

Gendered Violence and Genre in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and George Miller's "Mad Max: Fury Road"

By comparing and contrasting the relationship between genre, the female body, and violence in Ovid's epic poem, the *Metamorphoses*, and George Miller's 2015 film, "Mad Max: Fury Road," I argue that an important way the film initially legitimates but ultimately undermines female power is through disfiguring the female body, a product of the generic restrictions of action films. Both "Mad Max: Fury Road" and the *Metamorphoses* explore female power through violence against female bodies. While both works offer rich portrayals of women, they are both ultimately limited by generic constraints. By considering how Ovid draws upon other genres to critique the limits of the epic genre when exploring female power within his poem in comparison to "Mad Max: Fury Road," I show how the generic constraints of the film ultimately undermine its portrayal of powerful women.

I will consider three ways both the *Metamorphoses* and "Mad Max: Fury Road" explore and limit female power: the male gaze, gendered landscapes, and female bodies. Ovid's *Metamorphoses* recounts transformations of all kinds, and recent scholarship has focused on how the transformations of human women perform a kind of patriarchal control through representing sexual violence as bodily dismemberment, physical transformation, and violence against the landscape (Lovatt 2013, Keith 2009, Salzman-Mitchell 2005, Sharrock 2002, Segal 1998, Richlin 1992). The relationship between gendered disfigurement and power in "Mad Max: Fury Road" and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is a product of the male gaze present in both the film and epic poem. This gaze ultimately restricts and defines female power.

*Works Cited*

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