. Although he will attempt to escape by changing

form, the hero must not let go until the seer gives up and reveals the cause of the misfortune. The

thematic similarities to the *Odyssey* are already apparent, but Morgan details the unprecedented

extent to which Virgil directly translates Homer's language in crafting this scene[8]. At least half of

the roughly fifty lines that make up Cyrene's advice and Proteus' capture very closely follow

Homer's language in the *Odyssey* Book IV. Remarkably, as Morgan points out, both Proteus

episodes even occur in their respective works starting at Book IV, line 400[9]. The two passages

therefore not only mirror each other in terms of language, they also occupy the same physical

space within their respective texts. Morgan also emphasizes how this kind of textual borrowing

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[7] Putnam 1979: 290

[8] Morgan 1999: 219

[9] In the text of the *Georgics* to which this paper refers, the passage in question begins at line 401. However, Morgan argues that "the line numbered 401 in modern texts of the *Georgics* can easily be shown to have been originally line 400, since *G*. 4.338 is generally accepted as a later interpolation from the *Aeneid* (5.826). Our *G*. 4.401 is thus not only a close imitation of *Od*. 4.400: as *G*. 4.400 it is also the precise stichometrical equivalent - by line and book - of its model in the *Odyssey*" (Morgan 1999: 26).

has no parallel anywhere else in Virgil, not even in his other epic the *Aeneid*. This passage

therefore marks a truly unprecedented moment in Virgilian literature; more than literary allusion,

it is an almost word-for-word reanimation of Homer, transformed into Latin.

When Aristaeus attacks Proteus, Virgil echoes the same language that Cyrene used in

describing the seer's transformative abilities. Proteus rapidly undergoes several transformations

within a single line, his various forms appearing one after another in the Latin:

> *omnia transformat sese in miracula rerum,*
> *ignemque horribilemque feram fluviumque liquentem.* (*Geor*.IV.441-42)

(Proteus) transforms himself into all kinds of wondrous things,
into fire and monstrous beast and flowing water.

Below is the corresponding passage from the *Odyssey*, which, in Homer's version,

appears when Eidothea, daughter of Proteus, offers counsel to Menelaus:

> πάντα δὲ γιγνόμενος πειρήσεται, ὅσσ᾽ ἐπὶ γαῖαν
> ἑρπετὰ γίγνονται, καὶ ὕδωρ καὶ θεσπιδαὲς πῦρ (*Od*.IV.417-18)

He will try to become all kinds of things, the sort of beasts which
live upon the earth, and water, and divine fire.

Virgil follows Homer's example by keeping with the threefold transformations of animal,

fire, and water. However, he also expands upon Homer's language with the phrase *omnia*

miracula rerum, which, although it closely resembles πάντα γιγνόμενος in the *Odyssey*, colors

Proteus' physicality in a different way. Homer makes it clear that Proteus' shapeshifting is

limited to "ἑρπετὰ", which implies living creatures. However, the word *rerum* could imply any

kind of animal or thing, and any state of matter, thus expanding the theoretical scope of Proteus'

physicality[10]. Therefore, Virgil's portrayal of Proteus subtly deepens the miraculous nature of his powers, and broadens his abilities.

Virgil's inclusion of language from the *Odyssey* is already extraordinary, but the fact that the language included has to do with the figure of Proteus adds further depth to this striking moment. Virgil's textual transformation is occurring in a moment where literal transformation is happening on the page. Proteus thus becomes a metatextual agent of the transformation that Virgil is enacting in reanimating Homer's language, a physical manifestation of the literary tradition that Virgil is drawing on in crafting his miniature epic. The fact that Proteus will take on a speaking role for a good portion of the narrative further complicates how he fits into the text of the *Georgics*, since for a time, he becomes the creator of the text he is "speaking". We must therefore read Virgil's retelling of the Orpheus and Eurydice myth, with all its changing and shifting bodies, while bearing in mind that we are "hearing" this story through the mouth of a shapeshifter, who could theoretically embody all of the transformations he describes.

It is important for our reading of the *Georgics* to note that beyond Virgil's time, Proteus evolved into a cultural symbol of transformation and imitation, appearing in Lucian's *On Dancing* as the patron saint of pantomime dance[11]. According to Lucian, pantomime dancers "imitate Proteus himself.[12]" We cannot know for certain whether Proteus may have already carried this connotation as a cultural figure during Virgil's time. However, given how central

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[10] One direction in which this thinking could develop would be to explore the connections between this phrase and Lucretius' poem *De Rerum Natura*. Some scholars (Putnam 1979, Morgan 1999) have already noted the connections between Lucretius and the rest of the *Georgics*, but the significance of this phrasing appearing in reference to Proteus is a less-explored idea.

[11] Proteus' significance to pantomime will be discussed at length in the third chapter.

[12] Translated by Harmon 1936.

Proteus is to Virgil's story of renewal and transformation, we can read the Aristaeus narrative as an early literary meditation on how he helps the reader navigate modes of performance.

Orpheus' Rebirth and Temporal Manipulation

Virgil's retelling of the Orpheus and Eurydice narrative, which comprises the remainder of Book IV, is especially rife with changing and transforming bodies. His version of the myth (as told by Proteus to Aristaeus) starts with Orpheus' katabasis to the Underworld to retrieve his wife, and ends with his eventual dismemberment at the hands of the Cicones. As Proteus explains, the cause of Aristaeus' misfortunes is Orpheus himself. In order to avenge the death of his wife Eurydice, who, fleeing Aristaeus' advances, was bitten by a snake, Orpheus cursed Aristaeus' bees and caused them to perish[13]. An icon of Classical poetry for his virtuosic abilities as a musician and composer, Orpheus is commonly used by poets as an archetypal figure of poetry and song. It is therefore unsurprising that Orpheus appears in Virgil's earlier work, the *Eclogues*, in such a fashion. In *Eclogues* IV, Virgil uses Orpheus as a reference point by which he conjectures on his poetic legacy: "I pray that the twilight of a long life may then be vouchsafed me, and inspiration enough to praise your deeds! Then shall neither Thracian Orpheus nor Linus vanquish me in song[14]". However, in the *Georgics*, through his relationship to Proteus, Orpheus undergoes a transformation as a literary figure. Virgil uses him not as a touchstone of poetic excellence (although his skills as a poet are certainly part of the story Virgil crafts), but as a vehicle for Virgil's exploration of bodily boundaries and multi-layered narratives.

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[13] *Illa quidem, dum te fugeret per flumina praeceps, immanem ante pedes hydrum moritura puella servantem ripas alta non vidit in herba.* (*Geor*.IV.457-59)
[14] Eclogues IV.53-6

Richard Thomas, in his commentary on Book IV, reads the narrative as one large

chiasmus, rather than a series of cycles: "The narrative retreats from the centrally placed song of

Orpheus, retracing in reverse order the subjects of the *bugonia* and the roles of Aristaeus, Cyrene

and Proteus[15]". However, this reading leaves out all the instances in which the Orpheus narrative

interacts with and echoes its "real world" surroundings, namely, the people, places and events of

Aristaeus' world. Since all these events exist on the same temporal continuum, it seems more

accurate to read them as cyclical; the same events happen across different points in time and

within different bodies. Furthermore, as will be shown, the recycling of language, which Virgil

does so frequently, oftentimes in unpredictable places, disrupts Thomas' chiastic reading, and

overall gives the *Aristaeia* a much more complicated shape.

The Orpheus and Eurydice narrative embedded within Book IV may give the reader a

recurring sense of *deja vu*. There are an abundance of moments in which Virgil recycles

language, images, and even entire sequences of events, transposing them into different bodies

and different contexts. In many cases, events or images within Proteus' narrative serve to renew

a cycle that was begun earlier in the *Aristaeia*. To start, the Orpheus and Eurydice story, which

exists inside the larger aetiological narrative of the *Aristaeia*, is itself aetiological in nature, since

it explains the bees' cause of death. Thus, by the time Proteus begins his tale, Virgil has begun

the second aetiology of Book IV. This is the first of many cycles that is completed within the

Aristaeia. The next is completed when we first encounter Orpheus, who, when he is introduced

to us, is already in mourning over the loss of his wife. However, just before we meet him,

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[15] Virgil 1988: 236

another cycle is begun by the seemingly innocuous mention of the river Hebrus[16] just one line

before Orpheus *ipse* takes over. The Hebrus is the river on which his decapitated head will float a

few hundred lines later, and the positioning of the two bodies so close together thus serves as an

ominous reminder of his sorrows still to come. After a few polysyndetic references to the

surrounding landscape, Orpheus is described as follows:

> *Ipse cava solans aegrum testudine amorem*
> *te, dulcis coniunx, te solo in litore secum,*
> *te veniente die, te decedente canebat.*

> "(Orpheus) himself, consoling his sorrowful love on a hollow lyre
> was singing of you, sweet wife, of you on the lonely shore,
> you with the day dawning, you with it waning."   (*Geor*.IV.464-66)

Here is where time slows down, and ceases to have an effect on the grieving Orpheus.

The repetition of *te*, both on its own and within the participles of line 466, is highly musical;

some scholars have even read these lines as Virgil's attempt to recreate the text of Orpheus' song

on the page[17]. This repetition also emphasizes the endless nature of Orpheus' grief; no matter

what he sings, he inevitably returns to *te*. His singing therefore mirrors the endless cycles of the

natural world, a detail which Putnam elucidates: "His singing is coterminous with but not

enslaved to nature's daily round. Against the background of nature's cyclic lack of alteration runs

the eternity of Orpheus' mourning, unceasing and persistently directed to the lost "you".[18] Line

466 in particular (*te veniente die, te decedente canebat*) is striking for how it encapsulates a vast

expanse of time within the space of only a few words, while still leaving the length of time itself

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[16] The Hebrus, along with other geographical features around Scythia and Thrace, are described as weeping over Eurydice: *flerunt Rhodopeiae arces altaque Pangaea et Rhesi mavortia tellus atque Getae atque Hebrus et Actias Orithyia.*
[17] Putnam 1979: 294: "Virgil nearly recreates Orpheus singing, an event as magical as Orpheus' impending attempt to restore his wife, and the sound of the poetry, smoothly assonantal and alliterative, attracts the reader to participate in the event as it would soon mesmerize the underworld."
[18] Putnam 1979: 294

undefined. Orpheus' pain is so infinite and so acute that Virgil must place it beyond the

boundaries of time in order to express it.

Following Orpheus' endless mourning, time suddenly rushes forward, and by the next

line he has already "passed through the jaws of Taenarum, the high gates of Dis and the grove

dark with black terror" (*Taenarias...ingressus*, IV.467-69). As he moves through the Underworld,

his song stirs up its inhabitants and changes their states of being. Unlike in Ovid's version of the

Orpheus and Eurydice story in the *Metamorphoses*[19], Virgil does not include the text of Orpheus'

song. However, the song's effects are still abundantly clear. At the sound of his voice, "the thin

shadows, stirred by his song from the deepest places of Erebus, the images of those lying in

darkness[20]" awaken and listen, enraptured. Virgil walks the reader through the Underworld and

past its many inhabitants, concluding with the king and queen, the Eumenides, Cerberus, and the

tortured Ixion, who are "astounded" (*stupuere*) by the song:

> *Quin ipsae stupuere domus atque intima Leti*
> *tartara caeruleosque implexae crinibus angues*
> *Eumenides, tenuitque inhians tria Cerberus ora*
> *atque Ixionii vento rota constitit orbis.*
>
> Even the very house of Death and the deepest pits of hell
> were astounded, and the Furies with dark snakes entwined
> in their hair, and three-mouthed Cerberus gaped
> and the turning wheel of Ixion stood still in the wind.   (*Geor*.IV.481-84)

Thus, whereas Orpheus inspires movement in the previously motionless phantoms, he

causes the parts of the Underworld already in motion to stand still. Putnam notes how Orpheus'

presence in the underworld introduces the variable of time into an otherwise timeless

environment: "The human, regularly enslaved to time's alterations, becomes the steadying

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[19] Ovid, *M*.X.17-39
[20] *Geor*.IV.471-72

symbol of temporality observed, while the dead, usually fixed in a motionless world where time means nothing, are moved to change positions by the appearances of earthly time[21]". Whereas Orpheus' mourning defied temporal boundaries while still in the realm of the living, when the eternity of the Underworld is confronted with the newness of his song, his environment has no choice but to bend and shift around him.

The cyclical nature of Orpheus' mourning is further underscored by the similarities between this scene and Virgil's introduction of Aristaeus at the beginning of the *Aristaeia*. Orpheus' katabasis into the underworld mirrors Aristaeus' descent underwater to the realm of his mother Cyrene. In both passages, Virgil gives miniature catalogues of the inhabitants as the hero descends. In addition, he includes a more explicit reference to the previous katabasis with *stupuere* in line 481, where the inhabitants of the Underworld are struck with wonder at Orpheus' song, echoing *obstipuere* in line 351, where Cyrene and the nymphs are stunned by Aristaeus' cries. This is the first of many "loops" that Virgil creates around Orpheus, who increasingly becomes an entity which Virgil uses to manipulate the flow of time around him. In such moments of circularity, previous scholars' readings on the *Georgics'* preoccupation with the cycles of nature is especially evident. Just as every year the farmer tends his crops and cares for his animals, forever executing and re-executing the same processes, the characters of the *Aristaeia* perform and re-perform the same patterns of events. In recycling the same language at different points in the text, Virgil is rebirthing the same moments in different bodies, just as he did by reanimating the *Odyssey* in constructing Proteus' body.

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[21] Putnam 1979: 297

When Orpheus breaks the conditions of Pluto's deal and turns back to look at Eurydice, she laments aloud to him that the Fates command her to return. She concludes her speech exclaiming:

> *Iamque vale: feror ingenti circumdata nocte*
> *invalidasque tibi tendens, heu non tua, palmas!*

> Now farewell: I am borne surrounded by vast night
> stretching out these useless hands, alas, no longer yours!   (*Geor*.IV.497-8)

She then begins to dissolve into smoke, and Orpheus reaches for her, "grasping in vain at the shadows" (*prensantem nequiquam umbras*, 501), mirroring her movement and establishing a physical parallel between them. This is likely a reference to Homer's rendition of Patroclus' death in the *Iliad*, in which Achilles embraces Patroclus' fleeing ghost, which vanishes into smoke[22]. The allusion adds another layer of narrative to this moment, and it would likely underscore the feelings of anguish and loss that Virgil is evoking. He also mirrors Eurydice's dissolving physicality with a gradual shift from active to passive, and by finally erasing her body entirely. At first, she appears grammatically in her speech as *me* (494). She then uses the passive verb *feror* (497), which conveys her increasing helplessness and surrendered bodily autonomy as she is dragged back into the darkness. Finally, she has disappeared entirely, and Orpheus is left to grasp at the shadows into which she has been transformed. Putnam notes how the transformation into smoke especially underscores Eurydice's dwindling physicality : "In this context the comparison of Eurydice to smoke disappearing into thin air, a comparison that has a literary pedigree extending from Homer to Lucretius, is particularly effective. The image of smoke makes a smooth transition from absence of touch to absence of sight. Smoke… is more the result

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[22] ὣς ἄρα φωνήσας ὠρέξατο χερσὶ φίλῃσιν οὐδ᾽ ἔλαβε: ψυχὴ δὲ κατὰ χθονὸς ἠΰτε καπνὸς ᾤχετο τετριγυῖα (Iliad 23.99-101)

of body than body itself that has been transformed and nearly, but not wholly, eliminated. Thus Eurydice succumbs to death before our eyes, enduring the change from corporeal to incorporeal, from body to shade, from light to dark[23]".

Orpheus is then compared to a nightingale, or *philomela*, as he wanders grieving his lost wife. Virgil's word choice connects Orpheus' grief and subsequent singing to the story of Procne and Philomela, who, appearing in various traditions, also represent loss, transformation, and song. Philomela and her sister Procne are transformed into birds after Philomela is raped by Tereus, her brother-in-law. Their story later appears in Book VI of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Although Orpheus is compared to the bird itself, and not to Philomela the woman[24], Virgil's inclusion of the nightingale nevertheless adds a further dimension of transformation by means of literary innuendo to Orpheus' mourning song.

The lines following Eurydice's death complete another cycle, since Orpheus is once again left *solus* and wandering the wilderness. He has thus reinhabited his physical and textual state of lines 464-66, prior to his journey to the Underworld:

> *Solus Hyperboreas glacies Tanaimque nivalem*
> *arvaque Riphaeis numquam viduata pruinis*
> *lustrabat raptam Eurydicen atque inrita Ditis*
> *dona querens*
>
> "Alone, he wandered the Hyperborean glaciers and snowy Tanais
> and the fields never deprived of Riphaean frost,
> wailing over his taken Eurydice and the useless
> gifts of Dis"   (*Geor*.IV.517-20)

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[23] Putnam 1979: 306

[24] Putnam considers this an important distinction to make, and one which adds another possible layer of transformation to his characterization: "Because we see him now as *philomela* and not Philomela, Orpheus suffers a metamorphosis parallel to that of the Attic princess who, in a legend also deeply concerned with violence resulting from sexuality, became a bird… He is not a changed Philomela sorrowing for her lost Itylus, but any nightingale in a georgic setting, mourning her ravaged brood" (Putnam 1979: 310).

Orpheus' mourning once again compresses the flow of time. His journey, which spans locations both real and mythical, is divorced from the flow of time, as Virgil has condensed it into the space of a few lines, reminding the reader of the timelessness of his previous grief. He has ended exactly where he started, and the biggest cycle has completed itself.

Orpheus' fully realized transformation occurs at the moment of his death, when he is brutally dismembered by the Cicones, a tribe of Bacchic maenads who tear him apart when he interrupts their rites (yet another probable literary reference to Pentheus' dismemberment in Euripides' *Bacchae*). Orpheus, who at this point has reached the literal ends of the earth, and could not possibly be further from where he left Eurydice, now in death experiences a linguistic reunion with his beloved, as Virgil reechoes the language of her disappearance in describing how his severed head bobs along singing.

> *… spretae Ciconum quo munere matres*
> *inter sacra deum nocturnique orgia Bacchi*
> *discerptum latos iuvenem sparsere per agros.*
> *Tum quoque marmorea caput a cervice revulsum*
> *gurgite cum medio portans Oeagrius Hebrus*
> *volveret, Eurydicen vox ipsa et frigida lingua*
> *ah miseram Eurydicen! anima fugiente vocabat:*
> *Eurydicen toto referebant flumine ripae.*
>
> "...until the Ciconian mothers, despising such devotion
> in the middle of their rites and nocturnal mysteries of the god Bacchus
> scattered the mangled youth across the wide fields.
> Even when the Oeagrian Hebrus, carrying his head
> torn from its marble neck, rolled it midcurrent,
> his own voice and his frigid tongue cried out Eurydice,
> ah, poor Eurydice! He called out even with his soul departing:
> the banks echoed 'Eurydice' down the length of the river."   (*Geor*.IV.520-27)

Orpheus' dismemberment, although a much different death than that of Eurydice, strongly recalls her transformation into smoke. Both lovers undergo a watery death, and their

bodies (or body parts) are whisked along by a stronger force. The coldness of Eurydice's body (*iam frigida*, 506) has now been transferred to Orpheus' tongue (*frigida lingua*, 525), Orpheus' soul is fleeing (*anima fugiente*, 526) just as Eurydice's shadow did (*fugit diversa*, 500), and the banks of the river on which Orpheus' head floats "bring back" or echo Eurydice's name (*toto referebant flumine*, 527) as Eurydice herself was brought back by the call of the Fates (*feror ingenti circumdata nocte*, 497). Orpheus, who up to this point in the narrative has not spoken any words outside of the scope of his singing, now cries out in death just as his spouse did.[25] The bodily parallels established between them have come full circle to bring them back to each other. The circularity of their love story echoes the cycle of life and death which Virgil traces over and over again throughout the *Georgics*.

Almost as soon as Proteus finishes his story, he disappears:

Haec Proteus, et se iactu dedit aequor in altum,
quaque dedit, spumantem undam sub vertice torsit.

"Thus spoke Proteus, and with a leap threw himself into the deep water,
and where he dove, turned the wave into foam beneath the vortex."   (*Geor*.IV.528-29)

The switch is made especially abrupt by the fact that it was Orpheus' voice crying out just one line before. Although Virgil gives us little insight into what Proteus may look like, apart from the few details previously mentioned, Proteus' body is markedly absent from this final couplet. We can glimpse only his wake as he dives back into the water. With the intense physicality and multiple narrative voices of the Orpheus and Eurydice saga, it is easy to forget that it has been Proteus telling this story all along. This final reference to him is therefore a jolt

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[25] This is my own original reading (as far as I can tell).

back into the realm of the *Aristaeia*, which now picks back up with our protagonist and his mother, who, like before, advises him on how best to solve the problem at hand.

The Sacrifice: Closing the Cycle

Once Proteus finishes his story and disappears into the water, Aristaeus' mother Cyrene appears and counsels her son to make sacrifices to Orpheus, Eurydice and the Nymphs[26] who have cursed his bees. Just as before, Cyrene's advice is given and then repeated later on when Aristaeus carries it out. She advises him on the nature and the timing of his sacrifice: four bulls on four altars for the Nymphs, a black ewe and an offering of Lethean poppies for Orpheus, and a calf for Eurydice. Although the sacrifice of the bull is made to the Nymphs, the circumstances of the killing and the subsequent miraculous reappearance of the bees serve as a continuation of the cycles of dismemberment and rebirth that has already been seen in Orpheus' death:

> *Hic vero subitum ac dictu mirabile monstrum*
> *adspiciunt, liquefacta boum per viscera toto*
> *stridere apes utero et ruptis effervere costis,*
> *immensasque trahi nubes, iamque arbore summa*
> *confluere et lentis uvam demittere ramis.*
>
> Here they behold a strange thing, sudden and truly incredible
> to tell, the bees, buzzing through the whole stomach
> and the liquified innards, swarm forth from the broken ribs
> trailing in a vast cloud and now flow together to the treetop
> and hang like grapes from the pliant branches.   (*Geor*.IV.554-58)

A miraculous number of transformations take place within the space of these few lines. Firstly, in order for the resurrection to take place, the bull's body must become unrecognizable, as his flesh is "liquified" (*liquefacta*, 555). This initial transformation makes way for the

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[26] A sweet detail, and one which feels particularly poignant within the context of this project, is that the Nymphs who cursed Aristaeus were *cum quibus illa choros lucis agitabat in altis*; "those with whom she used to strike up dances in the deep groves." *Geor*.IV.533

appearance of the bees, who are first heard before they are seen (*stridere*, 556). They burst out of the bull's flesh "in a great cloud" (*immensasque nubes*, 557), then begin to "flow together" (*confluere*, a word which evokes the rushing of a body of water) and finally hang from the branches "like grapes" (*lentis...ramis*, 558). This passage subtly echoes Proteus' rapid transformations from earlier in Book IV. The bees slip through various shapes, sizes, and states of matter as they transition from cloud to liquid to grapes in Virgil's description. Much like the seer himself, whose own body remains difficult to pin down throughout the *Georgics*, the natural physical state of the bees eludes us as well, since Virgil conceals them behind multiple layers of metaphor. Besides reanimating a previous series of transformations, the resurrection of the bees also continues the cycle of destruction and rebirth that Orpheus' decapitation and subsequent song began. Both the bodies of the bees and that of Orpheus, although transformed, retain sound after their "deaths"; Orpheus' severed head continues to sing, and the slain bull "hums" before the bees burst out of him. Just as Orpheus' song emerged from out of his mangled corpse, the bull must be utterly destroyed in order for the bees to be born again. This final nod to Orpheus, whose death was so brutal, offers some sense of closure to his story. From out of death and destruction, new life has been born again.

So much is contained within the *Aristaeia* it can feel difficult to keep up. However, although the narrative is complex and multilayered, there are many textual commonalities between moments that bring a sense of familiarity to certain points in the story. Virgil's use of allusion, both within and without the world of Book IV, uncovers deep-running streams of connectivity between places and characters. Many of the bodies that inhabit the *Aristaeia* have the same textual makeup, sharing a physical body by sharing a "body" of text. Virgil concludes

his narrative with a moment of miraculous rebirth, which, if one examines the rest of the story while paying mind to how frequently he reuses language, no longer seems so miraculous. The entirety of his poem is an exercise in rebirth, both literal and textual. Thus, even though the *Aristaeia* is filled with so much death, suffering, and loss, nothing in Virgil's story is ever truly lost. Virgil's language lives, again and again, in the bodies with which he weaves the fabric of his tale.

Sweet Music & Clear Voices
Lyric Figures in Horace's *Odes*

Introduction - From Virgil to Horace

Horace's *Odes* extend our exploration of moving and transforming bodies into the realm of lyric poetry. Horace writes within a different genre than Virgil, and one which allows him to express ideas through moving bodies in completely different ways, outside of the bounds of long-form narrative. Like Virgil, he relies on creating a close relationship between bodies and texts in giving life to his *Odes*, while also fleshing out a relationship between authorship and performativity that is different from that of the *Georgics*. Lyric, crucially, is a genre with musical and performative roots. Although it is a matter of debate whether the *Odes* themselves were performed to music[27], lyric poetry is inherently imbued with a musical quality. Reading the *Odes* with a mind to their performative roots, especially in poems which depict performers, adds an entirely new dimension to our reading of moving and performing bodies, while at the same time priming us to understand them as metatextual symbols for the poetry itself.

In the *Georgics*, Virgil linked bodies together by means of recycling language, while shying away from overt physical descriptions of many of his characters. By contrast, Horace's *Odes* are filled with moments of ekphrasis. Horace will often zoom in on the body he is describing, deconstructing and describing it piece by piece, often in minute detail. In "Narrate and Describe: The Problem of Ekphrasis", D. P. Fowler explains the issues that arise when authors attempt to insert ekphrasis into narratives: "Set-piece description is regularly seen by

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[27] See Luigi Rossi's chapter "Horace, a Greek Lyrist without Music" in the Oxford Readings in Classical Studies volume, *Horace: Odes and Epodes*, edited by Michèle Lowrie. Rossi argues that Horace lacked both the institutions and the metrical structure to support performance of his work (Rossi 2009).

narratologists as the paradigm example of narrative pause, in the semi-technical sense of a passage at the level of narration to which nothing corresponds at the level of story. The plot does not advance, but something is described[28]." However, Horace entirely circumvents the potential problem of stasis that Fowler describes by choosing to use ekphrasis on bodies, or body parts, which are in motion. Thus his ekphrastic descriptions are never static, but rather detailed portraits of dynamic entities, constantly shifting and progressing along with the bodies they depict.

Horace is interested in movement, and the changing states that accompany it, across the entirety of the *Odes*. Many of his odes which deal with conquest, religious ceremony, or the changing of the seasons, for example, demonstrate strong physicality and a sense of continuous momentum. However, there is a specific subset of the *Odes* that deal in particular with human bodies, and how they move and change. This chapter will trace, across a selection of these odes, how Horace uses bodily objectification and transformation as a metaphor for the generation and circulation of his poetry. We will first examine 2.12, in which Horace uses a recusatio in order to express his desire both for the woman Licymnia, and the poetry she represents. We will next move to 2.20, a well-known ode in which Horace imagines himself transforming into a swan as a metaphor for his poetic legacy postmortem. Finally, we will close with 4.1, written years after Books I-III, in which an aging Horace reckons with his changing body, and the effects of love upon it.

These three odes play with moving bodies in one or more of the following ways.

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[28] Fowler 1991: 25-26

Firstly, Horace tends to use his odes as a means of self-reflection, often inserting his persona into

his texts, heightening and exaggerating his own bodily awareness[29]. The transformations that

appear in the *Odes* therefore bring a metatextual aspect of self-discovery and experimentation to

Horace's work. Secondly, by means of his self-reflection, Horace tends to use bodies as vehicles

by which he expresses his latent desires, whether sexual, which are aimed towards others, or

aspirational, which are more introspective regards to his work and legacy. Finally, although the

brevity and self-contained nature of lyric poems do not trace continuous narratives across

Horace's work in the way that narrative epic does, the fact that each poem can stand alone allows

the reader to identify poems more closely with the bodies that appear within them. Unlike the

sprawling, multilayered and densely populated world of the Georgics, Horace's *Odes*, and the

bodies therein, have defined edges, beginning and ending with the poem in which they are

contained. The *Odes* thus allow us a glimpse at a new kind of literary world concerned with and

dependent upon bodies in order to tell its story, one in which the individual body can be strongly

identified with the text within which it appears. This more easily allows us to read the characters

that appear in Horace's *Odes* as physical representations of their own source material.

*Ode*s 2.12: Poetic Desire

Desire is the momentum of much of Horace's *Odes*, acting as a transformative force

which pushes the physical boundaries of the bodies onto which it extends. In many of Horace's

odes, Horace's poetic aspirations and sexual feelings are conflated or wrapped up into one. His

sexual desire in particular often drives him to delve into metaphor; bodies become increasingly

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[29] Some examples of odes into which Horace inserts his own poetic persona include 2.13, 3.25, 2.20, and 4.1, the latter two of which will be discussed in depth later on in this chapter.

complex under the influence of his desire, shifting to represent the internal struggle of the ode in which they appear. Addressed to Horace's patron Maecenas, 2.12 begins as a recusatio, with Horace explaining how he wishes to write neither about war, nor the deeds of heroes, nor political machinations. Making the excuse that Lyric poetry is a "soft" genre (*mollibus*, line 3), and therefore ill-suited to bloody conflicts or military victories, Horace proposes that he instead write about his beloved Licymnia, the woman to whom he turns as his preferred subject matter. He then explains that the Muse wills him to write about Licymnia's physical beauty, and his subsequent description of her participation in a choral dance fills out her image for the reader in intimate detail. The final two stanzas show Licymnia in a much more sensual setting; Horace again addresses Maecenas, and the ode closes with his imagining Licymnia in the heat of passion with a lover. The many elements at play in 2.12 (the recusatio, the erotic subject matter, the address to Maecenas) make for a poem which is difficult to understand all together. Indeed, the multifaceted nature of 2.12, and particularly the implications of Horace's recusatio, has troubled some scholars for a number of reasons. Eduard Fraenkel criticizes 2.12 for being "artificial and overladen", and argues that "This unexpected climax of a poem that begins as a recusatio will doubtless have pleased Maecenas, but one would hesitate to say that the fusion of heterogeneous elements has produced here, as it does elsewhere in Horace's work, a harmonious whole[30]." One of the biggest scholarly questions of 2.12 is the matter of Licymnia herself, who is heavily implied to be his patron Maecenas' wife Terentia. This makes Horace's overt sexualization of his *domina*, as he refers to her, problematic and difficult to rationalize. Read with this information in mind, the personal and sexual politics of the ode become even more complicated.

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[30] Fraenkel 1966

However, Fraenkel's reading discounts how Horace's reuse of language throughout the ode serves to unite its two seemingly disparate halves. Since Horace's *recusatio* expresses a pivot not only towards a preferred genre of poetry, but also towards a person of sexual interest to the author, Licymnia thus represents Horace's romantic and poetic desires wrapped up into a single body. She embodies not only the text of this poem, but also Horace's larger poetic goals (even her name, which translates to "sweet singing" in Greek[31], hints at her close relationship to the text in which she appears). This is typical of the odes examined within this chapter; Horace will often use bodies - his own, and those of others, as malleable vehicles for the expression of his internal dialogue. We must therefore read Horatian bodies as tools by which the poet animates and expresses feelings and ideas, rather than literal corporeal beings.

Lauren Curtis' analysis of 2.12 in her book *Imagining the Chorus in Augustan Poetry* is particularly helpful in drawing out the nuances of Licymnia as a metapoetic figure. Curtis notes how the language of the initial recusatio, which has to do with the subject matter about which Horace is refusing to write, reappears at the close of the poem in Horace's description of Licymnia's passionate encounter with her lover. Ode 2.12, in recycling and repurposing language from one body to another, thus displays the same kind of textual reanimation that we saw throughout the *Georgics*. Once we notice how Horace establishes and later reuses the fabric of his poem, we can begin to understand how Licymnia should be read as a metapoetic symbol for Horace's poetry itself. In *Ode* 2.12, Horace manipulates Licymnia's bodily boundaries in order to express, on a surface level, his sexual desire, and on a deeper, metatextual level, his desires with regards to his poetry.

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[31] γλυκύς + ὑμνεῖν. Other scholars have also suggested λιγύς ("clear") as the stem rather than γλυκύς, which would connect her to Ligurinus, Horace's lover in 4.1.

Let us start by examining the language of the opening recusatio, which will resurface

later in reference to Licymnia. Horace begins:

> *Nolis longa ferae bella Numantiae*
> *nec durum Hannibalem nec Siculum mare*
> *Poeno purpureum sanguine mollibus*
> *aptari citharae modis*
>
> *nec saevos Lapithas et nimium mero*
> *Hylaeum domitosque Herculea manu*
> *Telluris iuvenes, unde periculum*
> *fulgens contremuit domus*
>
> *Saturni veteris tuque pedestribus*
> *dices historiis proelia Caesaris,*
> *Maecenas, melius ductaque per vias*
> *regum colla minacium.*
>
> "You would not wish for the long wars of fierce Numantia,
> nor cruel Hannibal nor the Sicilian sea
> red with Punic blood to be set to the
> soft strains of the lyre,
>
> nor the savage Lapiths and Hylaeus, too drunk,
> and the sons of Tellus, conquered by
> Hercules' hand, when the shining house of
> old Saturn trembled at the danger,
>
> and you, Maecenas, will tell of the battles
> of Caesar in prose, better than I,
> and the necks of menacing
> kings led through the streets."   (*Odes*.II.12.1-12)

The many images of these opening stanzas follow one another in quick succession. At

first glance, the many references of Horace's recusatio may seem random and overly crowded.

However, this constellation of images works together to provide a broad survey of literature

which Horace does not wish to write, from historical prose to epic poetry. The first stanza

references people and places from across Roman history: Numantia, a Celtiberian town which

revolted against Roman rule from 199 to 133 B.C.E.[32], "cruel" Hannibal, the Carthaginian general who famously led an assault on the Romans during the Second Punic War, and "the Sicilian sea red with Punic blood" (*Siculum… sanguine*, 2-3), which most likely refers to two major naval battles of the First Punic War[33]. Horace argues that these events are ill-suited to the "soft strains of the lyre". *Mollibus*, which refers to the *modis* of lyric poetry ("strains"; or, alternately: measures, rhythm, or stanzas), contrasts with *durum* in the previous line to underscore the dissonance between the events described in this stanza, and the lyric genre itself.

The references to epic poetry begin in the second stanza, and bleed into the third. Horace next refers to the Lapiths, or centaurs, whose drunken romps frequently appear in mythology, and as a decorative motif in Greek architecture[34]. He then mentions the *Telluris iuvenes*, the race of Giants who waged war against the gods and were subdued by Hercules. Garrison notes how the image of the Giants' struggle, and ultimate loss, often cropped up in political contexts: "their defeat, a familiar metaphor of political poetry, was also a traditionally unsuitable theme for light poetry." In the final stanza of the recusatio, Horace again turns to history as his subject matter, and explicitly references prose as a genre (*pedestribus*, 9). He also names his addressee, Maecenas, saying that he would be able to praise Caesar's victories better than Horace himself. In this way, Horace cycles through a wide variety of genres and themes in his recusatio. While many of the images and events in the recusatio carry a sense of physicality or motion, they happen on a very broad scale. However, this physicality will intensify, and also localize, as Horace introduces Licymnia and transfers the language of the recusatio onto her body. His

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[32] Garrison 1998: 276

[33] Garrison 1998: 276. The two battles are likely that of Mylae (260 B.C.E.) and the Aegatian Islands (242 B.C.E.).

[34] Garrison 1998: 276. "Centaurs invited to the wedding of Pirithous and Hippodamia became drunk and attempted to make off with the bride. The ensuing battle was immortalized on the metopes of the Parthenon and the western pediment of the temple of Zeus at Olympia."

portrait of Licymnia, from the very moment she appears in the text, is rife with physical

specificity which sharply contrasts with the faceless, more generalized momentum of the

previous stanzas:

> *me dulcis dominae Musa Licymniae*
> *cantus, me voluit dicere lucidum*
> *fulgentis oculos et bene mutuis*
> *fidum pectus amoribus;*
>
> *quam nec ferre pedem dedecuit choris*
> *nec certare ioco nec dare bracchia*
> *ludentem nitidis virginibus sacro*
> *Dianae celebris die.*
>
> "The Muse wishes me to tell of my lady
> Licymnia's sweet singing, the brightness of
> her flashing eyes and her faithful heart given
> in right mutual love,
>
> for whom it was becoming to lend her foot to the dance
> and compete in games and link arms
> frolicking with shining maidens on the festive
> day of celebrated Diana." (*Odes*.II.12.9-16)

Horace begins by admiring her more abstract/non-physical qualities: her voice, the

brightness of her eyes, and her loyalty (*me...amoribus*, 2.12.13-16). He then describes her

participation in a choral dance (*quam...die*, 16-20), lingering on her *pede* and *bracchia* as she is

joined with the other maidens on the festive day of Diana. This moment of choral dance is

important, as it marks Licymnia as an active participant within the context of the poem, rather

than a purely passive object. In addition to being a dancer, she is also implied to be singing, as

seen in line 2 (*cantus*). This reference to music also underscores how Horace has transitioned

from the genres of literature mentioned in his recusatio (for example, historical prose and epic

poetry) into the realm of lyric poetry.

In the final stanza, Horace again pivots to address Maecenas, and provides a much more intimate depiction of Licymnia, describing how she bends her neck to receive the kisses of her lover (*cum… cervicem*, 25-26), teasing him, in a sexually tinged game that echoes the *iocus* of the previous stanza:

> *num tu quae tenuit dives Achaemenes*
> *aut pinguis Phrygiae Mygdonias opes*
> *permutare velis crine Licymniae*
> *plenas aut Arabum domos,*
>
> *cum flagrantia detorquet ad oscula*
> *cervicem aut facili saevitia negat*
> *quae poscente magis gaudeat eripi,*
> *interdum rapere occupet?*
>
> "Would you want to exchange one of
> Licymnia's hairs for the riches of Achaemenes,
> or the Mygdonian wealth of fertile Phrygia,
> or the laden houses of the Arabs,
>
> when she turns her neck towards burning
> kisses, or denies them with easy cruelty,
> more than she who begs delights in having them stolen,
> and sometimes conquers by taking?"   (*Odes*.II.12.21-28)

Curtis makes a fascinating point regarding the echoing of the language of the initial recusatio at the close of the poem: "The savage Lapiths (*saevos, 5*) become Licymnia's pretended sexual savagery (*saevitia, 26*), the flashing abode of Saturn (*fulgens, 8*) is transformed into Licymnia's flashing eyes (*fulgentis, 15*), and the necks of kings led in Octavian's triumphs (*colla, 12*), become Licymnia's neck as it bends towards her lover (*cervicem, 26*)[35]." Furthermore, as Daniel Garrison notes in his commentary on the *Odes*, *rapere occupet*, in line 28, also picks up on the imagery of conquest found in the recusatio: "*rapere occupet* takes us

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[35] Curtis 2017: 119

back to the military images with which the poem began: Licymnia seizes the initiative to plunder kisses[36]." This kind of reanimation of language across different bodies recalls Virgil's cyclical patterns of words and events in the *Georgics*; Eurydice's *frigida* body echoes Orpheus' *frigida* tongue, both souls "flee" their bodies and are "carried" off by the current[37]. In a similar way to how this vocabulary of Eurydice's death reappears when Orpheus meets his end, Horace has transposed his poem's earlier vocabulary of epic and historical prose onto Licymnia's eroticized body.

However, whereas in the Georgics, Virgil tends to recycle language between moments that either share a theme, or even recreate the same series of events entirely (for example, between two death scenes, or two transformation scenes, or two *katabasis* scenes), Horace's version of textual reanimation is less easily explained. The erotic circumstances in which the vocabulary of the recusatio reemerges are very different from the more regal and militaristic context in which they first appear in the poem. Scholars such as Fraenkel have highlighted this discrepancy in criticizing the disjointed feeling of the poem, without taking into consideration how Horace's use and re-use of language ties the poem together into a latent expression of Horace's poetic desires. Licymnia's body is thus, at least in part, constructed out of a whole wealth of poetry which extends even beyond the boundaries of the Lyric genre. In alluding to prose, epic, and praise poetry, all genres which, in Horace's own words, are unfit for Lyric, Horace paints Licymnia as an entity who transcends the confines of the poetic framework she has been assigned.

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[36] Garrison 1998: 277

[37] *fugit diversa* (IV.500) vs. *anima fugiente* (IV.526); *referebant* (IV.497) vs. *feror* (IV.527)

There are a few additional aspects of 2.12 that merit discussion for the way they complicate and deepen our understanding of moving bodies in poetry. First, choral dance emerges in the *Odes* as a frequent motif. This inclusion introduces an element of performance into our study of Augustan bodies, and also gives a first concrete look, in this project, at the interaction between dance and literature as mutually dependent artistic mediums. Furthermore, the *me/tu* dynamic between Horace and Maecenas which governs *Ode* 2.12, and surrounds Licymnia, creates a performer/spectator relationship which plays off of Licymnia's own role as a performer. Curtis notes: "As the ode progresses, Horace's presentation of Licymnia's beauty leads (the poet hopes), to the addressee's increased recognition of her attractions… for Horace, Licymnia is a currency between the two men, instrumental in constructing a relationship between them that is based on viewing her body and its performances[38]." Thus, Licymnia is rendered as visible not only to the reader of 2.12, and to Horace himself, but also to Maecenas, its addressee. Embedded in the sexual metaphor of the sharing of her body is a reminder that Licymnia exists as a text which can be circulated[39].

Even within the bounds of Horace's text, her presence introduces a dimension of witnessed physicality which is missing from the *Georgics*. Although Proteus, Orpheus and Eurydice may exhibit the same kind of strong physicality and textual patterning in their respective text, Licymnia, crucially, is being watched, and is actively performing a physical role for the pleasure of her audience. However, Licymnia's "performance" is layered. On the one hand, she is sexually performative, since she exists for the pleasure of the men watching and reading her body. However, at the same time, Licymnia is a literal performer by virtue of her

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[38] Curtis 2017: 118
[39] The circulation of his poetry will become a more explicit concern to Horace, and more explicit within his odes, in poems yet to be analyzed.

dancing and singing. She is therefore both a sex object and an artistic creator in her own right.

This dichotomy perfectly encapsulates the interwoven relationship between Horace's sexual

desire and the creation of his poetry, the idea upon which 2.12 is built.

Licymnia represents a number of paradoxes. As an active performer, she possesses her

own artistic agency separate from that of her author. However, the complexities of her body and

its performances are creations of Horace himself. Furthermore, even as she exists as an

expression of Horace's poetic aspirations, through Curtis' analysis of the textual reanimation of

this ode, she also echoes all the writing which Horace refuses to produce. This strengthens the

argument for Licymnia as a metapoetic symbol, since by making her a performer, Horace is

hinting at the performative undercurrents of lyric. Licymnia thus represents a fully fleshed-out

embodiment of Horace's ideal form of poetry, one who encapsulates every dimension of the lyric

genre.

Odes 2.20: A Corporeal Legacy

Ode 2.20, in which Horace muses on his death and posthumous renown by imagining his

transformation into a swan, blurs the line between body and text even further, although this time

within the context of the author's own body. The ode's overarching themes (death as

transformation, ekphrastic bodily description, the relationship between body and text) are

common threads both throughout his own work and in Virgil's *Georgics*. As has been established

in 2.12, Horace will often use bodies as metaphorical tools in describing his own poetic

aspirations and desires. In the case of 2.20, imagining his legacy causes Horace to take on a

brand new physical form. This transformation complicates his relationship to his text in a few

key ways, some of which will feel familiar after reading 2.12. Firstly, in the act of writing about his own body, he splits himself into Horace the author, and Horace the text object, paradoxically creating his written body and living in it at the same time. Naturally, in rendering himself as text, he enters a murky territory where he himself and his text essentially merge into one idea. However, even as the two become conflated with regards to how they interact with their spatial environment, they remain inherently distinct. A piece of text cannot manipulate its spatial environment the way a body can, nor can a body be absorbed by a consumer as though it were the written word. Horace's self-transformations thus uncover a complicated relationship between his written body and the text in which it appears, in which both take on characteristics of the other.

In Ode 2.20, Horace's language becomes progressively more centered on his body as he pictures his death and the "afterlife" of his poetry. 2.20 is the final poem of Book II, and represents a *sphragis*, in which Horace sums up his conception of himself and his preceding work. Uncharacteristically boastful, he again addresses Maecenas as he imagines the mortal and spatial transcendence of his posthumous fame. The bodily specificity of this poem, and Horace's attentiveness to the changes his body is undergoing, is unparalleled anywhere else in the *Odes*. At the opening of the poem, Horace begins contemplating his transformation through the metaphor of flight:

> *Non usitata nec tenui ferar*
> *penna biformis per liquidum aethera*
> *vates, neque in terris morabor*
> *longius invidiaque maior*
>
> *urbes relinquam. Non ego, pauperum*
> *sanguis parentum, non ego, quem vocas,*
> *dilecte Maecenas, obibo*
> *nec Stygia cohibebor unda.*

Upon no common, feeble feather will I rise,
a biform prophet, through the liquid air,
nor will I linger longer on the land;
beyond even envy, I will leave cities behind.

Not I, blood of poor parents,
Not I, dear Maecenas, whom you call for,
I will not meet death
nor be dragged under by the Stygian wave.   (*Odes*.II.20.1-8)

The word *biformis*, in the first stanza, captures a critical duality of this ode. Nisbet and

Hubbard argue, with reference to *biformis*, that "Horace sees a piquant contrast between the

'immortality' of his poetry and his mundane corporeal existence[40]". While their reading rightly

notes the fantastical and even surprising nature of his sudden transformation, especially given

Horace's "usual posture of detachment[41]", their phrasing doesn't quite convey the crucial aspect

of how he chooses to conceptualize his death in 2.20. The metaphor of Horace's immortality is in

fact highly corporeal. As Ismene Lada-Richards states in "*Mutata corpora*: Ovid's Changing

Forms and the Metamorphic Bodies of Pantomime Dancing" with regards to the *Metamorphoses*,

"Ovid's metamorphic characters shape or sculpt themselves into existence much in the manner of

performers in the flesh, whose creative instrument and artwork is located in the living materiality

of their physical body[42]". Horace cultivates a similar relationship between his art and the bodily

medium from which it extends by inserting his own body into his work. Echoing Licymnia's

"kaleidoscopic" physicality in 2.12, his own written body is made hybrid by its transformations.

However, unlike the characters of the *Metamorphoses*, and unlike Licymnia, who for all her

physicality is fundamentally a written object, Horace actually embodies his own poetic material

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[40] Nisbet and Hubbard 1978: 338
[41] Garrison 1998: 289
[42] Lada-Richards 2013: 120

in his imagined transformations. Paradoxically, he represents both art and artist as he renders the

shifting contours of his body.

As Horace continues to transform, his language increases in physical specificity before

ultimately bursting into movement.

> *Iam iam resident cruribus asperae*
> *Pelles, et album mutor in alitem*
> *superne, nascunturque leves*
> *per digitos umerosque plumae.*

> "Now, rough skin already settles on my legs,
> and above I am changed into a white bird,
> and soft feathers burst
> through my fingers and shoulders."   (*Odes*.II.20.9-12)

Whereas his flight in the first stanza could be taken as metaphorical, and is not inherently

reliant on bodily transformation, it is impossible to mistake what is happening here: Horace has

suddenly become a swan. The transformation into a swan, according to most interpretations, is a

metaphor for his death and subsequent fame; Nisbet and Hubbard note that Horace probably

chose the swan for its mythic and cultural connotations, since "the bird was thought to sing

melodiously before its death; its splendour and its music connected it with Apollo, and its distant

northern flight with the felicity of the Hyperboreans[43]." Just as Horace lingers over Licymnia's

body in 2.12, he calls attention to various parts of his own body as it transforms. He gives special

weight to his legs, digits and shoulders (*cruribus*; *digitos*; *umeros*), the latter two of which are

highly expressive and communicative parts of the human body. This sequence once again

underscores his hybridity. First, there is a textural contrast between rough and soft (*asperae;*

leves). There is also a contrast of what theorists of movement have called "effort".[44] Here, it

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[43] Nisbet and Hubbard 1978: 333
[44] This term is taken from Rudolf Laban's theory of movement analysis. Laban was an influential choreographer and movement theorist of the early 20th century (Laban 1947).

involves a contrast in movement quality between "settling" (*residunt*) and "bursting forth" (*nascuntur*). Horace thus depicts his transforming body not as an homogenous entity, but as an uneven textural landscape. He therefore demonstrates himself to be *biformis* not only conceptually, but also physically. This close-up on Horace's body recalls the description of Licymnia in 2.12, where he calls attention to her feet and arms. However, whereas Horace compliments "the brightness of her flashing eyes", indicating he can "see", or at least imagine her whole body, in 2.20, he only details the transformation in the parts of his body that would be observable to him, i.e., from the shoulders down. He describes himself transforming almost as though he were watching it happen in real time. This indicates that Horace's metaphor is not an empty literary device, but rather an attempt to document the sensations of his own (imagined) experience. In 2.20, by essentially taking the objectifying gaze that he created in 2.12 and turning it onto himself, Horace further strengthens his connection as an author to the version of his body that appears on the page.

Furthermore, by foregrounding language of knowing in the latter half of the ode, Horace emphasizes the connection between his transfigured, hybrid body and the poetry for which he will be known postmortem. After his transformation into a swan is complete, he then begins to imagine all the peoples across the Roman Empire and beyond to which he will be known, from Colchians to Dacians to Spaniards:

> *Iam Daedaleo notior Icaro*
> *visam gementis litora Bosphori*
> *Syrtisque Gaetulas canorus*
> *ales Hyperboreosque campos.*
>
> *Me Colchus et qui dissimulat metum*
> *Marsae cohortis Dacus et ultimi*
> *noscent Geloni, me peritus*
> *discet Hiber Rhodanique potor.*

"Now, more famous than Daedalean Icarus,
as a swan I will visit the sighing shores of the Bosphorus
and the Moroccan quicksands,
singing over the fields of Hyperborea.

Colchians will know me, and Dacians, fearless
of Roman troops, and far-off Scythians will too;
the clever Spaniard will learn of me,
so will the drinker of the Rhone."   (*Odes*.II.20.13-20)

At first, these stanzas seem to be a continuation of his flight as a swan; he refers to

himself as a "tuneful bird" (*canorus ales*) in the first person as he traverses the lands. However, it

soon becomes clear that he is referring to the dispersal of his poetry, and not to any physical

version of himself. This is hinted at by his repeated use of words of cognition. He predicts he

will become *Daedaleo notior Icaro* (13); "more famous than Daedalean Icarus". *Notior*,

however, more literally means "more known". Similarly, in lines 17-20 he claims "the Colchian

will know (*noscent*) me...the skilled (*peritus*) Spaniard will become acquainted (*discet*) with

me." *Noscent*, *peritus* and *discet* are all forms of different verbs which can mean "to learn", all

ideas that apply more easily to a text than to a body. Horace pings back and forth between

various geographical landmarks, some real (Scythia, Spain, the Bosphorus), and some imagined

(Hyperborea, a snowy, fictional territory at the northernmost edge of the world). The spatial

references, and his journey through them, are an obvious metaphor for the circulation of his

work. However, the places he lists are so hyperbolically far-off from each other, and from Rome,

that his imagined journey would be wildly unrealistic, even for a poetically talented

swan-human. This adds a further layer of fantasy to 2.20. He thus begins to dissolve the new

body he has constructed for himself by expanding its boundaries, while simultaneously

confusing his corporeality.

The final stanza veers sharply back into reality, and Horace concludes with a few pragmatic requests regarding his funeral, presumably addressed to his reader:

> *Absint inani funere neniae*
> *luctusque turpes et querimoniae*
> *compesce clamorem ac sepulcri*
> *mitte supervacuos honores.*

> "Let there be no dirges, repulsive mourning
> or complaints at my empty funeral;
> keep from crying, and keep
> vapid honors off of my tomb."   (*Odes*.II.20.21-24)

In the final stanza we witness Horace completely shedding his "real" body, which would presumably be honored by the kind of funeral described above. At first glance, it seems to be a strange way to end a relatively whimsical and optimistic poem. However, throughout 2.20, Horace has been laying the groundwork for his own afterlife. With his body, as it is contained within his poetry, having been spread across the world, he will have achieved more in honors than a singular funeral could ever hope for. To him, a funeral would be truly *inanis* ("empty", but also "useless"), because he has already attained all the accolades it might bring him through this transformation into text. Taken in this light, the final stanza can be read as almost hopeful; in death he will have no need for sorrow, for he has soared above it by means of his craft.

Odes 4.1: Poetic Ghosts

In 4.1, we find Horace once again meditating on desire, lyric, and his own body, although this time, as a poet in the later stages of his career. Although Book IV of the *Odes* as a whole

represents a departure from Books I - III in a number of ways, Ode 4.1 serves as a perfect synthesis of the two poems analyzed thus far. In 4.1, Horace combines the recusatio and erotic gaze of 2.12 with 2.20's metamorphic self-examination. However, even as he draws upon the tropes of his previous poetry, he tends to invert them, and 4.1 therefore reads as a negative image of its poetic predecessors, both from within and without Horace's own corpus.

Putnam comments on the tonal shift that 4.1 represents from the earlier collection of *Odes*: "The fourth book's initial ode is a far more intimate, revelatory poem whose essence looks to self-definition not by contrast with others but by distinctions within the experience of the speaker himself[45]." This "experience" Putnam mentions leans heavily into bodily experience. Book IV was published circa 13 B.C.E., roughly ten years after the publication of Books I - III[46], and therefore in 4.1, Horace is reckoning with a body that has been transformed by age[47]. He makes no attempt to hide his aging, nor the bodily changes that accompany it. In fact, they are central to his argument for why Venus should leave him be, and his transformed body represents the starting point for the flight of fancy on which he suddenly embarks at the end of the ode. This personal, introspective gaze leads Horace to lean into examination of himself, and especially of the effects of love on his body. *Odes* 4.1 therefore represents the first poem in this project in which Horace turns an erotic gaze onto himself, and experiences the same kind of transformation we saw Licymnia undergo in 2.12.

On its own, 4.1 represents a return to love for Horace. Given its position in Horace's corpus, it also represents a return to lyric poetry, and the two are closely connected. The close

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[45] Putnam 1986: 35

[46] This is the timeline Richard Thomas and Michael C. J. Putnam suggest. Other scholars (Williams 1972: 44-47, after Syme 1958: 672) have set the publication of Book IV as late as 9 or 8 B.C.E., but this remains controversial.

[47] Horace would have been in his fifties around the time he published Book IV. He was not ancient, but also not a young man, and 4.1 clearly reflects a changed author.

relationship between erotic desire and the lyric genre will be familiar to readers of 2.12. To help him make his return, Horace draws heavily on two poems of Sappho, including, crucially, the first poem of Sappho's own body of work. Even the premise of 4.1, which begins with a plea to Venus, according to Putnam, is inspired by Sappho 1, in which she asks for Venus' help in wooing her lover. The opening of Sappho 1 reads: "Ornate-throned immortal Aphrodite, wile-weaving daughter of Zeus, I entreat you: do not overpower my heart, mistress, with ache and anguish, but come here, if ever in the past you heard my voice from afar and acquiesced and came, leaving your father's golden house, with chariot yoked…[48]" Putnam argues that this kind of direct address to a god in lyric is original to Sappho, and represents "an extraordinary leap from the origins of lyric in communal prayer directed to a transcendent divinity whose epiphany was occasioned for society at large, and in the imagination alone[49]." The rest of the poem sees Venus actually address the speaker in turn, offering her comfort and promising that her beloved "shall love even against her will[50]." However, in 4.1, Horace subverts this trope by in fact pleading with Venus, whom he characterizes as aggressively ruthless, to leave him alone, and to direct her attentions elsewhere:

> *Intermissa, Venus, diu*
> *rursus bella moves? parce, precor precor.*
> *non sum qualis eram bonae*
> *sub regno Cinarae. desine, dulcium*
>
> *mater saeva Cupidinum,*
> *circa lustra decem flectere mollibus*
> *iam durum imperiis: abi,*
> *quo blandae iuvenum te revocant preces.*
>
> "Venus, do you again stir up

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[48] ποικιλόθρον… ὑπασδεύξαισα (lines 1-9). Translated by Campbell 1982
[49] Putnam 1986: 39
[50] φιλήσει κωὖκ ἐθέλοισα (lines 23-24). Translated by Campbell 1982

wars long suspended? Spare me, I pray, I pray.
I am not as I was under the rule
of kind Cinara. Cease, cruel

mother of sweet desires,
after fifty years, from bending one
already hardened to your soft powers:
go, to where the gentle prayers of that youth call you."   (*Odes* IV.1.1-8)

In a drastically different depiction from the benevolent goddess in Sappho 1, Horace

characterizes Venus as *saeva* ("cruel"; "harsh"). Furthermore, in direct contrast to Sappho's plea

for the goddess to "come here" (ἀλλὰ τυίδ᾽ ἔλθ᾽, line 5), Horace explicitly and rather bluntly

asks her to leave (*abi… preces*, lines 7-8). Richard Thomas explains how *abi*, in line 7, a

frequent address in comedy, is "the opposite of a usual address to a god" and "somewhat brusque

as an address to a deity[51]". Thus, even though Horace clearly draws inspiration from Sappho in

crafting this opening, he subverts her example by turning his own address into a recusatio.

Horace connects his erotic and poetic renewals from the outset of 4.1, thereby

establishing the connection between his creation of lyric poetry and his embodied experiences.

The very first word of Book IV, *intermissa*, presumably alludes to the time that has elapsed since

he last took up lyric, although, as one continues to read, we learn that he is in fact referring to the

suspension of his romantic feelings, which Venus is now reawakening. Thomas notes the double

meaning which *intermissa* sets up in the first line: "the opening line of the book… entraps the

reader in a momentary ambiguity: 'sexual activity long discontinued (*intermissa Venus diu*); on

arriving at *bella* one adjusts[52]." We also see, in the second stanza, the same juxtaposition of

durum and *mollibus* which appeared in the recusatio of 2.12. However, in this instance it is

Horace who is "hardened", while Venus' unwanted powers are "soft". Appearing once again in

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[51] Thomas 2011: 90
[52] Thomas 2011: 87

this context, *mollibus* likely references the lyric genre to which Horace is now returning, as it did

in 2.12. As Putnam notes, Horace's lived experience, which he alludes to in these opening lines,

is also implicitly wrapped up in the poetic output which he has produced over the course of his

life: "To contemplate the effect of the passage of time on the amatory experience is to measure

oneself against lyric expression of that experience over a length of literary time, to contemplate

the speaker's human, and the poet's literary, past[53]." Thus the idea that Horace's return to love

not only coincides with his return to lyric, but in fact is synonymous with it, is established from

the outset.

    As a suitable alternative to himself, Horace offers up a young man named Paulus

Maximus as Venus' next potential victim. Horace envisions how the goddess might "burst into

the house of Paulus Maximus, borne on the wings of radiant swans"; this is yet another likely

reference to Sappho 1, in which Venus approaches the speaker in a sparrow-drawn chariot[54].

Horace describes the young man as "noble and handsome, and not silent on behalf of his

troubled clients, a boy of a hundred talents, he will carry the standard of your army far and wide"

(*nobilis… tuae*, lines 13-16). Line 16 continues the love-as-war metaphor which Horace began in

the first stanza with *intermissa bella*; now, Venus is on campaign, and Maximus is her general.

Moreover, in contrast with Horace, who is resistant and borderline belligerent in the face of the

goddess' powers, Maximus honors her with "a statue…at the Alban lake, under a citron roof"

(*Albanos…citrea*, lines 19-20). Putnam ascribes significance to this statue, and to its positioning

in the ode, noting that "her potential monumentalization, stabilized at the center of the poem and

of Maximus' life, is a visual counterpart to the abstractions that secure him so firmly to Roman

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[53] Putnam 1986: 41

[54] πύκνα δίννεντες πτέρ' ἀπ' ὠράνωἴθερος διὰ μέσσω, lines 11-12

greatness - *nobilitas* of character as well as ancestry, *decus* of spirit and of physique, eloquence

(*facundia*) placed at the disposal of his world, and an aesthetic appreciation that enhances its

beauty[55]." The statue of Venus thus acts as a physical manifestation of the abstract qualities

which Maximus embodies, symbolizing stability, piety, and Romanness, qualities which in turn

reflect back onto its devotee. Thus Horace establishes in Maximus, in opposition to himself, an

idealized Roman: rich, pious, handsome, and in the prime of his youth.

After the establishment of the statue, Horace goes on to describe a lavish celebration in

Venus' honor, replete with music and incense, and featuring a choral dance. As Putnam notes,

"as the poem changes orientation from the speaker's inner world to the *domus* of Paulus, we

enter a sphere where immediate external detail is paramount[56]". Horace describes the festivities

in depth: the "mingled songs" are accompanied by a lyre (*lyrae*), flutes (*Berecyntiae tibiae*), reed

pipes (*fistula*), and Venus is invited to "inhale copious incense" (*Illic… tura*, lines 21-22).

Horace also describes a chorus of boys and girls dancing "in the Salian manner" (*in morem

Salium*, line 28), (a reference to the Salii, Roman priests who performed a vigorous and

percussive three-step dance[57]), with *pede candido*, underscoring their beauty and status[58]. The

festivities come to an abrupt halt, however, when Horace interrupts with a new lament, beginning

a tricolon *abundans* in the following stanza:

> *me nec femina nec puer*
> *iam nec spes animi credula mutui*
> *nec certare iuvat mero*
> *nec vincire novis tempora floribus.*

> "Now, not a woman nor a boy
> nor the ridiculous hope of shared love

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[55] Putnam 1986: 39
[56] Putnam 1986: 36
[57] Thomas 2011: 98
[58] Garrison argues that the whiteness of the chorus' feet indicates they are "well-washed". (Garrison 1998: 343)

> nor competing for wine
> nor binding my temples with fresh flowers pleases me."   (*Odes*.IV.1.29-32)

The result is, to use Thomas' phrasing, an "anti-*convivium*[59]"; a firm rejection of pleasures of all sorts. Thomas also notes the many poetic intricacies contained within this single stanza; for one, the tricolon crescendo of the first two lines (framed by the anaphora of *nec*), the two subject infinitives of the latter half, and finally, the three subjects of *iuvat*. Thus, even as he paints himself in sharp contrast to Maximus, and to the festivities described in the previous stanza, Horace simultaneously flexes his poetic muscles to craft an extremely complex stanza excusing himself from the decadent life of a Venus worshipper. However, Horace contradicts himself immediately in the next stanza, which finally affords us a look at the cause of his romantic pessimism:

> *sed cur heu, Ligurine, cur*
> *manat rara meas lacrima per genas?*
> *cur facunda parum decoro*
> *inter verba cadit lingua silentio?*

> "But ah, why, Ligurinus, why
> does a stray tear linger on my cheeks?
> Why does my eloquent tongue
> fall between words into unbecoming silence?"   (*Odes*.IV.1.33-36)

Suddenly, the object of Horace's affections makes his entrance. Unlike the rich description of Licymnia which Horace offers in 2.12, we are given virtually no information about Ligurinus other than his name. He is completely disembodied within the context of the ode. However, Putnam ascribes great significance to the name Ligurinus, which, on its own, "identifies him as an Italian from Liguria, and perhaps also suggests a clear tenor voice, Gk. λιγυρός[60]." Putnam makes several fascinating points regarding the origins and possible

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[59] Thomas 2011: 98
[60] Garrison 1998: 343

metatextual implications of the name Ligurinus. In the *Aeneid*, one of the men who aids Aeneas

in battle is a Ligurian named Cupavo, son of Cycnus. Virgil explains his lineage in Book X[61]:

> *Non ego te, Ligurum ductor fortissime bello,*
> *transierim, Cinyre, et paucis comitate Cupavo,*
> *cuius olorinae surgunt de vertice pennae,*
> *crimen, Amor, vestrum formaeque insigne paternae.*
> *Namque ferunt luctu Cycnum Phaethontis amati,*
> *populeas inter frondes umbramque sororum*
> *dum canit et maestum Musa solatur amorem,*
> *canentem molli pluma duxisse senectam,*
> *linquentem terras et sidera voce sequentem.*

"Nor would I pass by you, Cinyras, bravest leader of the Ligurians in battle, and you, Cupavo, accompanied by your small troop, from whose crest swan feathers arise, a badge of your father's shape (the reproach, O Love, belongs to you). For they say that Cycnus, mourning for his beloved Phaethon, while singing and with poetry consoling the sadness of his love amid the shade of his sisters' poplar boughs, took to himself whitening age with soft feathers, abandoning the earth and following the stars with his cry[62]."

Cycnus' transformation into a swan, as Virgil describes it here, immediately calls to mind

Horace's metamorphosis in Ode 2.20. Putnam argues that, for this reason, Ligurinus represents

Horace himself as a younger man: "For the poet, however, this attractive, dulcet-toned, winged

creature is also the lure of the lyric past, the pull toward the voice and song of private desire that

once was, but can no longer be, his. Ligurinus is very much the speaker's former self[63]." While

Ligurinus certainly embodies the conflation of Horace's romantic and lyric past, it seems more

probable that he purely represents this marriage of life experience, rather than Horace's younger

self, which would make the erotic overtones of this poem more difficult to understand. I would

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[61] Although this is a different topic about which an entirely separate project could be written, it is important to note that this reference represents some of the very earliest literary engagement with the *Aeneid*, a text which had come out just a few years prior to the publishing of Book IV (circa 19 B. C. E.). This reminds us that the allusions in 4.1 span a wide swath of literature, from the (comparatively) very recent to the ancient. Horace's decision to allude to Virgil's seminal work within the context of his own self-examination and discovery perhaps points to the poet's increasing awareness of himself in Book IV as a Roman citizen and public figure, a sentiment which is apparent in the middle section of 4.1.

[62] *Aeneid* 10.185-93. Translated in Putnam 1986: 44

[63] Putnam 1986: 45

like to take Putnam's reading even further to suggest that Ligurinus can be read as a male, Italian

counterpart to Licymnia, whose names share similar etymologies[64], and who both function as

living justifications for the generation of Horace's poetry. Regardless of whether Horace is

referencing 2.12, the name Ligurinus, with its connections to Cycnus, primes the reader to recall

Horace's former lyric compositions in which he used transformation as a means of

self-examination, and the metatextual expression of his poetic desires, strategies which he

continues implementing in 4.1.

Even beyond the etymological context of his name, Ligurinus' inclusion in 4.1 is

fascinating. As has been mentioned, Horace provides no physical description of his lover

whatsoever, and instead, Ligurinus, and Horace's lust for him, becomes a tool by which Horace

is able to examine his own body in ekphrastic detail. In the ninth stanza, the momentum of the

ode suddenly slows, and Horace bursts into an emotional repetition of *cur*. He then narrows his

focus onto his face and head, tracking a single tear as it freezes on his cheek (*manat… genas*,

line 34), and on his once "eloquent" tongue (*facunda*), which "falls between words into

unbecoming silence" (*cur… silentio*, line 36). As opposed to the other ekphrastic descriptions of

bodies we have seen in this ode, which have tended to be more dynamic, in this case, Horace

now sketches a body which is completely motionless. He places *manat* ("stay"; "linger") at the

beginning of line 34, creating the sense that his body is, for the moment, suspended in time. This

instance of heightened bodily awareness also represents a reversal of the neck-down gaze of

2.20. Taken together with 2.20, in which Horace only focused on the parts of his body which

were observable to him, 4.1 now gives us a complete portrait of Horace's body, from head to toe.

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[64] λιγύς/γλυκύς + ὑμνεῖν: "clear-voiced"/"sweet-singing"

It is at this point that Horace once again references Sappho, who uses strikingly similar language in her own poem 31. The Roman elegiac poet Catullus also reworked Sappho 31 in his poem 51. Putnam argues that, in closing with a reference to a poem with a rich history of adaptation and recreation, "he is contemplating not only the Roman tradition of subjective elegy but also the lyric past as he glances back via Catullus and Anacreon, who bemoan the passing of time, to Sappho[65]." In addition to the stillness and revelatory nature of each version, every iteration of Sappho's original poem shares one key detail: a fixation on the speaker's tongue. In Sappho's version, her tongue "breaks" (ἀλλὰ κὰμ μὲν γλῶσσα ἔαγε, line 9). Catullus' version draws on the same imagery; his tongue "grows numb" at the sight of his beloved (*lingua sed torpet*, also line 9). Horace's version focuses more on the loss of speech which he suffers as a result of his sluggish tongue, asking "why does my eloquent tongue fall between words into unbecoming silence?" Sappho and Catullus draw on the image of the numbed or broken tongue as a metaphor for speechlessness; for Horace, the metaphor is made explicit as he falls into *silentio*. Virgil similarly borrowed language from other authors; as we saw in the *Georgics*, many of the bodies which populate the Aristaeia are constructed in part or wholly out of borrowed text. However, Horace, and Catullus before him, are doing something different and more personal here: they are borrowing not only language, but body parts, while maintaining a first-person narrative voice. In a way, by referencing Sappho 31, Horace is borrowing not just another poet's words, but, in a metatextual sense, her very tongue. By reusing her language, Horace has transformed Sappho's body into his own, and her tongue has been reanimated anew in his mouth. Given the metaphor of voice, or voicelessness, this moment is particularly poignant. This

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[65] Putnam 1986: 39

moment of literary allusion serves as another fascinating example of how bodies can be shared, transposed and transformed by and through text.

As soon as Horace slows down, he suddenly bursts into movement in the final stanza, and while he retains the dreamlike, revelatory nature which permeated the previous one, he is unmistakably more physically dynamic as he imagines pursuing and capturing a fleeing Ligurinus:

> *nocturnis ego somniis*
> *iam captum teneo, iam volucrem sequor*
> *te per gramina Martii*
> *campi, te per aquas, dure, volubilis.*

> "At night, in dreams,
> I hold you captive, I follow you, swift,
> through the grasses of the field of Mars,
> I follow you, cruel one, through winding waters."   (*Odes*.IV.1.37-40)

Freed from the paralysis of the previous stanza, Horace now employs the full weight of his bodily autonomy to close out 4.1, bursting into movement. The final stanza reads as a series of disconnected images, underscoring the dreamy state from which Horace now narrates. Interestingly, whereas the public rituals of the middle stanzas largely took place devoid of geographical context, Horace's private dreamscape is groundedly Roman. His nocturnal flight takes him both through the Campus Martius (*gramina Martii campi*), and "winding waters" (*aquas volubilis*), likely referring to the Tiber, which bordered the area. Even in dreams, his Rome is now permeating his consciousness, a foreshadowing of the odes still to come in Book IV. Horace constructs another possible parallel between himself and Ligurinus with the reuse of *dure*. Horace's "hardness" in the face of love from the first stanza has now become his lover's cruelty. The ode closes on *volubilis*, which Thomas argues hints at the elusive nature of

Ligurinus, and the ephemeral quality of these final few images: "the water snatches away both swimmer and image[66]" at the close, and the reader is left on uncertain footing.

Horace's tone of private, sorrowful reflection in the final stanza stands in contrast to the assuredness and groundedness of the middle section. Putnam too comments on the wistfulness of the close, and the implications of this uncertainty on Horace's future writing:

"Ode 1 is the first of a series of carefully placed poems that meditate on the losses, usually incurred by time, that afflict the lives of individual mortals. The center of the poem proclaims what will prove central to the book as a whole, that Horace's relation to Rome and Romans will now become his chief emotional focus. But what remains at the end is a reflection on human aging with only a wistful dream of escaping time's ravages[67]."

On the whole, 4.1 is a poem which feels haunted by spectres. Venus is a poltergeist, tormenting Horace, the ghosts of Sappho and Catullus possess the speaker, ventriloquizing his tongue, and in Ligurinus we see the shadow of Licymnia. Even Horace himself seems ghostly, wandering through the Roman landscape in pursuit of his younger lover, and for most of the poem fading into the background. But even in an ode where Horace's physicality seems like an afterthought, by once again delving into both lyric and eroticism in 4.1, Horace has emerged as a transformed being. As in 2.20, and also in 2.12, his poetry has sparked a metamorphosis, although this time we conclude on a much less optimistic note. The three odes we have examined in this chapter explore themes of love, aging, and the experience of creating poetry. Taken together, they reveal commonalities in how Horace conceives of his poetic corpus, and of himself as an author, through metaphors of bodily transformation and metatextual allusion.

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[66] Horace 2011: 102
[67] Putnam 1986: 46

Echoes of Proteus
Lucian's *On Dancing* and the Rise of the Narrative Ballet

Introduction: John Weaver and the Legacy of Lucian

Thus far in this project, we have explored how poets use bodies as vehicles for the expression of ideas and narratives. The third chapter will continue to explore this concept, and extend this thinking into a new artistic field: dance. To reiterate, by moving to modernity, while still keeping ancient literature in view, I argue that poets and choreographers create art using the same basic principles, but using different artistic mediums: poets with the written word, and choreographers with the human body. Much of this chapter will focus on John Weaver, a little-known eighteenth century British choreographer whose work was both deeply rooted in the philosophy of ancient dance, and a turning point for ballet as an art form. Crucially for this project, Weaver's ballets, and his philosophy of choreography, place him as a direct descendant of authors from antiquity, such as Horace and Virgil (and, as we will discuss in this chapter, Lucian), who explore using bodies as the means by which a story is told. By drawing on ancient theories of dance as a mimetic and storytelling art, Weaver would lay the foundation for a new generation of dancemakers who ushered in the Romantic era, a period synonymous with what dance historians and practitioners would categorize as "classical" ballet.

In 1718, John Weaver's pantomime ballet *Orpheus and Eurydice* opened at the Theatre Royal on Drury Lane, London. This production marked the second of Weaver's ballets to be staged at the theater, the first being *The Loves of Mars and Venus*, which had debuted the previous year. Each audience member in attendance was given a program no less than

twenty-five pages long, replete with passages taken from Virgil and Ovid[68]. Little is known about

the production, apart from the fact that Weaver himself performed the role of Orpheus, and that

the choreography relied largely on a gestural vocabulary of movement in order to convey the

story. It was not a successful production, in fact, Weaver's pantomimes were generally not

popular during his lifetime. He would not stage another one until what would be his third and

final attempt, *The Judgement of Paris*, performed decades later in 1733. However, *Orpheus and

Eurydice*, and Weaver's other pantomimes, which at first glance might seem like a footnote in

the history of dance, actually marks a watershed moment in the evolution of ballet. Although

Weaver would not live to see the effects his work would have, future choreographers would draw

heavily on the precedent he established in reviving ancient pantomime for the eighteenth century

stage.

In part, Weaver's tastes were a reflection of his time. Europe on the whole had been

swept up in a Neoclassical revival by the beginning of the eighteenth century; the dress,

literature, and iconography of Ancient Greece and Rome were simply *en vogue*. However,

Weaver's fixation on the classics, and his implementation of classical myth into his ballets, was

not driven by a merely superficial or aesthetic appreciation for the ancient world. In fact, he owes

his entire choreographic ethos to one author, and one text, in particular: Lucian's *On Dancing*.

The complete works of Lucian were widely available and in circulation by the middle of the

sixteenth century in Europe (and translated into Latin, making them even more accessible[69]).

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[68] Homans 2010: 57. Although I cannot locate a copy of the program, and no authors that I have found (including Homans) reference it directly, we can assume that the texts provided would have been Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Virgil's *Georgics*.

[69] Edith Hall rightly notes that "a scholarly history of the printed editions and translations of *On Dancing* would be a most useful 'new direction' in which pantomime scholarship could move." Tracing the text's migrations across Europe during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries might give us new insights into its ripples across the dance world.

While not as widely popular as some of his other works, such as *A True History* or *Dialogues of the Sea Gods*[70], *On Dancing* proved to be particularly important for dancemakers such as Weaver, who sought to use pantomime, as described by Lucian, as a means of inserting narrative into ballet, which was at the time a relatively abstract art form. Indeed, Weaver would write his own treatise in 1728, titled "The history of the mimes and pantomimes, with an historical account of several performers in dancing, living in the time of the Roman emperors, to which will be added, A list of the modern entertainments that have been exhibited on the English stage, either in imitation of the ancient pantomimes, or after the manner of the modern Italians; when and where first performed, and by whom composed". It is largely paraphrased from *On Dancing*, and heavily influenced by Lucian's theory of dance, as we will explore later in this chapter.

Before we dive into the ways in which Weaver's choreographic career rested upon Lucian, I would like to take a moment to step back and remark on the significance of Weaver's contributions to ballet, and especially on the improbability and relative obscurity of ballet's connection to Lucian. Lucian's impact on western dance is virtually unknown, even to many experienced historians and practitioners of dance. It is a piece of ballet history that is for the most part neglected, due largely (I suspect) to the lack of dialogue between the fields of classics and dance studies. It is almost unbelievable that the art of ballet owes so much to a singular, infrequently read ancient text, and even more unbelievable that as ballet dancers, we are not taught where our tradition of pantomime comes from. Much of the dance community remains ignorant of both Weaver and Lucian, and yet Weaver's discovery and repurposing of pantomime, made possible by his engagement with Lucian, fundamentally changed ballet. In some sense,

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[70] Hall 2008: 365

Weaver is a Lucianic figure himself. Both men's work is largely familiar only to specialists, but both are pivotal figures in the history and evolution of dance. In this chapter, I will attempt to sketch how pre-Romantic choreographers used Lucian's theory of pantomime dance in order to reformulate ballet and transform it into an art form capable of expressing narrative.

On Dancing: Ballet's Blueprint

In order to fully grasp how Weaver used Lucian's treatise as the theoretical lens by which he understood dance, we must first understand how Lucian himself conceives of dance. Once we achieve that, we will begin to understand the enormous degree of his influence on western dance, and see how his theory on pantomime echoed across millenia, transforming ballet into a narrative art form. Lucian of Samosata, a Syrian satirist and, among many other things, dance theorist, wrote largely in the latter half of the second century CE. His treatise *On Dancing* (περί ὀρχήσεως) is framed as a dialogue between Lycinus, an impassioned advocate for the merits of pantomime dance, and Crato, a skeptic. It is remarkable first of all for its existence as a piece of ancient dance theory, but also for the richness of detail which Lucian provides on the history, philosophy, and reception of pantomime dance. Although the whole of the treatise merits analysis, for the purposes of this chapter we will focus on a few key principles of dance which Lucian outlines, using Lycinus as his mouthpiece. Some brief but essential context on pantomime: the dance was always performed by a male, solo dancer, masked and costumed in accordance with the character he was portraying. The dancer was accompanied by music, often a flute, and a sung libretto. The pantomime usually depicted stories from mythology, with the dancer playing as many parts as was required to tell the story. To be a pantomime dancer

therefore required a great deal of technical skill, both as a dancer and as a vivid and intelligible

storyteller. The standards which Lucian sets for the pantomime dancer in *On Dancing*

accordingly reflect the high demands of the art form.

Pantomime dance, like the genres of poetry examined in previous chapters, is a medium

which promotes the exploration of relationships between body and text. As Lucian explains, the

pantomime dancer must have ready at his disposal essentially the entire canon of ancient myth.

He says that "his whole accoutrement for the work is ancient story (ἱστορία), as I have said, and

the prompt recollection and graceful presentation of it. Beginning with Chaos and the primal

origin of the world, he must know everything down to the story of Cleopatra the Egyptian. Let

this be the range we prescribe for the dancer's learning, and let him know thoroughly all that lies

within it[71]". He then proceeds to list all the myths with which the dancer should ideally be

familiar. This is where Lucian's satire peeks through, since the list is so hyperbolically long that

knowing and remembering all of it would be quite a feat. However, this is not to say that he is

being insincere. From what we know about pantomime, most libretti were taken or adapted from

mythological subject matter. It is therefore safe to assume that a dancer would in fact need to be

well versed in the myths he was performing, in order to be able to render them intelligible to his

audience. It is simply the extent of the dancer's knowledge which Lucian may be exaggerating,

not the presence or importance of the knowledge itself. He concludes his catalog by saying:

> "These are a very few themes that I have selected out of many, or rather out of an infinite
> number, and set down as the more important, leaving the rest for the poets to sing of, for
> the dancers themselves to present, and for you to add, finding them by their likeness to
> those already mentioned, all of which must lie ready, provided, and stored by the dancer
> in advance to meet every occasion."[72]

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[71] ἡ…ἴστω, 37. Translated by Harmon 1936
[72] ταῦτα…ἀναγκαῖον, 61. Translated by Harmon 1936

Homans uses the wonderfully evocative phrase "living cultural encyclopedia[73]" to describe the essence of the pantomime dancer. As a dancer in the modern day, one often hears the term "embodied intelligence[74]" with reference to how dancers teach, learn, and share ideas, both in and out of the dance studio. In Lucian's vision of pantomime, this kind of "embodied" intelligence is very literal; the dancer acts as a physical repository of countless stories. It is easy to see how this ideal of the dancer might be alluring to modern dancemakers; it emphasizes the importance of the dancer's mental faculties just as much as their physical prowess, when historically the former has been neglected in favor of the latter. Lucian thus paints a portrait of a well-rounded, wholly human dancer, who is both able to learn, understand and store narratives, and skillfully depict them through movement.

One figure whom Lucian cites as representing the core values of pantomime (and one with whom we are by now already familiar) is Proteus. Lucian goes as far as to say that Proteus, who was known for his shape-shifting and prophetic abilities, was in fact a dancer. This comparison alludes to another important aspect of pantomime: it is a mimetic art form. Lucian explains, with regards to Proteus:

"For it seems to me that the ancient myth about Proteus the Egyptian means nothing else than that he was a dancer, an imitative fellow, able to shape himself and change himself into anything, so that he could imitate even the liquidity of water and the sharpness of fire in the liveliness of his movement; yes, the fierceness of a lion, the rage of a leopard, the quivering of a tree, and in a word whatever he wished. Mythology, however, on taking it over, described his nature in terms more paradoxical, as if he became what he imitated. Now just that thing is characteristic of the dancers to-day, who certainly may be seen changing swiftly at the cue and imitating Proteus himself[75]."

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[73] Homans 2010: 218

[74] From what I can tell, this term is also used, in a different context, in the field of robotics. However, in dance, it is a term which refers to the physical knowledge a dancer possesses, either in or about one's body, including but not limited to: proprioception, balance, musicality, etc.

[75] δοκεῖ…Πρωτέα, 19. Translated by Harmon 1936. This language is adapted from Book IV of the *Odyssey*, in which Proteus undergoes a similar series of transformations around lines 456-58.

As Karin Schlapbach notes, Lucian's "explanation of Proteus' metamorphoses as a form of artistic illusion created by dance is singular and quite remarkable[76]". In defining Proteus as a pantomime dancer, he dissolves the mythical model which Proteus represents, and paradoxically makes pantomime its own paradigm. Dancers who "imitate Proteus" are thus imitating an imitator. Although this is not explicitly stated in *On Dancing*, or in any scholarship on the text I have found, my theory is that in claiming that Proteus was nothing other than a dancer, Lucian is alluding to how dance is learned and passed down. By describing Proteus as a dancer, he casts him as the primordial originator of pantomime, from whom all other pantomime dancers descend. Dancers largely learn and develop their craft through imitation of their teachers; imitation is the first skill the very youngest dancers learn, and one which they will continue to use for as long as they continue dancing. Describing Proteus as "imitative" (μιμητικὸν) thus highlights the dancer's primal instinct, and perhaps hints at a hidden dimension of the mimetic quality of pantomime: dancers imitate not only mythical figures for the purposes of performing, but also each other for the purposes of sharing and preserving their tradition[77].

At times, Lucian's discourse on pantomime can stray outside the bounds of what is believable or realistic. For example, in describing the dancer's capacity for storing and recalling information, he references another mythical seer, Calchas: "Like Calchas in Homer, the dancer must know 'what is, and what shall be, and was of old,' so thoroughly that nothing will escape him, but his memory of it all will be prompt[78]." The phrase "what is, and what shall be, and was

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[76] Schlapbach 2018: 84

[77] These questions of how pantomime was learned, taught and passed down are relatively untapped by Lucian, and to some extent by modern scholars as well.

[78] κατὰ…αὐτῶν, 36. Translated by Harmon 1936

of old" (τά τ᾽ ἐόντα τά τ᾽ἐσσόμενα πρό τ᾽ ἐόντα), or, put more simply, "what is, what will be,

and what was," is one that appears multiple times throughout ancient literature. The Greek is

taken directly from Book I of the *Iliad*, where it refers to the Calchas[79] (this is where Lucian

attributes it). However, Lucian neglects to mention another instance of this phrase which appears

in the *Georgics*, and in direct reference to Proteus himself (*quae sint, quae fuerint, quae mox

ventura trahantur*[80]). Although Lucian does not make this connection, the quote's association

with Proteus further emphasizes how he fulfills the role of the ideal pantomime dancer: he does

so not only with his physical abilities, but also with his powers of divination, which Lucian

equates to the dancer's thorough grasp on the mythical canon.

> Towards the close of his treatise, Lucian summarizes the dancer's duties, stating:

> "In general, the dancer should be perfect in every point, so as to be wholly rhythmical,
> graceful, symmetrical, consistent, unexceptionable, impeccable, not wanting in any way,
> blent of the highest qualities, keen in his ideas, profound in his culture, and above all,
> human in his sentiments. In fact, the praise that he gets from the spectators will be
> consummate when each of those who behold him recognises his own traits, or rather sees
> in the dancer as in a mirror his very self, with his customary feelings and actions. Then
> people cannot contain themselves for pleasure, and with one accord they burst into
> applause, each seeing the reflection of his own soul and recognising himself. Really, that
> Delphic monition "Know thyself" realises itself in them from the spectacle, and when
> they go away from the theatre they have learned what they should choose and what avoid,
> and have been taught what they did not know before[81]."

This description is hyperbolic. However, as Lucian points out, the dancer's most

important objective is to be "human in his sentiments" (τὰς ἐννοίας ἀνθρώπινον, 81), and to

deeply connect with his audience, transforming them internally. It is this "human" quality, and

the idea of enacting social change through art, which choreographers of the Enlightenment were

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[79] *Iliad*.I.70
[80] *Geor*.IV.393
[81] Ὅλως…διδαχθέντες, 81. Translated by Harmon 1936

so captivated by. The idea that dance could serve as a didactic art form capable of conveying a

potent message to its spectators was one which would drive Weaver and other choreographers to

attempt social reform through ballet, and one which has its origins in Lucian, and in pantomime.

Weaver: Forgotten Forefather of the Story Ballet

John Weaver (1673-1760) was born to a ballet master in Shrewsbury, England. Trained in

dance by his father, he would found his own school in Shrewsbury, teaching social dances to the

English nobility, before eventually settling in London[82]. There, Weaver, along with a small

contingent of other socially minded ballet masters, kept his finger on the pulse of the dance

world, in a time when London was undergoing wide-scale and rapid changes. The city

experienced a boom in population between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and its

intellectual and artistic communities were beginning to take root. Amid this burgeoning wave of

artistic innovation, Weaver delved deeper into dance theory and history. Selections from his

bibliography include a 1706 translation of Feuillet's seminal treatise on dance notation, an essay

on the history of dance, and *Anatomical and Mechanical Lectures on Dancing*. However, it was

ancient pantomime, and particularly *On Dancing*, which caught his attention as a possible tool

with which he might transform his discipline.

At this point, a brief history of ballet up until Weaver's time might be useful. In very

broad terms, ballet[83] originated in the court of Catherine de Medici in the mid sixteenth century,

and was later codified by the French king Louis XIV. Louis is also responsible for the first staged

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[82] Homans 2010: 53

[83] Catherine grew up performing social dances which the Italians referred to as *balletti*, upon her marriage in 1533 to the French king Henri II, French and Italian court culture merged, and the French term *ballets* was born (Homans 2010: 4).

ballets; massive spectacles of costuming and stagecraft in which he would often perform the principal part. However, the ballets of his time looked very different from what most would consider "classical" ballet. For the most part, ballet in its early stages was concerned with spectacle, regality, and large-scale demonstrations of geometrical shapes and patterns. Ballet continued to be highly popular in the French courts for centuries, spawning legions of dancing masters and academies where the art was solidified and propagated, but it took much longer to catch on in England. As Jennifer Homans writes, "The English had always harbored a deep suspicion of ballet[84]". The generation before Weaver had lived through the sweeping reforms of Puritanism, which stifled the performing arts. Dance in particular was looked down upon as base and lurid, a form of "wantonnesse" by which "in everie part a wicked art is added to increase the natural filthinesse[85]". However, the restoration of the monarchy in 1660 revived court entertainments, and began to rehabilitate ballet's image. However, as Homans explains, "as things stood at the end of the seventeenth century, ballet was seen as a 'frivolous Circumstance' at best and at worst as a suspect enterprise cloaking indecent impulses and vaguely related to prostitution[86]". Knowing the moral context of Weaver's society, one can't help but draw comparisons to Lucian, who had to defend pantomime against the same kind of distrust. Indeed, Crato's opening critiques in *On Dancing* accuse dance of promoting the same things: effeminacy, promiscuity and overall moral degeneracy. In Crato's view, the spectators "sit enthralled by the flute, watching a girlish fellow play the wanton with dainty clothing and bawdy songs and imitate love-sick minxes, the most erotic of all antiquity[87]". His complaints sound as though they

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[84] Homans 2010: 50
[85] Homans 2010: 51
[86] Homans 2010: 52
[87] κάθηται…μαχλοτάτας, 2. Translated by Harmon 1936.

could have been written by a seventeenth century naysayer. Reading Lucian, Weaver must have

been inspired by this impassioned defense of dance, against the kind of criticisms which he

himself must have heard many times. Determined to convince England of the merits of ballet,

Weaver cast himself as a Lycinus, and English society would be his Crato.

Weaver's first step was to befriend Richard Steele, a writer who founded the journal *The*

Spectator[88] in 1711. Steele would publish many of Weaver's writings, the first of which was an

open letter in 1712, "in which he argued the merits of dancing as a high art but above all as an

vital educational tool 'of universal benefit,' as he later put it, 'to all Lovers of Elegance and

Politeness[89]". In Weaver's vision, ballet could serve as a great societal equalizer, a way to blur

class divides by standardizing comportment and physicality. Through his writings, he "managed

to convince Steele that ballet was an invaluable civic tool - that its manners and graces were not

necessarily effete and frilly but instead a form of politeness that might be turned to the cause of

English civic propriety[90]." However, Weaver not only aspired to make ballet a tool for social

equality, but also to turn it into a (distinctly English) theatrical art form. To that end, he turned to

Lucian, and to pantomime.

Although Weaver's impact on the dance world is broad, I believe that his single most

important contribution to ballet was his insertion of narrative into what had been hitherto a

fundamentally abstract art form. His first attempt at a pantomime ballet was the aforementioned

The Loves of Mars and Venus, staged at the Theatre Royal at Drury Lane, which his collaborator

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[88] As Homans notes, "at a penny an issue, it was reasonably affordable and appealed to men and women of the elite and aspiring classes alike" (pp. 55). *The Spectator* was extremely popular during its time. His collaboration with Steele was an important moment for Weaver; it provided him with the platform to get his ideas out on a much larger scale than he previously had access to.
[89] Homans 2010: 55
[90] Homans 2010: 55

Richard Steele happened to own, in 1717. The full (and very lengthy) title was as follows: *The Loves of Mars and Venus: A Dramatick Entertainment of Dancing Attempted in Imitation of the Pantomimes of the Ancient Greeks and Romans*. With this title, Weaver laid out his artistic inspirations in very plain terms; by staging his ballets, he sought to emulate the kind of expressive performance he had read about in *On Dancing*. Lucian's influence on Weaver is visible in his productions (albeit we do not know much about them) in a number of ways. Weaver, in his 1728 treatise on "the history of the mimes and pantomimes", strongly defends Lucian's expertise on pantomime, and clearly regards *On Dancing* as a serious piece of dance theory: "Lucian (in what I have transcribed from him, on the Qualifications of a Pantomime) has put in nothing Hyperbolical, or with an Affectation of Difficulty: he was an eye-witness of their Performances, and knew the general Subjects of their Art, and is a Rule to them, as Aristotle is to the Dramatick Poets, having drawn what he says, not from his own Imagination, but from the Practice of his Time[91]". Furthermore, in his explanation of the marks of a dancer, he clearly borrows from Lucian, stating:

> "To arrive at a perfection in this art (says he) a man must borrow assistance from all the other sciences (viz.) Musick, Arithmetick, Geometry, and particularly from Philosophy, both Natural and Moral; he must also be acquainted with Rhetorick, so far as it relates to Manners and Passions, nor ought this Art to be a stranger to Painting and Sculpture, but its chief Dependance is Memory; to have a Memory tenacious and at command: he ought particularly to express and imitate all Things; nay even his very thoughts, by the Motions and Gesticulations of his Body: in short, it is a science Imitative and Demonstrative, an Interpreter of all Things Aenigmatical, and an Explainer of Ambiguities[92]."

Weaver's commitment to reviving pantomime dance went deeper than a surface-level appreciation of the art form. Instead, he sought to use Lucian as a blueprint by which he might recreate pantomime, adhering closely to Lucian's descriptions, and repurposing it for the

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[91] Weaver 1728: 11-12
[92] Weaver 1728: 21-22

purposes of storytelling within a ballet. Consider the programs which Weaver provided for those

in attendance at *Orpheus and Eurydice*. Given his choice to supplement the performance with

selections from ancient literature, we can infer that Weaver desired his audience to contextualize

what they were to see onstage not only with the story of Orpheus and Eurydice, but with the very

texts from which the story derives. This indicates that he sought to preserve the relationship

between dance and text which Lucian outlines. For his program notes on *The Loves of Mars and*

Venus, which do survive, he provided, in addition to biographies of cast members, and a brief

synopsis of the ballet, a description of various gestures appearing in the ballet and what they

signified. For example, Weaver describes "Admiration" as a "raising up of the right Hand, the

Palm turn'd upwards, the Fingers clos'd; and in one Motion the Wrist turn'd round and Fingers

spread; the Body reclining, and Eyes fix'd on the Object[93]". Of course, the fact that Weaver felt

the need to explain to his audience the meaning of the dancers' gestures does not align with

Lucian's vision of pantomime, which argued that the dancer's gestures must be completely and

universally intelligible, even to those who do not speak the same language[94]. Weaver himself

says as much in his 1712 "An Essay towards an history of dancing", in which he states, again

clearly drawing inspiration from Lucian:

"Stage dancing was at first designed for Imitation; to explain Things conceiv'd in the
Mind, by the Gestures and Motions of the Body, and plainly and intelligibly representing
Actions, Manners and Passions; so that the Spectator might perfectly understand the Performer

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[93] Weaver 1717: 21

[94] Two episodes from *On Dancing* illustrate how dance is meant to transcend language, and both have to do with
barbarians: first in section 64, Lucian reports that a barbarian from Pontus requested a dancer to serve as his
interpreter after seeing him perform, saying: "I have barbarian neighbours who do not speak the same language, and
it is not easy to keep supplied with interpreters for them. If I am in want of one, therefore, this man will interpret
everything for me by signs." (Lucian 1936: 269). The second is in section 66, in which Lucian describes a barbarian
"noticing that the dancer had five masks ready - the drama had that number of acts - since he saw but the one dancer,
he enquired who were to dance and act the other roles, and when he learned that the dancer himself was to dance and
act them all, he said; 'I did not realize, my friend, that though you have only one body, you have many souls'"
(Lucian 1936: 269).

by these his Motions, tho' he say not a Word… Scenical Dancing is a faint imitation of the Roman Pantomimes and explains whole Stories by Action[95]."

Weaver may not have been able to achieve this universality of movement which he and Lucian outline. Nevertheless, the intricacy of his gestures, the narrative and dramatic weight which they held, and his effort to make them readable to his audience, makes evident his dedication to faithfully following Lucian's philosophy of dance.

As was mentioned in the introduction, with the exception of *The Loves of Mars and Venus*, Weaver's pantomime ballets were not commercially successful[96]. For his *Orpheus and Eurydice* ballet, Weaver dropped the word "pantomime" from the title, perhaps in an effort to distance himself from the lowbrow, comedic "pantomime" entertainment, in imitation of the Italian *commedia dell'arte*, which was becoming popular with English audiences at the time. Weaver would leave the theater in 1721, retiring to Shrewsbury, "where he taught dance and nostalgically rehearsed pantomimes from the old days at the Drury Lane until his own death in 1760, which passed largely unnoticed[97]." In my view, ballet's post-eighteenth century history as a traditionally narrative art form is owed almost entirely to Lucian, and to Weaver's interpretation of his *On Dancing*.

Jean-Georges Noverre and the *Ballet D'Action*

"Children of Terpsichore, give up fancy jumps, *entrechats* and other complicated steps; abandon affectation for feelings, simple graces and expressions; apply yourself to the noble pantomime[98]". So said the French ballet master Jean-Georges Noverre (1727-1810), widely

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[95] Weaver 1712
[96] Homans 2010: 57
[97] Homans 2010: 57
[98] Homans 2010: 49

considered to be one of the most important figures of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century

dance. While Weaver may have revived ancient pantomime and repurposed it for large-scale

spectacles of storytelling, Noverre is largely responsible for cementing pantomime as an essential

component of the story ballets, or *ballets d'action*, which would come to dominate the Romantic

period. Like Weaver, Noverre was a prolific writer, but unlike Weaver, his choreography was

much more widely influential. His *Lettres sur la Danse et sur les Ballets*, which are in essence

the foundational texts of classical ballet, were circulated throughout Europe during his lifetime,

and helped to build the ideological backbone of the Romantic period. In his *Lettres*, he

emphasizes the importance of including narrative, which he often referred to as "action," within

ballets. In order to convey narrative, like Weaver, he turned to pantomime. He argued:

"Pantomime is the soul of the dance and vivifies the ballet…I have decided to reunite action with

dancing; to accord it some expression and purpose[99]". Unsurprisingly, since their choreographic

goals overlapped, Noverre in fact represented a direct descendant of Weaver's teachings. His

own teacher at the Paris Opera was the *danseur noble* Louis Dupré, who had danced the role of

Mars in *The Loves of Mars and Venus*[100]. This little known connection holds tremendous

meaning. In dance, as in many artistic disciplines, one's artistic lineage determines almost

everything about oneself. Knowledge is passed from the teacher's body to those of their pupils,

who serve as physical storehouses of generations of tradition. The fact that Noverre was trained

by someone who danced for Weaver means that their connection was not only ideological, but

tangible and visible. Noverre would have carried markers of Weaver's technique, which he then

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[99] Noverre 1783, translated at Lynham 1950: 130-131
[100] Hall 2018: 371.

would have passed to his many students. Through Dupré, and subsequently through Noverre, Weaver's legacy lived on.

As a thinker, writer and choreographer, Noverre was steeped in the philosophy of the French Enlightenment. Like Weaver before him, he believed that ballet could function as a tool for the expression of lofty moral ideas which could benefit society. The popularity, and relatively radical ethos of his work, afforded him the opportunity to choreograph for many different theaters and companies across Europe; over the course of his lifetime, he would mount productions in Paris, Lyon, London, Berlin, Stuttgart, Vienna, and Milan[101]. In total, he composed approximately eighty ballets and twenty-four *opéra-ballets*, and was, in Homans' words, "the best-known ballet master of his time[102]". He also prided himself on his association with prominent philosophers of the Enlightenment, such as Voltaire and Diderot, the latter of whom was a particular advocate for pantomime, writing in his 1757 work *Troisième Entretien sur le Fils Naturel*, "The dance awaits a man of genius; it is everywhere bad because it is barely suspected that it is an imitative art. The dance is to pantomime as poetry is to prose, or rather as natural declamation is to song…A dance is a poem. The poem should therefore have its separate performance. It is an imitation in movement which supposes the assistance of the poet, of the painter, of the musician and of the mime[103]". To much of Europe, that "man of genius" was Noverre. Sources indicate that he was an exacting choreographer with a sharp eye for detail. However, he was still aware of pantomime's limitations; there is no way to clearly convey past or future time through gesture, which made the telling of complicated stories rather difficult. To that end, Noverre sought to model his ballets after paintings, creating a series of "living tableaux"

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[101] Homans 2010: 68
[102] Homans 2010: 68
[103] Translated in Lynham 1950: 125

which, following one after the other, would harmoniously tell a story. As Homans notes, "Noverre assiduously studied art and architecture and applied the laws of perspective, proportion and light to his ballets. He arranged his dancers by height from short to tall, moving from the stage apron back to a distant horizon, and he meticulously plotted patterns of chiaroscuro onstage [104]". He also demanded that dancers' costumes be stripped back, preferring "light and simple draperies… worn in such a manner as to reveal the dancers' figure[105]" to the hoop skirts and petticoats which were in fashion at the time. These changes (which were widely adopted) allowed for greater freedom of movement, which would lead to increasingly virtuosic choreography in each new generation of dancers. The results were striking. Noverre had managed to create a new kind of ballet, one that was both visually pleasing and narratively compelling, and popular with audiences besides. Lynham remarks that "to the contemporary spectator, who had come to expect a ballet to be a colourless series of minuets, *loures* or *passepieds*, expressed in conventional steps and attitudes, movement based on an imitation of nature, or as we would say in modern parlance, a heightened realism, must have seemed highly dramatic".[106]

Noverre is by no means the only figure responsible for the inclusion of pantomime in ballet. Other important figures in the evolution of pantomime in modernity were Marie Sallé, a highly expressive dancer and early mentor of Noverre, and Salvatore Viganò, a popular choreographer and pantomime aficionado who would be responsible for transforming Italian ballet into a powerhouse of the nineteenth century dance world[107]. For the purposes of this

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[104] Homans 2010: 74-5
[105] Lynham 1950: 135
[106] Lynham 1950: 146
[107] For Sallé, see Homans 2010: 60-63, and for Viganò, see Homans 2010: "Italian Heresy: Pantomime, Virtuosity, and Italian Ballet".

chapter, I have chosen to examine two figures, Weaver and Noverre, because they represent direct descendants of Lucian's thinking. To conclude this chapter, and to extend Lucian's legacy even further into modernity, I would like to briefly remark on pantomime functions in ballet today, speaking from personal experience. Exploring pantomime as it exists within ballet now yields insight into how Lucian's ideas in *On Dancing*, as propagated by Weaver and Noverre, continue to have repercussions in the modern world of dance, even if they go unseen. In writing this chapter, I have begun to view characters who mime in ballets (usually only the principal dancers, never the *corps*) as neo-Proteuses. Ballet, for all Weaver and Noverre's efforts, remains an abstract art form in the sense that the steps themselves carry no inherent meaning. It is only in moments of pantomime when the plot truly advances and the story is conveyed. Characters who mime will often predict events, explaining them through gestures, and later the events will unfold in the ballet just as the dancer explained them. If you were to go see *The Sleeping Beauty*, *The Nutcracker*, or virtually any other classical ballet you would see the same kind of cyclical narratives as the ones we saw in the poetry of our earlier Roman authors.

All dancers would benefit from reading Lucian. *On Dancing*, in a sense, is the foundational text of the story ballet. In this chapter, I have traced its lineage through the early days of ballet through to modernity, in an effort to elucidate the close relationship between ancient pantomime dance and the genesis of ballet as a narrative art form. It is my hope that as dancers, we become more aware of Lucian's critical influence on Western dance, and the legacy of his treatise on our discipline.

Epilogue - The Things That Will Be

There is not often cause for dancers and classicists to interact, whether in person or through scholarship. Even dance's academic fields (dance theory, studies, history, etc.), which have finally begun to gain recognition in recent decades, have yet to deeply delve into the ancient world. The study of ancient dance is ongoing, and it will need the collaboration of both dancers and those who study ancient dance in order for it to reach its full potential. The process of writing and researching for this project has confirmed the vital need for an open dialogue between the two disciplines, and demonstrated the marvelous fruits which that dialogue can yield. When I brought up Lucian's point that the dancer must know "the things that are, the things that will be, and the things that were" in discussion with the dance department, Professor Maria Simpson raised a beautiful point which completely changed the way I viewed the quote. I had long taken Lucian's inclusion of this line, with its connections to Proteus and to Homer, to be nothing more than another instance of hyperbole. After all, dancers are not prophets. However, Prof. Simpson remarked on how the line encapsulates how she views her work as a teacher of dance. She recognizes "the things that were", in what her own past teachers taught her, "the things that are", in the teachings she now passes to her students, and "the things that will be", in her students themselves, who will carry her teachings within them into the future. Upon reflection, I am struck by how this sharing, reinterpreting and transforming of information, body-to-body, is reflected in how authors share and borrow ideas between texts in the poetry examined herein. Both in literature and in dance, artists work and create on a continuum, situated between their predecessors and those who will follow them, and in constant dialogue with both. Examining the poetry of Horace and Virgil, together with the influences of pantomime on

modern ballet, demonstrates how the disciplines of classics and dance exist, at least in part, on the same continuum. I hope that as scholars in both fields, we will continue to recognize and pay homage to our shared ancestors, and work to educate those who will follow us on the legacy they represent.

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