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Michèle Lowrie

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# Divided Voices and Imperial identity in Propertius 4.1 and Derrida, *Monolingualism of the Other* and *Politics of Friendship*\*

Michèle Lowrie

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*Je est un autre.*  
Arthur Rimbaud

*This film is comfortable with otherness so long as it is  
not really other.*

Karen Mirza and Brad Butler<sup>1</sup>

- 1 When Horos objects to Propertius' proposal to engage in a more civic-minded poetry in poem 4.1, it is not clear who he is, what right he has to speak, whether he is friendly or hostile, and what, if any, relation he has to the figure of the poet who speaks in the poem's first half.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, he is in many respects unreliable, so that it is unclear how much weight his objections actually or should carry. He nevertheless contributes, along with the speaking poet 'Propertius,' to the definition of Propertius as the poem's implied author. The relation of these two voices could be interpreted in any number of ways depending on their speech situation: whether Horos and Propertius are to represent two distinct persons or one person speaking to an imaginary interlocutor; whether actually uttered or an interior dialogue; whether dialogically interactive or statically juxtaposed monologues; whether each voice represents contradictory desires of the implied author or one or both correspond to external impulses or constraints.<sup>3</sup> The possibilities are dizzying and the lack of a frame that could provide some resolution means the two voices do not add up to a unity. The conflict between them rather enacts a competition – in form and content – over the program of book four staged in terms of the identity of Propertius, who he is, where he comes from, and what kind of poetry he wants to write.<sup>4</sup> The struggle over who Propertius is and what he should write operates as a paradigm for Roman identity beyond his own.

## I. Subject/self/identity/empire

- 2 Neither the speaking poet nor Horos corresponds fully to the reader's preconceptions of Propertius as garnered from the previous books, but each bears some relation to him. My working hypothesis is that the voice that opens the poem represents the subject position against which the second voice protests and that it is the second voice's job to aid in the definition of the first.<sup>5</sup> It is the second voice, for instance, that identifies the first by name ('Properti,' 4.1.71) and only subsequently identifies itself ('Horon,' 78). The first voice does not need to name itself because it is the speaking subject: it simply speaks. Although Horos also speaks in the first person, his speech is responsive, so that he occupies the slot of the second person with respect to the first. The second person is the one who can and indeed is expected to speak back, but his point of view is presented as filtered through the first speaker. There is, however, a larger self at the level of the implied author that is defined through the interaction of first and second persons in this poem. By self, I mean the outward projection a particular subject makes of his or her sense of being a whole person with a unique set of experiences and other identity traits, however much these traits may conflict and however illusory or constructed this sense of wholeness may be.<sup>6</sup>
  
- 3 Since what the speaking voice first says entails a description of the heart of *maxima Roma* in terms of its legendary past, the identity to be defined in the poem at first appears to be that of Rome rather than that of the speaker, whom we only take to be a person engaged in a dynamic speech situation rather than an impersonal narrator because of the address in the first line to a second-person *hospes*. A first-person verb must wait fifty-six lines (*coner*, I would try, 4.1.57), until after a meaty chunk of Roman lore. The speaker's identity is not presented in psychosexual terms – this comes later in Horos' voice – but rather through the cultural and political interrelation predominantly of Umbria and Rome, but also of Greece and Troy. I therefore propose to read this poem through a lens that foregrounds identity at the national level, that is, in relation to Rome as 'an imaginary community with a supposedly shared imaginary.'<sup>7</sup>
  
- 4 There are both formal and substantive reasons to consider what Jacques Derrida's *Monolingualism of the Other* and his *Politics of Friendship* can bring to our understanding of what and how a figure of an other contributes to the definition of the self in Propertius. The analogies between these texts will help clarify the operations within both, and the points of departure will similarly help establish differences between ancient and modern approaches.<sup>8</sup> Formally, both include quoted oppositionalist voices within their texts. *Monolingualism* opens in 'Derrida's' voice with a paradox, 'I have only one language; it is not mine' – French is the colonial language in Algeria, where he was born, so Derrida does not speak what would otherwise be his native language. He is furthermore working within a French tradition: Rimbaud's famous *je est un autre*, cited as epigraph above, is the model for finding the other within the self or externalizing the self into an other. *Monolingualism's* opening sentence turns the self into an other, since the speaking subject avows a monolingualism attributed to the other of the work's title. 'Derrida' is immediately interrupted by an internal interlocutor who voices objections, dismisses the paradox as nonsense, and calls the ostensibly authorial voice incoherent and even reaches to another language, English, for the word 'inconsistent'.<sup>9</sup> This speaker has more than one language, a fact that reveals from the beginning the

multilingual competence of the author. Derrida also uses internal voices at various places in *Politics*. Propertius' Horos not only provides a similarly oppositionalist voice, he also uses similar language when he calls the newly aetiological poet *uagus* ('inconsistent') and *imprudens* ('lacking in judgment'). A further parallel is that the oppositionalist voice reveals biographical information about the author. Instead of linguistic competence, Horos emphasizes other markers of Propertius' identity, namely that he was from Assisi, the early loss of his father and wealth, and the decision to pursue poetry rather than oratory as a career (4.1.124-34).

- 5 Substantively, each is asking how to define oneself and relate to others in a world where one's identity is in different respects given and chosen, constructed from within, from without, and in relation, where who one is and the people one relates to are simultaneously conditions for and conditioned by different kinds of politics. In *Monolingualism* Derrida presents himself as a francophone Jew from the Maghreb who lost his citizenship under the Vichy regime of Maréchal Pétain, which summarily removed citizenship from Algerian Jews without their having any alternative citizenship. Although eventually restored, its removal put him temporarily in a position common in antiquity: not having any citizenship whatsoever. Increasingly common in modernity is having some citizenship that does not answer to the particular configuration of power in which one finds oneself.<sup>10</sup> *Politics*, more philosophical and less autobiographic, asks about the history of thinking about the friend, an other who can enfold the foe, as a condition for politics. The figure of the *hospes*, who mediates between friend and foe in *Monolingualism* and is addressed in the first line of poem 4.1, will let us think about the politics of friendship where an other of indeterminate citizen status aids in defining the self.
- 6 Propertius presents himself as similarly multilayered: he is simultaneously Umbrian and Roman (*Vmbria Romani patria Callimachi*, 4.1.64).<sup>11</sup> While Umbria had been Roman for several centuries already and was one of eleven administrative regions into which Augustus divided Italy, Propertius' previous mention of his native regime in poem 1.22 specifies that Umbrian Perusia was known for being the locus of civil war, so that he too had experienced the land where he grew up in terms of military disturbances that made his allegiance to some larger state entity fraught. Furthermore, the citizenship status and national identity of Horos, Propertius' *alter ego*, are unclear. Both Derrida and Propertius engage with political worlds where expanding states exercise power beyond their own boundaries and over people who are not or at least were not originally their own citizens. Each to that extent raises the larger question not just of what it means in their own cases to be Umbrian or Roman, Maghrebian, Algerian, or French, but more generally what it means to be whoever one is specifically under conditions of empire. Their multiple identities respond particularly to a variety of overlapping and conflicting configurations of power, but also present their own condition as paradigmatic (section V below).
- 7 Many categories can be used to define 'national' identity: ethnicity, territory, religion, and everything that falls under culture, e.g., language, lifestyle, values, degree of urbanization, the role of education in society, and so on. Many also serve to define 'personal' identity: e.g., gender, sexuality, race, class, level of education, citizenship or its lack, in addition to all the categories that make up national identity.<sup>12</sup> These lists are hardly exhaustive. Features that might at first look as though they belong to one category, such as place names, can serve as shorthand for clusters of overlapping

features that help shape identity in several different respects. Categories of identity function both on the level of content, i.e., that Cicero presents himself as a 'new man' with a double identity as a citizen both of Arpinum and of Rome, and on the level of style. His oratorical style indicates his level of education, intellectual allegiances, taste, and so on. I will focus as much on the formal processes of signification (style, narratological choices) as on the signified (content, ideology) with an eye to their interrelation.<sup>13</sup>

- 8 Empires ancient and modern alike bring together people and peoples with different identity configurations and their contact has influence, with the result that both national and personal identities can have many layers. Although such mixing is not exclusive to empire – migration and trade similarly bring different peoples into contact – multiple or divided identities are endemic to imperial conditions.<sup>14</sup> The complex hierarchies and relations within any individual identity's various components attest to conflicting currents of power at different levels.<sup>15</sup> For the purposes of this paper, I bracket the differences between the material and political conditions of the Roman empire and the colonial and post-colonial empires of modernity to explore a technique, the divided voice, shared by writers within each.<sup>16</sup>
- 9 By divided voice, I mean that the speaking voices of Propertius and Horos, of Derrida and his imagined interlocutors, all belong to the implied author of their respective texts, whose own voice encompasses the two (or more).<sup>17</sup> Although 'Propertius' and 'Derrida' are speaking subjects within the texts and whose identity the texts explore, the implied authors Propertius and Derrida project more complex images of themselves by setting figures of their own subjectivity, represented by their speaking subjects, into relation with figures of the other. The presentation of Horos as non-Roman and specifically as Eastern makes him into a figure for the 'other,' namely a figure whose job it is to lend definition to the subject. The category of otherness, by virtue of its semantics, is only ever relational to some perceived center, whether the speaking subject in the case of subjectivity or Rome in political terms. The other can never be understood on its own terms because that is not the category's job. If the other were ever 'really other,' as in the Mirza and Butler quotation cited in the epigraph above, it would become a subject on its own, which would contradict its function as the category that allows self-definition through difference and appropriation. This is the paradox pursued by Derrida, who situates himself both as a speaking subject and as an alienated other with respect to France.
- 10 The interaction between two figures at the same narratological level (speaking subject, oppositional others) aids in the definition of self for both Propertius and Derrida at the level of the implied author. This technique is a means for giving expression to some of the different aspects of personal identity, particularly those aspects against which their subjectivity resists, and provides an icon of internal division within the self. Although all subjectivity is divided in that the subject position requires a second person to define it, in both Propertius and Derrida, the multiplicity of voices speaking to one another additionally brings alternative national identities into interaction with one another. The structure of political identity here maps onto that of psychological subjectivity. Each author negotiates an identity within an imperial context where they occupy in different respects the position of both dominator and dominated.
- 11 Much of our thought about Rome and identity has been shaped by its contact with the East and the understanding of this relation in the past decade or so has revolved

around competing notions of openness and inclusion on the one hand, appropriation and domination on the other.<sup>18</sup> I start from the premise that 'East' for Rome is not only a relational geographic category, but stands for the other from the perspective of an imperial system where inclusion and domination are not incompatible, but friendly and forceful sides respectively of the structuring of plurality through power.<sup>19</sup> I also assume that Roman identity is not a stable, univocal category, but that it has been multiple as far back as we can trace its development and is understood to be and to have been so during the Augustan age.<sup>20</sup> If Roman identity is plural already within itself and in its relations with its Italian neighbors, then the question becomes what further role the eastern other plays in defining Rome.

- 12 The relation of national to personal identity involves a negotiation between the general and the particular, the normative and the singular to begin with. The complexity is magnified when the general, as in the case of Rome as well as modern empires, already entails multiplicity.<sup>21</sup> The challenge of reconstructing 'the human experience of imperialism' pertains to both conquered and conqueror, and Propertius and Derrida identify in different respects and at different times with both sides.<sup>22</sup> Propertius aligns with the dominated in his self-presentation as Umbrian, but with the dominator over against his eastern interlocutor Horos. Derrida aligns with the dominated as an Algerian Jew, but with the dominator as a speaker of French. The subordinate voices within the texts, Horos or Derrida's various oppositionalist voices, replay the problematic by trying to dictate to the speaking subject and set the conditions for his speech. Dominator and dominated are positions to be occupied rather than permanent states of being and the various voices in these texts struggle to obtain advantage for themselves.

## II. Identity *en abyme*

- 13 The construction of identity in both Propertius 4.1 and in *Monolingualism* turns not merely on an interrelation between voices at the same narratological level, but on reflection, refraction, and inversion between levels (*mise en abyme*) – again both formally and substantively. If identity is produced dialogically in relation to some other, difference does not merely strengthen the self, but challenges it to recognize the other within.
- 14 Derrida and Propertius alike quote others within their own notional voices to disrupt presuppositions of a single identity. Beyond the oppositionalist voice that alternates with his own through most of the book, 'Derrida' also quotes a hypothetical internal interlocutor, who, like Horos, is argumentative (4-5). But he furthermore gives quotations from the book of a friend and colleague, Abdelkebir Khatibi, a linguist and also Franco-Maghrebian (7-8). Derrida imagines a conversation between himself and Khatibi in which he outlines his own unusual situation of being both Maghrebian and a French citizen by birth (12-13). Propertius' internal voices are prophetic. 'Propertius' quotes Cassandra who tells the Greeks their victory will be in vain (4.1.53-4), and his Horos even engages in self-quotation of his own effective prayer to the gods (101). If lines 135-46 are the speech of Apollo, the god of prophecy and poetic programs alike, the most conventional elegiac program is a citation within a citation.<sup>23</sup>
- 15 Furthermore, there is a textual problem at lines 87-8 that, as so often, exemplifies the interpretive stakes, here, the identity of the speakers. It is not clear who speaks the

lines that proclaim a first person prophetic authority (*dicam, canam* 4.1.87-8). Although the manuscript tradition ascribes them to Horos, many editors move them to the section of the poem voiced by 'Propertius.'<sup>24</sup> If they go after line 52, the first person proclamation *dicam* will belong not to 'Propertius,' but the internally quoted prophet Cassandra – a further level of internal quotation. The lines' sitting ill in their transmitted context raises a question of subjectivity: it is not at all clear who is speaking. We return below to their content, the announcement that Troy will fall and a Trojan Rome will rise again (4.1. 87). Propertius goes formally beyond Derrida in making the voice of the other, that of Horos, the one to define Propertius according to criteria familiar from books 1-3, while his own voice announces a project at variance with himself as we know him. The familiar is externalized.

- 16 Within the various narratological levels, the categories of identity are neither univocal nor static and their dynamism interacts with that of the other levels. If the subjectivity of the speaker Propertius is constituted in relation with Horos, this does not mean that either 'Propertius' or Horos has a single or set identity when taken on his own. The passage in which 'Propertius' announces his newly patriotic poetry (*hoc patriae seruiet omne meae*, 'all this will serve my country,' 4.1.60) entails a poetic avowal of identity: he is, or will be, a *Romanus Callimachus* (64). Taken out of context (63-4), we could understand the phrase merely as a statement about the transfer of a poetic vision from Greece to Rome. But the Greek/Roman alignment matches another closer to home, Rome/Umbria. Both interrelations entail a Rome that has grown to encompass its neighbors further and further afield.

ut nostris tumefacta superbiat Vmbria libris,  
Vmbria Romani patria Callimachi ! (4.1.63-4)

May Umbria proudly boast of my books, Umbria, the fatherland of the Roman Callimachus.

- 17 Here is the notion of two *patriae* familiar from Cicero.<sup>25</sup> In a poem where everyone is to some extent a foreigner, the repetition of Umbria highlights the different levels and respects in which identity can operate: Rome is national; Umbria is Italian and local; Callimachus is a cultural indicator by virtue of being Greek. These aspects all together add up to a multivalent identity that operates within the expansive context of empire, in which elements of a different order jumble together.
- 18 It is not only the identity of 'Propertius' that is multivalent. I have assumed so far that Horos can be identified as eastern, but to pin down where he is actually from is difficult.<sup>26</sup> As an astrologer, his name evokes the Greek *hora* and horoscope. But there are also overtones of the Egyptian Horos, the god of the sky.<sup>27</sup> He uses birth as a legitimating category and proclaims that Babylonian Orops is his father, that Orops is descended from Archytas, and that his house derives from Conon (77-9). This makes us wonder whether he is Babylonian or Greek and whether such a distinction would be meaningful. During this period Babylon was part of the Parthian empire and so much more not Roman than merely Greek would be. There was additionally an Egyptian Babylon, thought to be a locus for star science,<sup>28</sup> so even Babylon turns out not to be single. The poem furthermore does not disambiguate between a personal and a professional genealogy. Whatever Horos' identity as a speaker, the discourse of astrology has non-Roman associations. He emerges as generally eastern in many respects rather than having a well-defined specific identity.



- 19 Propertius' story about Roman origins, moreover, also has strong non-Roman, eastern associations, so that the 'other' is found within also for national identity – the interplay internal to subjectivity is reflected or refracted in the collective.<sup>29</sup> Contradiction and ambivalence about foreign origins, however, mean that the poem does not fully embrace the alien within the Roman. The beginning of the poem, when Propertius stages a panoramic view of Rome's center for a visitor he addresses (*hospes*, 4.1.1), intertwines the difference between Rome's rustic origins and contemporary splendor with the progressive integration of non-native elements. The contrast between contemporary golden temples and formerly earthen gods (5) intimates the conventional topos of decline, encoded by an emphasis on previous smallness (1-2, 14, 34), poverty (21-2), or both (10-12), that are valorized. Many details of origin are originally from elsewhere. Aeneas is Phrygian (2), Evander a refugee – at least his cows are (*profugae ... boues*, 4), the Tiber is a foreigner (*advena*, 8). The house of Romulus is mentioned under Remus' name (9). We cannot gloss over this anomaly by making an easy equation between the two.<sup>30</sup> Fratricide in this period stands for civil war, which in turn indicates internal division. While the speaker seems to welcome some foreign elements, as in the affirmation of Troy's sending the Penates (39), the statement that 'there was no care to seek external gods' (*nulla cura fuit externos quaerere diuos*, 17) rubs against the characterization of the same Penates as welcome refugees (*profugos*). It would be a stretch to emphasize that Romans may not have sought foreign gods, instead they just came of their own volition – the nativist prejudice combines with a contrast between then and now with the implication that things have taken a turn for the worse.
- 20 Propertius' strategy resembles in some respects Vergil's in the *Aeneid*, where elements we assume are native turn out to come from elsewhere, but the poems set integration in relation to continued alienation in different ways.<sup>31</sup> Where Evander gives Aeneas a proper tour at the story level in *Aeneid* 8, Propertius turns the tourist figure into one of address. This feature is not only generically appropriate to elegy, but also highlights the interrelation between subject positions. His addressee is more a notional visitor than Aeneas, who goes on an actual walking tour. This poem moves in its description faster from the Palatine to the Capitoline, to the Forum in between, and the Tiber beyond than one could walk, so that levels of story and narration are at odds. The poem quickly passes beyond the monuments, which are subject to actual viewing, toward a mental picture of ancient institutions such as the Parilia (19) and the division into tribes (31) and delves into Rome's Trojan origins (39-44, 51-4). The addressee of the first line is left behind and Propertius closes his section of the poem with an enthusiastic embrace of a new poetic vision for himself as a poet who can tell us the aetiological stories that serve an important function in national self-definition. This novel role alters Propertius' definition of what kind of poet he is and consequently of his identity. His account, however, differs significantly from Vergil's not only in the form of the tour, but in the message. Where the epic poet sets a strong break between Troy and Rome through the annihilation of Trojan culture (*occidit, occideritque sinas cum nomine Troia*, 'Troy has fallen, let Troy fall along with her name,' *Aen.* 12.828), the elegist makes Rome Trojan (*Troia cades, et Troica Roma resurges*, 'Troy, you will fall and you, Roman Troy, will rise again,' 4.1.53-4). Vergil upends categories of ethnicity by blending into Rome manifold Italic and Mediterranean elements, but the break from Troy stands for success in establishing something recognizably Roman.<sup>32</sup> What makes Rome Roman is



not lineage, but shared values. It is not at all clear that Propertius' Rome succeeds as well as Vergil's in standing out from the mixture in terms of stable norms.

- 21 Furthermore, a textual problem is symptomatic of the poem's ambivalence and confronts us with opposing attitudes: the affirmation of a symbolic identity over one determined by descent or a lamentable decline from an original bloodline. At line 37, *pudet* allows for the former and *putet* for the latter: 'nil patrium nisi nomen habet Romanus alumnus: / sanguinis altricem non pudet/putet esse lupam' (the Roman son has nothing of his father but a name; he is not ashamed/would not think a wolf is the nursemaid of his blood', 37).<sup>33</sup> The symbolic reading would make Rome reside in the name rather than in some essentializing identity. Son here is *alumnus*, a foster child rather than a naturally born son. We could recognize all Romans as foster children who, like Romulus, have been brought up by notional wolves. Nurture would surpass the bloodline so that identity would be determined by education, cultural choices and symbolic names rather than by breeding. But the better attested reading *putet* emphasizes the conventional notion of decline – the contemporary Roman has the mere name as opposed to the vibrant blood of his martial ancestors – as well as a lack of self-knowledge in a people who do not recognize their own origins. Whichever reading we choose, traces of the other remain and unsettle, so that the textual surface as transmitted raises questions of its own identity. As readers we must ask which is the native, which the intruder.
- 22 The wolf also allows for reflection between Roman identity outside the text and Propertius' own. The slang word for prostitute, *lupa* (38, 55), accords well here with elegy's self-identification with non-normative sexuality. In *A Latin Lover in Ancient Rome*, Ralph Johnson insists on the 'possible ambiguities of his patriotism' that are provided among other things by Propertius' insistence on defining his identity through sexuality.<sup>34</sup> But he also shows that rampant eroticism pervaded not just the demi-monde, but the powerful in this period.<sup>35</sup> Antony may not have won, but Sulla certainly did. Both were playboys, as was Caesar, and Augustus' record is less clean than he would have others be. As Propertius says, Venus herself brought Caesar his arms (46). Which Caesar hardly matters. And Horos reveals in this poem that the arms 'Propertius' bears are erotic (137). The larger point is that Propertius turns out to be representative rather than or maybe because of being oppositionalist. Non-normative sexuality inhabits Roman power just as eastern elements do. All of the ways Propertius presents himself as an outsider from the corridors of power reinscribe him further within a Roman identity that is already fractured.
- 23 The interplay between bearing arms against an enemy or wielded in a more friendly struggle brings us to the last element of textual reflection considered here and offer a transition to the next section on the friend/enemy distinction. The *hospes* offers a blank that invites projection. While we might be tempted to identify the person addressed in the first line with Horos and to align the two figures in the second person,<sup>36</sup> there are no textual indications we are to do so. This figure is the abstract correlative to the cranky peculiarity of Horos – another instance of internal mirroring without direct correspondence. Even though he is not a strong character, the *hospes* contributes to the poem's processes of identity formation by structuring the discourse as an address to another whose identity and origins are mysterious. He cannot be from Rome or he would not need the introduction to the city. He is a generic other without particularity, the one over against whom, over against the idea of whom, self-definition takes place.

- 24 When faced with a stranger, we must first determine how to relate to this person, whether to welcome him with open arms or defend ourselves. Derrida cites Benveniste several times in *Monolingualisme* for an analysis of the links between *ipse*, *hospes*, *hostis*, and a variety of words denoting capacity (*posse*).<sup>37</sup> This figure, guest or host (*hospes*), friend or enemy (*hostis*), is intimately linked to the self (*ipse*). Derrida uses the word when asking about the relationship between identity on the level of ‘monoculturalism or multiculturalism, nationality, citizenship, and, in general, belonging’ and identity on a different level ‘before the identity of the subject’ (i.e., the political subject), namely ‘*ipseity*’, which he links to the originary power to say ‘I can’ (*possum*) even before the abstract capacity to say ‘I’ (14). His point is that identity establishes one’s place in the world as a power relation, particularly the ability to articulate one’s own power through language. This is what Propertius does when he presents his new personal and poetic identity as a Roman Callimachus, someone who can tell stories of origin in the search for national identity. His addressee the *hospes* seems open to this gambit, at least until Horos begins to speak.

### III. The friend/enemy distinction

- 25 Horos says ‘no’ and punctures the balloon of the speaker ‘Propertius’ in his claim to power. He attempts to put the poet and his poetry back into a familiar and restricted box. Trying on his new poetic project will be painful and Horos threatens him with tears (73, 120). Propertius the author puts in another’s voice a self-censorship that reconfigures Horace’s ‘quo, Musa, tendis ? desine pervicax...’ (Where are you heading, Muse ? Stop headstrong... *Odes* 3.3.70). The lyrist pulls back when he was similarly embracing more political topics that share Rome’s Trojan origins as a theme.<sup>38</sup> His address to his Muse externalizes an internal poetic conflict. By staging the opposition as human and foreign, Propertius enacts a political scene.
- 26 At this point we need to determine whether Horos is a friend or an enemy, and furthermore whether we can actually make this needed determination. The tenor of Propertius’ politics depends on the former question, the operation in the poem of the political as such on the latter. Derrida’s *Politics of Friendship* is devoted to the history of thinking about friendship as a foundational trope for politics and particularly to deconstructing the political theory of Carl Schmitt, whose thesis in *The Concept of the Political* is, ‘The specific political distinctions to which political actions and motives can be reduced is that between friend and enemy.’<sup>39</sup> Schmitt’s involvement as the attorney general in the Nazi regime has made it imperative not only to counter his politics, but to give an answer also to his provocative and highly original thinking.<sup>40</sup> Derrida calls into question whether the distinction between friend and enemy can hold up :<sup>41</sup> ‘The body politic should, no doubt – but it never manages to – identify correctly the foreign body of the enemy outside itself.’ But the distinction between civil war and foreign war calls the ability to make this identification into question, so that in practice, it becomes impossible to decide purely and concretely who the enemy is. Without this knowledge, on which Schmitt insists, the political cannot exist according to his own definition.<sup>42</sup>
- 27 It is beyond the scope of this essay to analyze either Schmitt’s or Derrida’s political theory in depth. Suffice it to say in this reading of Propertius 4.1 that the introduction of political themes having to do with Rome’s foundation at the same time as a voice of a foreign opponent to the newly defined project enacts the political through conflict. To

this extent the poem as a whole accords with the announced project : it fits through its structure the themes 'Propertius' introduces. If, however, it becomes impossible to determine whether Horos is a friend or an enemy, not only will the conflict between 'Propertius' and Horos replay a distinctive characteristic of civil war, but the inability to make this distinction will call the political as such into question. In this case, Horos' objections would win out over the program enunciated by 'Propertius.'

- 28 To examine the extent to which Horos operates as friend or enemy, let us first return to his partial overlap with the *hospes* addressed in line 1. Like the *hospes*, Horos does not seem to have any basic knowledge of Rome. In accord with his position as foreigner, the *exemplum* (4.1.109) he retails is not Roman : his telling the story of Calchas, unlike the link made by 'Propertius' between Troy and Rome (47-8), brings up the Trojan war entirely from a Greek perspective. But being non-Roman does not necessarily make him an enemy, and even if it did, the ambivalence over whether *hospes* means friend or enemy is replayed in Horos, but taken further. In addition to marking the second-person position, like the *hospes*, Horos not only speaks back, he intervenes. He is friendly in that he is in dialogue, inimical in that he interferes with a decision that should belong rightly to 'Propertius.'
- 29 The determination of whether Horos is the enemy must be made before asking about his attempt to influence another's decision. The question Derrida traces in Schmitt progresses from who the enemy is to a matter less of identity as such than of recognition.

One simply passes from being-enemy to the recognition of the enemy – that is, to his identification, but to an *identification* which will carry me to my identification, finally, myself, with the other, with the enemy whom I identify. Previously, the sentence was : 'I wonder, then who can finally *be* my enemy ?' now it is : 'Whom may I finally *recognize* as my enemy ?' Derrida 2005 : 162

Horos' status turns less on his identity in terms of content – foreign, eastern, or whatever – than on our ability to identify him in the sense of recognize him as occupying the position of the enemy. Derrida continues :

Response : 'Manifestly, he alone who can put me in question (*der mich in Frage stellen kann*). In so far as I recognize him as my enemy, I recognize that he can put me in question.

This would seem to provide the needed criterion. Horos puts 'Propertius' into question by intervening both on his decision and on his self-definition ; therefore he is the enemy. But the problematic comes full circle.

And who can effectively put me in question? Only myself. Or my brother. (162) ...

The enemy is oneself, I myself am my own enemy. (163)

If Horos turns out to be the enemy, he also turns out to be Propertius' self. I have operated from the beginning with the assumption that Horos is an internal voice controlled by the poem's implied author, whose larger self is constructed through the interaction between 'Propertius' the speaker and Horos. But Derrida's formulation makes it necessary to consider whether the two speakers are also intimately related.

- 30 Many verbal continuities between the two sections of the poem link 'Propertius' and Horos thematically and discursively. Both, for instance, apostrophize Troy (39, 114). In trying to establish his authority on the basis of predictions about otherwise unknown persons, Horos repeats the name Luperus from the first section of the poem. Where Propertius links this name to the Fabii and the Lupercalia (26), i.e., to a national myth, Horos assigns it within the private sphere to an unknown individual, one of two sons whose death he predicted. Each turns the name toward the poetics he avows. The sons'

names, however, end up replaying the difficulties of identity and recognition we have encountered throughout the poem. One has a very Roman name, but the other, called Gallus, could be either Roman or non-Roman. A number of possibilities come to mind. If he recalls Cornelius Gallus, he would be like Propertius in being an elegist, but we would then have to wonder about the success of his politics.<sup>43</sup> If he is a Gaul, then he is a former enemy now subjected and colonized. If he is a castrated Gallus,<sup>44</sup> priest of the Magna Mater, Horos emphasizes the frustrated psychosexual identity he associates with elegy and reimposes on 'Propertius,' always stuck on one girl who gets away (139-46). Each possibility involves some sort of check. Taken together, the possibilities interweave Roman imperialism, an elegiac figure who came to grief in the political realm while serving it, and castration, that is, precisely the territory of elegy turned toward exploring the interrelation of sexual and political identity under empire.

- 31 In addition to similarities found in the two sections of the poem, Horos is bound up with 'Propertius' in more intimate ways. He is the one who reveals biographical information about the poet never articulated as clearly elsewhere. There are contrasts, however, in their respective representations. 'Propertius' boldly approaches his new poetic project with a complex mixed identity (*Vmbria Romani patria Callimachi*, 64). His avowal of generic insufficiency (*ei mihi, quod nostro est paruus in ore sonus*!, alas for the smallness of my poetic voice, 58) could betray anxiety, but it could equally well emphasize his courage in pushing against limitations. Horos on the other hand restricts him: *patria* for him pertains exclusively to Umbria (122) and keeps him local. Horos also emphasizes the aspects of Propertius' life that prevent him from becoming a fully enfranchised Roman: the early death of his father and diminution of wealth (127-8), the loss of his land (129-30), and his exclusion from the Forum (133-4), presumably consequent on the land loss. We can only wonder whether Apollo forbade Propertius access to the Forum as the god of poetry doing literature a favor – a divine sanction of his life choices – or whether as the patron god of the victory at Actium he indicates a political career cut short by historical circumstances, so that poetry emerges as second-best.<sup>45</sup> Horos limits Propertius' participation in public affairs through the substitute of the topsy-turvy *militia amoris* and through his poetry (137-8). Unspoken is that he participates in the Augustan regime by accepting Maecenas as his patron. Unspoken also is whether this patronage resulted, like Horace's Sabine estate, in a land grant that restored his status.
- 32 If Horos is an enemy, he is the enemy within. He turns the tables on his interlocutor 'Propertius' in fact by calling him *hostis* (enemy) twice, first in the *militia amoris*, where he 'will be an enemy useful to Venus' boys' (*Veneris pueris utilis hostis eris*, 138),<sup>46</sup> then stresses his vulnerability as an 'unarmed enemy among armed men' (*armatis hostis inermis*, 148). By contrast, the mention 'Propertius' makes of military affairs pertains to Rome: the soldier (*miles*, 27) goes back to a time before well-developed armor, but is still armed with pikes; Rome has defensive walls and a citadel (*arces, muros*, 65-6). 'Propertius' seems unaware of Horos at all, much less as either friend or foe, except to the extent that he overlaps with the *hospes*; rather it is Horos who brings the figure of the enemy into the poem and attaches it to the speaker. Inasmuch as Horos voices important aspects of Propertius' identity, ranging from his town of origin, to information about his socioeconomic status, sexuality, and poetics, he turns into an *alter ego*. But his opposition, both as his objection to the *ego*'s expressed desire and as

his figuration of him as a *hostis*, may rather make him an *alterum id*.<sup>47</sup> Let us accept this notion provisionally – its limitations are shown below.

- 33 Derrida raises questions about subjectivity in relation to the unconscious precisely with regard to decision-making, the area where Horos intervenes.

Undoubtedly the subjectivity of a subject, already, never decides anything: its identity in itself and its calculable permanence make every decision an accident which leaves the subject unchanged and indifferent. *A theory of the subject is incapable of accounting for the slightest decision.* (Derrida 2005 : 68 ; his emphasis)

He challenges, on the one hand, the ‘classic, free, and wilful subject’ and the ‘classic concept of decision, which must interrupt and mark an absolute beginning,’ and, on the other, the ‘passive’ decision taken without freedom. The former implies an agency he suspects, while the latter can hardly be understood to be a decision. He concludes : ‘*In sum, a decision is unconscious*’ (69 ; his emphasis). His target is Schmitt’s decisionism, where one of the main issues to be decided is who the enemy is, but his scope encompasses the relation of the psychological to the political and to that extent reveals the problem Propertius faces. He cannot from his own subjectivity make a decision about changing the course of his poetics, because the decision cannot be made from the subject position. The decision he announces does not correspond to his identity. It requires the alien within to articulate this identity, to reaffirm the psychosexual elegist he has always hitherto been, to make the decision for him or at least prevent him from making a decision counter to who he is. But if we are tempted to align Horos with Propertius’ authentic desires, who limits whom will be the topic of the next section.

- 34 Derrida’s keen sense of classical form leads him to reproduce some of the same techniques found in Propertius 4.1. The dialogism in *Monolingualism*, where his own biography is foregrounded, maintains a clear subject position that aligns with himself as author. In *Politics*, however, he enfold a dialogue between two friends – ‘dear friend’ (149) is spoken by both interlocutors – where both voices ask questions that have been troubling Derrida throughout the work and it is not clear whether one, either, or both align with the author. The internal speakers collaborate with one another. Furthermore, he also makes Schmitt speak (157), so that he is represented as answering objections put to him by Derrida he had not anticipated himself. ‘Schmitt’ plays the role of the enemy within. The two passages correspond in form to different philosophical visions, one of politics enacted through friendship, the other of politics enacted through the friend/enemy distinction.<sup>48</sup> The two passages in content bring up the absence of woman in both sorts of accounts : the sister does not play a role analogous to that of the brother in the philosophical tradition that makes friendship a basis for politics and ‘Schmitt’ elides sexual difference to claim that ‘the subject of the political is genderless.’ Like Horos, who reminds ‘Propertius’ of his subservience to his *puella*, Derrida reminds us of an important category of identity. The political once again entails an exclusion.

#### IV. ‘The museum of non participation’

- 35 To be excluded, however, does not mean to be totally absent from the game, but rather to participate through negation or under erasure. In Horos’ section of the poem, ‘Propertius’ is figured as a non-participant in a variety of respects. As mentioned above, he has lost his land and cannot speak in the Forum (134). In addition, Horos blocks his speaking of overtly nationalistic topics within his poetry (71-2). The traditional elegiac

topic Horos does affirm, love poetry, also turns on exclusion : his girl escapes him and he himself spends nights on her doorstep, despite the gesture's failure to persuade (145-6). The rhetoric of inability is a powerful way to call attention to and protest one's condition whether in love or politics.<sup>49</sup>

- 36 Active non-participation characterizes intellectual life.<sup>50</sup> Hannah Arendt, in a section of the *Life of the Mind* devoted to the relationship between thinking and doing (92-8), comments on the advantages of spectatorship over action : 'only the *spectator*, never the actor, can know and understand whatever offers itself as a spectacle' (92, her emphasis). She calls spectatorship 'deliberate, active non-participation in life's daily business' (93). Although the writing of poetry creates in her categories a durable work and is to that extent part of the active life, it nevertheless falls short of action as the realm of the political.<sup>51</sup> Active non-participation speaks to the double sense thinkers have that they lack the power to change the course of events, but that by translating what they observe into art or some form of expression, they can nevertheless perform the important social function of making history intelligible and also that of critique. If we accept the role of the intellectual as a viewer and commentator rather than an actor, the first half of poem 4.1 already satisfies the criterion. 'Propertius' makes no claim to engage in politics, only to aspire to represent it in his poetry. His poetry will serve the state (*hoc patriae seruiet omne meae*, 60) not through oratory or the military, conventional activities of service, but by presenting the history of Roman culture to others. He will not build walls or set up institutions, but arrange them in verse or song (*disponere uersu*, 57 ; *canam*, 69). This is his portion of the active life and his invitation to the *hospes* at the poem's beginning presents his role as analogous to the tour guide, that is, someone who can explicate the spectacle, what he and his guest view (*uides*, 1).
- 37 By presenting himself as excluded, Propertius stages himself as an intellectual in a society that valorizes political participation. By articulating the various ways he is excluded from politics in the voice of another, however, Propertius goes beyond Arendt's active non-participation to show that these exclusions were not entirely of his own choosing. Horos reveals that 'Propertius,' who is otherwise ready and willing to adopt the role of engaged non-participant, had only so much agency in his decision to become a poet. But Propertius makes an additional move by revealing information about himself in the voice of someone who is in turn subject to a variety of exclusions. Horos again reveals a darker side of Propertius' self, but this gesture goes beyond Propertius' own self-definition to ask more general questions about identity and authority in contemporary Rome. The intellectual may rank second to the politician, but can still wield cultural authority. The astrologer, however, sits lower on the totem pole and Horos is not a good one at that. Propertius consistently undermines his authority.
- 38 For Horos' exclusions, we need first to look outside the text to consider astrology's fraught relationship to authority in this period. On the one hand, important political figures made it respectable, mostly notably Augustus. Tamsyn Barton's *Ancient Astrology* emphasizes astrology's links to science in antiquity and generally tries to recuperate its respectability.<sup>52</sup> On the other, astrologers were repeatedly thrown out of Rome, mostly recently by Agrippa in 33 BCE. The triumphal period is also the obvious candidate for when Propertius lost his property and his qualification for normative public life. The ambivalence between engaging in powerful discourses (poetry, astronomy) and dispossession is another element that links 'Propertius' with Horos.



- 39 Within the text, however, Propertius gets his revenge on Horos by undermining his authority as a speaker, that is, he performs his own exclusion on the voice that attempts to limit him. Horos' anxiety about his authority appears in his attempt to bolster it for a good 47 lines. He boasts *certa feram certis auctoribus* ('I will bring sure information from sure authorities,' 75). His rehearsal of his lineage means to back this vaunt up (77-8), an essentializing and reductive gesture. He cites his astrological knowledge (79-86) and predictions that came true (89-102). He critiques rivals' ability – none other than the oracle of Ammon and the mythological Calchas (103-118). Horos is unreliable and his knowledge and predictions banal.<sup>53</sup> While Horos presents 'Propertius' as excluded from speaking authoritatively in the Forum, Propertius turns the tables and undercuts him in turn. Both speakers end up with compromised authority, another intimate link between them.
- 40 Propertius' treatment of Horos comments on Roman imperial identity pragmatically as well as in content. First the latter. Beyond the personal link, the ambivalence of dispossession of property and citizenship correspond to central features of Roman identity as represented in myth. Romans are notionally powerful and authoritative political players, but they also trace their lineage back to defeated Troy. Roman achievement comes in the wake of dispossession. Troy is not a univocal signifier and even in poem 4.1 the different voices have different perspectives. Nevertheless, Troy's recurrence in the poem's two parts, specifically in prophecies by seers, is one more verbal and conceptual link. Although both recognize Rome as the continuation of Troy, 'Propertius' celebrates the displaced victory, while Horos focalizes the Greek point of view. The Trojan Cassandra in the first part warns the Greeks that they are winning at a cost and that Troy will survive: *male uincitis! Ilia tellus uiuet* ('You win to no avail! The Ilian land will live,' 53-4). This is a message about resilience in the face of defeat. Horos uses the Greek Calchas more restrictively as a negative example (*exemplum graue*, 109) of the superiority of astrology over other kinds of prophecy, since the Greeks won over Troy at the price of not returning home; Calchas should have been able to prevent the whole endeavor from starting. Troy is to dry her tears (113-14). The difference in attitude between the Roman 'Propertius', who offers a more celebratory message, and that of the eastern outsider, who acknowledges Roman supremacy without identifying with it, enacts an imperial perspective by putting both conquered and conqueror on display.<sup>54</sup> Rome occupies both positions at different points.
- 41 If the Roman story is one of exile in defeat followed by successful empire, we could see Propertius' story as typically Roman: his success as a poet follows an initial dispossession. But this would be to undervalue the generic function of the exclusions he shows himself to have undergone. In the elegiac trope, the poet's failure at persuasion (146), at getting the girl, is exactly what makes him a good practitioner of the genre. That is, he is a good love poet not because of his success at love, but because of his failure. The same holds for political poetry. In Adorno's analysis, the more lyric withdraws from politics, the more political it is.<sup>55</sup> The same logic applies to elegy and poem 4.1 figures the political similarly to the way it figures love. Poetry succeeds in participating in the relevant sphere by representing the poet's own failure to participate or at least participate fully. Desire rather than success structures elegiac discourse. To bring the erotic logic over to the political, it is not the declaration of 'Propertius' that makes him a political poet, but rather Horos' interdiction.



- 42 Let me attempt to stave off some possible oversimplifying interpretations. It would be tempting to apply Lacanian terms and see Horos' interdiction as the Symbolic limiting the Imaginary.<sup>56</sup> But we cannot simply align 'Propertius' with the Imaginary (the self the poet would like to project) over against Horos as the representative of the Symbolic (which imposes rules), because the voices reverse the alignment: the poetic stance 'Propertius' says he would adopt represents the more normative Symbolic, the kind of poetry Augustan poets present those in power as wanting, while the desires voiced by Horos, his psychosexual identity, correspond better to Propertius' ordinary self-presentation. For similar reasons, 'Propertius' cannot align with the Freudian ego and Horos with the id. It is normally the ego which tries to limit the id, not the other way around. Nor can we apply in any straightforward way the categories of 'first-order' and 'second-order' desires Bartsch uses for analyzing the structured self in Seneca, where the former are more instinctive and the latter are what a subject wants to want or thinks it should want, but that often conflict with the first-order desires.<sup>57</sup> The absence of hierarchy between the voices makes it hard to pinpoint which of them represents what Propertius 'really' wants, even apart from Bartsch's conclusion that second-order limitation rather than instinctual desire is what reveals character. It is not clear that the desire to participate in the public world is any more or less instinctual than psychosexual desires, or that the limitation either applies to the other is more top-down. A better Lacanian analysis would locate the irruption of the Real here in the struggle between the voices as they fail to go in the same direction and attempt to limit each other.<sup>58</sup> More true to Bartsch's overall analysis would be to underscore the mutual mirroring between the different manifestations of Propertius' self.
- 43 If 'Propertius' recuperates success by his stance as an intellectual commentator on the political on one level, and Propertius furthermore aligns this engaged non-participation with the structure of the erotic, where poetic success depends on an erotic exclusion, what remains to be examined is whether the same logic can apply to the exclusions to which Horos is subjected in the poem. I would submit that the deauthorization of Horos holds the place of the non-recuperable exclusion in the politics of empire. Himself marginal, he attempts to disenfranchise 'Propertius' as well. To this extent, he allegorizes the forces of empire. Although it was hardly the Eastern foreigner who subjected the Roman upper classes to the position of impotence felt with the collapse of the Republic and represented in elegy, Horos intertwines two aspects of imperial expansion: contact with foreigners and the interdictions on political participation among the elite that resulted from the concentration of power in the single figure of the emperor.
- 44 Is Horos abject or comic?<sup>59</sup> He may show up all of the ways 'Propertius' comes short of being normatively Roman, the aspects that belong to Propertius but from which he would rather distance himself, and to that extent line up with the abject. But he also reveals basic truths about contemporary society exemplified by both Propertius and himself. After all, he defines 'Propertius' as he is already known to the reader, a position he might in fact find comfortable. His powerlessness turns out to have a certain power after all, and to that extent he performs a comic function, to reestablish and justify the status quo.

## V. The paradigmatic self

- 45 One of the ways Propertius 4.1 differs from many other Augustan explorations of Roman identity is that he works through the definition of a single person – however divided – on his way to a larger notion of what it means to be Roman as a collective. His particular identity is paradigmatic for a larger whole, not in conformity to a universal or in adhering to the norms of Romanness, but in the mechanics of its construction and in the way the particular relates to the collective. Rather than matching an image of ‘Joe Roman,’ Propertius shows himself as an individual with his own experiences engaged in a dynamic process of identity construction in relation to Roman norms and outsiders alike. This is how he reveals himself as Roman.
- 46 Vergil and Horace offer different models – these brief remarks mean to highlight what is special to Propertius 4.1. The multiplicity of people and peoples who are the forerunners to Rome in the *Aeneid* not only reveal the city’s heterogenous origins, but also express contemporary realities about the empire : to be Roman is less a question of ethnic descent than of shared culture. The treaty between Juno and Jupiter at the poem’s end sanctifies the foundation of a state through cultural markers (language, dress ; 12.825) and norms (*uirtus*, *mores*, religious practices ; 12.827, 836). No single person becomes emblematic of Roman identity in the *Aeneid*, which frames identity in national terms, via norms rather than through individual subjectivities.<sup>60</sup>
- 47 Although Horace uses a single figure, Cleopatra, in *Odes* 1.37 to explore through negation the norms (male, sane, virtuous) that define Roman identity, her actions and decisions are viewed from the outside rather than through a speaking subject.<sup>61</sup> Horace’s Cleopatra works out Roman identity on the symbolic level. That she turns out to embody many Roman norms she initially flouts reveals not only the complexity of individual persons, but also chinks in the ideology. For a woman to commit a ‘Stoic suicide’ along the lines of Cato shows the weakness of the Roman masculinist bias. The poem’s speaking subject, however, in this poem fills a blank slot : the poet is a citizen without individualizing characteristics celebrating a national victory.<sup>62</sup> Horace is concerned in a context of civil war with fractures in Roman ideology rather than with how an individual Roman might negotiate within it. To come up with a picture of his own identity as an imperial citizen requires deciphering a mosaic that spans poems, collections, and genres. No single poem provides a complete picture, which rather emerges from bits and pieces.
- 48 Poem 4.1 makes Propertius exemplary of Roman identity, despite the lack of alignment between his self-definition and normative Romanness, despite the failure of his life to be representative. Although ‘Propertius’ does not reveal much about himself, a remarkable amount of biographical information is divulged in the voice of Horos. Many of his experiences were common to the period, most specifically the land confiscations. Others are universal : the failure to win the object of desire. Some are particular and local : the early death of his father in Assisi. But the way in which Horos makes him an *exemplum* is specifically linked to his poetic vocation, where few could follow even if a mass of them would be interested in trying : *scribat ut exemplo cetera turba tuo* (‘so that the rest of the crowd could write according to your example,’ 136). The question is then how Propertius’ construction of identity goes beyond his narrow exemplarity as a poet to be paradigmatic for Roman identity as a whole.

- 49 The structure Propertius sets out of a dialogic construction of identity through the deconstruction of difference can be generalized despite the singular peculiarities of any individual. That is, he can be paradigmatic for other singular individuals even when they do not share the same life experiences because the structure is the common element between them. Aristotle classifies the *paradeigma* (example) as a kind of induction (*epagoge*), which proceeds from part to whole, but differentiates it from induction proper in that it proceeds from part to another part (*Prior Analytics* 69a13-14). That is, the example operates as a singularity that reveals a third common element about another singularity. In the *Rhetoric* (1.2.19), he specifies that the *paradeigma* goes from part to part under a larger umbrella of the *genos* or kind. The singularity for poem 4.1 is the identity of Propertius; the *genos* is the structure of subjectivity; the other singularity would be any other Roman subjectivity.
- 50 Giorgio Agamben, who discusses the methodology of the *paradeigma* in *Signatura rerum*, takes Aristotle's point about the relation of one singularity to another, but leaves Aristotle behind by pressing for a radical singularity.<sup>63</sup> He finds it impossible to separate clearly in an example its paradigmatic status, namely, its truth value for all, from its being a singular case among others (22). The *paradeigma* does not subsume a singularity into an existing norm but rather produces its own norm through analogy. This general rule cannot be formulated *a priori* (24), with the result that a singularity taken as an example produces new knowledge performatively. Derrida warns in his essay on performativity, 'Signature, Évenement, Contexte,' that performative production cannot escape the citation of previous performatives, even if reenactment produces something new. This means that performatively produced new knowledge stands in relation to what is already known without being identical to it. Agamben stresses that every singularity relates to innumerable other singularities (31). The *paradeigma* mediates between a phenomenon and its image, between an origin and the already existing.<sup>64</sup>
- 51 Although Propertius does not reproduce the exact structure of identity construction through difference we see exemplified in other literary texts, his model can be paradigmatic because his singular identity, instantiated within the text, produces a new model through the example of himself. We can take both the identity Propertius constructs for himself and the poem in which he constructs it as paradigmatic. Propertius' new model in poem 4.1 builds on the other models put forward by his contemporaries. His emphasis on the subjectivity of an individual with all his own peculiarities adds a new element to the then current debate about the structure of identity construction. It is not only his self that is paradigmatic to the Roman self in this period, but his poem that is paradigmatic for other poetry with similar concerns.
- 52 For a collective identity to have any validity, aspects of it need to be embodied in particular persons, even if no individual matches the totality. Derrida makes the move in chapter 4 of *Monolingualism* of turning himself into an example. He universalizes his unique experience and in the process reveals that the idea of himself that he has been presenting is a simplification (19).

Let us sketch out a figure. It will have only a vague *resemblance* to myself and to the kind of autobiographical anamnesis that always appears like the thing to do when one exposes oneself in the space of *relation*. Let us understand "relation" in the sense of narration, the narration of the genealogical narrative, for example, but more generally as well...

Derrida goes on to speak of both a poetics and a politics of relation. Besides relation as narrative, i.e., to relate a story, I think he additionally means relation in the sense of establishing relations between people, between different ways of belonging to some larger whole. We can say something similar of Propertius. The real Propertius is the one to whom the whole, complex, multivocal poem belongs and the simplified Propertius within it arises as an idea from the combination of the speaker 'Propertius' and the biographical information about him given by Horos.

- 53 Propertius' singularity, however, should be distinguished from the unique. Every element which might differentiate him from some other singular person turns out to be shared: others were dispossessed, lost their fathers at an early age, lost relatives in civil war, came from Umbria, wrote poetry. The singular is one in a series; the unique stands alone in its category. Derrida's analysis of identity makes a stronger, more modern claim than poem 4.1 by adding uniqueness into his argument about the relation of the individual to the universal (20).

What happens when someone resorts to describing an allegedly uncommon "situation," mine, for example, by testifying to it in terms that go beyond it, in a language whose generality takes on a value that is in some way structural, universal, transcendental, or ontological? When anybody who happens by infers the following: "What holds for me, irreplaceably, also applies to all. Substitution is in progress; it has already taken effect. Everyone can say the same thing for themselves and of themselves. It suffices to hear me; I am the universal hostage."

... How does one determine this, an uncommon this whose uniqueness stems from testimony alone, from the fact that certain individuals in certain situations testify to the features of a structure nevertheless universal, revealing it, showing it, and allowing it to be read "more vividly," more vividly as one says, and because, above all, one says it about an injury, more vividly and *better than others*, and sometimes alone in their category? And what makes it more unbelievable is that they are alone in a genre which becomes in turn a universal example, thus interbreeding and accumulating the two logics, that of exemplarity and that of the host as hostage.

- 54 If we take these questions seriously, we also have to ask whether Propertius envisions the generalization of his own identity construction beyond contemporary historical circumstances, namely those of a citizen who experienced civil war at Rome in the transition to empire. That is, does he see the identity he constructs in a dialogic relation with Horos as emblematic of Roman imperial conditions or as universal? My impression is that his generalization goes only so far and that if we want to make this interaction universal for psychoanalysis or our own globalized times, this is an operation we bring to bear on the text as readers. Derrida's emphasis on the unique accords with a post-enlightenment conception of the person and his emphasis on the universal – as opposed to the merely paradigmatic for certain historical conditions – generalizes in a gesture common among late 20<sup>th</sup> c. theoretical approaches. My sense is that Latin literature of this period is concerned with its own sociopolitical circumstances rather than with the human condition as such, but the ability of the singular to intimate the universal means that we cannot shut down an attempt at generalization made at the point of reception.

- 55 We should further ask whether the other elements Derrida intertwines, the injury and the hostage, find equivalents in poem 4.1. Although the hostage shares a root with *hospes*, I would be hard pressed to say that Horos holds 'Propertius' hostage. Yes, he impinges on his poetic liberty, but he does not ask a ransom in return for release. Nor

does Propertius hold hostage a fictitious character under his artistic control. With injury, however, we find greater correspondence. The loss of land was a significant diminution of status that corresponds to Derrida's own loss of citizenship. Although the latter was a greater injury, it was temporary, while Propertius does not let us know he ever recovered his land – on balance a similarity. Furthermore, poem 4.1 ends with Horos prophesying harm, physical or metaphorical: whether 'Propertius' takes a sea journey, confronts an enemy unarmed, or the earth gapes beneath him, what he is really to fear is the sign of the Crab (147-50). Something bad is looming. Still, these vague threats by an astrologer it is hard to take seriously come short of Derrida's gesture toward trauma theory. I will leave this opening for someone more oriented toward psychoanalytic readings to pursue.

## VI. Conclusion

- 56 The ideological Roman is notionally masculine, brave, virtuous in public affairs as in his private life; his life emanates from a city at the center of its empire. But it is not only individuals who are exceptions to or resist the simplified norm. All the counter-terms also define the Roman, by negation or contrast, but also by inclusion. Although such internal contradictions inhabit identity defined under non-imperial circumstances as well, imperial conditions make frequent contact with other peoples under circumstances of inclusion, acculturation, domination, and appropriation fertile material for self-definition whether from the point of view of the dominant or dominated alike. The inclusion of 'alien' or 'Eastern' voices, the turn to the conditions of making art or speaking at all, and the exploration of social exclusion and artistic interdiction, are all ways of defining identity under imperial conditions. The relation between Derrida and Propertius is not allusive, but analogical. Both find their way to these techniques because of exposure to a world larger than their local identities, one in which power is felt as constraining whether they lie on the side of the conquerors or the conquered. By using an internal, alienating voice with Eastern overtones to express the version of his self that resists the norm, Propertius reaches beyond his own poetic self-definition to self-exemplarity: by dividing up his own voice, he defines the structure of being Roman under the Empire. What turns out to be universal is the inability of anyone to measure up to the imaginary whole, whose use is to provide a framework against which actual subjectivities differentiate themselves.

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## NOTES

\*. An earlier version of this paper was written for a conference on 'Orientalismo romano,' Roma, La Sapienza (November 2009). I thank Alessandro Schiesaro for organizing and all the



participants for their feedback. The remarks on the norm and exemplarity at the end of the paper were informed by discussion with Susanne Lüdemann and Christiane Frey as we were organizing a conference on 'Exemplarity/Singularity' at the University of Konstanz (May 2011). Especial thanks are owed to the anonymous referees, both friendly and oppositionalist. To the latter, I offer this quotation as a gift: 'Conclusion: if you want a friend, you must wage war on him, and in order to wage war, you must be capable of it, capable of having a "best enemy",' Derrida (2005) 282.

1. Their film, 'The Exception and the Rule,' was shown under the avant-garde rubric at the New York Film Festival (fall 2009; clip available <http://www.mirza-butler.net/index.php?/project/the-museum-of-non-participation/>, accessed December 2010). Their larger project, 'The Museum of Non Participation' (Section IV is entitled with this phrase below), was conceived in 2007 while viewing the protests and state violence of the Pakistani lawyers movement from a window in the National Art Gallery. The film explores imperial identity through various formal techniques, including showing material from another artist figure, 'Raj Kumar,' whose work is identified as being on video while that of Mirza's voice is on film. Unlike Propertius 4.1 and the voices explored below in Derrida, Raj Kumar's voice or viewpoint aligns sympathetically with those of the filmmakers.

2. Some divide the poem in two, see Miller (2004) 186, Hutchinson (2006) 61. Since Horos' speech answers that of 'Propertius,' the question is immaterial to my argument.

3. Newman (1997) 274: 'is the poet not speaking all the time?'

4. For the poem as combined 'program poem' and 'recusatio,' see Richardson (1977) 414; DeBrohun (2003) 9-22; Syndikus (2010) 310 traces the history of reading the program as greater than the sum of the poem's two parts and emphasizes the ironic dissolution of polarities.

5. 'Subject,' 'subjectivity,' 'identity,' and 'self' are contested categories that different approaches put in relation in different ways. I lay out my provisional assumptions to orient the reader, but do not mean these to be dogmatic. Syed (2005), for instance, locates the subjectivity that the *Aeneid* constructs in the reader.

6. In Miller's (2004) 5 version of Lacan's terms, the Imaginary.

7. Phrase from Alston and Spentzou (2011) 219.

8. I am sympathetic to the approaches to analyzing identity and the self outlined in Arweiler and Möller (2008) vii-xiii and Alston and Spentzou (2011) 1-26. They are skeptical about genealogy and applied theory, but rather pursue analogies between ancient and modern texts across disciplines. A dominant critical trend for analyzing elegy in recent years has been psychoanalytic, particularly with a Lacanian cast. E.g., Janan (2001), Miller (2004), Oliensis (2009) 3 and 60 comments on the appeal of Lacan's semiotics and abstraction to Latinists. Alston and Spentzou (2011) set Lacanian terms into relation with Foucault. My turn to Derrida has much to do with the formal properties of the chosen texts and I hope this approach will supplement the more overtly psychoanalytic trend. Agamben (2008) 11-34 defends the analogical method, as do Alston and Spentzou (2011) *passim* but especially 1-26 and 225-30.

9. Derrida (1998) 2.

10. For statelessness and two classes of citizenship in modern democracies, see Brown (2010) 82, 87, 96.

11. DeBrohun (2003) 102-113 also underscores the association of Umbria with civil war.

12. Hall's (2005) 262 comment that ethnicity is not an a priori container but a discursive construction is relevant for all categories of identity. National and personal identity are anachronistic categories, used here as shorthand without implication of exact overlap between nation and *patria*, between the personal and the subject position.

13. Lowrie (2008) considers the interrelation of form and ideology in Propertius 4.11.

14. For the reciprocal effects of contact between cultural groups, see Hall (2005) 264.

15. Woolf (2001) 311 emphasizes the lack of homogeneity in ancient empires and the hitherto unprecedented scale of the Roman (313). Hall (2005) 264 shows the relevance of post-colonial theories of hybridity to the movements of population in the ancient Mediterranean, but also points out that peoples did not always encounter one another in contexts of suspicion, hostility, or subjugation (280). Wirth (2010) explores the metaphor of 'grafting' as a divergent cultural model for mixed identities in an attempt to get beyond the naturalization that can attend metaphors of hybridization.

16. For a basic overview of the Roman empire within a volume dedicated to a larger comparison of empires, see Woolf (2001), who at (1998) 26-7 explores the limits of similarities between Rome and the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> c. colonial empires of the West. Hardt and Negri (2000) envision empire as a post-modern world order beyond the sovereignty of modern nation states.

17. Many understand Propertius' identity as divided. Edwards (1996) 55-6 sees Propertius as conflicted, both Roman and Umbrian, who lost relatives in civil war. Janan (2001) 12-13 presents the 'upheaval of Rome's transformation from republic to empire' as the context for 'a social crisis characterized by the disintegration of an ideologically secure sense of self.' Propertius 4 is a case in point because of the lack of a 'common viewpoint' or the 'unifying voice' of books 1-3; the book treats 'not just an individual's slippery prosopography, but a nation's tenuous link to its defining foundations.' Miller (2004) 186 criticizes the 'desire to establish two self-consistent and freestanding speaking subjects' and sees the poem as deconstructing 'the oppositions between epic and elegy, between the Roman and the Callimachean, and between the poet's Imaginary self-projection as an elegist and his interpolation by the Symbolic structures and institutions of the Augustan state'.

18. Woolf (1992) 348 defines a central problem in the study of imperialism as understanding both 'the broad dynamics of expansion, exploitation and control' and 'the multiplicity of local experiences.' The problem of modern scholarship replays problems the Romans themselves had in understanding their own role in the expansion of empire. Dench (2005) 21 speaks of the 'double pull of "generosity" and violence in ancient accounts of the Roman conquest of Italy, and indeed, in Roman accounts of "imperialism" more generally.' Toll (1997) 45-50 sees Vergil's perspective in the *Aeneid* as one of an openness that corresponds to his own origins on the borders of an area that acquired Roman citizenship within his lifetime; she generalizes inclusion as an obligation of empire (52).

19. The classic work on orientalism is Said (1978). Although differences between imperial conditions call for care in using it for ancient Rome, Latin literature of the Augustan period studied here is certainly Eurocentric and the contact between Rome and the East that fueled literary interest was channeled through military expansion. I thank Grant Parker for sharing with me a paper in preparation that critiques Said's orientalism from the perspective of its relevance to Rome.

20. Woolf (2001) 317 sees tension between the ideas of Rome as a melting pot and as an 'ever-threatened unity.' Dench (2005) 4 emphasizes Roman plurality and frames appropriation more neutrally as the 'incorporation and transformation of other peoples and cultures'; the Augustans especially underscored Rome's ethnically and socially accretive nature, an emphasis unparalleled in Mediterranean culture (254).

21. Dench (2005) 329 mentions Propertius' interplay and tension between global and local perspectives through different speaking voices (poem 4.1 in n. 96).

22. Phrase from Wolf (1992) 350, who at (1998) 22 speaks of 'the dilemmas of individuals caught in the middle'. Alston and Spentzou (2011) organize their discussion of Roman identity from the individual level out to the imperial; programmatic statement at 193.

23. Hutchinson (2006) 31 prints quotation marks; history of the idea in Hübner (2008) 356. DeBrohun (2003) 17 calls these lines 'a short review of the topoi of love elegy.'

24. Heyworth (2007) and Goold (1990) put them after line 52. They are bracketed in Barber (1960) and Hutchinson (2006). Richardson (1977) thinks they belong in a different poem. Butler and Barber (1933) list possible solutions.
25. Parallel in Edwards (1996) 55-6.
26. Miller (2009) 319-20: Horos is 'oriental' (in scare quotes) with 'a ridiculous Greco-Babylonian-Egyptian pedigree'; he is an 'ethnic Other.'
27. DeBrohun (2003) 19-21, who underscores the multivalence of Horos' name, also considers a possible derivation from the Greek *horos* (boundary), which fits with Horos' attempt to keep Propertius within familiar poetic bounds. Hübner (2008) 352-4 thinks his name may be a pseudonym or *nom de plume* as was common among astrologers; the mixed identity of Babylonian, Egyptian, and Greek is similarly professional rather than genealogical – in which case Horos is pure figuration.
28. Rochberg in Keyser (2008) 787: Teucros, who is later than Propertius, was presumably not operating in a vacuum.
29. Hutchinson (2006) 61 sees foreign religion and culture as a locus for the poem's exploration of Roman change, with Rome's Trojan origin complicating the picture.
30. The equation is made by Hutchinson (2006) *ad loc.*, who claims that Remus can stand for both brothers or for Romulus, and Butler and Barber (1933), who locate the hut on the Palatine and explain the substitution by meter. Richardson (1977) does not object to the equation, but to the identification of the monument, which he thinks is more probably the temple of Quirinus. See Janan (2001) 135.
31. Syed (2005) 205-223, Reed (2010).
32. Toll (1991) 4 speaks of 'fusion'; Syed (2005) 221-2 emphasizes inclusion and integration; Alston and Spentzou (2011) see Vergil's vision as one 'of a Rome and Italy unified by common values.' Reed (2010) tilts more toward the instability of the categories: Roman identity emerges as imperial, precisely because 'The "ideal Roman" is perpetually deferred' (72). The interplay between integration and disintegration I see in Lowrie (2005a) provides more symbolic resolution than offered by Propertius.
33. *puget* is attested in *P*; Baehrens's suggestion *patet* goes too decisively toward the decline narrative.
34. Johnson (2009) 60.
35. Johnson (2009) Chapter 1.
36. Butler and Barber (1933) at 4.1.1 'presumably, but not necessarily Horos.' Richardson (1977) 414 identifies the two. Hutchinson (2006) calls him merely a 'stranger.'
37. Derrida (1998) 14 and 24.
38. Parallels and bibliography on the *Abbruchsformel* can be found at Lowrie (1997) 44, 164 n. 41, 182, 229 n. 8.
39. Schmitt (1996) 26.
40. An incisive analysis of Schmitt's politics in relation to his political theory is John McCormick's introduction to Schmitt (2004). Kalyvas (2008) chapter 2 recuperates and redirects useful aspects.
41. Derrida (2005) chapter 5.
42. Derrida (2005) 114-16.
43. Gallus' initial success as prefect in Egypt after Actium was followed by excessive self-glorification; after being interdicted from the house and provinces of Augustus, he committed suicide. See *OCD* at Cornelius, Gallus.
44. Beard (1996) analyzes the tension between the rejection of the cult of Magna Mater with her eunuch priests and its inclusion in the 'symbolic forms of state religion' in relation to the larger debate on 'Romanness' in imperial Rome (166).

45. DeBrohun (2003) 87 links Propertius' diminished resources to Apollo's assignment of genre. Miller (2009) 232 and 321-3 situates Apollo's intervention here within the topoi of the Augustan *recusatio*, including the retroping of Callimachus' *Aitia*.
46. Richardson (1977) *ad loc.*: the poet is a 'good target' for the Amores. Hutchinson (2006) *ad loc.*: his poetry confers glory on them.
47. Newman (1997) 275: the repressed returns in Horos.
48. Bartsch (2006) 240-1 cites internal dialogue in Seneca between himself and a friend (Lucilius) as well as two voices of the self. The identity worked out in these passages, however, is moral and revolves around attitudes to wealth.
49. A leitmotif of Lowrie (2009), especially chapter 14.
50. Mirza and Butler explore the artist's position as the engaged observer (n. 1 above).
51. Arendt (1977) 92-3. I use Arendt's formulation for Horace's definition of his position as a lyricist in Augustan Rome in a book in progress provisionally entitled 'From Safety to Security: Roman Literature and Political Thought in the Transition to Empire.'
52. Barton (1994). Hutchinson (2006) 60 traces 'conflicting attitudes' to astrologers with a wealth of further bibliography. Also Hübner (2008) 347.
53. Richardson (1977) at 4.1.102; Rothstein (1979) at 4.1.101; Newman (1997) 272 'pseudo-science'. Scholars cannot agree about any of the astrology in the poem, e.g., Keyser (1992) and Butrica (1993). General review at Hübner (2008) 348-50.
54. As mentioned above, it is not clear who voices the prophecy *Troia cades, et Troica Roma resurges* ('Troy, you will fall and you, Trojan Rome, will rise again', 87). Moving the line to the voice of 'Propertius' would keep the triumphalism together. See n. 24 above.
55. Adorno (1991). Mirza and Butler (above n. 1) flash across the screen, 'If all art is political how do you make a political film?' They also dramatize interdiction: 'Raj Kumar' is denied a permit to film in India. He distinguishes between making a political film and making a film politically, that is, he separates content from form.
56. Miller's (2004) 5 definitions. He aligns Propertius' 'interpellation by the Symbolic' with the program expressed by 'Propertius,' but also traces the dissolution of the subject position in book 4 and an irony that 'floats free of any single Imaginary projection of self.'
57. Bartsch (2006) 236-9.
58. Buchan (2005) 201, who resists the alignment of the Imaginary with the private and the Symbolic with the public, quotes Lacan: 'the Imaginary offers us the "armor of an alienating identity." Our self-image is, for Lacan, a way of avoiding our own fragility and helplessness, and the price to be paid is alienation: our image of ourselves is, precisely, *not us*.' The Imaginary and the Symbolic inhabit the speeches of both voices.
59. Horos is often read as silly rather than threatening. Humor: Rothstein (1979) at 4.1.89, 101, 147; satire: Newman (1997) 271. For a survey of the scholarly assessments, see Hübner (2008) 345-50.
60. Syed (2005) locates subjectivity in the reader; earlier bibliography at 252 n. 51. More recently, see Toll (1991) and (1997), Ando (2002), Lowrie (2005a) 971-6, Reed (2007) and (2010). All emphasize in various ways the multiplicity that makes up the Roman.
61. Lowrie (1997) 139-64.
62. Oliensis (1998) 137.
63. Agamben (2008) 'Che cos'è un paradeigma?' 11-34.
64. I take the liberty of attempting to unpack Agamben's (2008) 33 dense summary (item 5).

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## RÉSUMÉS

Propertius and Derrida use a similar formal technique to explore the structure of identity under imperial conditions. This is the divided voice, where significant elements of authorial self-expression occur in the voice of an oppositional other. These texts enact a dialectic without synthesis between a more normative self and one that undergoes dispossession, loss of citizenship, various restrictions on speech, or other forms of limitation or exclusion. They raise the question of the extent to which singular individuals, whose identities do not and cannot fit the ideological norm, can be paradigmatic for identity within their own times and political circumstances. While Propertius emerges as singular, that is, an individual within a series, Derrida claims a unique status that marks a difference between ancient and modern conceptions of the self.

## INDEX

**Mots-clés :** Derrida, empire, exemplum, identity, Propertius

## AUTEUR

MICHÈLE LOWRIE

University of Chicago  
mlowrie@uchicago.edu