An Examination of the Creation and Limitation of Realism
in the Elegies of Propertius

by

JANE MARIE CHRISTINE BURKOWSKI

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an examination of realism in the love elegies of Propertius: of how it is created, how it is limited, and how its limitations increase its effectiveness rather than diminishing it. The first half analyzes the variety and subtlety of the creation of realism in elegies 1.3, 2.29b, and 4.7, three poems that, because of shared features that link them to each other and set them apart from the rest of Propertius's elegies, represent a case study of realism. The second half begins by describing how the realism in these poems is limited, and how these limitations intensify the effect of their realism by drawing attention to the poet's agency in creating it. This effect is then related to larger trends in the creation and limitation of realism in Propertius's remaining love elegies, in which the same pattern is observed, by means of the analysis of recurring techniques. This examination of aspects of realism in Propertius's poetry provides insight not only into his poetic method, but into his attitude to his genre and its potential.
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CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

This thesis examines aspects of realism in the elegies of Sextus Propertius: the variety and subtlety of the methods by which it is created, as well as the accompanying ways in which it is limited, and how these limitations actually intensify its effectiveness rather than dampening it.

Realism is a feature of Propertius's poetry that is almost always noted by critics as a distinctive characteristic of his style, and the techniques and devices that create it have often been analyzed and commented upon. Whether they explicitly label it as realism or not, critics often refer to Propertius's vivid evocation of physical situations (here to be referred to as physical realism), and to his naturalistic depiction of complex mental and emotional states (here referred to as psychological realism). Take for example Jean-Paul Boucher's praise for the physical realism in Propertius's description of the drowning of Paetus in elegy 3.7 -- "All the horror of death . . . is here evoked with a forceful brevity that places Propertius on the level of the greatest realist artists, whether painters or novelists, Goya or Zola" (1965: 78)2 -- or Margaret Hubbard's praise for the psychological realism of 1.3 - "So intense an expression of awareness of another person’s identity has hardly a parallel in ancient literature and few in modern" (1974: 21).3

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1 All line references from Propertius refer to E.A. Barber's 1960 OCT edition (which is generally more conservative than either Goold's 1999 Loeb edition or S.J. Heyworth's 2007 OCT edition in following the manuscripts, and so incorporates fewer conjectures). All translations from the Latin are mine, unless otherwise noted.
2 My translation; the original is as follows: "toute l'horreur de la mort . . . est evocée ici avec une force dans la brièveté qui place Properce au rang des plus grands artistes réalistes, peintres ou romanciers, Goya ou Zola."
3 For further examples, see Musker: "Propertius makes [stock situations] seem real and the emotions they arouse fresh and true" (1972: 17); Lyne: "Propertius . . . likes his poems to reproduce psychological uncertainty or vacillation" (1980: 144); Hodge & Buttimore on 1.3: "Propertius's state of mind is dreamlike, but the experience itself is real, particular, conveyed with utter fidelity" (1976: 87); Benediktson on 2.25: "the reader feels that he or she is sharing the private thoughts of the poet instead of witnessing the rational reorganization of these thoughts that most classical poets would have presented" (1989: 36); and Sharrock
However, though critics so often comment upon this realism, they usually do so in passing, and it is rarely itself the primary focus of studies of Propertius's elegies.

Since realism of one kind or another is such a central feature of his style, and a relatively amorphous one in any poet's work, being the result of many contributing factors, one can hardly consider it as a whole, as it applies to Propertius's entire oeuvre. I have thus chosen to limit my analysis in two main ways. First, I shall consider only his subjective love elegies: those elegies relating directly to his own persona's love-relationships, as opposed to those focusing on his friends and their relationships (such as 1.9, 1.13, 1.20, 3.12), programmatic poems concerned with the nature of his poetry (such as 2.1, 2.10, 3.1, 3.2, 3.9), or poems focusing on mythological, historical, or topical subjects (such as 2.31, 3.4, 4.2, 4.4, 4.6, 4.9, 4.10). Realism, important as it is in Propertius's elegies, is not a major feature in every one of his poems, and tends to be most prominent in his subjective love poems, which makes them good candidates for analysis. Furthermore, though they certainly incorporate realism of the physical type, which is typically a function of the content of a poem, they are particularly notable for their creation of psychological realism, which is more a function of the way in which that content is expressed, and this psychological realism will be the focus of the majority of this thesis. As a second way of limiting the scope of this study, I shall begin by closely examining realism only in a small selection of the subjective love elegies, and only then go on to examine realism in the rest, with reference to that created in the particular poems selected.

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4 Matthew Potolsky, in his overview of the concept of mimesis, calls realism "a feeling, something we recognize when we encounter it, or miss when it is absent, rather than a single quality of any given work" (2006: 94).
The three poems that I have isolated for detailed consideration are elegies 1.3, 2.29b, and 4.7, a set of three poems that share several distinctive features. Verbal cues link the poems together (1.3 and 2.29b especially), but it is the broader similarities between them, in plot, structure, style, and approach, that most clearly set them apart as a group. Each, for example, involves a surprise visit from one lover to the other, incorporates sleep and dreams as a motif, includes a vivid description of Cynthia that is followed by and developed upon by a long speech delivered in her own voice, and ends abruptly, without the reply that we might have expected from Propertius. These features and the poetic devices tied to them work together to create a particular flavour of realism, and one that distinguishes these poems from the rest of Propertius's works. They all relate to the contrast and interaction of individuals' perspectives and the relationship between perception and reality, and the uncertainty and layering of perspectives that they create are unique among his works; the result is an especially subtle and complex realism. As John Warden, who points out the similarities that unite them, puts it, "One might suggest that [in these three poems] Propertius has developed his own sub-genre, with its own formal characteristics . . . as a means of exploring in literary terms the complexities and ambivalence of a human relationship" (1980: 75-76).7

This similarity to each other and difference from the rest of the elegies means that the three poems do not so much provide a representative sampling of the methods by which Propertius creates realism, as offer a fairly complete and independent example of

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5 Texts and translations of these three poems are to be found in the Appendix.
6 The phrase talis visa mihi, "thus she seemed to me", which is nowhere else applied to Cynthia, occurs in a prominent position in both 1.3 and 2.29b (1.3.7, 2.29.29), and is recalled in the visa est of 4.7.3; see below, pg. 33, 39). The word obstipui, "I was dumbstruck", too, appears both at 1.3.28 and 2.29.25, but nowhere else in the context of Propertius's own relationships; see below, pg. 28.
7 Warden reiterates the connection between the poems in a more recent work (2008: 62-66). See also Richardson 1977: 296; Lyne 1980: 139.
the way in which each particular method that he employs can be put to work in a variety of ways throughout the course of his oeuvre. Take for example one of the more striking features producing realism that the poems share: a long speech delivered by Cynthia directly, for which Propertius's own persona offers no reply. Since this feature exists in none of his other poems, its use and its role in creating realism can here be discussed comprehensively. In other words, the uniqueness of this group of poems makes them as close to being a closed system as possible. The third chapter of this study will thus set out to analyze the most distinctive devices through which Propertius creates realism in these poems, and how these devices interact, examining them more as a case study than a representative cross-section of the creation of realism in his poetry.

Unique and striking as the realism in 1.3, 2.29b, and 4.7 is in its particulars, it nonetheless reflects general trends in the creation of realism in Propertius's works. One example of this is the fact that, as is the case in much of Propertius's poetry, the realism in these poems is dependent for its effectiveness on factors that limit it, and that, in doing so, draw attention to the poet and his craft. The end result is a realism that is not only made more vivid by its very limitations, but that encourages the reader actively to acknowledge the achievement of the poet in creating it. The fourth chapter of this study will first examine the ways in which realism is limited in 1.3, 2.29b, and 4.7, and how these aspects of the poems draw attention to the poet's agency. It will then go on to relate this pattern of the creation and limitation of realism to trends in Propertius's love elegies as a whole, by describing, via illustrative examples, how the most common means by which he creates realism serve also to limit it. The aspects of his style that will be considered in detail are his original use and manipulation of the conventions of the
elegiac genre, his mixing of vividly realistic with fanciful imagery, and his juxtaposition of a quick, naturalistic thought-progression with comparatively organized mythical exempla. Since I have chosen these devices for their frequent use by Propertius, and because they are characteristic of his style as compared with that of the other elegists, my analysis of their use and effects will provide the cross-section of Propertius's methods in creating realism that the close study of 1.3, 2.29b, and 4.7 in chapter three does not. The fifth, concluding chapter will briefly relate the pattern of the creation and limitation of realism, that will have been charted in the preceding chapters, to Propertius's stated ideas about his genre and its capabilities, and will thus demonstrate the importance of these features of his poetry to his general method and attitudes.

Before proceeding with the examination of the creation and limitation of the realism in 1.3, 2.29b, and 4.7, and the ways in which these relate to trends in Propertius's love poetry as a whole, however, we must consider what precisely is meant by realism in the first place, and how this applies to Propertius. As such, the following chapter will review major trends in critics' thinking on the subject over the course of modern Propertian scholarship, and will conclude with a definition of the term "realism" as it will be used in the present study.
CHAPTER TWO: Literature Review

I. Introduction, and the Biographical Approach

As critical approaches to the works of Propertius have changed, so have critics' views on realism in his poetry: views on what aspects of his poetry, if any, are realistic and what the term implies, on what aspects of his style produce realism and how they do so, and on whether this realism is a necessary result of the poet's personality, a self-conscious artistic effect, or some combination of the two.

Propertius's elegies only really began to receive widespread scholarly attention following Karl Lachmann's edition of 1816. This and the commentaries that followed throughout most of the nineteenth century, however, were primarily concerned with textual criticism, the text of Propertius being notoriously corrupt.8 A review of critical attitudes to realism in Propertius can thus usefully begin only with scholarly approaches from around the turn of the last century. At that time it was the tendency for critics to take a biographical approach to the works of the Latin poets, fashioning personal histories and character portraits for them based on events described and attitudes expressed in their poems, and extrapolating from these when analyzing their style and technique.9 J.P. Postgate (1884) and W.Y. Sellar (1899), for example, under the assumption that Propertius gives us a relatively faithful account of a real-life relationship as it happened in his own experience, both go so far as to use clues taken from the poems to reconstruct a detailed life story.10 Both critics also take Propertius's style as indicative of the poet's real-life personality, and the emotional states presented in the love poems as a genuine

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8 For a brief history of the reception of Propertius, and of Propertian scholarship through to the nineteenth century, see J.P. Sullivan 1976: 46-50.
10 Postgate 1884: xvii-xxviii; Sellar 1899: 278-290.
reflection of the poet's state of mind during their composition, rather than as primarily the result of conscious devices.\(^{11}\) This approach continued to affect critics' interpretations of Propertius's work through the first few decades of the twentieth century. H.E. Butler and E.A. Barber (1933), for example, devote a section of the introduction to their edition of Propertius to a reconstructed narrative of the poet's life, and later weigh the likelihood of each situation narrated in book one having actually occurred.\(^ {12}\) Agnes Kirsopp Lake (1937) too uses the biographical approach as the basis for her argument that the real woman on whom Cynthia was based was still alive when 4.7 was composed, using evidence from earlier poems to suggest that the harsher tone thus implied would be consistent with the trajectory of the relationship.\(^ {13}\)

Of course, none of these critics are entirely limited by the biographical bent of their interpretations. Sellar, for example, sees Propertius's approach to his material as heavily influenced by a desire to replicate the Alexandrian style of Callimachus (1899: 295-296). The biographical approach, though, does form the basis for many of their conclusions, since they see the persona as being practically equivalent to the real-life poet. See, for example, Postgate's suggestion that Propertius must have rarely looked back over completed poems (1884: lxxiii); Sellar's assumptions about the order of composition of the poems of the first book, based on charting Propertius's emotional state (1899: 296-297); and Kirsopp Lake's suggestion that because 4.7 and 4.8 appear after the end of Propertius and Cynthia's relationship, described at the end of the third book, they

\(^{11}\) Postgate 1884: xxxvi-xxxviii; Sellar 1899: 299, 312.

\(^{12}\) Butler and Barber 1933 (xviii-xxiii, lxiv-lxv). See also Elizabeth Hazelton Haight 1932: 82ff. and 105, for another "biography" of Propertius based on events mentioned in the poems and comments on how his personality is seen through his style, respectively.

\(^{13}\) Kirsopp Lake 1937: 53-55; Postgate (1884: xxvi-xxvii) and Sellar (1899: 290) had both taken Propertius's word for it that the real "Cynthia" was in fact dead at the time of the poem's composition.
should be read in the context of that separation (1937: 54). For critics taking this approach, then, any impression of realism in Propertius's love elegies is largely a product of the poet's genuine sincerity: it is the result of his conscious art only in the sense that he has faithfully and evocatively depicted characters and events with an existence outside the poems' contexts, in a tone and style reflecting his actual emotional state.

II. Rejection of the Biographical Approach, and Realism as a Conscious Effect

By the middle of the twentieth century, literary criticism in general had moved on from its "predominantly biographical, historical, psychological, impressionistic, and empirical" focus,¹⁴ and accompanying changes had occurred in Propertian scholarship as well. Around this time, influenced by the development of scholarly trends that involved a shift of focus away from the author and towards the work itself and its characteristics, such as formalism and New Criticism,¹⁵ many Propertian scholars began firmly to reject the biographical approach. To Archibald Allen (1962), for example, as well as Gordon Williams (1968), Georg Luck (1969), Hubbard (1974), and others,¹⁶ the existence outside of the poems of Cynthia and of the situations in which she and Propertius's persona find themselves is both impossible to determine, and irrelevant. Most theorize that Cynthia was to some degree based on a real woman, but not that any of the details of the stories that Propertius tells necessarily correspond to real events in that relationship. This quickly became the critical consensus. Since they do not believe that Propertius is trying to tell a cohesive story, but that he is instead inventing isolated scenes or moulding

characters and situations to the necessities of each poem. 17 critics who reject the biographical approach consider each poem's narrative as essentially a unit in itself, and for the most part discuss them as such. They do not deny the thematic connections and motifs that unite poems, particularly within individual books, or the obvious mini-narratives implied by poems that make direct reference to each other -- 1.7 and 1.9, for example -- but simply reject the idea that there is a single overarching story being told by the love elegies as a whole. Their non-biographical approach also means that they take emotional realism in the poems -- what Postgate or Sellar would describe as a result of Propertius's "sincerity" -- to be instead more purely the result of conscious stylistic choices. To these critics, for example, Propertius's tendency to make quick changes of subject without logical transition is indicative not of genuine emotional upset, but of the conscious replication of a tone of emotional upset. 18 It is a general, textural resemblance between the poem and reality that creates realism, rather than a reflection of a specific, really existing situation and frame of mind. The same principle applies to these critics' assessment of realism in characterization, descriptive passages, and other aspects of Propertius's poetry.

By the 1980s, the idea that Propertius consciously used poetic devices to create both concrete and emotional realism was well established. R.J. Baker (1980), for example, taking it as a given that Propertius intends us to read the tone and content of 1.3 as both psychologically and physically realistic, uses this as the background for his interpretation of troublesome lines. 19 By 1985, Jasper Griffin could confidently state that

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19 See Baker 1980: 250-252, 256.
"the days have passed when we used to wonder whether [Horace's] Chloe came before Glycera, or how to fit together the occasional chronological hints in Propertius," and he even refers to the biographical approach to criticism as "sadly naïve" (1985: 26, 48).

Once it had for the most part been agreed upon that the realism in Propertius's elegies was an intentional effect, and not the result of the poet's inherent sincerity, critics began to discuss at greater length precisely how he achieved this effect. John Warden, for example, devoted a book-length study (1980) to the relationship between the poet and the reader in Propertius's elegies, which, he argues based on a close reading of 4.7, is intentionally complicated by the poet, such that it creates psychological realism.20

Thomas D. Benediktson (1989) charted several aspects of Propertius's poetry which he felt made it in some ways have more in common with modern literature than with that of his contemporaries,21 and the immediacy and realism that characterizes Propertius's description of emotional states was one of the aspects that Benediktson pinpointed.22

Shorter analyses of individual poems tended likewise to focus on ways in which Propertius's characterization of Cynthia, use of imagery, and other aspects of his poetry made for emotional plausibility via a realistic texture.23

III. Reservations About Realism, and Feminist Criticism

Of course, not all critics have been in agreement with the basic idea that realism is a characteristic feature of Propertius's poems at all. Some have rejected the idea

20 Warden has recently revisited the idea; see 2008: 95-97.
21 Hence, perhaps, modern (and modernist) poets' greater interest in translating or reinterpreting Propertius's poems over those of the other elegists, despite previous eras' preference for Ovid (for which see Sullivan 1976: 47-48); see for example W.B. Yeats' "A Thought From Propertius" (The Wild Swans at Coole, 1917), Ezra Pound's Homage to Sextus Propertius (1919), and Robert Lowell's "The Ghost", based on Propertius 4.7 (Lord Weary's Castle, 1946).
altogether, while others have accepted it only with reservations, or redefined the scope of
the term to embrace only certain aspects of Propertius's style. Clarence W. Mendell
(1965), for one, finds Propertius's concern with his persona's emotional states, which he
describes as "morbid self-pity", to be more clinical than realistically emotional in tone,
and Propertius's generous use of mythical exempla to be at odds with the creation of
simple realism.24 Another dissenter is Paul Veyne (1988), who, analyzing elegy from a
poststructuralist standpoint, argues that the world in which Propertius's as well as
Tibullus's and Ovid's erotic elegy is set is meant to be just as far from reality as that of
bucolic poetry. He sees elegy as an essentially humorous genre, not intended to be taken
as realistic in terms of the events, characters, or emotions described.25 Both of these
critics, though, are in agreement with the underlying premise of those who do favour
realism as an important element of Propertius's style: that the relative degree of realism in
his works, whatever that may be, is the result of conscious choices rather than an
inevitable consequence of the poet's personality.

Feminist criticism, from the 1970s onwards, introduced a new viewpoint on the
specific question of how realistically women and female voices are depicted in elegy, a
genre in which the relationship between the sexes is a major focus. "Realism" is used by
these critics, beginning with Judith P. Hallett (1973), primarily to refer to the degree of
faithfulness with which the poet has depicted the real-life dynamics of contemporary
relationships between specific individuals and between the sexes in general. Their
approach thus falls somewhere between that of the biographical focus of early twentieth-
century critics and the later critics who rejected it. Like their contemporaries of the mid

24 Mendell 1965: 205; see also 195, 211.
to late twentieth century and beyond, feminist critics generally reject the idea that Propertius and the other elegists are faithfully depicting real relationships. Their definition of realism, though, is more tied to the specific correspondences between the world of the poems and the real-life world of the poets than the definition used by their contemporaries, for whom realism is often a more generalized question of texture.\textsuperscript{26} This being the case, they tend only reservedly to accept the idea that Propertius's elegies are realistic, acknowledging the realism of their texture while rejecting the realism of the relationships and characterizations presented. Hallett, for example, suggests that the female beloveds of the elegiac poets' personas do not so much reflect the reality of women's lives at the time of composition, as present a sort of "counter-cultural", quasi-feminist picture that, at least in some ways, inverts traditional Roman ideas about the relationship between the sexes. Ellen Greene (1995), taking a similar approach, but coming to a less optimistic conclusion, argues that Cynthia, particularly as she is depicted in 1.3, is unrealistically characterized in that she is entirely a projection of the poet's male fantasies and anxieties.\textsuperscript{27}

\textbf{IV. Poet, Characters, and the Reader}

In the context of late twentieth century developments in literary criticism, such as New Historicism and reader-response theory, which emphasize the importance of the context in which literature is produced and received, respectively,\textsuperscript{28} the focus of Propertian scholarship has shifted again. The various intertwining relationships between

\textsuperscript{26} For a clear expression of this contrast, see Maria Wyke's summary of her approach to realism in Propertius, and reactions to earlier approaches (2002: 13-18).
\textsuperscript{27} Greene 1995: 303, 307-309.
\textsuperscript{28} See Habib 2008: 147-150, 153-159.
the poet and his real-life contemporaries, the characters and personas in poems, and the reader (whether contemporary or modern) have been of particular concern to critics in recent years, and this has had implications for attitudes to realism in Propertius's poetry.

Maria Wyke, in several articles that have been quite influential on recent interpretations of the elegists, introduced the idea that Cynthia, whom she describes as a *scripta puella*, or "written woman", is in large part a projection of Propertius's ideas about literature, and that the relationship depicted thus represents not only the lover-persona's relationship with his beloved, but that of the poet with love poetry itself. This interpretation, with its added layer of symbolism, naturally limits the degree to which the depiction of Cynthia can be considered "realistic". Others, such as Shelley Kaufhold (1997), Barbara Flaschenriem (1998), Alison Sharrock (2000), and Brian W. Breed (2003), all of whom consider Propertius's elegies firmly in the context of the intellectual and social climate in which they were written, have focused on the degree of autonomy that characters seem to have as individuals as the feature that defines how realistic they should be considered to be. They single Propertius's works out as particularly realistic because of his complex (and, to them, naturalistic) depiction of relationships and the course of his persona's and characters' thoughts and emotions.

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30 The phrase is borrowed from 2.10.8, *bella canam, quando scripta puella mea est* ("I will sing of wars, once my girl has been written"), from a poem in which Propertius contemplates one day abandoning love elegy for epic.
V. Conclusion, and a Definition of "Realism"

The approach that I take in this thesis has been informed primarily by the reaction against the biographical approach, and the trend to acknowledge the conscious agency of the poet in creating realism. I take the overall effect of realism and the aspects of a poem that contribute to it to be the result of conscious devices employed by the poet, rather than the result of any "sincerity" on his part. My approach has also been shaped by the current focus on the relationship between poet, persona, characters, and reader. It should be noted, however, that the idea of the *scripta puella* has not been adopted in this thesis. The interactions between Cynthia and Propertius's persona will here be taken primarily to represent a literal (albeit fictional) relationship between two people, and not an extended metaphor.

I define "realism" as the creation of an atmosphere, texture, and/or overall narrative that is internally consistent and seems "real", in that it reflects the complexity of the real world experienced by the reader, whether physically, psychologically, and/or emotionally. By this definition, characters achieve realism if they seem to be three-dimensional, thinking and feeling individuals whose behaviour is consistent with their personality and situation, and changes as these conditions change and develop, rather than type characters with no emotional or psychological complexity. Their actions need not always be predictable (which might, on the contrary, diminish their level of realism), but should be in line with the psychological background that the author has laid out for them. Characters are realistic, in other words, if they give the impression that they have, or could have, an existence outside of the bounds of the narrative in which they appear. This realism is not dependent on the characters' precise resemblance to any really existing
persons or types of person; entirely fanciful or mythical characters, such as Cynthia's speaking door in 1.16, or the gang of Cupids in 2.29a,\textsuperscript{31} can still be realistic, as long as they speak and behave in a manner appropriate to their situation. This is because internal consistency is more important for the creation of realism by this definition than even general conformity to the real world. In other words, the physical aspect of realism can be sacrificed without the overall effect of realism being destroyed, provided that the psychological and emotional aspects remain in place.\textsuperscript{32} As for descriptive passages, these are realistic if they vividly evoke for the reader the situation in which the characters find themselves, in a manner consistent with the nature of the narrative and the emotional context. The same principle that internal consistency trumps overall plausibility also applies here. The description of Cynthia's ghost in 4.7,\textsuperscript{33} though it describes something doubly unreal (a ghost within a dream), is realistic, because it incorporates physical details that minutely reflect reality or evoke experiences that do exist in the real world, and because it plausibly suggests the emotional reactions of the speaker.

The fact that the effect of realism depends on its different aspects - physical, psychological, and so on - to varying degrees can, in turn, create a range of levels of realism. For example, a situation that, within the narrative itself, is a potential or entirely imaginary one can seem unrealistically exaggerated in terms of the events of its narrative, but be realistic in terms of the way in which these events are described.\textsuperscript{34} In such cases, devices that would ordinarily create a purely realistic effect instead make the reader relate

\textsuperscript{31} For more on whom, see below, pg. 68.
\textsuperscript{32} On the difference in acceptability to a reader or audience between an implausible possibility and a plausible impossibility, see Arist. Poet. 1460a26-1460b2, 1461b9-1461b14. See also Potolsky's comments on realism in science fiction: "the sense of realism lies in the manner of presentation, which renders the unreal familiar or the real strangely unfamiliar" (2006: 96).
\textsuperscript{33} See below, pg. 41-43.
\textsuperscript{34} See for example Propertius's revenge fantasy at 2.8.25-28, or 2.26a, the dream-narrative in which he sees Cynthia shipwrecked.
to an unreal situation on the same terms as if it were real. One might compare surrealistic paintings, in which impossible scenes are depicted in a realistic manner or juxtaposed with realistic elements; their unsettling effect relies on their partial resemblance to reality. A situation described by a speaker in a heightened emotional state can yield an opposite but corresponding result. In this case, even if the narrative is realistic, the terms used to describe it may be hyperbolic or otherwise out of proportion.\footnote{See for example Propertius's ecstatic joy at having spent the whole night with Cynthia, which, in 2.14, he describes as greater than that of Agamemnon upon the fall of Troy, claims will grant him immortality, and so on - comparisons that are entirely emotionally plausible in the mouth of the speaker, but, objectively speaking, are exaggerations.} The reader is thus made to relate to a real-life situation on an exaggeratedly intense level. Both results make a situation seem "larger than life", and will thus be referred to in this thesis as "hyperlrealistic".

The scope and implications of the term "realism" having been established, we can now proceed to examine this effect at work in Propertius's love poetry, beginning with the case study provided by elegies 1.3, 2.29b, and 4.7.
CHAPTER THREE: The Creation of Realism in 1.3, 2.29b, and 4.7

I. Introduction

Realism in Propertius's elegies is a complex effect, with several poetic devices contributing to it. In 1.3, 2.29b, and 4.7, two of these devices are especially important, and are employed in a uniquely complex manner. Both contribute specifically to the psychological and emotional type of realism. The first is the expression of the differing perspectives of Propertius and Cynthia as characters; the second is the related issue of the interaction of each character's perception with whatever objective reality may exist in the world of the poems, which is itself often in doubt. In these three poems, Propertius and Cynthia, as characters in the scenes presented, have different attitudes, and perceive situations differently; their perspectives thus contrast and interact sometimes with each other, sometimes with the objective reality of the situation (insofar as it is presented), and sometimes even with the perspective of the reader. The resulting complexity makes for a realistically layered psychological context for the characters' interactions. Each of them seems to be capable of independent thought, and is fully realized as an individual, rather than as a type without independent and vivid characterization, or a mouthpiece who fully shares the perspective of the poet.

The importance of these issues of perception, which develop characterization and foster a sense of realism in 1.3, 2.29b, and 4.7, is made clear by the fact that most of the characteristics that the three poems share are in some way related to these same issues. All the poems' most distinctive shared features emphasize and complicate issues related to individuals’ differing perspectives, and the relationship between perception and reality. Firstly, the plot of each poem involves a surprise visit, which means that in each case
Propertius's and Cynthia's perspectives are brought into juxtaposition suddenly, and thus with significant impact; the circumstances of each visit prompt accusations of infidelity on one side or the other, and in no case is the truth of the matter ever established.

Second, sleep and dreams are a motif in all three poems, with all the connotations that they bring with them, of the more than usual isolation of an individual's perspective from reality and from others' perspectives. Each poem, too, contains a highly evocative description of Cynthia, which the reader cannot help but compare and contrast with her later speech and behaviour as the poem progresses; this makes for a clear illustration in each case of the doubtful relationship between perception and reality in the world of the poems. Perhaps most notably, in all three poems Cynthia speaks, becoming in each case a sort of narrator in her own right, though of course a secondary one; this aspect of the poems in particular, and the way in which Propertius handles it, suggests a whole variety of issues having to do with reality and subjectivity. The final similarity is that in each case, Propertius gives no verbal response to Cynthia's speech, and the reader is left with very little or no explicit guidance on how to interpret what he or she has just read; this narrative device leaves each poem open-ended. A close examination of each of these shared characteristics and the specific ways in which they relate to issues of differing perspective and the relationship between perception and objective reality will demonstrate the complexity of these issues in each of the three poems, individually and collectively, and show how they work together to create a sense of realism.
II. The Surprise Visit

The first shared characteristic of the three poems, the surprise visit, is an aspect of plot; in each case it forms the backbone of the story. In 1.3, Propertius comes back drunk from a party, and the sleeping Cynthia does not know he is present until she wakes; in 2.29b, Propertius surprises Cynthia in the morning, hoping to find out whether she has been sleeping alone; and in 4.7, Cynthia's ghost unexpectedly visits Propertius as he lies in bed. These surprise visits all involve the sudden meeting and interaction of the two characters, with their differing perspectives. In each case, Propertius and Cynthia have their theories about what the other has been doing until the point of their meeting, and in each case one of the lovers lays charges of sexual infidelity or of disloyalty of other kinds against the other. Sometimes their suspicions are at least partly confirmed, sometimes the reader knows that they are mistaken, but most often the objective truth of the situation is left unclear at the end of the elegy.

In 1.3, when Cynthia finally wakes, her speech begins and ends with her theories about where Propertius has been all night (1.3.35-38, 43-46); she assumes that he has been with another lover. The fact that Propertius comes in drunk and wearing a crown of flowers (1.3.9, 21-22) suggests that he has been at a *convivium* rather than visiting another woman, but this is not a certainty, and in any case such parties could involve mixed company, and are not inconsistent with the infidelity of which Cynthia accuses Propertius. 36 In 2.33b for example, Cynthia herself drinks, garlanded, at a party; in the same poem, Propertius refers to the sexual licence that wine encourages at such occasions.

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36 For Cynthia's accusations as unfounded, see R.O.A.M. Lyne 1980: 118; for the suggestion that a *convivium* and female company are not mutually exclusive, see Kaufhold 1997: 89-90, 89 n.17. For men and women drinking together, see for example Hor. *Carm.* 1.36; Ov. *Am.* 1.4; Pet. *Sat.* 50, 67. For the *convivium* as an opportunity for seduction, see Ov. *Ars Am.* 1.229-244.
(2.33.25, 34-37); it is then quite possible that Cynthia's accusations are well founded. In any case, we are not told precisely where Propertius has been before the start of the poem, whom he has been with, or what he has been doing. However, if Cynthia is assuming is that Propertius has been out all night, and has only just returned home as dawn is approaching (exactis sideribus, 1.3.38), she is, in this at least, mistaken. Propertius does indeed arrive late (sera nocte, 1.3.10), but proceeds to spend the rest of the night admiring and doting on the sleeping Cynthia. The use of the imperfect tense in the description of his attentions -- solvebam, ponebam, gaudebam, dabam (1.3.21-26) -- along with the modo…modo construction of 21-23, suggests that he thus occupied himself for some time. The contrast and interaction of perspectives involved in this poem -- of Cynthia's and Propertius's perspectives with each other, and of both with the reader's as well -- is thus complex and varied on the factual level itself. No information in the earlier part of the poem either confirms or contradicts Cynthia's charge that Propertius has been unfaithful. She seems satisfied that she is right; Propertius must know, but does not tell us either way; and the reader cannot be sure. The middle section of the poem does, however, demonstrate that Cynthia's implied accusations of Propertius's neglect and lack of concern for her (1.3.37-38, 43-44) are unfounded, or at least exaggerated. We know as well as Propertius does that he has spent a large part of the night at Cynthia's side, but, having been asleep, she is unaware that her accusation is unfair. On the whole, though, we do not know whom to believe.

The issues of perspective involved in the surprise visit in 2.29b are simpler than those in 1.3 or 4.7, as is perhaps to be expected from a shorter poem, but they are present, and reminiscent of those in 1.3. Propertius has arrived early in the morning to surprise
Cynthia and see whether she is sleeping alone; it turns out that she is, and she berates Propertius in turn for his own lack of fidelity and trust. In this case, Propertius does reveal a change in perspective; by the end of the poem, he claims to have abandoned his suspicions and been convinced by Cynthia's claims of fidelity: *sic ego tam sancti custos deludor amoris* ("thus I was made a fool of, keeping watch over a love so sacred"

2.29.41). The reader will not necessarily be so charitable, however; Propertius, after all, has a practical reason to be quick to accept Cynthia's version of events: ever since the confrontation described, Cynthia has been withholding her favours, presumably to punish him for his lack of trust (2.29.42). In her own speech, meanwhile, Cynthia is defensive and sarcastic, turning Propertius's implied accusation back onto him, and even threatening to leave him (2.29.31-34). The hostility of Cynthia's outburst is emphasized by the suddenness with which her speech begins. With *ait* delayed, her words, beginning with the short, sharp interrogative, *quid*, quite violently interrupt Propertius's musings on her beauty (2.29.30-31). The excessiveness of her anger may suggest a note of guilt.37 Furthermore, Cynthia's actual arguments -- that her bed shows no signs of a second occupant, and that her breathing is not heavy (2.29.35-38) -- apply in this particular case, but have no bearing on her faithfulness in general. Thus, though it is by no means certain that Propertius means us to infer that Cynthia is unfaithful, there does remain a shadow of doubt. As in 1.3, Cynthia is of course a biased source, and so when she accuses Propertius of infidelity (2.29.32-34), we cannot be sure whether her complaints are justified either. In contrast to the specificity of her defense of her own actions, too, her accusation of Propertius generalizes: the question *me similem vestris moribus esse putas?* (2.29.32) can, with plural for singular, mean "do you think my ways are like yours?";

with the force of the plural felt, though, it can just as well mean "do you think my ways are like those of your sort?", which forms a much less specific accusation. Either way, Cynthia cites no particular instance of infidelity. Though the layers of uncertainty and the interaction of perspectives in this case, then, are not so complex as in 1.3, they are nonetheless present.

The interaction of perspectives and the uncertainty that it produces are more pronounced in 4.7, the longest of the three poems. Here, the ghost of Cynthia appears to Propertius as he lies in bed; the situation is thus the reverse of that in 1.3 or 2.29b, since Cynthia is now the one visiting Propertius. Nevertheless, the plot progresses in essentially the same way as it does in the earlier poems: Cynthia berates Propertius for his infidelity, this time adding the charges that he neglected her funeral rites and even that he stood by and let his new lover conspire to poison her, take her place, and rule over the household. As we shall see,38 in most of the poem it is not entirely clear whether Cynthia's ghost is a real shade returning to haunt Propertius, merely a dream, or perhaps both (a real ghost, appearing in a dream). No matter which of these is intended, however, there is, as before, doubt as to the accuracy of her allegations. The reader has never before heard of Chloris, the supposed usurper of Cynthia's place, but Cynthia mentions her name offhandedly: certainly the implication is that Propertius knows who she is (4.7.72).39 Propertius does tell us at the beginning of the poem that he is sleeping alone, in terms that suggest that he has not taken a new lover: *cum mihi somnus ab exsequiis penderet amoris, / et quererer lecti frigida regna mei* ("as my sleep hung on the burial of my love, and I lamented over the cold kingdom of my bed," 4.7.5-6). As with Cynthia's

38 See below, pg. 29-31.
proof of her innocence in 2.29b, however, this only really speaks for the current emptiness of his bed;\textsuperscript{40} he does not tell us in clear terms whether he has taken up with a new lover or not, and, as with the other two poems, gives no rebuttal to Cynthia's allegations.

Her other charges are equally unsupported by evidence outside of her speech. Cynthia's story of the way Propertius neglected her burial rites seems plausible enough, but as her chronologically jumbled narrative continues, its details become increasingly strange. If Cynthia could tell that her wine was poisoned -- \textit{sensi ego, cum insidiis pallida vina bibi} (4.7.36) -- why did she drink it, and say nothing about it at the time?\textsuperscript{41}

If the suggestion in lines 41-46 is that Chloris now has control over Cynthia's slaves, it too is a strange one; it is nowhere in the rest of the elegies suggested that Cynthia is Propertius's legal wife, and thus it is difficult to imagine a situation in which Propertius's next lover would have any control over the dead Cynthia's household.\textsuperscript{42} Even if these slaves are Propertius's own, which seems more likely,\textsuperscript{43} Cynthia's stories of the way in which those who remember her fondly are being treated seem rather fanciful; they read more like a scene from mime or comedy than from elegy, right down to the too appropriate names of the slaves: Petale (from \textit{πέταλον}, "leaf") for the one whose crime involved garlands of flowers, and Lalage (\textit{λαλαγή}, "chatterbox") for the one who spoke

\textsuperscript{40} See Hutchinson 2006: 173.
\textsuperscript{41} Doubtful accusations of poisoning are not unknown in actual legal speeches of the period; for this and other ways in which 4.7 recalls legal speeches in general, and Cicero's \textit{Pro Caelio} in particular, see Basil Dufallo 2007: 79-81. The fact that Cynthia drinks wine at all, and admits it, itself speaks ill of her morals, but then, so does her relationship with Propertius; on women and wine in the late Republic and early Empire, see Nicholas Purcell 1994: 194-201, 205-207.
\textsuperscript{42} W.A. Camps (1965: 6, 115) admits that he is unable to reconstruct what the context is supposed to be, in terms of Propertius's and Cynthia's living arrangements before her death; Boucher (1965: 437) and Ronald Musker (1972: 18-19) point out that the clues about them are inconsistent and hard to make sense of throughout the elegies.
\textsuperscript{43} Hutchinson believes so (2006: 178-180).
inadvisedly. Is Cynthia wildly inventing these allegations, exaggerating actual slights, or telling the truth? The reader is given no information from any perspective but Cynthia's, and is left in a state of uncertainty similar to that produced by 1.3 and 2.29b, not only on the subject of Cynthia's charges of infidelity, but the whole narrative that she presents.

In all three poems, then, the surprise visit of one lover to the other suddenly juxtaposes their differing perspectives, and soon involves allegations of infidelity and neglect. In none of the three is the reader made fully aware of the truth behind these allegations, or of the accuracy of each character's theories and accusations about what the other has been doing before their sudden meeting; Propertius provides us with no larger context, even by clear implication. The arguments that are meant to support the accuser's views are always either unsupported by more objective evidence in the rest of the poem, or strange in themselves, and thus questionable enough to cast doubt upon them, though not enough to invalidate them completely. Like Cynthia and Propertius, the reader joins a conversation unexpectedly; unlike them, however, the reader is an eavesdropper - a third party who is unaware of the context, and thus unable to judge the reality of the situation accurately. Whatever ambiguity exists for the characters, it is magnified and thus made more vivid for the reader.

III. Sleep and Dreams

The next similarity between the three poems that has to do with issues of perception, reality, and the interaction of perspectives is that sleep and dreams play an

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important part in each. For much of 1.3, Cynthia is asleep, and Propertius theorizes about her dreams; in 2.29b, Cynthia has just woken, and her dreams on a past occasion are mentioned in the passage describing her; and for most of 4.7, there is doubt as to whether Propertius is sleeping or not when Cynthia's ghost visits him, and thus whether she in turn is an actual ghost visiting the wakeful Propertius, a true dream through which the dead Cynthia is actually communicating with the sleeping Propertius, or even a false dream. Since sleep and dreams involve the greatest possible division between individuals' perspectives despite physical proximity -- a person who is awake cannot know what a sleeper is dreaming about, whereas the sleeper does not even know another person is present -- Propertius's use of these as a motif in all three poems emphasizes the disjointedness of perspective that he presents, and the characters' resulting failure to relate to one another.

Cynthia spends the first two thirds of 1.3 asleep. Propertius does not simply state that she is asleep, but emphasizes the fact, spending the first eight lines comparing her to three separate sleeping mythical characters, and describing the position in which she is lying. The contrast is sudden and pronounced when Propertius's own persona enters the scene, "dragging his drunken footsteps" and accompanied by slaves with torches (1.3.9-10). Firstly, it calls into question whose perspective we have been presented with thus far. Was the description of Cynthia that of the drunken Propertius, transposed for poetic effect? Or, more likely, was it also that of the sober, narrating Propertius? Secondly, his inebriated state makes the course of the narrative more than usually unpredictable; for the next twenty-five lines, half of the poem's length, the reader expects Cynthia to wake any moment, and wonders what will happen when she does. The suggestion in line 8 that
Cynthia may not be sleeping particularly soundly (\textit{non certis nixa caput manibus,} "lying with her head supported on unsteady hands") lends an even greater sense of tension to the proceedings.\textsuperscript{45} Propertius, drunk though he is, soon becomes aware that the situation is delicate, and modifies his behaviour based on his fear of what Cynthia is likely to say and do when she does finally wake: \textit{non tamen ausus eram dominae turbare quietem, / expertae metuens iurgia saevitiae} ("I did not, however, dare to disturb my mistress' rest, / fearing as I did the quarrels of her well-known fierceness" 1.3.17-18). For the majority of the poem, then, events are largely at an impasse. Propertius is captivated (\textit{intentis haerebam fixus ocellis}, "I stood transfixed, with my eyes gazing at her," 1.3.19), but does not dare to do anything to wake Cynthia, and so he settles for watching her sleep, arranging her hair, cautiously placing fruit on her sleeping body, and so on (1.3.19-30).

While Cynthia remains asleep, the action is of course utterly one-sided, as is explicitly brought to our attention in the case of the fruit: \textit{omniaque ingrato largibar munera somno} ("and I lavished all my gifts on ungrateful sleep," 1.3.25). Any actual interaction between the two characters is delayed. In this part of the poem, then, we see everything from Propertius's point of view alone.\textsuperscript{46} Greene finds fault with earlier scholars for what she sees as their tendency to "privilege and romanticize the male perspective of the narrator" here (1995: 306), but, as Breed explains (2003: 48), this is evidence more of "the power this poem has to impose a perspective on the reader" than of particular bias on the part of scholars. The utterly removed perspective of the sleeping Cynthia is unknown to the character of Propertius at this point in the narrative, and so is not expressed simply because it cannot be. Like Propertius, the reader is as yet unaware

\textsuperscript{46} Even if this point of view is a double one, incorporating that of Propertius the character and Propertius the narrator; see below, pg. 34-38.
how Cynthia has spent her evening, and so at this point has little evidence on which to base ideas about what her perspective on the current situation will be (other than her aforementioned *experta saevitia*). Cynthia sighs and moves occasionally, and so seems to be dreaming (1.3.27), but neither we nor Propertius have any way of telling what or whom she is dreaming about, nor do we ever find out. He fears that she is dreaming of being assaulted - an interpretation that seems to be based more on the memory of his own original intentions towards Cynthia (1.3.11-16) than on observation, since he is perfectly aware that there is no way to tell what she is actually dreaming about (*obstipui vano credulus auspicio*, "I was dumbstruck, convinced by the empty sign," 1.3.28).

It is significant that Propertius's theory about Cynthia's dreams is cut short by her final waking (1.3.31-33).47 The long-awaited revelation of what Cynthia has to say thus comes just at the moment when Propertius has been actively wondering what she might be thinking, and there is of course a marked contrast between the two: Cynthia is unconcerned with whatever she has been dreaming about (implying that Propertius's fear that she was having a nightmare was indeed empty), and her complaint is not with some unknown man, but with Propertius himself. If Propertius was "dumbstruck" before (1.3.28), we can only imagine what his reaction to the waking Cynthia's tirade might be, juxtaposed as it is with his protective feelings towards the sleeping Cynthia. By having Cynthia remain asleep for so long, then, and having the reader be exposed to and identify only with Propertius the character's own point of view as he observes her and theorizes about what she might be experiencing, the poet heavily emphasizes issues of perspective in the poem, such that there is a very pronounced shift when Cynthia finally wakes and

47 She also wakes quite suddenly; Warden (2008: 60) points out that she does so in the pentameter of the verse, where new information or plot developments are not expected to occur.
her perspective is revealed. All the uncertainties involved in the interaction of Propertius's and Cynthia's perspectives which follows are emphasized by the delay, and by the issues of subjectivity raised by the part of the poem in which Cynthia is asleep.

The plot of 2.29b is more compressed; Cynthia wakes as soon as Propertius arrives, and so the delay in their interaction is significantly less drawn-out. The connotations of disconnected perspective related to sleep and dreams, though, are present in the poem nonetheless. The poem does, after all, take place as Cynthia has just woken up, as Propertius repeatedly mentions. The first words establish its morning setting (Mane erat, 2.29.23); lines 29-30 make reference to the fact that Cynthia has just woken up - so recently, in fact, that she has not yet risen or put clothes on; and in the first line of her speech, in which she accuses Propertius of being a matutinus . . . speculator amicae (2.29.31), the strange phrase again reminds us that it is morning. The idea that Cynthia has just woken up is most evocatively expressed, however, by the comparison of her appearance this morning to her appearance on a previous morning (2.29.25-28); this passage, describing a time when Cynthia went to the Temple of Vesta to ward off the omens of her nightmares, brings the image of dreams into the mix, and with them their general connotations of disconnected perspective. There is even a verbal echo from 1.3, which suggests a more specific allusion to the earlier poem: obstipui (2.29.25), Propertius's reaction to Cynthia's beauty, which triggers the story of her beauty when she went to tell about her dreams, recalls obstupui (a variant spelling of the same word), Propertius's reaction to the dreaming Cynthia's sighs and movements (1.3.28). The word

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48 For the shift in focus from Propertius's gaze to Cynthia's opening eyes at this point in the poem as an additional means of emphasizing a shift in perspective, see Breed 2003: 49.  
49 See Warden 1980: 74 and 2008: 64 for the oddness of the phrase, which he renders as "early-morning-girlfriend-spy".  
50 For more on this practice, see below, pg. 39-40.
occurs in only one other place in all of Propertius, and nowhere else in the context of his relationship with Cynthia. Its use here, then, especially in conjunction with the mention of dreams, reminds us of the specific disconnection of perspective at the point in 1.3 in which the word appears. The similarity in context between the two poems further encourages the comparison. It is also interesting to note that in neither case do we learn the specifics of what Cynthia actually dreamt about, which only magnifies our impression of the remoteness of Propertius's and Cynthia's consciousnesses one from the other, and ours from both. If characters have thoughts that we are aware of but not privy to, it suggests that they have lives outside of the narratives presented, and they seem more realistic as a result. Though less directly than in 1.3, then, and to a lesser degree, the issues of perspective which are involved in images of sleep and dreams affect Propertius's and Cynthia's interaction and our perception of it in 2.29b as well.

Sleep and dreams contribute to the ambiguity of 1.3 and 2.29b primarily by directly increasing or indirectly emphasizing the disconnection of Propertius's and Cynthia's perspectives. In 4.7, in addition to performing these functions, the characters' status as relates to sleep and dreams is also ambiguous in itself, adding to the general atmosphere of uncertainty; for most of the poem, it is not entirely clear whether Propertius is asleep at all, and thus whether he is simply dreaming the whole encounter. Hutchinson sees no such ambiguity, taking Propertius's description of his own state, *cum mihi somnus ab exsequiis penderet amoris* ("when my sleep hung on the burial of my love," 4.7.5), to mean "when I, in my sleep, was utterly involved in the burial of my beloved," by interpreting *somnus* as standing in for the sleeping Propertius as *amor*.

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51 J. Swinnerton Phillimore 1905: 65. The other use of the word is in the description of Tarpeia's reaction to seeing Tatius for the first time (4.4.21).
stands in for Cynthia (2006: 173). The phrase is obscure, however, and others take it to mean that Propertius is sleeping only fitfully, or that he cannot sleep at all. The question of whether Propertius is asleep is complicated by the next line: *et quererer lecti frigida regna mei* ("and I was lamenting over the cold kingdom of my bed," 4.7.6).

_Penderet_ and _quererer_, both imperfects, seem to be concurrent; can Propertius lament in his sleep? The picture is still ambiguous. The first clear reference to Propertius being asleep is made by Cynthia (*in te iam vires somnus habere potest?* / "can sleep already have power over you?" 4.7.14), but her reliability, when one considers how angry she is, is questionable. And the accusation sounds strange coming directly after a detailed description of Cynthia; how has Propertius been observing Cynthia's appearance, if he has been asleep until this point? Was he asleep at all? If he was, have Cynthia's snapping fingers (4.7.12) woken him up, or is he still asleep, and dreaming the whole encounter?

The only truly firm evidence that Propertius has indeed been asleep throughout the scene, and that Cynthia's ghost is in fact appearing to him in a dream, comes much later, towards the end of her speech, when she refers to herself as the type of dream that tells the truth (4.7.86-87). It is only at this point that, in retrospect, the ambiguities about Propertius's state of wakefulness and Cynthia's status as a dream are cleared up. The obscurity of the description of Propertius's state of wakefulness upon Cynthia's entrance, we now understand, implied that Propertius was indeed already asleep when she appeared

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52 For the suggestion that the phrase means he is sleeping fitfully, see Butler and Barber 1933: 360; for the suggestion that it means he cannot sleep, see Warden 1980: 18; Papanghelis 1987: 150. Camps (1965: 115), Lawrence Richardson Jr. (1977: 456), and Paul Allen Miller (2002: 229) are not sure.

(in his dream), but that he had not fully realized it.\textsuperscript{54} Cynthia's rebuke about Propertius being asleep now also makes sense, even in the context of the description of Cynthia that precedes it. Cynthia can perfectly legitimately tell a clearly conscious Propertius that he is in fact asleep, because she is addressing Propertius's persona in his own dream. The confusion felt by the reader on the subject of whether Propertius is asleep evokes the uncertainty of the dreamer about whether he is awake or not, and the reader's uncertainty, like the dreamer's, is dispelled only shortly before the end of the poem, when the dreamer starts to wake. If practically the whole narrative of the poem, then, describes a dream, this further complicates the question of the truth of Cynthia's claims. She says that she is a dream that has come \textit{piis portis} (4.7.87-88), but this suggests only that she is in fact "Cynthia", and not an empty dream-image impersonating her.\textsuperscript{55} The fact that this is the thrust of the assertion is made clear by the details that follow, that Cynthia includes to back up only the claim that she is a real shade. Cynthia's status as a "true dream", then, says nothing for the truth of her accusations against Propertius or the degree of subjectivity in her narrative. The fact that Propertius is asleep and that Cynthia is a dream only increases the degree of uncertainty in the poem, particularly for the large part of the narrative in which neither the reader nor Propertius himself is entirely aware that he is asleep at all.

In all three poems, the motif of sleep and dreams adds to the sense of uncertainty and subjectivity, and brings issues of perspective further to the fore. The fact that

\textsuperscript{54} This need not mean that Warden, Papanghelis, Camps, Richardson, and Miller are mistaken in their interpretations of line 5 (see above, n. 51); on the contrary, their interpretations only reinforce the idea that Propertius himself is at that point in the poem unsure of his own state of wakefulness.

\textsuperscript{55} See \textit{Aeneid} 6.893-899, and R.G. Austin's discussion thereof (1977: 274-276). The gates of dreams are first described in detail in the \textit{Odyssey}, at 19.562-567; for a full history of the image's use in Classical literature, see E.L. Highbarger 1940. For a brief history of belief in the truthfulness of dreams in Rome, see W.V. Harris 2003.
Propertius's perspective is so utterly disconnected from the sleeping Cynthia's in 1.3 emphasizes the primacy of his point of view in the earlier part of the poem, contrasts it more clearly with that of hers in her speech, and thus stresses the divergence of the two, as does his and our ignorance of what she has been dreaming about. Mention of sleep and dreams in a context that recalls 1.3 brings the same issues into action in 2.29b. The fact that practically all of 4.7 takes place within the dream of the sleeping Propertius strongly emphasizes issues of perspective as well, presenting the reader with the confused perspective of a dreamer and the doubtfully reliable perspective of the figure appearing in his dream. All of these effects give depth to the sense of the individuality of the characters, and thus to the overall psychological realism of the poems.

IV. Propertius's Descriptions of Cynthia Versus her Speeches

The next similarity related to issues of perspective that the poems have in common is structural. All three involve a long, vivid, or otherwise evocative description of Cynthia, followed by a speech by Cynthia that provides some but not total contrast to this description. The first lines of 1.3 are devoted to comparisons of Cynthia to sleeping mythical women, and in the next part of the poem several phrases describe the sleeping Cynthia's posture and appearance; when she wakes, Cynthia's character and narrative put these descriptions in a new light. In 2.29b, Propertius compares the beauty of Cynthia in her nakedness to her beauty on another occasion, when she went to the temple of Vesta to dispel the bad omens in her dreams; in her speech, she again makes the reader reflect on the implications of these descriptions and the contrast between them. In 4.7, before Cynthia's ghost speaks, Propertius describes her appearance as a grotesque mixture of
living and dead; when she speaks, the various aspects of this description are reflected
alternately, as Cynthia's tone fluctuates. In each case, the evocative description prepares
us for what Cynthia will say, and in each case her actual speech and attitudes change the
reader's perspective on the description of her that came before. The shifts in Propertius's
perspective, produced by the differences between his impressions of Cynthia before and
after she has expressed her own perspective, put emphasis on the complex relationship
between perception and reality in the poems.

As noted above, 1.3 opens with six lines describing sleeping mythical characters. It is only afterwards, in lines 7 and 8, that it is made clear that the mythical exempla are describing Cynthia. Propertius presents the exempla to us and gives their connotations free rein before specifying the main basis for comparison: that Cynthia is, like them, asleep. The weight given to the exempla by their placement at the very opening of the poem suggests that the comparisons are not simply decorative, but important to our understanding of the poem.56 The delay of their explanation also suggests that the range of similarities between tenor and vehicle should be taken to be broad: that as the poem continues we should keep in mind the larger stories of Ariadne and Andromeda, and the characteristics of the Thracian Bacchante. As we shall see, these larger narratives become particularly important in retrospect, once Cynthia has finally woken up and spoken.

As Propertius goes on to make the immediate comparison between Cynthia and the mythical figures, the words visa mihi are particularly important. Though Propertius describes Cynthia's appearance and compares her to mythical figures in other poems (see for example 2.2, 2.3.9-22), this particular phrasing occurs only here and, significantly, at

in each case it carries implications of subjectivity. It makes it clear that the comparison is not primarily based on the objective facts (the mythical figures were asleep, and so was Cynthia), but on Propertius's interpretation of what he sees: the way in which she was sleeping reminds him of the way that they were sleeping. And, after all, of the three women described, only Ariadne is particularly known for sleeping. This not only further suggests the importance of the larger connotations of each of the three comparisons, but firmly places them in the context of Propertius's perspective. What remains to be seen is whether this is the perspective of Propertius the narrator, who knows what is coming next in the narrative, of Propertius the character, who does not, or some combination of the two. Certainly once Propertius the character is himself described and begins to act, starting at line 9, his perspective is the most important; the phrases describing or alluding to Cynthia from this point on reflect his proximity to and attitude towards her. The description of Cynthia's bed as molliter impresso, as R.I.V. Hodge and R.A. Buttimore point out (1977: 91), "works kinaesthetically, through an awareness of her soft body pressing gently into the yielding couch;" it emphasizes Propertius's physical awareness of Cynthia. This concept is picked up when he considers slipping an arm under her where she lies (subiecto leviter positam temptare lacerto 1.3.15). Leviter can be understood as modifying either positam or temptare, and almost modifies both: Propertius would have to make his attempt "gently" if not to wake her, and she is lying "lightly" on her bed. The phrase very much

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57 Phillimore 1905: 107. Hodge and Buttimore (1977: 89) point out that in an imitation of the opening of this poem at Am. 1.10.1-8, Ovid substitutes the objective eras for the subjective visa mihi.

58 On the "arbitrary" nature of the allusions, see Williams 1980: 71-73. For Ariadne sleeping, see Catull. 64.56 and Ov. Her. 10.5.

59 For the alternate interpretation that this perspective is absolutely dominant throughout the poem, see Benediktson (1989: 84) and Greene (1995: 306).

60 See Hodge and Buttimore 1977: 92.
reinforces the idea implied by *molliter impresso conor adire toro* ("I attempted to approach [her] on her softly pressed bed," 1.3.12) and *Cynthia non certis nixa caput manibus* (1.3.8) before it, that Cynthia is not sleeping very soundly, and could wake at any moment; all three phrases are evocative both in the visual and the tactile sense of the delicacy and tension of the situation, from Propertius's perspective.

When Cynthia wakes and her perspective is revealed, her sudden consciousness and activity are in surprising contrast to her sleeping passivity, and her thoughts are not what Propertius has most recently been imagining them to be; but it is also the fulfilment of the expectation throughout the earlier part of the poem that Cynthia would soon wake and have something to say about the situation. The break between what we (and Propertius) think of Cynthia in the first part of the poem and the second is certainly not so sharp as it has often been considered; several critics have seen a serious shift in Propertius's attitude from dreamy idealization to harsh realism at the point where Cynthia wakes, but, as Baker points out in response to Lyne's view, Propertius's description of his fear of Cynthia's *saevitia* if she should wake makes such an interpretation difficult to support. To read *non tamen ausus eram dominae turbare quietem* as a sign of romantic concern for Cynthia's rest, he quite sensibly argues, “seems no more reasonable than to hold that ‘to let sleeping dogs lie’ is to be motivated by consideration for the welfare of the dog” (1980: 252-253). The contrast when Cynthia wakes is then not general - idealized, passive Cynthia versus waking, nagging Cynthia - but specific. Propertius knows that Cynthia is likely to berate him if she has any reason to complain about his

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61 See above, pg. 26.
63 For further arguments against a sharp contrast between idealism and realism in the two parts of the poem, see Kaufhold 1997. Warden (2008: 57) agrees with Baker's assessment.
treatment of her, but by the point at which she wakes, he no longer believes that this is the case, since he is unaware of her perspective on the events of the evening. When Cynthia speaks, it is not her personality that is surprising (her *saevitia* is after all *experta*, 1.3.18), but rather her point of view.

Once we understand Cynthia's perspective on events, and have heard her narrative of the course of her evening, the importance of the larger contexts of the mythical exempla at the beginning of the poem becomes clearer, and we understand their implications in a new way. We see them now through the eyes not only of Propertius the character, who did not know what was in store for him, but of Propertius the narrator, who did. Greene points out that if the sleeping Cynthia is Ariadne, the drunken Propertius must see himself as Bacchus come to rescue her (1995: 307); this is perhaps the case, but the focus in the description is on Ariadne's abandonment, and in retrospect we see that from Cynthia's perspective, Propertius is not a Bacchus, but a Theseus.⁶⁴ As for the description of Andromeda, many critics see *accubuit* as having sexual connotations, based on the fact that it is almost always used in erotic contexts in the rest of Propertius's elegies.⁶⁵ In this case, though, especially when one considers that Perseus is alluded to only by a reference to Andromeda's freedom, and is not mentioned directly at all, it is just as likely that *accubuit* is used simply as a synonym for *iacuit*, for the sake of variety, just as the unexpected *concidit*, a word used only once elsewhere by Propertius, of a dying soldier, is used of the Bacchante in line 6.⁶⁶ In any case, if there is

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⁶⁶ Phillimore 1905: 15; *concidit* is used at 4.1.96. Butler and Barber (1933: 158) resist the erotic interpretation of *accubuit*. 
a sexual implication here, it is very mild; the focus of the description is instead on
Andromeda's actual liberation. In the phrase describing Andromeda, however -- *liberam
duris cotibus* (1.3.4) -- the phrasing is, like that of line 15, ambiguous. It could mean
either "just now freed, on the hard rocks," or "just now freed from the hard rocks." The
former, as Hodge and Buttimore, who support this interpretation, argue (1977: 88-89),
emphasizes Andromeda's current situation more than her past sufferings; the focus would
then be on the state of somewhat uncomfortable sleep in which Propertius finds Cynthia.
The latter reading, though, emphasizes Andromeda's painful captivity, and makes a
neater comparison in the context of Cynthia's complaints: Cynthia had spent an
unpleasant evening, and was relieved when sleep finally came to her (1.3.45). As with
the Ariadne comparison, the relative likelihood of the alternate interpretations has shifted
by the end of the poem, as the reader has learned what Propertius the narrator knew all
along. The third comparison, to a Thracian Bacchante, is less specific; the character is
not a named individual, but one of a type. This makes for even more ambiguity, in terms
of what connotations are likely to be felt, since Propertius is not alluding to any particular
story. Hodge and Buttimore suggest (1977: 89) that the image of a woman sleeping in a
dry watercourse,67 paired with that of Propertius approaching Cynthia, evokes stories of
river-gods' "tumultuous sexual passion;"68 at the same time, the fact that this woman is a
Bacchante suggests her capacity for violent rages if woken. If this double interpretation
is correct, then the former implication reflects Propertius the character's intentions

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67 This is their interpretation of *in herboso concidit Apidano*, and makes more grammatical sense than "on
the grassy banks of the Apidanus;" Propertius is quite capable of transferring the attributes of a river's
surroundings to the river itself (e.g. *Anio pomifer* 4.7.81), but this reading would have *in* with the ablative
mean "near," which, as Hodge and Buttimore explain, would be "a most unusual sense".

68 For examples of which, see Soph. *Trach.* 9; *Ov. Am.* 3.6.23-84; *Ov. Met.* 5.585-641, 8.590-610.
towards the sleeping Cynthia upon his arrival, and the latter reflects the narrator's knowledge of the interview's actual conclusion.\textsuperscript{69}

All three of the comparisons that open the poem, then, have alternate possible readings, and ambiguous connotations. Lyne quite rightly points out that the choice of such ambiguous exempla "hint[s] at a different awareness" from the current, conscious awareness of Propertius the character (1980: 99), but he attributes the "tension" that is thus produced to a subconscious awareness of Cynthia's real, abrasive personality. It is more likely, in the context of the poem as a whole, that the ambiguity in the exempla instead reflects the difference in point of view between Propertius the character, who experiences the events in the poem as they come, and Propertius the narrator, who is looking back on it all, and whose perspective has already been altered by knowledge of Cynthia's. Propertius chooses exempla with multiple connotations and manipulates them in such a way that they are ambiguous, to make them reflect the ambiguity and the possibility of misinterpretation inherent in the situation itself. The choice of exempla and the way in which the comparisons are manipulated thus demonstrate the difference that point of view makes in interpreting and understanding that situation. Like Propertius's own persona, the reader does not understand the full implications of the myths alluded to until the end of the poem.\textsuperscript{70}

There are no such comparisons to mythical characters in 2.29b; instead, Propertius describes Cynthia's appearance on the morning in question by comparing it to her own appearance on a previous morning, and she becomes her own exemplum.

\textsuperscript{69} See Curran 1966: 197, 200.

\textsuperscript{70} For this "technique of drawing . . . at a later stage in a poem on accumulated, but undeclared, reserves in mythic deposits made at an earlier stage of the same poem" (\textit{e sequentibus praecedentia}), see Williams 1980: 23-24, 62-65, 71-73. For the multiple implications of each exemplum in 1.3, see Miller 2002: 171.
Despite this difference, the comparison recalls those in 1.3, again by the use of a verbal echo: the phrase *talis visa mihi* ("thus she seemed to me," 2.29.29; 1.3.7) appears nowhere else in the elegies.\(^{71}\) The fact that it here appears in precisely the same position in both poems, at the beginning of the seventh line, perhaps strengthens the link between the two. It would, then, be reasonable to expect further similarities between the handling of the comparisons in the two poems. The strength of feeling suggested by *obstipui* (2.29.25), by *non umquam*, used emphatically in place of the more usual *numquam* (2.29.25), and by the repetition of *visa mihi* in lines 25-26 and 29, makes clear that the effect on Propertius the character of seeing Cynthia is no less powerful here than in the earlier poem. There is, though, certainly less complexity and ambiguity in the single comparison in 2.29b than in the three comparisons that open 1.3. Cynthia has "not ever seemed more beautiful" than she does this morning, not even on a past occasion when she looked particularly beautiful (2.29.25-29). The description of Cynthia’s appearance and conduct on that past occasion is detailed, however, and its nature does suggest a similar shift in perspective on the part of Propertius to that in 1.3.

Cynthia was, on the occasion described, going on a distinctly innocent errand that expressed her loyalty to and concern for Propertius:\(^{72}\) "to tell her dreams to chaste Vesta, lest they should be harmful to her or to [him]" (2.29.27-28). A similar errand is described by the minor elegiac poet Lygdamus, who, in Tib. 3.4, beseeches Juno Lucina to avert the bad omen inherent in a dream about his wife, Neaera, leaving him for another man. The appropriateness of Juno as the dispeller of an omen related to marriage suggests that, in

\(^{71}\) See above, pg. 33-34.

\(^{72}\) See Williams 1980: 132-133.
such circumstances, the god consulted depended on the nature of the omen. The fact that Cynthia went to Vesta, then, suggests that the omen she wished to avert had to do with her home and her own chaste fidelity, and thus emphasizes her virtuous concern for these things. The use of the epithet "chaste" for Vesta doubly emphasizes the latter; it goes without saying that Vesta is chaste, and so the inclusion of the epithet draws special attention to this characteristic. And virtuous as Cynthia was on that occasion, she appears to be more so now; she was then dressed in purple, and thus particularly opulently dressed (2.29.26), but is now naked. Elsewhere in the elegies, expensive clothes or elaborate adornments, being a form of deception, are often linked with disloyalty and liberality, whereas nudity is associated with natural, honest beauty, and pure and faithful love. Though the emphasis in Propertius the character's mind, then, is primarily on Cynthia's beauty, the nature of the comparison used to describe her also strongly emphasizes her virtue, of which Propertius tells us he is convinced by the end of the poem. As in 1.3, the shift in understanding felt by Propertius's persona puts his description in a new light in retrospect. That which, to Propertius the character, is a musing on Cynthia's beauty, is phrased by Propertius the narrator in such a way as to emphasize her innocence as well. Coexisting with the simple awe felt by Propertius the character, we are presented with the narrator's more clear-headed reflection on the fact that he should have known as soon as he saw Cynthia lying alone that his suspicions of

73 The word used of Neaera in this poem is nupta, "bride" (3.4.60); whether or not Lygdamus and Neaera are meant to be legally married - Luck (1969: 104), for one, considers the term to be descriptive of an unofficial union - their relationship is described in terms of that of man and wife, and so falls under Juno's jurisdiction.
74 See Warden 1980: 74.
75 See 1.2; 1.15.5-8; 2.18c; 3.13.11-12; 3.14. At 2.1.5-6, 2.3.15-16, and 3.10.15-16, Propertius admires Cynthia's beautiful clothes without this implication, but the image is not in these cases contrasted with nudity.
her faithlessness were unfounded (on this occasion at least), and not waited around to be lambasted.

The relationship between the description of Cynthia in 4.7 and her ensuing speech is rather different from that in both 1.3 and 2.29b, but nonetheless affects the nature of the relationship between the reader's perspective and Propertius the character's, this time by making the reader identify with Propertius's experience. In the earlier poems, the content of Cynthia's speech provides contrast and retroactively alters the reader's perspective on the description of her appearance. In 4.7, there are different sides to the description of Cynthia, as well as to the nature of her speech, and as the various aspects of the speech fluctuate, they recall the different aspects of the description. The result contributes to the dream-like atmosphere of the poem, in which so much is ambiguous.76

The description of Cynthia has several sides to it, in that it is a horrific description of a seemingly tangible walking corpse, but also of a quite recognizable Cynthia, acting much as she did when she was alive, and yet again, at the same time, of an insubstantial shade. Propertius first tells us that Cynthia "kept the same hairstyle as when she was brought out [on her bier], the same eyes" (eosdem habuit secum quibus est elata capillos, / eosdem oculos, 4.7.7-8).77 In essence, then, she looks as she did when Propertius last saw her, but since she was dead on that occasion, this image is already disturbing.78 As the description continues, it becomes more unsettling, as we realize that Cynthia does not

76 For the confused, nightmarish atmosphere of the poem, see Boucher 1965: 436; Richardson 1977: 454-455. Papanghelis (1987: 190-194) discusses at length the same shifts in tone and atmosphere described here, but attributes them to Propertius's examination of the complex relationship between beauty, love, and death in the poem, and does not address its dream aspect.
77 Warden (1980: 19) points out that the phrasing habuit secum, though it does idiomatically mean "kept", also has an unsettlingly disjunctive effect: it suggests that Cynthia's features are not quite part of her, but that she has instead brought them along with her.
78 It was normal Roman funerary practice to open the corpse's eyes before cremation, and this image of a dead body with its eyes open is likely what is implied here; see Valerie M. Hope 2007: 85, 111-112 and the excerpt from Pliny the Elder there cited (Pliny, Nat. Hist. 11.55.150).
simply look as she did when lying on her bier. Her dress is burnt onto her side, and the
gem on her ring eaten into by the flames of her pyre, as though the process of her
cremation were not complete (4.7.8-9).\textsuperscript{79} This is hard enough to explain -- why should
she be stuck in such a liminal state, when her cremation and burial have been completed
(4.7.1-4)? -- but her lips have also been chafed by the waters of Lethe,\textsuperscript{80} implying that she
has already been to the underworld and back (4.7.10). Her appearance, then, is a strange
mixture: that of a half-burnt, unburied corpse and partly that of a shade. Her manner,
meanwhile, is that of her living self: \textit{spirantisque animos et vocem misit} (4.7.11). When
Cynthia finally moves, snapping her fingers, it brings the whole picture together: she
behaves and gestures just as if she were alive, but the fingers that she snaps at Propertius
are brittle and skeletal (4.7.11-12).

The shock that Cynthia's both-and-neither appearance produces in Propertius is
evoked by a sound effect. The \textit{eosdem} that begins lines 7 and 8, with synizesis in the first
syllable combined with elision of the second, makes an unpleasant gulping sound in the
first case (since the "h" of \textit{habuit}, too, is elided), and a choking sound in the second
(where the next consonant is a "c"), both of which are evocative of his fright.\textsuperscript{81}
Frightening as Cynthia's apparition is, though, elements of the description also remind us
of her attractiveness. The particular features that Propertius points out -- Cynthia's hair,
her eyes, her dress, her hands -- are the same ones that he often singles out for praise in

\textsuperscript{79} For the partly-burned body as an almost proverbially horrifying image to the Romans of this period, and
as symbolic of the neglect of the dead by the living, see David Noy 2000: 191-193.
\textsuperscript{80} A strange use of \textit{tero (summaque Lethaeus triverat ora liquor)}; Propertius does, however, use the word
of drops of water eroding rocks, at 2.25.15-16 (\textit{teritur. . . parvo saepe liquore silex}), and may be suggesting
a similar image here.
\textsuperscript{81} See Warden 1980: 19. According to Camps, synizesis of this type is common enough in Propertius, but
nowhere else occurs in the first syllable of a verse, let alone of two in a row (1965: 116).
other poems.\textsuperscript{82} And there is, as Warden puts it, an "inescapable eroticism" inherent in Propertius's review of these favourite features one by one (and in one long gaze, from top to bottom), as well as in the image of Cynthia's dress clinging to her body, grisly as it is made by the fact that it does so because it is burnt on (1980: 20).\textsuperscript{83} This mixing of the horrific and the erotic adds a final layer of uneasiness to the description.

As Cynthia's speech progresses, the different aspects of the description of her are evoked sometimes one at a time, and sometimes all three together, so that the atmosphere fluctuates in an unsettling way. In the first section of Cynthia's speech, she recalls her and Propertius's trysts, with evocative sense-imagery: her windowsill worn smooth by her slipping over it to meet him so often, the ground at the crossroads made warm by their bodies, and so on (4.7.13-22). The fact that this speech is being delivered by such a gruesome apparition at first contrasts uncomfortably with its erotic content, but the influence of Cynthia's narrative soon takes over, and we partly forget that she is a walking corpse. No sooner has this shift been achieved, however, than the next section of the speech vividly calls us back to the image of Cynthia as half dead and half alive: she takes us through the course of her funeral, describing it as if she had been conscious through the whole process, including her cremation (4.7.23-34). In the section that follows, Cynthia hops back and forth in time, to her rival's plot against her before her death, and the current mistreatment of the household slaves (4.7.35-50). Here, Cynthia's abrasive manner continues to make her seem quite like her living self; her apparent

\textsuperscript{82} For Cynthia's hair, see 1.2.1-3; 1.3.23; 1.17.21; 2.1.7-8; 2.2.5; 2.3.13; 3.6.9; 3.10.14; 4.8.52. For her eyes, see 1.1.1; 1.15.33; 2.1.11-12; 2.3.14; 2.12.23; 2.28.12; 4.8.55. For her dress, see 2.1.5-6; 2.3.15; 2.29.26; 3.6.13; 3.10.15-16. For her hands, see 2.1.9-10; 2.2.5; 2.12.23; 3.6.12; 3.8.6.

\textsuperscript{83} See also Papanghelis 1987: 151; Miller 2002: 229.
omniscience about current events, however, recalls her ghostly state,\(^8^4\) as do frequent reminders that she is, in fact, dead: Petale leaves a garland on her grave; her rival melts down gold over her pyre; she speaks of her own life in the imperfect (4.7.43, 47, 49-50). In the next section, though, images of Cerberus and Elysium creep into Cynthia's speech, and we begin to think of her not so much as a walking corpse as some kind of relatively insubstantial shade. This impression persists almost until the end of the speech, as she describes her existence in the underworld more in sorrow than in anger, and gives Propertius instructions for her monument and epitaph (4.7.51-92). Only the occasional reference implying her consciousness as she lies in her grave recalls her living dead appearance. Whereas in life Cynthia swore that her eyes would fall out if she were unfaithful (1.15.33-34), she has now changed her vow to: "if I lie, may a viper hiss in my tomb and nestle on my bones" (4.7.53-54). As she tells Propertius how to tend to her grave, she asks him to "drive the ivy from my tomb, which . . . binds my brittle bones with its tangled fronds" (4.7.79-80). Cynthia's conscious corpse, though, remains passive and restricted to her tomb in these images, and, for the most part, the image of her as a mere shade persists.

The final reversal, then, when Cynthia ends her speech with a promise to Propertius that one day they will be together again in death, shocks the reader with its sudden return to the picture of Cynthia as a menacing and horrific, but, at the same time, unsettlingly attractive, walking corpse: \textit{mox sola tenebo: / mecum eris, et mixtis ossibus ossa teram} ("soon I alone will hold you: you will be with me, and, with our bones mixed,\(^8^4\)

\(^{8^4}\) For the dead possessing supernatural awareness of events in the world of the living (and/or of the future), see Nemesis' sister in Tib. 2.6.29-40 (Tibullus threatens to invoke her to haunt Nemesis in a dream, much as Cynthia haunts Propertius), Anchises in \textit{Aen.} 6.689ff., and Africanus in Cicero's \textit{Somnium Scipionis}, 6.11-16. See also J.M.C. Toynbee 1971: 34-35.
I will grind on your bones," 4.7.93-94). The suddenness of this return to the grislier aspects of the opening description leaves some critics unwilling to accept all its implications. Musker (1972: 12-13) rejects "ghoulish" interpretations, and sees instead a "romantic touch", comparing the image to that in chapter 19 of *Wuthering Heights* of Heathcliff wanting to be buried with Cathy so that their bones can mingle. Camps tries to get around the earthy sexuality of the phrase by reading *ossa* as equivalent in meaning to *umbra*, and suggesting that *teram* need not necessarily imply friction; nonetheless, he admits that "the primary meanings of the words . . . are hard to escape from" (1965: 125). This is, after all, not a problem if one does not attempt to escape from them, but instead takes the phrase as an intentionally shocking end to Cynthia's speech, made to jolt the reader's mind back to the description that preceded it. The image is admittedly similar to that seen in extant epitaphs of the period, that look forward to the day when a beloved family member's bones will join those of the deceased in their urn. Unlike the situation imagined in these cases, though, or in that of Heathcliff and Cathy's bones cited by Musker, the image is an active one. *Mixtis ossibus* echoes the *pectore mixto* of line 19; Cynthia is suggesting that she and Propertius will not simply be reunited, but will make love in the grave in death as they did at the crossroads in life. The phrase, though, is here more literal, and thus more forceful; whereas *pectore mixto* is an essentially figurative way of expressing the closeness of the lovers' bodies, *mixtis ossibus* implies the actual jumbling of bones. In this context, *teram* is unlikely to be weakened in force, as

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85 Warden (1980: 60) likens the image, in its sudden and forceful impact, to "the last most violent lightning flash of a storm that seemed already past".
86 For examples, see J.C. Yardley 1977: 83; Griffin 1985: 157-158.
Camps suggests; on the contrary, it takes on specifically sexual connotations. The ghastly but more perfect union than was possible in life that Cynthia describes is also expressed visually in the couplet. As Flaschenriem points out (1998: 54), *mecum* and *teram*, expressing the first person -- Cynthia herself -- appear at the beginning and end of line 94, embracing the rest of the thought just as Cynthia will embrace Propertius. One might add that the elision of *mecum* and *eris* unites the two even more vividly. The polyptoton of *ossibus ossa*, too, reinforces the picture by showing us the bones visually joined. The end result very concisely calls back into the reader's mind the uneasy combination of death and life, of horror and eroticism, that the introductory description represented.

The content of Cynthia's speech, then, rather than simply altering the reader's perspective on the descriptive passage that precedes it, interacts with this passage throughout. It sometimes recalls the more ghoulish aspects of that description, and sometimes suppresses them, calling them back up at the end, after a long lull, for the final jolt. The overall effect is an image of Cynthia's ghost that is alternately horrific, attractive, and ethereal, and sometimes all three at once. The atmosphere, too, shifts through various phases from being distinctly uneasy to quite lyrical and back again. This creates a realistically dream-like atmosphere for the poem as a whole, making the reader, like the dreaming Propertius, feel that nothing is quite consistent.

In each of the three poems, the relationship between the description of Cynthia and the nature and content of her speech is thus a primary factor in establishing and developing the interaction between the perspective of the reader, Propertius the character,

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88 For the various sexual uses of the word and its synonyms, see Adams 1982: 183. One of the examples he cites for its use is also from Propertius: at 3.11.20, Cleopatra is described as *famulos inter femina trita suos*, literally "the woman who was rubbed between her servants".
and Propertius the narrator. In 1.3, Cynthia's speech reveals both to Propertius the
color and to the reader what was previously unknown to them about her experiences
and her perspective on the present situation, retroactively making clear the effect of the
knowing perspective of Propertius the narrator on the details of the opening description
of her. In 2.29b, the description of Cynthia more clearly and simply foreshadows the
attitude that Cynthia will display in her speech, which was, at the time of the events
described, lost on Propertius the character, but is known to the narrator. In 4.7, Cynthia's
speech plays off the inconsistent and multifarious nature of the description that precedes
it, to create for the reader the same fluctuating, dream-like atmosphere that Propertius the
character is experiencing. In all three poems, the emphasis on the importance of
perspective created by these contrasts and interactions further intensifies the sense of
psychological and emotional realism that is fostered by the depth of characterization thus
produced.

V. Cynthia Speaks

The subject of Cynthia's speeches leads us to the next of the shared characteristics
of the three poems: in each of them, Cynthia speaks at length in her own voice.
Propertius does theorize in some of his other elegies about what Cynthia might say in a
given situation, in indirect speech at 1.6.7-10, for example, and in direct speech at 3.6.18-
34. Cynthia occasionally speaks for herself in direct speech: very briefly at 2.15.8, as she
encourages Propertius to stay awake, and at greater length at 4.8.73-80, as she lays down
the law after breaking up a party Propertius had thrown in her absence. 1.3, 2.29b, and
4.7, however, are the only elegies in which he gives her long passages of direct speech\textsuperscript{89} that are narratives in their own right. This promotion of Cynthia from character to secondary narrator is the most direct and effective means by which Propertius establishes the differences between his persona's perspective and Cynthia's. For this and other reasons, it is also one of the most significant ways in which Propertius creates a sense of realism in these poems. Since it has several effects, which operate in a similar way in all three poems, I shall consider the poems concurrently, rather than one by one.

The simple fact that Cynthia is speaking is the most basic way in which she is made to seem more real in these elegies than in others, in which she often appears and acts, but for the most part has no voice. For one thing, direct speech is itself more "real" than other types of narrative, in that it is describing words via words. A written description of a painting is not made of paint or of visible images; a description of what someone said by means of direct speech, however, is essentially as close as one can get to perfect mimesis, since the medium has not changed.\textsuperscript{90} As for the relative reality of the character of Cynthia in these poems, making sounds at all is one of the signs that differentiates a living thing from an object, and so direct speech gives her a greater appearance of life than mute action or indirect speech does. See for example the poems in the \textit{Greek Anthology} on Myron's sculpted cattle, in which their silence is noted as the telltale sign that they are not real cows (\textit{AP} 724, 727, 728, 740, 742). Myron's cattle are also mentioned by Propertius, in 2.31; though he does not mention their inability to moo, he does, in the same poem, describe the statue of Apollo on the Palatine as perfectly

\textsuperscript{89} The nearest contender is Cynthia's speech at 4.8.73-80, which, at eight lines, is exactly as long as that in 2.29b. In 4.8, though, Cynthia's speech represents only about a tenth of the whole poem, whereas in 2.29b, it is more than a third of the total. At twelve lines, Cynthia's speech in 1.3 represents more than a quarter of the total, and that in 4.7, at eighty-two lines, makes up five sixths of the poem.

\textsuperscript{90} See Breed 2003: 44.
realistic except for its telltale silence: *visus mihi pulchrior ipso / marmoreus tacita carmina hiare lyra* ("he seemed to me, being more handsome than [Apollo] himself, to be pouring forth songs from his silent lyre, though made of marble," 2.31.5-6). Having Cynthia speak puts her, in the mind of the reader, on a level of reality similar to that of the narrator himself. As a related point, it should be noted that in all three poems in question, significant mention is made of Cynthia's breath, which is another sign of life: she is said to be "breathing soft rest," and "heaving sighs" (1.3.7, 27); she draws Propertius's attention to the fact that she is breathing normally (2.29.37-38); and her ghost displays "the vigour and voice of one who breathes" (4.7.11).

As the clearest way in which the details of one's thoughts and feelings are made known to others, too, actual speech is an expression not only of life but of personhood and the capacity for individual thought.91 A speaking role helps to make Cynthia seem less like a type, simply the object of Propertius's effusions, and more like a realistically well-rounded character. Even in the other elegies in which Cynthia speaks directly, 2.15 and 4.8, the effect is similar, though less pronounced. In 2.15, which describes a night of lovemaking, Cynthia's speech, brief though it is, is one of the factors that emphasizes the theme of the union of individuals in the poem, especially as the content of her speech displays initiative. In 4.8, Cynthia's relatively long speech92 emphasizes the strength of her character, as her humorous domination over Propertius is one of the main themes of the poem. In the three poems in question as in these cases, Cynthia's speech contributes to the development of themes; in their case, though, since these themes include the contrast of individuals' perspectives, and the relationship between perception and

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91 See Breed 2003: 35, 42.
92 See above, n. 89.
objective reality, longer and more developed speeches are required, to create a more individualistic and well-rounded character for Cynthia.

Having Cynthia deliver not only speech but actual narrative goes further, giving her a yet greater sense of individuality. By making Cynthia a secondary narrator, Propertius gives her perspective and her version of events a validity almost equivalent to his own persona's. As with the majority of the elegies outside of the fourth book, Propertius is speaking in that persona -- Cynthia even addresses him by name and makes reference to his poetry at 4.7.49-50 -- and the reader knows that, whatever relation the persona's experiences and attitudes may have to those of the real-life poet, Propertius is "real". Putting Cynthia on a similar level in terms of the validity of her perspective and her narrative, then, makes her seem "real" as well. She even usurps Propertius's role directly in 1.3, 2.29b, and 4.7, not only as a narrator in general but as an elegiac lover in particular: in all three she is in the position of complaining of Propertius's infidelity and lack of devotion, reversing the usual pattern in his elegies. In 4.7 in particular, at eighty-two lines, Cynthia's speech makes up most of the poem, framed as it is by a total of only fourteen lines spoken by Propertius directly. Her role in these poems, when she speaks, is less like her role in the poems in which she is silent, and her characterization revealed to us only via the narrator's descriptions, and more like that of the soldier's wife.

93 The debate on whether Cynthia is based on a real person is a long one and, of course, impossible to resolve; it seems most likely, however, that she is largely a poetic fiction. For Cynthia as real, see Postgate 1884: xviii-xxvii; Kirspop Lake 1937: 53; Camps 1961: 5-6; R.M. Ogilvie 1980: 131-132. For Cynthia as an invention or a composite, see Mendell 1965: 211; Allen 1967: 12-17; Williams 1968: 535; Luck 1969: 144; Sullivan 1976: 76-78; Richardson 1977: 3-5; Veyne 1988: 64; Wyke 2002: 13ff.
94 See Baker 1980: 257-258; Kaufhold 1997: 93-94; Flaschenriem 1998: 53; Miller 2002: 228-229. See also Breed 2003: 49, for aspects of 1.3 that particularly argue for the validity of Cynthia's perspective. For Propertius in the role of the aggrieved party, that Cynthia here assumes, see especially 1.11, 1.12, 1.15, 1.16, 1.19, 2.6, 2.8, 2.9, 2.16, 2.17, 2.21, 2.24a, 2.24b, 2.26, 2.32, 3.13, 3.19.
Arethusa in 4.3, or Cornelia in 4.11:95 her character is revealed through her own words. Cynthia's words, though rendered in direct speech, are of course relayed via Propertius (who remains the primary narrator), so that Propertius is in absolutely technical terms the only speaker. The importance in each case of the premise that an actual encounter is being faithfully narrated, however, along with the contrast with Propertius's attitudes and assumptions that Cynthia's speech presents, creates the impression more of a drama than of a monologue containing an extended quotation. Other elegies have a similar dramatic aspect, in that they vividly suggest the actual presence of the addressee. In 1.8 (if it is not divided into two separate poems, as it is, for example, by Barber, Goold, and Heyworth), Propertius's request that Cynthia not leave on a sea-voyage with another man is granted halfway through the poem (1.8.27), suggesting that the poem is being delivered to the reader and the addressee concurrently, to the one through writing and to the other by speaking aloud. In 3.6, Propertius addresses Cynthia's slave Lygdamus four times, emphasizing his actual presence, and, in the same poem, vividly imagines what Cynthia might be doing and saying, adding a third character to the drama. This imagined Cynthia addresses Lygdamus another three times, suggesting his presence even in this imagined scene.96 The three poems in question, though, create the impression of a drama, and thus of the autonomy of the characters, much more vividly even than either of these.

As for the actual nature and content of Cynthia's speeches, these too contribute to the realism of her portrayal. The Cynthia who is depicted through these speeches is quite consistent in character through the three poems, and is generally consistent with her

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95 Propertius writes each of these poems entirely in a persona other than his own. For the vividness of the characterization of these personas, see Hallett 1973: 117; Hubbard 1974: 142-143, 147-149; Warden 1980: 80, 104-105. His only other poems that identify themselves as being written entirely in another persona are 1.16 (spoken by Cynthia's door), 1.21 (spoken by a fallen soldier), and 4.2 (spoken by Vertumnus).

96 For fuller analyses of 1.8 and 3.6, see below, pg. 74-76.
character in other elegies. More significant, though, than the fact that Cynthia's manner of speaking is consistent with her usual character, is that it differs from that of Propertius as much as her perspective does. It is not entirely different, of course; Propertius is after all writing both characters. For the most part, though, especially within the confines of each poem, Cynthia's tone and style do differ markedly from Propertius's. In 1.3, Propertius's tone is largely that of the tension of suppressed enjoyment. He wonders at Cynthia, and dotes on her, but is keeping himself from doing anything that might wake her, in dread of her reaction; this atmosphere is reflected in his tone, which is made tense by words implying his need for caution, such as conor adire, leviter, temptare, metuens, and furtiva (1.3.12, 15, 18, 24). The ambiguity of some of his phrasings, too -- in more than one place, the adverbial idea can be validly applied to more than one verb or adjective in a phrase\textsuperscript{97} -- perhaps reflects his unwillingness to do anything sudden or decisive. Cynthia, quite as saeva as Propertius had feared, displays none of the timidity that Propertius has, but is instead quite dramatic in her expression of her anger and self-pity. She launches straight into her speech with an accusation, beginning with the harsh tandem, "at last!" (1.3.35). Where Propertius had made his excited nervousness clear with ambiguous phrasings and words implying caution, Cynthia punctuates her description of the unpleasant evening Propertius has unwittingly put her through with forceful exclamations: ei mihi, "ah me!", and the vocative improbe, "you evil man!" (1.3.38, 39).

These and similar differences in tone in the other two poems are due to the difference between Propertius's and Cynthia's perspectives, and thus express that distinction. There are, however, other differences in style that more subtly but

\textsuperscript{97} See for example molliter in line 12, and leviter in line 15; see above, pg. 34.
significantly differentiate their characterizations, by suggesting that they have different perspectives on things in general, and not only on their specific situation -- in short, that they are truly individuals. Cynthia, for example, is more down-to-earth in her expression than Propertius. In his own voice, Propertius is allusive, taking similes from myth or past experience to expand on his descriptions of his current situation (1.3.1-6, 20; 2.29.25-28). He has Cynthia, by contrast, stick almost entirely to literal description, and rely on sensory detail alone to make her language evocative. See for example her description of how she has spent her evening in the first poem (1.3.41-46), her presentation of the case for her innocence in the second (2.29.35-38), and her description of her funeral in the last (4.7.23-34). She does make reference to mythical characters and situations in her speeches, but only when they are to be imagined as being literally involved in the narrative, as with Sleep at 1.3.42-45, and the mythical characters that she sees in the underworld in 4.7 (22, 52-70, 87-92); she never uses them purely as exempla. Warden (1980: 25) argues that Cynthia also displays a rather more earthy attitude to sex in 4.7 than Propertius usually presents, citing her focus on sense-imagery and the physical in her reminiscence of her trysts with Propertius and in her promise of their future union in death (4.7.15-20, 93-94). It is a difficult point to judge; Propertius does generally remain more abstract on the subject, but his descriptions can at times be at least as strongly focused on the physical as Cynthia's: see, for example, 2.15.5-10. But there is, perhaps, an argument. In 2.29b, Propertius frames the purpose of his visit to Cynthia in terms of seeing whether she is sleeping alone (volui, si sola quiesceret illa, visere 2.29.23-24), and does not get specific or directly express the obvious implication, that this will let him know whether she has been unfaithful. Cynthia, on the other hand, unabashedly gets

straight to the point of Propertius's spying, sarcastically showing him the absence of the physical signs he might have expected to find: traces on her bed suggesting that "two had lain tumbling there,"99 and heavy breathing on her part (2.29.35-38).

Other differences are more quantifiable. In 1.3 at least, Cynthia's sentences are shorter and sharper than Propertius's, which are long, complicated, and self-consciously poetic. The first thirty-four lines of the poem, spoken by Propertius, are made up of only four sentences, while the last twelve lines, spoken by Cynthia, are made up of five sentences; in other words, Cynthia's sentences are, on average, only a third as long as Propertius's. Even Cynthia's diction sometimes differs from Propertius's, revealing differences in the finer details of their perspectives. In her proposed epitaph in 4.7, for example, as Flaschenriem points out (1998: 59), Cynthia describes herself as aurea, making the word sound almost like an epithet, whereas Propertius, who never uses the word of her in his own voice, ordinarily uses formosa or candida to describe her beauty.100 Cynthia, it seems, thinks of herself in terms different from those which Propertius uses. She also refers to Lygdamus as a verna (4.7.35), a slave born in the household, whereas Propertius only ever calls him by the more general descriptor, servus (3.6.6). The specificity of this word, and the introduction of other servants -- Cynthia's nurse, Parthenie, and her lady's maid, Latris (4.7.73, 75) -- show her greater intimacy with and concern for her own household. It is clear from the way that Cynthia talks about them without much explanation that Propertius is meant to know who these people are, but he has never mentioned them before. Cynthia's rival, Chloris, and the members of

99 This phrase, as Camps points out (1967: 197) is particularly "blunt, stylistically".
100 For Propertius's use of aurea, see Phillimore 1966: 9. He uses candida of Cynthia at 2.3.9, 2.16.24, 2.22.8, and 2.29.30, and uses formosa particularly often, at 1.15.8, 1.18.12, 2.18.29, 2.18.30, 2.24.18, 2.24.40, 2.28.2, 2.28.13, 2.33.36, 2.34.4, 3.8.6, 3.8.35.
Propertius's household are likewise introduced with no helpful explanations inserted for the reader's benefit (4.7.39-40, 72; 43-46). The result is that the reader feels that there are several details in the history between Propertius and Cynthia that Propertius has not shared with us, and thus that each has a life beyond the bounds of the narratives presented. We get the impression, too, that what is important from Cynthia's perspective differs from what is important to Propertius, which further emphasizes their individuality as characters.¹⁰¹

The simple fact that Cynthia speaks in each of the three poems, then, makes her seem more as though she is on a similar level of reality to that of Propertius's own persona, while the nature and content of her speeches support this effect by rounding out the complexity of her character and emphasizing the variance between her perspective and Propertius's, not only on the situations described, but in general terms as well. The reader, confronted with a Cynthia who speaks, and crafts narratives that differ in their tone, style, and focus from those that Propertius himself presents, is encouraged to see her as almost outside the poet's control - as a real person whom he is faithfully depicting and quoting, rather than his own creation.¹⁰² Since the interaction of the characters is the primary focus of all three poems, heightened realism and complexity of characterization make for greater realism overall.

VI. Abrupt Endings and Propertius as a Character

This leads us to the last major similarity between the three poems, which is connected to the role of Propertius's own persona: Propertius gives no verbal response at the end of any of them, and gives the reader little or no explicit description of his own reactions to her speeches. In 1.3, Cynthia literally has the last word; the poem ends with the end of her speech. In 2.29b, Cynthia cuts the interview short after her speech, and, though Propertius professes to have been convinced by her arguments, the issue remains open-ended. In 4.7, Cynthia's ghost disappears before Propertius can even embrace her, and he in turn gives us no further description of his reaction. The reader is in each case left to interpret what Propertius has presented, and to sort out the complex issues of perspective and the interaction of truth and perception described above, without much explicit guidance from the poet.

Most of Propertius's elegies end with what Hodge and Buttimore refer to as a "gnomic conclusion" (1977: 98): one or two couplets summing up the overall thrust of the poem, or clarifying a poem that is particularly allusive or wanders through a variety of subjects. 103 1.19, for example, in which Propertius discusses the lover's attitude to death, ends with a summation: quare, dum licet, inter nos laetemur amantes: / non satis est ullo tempore longus amor ("therefore, while we can, let us rejoice together as lovers: / a longlasting love is not enough, however long it is," 1.19.25-26). The poem that follows, in which Propertius narrates for Gallus the myth of Hylas, explains itself in the last couplet: his, o Galle, tuos monitus servabis amores, / formosum nymphis credere visus Hylan ("warned by the above, you will safeguard your love, Gallus, / who now seem to trust your lovely Hylas with Nymphs," 1.20.51-52). This is the standard pattern.

103 See also Williams 1968: 775-776.
It is particularly striking, then, that 1.3, 2.29b, and 4.7 should all end with little or no comment from Propertius. It perhaps has to do with the fact that each poem begins with Propertius's own narration, but shifts into Cynthia's direct speech in the latter part. In poems which Propertius ends with a gnomic conclusion, he is usually expanding on or explaining his own perspective, since he has been the only speaker all along. If he were to end the poems in question in this way, though, he would instead be commenting on and interpreting his reaction to Cynthia's speeches. This would privilege his perspective and bias the reader towards it, as that of the narrator.\textsuperscript{104} With the poems left open-ended, Propertius's and Cynthia's perspectives are instead left to fight it out on equal ground in the mind of the reader. We are, at the end of each poem, left wondering not only whom to believe, and whose perspective to sympathize with, but what Propertius's own reaction to Cynthia's speech might have been.\textsuperscript{105} In 2.29b, the only one of the three to include any explicit guidance on this point, Propertius does rather sheepishly claim to have been convinced by Cynthia's speech, but, as described above, we should perhaps not take even this assertion at face value.\textsuperscript{106}

The effect of the lack of interpretation by Propertius, of leaving the poems largely open to interpretation by the reader, is intensified by a corresponding lack of speech or further action on Propertius's part within the narrative. 1.3 is the most extreme case, as it ends with absolutely no action, speech, or explanation by Propertius. The curtain, as it were, closes on the drama before we can see any suggestion of how it continues. At the

\textsuperscript{104} For the general dominance of the narrator's perspective, see Watts 1966: 23; Benediktson 1989: 79-80; Greene 1995: 303-309. For ways in which it can be complicated, see Sharrock 2000: 273.

\textsuperscript{105} See Hodge and Buttimore 1977: 98; Warden 1980: 70. On endings generally as a guide to the interpretation of the preceding narrative, see Deborah H. Roberts 1997: 254. One might compare the famously abrupt ending of the \textit{Aeneid}, or, in terms of the audience being left to wonder about a character's thoughts without explicit guidance, Alcestis' silence (Eur. \textit{Alc.} 1143ff.), or Iago's refusal to explain his motivations (\textit{Othello} act 5 scene 2).

\textsuperscript{106} See above, pg. 21.
end of 2.29b and of 4.7, though, Propertius does at least attempt to act. In 2.29b, he tries to kiss Cynthia, but she pushes him away and leaves; in 4.7, Propertius similarly tries to embrace Cynthia's ghost, but it vanishes before he can do so.\textsuperscript{107} It is significant that in each case Propertius responds to Cynthia's speech not with words, but with actions, and frustrated ones at that. All three poems open with Propertius addressing only the reader, and Cynthia delivers the only actual speech in each scene. Although, to Propertius and to the reader, a juxtaposition of perspectives has taken place, there is no response from Propertius, and thus no dialogue. To Cynthia, her own perspective remains the dominant one by default. With Propertius dumbstruck, and (in the two later poems at least) his rather lame attempts at wordless response thwarted, the natural primacy of the narrator's perspective is suppressed. Cynthia, since she is unanswered, seems unanswerable, if not because she is right, then at least because of her fierceness and force of character. These effects are not enough to make Cynthia's perspective dominant, but they do go a long way towards equalizing it with that of Propertius. We thus get the impression that, in each narrative, we are witnessing the interaction of two equally individualized and well-rounded characters, who exist on a similar level of realism, rather than that of the persona of a real-life person with his purely fictional, comparatively two-dimensional creation.

\section*{VII. Conclusion}

Each of the shared characteristics described above, then, creates a similar set of effects: they all create intricate interrelationships between the characters' perspectives and

\footnote{\textsuperscript{107} For the allusion to \textit{Il}. 23.99-101 suggested by the latter situation, and the allusion to Patroclus' ghost suggested by the circumstances of 4.7 generally, see Hubbard 1974: 152-153; Warden 1980: 14 and 2008: 95-96; Wyke 2002: 26-27. Note that, while Achilles comments on the implications of Patroclus' visit after he has disappeared, Propertius does so before describing the encounter, and is speechless at the end. For other failures to embrace ghosts, see \textit{Od}. 11.206-208 and \textit{Aen}. 2.790-92.}
the reader's, complex, three-dimensional characterizations, and doubt as to the objective truth of each situation. All these results foster a sense of realism.

Emphasis on the differentiation of the characters' perspectives from each other, as well as from the reader's, establishes their individuality and strengthens the impression that they are "real." It suggests that they have lives outside the narrative, complete with thoughts and feelings to which we are only sometimes allowed access. This effect is particularly marked in the case of Cynthia, for whom it is more of an illusion, given that she is in the literal sense more of a fiction than the poet's own persona. Doubt about the objective truth in the situations described, meanwhile, acts similarly, putting the reader on an equal (or sometimes lesser) footing to that of the characters in terms of knowledge of the context. This has a two-sided effect. On the one hand, it further weakens the barrier between the world of the poems and the world of the reader, by giving the reader something in common with the characters. On the other hand, it also has a divisive effect, making the reader quite aware of being a mere onlooker, excluded from the implied larger context. Both effects, though, heighten the poems' realism, by creating the impression that the characters are as real as the reader, and by suggesting that they exist independent of their role in the poem. It seems, then, that Warden is right to suggest that in these three poems Propertius has, in a way, "developed his own sub-genre . . . as a means of exploring in literary terms the complexities and ambivalence of a human relationship" (1980: 75-76). All of the most significant shared characteristics of the poems, and the ways in which Propertius handles them, complicate the characters' interactions and create a strong sense of psychological and emotional realism.
CHAPTER FOUR: Realism Limited

I. Introduction

As we have seen, the various shared characteristics of 1.3, 2.29b, and 4.7, all of which are related to issues of perspective and the relationship between perception and objective reality, foster a strong sense of realism, primarily by creating fully individualized characters who act and react in a realistically complex emotional context. This sense of realism, though, is limited in scope, since it relies on the isolation of the situation of each individual poem and the absence of any larger narrative. It is also complicated by issues such as an excessive degree of doubt as to the precise nature of the emotional or even factual situation presented. This gives a greater than usual freedom of interpretation to the reader, and draws attention to the role of the poet, and thus limits the overall sense of realism that the poems present. The issues related to perspective in the poems raise questions about the relationship between the poet and his persona, and so have a similar effect.

This sense of realism being limited or complicated by other effects is a common feature in Propertius's elegies. In fact, all the most frequent and characteristic ways in which he creates realism are also limited, whether by outside factors or by some aspect of the way in which they themselves operate. Propertius often uses poetic commonplaces in original and unexpected ways, for example, which undermines them as conventions and thus makes his versions of them less affected. Paradoxically, this technique draws attention to those same commonplaces; instead of letting them pass by and be accepted passively as part of the conventions of the genre, it reminds the reader that they are conventions manipulated by a poet, whose agency is thus more noticeably felt. He also
uses particularly dense and evocative sense-imagery to enliven narrative and make descriptions seem more immediate, but juxtaposes it with hyperbole and other fanciful imagery that, vivid and effective though it is, resonates less with the reader's real-life experience. An often quick and jarring progression from thought to thought, too, without much explanation or transition, gives the impression of a natural train of thought that has not been tidied up for the sake of clarity, but is interspersed with long and stylish lists of mythical exempla, which give the opposite impression. Such inconsistencies are persistent enough in the elegies that they argue for a conscious design. Propertius, it seems, frequently aims to produce a striking impression of realism and apparent sincerity while maintaining a degree of artificiality sufficient to let the poet's presence be felt as separate from that of his persona.

In this chapter, then, we shall first discuss the limitations of the realism in the three poems considered in the previous chapter, and then limited realism in the other elegies, focusing on the three specific techniques listed above.

**II. Limitations to the Realism in 1.3, 2.29b, and 4.7**

The first of the limitations and complications of the realism in 1.3, 2.29b, and 4.7 is that their realism is dependent on their isolation. Each poem narrates an isolated incident, and allusions to a greater context for the plot are too generalized, like the mention of Cynthia's *experta saevitia* at 1.3.18, or doubtful, like Propertius's infidelities at 1.3.35-6 and 2.29.32-34, to be particularly helpful in forming a full picture of a larger narrative. When specific details are provided, like Cynthia's complaints about Chloris at 4.7.39-48, they relate to incidents that are neither confirmed as true within the poem, nor
mentioned outside the poem in question, and are thus only of immediate relevance. In short, each poem is for the most part a unit in itself, and not part of a cohesive, overarching narrative formed by all of the poems about Cynthia. Each of the three, though, does rely on the general picture that the reader has formed or is forming from other poems to provide a vague background. The woman is named Cynthia in each case, apparently the same Cynthia of all the first-person amatory elegies in which Propertius names his lover (and likely the rest too), and her general character-traits are consistent with those displayed in other poems. The practical details of the relationship depicted, however, are not consistent even between the three poems in question. In 1.3 and 2.29b, for example, Cynthia seems to live alone, and Propertius apparently has free access to her house, but in her reminiscences at 4.7.15-22, she seems instead to be another man's wife or lover, and to be compelled to sneak away secretly to meet him.

This consistency in characterization paired with inconsistency in plot is not unique to the three poems in question; in fact, it is the norm for Propertius's elegies. Though he does occasionally provide "background" information on the course of the theoretical relationship of which each elegy forms a part, these bits of information cannot be strung together into a coherent whole. A convincing "chronological" arrangement of the scenes depicted in the poems is practically impossible; Cynthia seems sometimes to

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108 This is generally assumed; for doubts about whether unnamed lovers are "Cynthia" or not, though, see Richardson 1977: 4-5; Veyne 1988: 57; Duncan F. Kennedy 1993: 87. Cynthia is named in thirteen of eighteen amatory poems in book one (72%), twelve of thirty-nine (counting poems divided by Barber into multiple poems) in book two (31%), and three of twelve in book three (25%), as well as in both of the two amatory poems in book four. The only other lover whom Propertius actually names, however, is a past one, Lycinna (3.15), and he names her only in the course of denying current involvement with her.

109 See for example 1.1.7, 2.3.1-8, 2.20.21-22, 3.25.3.

110 For the inconsistency and/or non-existence of an overall narrative, see Allen 1962: 112-117; Mendell 1965: 211; Musker 1972: 18-19; Sullivan 1976: 76-77; Veyne 1988: 132; Sharrock 2000: 274; Miller 2002: 170. For attempts to establish one for biographical purposes, with questionable success, see Postgate 1884:
be a *meretrix*, and sometimes another man's wife;¹¹¹ and so on. Each poem that deals with Propertius's "relationship" with Cynthia is, it seems, more an exploration of the emotional complexities of an isolated fictional situation than it is a building block in an overall story.¹¹² The circumstances of 1.3, 2.29b, and 4.7 are perhaps even more isolated than most, however, because their guiding premises are unusual. The most consistently recurring theme in Propertius's love poems is the pain caused to him by Cynthia's neglect or infidelity. Here, though, the much rarer theme of Propertius's own infidelity is added.¹¹³ 4.7 also incorporates a unique theme: though in 2.26a and 2.28a-b Cynthia is depicted as being in mortal danger, she is nowhere else spoken of as being dead.¹¹⁴ It is also, unlike 1.3 or 2.29b, literally isolated from almost all the other Cynthia poems, appearing in book 4, in which Propertius deals with a greater variety of subject matter than he does in the other books, such that 4.7 and 4.8 are the only Cynthia poems in the book.

These three poems, then, are even more isolated than most of the other love elegies. But the vividness of their realism also relies on their lack of context in a way that the vividness in most of the other poems does not, because the effects that are the primary basis of their realism are made more dramatic by isolation. The juxtaposition

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¹¹¹ For Cynthia as a *meretrix*, see 1.8a-b, 1.14, 2.16; for Cynthia as another man's wife, see 2.24a, 2.32.45-46, 3.3.47-50, 3.8.37-38. Critics who think she is always to be read as a *meretrix* include Postgate (1884: xviii) and Camps (1961:5-6). Those who think of her as an unfaithful wife include Williams (1968: 529ff.) and Hodge and Buttimore (1977: 7-9). Luck (1969: 15) argues that she is an unmarried noblewoman. In the majority of the elegies, her status is simply unclear.

¹¹² For the isolation of each incident described in the elegies, see Allen 1962: 117-118; Watts 1966: 21 (Watts cites 2.29b as an example); Williams 1968: 535; Luck 1969: 144.

¹¹³ See above, pg. 50.

¹¹⁴ Given the level of uncertainty about most of the factual aspects of the poem, one might wonder whether Cynthia is dead at all, or whether Propertius is only dreaming that she has died. The opening line, though (*Sunt aliquid manes*, "Ghosts do exist"), spoken as it is by the narrating Propertius as a later reflection on his experience, does suggest that she is indeed dead.
and interaction of the characters' perspectives is as striking as it is only because, with no context as guidance, the reader has no reliable basis for expectation beforehand or interpretation afterward; we know Propertius's and Cynthia's general character-trait traits, but not what the story so far might be. The situation and the characters' perspectives on it are presented in quick succession, so that the whole experience is made more vivid by its suddenness. The doubt about the objective reality inherent in each situation would likewise not be possible in the context of a detailed larger narrative. As such, the effects that contribute most strongly to a sense of realism in the poems are made possible largely by the inconsistency of the Cynthia poems overall, which itself prevents any sense of true sincerity -- that is, of the poet faithfully depicting real events -- in the poems when they are taken together. The isolation of the circumstances of the poems' plots thus intensifies their particular realism, while underscoring their general unreality. The result in each case is a poem that gives a strong impression of its realism while it is being read, but allows its true status as a poetic fiction to be appreciated when it is viewed in its place among the other elegies.

The extreme degree of doubt, layering of perspectives, and general uncertainty in the three poems, too, has a double-edged effect. It creates a realistically untidy world, in which the poet's persona is nowhere near omniscient, misinterpretation and bias are rife, and human interactions are convincingly complicated. But it leaves so much open to interpretation that the reader can end up more confused about what precisely has occurred than the characters are, particularly in terms of the various emotional states involved. Take for example the variance in scholars' interpretations of what Propertius the character's attitude might be at the end of 1.3. Greene imagines that by the end of the
poem Cynthia's shrewish nagging has crushed Propertius's fantasy of her as a passive, practically captive object of desire, and left him and us to ponder the "disappointing realities of amatory relations" (1995: 309). Hodge and Buttimore, on the contrary, theorize that Cynthia's complaints, harsh though they are, come from love, and that "Propertius could answer the main charge [that he has been exhausted by another woman] in the most delightful way possible, proving that he was not _languidus_ and that his fires still burnt [sic]" (1977: 98). Warden's interpretation falls halfway between the two, incorporating both disappointment and mutual affection: he sees "a note of gentle sadness" in the poem, and describes how "each character shows a tenderness, a capacity for love only when the other is out of reach" (1980: 73). The fact that all three of these divergent positions are equally supported by the text demonstrates its vagueness.115 This and similar points that are left uncertain -- the overall attitude of the narrating Propertius to the speech of Cynthia's ghost in 4.7, for example -- are central to a full understanding of the poems, and so it is odd that Propertius should leave them so open to interpretation, and potentially to misconstruction, by the reader. When recited expressively by the poet, as they would sometimes have been, the poems would likely not have allowed the audience such freedom of interpretation, but Propertius himself describes his poetry as being primarily intended for private consumption.116 This being the case, it is quite

115 On the multiplicity of possible interpretations that 1.3 offers, see Mary-Kay Gamel 1998: 92. Veyne's rather iconoclastic argument is that the poem's "mystery is due perhaps only to clumsiness" and that "the anecdote is so badly told that we wonder whether we should not look for a peripeteia between the lines" (1988: 52).

116 He imagines his books being read by girls to pass the time spent waiting for their lovers (3.3.19-20), and by lovers themselves, both for advice (3.3.47-50), and to see their own troubles reflected (1.7.13-14). Ovid describes Propertius reciting his poetry, at _Tristia_ 4.10.45-46 (_saepe suos solitus recitare Propertius ignes iure sodalicii, quo mihi iunctus erat, "often Propertius would recite his fiery poems, by right of the friendship by which he was joined to me"_), but the context he describes seems to be more in the nature of a private than a public performance, and the implication is that hearing him recite was a particular privilege of his friends.
possible that the poems would have left their original readers almost as puzzled and their interpretations as conflicting as they do today. This ambiguity does produce a sense of realism to a certain extent, since, like the intricacy of the characters' relative perspectives, it reflects the complexity of interpersonal relations in the real world. The ambiguities and sources of confusion described above, though, relate to aspects of the poem, such as the characters' exact emotional states, which would be a great deal more verifiable if we were hearing them "in person" as opposed to through a written medium. The very fact that here they can be left uncertain draws attention to their status as part of artistic creations, and thus to the ingenuity of the poet, who can leave several equally valid options for interpretation open concurrently. Each individual valid interpretation is in itself realistic, but the very fact that this is the case undermines that realism.

The poet's hand is also seen in the creation of the characters of Cynthia and Propertius in the three poems, one of the most effective means by which their realism is developed. The extreme emphasis on the division between Propertius the character's perspective and Propertius the narrator's, and the isolation of both from Cynthia's, while it makes them seem like "real" individuals, with internal mental and emotional lives, also draws attention to the relationship between Propertius's various incarnations as character, narrator, and, behind both, flesh-and-blood poet. In the case of most poems in which Propertius's own persona is narrator, the division between the perspectives of character, narrator, and poet is relatively unimportant, and not felt very strongly. Here, though, emphasis on the variance of their perspectives draws our attention to the question of the degree to which the persona is to be identified with the poet. Awareness that Propertius

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117 For the effects and implications of a similarly wide field of interpretation in Catullus (discussed in the context of performance), see Gamel 1998: 83-86.
the poet is also behind Cynthia's character, vividly portrayed as it is, likewise complicates our understanding of the poems, as questions about the relative "reality" of Cynthia as compared to Propertius's persona arise.\textsuperscript{118} The depiction of both characters is plausible enough, though,\textsuperscript{119} that the result is not the collapse of the realism, but rather wonder at its effectiveness: at the poet's ability to enter into several characters' perspectives so effectively in a single poem. This effect is a more complex version of the reader's reaction to Propertius's assumption of personas distinctly different from his own as primary narrators, in 1.16 (Cynthia's door), 1.21 (a fallen soldier), 4.2 (the god Vertumnus), 4.3 (Arethusa, a soldier's wife), and 4.11 (Cornelia).\textsuperscript{120} Just as, in reading those poems, we appreciate the poet's ability to enter convincingly into and express another's perspective, we here appreciate his ability to express another's perspective as well as his own persona's at two different moments in time (as character and narrator), all within a single poem. The effect produced is comparable to that of a prominent signature on a photo-realistic painting. It reminds us of the presence of the creator of the piece of art, and thus of the skill and conscious artifice involved in making something appear realistic.

\section*{III. Limited Realism in the Other Elegies: Introduction}

This pattern, of realism being generated by one set of techniques only to be limited or complicated by another, is particularly pronounced in 1.3, 2.29b, and 4.7, 

\textsuperscript{118} On the difference between the relative degree of reality of Propertius's persona and Cynthia, see Sharrock 2000: 272-273; Wyke 2002: 29.

\textsuperscript{119} \textit{Pace} Veyne (1988: 58, 64) and Greene (1995: 303-309).

\textsuperscript{120} These poems, too, sometimes draw particular attention to their own artifice with self-referential passages. At 1.16.17-44, the door quotes at length the lover who waits outside it, so that Propertius is in effect assuming the voice of someone who is in turn assuming that of his own usual lover-poet persona; at 4.2.57, Vertumnus displays knowledge that he is speaking in verse, by reassuring his audience that there are only six lines left.
because in these poems it is achieved via several different techniques, and ones that are not otherwise common in the elegies; it is also particularly intricate in these poems, because of the layers of complexity and uncertainty that these techniques produce. The pattern itself, though, is not unique to 1.3, 2.29b, and 4.7. In fact, it is present in most of Propertius's other elegies to varying degrees, and is achieved in a variety of ways.

Not all of the elegies have realism as a central effect, or one that encompasses most of its aspects, as those just discussed do. Some have plots that are distinctly fantastical, such as 1.16, in which Cynthia's door speaks, 2.29a, in which Propertius is accosted by a band of Cupids, or 2.30b, in which he invites Cynthia to live with him in a mossy cave among the Muses.\textsuperscript{121} The majority of the elegies, though, do describe essentially plausible situations, with mythic or fantastical elements inserted only by way of comparison -- and even in the occasional fantastical poems, there is a focus on particular realism: though the situations themselves are not realistic, they are internally consistent, and maintain a sense of realism in their finer details. The complaints of the door in 1.16, for example, are plausible in their own context; it says what one might realistically expect a door to say, if it were sentient, and its characterization and attitudes are consistent with its situation. Propertius's descriptions of the attack of the Cupids in 2.29a, and of his and Cynthia's pastoral existence in 2.30b, too, are as rich in evocative physical detail as his descriptions of situations that are more grounded in the real, urban experience of his audience. Realism in Propertius, whether in poems that are realistic

\textsuperscript{121} I do not include 4.7 in this category, since the visitation takes place within a dream. Even if the ghost in Propertius's dream is to be read as a real spirit, this would be more acceptable as a "real" situation in the contemporary audience's minds than the examples cited, which are quite clearly fantasies. On belief in (and scepticism of) "true" dreams in the Late Republic and Early Empire, see Harris 2003: 22-23, 27-30. For other ghost stories (many incorporating dreams), suggesting that at least some Romans believed in the possibility of such visitations, see Hope 2007: 236-247.
overall, or ones that have only some realistic aspects, is created and emphasized by
means of various techniques, which, whether alone or in combination with each other,
allow for a variety of levels and types of realism. The most common of these are his
original use of the conventions of the genre, the use of dense and evocative sense imagery
to enrich both descriptive and narrative passages, and a quick thought progression that
suggests an unedited internal monologue.

In poems that have distinctly fanciful plots, the main source of the realism's
limitations is clear: the overall situation is itself unreal. Even in poems that are
essentially realistic, though, the realism is often limited or complicated by more subtle
factors, which act with and against those that produce the realism itself. The ways in
which Propertius elaborates on conventions of the genre, for example, frequently involve
complications that limit realism; his dense realistic imagery interacts with equally vivid
unreal and fanciful imagery; and his apparently spontaneous thought-progression is
balanced by collections of mythical exempla that are carefully and subtly tied into the
surrounding narrative. The result in each case is the same as that in 1.3, 2.29b, and 4.7:
vivid realism is produced, but the reader is not simply allowed passively to enjoy the
effectiveness of this realism in itself, but is specifically encouraged to recognize and
appreciate the agency of the poet in accomplishing it. An examination of poems that
exemplify each of the three tendencies listed will show more precisely how they operate.
IV. Original Treatment of the Conventions of the Genre

The first technique to be discussed, whereby Propertius often produces realism at the same time as he limits it, is his original use of the conventions of his genre. Latin erotic elegy was fairly short-lived as a major genre, popular for not much more than fifty years, beginning the lost works of C. Cornelius Gallus, who died circa 27 BCE, and ending with the death of Ovid in 17 CE. Nonetheless, like any other poetic genre, it had a number of conventions associated with it. These can be difficult to pin down, since the works of only three elegists (Tibullus, Propertius, and Ovid) survive in significant quantity, and all three have distinct styles and tendencies. It is also difficult to tell with certainty which similarities in style or treatment might be the result of the poets' acquaintance with each other and each other's works rather than of the requirements of the genre itself, since Ovid knew Propertius personally, and was part of the same literary circle as Tibullus, under the patronage of Messalla Corvinus. The fact that Gallus' works do not survive to provide evidence for the previous generation of elegy further complicates the question. Some shared features of the surviving elegists' works, though, can be isolated as likely conventions of the genre. A few of these are specific to elegy, but many apparently originated in or were inspired by earlier Greek and Latin poetry of

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123 All that survives of his elegies are a partial line quoted by Vibius Sequester in his De Fluminibus, and nine fragmentary lines preserved on a papyrus found in 1978. For these fragments and a summary of what is known of Gallus' life and works from other sources, see Adrian S. Hollis 2007: 219-252.
124 Some works by Lygdamus, Sulpicia, and other, unnamed poets are preserved in the Corpus Tibullianum (Tib. 3.1-20), but the limited size of these samples makes them difficult to argue from. Catullus wrote several poems in the elegiac meter, but is not generally considered an "elegist", and was excluded from the list as early as Quintilian (Inst. 10.1.93). As for Ovid, only his Amores will be considered here; the Ars Amatoria, Remedia Amoris, Medicamina Faciei, Fasti, Heroides, Tristia, and Epistulae ex Ponto, though written in the elegiac metre, do not fall into the same genre as the relatively short, subjective love elegies of Tibullus and Propertius.
125 For Ovid's acquaintance with the other elegists, particularly Propertius, see Tr. 4.45-58; he wrote an elegy lamenting Tibullus's death, Am. 3.9. For Messalla as patron of Tibullus and Ovid, see Miller 2002: 21.
other genres in other metres, particularly the works of Alexandrian poets, Hellenistic
epigram, and the subjective short poems of Catullus and his contemporaries.126

In all the elegies of Tibullus and Ovid, for example, only the poet's persona ever
speaks directly; other characters' speech, when it occurs, is presented in the form of direct
speech quoted by the main speaker in a framing narrative, just as Cynthia's is in 1.3,
2.29b, and 4.7.127 Clearly identified addressees are the norm, whether or not the content
of the elegies personally concerns them;128 for example, at least one direct addressee is
named or otherwise identified in each of Tibullus's elegies. Even when no particular
addressee is named, as is the case in many of Ovid's Amores, there is usually a clear sense
that the narrator is speaking directly to an audience, rather than musing to himself. Take
for example the opening of Amores 2.4, which incorporates terms evocative of a legal
speech (non ego mendosos ausim defendere mores / . . . / confiteor, "I would not dare to
defend my fault-ridden character . . . I confess," 2.4.1-3). An even clearer example, 3.12,
not only implies but directly expresses the narrator's consciousness of his audience; Ovid
tells of the inconvenient increase in Corinna's popularity that has resulted from his
descriptions of her in verse, and ends by clearly addressing his readership (credulitas
nunc mihi vestra nocet, "your credulity now does me harm," 3.12.44). As for
conventions of plot, though none of the surviving elegists presents an entirely consistent

126 For overviews of the origins, history, and nature of Latin elegy, see Archibald A. Day 1938; Camps
Callimachus and Philetas as stylistic influences, at 2.1.39-42, 2.34.31-32, 3.1.1-2, 3.3.51-52, 3.9.43-44,
4.1.64, and 4.6.3-4; he mentions Catullus at 2.32.45-46 and 2.34.87-88.
127 "Sulpicia's Garland" (Tib. 3.8-12), the set of poems preceding those acknowledged as Sulpicia's own,
seem to be an exception to this principle; three are spoken by a third party observing Sulpicia's relationship
with Cerinthus, and two by Sulpicia herself. It is generally assumed, however (primarily on stylistic
grounds), that these poems were not written by Sulpicia, but by another (as yet unidentified) author. For a
review of the debate on the subject and a close stylistic analysis, see Thomas K. Hubbard 2004.
128 For the nature and purposes of address in elegy in general and Propertius in particular, see Boucher
272.
overall narrative, there is one background situation common to most of Latin erotic elegy: the narrator has one main beloved, who is of course irresistibly attractive, and he is enslaved to her by his love; she is not entirely unattainable, but more often than not causes her lover grief through her unavailability, infidelity, ill-temper, or other means. The minor elegiac poet Lygdamus's relationship with Neaera seems to follow the same pattern. So does the female poet Sulpicia's relationship with Cerinthus, even though the genders are reversed; this last fact argues particularly strongly that the basic pattern of the relationship between the poet-lover and the beloved was a convention of the genre, rather than the reflection of a social norm. Conventional subgenres of lyric poetry and epigram, too, make an appearance in elegy: the **paraclausithyron**, for example, the **propempticon**, the **recusatio**, and the **querela**. There are, of course, more features that the elegists share, but the above will serve as representative examples.

Propertius does quite often adhere to such poetic conventions. Most of the poems in book one, for example, are straightforwardly and consistently addressed to an individual who can be imagined as receiving the poems, whether to a male friend (1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.9, 1.10, 1.12, 1.13, 1.14, 1.20, 1.22), or to Cynthia herself (1.2, 1.11, 1.15, 1.19). The background situation of the relationship between the elegiac lover and beloved described above, too, holds true for Propertius even more consistently than for

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129 Tibullus depicts no specific erotic encounters, but makes it clear at 1.6.5-14 that he has had a physical relationship with Delia. Ovid describes specific erotic encounters with Corinna at *Am.* 1.5, 2.12 and 3.7, and in 2.13 and 2.14, thinks it likely that he was the one who got her pregnant.

130 See especially Tib. 1.5, 1.6, 1.9, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, and Ov. *Am.* 1.4, 1.6, 1.12, 2.5, 2.7, 2.16, 3.3, 3.8, 3.11b, 3.14. References to Gallus that allude to the content of his poetry (among them Propertius 2.34.91-92) suggest a similar background situation for his poems; see Hollis 2007: 220-221.

131 Called the *komos* by Francis Cairns in his study of generic composition (see 1972: 6).

132 **Propemptica** include Tib. 1.3 and Ov. *Am.* 2.11; **paraclausithyra**, Tib. 1.2 and Ov. *Am.* 1.6, 3.8; **recusationes**, Ov. *Am.* 2.18, 3.1; **querelae**, Tib.1.5, 1.9, 2.4, 2.6 and Ov. *Am.* 2.5, 3.3, 3.8.

133 For some of these, see Mendell 1965: 184, 187; Kenneth Quinn 1979: 181-182; Warden 1980: 11-12; Miller 2002: 3-7; Gibson 2005: 160-166.
Tibullus or Ovid, who more often vary the scheme. Tibullus, for example, has three separate named objects of affection (Delia in 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.5, and 1.6; the boy Marathus in 1.4, 1.8, and 1.9; and Nemesis in 2.3, 2.4, and 2.6), each of whom represents only certain aspects of the general scheme. Ovid describes having an affair with Corinna's maid (2.8), carrying on two relationships at once (2.10), and being generally susceptible to falling in love with all sorts of women (2.4). As for conventional subgenres, Propertius 2.17 is a perfectly standard example of a paraclausithyron, and 2.1 and 3.3 of recusationes. (In fact, as Propertius never significantly subverts the recusatio as a genre, none will be discussed below.) Often, though, Propertius uses the same set of conventions in original and even surprising ways. This both supports a sense of realism, by distancing the poems from the conventions that they subvert, and, conversely, reminds the reader of their artificiality, thus prominently displaying the poet's ingenuity.

The convention that Propertius perhaps most often treats in an original way is that of direct address by one narrator to a stated or implied audience. He does so in a variety of ways, most frequently in books two and three. Two of his elegies, for example, 2.3 and 2.24a, are instead dialogues; an unidentified voice, unintroduced by a narrator - there is no ait or dixit - opens each poem with an accusation, and the rest is made up of Propertius's reply. A more conventional way to open an elegy incorporating this sort of reply, while keeping to a single narrating voice, would have been to paraphrase the other speaker, as at the opening of 1.4 (Quid mihi tam multas laudando, Basse, puellas / mutatum domina cogis abire mea? / "Why, by praising so many girls to me, Bassus, do you urge me to change my mind and leave my mistress?"). The actual dialogues presented in 2.3 and 2.24a are more realistic, in that Propertius can launch straight into
his replies rather than prefacing them with the sort of mannered introduction seen in 1.4. Another more conventional way of presenting a dialogue would have been with framing explanations by the narrator, as in the dialogues appearing in the other elegists, Tibullus 1.4 (between the narrator and a sculpted Priapus) and Ovid Am. 3.5 (between the narrator and an interpreter of dreams). This maintains the primacy of the voice of the narrator, through whom the dialogue is filtered; the result is thus one step further removed from the experience of witnessing an actual conversation than Propertius's dialogues are. However, the fact that in each of Propertius's dialogues the introductory voice is unidentified, that no context is given for the conversation, and, most of all, that there is no ongoing exchange, but only one speech from each speaker, of which the second is disproportionately long, prevents the reader from understanding it as existing within a dramatic situation.134 This, by contrast, emphasizes its artificiality.

In 3.6, Propertius bends the convention in the other direction. Here, a dramatic situation is strongly implied, as Propertius not only addresses Cynthia's slave, Lygdamus, four times by name, but sends him on an errand at the end, so that we understand the poem as being spoken directly to him in a real-life context. Lygdamus does not, however, get a word in edge-wise, and so there is no true dialogue, filtered through a narrator or not. As such, Propertius avoids breaking the convention of consistent direct address by one speaker, but unconventionally imagines it as being really received verbally, in a face-to-face interaction. In short, the poem is a dramatic monologue.135 Ovid has several poems that work from the same premise: 1.11, addressed to Corinna's

134 Allen (1962: 126) sees the questioning voice that opens 2.24a as that of someone who has just read (or heard?) 2.23, but this is far from certain, especially since the order of composition of Propertius's elegies cannot be reliably determined.
maid, Nape; 2.2, to her chaperon, Bagoas; 2.3, to her eunuch; 2.8, to another maid, Cypassis; and 3.2, to a girl sitting beside him at the races. All are imagined as being received verbally, in person. This need not necessarily discount the possibility that the technique was unconventional when Propertius used it, however; it is not used by Tibullus or any of the poets in the Corpus Tibullianum, and Ovid's Amores, after all, were published starting around 19 BCE, and so could easily have been influenced by Propertius's third book, which probably appeared around 23 BCE.\textsuperscript{136} In any case, though, the degree of realism is more consistently maintained in Propertius's poem than in Ovid's. Lygdamus's failure to reply is made to seem natural: he is prevented from doing so by Propertius's own excited rambling, evoked by his frequent repetition of Lygdamus's name (3.6.2, 11, 36, 42), his offers to free him (3.6.1-2, 41-42), and insistent questions (3.6.3-4, 9-18). The silence of the addressees in Ovid's poems, by contrast, is more obviously a self-imposed requirement of the poet rather than of the dramatic situation.

In two other poems, 1.8 and 2.28, Propertius creates a similar sense of a drama being played out in what does seem to be a distinctly unconventional way, by having his address heard and responded to (though not answered verbally) within the duration of the poem.\textsuperscript{137} In 1.8, Propertius begs Cynthia not to leave on a sea-voyage with a rival, and she relents; both his request and its fulfillment are presented in the present tense, creating the impression that Cynthia's mind has changed within the timespan of the poem itself. In 2.28, Propertius beseeches the gods to save Cynthia from an illness, and by the end of the poem, she has recovered. This device of collapsing time within a single poem is so

\textsuperscript{136} For the dating of the Amores, see Miller 2002: 29. For that of Propertius book three, see Postgate 1884: lii-liii; Camps 1966: 1; Sullivan 1976: 3; Richardson 1977: 10; Miller 2002: 28.

counter to convention that editors usually divide both poems into parts on the strength of it, 1.8 after line 26, and 2.28 after lines 32 and 46. There is perhaps an argument for the division of 2.28, as the transitions from section to section, the second especially, are rather jarring; 1.8, however, reads perfectly smoothly as a cohesive unit, and should likely stand as such.  Like 3.6, these poems push the idea of having one speaker and a clearly felt addressee in a direction that, paradoxically, both increases and limits the degree of realism. The idea that the addressee is literally being spoken to (in 3.6 and 1.8, at least) increases the sense of realism in the poems by depicting a dramatized, real-life interaction, in the place of a one-sided, formalized communication via the written word. Of course, the drama is still in actual fact one-sided, formalized, and written; but by minimizing the implausibility of Lygdamus's silence in 3.6, and alluding to the receipt of and response to the persona's words in 1.8 and 2.28, Propertius keeps the balance from tipping as far towards artificiality as it does in Ovid's similar poems. Enough artificiality remains, though, that the poet's role cannot be ignored; the exaggerated length and detail of Propertius's dramatization in 3.6 of what Cynthia must be doing and saying (3.6.19-34),

139 and the collapse of time that allows for 1.8 and 2.28 to be responded to, keep us from feeling that we are genuinely hearing speeches transcribed as delivered.

As for the standard background plot situation of most of Latin love elegy - the conventional pattern of the relationship between the lover-persona and his beloved - Propertius, as described above, actually adheres to this pattern more consistently than the other elegists. This does not, however, lessen his overall level of idiosyncrasy; instead, it

138 1.8 stands as an undivided unit in the oldest representatives of each family of manuscripts, N and A, in both of which the first lines of poems are marked by coloured initial letters; 2.28 is divided in two at line 34, in N only; see Richardson 1977: 16-17, 169 and Camps 1967: 186, respectively.
139 On the unreality of this aspect in particular, see Camps 1966: 79.
often acts as an anchor for his departures from convention. As Allen explains (1962: 128-129), the ideas that Propertius expresses about his love for Cynthia tend to be firmly fixed in the literary tradition, but unconventionally expressed, whereas the opposite is true, for example, of Ovid. An example of this is the way in which Propertius works with conventional subgenres, which does often include an original twist. The poem in which Cynthia's door speaks, 1.16, has already been mentioned; this variation on the standard *paraclausithyron* was perhaps inspired by Catullus 67, a conversation with a door, but goes a step further by introducing the poet's usual lover-persona's perspective only via the door's perception of it. This widens the scope of the genre, by neglecting its usual focus on the sufferings of the *exclusus amator* in favour of the effects of his complaints on their recipient. This increases the realism of the situation by examining its larger context and the emotions of more of its characters than just the lover-persona. The limitation of that realism, though, is obvious: the psychological state examined is that of an inanimate object. This witty spin on the genre is unique -- nowhere else is an elegy involving the usual elegiac lover as a character delivered entirely in another persona -- and it emphasizes the poet's originality and skill by demonstrating how creative he can be while avoiding truly departing from the conventions of the genre. Adding to this effect is the fact that the door's speech contains a long example of the sort of complaint it receives from the lover on its doorstep, and this complaint is itself a particularly standard and unoriginal *paraclausithyron*. One might compare the "play within a play" in *Hamlet* act

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140 The theme of *Am.* 3.14, for example, that Corinna can be as unfaithful as she likes as long as she does not pain Ovid by letting him find out about it, is quite alien to conventional attitudes about women's chaste fidelity, but is expressed in a formal, rhetorically structured way.

141 On 1.16 and the ways in which it subverts convention, see Williams 1968: 547; Copley 1969: 259-260; Cairns 1972: 216 (though it should be noted that the door does not speak to the lover in place of the beloved, as he claims; it is annoyed by both parties - see 1.16.9-12); Hodge and Buttimore 1977: 176-182; Richardson 1977: 189; Wyke 2002: 22.
3 scene 2, in which the players' exaggeratedly artificial diction makes the surrounding dialogue of the play itself seem natural by contrast.

As for other subgenres, 1.8, the propempticon in which the speaker's requests are actually granted, has also already been discussed. It is part of a larger trend of Propertius taking poetic commonplaces to their logical ends, as described by Hubbard (1974: 33-34) in her discussion of 1.18. In the case of the latter poem, apostrophe is imagined as having a real purpose: the implication is that Cynthia, called on from afar like a goddess, in a standard elegiac commonplace, might actually hear and be able to alter the weather. In 1.8, the propempticon is likewise imagined as having a real goal. Propertius does not ask Cynthia to stay simply to prove his affection in poetry; his persona genuinely hopes that she will stay, and she does. Since it is here presented as having a practical purpose, in which it is even successful, the convention in its usual guise is made to seem artificial, in contrast to its more realistic treatment here. Another propempticon, 1.6, is dealt with differently, but, again, unconventionally.\(^{142}\) It begins in standard terms: Propertius expresses his willingness to accompany Tullus on his voyage, and his inability to do so (1.6.1-6). But his unhappiness in remaining in Rome does not, as in a usual propempticon, have to do with Tullus' departure. It is instead the result of his own sufferings at Cynthia's hands: if he were to leave, her complaints would be unbearable (1.6.7-18). On the other hand, even when he stays, fortune will grant him no joy, and he is likely to die for love (1.6.23-28, 35-36). This variation on the theme of the propempticon, focusing on the feelings of the one left behind to the exclusion of concern for the one leaving (whom Propertius even encourages to leave, 3.6.19-20) fosters an increased sense of realism simply because it is a departure from the usual pattern; it gives

the impression that the speaker is not following a preset convention, but expressing his own feelings in a situation that happens to be reminiscent of a conventional one. Its variation from the usual pattern, though, itself falls into a conventional category: the elegiac lover's querela, or lament at his mistress' cruelty. It thus, once again, comes across as more realistic than usual through its originality, but as limited in its realism by other factors, this time in such a way as to emphasize the poet's cleverness in fusing two commonplaces.

Many of the ways in which Propertius departs from or bends the limits of the conventions of the genre, then, increase the sense of realism in his poems. In part, they do so simply because they introduce changes at all. If conventions are seen as artificial, in that they are one of the more obvious aspects of poetry that distance it from natural speech, then departures from those conventions naturally, on one level, increase realism. They also accomplish the same result by means of the nature of the changes made: the variations that Propertius makes on the standard scheme of direct address by one speaker can more closely approximate real-life interactions; the spin he puts on the paraclausithyron expands the range of emotions it can depict and reactions it can provoke; and so on. However it is produced, though, this increased realism is also limited by other means. These limitations are significant enough to draw attention to the realism, and thus to the skill of the poet behind it, without being distracting enough to negate it completely.
V. Hyper-realism and the Interaction of Types of Imagery

The same pattern whereby realism is created but limited by Propertius is seen in his handling of imagery. Propertius often alternates between literally expressed sense-imagery that is evocative because it resonates with the real experience of the reader, and imagery that is vivid for the opposite reason, because it is hyperbolic or fanciful. This tendency is, of course, not unique to Propertius, but is more pronounced in his works than in those of the other elegists, because he tends to include a greater amount of more minute physical details, imagery focusing on senses other than sight, and more surprising fanciful images. On one level, down-to-earth imagery fosters realism by suggesting links between the world of the poems and the world of the reader, and fanciful imagery limits it by reestablishing distance, so that this give-and-take does have a result similar to that created by Propertius's original use of the conventions of the genre. More important here, though, are the immediate effects of the interaction of the different types of imagery. When real-life imagery has put the audience in a state of equating the world of the poem to their own, and is then followed by hyperbolic or fantastical imagery, the latter is more effective than it would have been on its own. It is more acceptable, because we have in a sense been eased into it, and yet more striking, because, having been thus eased in, we are more likely to look at it in the real-life terms of the preceding imagery, and so invest it with more emotional weight. When the order is reversed, and unreal imagery precedes realistic imagery, the former has full shock-value, but may be difficult

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143 Mythical exempla will be touched on only briefly in this section; they are discussed in more detail below in section VI, pg. 87-94.
to identify with and accept. The more realistic imagery then works within the unreal context that has been established, to make that context easier to relate to, while at the same time its own dramatic impact is heightened by association.\textsuperscript{145} In most of the elegies that contain varied imagery, the real and the unreal alternate more than once, so that both effects mingle together. The examples examined below, though, have a clearer and more consistent progression from one type of imagery to the other, and so more clearly illustrate the principles at work, since they do so on a larger scale. The end result of each scenario is similar, whether an over-the-top scheme of imagery is made acceptable by down-to-earth details, a realistic context is made hyper-realistic by more extreme imagery, or there is an even mixture: an environment is created for the events described that is more evocative than the unrelieved use of one or the other kind of imagery would have produced.

2.8 provides a good example of a progression from literal description to more extreme imagery. In this poem, in which Propertius laments Cynthia having left him for another man, the imagery begins fairly well-grounded in reality. Propertius describes in literal terms his own tears, and Cynthia on the arm of his rival (2.8.2, 5). He then imagines love as a wheel which, like Fortune’s, raises lovers up or casts them down (2.8.7-8), then goes on to compare himself to a freedman still harassed by his old mistress (2.8.15-16). These are of course more figurative than the opening images, but are simple metaphors alluding to things that the contemporary reader would have experience of: wheels, and the relationship between slaves and their masters. The imagery then begins to become more active and fanciful, as Propertius imagines himself dying for love, and

\textsuperscript{145} On the mixing of real, metaphorical, and fantastical imagery in Propertius, see Williams 1968: 475; Luck 1969: 120; Musker 1972: 26; Warden 1980: 12. On the use of this technique in 1.3 and 4.7, respectively, see Hodge & Buttimore 1977: 87, 92-93, and Warden 1980: 24, 27.
Cynthia harrying his shade, trampling on his grave, and crushing his bones (2.8.17-20). At last, via the somewhat tenuous link of the double suicide of Antigone and Haemon, Propertius decides that if he is to die, Cynthia must as well, and imagines committing a murder-suicide. He suggests the horror of the act with a simple but evocative image: *hoc eodem ferro stillet uterque cruor* ("let the blood of each [of us] drip from this one sword," 2.8.26). The poem then winds down in an extended allusion to Achilles's revenge on Hector, but the preceding gory image is its emotional peak. The increase in the degree of distance between the imagery used and the real experience of the speaker, from a literal description of what is actually happening, through figurative descriptions of it, to increasingly violent fantasies set in the future, is gradual enough that by the time Propertius starts to speak about actually killing Cynthia and himself, the reader has accepted the scenario as realistic and can be fully struck by the emotional tension and shocking nature of the image. The picture is thus made more vivid than it would have been if it had appeared nearer to the beginning of the poem. The hyper-realism that results convincingly reflects the intense emotional state of the speaker, and thus creates an impression of extreme vividness through the interaction of real and unreal imagery.

A similar progression from literal description to more figurative expression has the same effect of producing vividness and emotional plausibility in 2.15, though in this case the less literal imagery, though striking, is not particularly shocking or violent, and the straightforward descriptions are instead the more evocative of the two. The poem,

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146 The ill fit of the allusion to Propertius's situation perhaps suggests the increasing distress of the speaker. On this allusion, see Butler and Barber 1933: 205; Boucher 1965: 390; Camps 1967: 102; Williams 1968: 478-479; Richardson 1977: 234; Papanghelis 1987: 120-125.
147 On Propertius's tendency to describe imaginary future events with the same attention to minute detail as "actual" events, see Boucher 1965: 60.
148 On the formality of the syntax of the Achilles exemplum as compared with that of the earlier part of the poem, suggesting a less keyed-up speaker, see Lyne 1980: 146; Papanghelis 1987: 129-130.
which describes a night spent making love to Cynthia, begins with a long passage of
description, incorporating all kinds of evocative sense imagery, but no purely figurative
expressions. It relies particularly on a series of opposites, in which the effectiveness of
each image is increased by contrast, and a full range of images is suggested by each
juxtaposition of two extremes: the light versus the dark (2.15.3-4), bare skin versus
clothes (2.15.5-6), Propertius's sleepiness versus Cynthia's wakefulness (2.15.7-8; these
two concepts are juxtaposed in the image of Cynthia opening Propertius's eyes with
kisses), and active limbs versus lingering lips (2.15.9-10). After a brief pair of mythical
exempla in praise of nudity (2.15.13-16), the realistic imagery continues; there are no
more pairs of opposites, though, and Propertius shifts from literal description of past
events to predictions for the future. The specificity and the tactile nature of the imagery,
though, keep the level of vividness high: Propertius warns Cynthia that if she comes to
bed dressed, he will tear her clothes, and she will have bruises "to show her mother" (a
particularly vivid image, which suggests a whole potential mini-narrative of its own\(^1\));
he also praises the youthful firmness of her breasts (2.15.17-22). The final image
provides a segue from literal description into semi-philosophical musings, and into more
figurative language, as Propertius begins to speak about the brevity of life and the
importance of love, and the imagery becomes more fanciful.

It begins with a densely-packed set of simple metaphors, of eyes being "sated"
with love, of life as a day and death as an eternal night, of love as a chain uniting lovers,
and of that union as the mating of doves (2.15.23-28). A set of \textit{adynata} (2.15.31-35), by
\footnote{See Richardson 1977: 255; Warden 2008: 75. For the general technique of suggesting a whole picture
or narrative while really providing only key details, see Benediktson 1989: 86. For Catullus's use of the
same technique, see Williams 1968: 465.}

\footnote{The phrase also calls to mind the episode at \textit{Il.} 5.370ff. in which Aphrodite goes to Dione for sympathy
after being wounded by Diomedes.}
the very nature of the device, then further distances the imagery from reality, and is followed by a hyperbole in which Propertius describes the power of Cynthia's love to confer immortality (2.15.36-40). All of these metaphors are quite standard and conventional. Next, in another commonplace, the life of love is defiantly contrasted with that of war; the consequences of the latter are described in symbolic terms, with the idea of Rome being worn out by perpetual warfare evoked by the allegorical figure of Roma being too exhausted to untie her own hair - that is, to relax and be at peace, but this action is also a gesture of mourning (2.15.41-48). A coda unites the two types of imagery, as Propertius likens the ephemeral nature of life to that of the garlands that are already dropping leaves into his and Cynthia's wine-cups: this is, of course, a figurative expression, but its vehicle is an object that is physically present in the scene (2.15.49-54). This union of the literal and the figurative echoes how the different types of imagery work together in the poem as a whole. The gradual distancing of the imagery from reality, as in 2.8, allows us more readily to accept the more fanciful imagery of the latter half of the poem. Here, however, it is not a case of less emotionally charged realistic imagery easing us into violent fanciful imagery, but rather of vivid and physical realistic imagery leading us to transfer its high emotional pitch and specificity into the second section, which, evocative though it is, might on its own seem rather too learned, conventional, and detached from experience. The more figurative language of the second half, meanwhile, linked as it is to more general themes, universalizes the very particular picture created in the first half. As in 2.8, the end result is more vivid than either type of

151 See Day 1938: 121-122.
152 See Butler and Barber 1933: 217; Camps 1967: 129; Miller 2002: 193.
imagery would have achieved in isolation, and evokes a realistic emotional progression from unalloyed happiness to more sober reflection.

In 1.5, a poem representing another variation on the mixture of literal and more fanciful imagery, the progression runs in the opposite direction, from loftier to more down-to-earth. It is a warning to Propertius's friend Gallus\textsuperscript{153} not to attempt to woo Cynthia away, and falls into two parallel progressions from figurative imagery to literal description. As such, instead of realistic imagery providing a context for imagery that the audience is less likely to relate to at once, the more extreme imagery provides a context for the literal description, thus raising it to its own hyperbolic level. Propertius first warns Gallus that he does not know what he is asking for, because loving Cynthia is like walking through fire or drinking poison (\textit{properas . . . / . . . ignotos vestigia ferre per ignis, / et bibere e tota toxica Thessalia}, 1.5.4-6), and she tames men like animals (1.5.12). It is only after these figurative descriptions that Gallus is given a more literal account of what Cynthia would do to him: he would end up running to Propertius's doorstep for pity, shuddering, gasping, and weeping, speechless and unrecognizable (1.5.13-18).\textsuperscript{154} This description is, one assumes, somewhat exaggerated, though it incorporates no figurative elements. Because it follows a set of hyperbolic introductory metaphors, though, we understand it in that context and take its extreme nature in stride: the picture, though it may be somewhat too intense to be a realistic description of a Roman lover, is what one might expect of someone who has walked through fire, been poisoned, or been broken like an animal. As though to reinforce the lesson, Propertius repeats the pattern a second time. Before describing how, if he and Gallus were both to

\textsuperscript{153} This is probably not Cornelius Gallus, the elegiac poet; see Hubbard 1974: 25-26.
\textsuperscript{154} This picture can also be seen as another witty variation on the \textit{paraclausithyron}. 

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pursue Cynthia, they would only end up weeping on each other's breast (1.5.29-30), Propertius likens love of Cynthia to servitude, or a wasting disease with no cure (1.5.19-22). In both cases, we are prepared for the hyperbole of the literal descriptions in the poem by the extreme nature of the metaphorical images that precede them. The end result is a high emotional pitch appropriate to Propertius's anxiety that Gallus might become his rival that prompts his extreme description of the suffering that Cynthia puts him through.

Whether there is a progression from realistic to more fanciful imagery or vice versa -- or, as is most frequent, a mixture of the two -- the end result is the same. The unrelieved use of realistic imagery and literal description might be evocative, but would be in danger of coming across as clinical. The use of nothing but hyperbolic and fanciful imagery, on the other hand, would lack grounding and risk being difficult for an audience to relate to. The interaction of the different types of imagery, though, makes for an overall effect that is neither realistic nor unrealistic, but instead hyper-realistic, plausibly reflecting the over-reaction and overstatement characteristic of the heightened emotional states in which Propertius's persona often finds himself. This is a result different from that seen in Propertius's original use of conventions, where the hand of the poet is more obtrusive, but it nonetheless results from the manipulation of the real and the unreal to produce an essentially realistic effect.

VI. Interaction of Quick Thought-Progression and Mythical Exempla

The two distinctive aspects of Propertius's style that have perhaps been most commented upon by critics are his tendency to shift from one train of thought to another
with little or no transition, and his prolific use of often obscure mythical exempla. Both, though not by any means absent from the works of the other elegists, are particularly pronounced in Propertius for two reasons. First, his shifts in subject tend to be more rapid than those of the other elegists, and his exempla piled one upon the other; second, he often uses both techniques in the same poem, so that their opposite natures make them emphasize each other by contrast. His quick progression from thought to thought gives an impression of realism through its apparent spontaneity, and encourages us to think of the poem in which it occurs almost as the unedited "stream of consciousness" of the speaker. Mythical allusions, on the other hand (especially when they are obscure or occur in groups), through the subtlety of their relation to the real-life subjects to which they are compared, give the opposite impression, of a carefully crafted composition.

Some critics are uncomfortable with the juxtaposition of the two devices that Propertius presents. Mendell, for example, describes how, "almost naively, [his] sincerity is constantly interrupted by passages of learned obscurity," and he uses the poet's "Hellenistic indulgence in learned allusion" as evidence for the essential artificiality of his verse (1965: 195; 205, 211). Frank O. Copley refers to Propertius's lists of exempla as "hardly more than poetic ornamentation", and, tellingly, goes on to state that the "actual content" of the elegies is of far greater interest (1969: 251). Veyne can only make sense of the way in which the more realistically down-to-earth passages in

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156 See Leonard E. Woodbury's comments on Stesichorus and the λεξις ειρομενη, or style that is "linear in movement, paratactic in syntax, continuous and associative in thought" (1967: 174).
Propertius are "ruined by bizarre digressions . . . or an abuse of mythology" by concluding that the overall effect is meant to be humorous (1988: 32-33). Luck defends the profusion of exempla, but the terms he uses in doing so make clear that he feels his reader will need to be convinced that they are not useless: "His mythological erudition, heavy as it may appear at times, never suffocates this fresh vision of life that he wants to convey. Even where we have the impression that the exempla are accumulated for their own sake, they are never left hanging in the air." (1969: 122; my emphasis). As we have seen in the above analyses of his use of imagery, though, Propertius's style is not otherwise characterized by clumsiness or disorganization. And indeed, a naturalistic thought-progression and lists of mythical exempla do not seem to have been perceived by ancient critics to be quite so jarringly incompatible as we might consider them.

Quintilian, in his brief assessment of the characteristics of each of the elegists, categorizes Propertius with Tibullus, as tersus atque elegans, or "polished and tasteful", and the younger Pliny's assessment is similar.157 To these ancient critics, then -- surely nearer equivalents to Propertius's contemporary audience than ourselves, in taste as well as in time and culture -- his quick progression from thought to thought and its juxtaposition with apparently more organized collections of mythical allusions (both of which occur too frequently to be ignored) must not have seemed disorientingly harsh.

157 Quintilian's full assessment is as follows: Elegia quoque Graecos provocamus, cuius mihi tersus atque elegans maxime videtur auctor Tibullus. Sunt qui Propertium malint. Ovidius utroque lascivior, sicut durior Gallus, "In elegy, too, we challenge the Greeks. Tibullus seems to me the most polished and tasteful poet of this [genre]. There are those who prefer Propertius. Ovid is more playful/naughty than either, just as Gallus is harsher." (Inst. 10.1.93). The reference to Propertius in this passage is admittedly ambiguous, but for discussions of its precise implications, see Allen 1962: 107-108 and Hubbard 1974: 2-3; see also Boucher 1965: 387. Postgate (1884: i-vii) blames the incompatibility of Quintilian's assessment with his own on the former's "rhetorical bias". Pliny, meanwhile, refers to Propertius's poetry only indirectly, but in similar terms: Si elegos [Passeumni Paulli] in manus sumpseris, leges opus tersum, molle, iucundum, et plane in Properti domo scriptum, "If you take into your hands the elegies [of Passeenus Paullus], you will read a work that is polished, tender, pleasant, and clearly written within Propertius's family" (Epist. 9.22.2; as Pliny explains, Passeenus Paullus (whose works do not survive) claimed to be descended from Propertius).
More likely, then, the ways in which the two devices complement one another are as important as the ways in which they contrast; a close examination of some poems in which both are present will demonstrate how they act and interact, and, in the end, foster realism rather than sabotaging it.

In 2.9, allusions to myth appear at the beginning and end of the poem, bracketing a train of thought that is diverted with extreme frequency throughout the middle section. After the elegy's first couplet introduces the context -- Cynthia has a new lover, and Propertius has been cut out -- there follow two well-developed exempla, favourably describing the conduct of Penelope, who was faithful even during Ulysses' 20-year absence, and Briseis, who mourned for Achilles and saw to his funeral rites in place of his absent parents (2.9.3-18). Cynthia, by contrast, cannot be left alone by Propertius even for one day before she finds a replacement (2.9.19-20). In the twenty-eight lines that follow, as Propertius mulls the situation over, he changes subject eight times: he imagines Cynthia and her new lover drinking together and mocking him; he notes that his rival once left Cynthia, and is thus undeserving of her attention; he recalls his own faithfulness when Cynthia was sick; he wonders what she would get up to if he were ever absent for an extended period; he muses on woman's capacity for falsehood; he imagines that he will die of love; he swears that he will always be faithful; and he prays that his rival be cursed (2.9.21-48). One last mythical exemplum ends the poem, as Propertius addresses his rival directly, swearing that he would fight him for Cynthia even if, like Eteocles and Polynices, they were both doomed to die in the combat (2.9.49-52). The exempla of Penelope and Briseis at the beginning of the poem and of Eteocles and Polynices at the end, though, do more than provide a neat structural symmetry. They also
sum up the overall themes of the passage that they frame, which might otherwise seem scattered, since it follows no particularly clear and logical sequence of thought. The exempla at the beginning of the poem demonstrate Cynthia's lack of faithfulness, even in Propertius's brief absence, in contrast to Penelope's faithfulness in Ulysses' long absence and Briseis's in Achilles's permanent one. The allusion at the end of poem complements this idea, demonstrating that Propertius's love and fidelity are not contingent on his obtaining any reward for it; he would fight to prove his love for her even if he were afterward separated from her by death.158 This contrast between Propertius's selfless devotion and Cynthia's lack thereof is the idea behind all of the thoughts touched on in the middle section of the poem. The exempla thus help to unite these thoughts, by making their organizing principle clearer. With this structure imposed on it from the outside, the middle section is free to demonstrate the realistically irrational thought-progression of a distressed and agitated mind, without its randomness becoming disorienting. The mythical allusions, then, which are comparatively unrealistic (since one does not necessarily expect someone as distraught as Propertius claims to be to insert such formal elements into his discourse), far from tripping up the realism of the rest of the poem, actually help it along. They let it have its full force, while at the same time counteracting its less desirable side-effects.

The mythical exempla in 1.15 are arranged differently, and act differently, but have a similar role in helping to unite the poem.159 The myths are grouped near the beginning of the poem, following a few lines that establish the context: Cynthia's concern

158 For a fuller analysis of the relation between the myths and the dramatic situation in the poem, see Nancy Wiggers 1976: 367-374.
for her own appearance when Propertius is dangerously ill\textsuperscript{160} is evidence of the shallowness of her love for him (1.15.1-8). The first exemplum, of Calypso's love for Ulysses (1.15.9-14), is made to contrast directly with the current situation by mention of Calypso's dishevelled hair; unlike Cynthia, Calypso cared more for her lover than for her appearance. The next allusion only briefly describes Alphesiboea's greater attachment to her estranged husband than to her brothers, and the story referred to is obscure,\textsuperscript{161} but it does provide a general exemplum in praise of wifely devotion (1.15.15-16).\textsuperscript{162} The next two exempla are variations on and intensifications of these first two; that of Hypsipyle parallels that of Calypso, with the addition that Hypsipyle never had another lover after Jason, and that of Evadne parallels that of Alphesiboea, except that her devotion manifested itself in \textit{suttee}-style self-immolation rather than revenge (1.15.17-22).

Propertius ties this list directly to his current situation explicitly as well as by implication: if only Cynthia changed her ways, she too could become a famed example of chastity and devotion (1.15.23-24). At this point, the speaker's manner of expression becomes more naturalistic; mythical exempla are abandoned, and Propertius covers the range of his emotions on Cynthia's betrayal in more direct terms. The guiding principle is here more evident than in 2.9, but nonetheless the progression from thought to thought is quite

\textsuperscript{160} Or perhaps leaving on a sea-voyage; see Haig Gaisser 1977: 386. Richardson (1977: 186-187) argues against both interpretations, suggesting that the danger of death to which Propertius refers is his response to Cynthia's lack of concern for him, and not vice versa.

\textsuperscript{161} See the \textit{Oxford Classical Dictionary} (2003), s.v. "Alphesiboea".

\textsuperscript{162} I am here following the original line-ordering of the manuscripts, and not Markland's reordering, favoured by Barber, which places lines 15-16 after line 20 for the sake of a more logical progression in the mythical heroines' level of devotion. Alternation between close parallels to Cynthia's situation (Calypso and Hypsipyle) and more abstract ones (Alphesiboea and Evadne), as appears in the manuscripts, is just as systematic as the linear development from one to the other that Markland suggests, and so the former might as well be retained. See also Allen 1973: 383; Haig Gaisser 1977: 388; Hodge and Buttimore 1977: 170 n.10. Goold follows Lachmann in placing lines 15-16 after 22; Heyworth makes no decision on their placement.
rapid, with five subjects being covered in the remaining eighteen lines: Cynthia must stop lying; but he will be faithful to her, however she may act; her failure to stand behind her oaths is putting her in danger of the gods' wrath; her tears and blushes show the truth anyway; and when Propertius dies, the result of her faithlessness will be a warning to others (1.15.25-42). On the surface, then, it seems that the poem falls into two relatively distinct parts: the list of mythical allusions, and the more emotionally naturalistic review of the situation at hand. The final assertion, though, that Cynthia will at last provide a cautionary example to others (1.15.41-42), links the two by recalling her failure to be a model of faithfulness like the mythical heroines listed (1.15.23-24). The review of Cynthia's fickleness and its effects thus becomes one long contrasting equivalent to the descriptions of the mythical heroines' actions, and a sort of exemplum in itself. The two halves of the poem are very much thematically linked, and this reduces the disjunction between the two modes of expression and levels of realism that they represent.

2.13b displays yet another structural scheme and another way in which mythical exempla can work with more naturalistic modes of expression. In this poem, in which Propertius contemplates the prospect of his own death and funeral, the exempla are interspersed with the speaker's more down-to-earth thoughts. Rather than being purely decorative or simply working to intensify each idea, though, the exempla actively lead the reader from thought to thought. After a long introduction in which Propertius expresses his desire for a simple funeral and an epitaph expressing only his devotion to Cynthia (2.13.17-36), he uses Achilles's tomb as the example of how famous his own will become (2.13.37-38). The connotations of this image -- the phrase *cruenta busta*,

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163 Hodge and Buttimore find the progression disconnected enough that they feel the need to supply Cynthia's implied actions and reactions that must have prompted each thought (1977: 168, 172-175).
"bloody grave", suggests the sacrifice of Polyxena over Achilles's tomb at his ghost's request for this honour -- lead Propertius to his next subject, via several subtle links. The idea of Polyxena and Achilles joined in the grave\textsuperscript{164} leads him to contemplate the aged Cynthia one day joining him in death (2.13.39-40). He then reminds Cynthia to honour his grave in the meantime by visiting it regularly (much less of an imposition than that laid on Polyxena), since the earth there, like Achilles's ghost, will know whether she does so or not (2.13.39-42).\textsuperscript{165} At this point the only unsignposted shift in the direction of Propertius's train of thought occurs; he suddenly laments the uncertain span of life, and the fact that he did not die in infancy (2.13.43-45). The exemplum that this prompts, though, of Nestor having lived long enough to have to grieve over the burial of his son (2.13.46-50), leads neatly into the next of Propertius's requests from Cynthia: that, as Nestor did for Antilochus, she continue to love him and weep for him after his death (2.13.51-52). This, in turn, leads into another exemplum, of Venus weeping for Adonis (2.13.53-56), which, since Venus's lamentation could not bring Adonis back to life, brings us to the final couplet, in which Propertius rhetorically asks what use Cynthia's weeping would be, after all (2.13.57-58). Without the mythical allusions inserted to guide the reader from one thought to another via their multiple connotations, the progression of thought in the latter half of the poem would seem random and, at times, contradictory. The final thought, for example, is in direct opposition to Propertius's earlier requests for attention to his grave; the Adonis myth's implications, though, give him a motivation for this sudden about-face. The insertion of these allusions, however, does not negate the realism created by the increasingly quick jumps from subject to

\textsuperscript{164} For this as the implied aftermath of her sacrifice over his tomb, see Eur. \textit{Hec.} 612.

\textsuperscript{165} For the idea of the consciousness of the earth over a grave, see 1.19.6, 4.11.74; see also Hope 2007: 236-238.
subject in the poem; on the contrary, the readiness with which the speaker shifts from the
initial idea that prompted a given myth to its other implications creates the same effect of
apparent spontaneity that the quick thought-progression itself does. The poem thus
provides a particularly clear example of how mythical exempla can work together with an
apparently unsystematic and naturalistic thought-progression, by leading us through it
and keeping it from becoming disorienting, while not disturbing the realistic effect it
produces.

Propertius's mythical exempla, then, though they do represent a mode of
expression that is in itself less realistic than that involved in his rapid thought-progression
in more literal passages, do not truly create a jarring contrast or disturb the overall
realism of his poems. Instead, it works with this more naturalistic manner of expression,
providing context and a means of uniting apparently scattered thoughts via their shared
themes. Thus, though the two devices, in isolation, have opposite effects in terms of
creating a sense of realism, the effect of their interaction is neat and smooth. As with the
interaction of down-to-earth and fanciful imagery described above, the realistic and the
unrealistic come together to create an overall effect that is realistic, but that allows us to
see the poetic artificiality by which it was achieved.

VII. Conclusion

The unique techniques at work to create and limit realism in 1.3, 2.29b, and 4.7 --
although, in their particular focus on the effects of perspective and subjective thought and
emotion, they create a different and particularly textured type of realism from that seen in
Propertius's other elegies -- are nonetheless part of a larger trend in his elegies as a whole.
Each of the major ways in which realism is limited in Propertius's elegies works together with the devices that create realism, to support them rather than subvert them, with a result that is more vivid than pure naturalism of expression would be. Original and surprising manipulation of the conventions of the genre creates naturalistic effects and situations, but at the same time draws attention to its own artificiality. The interaction of down-to-earth and fanciful imagery increases the effectiveness of both, resulting in a hyper-realistic texture more evocative of a high emotional pitch than either could produce on its own. And the interaction between the naturalistic mode of expression represented by a quick thought-progression and the more artificial one represented by the insertion of long or frequent mythical exempla allows the former to have its full effect without confusing the reader. Through these processes, the reader is made to notice and specifically appreciate the poet's agency, and not only its effects.
CHAPTER FIVE: Conclusion

Several factors contribute to the realism in Propertius's love elegies, some of which (like Cynthia's long speeches) are rare enough that their presence sets apart the poems in which they appear as practically their own sub-genre, and others of which (like his quick thought-progression or his use of evocative sense imagery) are present in so many of his poems that they are generally and rightly considered distinctive features of his overall style. These devices act individually and collectively to create a rich variety of different types and depths of realism, in the physical sense, but also, and more importantly, in the psychological and emotional sense. Even the number of factors contributing to realism and the ways in which they interact can themselves foster realism. In 1.3, 2.29b, and 4.7, for example, the intricacy of the devices at work and the subtlety of the ways in which they affect one another are themselves evocative of the emotional complexity and doubt inherent in the situations narrated. Varied and complex as it is, though, there are certain features of the realism in Propertius's poetry that are consistent, and one of these is that it is limited, whether by other devices external to its creation, or by aspects of its contributing factors themselves. As we have seen, however, these limitations do not diminish the effectiveness of the realism in his poetry, but instead enhance it, and so are more a part of what encourages realism in Propertius's poetry than what detracts from it.

This pattern of the creation of realism and its enhancement via its limitations tends to distinguish Propertius the poet from his persona, and thus draws attention to his presence and agency. The analysis of this effect shows us something of Propertius's specific methods in crafting the effect of individual poems, but it also reflects his more
general concerns as an elegiac poet. Though the elegists sometimes display what is essentially false modesty in the form of *recusationes*, they more often clearly, and sometimes almost defiantly, champion their own genre. Propertius, in fact, praises love elegy the most often and the most directly of the surviving elegists. He several times commends it, for example, as the type of poetry that is most useful in the real world for poets themselves, since it pleases their lovers. One of its features that he most often singles out in the course of this praise is the private and subjective nature of its subject matter and style, as compared with the larger-than-life themes and bombastic nature of epic. Since realism, especially psychological and emotional realism, supports this private, subjective aspect of elegy, it is a feature that Propertius well might wish not only to emphasize by employing it often and effectively, but also to draw his readers' conscious attention to, making sure that they acknowledge it as a deliberate effect.

The complexity and variety of the realism in Propertius's love elegies thus lets him practice what he preaches elsewhere, in poems which express his attitude to his genre. Statements in these programmatic poems about the features and the uses of elegiac poetry are made by the poet's lover-persona, and so do not carry full weight in themselves; we are justified in doubting, for example, whether the primary real-life purpose of writing elegy was really seducing or placating one's mistress. Propertius's love poems themselves, though, as they foster such dense and varied realism and even actively point it out to us, encourage us to acknowledge and laud the poet's skill for the

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166 See pg. 72 above, n. 131.
167 See Prop. 1.7; 1.9.9-14; 2.1.1-16; 2.13.1-8; 2.34b; 3.1; 3.2; 3.3; 4.1.131-140; see also Ovid *Am.* 1.1; 2.1; 2.18.35-40; 3.1. See also Luck 1969: 21; Miller 2002: 26; Gibson 2005: 162. Tibullus only indirectly praises love elegy, by praising the private life of the lover over the public one of the soldier or businessman (1.1.57-68; 1.2.67-80; 1.3.57-82; 1.10; 2.6).
168 See Wyke 2002: 46-51 (though she advances her arguments in favour of a rather different conclusion; see above, pg. 13).
same reasons as the programmatic ones do: for his ability to evoke down-to-earth situations and emotions on a personal level. Moreover, unlike the programmatic poems, they demonstrate these features on the level of the poet himself rather than that of his persona. Instead of telling us about his approach, they show us its process and its results directly.

An examination of the creation and limitation of realism in Propertius's love poetry thus gives us insight not only into Propertius's methods in individual poems and groups of poems, but perhaps into his actual objectives and his attitude toward his genre. The complexity and subtlety of the creation of realism work in combination with a concern for the reader's acknowledgement of the poet's agency in creating it, represented by the limitation of that realism, to demonstrate that Propertius's arguments in favour of his genre's unique features and capabilities are not mere commonplaces or rhetorical exercises, but are genuinely reflected in his oeuvre. Through realism and its limitations, Propertius shows us the realization of what he elsewhere describes as elegy's potential.
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APPENDIX

Below are elegies 1.3, 2.29b, and 4.7 in the original Latin, from E.A. Barber's 1960 OCT edition, followed by my English translations.

1.3

Qualis Thesea iacuit cedente carina
languida desertis Cnosia litoribus;
qualis et accubuit primo Cepheia somno
libera iam duris cotibus Andromede;
nec minus assiduis Edonis fessa choreis
qualis in herboso concidit Apidano:
talis visa mihi mollem spirare quietem
Cynthia non certis nixa caput manibus,
ebria cum multo traherem vestigia Baccho,
et quaterent sera nocte facem pueri.
hanc ego, nondum etiam sensus deperditus omnis,
molliter impresso conor adire toro;
et quamvis duplici correptum ardore iuberent
hac Amor hac Liber, durus uterque deus,
subiecto leviter positam temptare lacerto
osculaque admota sumere †et arma† manu,
non tamen ausus eram dominae turbare quietem,
expertae metuens iurgia saevitiae;

104
sed sic intentis haerebam fixus ocellis,
   Argus ut ignotis cornibus Inachidos.  20
et modo solvebam nostra de fronte corollas
   ponebamque tuis, Cynthia, temporibus;
et modo gaudebam lapsos formare capillos;
nunc furtiva cavis poma dabam manibus;
omniaque ingrato largibar munera somno,
   munera de prono saepe voluta sinu;
et quotiens raro duxti suspiria motu,
   obstupui vano credulus auspicio,
ne qua tibi insolitos portarent visa timores,
   neve quis invitam cogeret esse suam:  30
donec diversas praecurrents luna fenestras,
   luna moraturis sedula luminibus,
compositos levibus radiis patefecit ocellos.
   sic ait in molli fixa toro cubitum:
'tandem te nostro referens iniuria lecto  35
   alterius clausis expulit e foribus?
namque ubi longa meae consumpsti tempora noctis,
   languidus exactis, ei mihi, sideribus?
o utinam talis perducas, improbe, noctes,
   me miseram qualis semper habere iubes!  40
nam modo purpureo fallebam stamine somnum,
rursus et Orpheae carmine, fessa, lyrae;
interdum leviter mecum deserta querebar
externo longas saepe in amore moras:
dum me iucundis lapsam sopor impulit alis. 45
illa fuit lacrimis ultima cura meis.'

Just as the girl from Knossos [Ariadne], as Theseus' ship was departing,
lay exhausted on deserted shores;
and just as Andromeda, daughter of Cepheus, lay down in her first sleep,
just freed from the hard rocks [or, just freed, on the hard rocks];
and no less as the Thracian woman [Bacchante] fell down,
exhausted by endless dances, in the grassy [course of] Apidanus:
thus Cynthia seemed to me to be breathing soft rest,
her head supported on her unsteady hands,
as I was dragging my footsteps, which were drunk with much wine,
and, it being late at night, slave-boys shook a torch. 10
Being not yet entirely deprived of my senses,
I attempted to approach her, on her lightly pressed bed;
and, much as both Amor on one side and Liber on the other
- each an inflexible god - compelled me, overcome as I was by my passion,
gently to make an attempt on her where she lay, with my arm slipped under her, 15
and, my hand laid on her, to steal kisses and take up arms,169

169 Barber considers et arma to be a crux, but the phrase makes sense as written if it is read as a zeugma,
with sumere taking both oscula and arma as objects.
nevertheless I did not dare to disturb my mistress' rest,
dreading as I did the quarrels of her well-known fierceness;
but, with my eyes intent on her, I stood transfixed,
just as Argus was by the unfamiliar horns of the daughter of Inachus [Io].
And at one point I loosed the garlands from my brow
and placed them, Cynthia, around your temples;
and at another, I delighted in arranging your fallen locks;
now I cautiously gave you fruit with cupped hands;
and I lavished all these gifts on ungrateful sleep,
gifts which often rolled from your sloping bosom;
and whenever you drew sighs, when you occasionally moved,
I was dumbstruck, convinced by the empty sign
that somehow your dreams were bringing you unfamiliar fears,
or someone was forcing you, unwilling, to be his:
until the moon, running past the windows opposite,
the busybody moon, with eyes that wanted to linger,
opened your closed eyes with its gentle rays.
Thus she [Cynthia] spoke, supported on her elbow on her soft bed:
"So, at last the insults of another have driven you from her closed doors,
bringing you back to our bed?
Where, then, have you been spending the long hours of a night that was [supposed to be]
mine, all worn out, ah me! as the stars are fading?
O that you could spend such nights, you evil man,
as you always force my miserable self to have!

For at times I beguiled sleep with a purple thread [ie. by weaving],
and again, though exhausted, with the music of the Orphean lyre;
all the while, all by my abandoned self, I softly lamented
the long delays often caused by your outside love-affairs:
meanwhile Sleep pushed me over, as I was slipping, with his pleasant wings.

This was the final source of care for my tears."

2.29b

Mane erat, et volui, si sola quiesceret illa,
visere: at in lecto Cynthia sola fuit.

obstipui: non illa mihi formosior umquam
visa, neque ostrina cum fuit in tunica,
ibat et hinc castae narratum somnia Vestae,
neu sibi neve mihi quae nocitura forent:
talis visa mihi somno dimissa recenti.

heu quantum per se candida forma valet!

'Quid tu matutinus,' ait, 'speculator amicae?
me similem vestris moribus esse putas?
non ego tam facilis: sat erit mihi cognitus unus,
vel tu vel si quis verior esse potest.

apparent non ulla toro vestigia presso,
signa voluntas nec iacuisse duos.
It was morning, and I wanted to see if she was sleeping alone:

but Cynthia was alone in her bed.

I was dumbstruck: she has not ever seemed more beautiful to me,

not even when she was in her purple tunic,

and went forth to tell her dreams to chaste Vesta,

lest they should be harmful to her or to me:

thus she seemed to me, released from recent sleep.

Oh, how powerful her shining beauty is all by itself!

"What are you?" she said, "A morning girlfriend-spy?

Do you think my habits are like yours [or, like those of your type]?

I am not that easy: it will be enough for one man to be known to me,

whether it should be you, or someone who is able to be truer.

No traces are visible on the pressed bed,

nor signs that two have lain tumbling there.

Observe that no breath rises up in my whole body [i.e. I am not breathing heavily]

-- the evidence when adultery has been committed."
Thus she spoke, and, pushing my kisses away with her interposed right hand, she sprang up onto her feet, in her slippers.

Thus I was made a fool of, keeping watch over a love so sacred:

ever since then, no night has been lucky for me.

4.7

Sunt aliquid Manes: letum non omnia finit,

luridaque evictos effugit umbra rogos.

Cynthia namque meo uisa est incumbere fulcro,

murmur ad extremae nuper humata viae,

cum mihi somnus ab exsequiis penderet amoris,

et quereret lecti frigida regna mei.

eosdem habuit secum quibus est elata capillos,

eosdem oculos: lateri vestis adusta fuit,

et solitum digito beryllon adederat ignis,

summaque Lethaeus triverat ora liquor.

spirantisque animos et vocem misit: at illi

pollicibus fragiles increpuere manus:

'Perfide nec cuiquam melior sperande puellae,

in te iam vires somnus habere potest?

iamne tibi exciderant vigilacis furta Suburae

et mea nocturnis trita fenestra dolis?

per quam demisso quotiens tibi fune pependi,
alterna veniens in tua colla manu!
saepe Venus trivio commissa est, pectore mixto
  fecerunt tepidas pallia nostra vias.  20
foederis heu taciti, cuius fallacia verba
  non audituri diripuere Noti.
at mihi non oculos quisquam inclamavit euntis:
  unum impetrassem te revocante diem:
  nec crepuit fissa me propter harundine custos,
    laesit et obiectum tegula curta caput.
denique quis nostro curvum te funere vidit,
    atram quis lacrimis incaluisse togam?
si piguit portas ultra procedere, at illuc
    iussisses lectum lentius ire meum.  30
cur ventos non ipse rogis, ingrate, petisti?
    cur nardo flammae non oluere meae?
hoc etiam grave erat, nulla mercede hyacinthos
    inicere et fracto busta piare cado.
Lygdamus uratur - candescat lamina vernae -
    sensi ego, cum insidiis pallida vina bibi -
aut Nomas - arcanas tollat versuta salivas;
    dicet damnatas ignea testa manus.
quae modo per vilis inspecta est publica noctes,
    haec nunc aurata cyclade signat humum;  40
et graviora rependit iniquis pensa quasillis,
garrula de facie si qua locuta mea est;

nostraque quod Petale tulit ad monumenta coronas,
codicis immundi vincula sentit anus;

caeditur et Lalage tortis suspensa capillis,
per nomen quoniam est ausa rogare meum.
te patiente meae conflagit imaginis aurum,
ardente e nostro dotem habitura rogo.

non tamen insector, quamvis mereare, Properti:
longa mea in libris regna fuere tuis.
iuro ego Fatorumnulli revolubile carmen,
tergeminusque canis sic mihi molle sonet,
me servasse fidem. si fallo, vipera nostris
sibilet in tumulis et super ossa cubet.

nam gemina est sedes turpem sortita per amnem,
turbaque diversa remigat omnis aqua.
unda Clytaemestrae stuprum uexit altera, Cressae
portat mentitae lignea monstra bovis.
ecce coronato pars altera rapta phaselo,
mulcet ubi Elysias aura beata rosas,
qua numerosa fides, quaque aera rotunda Cybebes
mitratisque sonant Lydia plectra choris.

Andromedeque et Hypermestre sine fraude maritae
narrant historiae tempora nota suae:

haec sua maternis queritur livere catenis 65

brachia nec meritas frigida saxa manus;
narrat Hypermestre magnum ausas esse sorores,
in scelus hoc animum non valuisse suum.
sic mortis lacrimis vitae sancimus amores:

celo ego perfidia crimina multa tuae. 70

sed tibi nunc mandata damus, si forte moveris,
    si te non totum Chloridos herba tenet:
nutrix in tremulis ne quid desideret annis
        Parthenie: potuit, nec tibi avara fuit.
deliciaeque meae Latris, cui nomen ab usu est, 75
        ne speculum dominae porrigat illa novae.
et quoscumque meo fecisti nomine versus,
    ure mihi: laudes desine habere meas.
pelle hederam tumulo, mihi quae praegnante corymbo
    mollia contortis alligatossa comis. 80
ramosis Anio qua pomifer incubat arvis,
    et numquam Herculeo numine pallet ebur,
hic carmen media dignum me scribe columna,
    sed breve, quod currens vector ab urbe legat:

HIC TIBURTINA IACET AUREA CYNTIA TERRA: 85
ACCESSIT RIPAE LAUS, ANIENE, TUAE.
ne tu sperne piis venientia somnia portis:
   cum pia venerunt somnia, pondus habent.
nocte vagae ferimur, nox clausas liberat umbras,
   errat et abiecta Cerberus ipse sera.                  90
luce iubent leges Lethaea ad stagna reverti:
   nos vehimur, vectum nauta recenset onus.
nunc te possideant aliae: mox sola tenebo:
   mecum eris, et mixtis ossibus ossa teram.'
haec postquam querula mecum sub lite peregit,          95
   inter complexus excidit umbra meos.

Ghosts do exist: death does not end all,
and the pale shade escapes the defeated pyre.
For Cynthia seemed to lean over my bed,
though recently buried by the rumble of the edge of the road,
as my sleep hung on the funeral of my love,               5
and I was lamenting over the cold kingdom of my bed.
She had the same hairstyle as when she was brought out [on her bier],
the same eyes; her dress was burnt onto her side,
and the fire had eaten at the usual beryl on her finger,
and Lethaean water had chafed her lips.                  10
And she sent forth the attitude and voice of a breathing girl,
but brittle hands rattled on her thumbs [or, she snapped her brittle fingers]:
"Traitor! -- nor can you be expected to be better for any girl --
can sleep already have power over you?
Have the deceits of wakeful Subura already slipped away from you,
and my windowsill rubbed smooth by night-time escapades?
How often I hung out of that window on a rope for you,
coming down hand over hand onto your neck!
Often, we made love at the crossroads, and with our breasts joined,
our cloaks made the streets warm.
Alas for our secret pact, whose lying words
unheeding Notus has torn away.
But no one called to my eyes as they faded:
I could have gotten one [more] day, if you had called me back.
Nor did a guard clack a split reed for my sake,
and a broken tile wounded my head as I lay on it.
Furthermore, who saw you bent over my grave,
who [saw you] warm a black toga with tears?
If it was an annoyance to go beyond the gates,
you could have ordered that my bier go more slowly [at least] that far.
Why, ingrate, did you not personally beseech the winds for my pyre's sake?
Why did my flames not smell of perfume?
Even this was [too much of] a burden: to throw on hyacinths at no cost,
and to honour my grave with a broken jar.
Let Lygdamus be burned - let the metal glow for the slave -
I could tell, when I drank the wine, pale with treachery -
or Nomas - let her craftily hide her potions;
a fiery urn will say that her hands are guilty.

And she who lately was looked over publicly throughout the cheap night,
she now marks the dust with a golden gown;
but she weighs out heavier daily tasks in unequal baskets,
if anyone chattily speaks of my beauty;
and dear Petale, because she took garlands to my tomb,
feels the chains of a filthy log, though an old woman;
and Lalage is beaten and hung up by her twisted hair,
since she dared to ask something in my name.

As you stood by, she melted down the gold of my statue,
to have a dowry from my burning pyre.
But I am not attacking you, Propertius, much as you deserve it:
my reign in your books was long.

I swear by the song of the Fates, reversible by none,
so may the triple-headed dog bark [only] softly at me,
I kept my faith. If I lie, may a viper
hiss in my tomb and nestle on my bones.

For the appointed places across the hateful river are two,
and the whole crowd rows on a divided stream.
One wave carries the disgrace of Clytemnestra, [and] bears
the wooden monstrosity of the deceitful Cretan "cow".
Behold, the other half is taken away in a garlanded boat,
where the blessed breeze soothes the Elysian roses,
where melodious lyres, and the bronze cymbals of Cybele,
and Lydian plectra play for turbaned dancers.
And Andromeda and Hypermestra, wives without fault,
tell the famous stories of their lives:
the former laments that her arms were bruised by her mother's chains,
and her undeserving hands by the cold rocks;
Hypermestra tells how her sisters dared a terrible deed,
for which crime her spirit did not have the strength.
Thus we sanctify the loves of life with the tears of death:
I keep quiet about the many wrongs of your treachery.
But now I [shall] give you your instructions, if by chance you are moved,
if the drugs of Chloris do not hold you entirely:
let not my nurse Parthenie want for anything in her trembling old age:
she could have been greedy [i.e. demanded bribes] from you, and did not.
And my dear Latris, whose name matches her job,
let her not hold up a mirror for a new mistress.
And whatever verses you have made in my name,
burn them for me: have my praises no longer.
Drive the ivy from my tomb, which, with its swelling clusters,
binds my brittle bones with its twisted hair.
Where fruitful Anio lies on the leafy fields,
and, because of the spirit of Hercules, ivory never pales,
there write a poem worthy of me on the middle of a column,
but a short one, which a traveller rushing from the city might read:

'Here in the Tiburtine soil lies golden Cynthia:

85

a source of praise, Anio, has been added to your banks.'

Do not spurn dreams that come through the gates of truth:
when true dreams come, they have weight.

By night we are borne along, wanderers; night frees the trapped shades,

and Cerberus himself ranges about, the bolts thrown back.

90

The law orders us to return to the Lethaean swamp at dawn:
we are taken, and the ferryman counts the load he carries.

For now, let other women have you: soon I alone will hold [you]:

you will be with me, and, our bones mingled, I will grind on your bones."

When she got through this complaint,

95

the shade slipped out of my embrace.