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Multiple Change in the *Metamorphoses*

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At the beginning of the *Metamorphoses* Ovid announces that he feels impelled to speak of changed forms (*mutatas dicere formas* 1.1). With that phrase *mutatas formas*, he not only establishes the subject of his monumental poem, but also announces the vocabulary by which he will describe metamorphosis. Twice in the *Tristia* (1.1.117 and 1.7.13), he refers back to the poem by citing this characteristic phrase; and throughout the poem itself, he employs the noun *forma* and the verb *mutare* together and separately, in various syntactical arrangements, to describe the changes which constitute his subject. As others have noted, Latin did not possess in Ovid's time an exact equivalent for the Greek word *metamorphosis*; *transformatio*, which would have served as the perfect translation, did not come into existence until the period of St. Augustine. I suspect, however, that Ovid would have invented the word, had he wanted it.[1] But since he could use *mutatas formas* freely, in many metrical positions, close together or considerably separated, and could substitute synonyms for either or both, Ovid presumably felt no need for an awkward, long word like *transformatio* even in his title. It is my purpose in this paper

[1] Ovid, like Vergil, did not hesitate to invent words when necessary. See J. Favre, *De Ovidio novatore vocabulorum in Metamorphoseon libris* (Paris 1885).

to discuss the words that refer to metamorphosis, so as to throw some light on Ovid's versatility and also to bring out more clearly his basic interest in "changed forms."

I. The Vocabulary of Metamorphosis

It is necessary first to establish the vocabulary which regularly appears in the context of a physical metamorphosis. I have classified this vocabulary in five groups: nouns like *forma*, verbs like *mutare*, related nouns and adjectives, words expressing surprise, and terms used to define continuity after metamorphosis. I shall briefly explain my inclusion of the last two groups, not strictly vocabulary for metamorphosis, when I come to them.

A. *Nouns Meaning "Form"*

Noun	Number of Occurrences	Exact Meaning
forma	93	form, beauty
facies	59	form, shape
figura	31	form, shape
species	20	visible form
vultus		face, whole aspect
imago		likeness, imitation, form
simulacrum		likeness, statue (after change)
simulamen	unique at 10.727 (Ovid's invention)	imitation
effigies	3 (1.83, 9.264, 14.358)	likeness, human shape
umbra		shadow of living, shade of dead

B. *Verbs Meaning "Change" (trans. or intrans.) or Describing the Process of Change*

Verb	Typical Early Occurrence	Verb	Typical Early Occurrence
mutare (59 times)	1.1	novare formam	8.853
vertere (92 times)	1.160	,, faciem	2.674
immutare	7.722	renovare	1.110
convertere	1.88	facere	1.78
formare	1.364	efficere imaginem	7.129
reformare (2 times) (Ovid's invention)	9.399	,, formam	9.335
		fieri	1.237
transformare	10.237	simulare	2.668

Verb	Typical Early Occurrence	Verb	Typical Early Occurrence
adsimulare	5.6	assumere alas	12.1
dissimulare	2.374	variare	4.578
conferre in	4.278	ire in	10.493
transferre	10.84	abire in	1.236
dare formam	10.248	exire	5.671
„ figuram	8.615	transire in	4.201
reddere formam	8.870	subit facies	14.827
„ faciem	6.121	rediit forma	3.331
capere formam	10.212	flectere	8.881
„ faciem	13.605	haerere	1.551
„ vultum	1.738	migrare in	15.172
„ figuram	15.308	succedere in	15.199
accipere faciem	14.506	subduci facies	2.661
perdere figuram	1.547	induci facies	4.374
„ formam	13.405	vindicare faciem	2.523
adimere figuram	2.474	ponere imaginem	3.1
ducere formam	1.402	mota est forma	8.729
inducere formam	7 642	removere formam	6.43
reducere in formam	15.381	imitari faciem	8.736
induitur faciem	2.425	„ formam	11.613
„ formam	11.203	abdere vultus	6.500
induit figuras	1.88	celatus imagine	6.110
„ vultum	8.853	„ forma	9.76
exuit hominem	10.105	mentitis figuris	5.326
trahere faciem	1.412	operire alis	4.425
trahere figuram	3.399	„ plumis	5.672
detrahere vultus	2.524	fingere vultum	4.319
contrahere in formam	5.457	„ simulacrum	11.628
sumere pennas	4.47	„ effigiem	14.359
„ alas	5.288	fingere in effigiem	1.83
„ figuram	11.653	„ „ formam	14.685
„ formam	15.556	curvari in	10.689
resumere species	15.743	saxo oborto	5.202

inceptive verbs (with a suffix -escere): e.g. crescere, increscere, concrescere, mollescere, durescere, indurescere, rigescere, frondescere

C. *Related Nouns and Adjectives*

deformis	1.300	cf. forma
transformis	8.871 (Ovid's invention?)	
biformis	2.664	
formosus	1.612 (23 occurrences)	
fictor	7.741	cf. fingere, figura
speciosus	7.69	cf. species
spectabilis	6.166	
transitus	5.434	cf. transire
simulator	11.634	cf. simulare, simulacrum
similis	1.535	

dissimilis	7.170	
renovamen	8.729 (unique in Latin)	cf. novare, renovare
novatrix	15.252 (unique in Latin)	
novitas	2.31	
novus	1.1	
subitus	1.315	
recens	1.80	

D. *The Vocabulary of Surprise*

Ovid regularly associates with his descriptions of metamorphosis dramatic directions, by which he represents the amazement caused by the change in the individual and/or his companions, or through which he announces a story of change. The poet himself or a narrator within the poem may claim attention with a *res mira*; or the person being changed may react to his alteration with astonishment; or finally people may be surprised after the metamorphosis has occurred. Since the vocabulary of surprise and amazement occurs commonly in the poem and significantly in the same context with the changes, it seems useful to register the key terms.

mirus	1.252	21 occurrences
res mira	6.320, 13.893	
mirum potuisse	6.583, 11.731	
(mirum!)	7.790, 11.51	
quodque magis mirum est	7.130, 15.317; cf. 12.174	
mirari	1.301	45 occurrences
admirari	1.644	
mirabilis	3.326	
miraculum	3.673	
mirator	4.641	
admirabilis	6.14	
stupere	4.676	
adstupere	3.418 (Ovid's invention?)	
obstipescere	2.726	
adtonitus	8.681	
monstrum	2.367	

E. *The Vocabulary of Continuity*

Finally, when the metamorphosis has been completed, Ovid commonly suggests that something has survived from the old form in the new. Often, it is only the name that continues over into the new shape. Sometimes, however, when the person has been characterized by a striking habit, ability, or desire, that particular

trait persists. Again, if the human form has been petrified, the shape remains constant. Just as Ovid calls attention to the marvelous aspect of each change, so he deliberately comments also on the continuity of the individuality in some form. For example, after describing the transformation of Lycaon into a wolf, the poet goes on to make clear the relationship between the barbaric human tyrant and the wild beast (1.237–39):

> fit lupus et veteris servat vestigia formae;
> canities eadem est, eadem violentia vultus,
> idem oculi lucent, eadem feritatis imago est.

idem, eadem	cf. above	Something in the new is *the same* as in the old.
servare	cf. above	With vestigia formae, formas, imago, nomen, amorem
manere	1.17, 410	With vultus, imago, facies, species, effigies, nomen
remanere	1.552	With vultus, nomen, species, effigies
permanere	9.788	
superesse	1.743	
inhaerere	7.447	With nomen
perstare	15.177	
vetus	cf. above	With servare, retinere, memor
antiquus	1.437	With referre, manere, exercere, memor
vivere	3.401	
restare	14.396	With nomen, pars optima
relinquere	14.100, 153	
retinere	7.497	With pignora formae, figuram
tenere	10.297	With nomen
habere	9.665	With nomen
memor	8.259	(cf. immemor 10.171, oblitus 13.763)
tamen + verb	6.310	With flere
nunc quoque + verb	7.467	With diligere, habere, etc.
adhuc + verb	2.255, 6.669	With excedere, latere, etc.

II. Multiple Metamorphosis

Now that we have listed the principal thematic words for change and for the concomitant effects of marvel and continuity, we are in a position to assess the special uses made of these terms by Ovid. I should particularly like to draw attention to the double and triple metamorphoses in certain stories. In nearly every case, a story ends with a transformation; but in many cases, the main action has been caused by another transformation. Perhaps the most common change that occurs within a story and

initiates a final metamorphosis is that of love or, as it appears more commonly in this poem, passion. The first story of love illustrates this feature clearly.

Daphne, pursued by many men, shuns them all and secures her father's reluctant consent to her perpetual virginity (1.478 ff.). However, interjects the poet, her very form (i.e. beauty) conflicts with her desire: *voto tuo tua forma repugnat* (489). Apollo has seen her, fallen in love with her beauty, and lusted for "marriage" with her. Daphne's beauty exercises a violent effect, it appears: it moves Apollo so strongly that the god loses his essential qualities. In two ways, Ovid suggests that the god has been "transformed" by passion: he describes the failure of Apollo's powers, and he uses one of his thematic phrases for metamorphosis. First, the prophetic god of Delphi is deceived by his own oracles and hopes to conquer a girl who will in fact escape him (491). Then, he becomes afire with passion, like a burning field; he "goes into" flames: *deus in flammas abiit* (495). Ovid earlier used *abire in* to render Lycaon's metamorphosis (cf. 1.236) and will use the phrase again in similar contexts of change. Here, it stresses what has occurred to Apollo. The god's breathless appeal to the fleeing Daphne develops humorously more of the paradoxical changes that have manifested themselves in him (504 ff.): he chases her through the countryside, but is not rustic; he is a god, but "prays" to a human being; he, the supreme archer, has fallen prey to another's arrow; he watches over doctors, but lacks the medical skill to cure himself of this ailment.

Daphne spurns the god and flees. As she runs, the breeze blows her clothes away from her legs and against her body, so as to bare part of her form and outline the rest; moreover, the wind makes her lovely, and long locks flow backwards upon her shoulders. In short, her beauty is enhanced by her flight: *aucta forma fuga est* (530). Ovid's playful alliteration helps to point up the situation, that every action of Daphne to avoid love merely increases that *forma* which causes her to be loved. In the end, rather than submit, she implores her father to destroy her form (547):

qua nimium placui, mutando perde figuram.

Then, the second transformation occurs. Her soft form is covered with bark; her hair grows into leaves (*crescunt in* 550),

her arms into branches; her feet, once so swift, are stopped motionless (*haeret* 551). Only her brightness remains (*remanet* 552).

Passion's power to transform gods and men constitutes a principal element of many stories recounted by Ovid.[2] Often, as in the tale of the Sun's love for Leucothoe, the transformation works first psychically, then physically. Leucothoe, whose mother was most beautiful (*formosissima* 4.209), surpassed her mother's beauty (211). Seeing her, the Sun was made helpless. What good, asks the poet in apostrophe, are your beauty (*forma* 193), O Sun, your color, and your flashing eyes (or light, *lumina*)? Then, he proceeds to set forth some of the paradoxes of this situation: he who burns the world with his fire is now burned himself; he who should view the whole earth looks only at Leucothoe (*spectas* 196; i.e. she is *spectabilis*). Just as other lovers grow pale and wan, so the Sun is weakened and fades away with passion (200–3):

> deficis interdum, vitiumque *in* lumina mentis
> *transit*, et *obscurus* mortalia pectora terres.
> nec, tibi quod lunae terris propioris imago
> obstiterit, *palles: facit* hunc amor iste colorem.

When Apollo pursued Daphne, Ovid compared him to a hunting dog (1.533 ff.); but he retained his own divine shape. Sometimes, to gratify their passion—which has, so to speak, robbed them of their divinity—gods disguise themselves and win a girl by deceit. The Sun here, transformed inwardly by his desire, now approaches Leucothoe outwardly transformed. He changes himself to resemble Leucothoe's mother and enters the room of his beloved (218–19):

> thalamos deus intrat amatos
> versus in Eurynomes faciem genetricis.

[2] In certain stories, Ovid suggests that the emotions constitute a formal part of the individual and have their own shape, indeed even determine the physical form. Lycaon, changed into a wolf, retains the same savage look (*violentia vultus* 1.238), the same form or likeness of wildness (*feritatis imago* 239). Apparently, his wildness as a human (cf. 1.198) explains his wild shape now. Procne, furious at Tereus, is described as "entirely in the image of punishment" (*poenae in imagine tota est* 6.586); by which, I believe, Ovid implies that her vengeful purposes gives her face a particular shape (at the same time that he shows her imagining her vengeance). Ovid gives us no description of Aglauros' *forma*, only of her *invidia*. It is that emotion, it appears, which defines her and causes her to turn into a livid-colored stone: *sua mens infecerat illam* (2.832).

By maternal authority, he can clear the room of servants and then have the girl to himself. After proclaiming his love and growing still more excited over the maidenly tremulousness of Leucothoe, he resumes his customary form and possesses her (230–33):

> ipse timor decuit, nec longius ille moratus
> in veram rediit faciem solitumque nitorem;
> at virgo quamvis inopino territa visu
> victa nitore dei posita vim passa querella est.

In general, then, we may conclude that Ovid portrays an initial metamorphosis in the lover before he describes the change in the beloved. Both this story and that of Apollo's love for Daphne make more of the lover's transformation than of the beloved's. Whereas Ovid devotes 15 lines to the Sun's alterations, six lines suffice (4.250–55) to account for Leucothoe's change into a flower. Furthermore, Ovid stresses the fact that the girl who boasts *forma*, who is *formosa* or *speciosa*, unwittingly exerts irresistible power over men and gods, who see her and are transformed. Thus, Ovid describes the effect on Apollo (*abiit in flammas*) and the Sun (*vitium in lumina mentis transiit, facit amor colorem*), with the thematic language for metamorphosis. He sometimes characterizes a man as dumbfounded by beauty (*obstipuit*), using the same word that he elsewhere employs to render amazement at metamorphosis. Mercury, flying over Athens, sees the beauteous Herse and can no longer fly a straight course: *in orbem curvat* (2.715), *flectitur* (718), *inclinat cursus* (721), *vertit iter* (730). These words, which playfully indicate the change in the god, are capped by a reference to his amazement: *obstipuit forma* (726).[3] Next, we might expect Mercury to assume disguise like Apollo, an expectation which Ovid cleverly alludes to. Because the god feels confident in his own handsome shape, he shuns disguise, content merely to spruce himself up a bit (731–32):

> nec se dissimulat: tanta est fiducia formae,
> quae quamquam iusta est, cura tamen adiuvat illam.

Falling in love may alter the gods and reduce them absurdly to the level of human beings, but gods never suffer long. Mercury gratifies his passion with Herse and flies lightheartedly away.

[3] For other uses of *obstipuit* in similar contexts, see 7.727, 10.580, 14.350.

The Sun, aroused over Leucothoe, forgets all his previous conquests (4.208) briefly, only to forget Leucothoe, too, after a few pangs of regret. Being loved by gods is no joking matter. Daphne prefers to destroy her beauty rather than submit; Leucothoe yields, and her father executes her. In other cases, the girls receive punishment from Juno or occasionally a doubtful reward from the pleased god. Whatever it is, reward or punishment, Ovid uses his folk-motif skillfully to emphasize the fact that the gods' amoral violence to human beings transforms them physically and psychologically. Thus, Callisto, tricked by a disguised Jupiter and raped, begins to suspect even Diana, hates the forest where, as a virgin, she hunted, and almost forgets her quiver and arrows (2.437 ff.).[4] After Diana rejects her, Juno takes her vengeance. She says that she will destroy the beauty (*figuram* 474) which pleased Jupiter, hurls the girl to the ground, angrily ignores all prayers, and soon has "deformed" (481) that beauty. Callisto, victim of Jupiter's bestial lust and Juno's bestial fury, becomes appropriately a beast; though her human soul continues within the animal form: *mens antiqua manet* (485). Io becomes a cow when Jupiter disguises his misdeed, the plaything of a malevolent Juno. On the other hand, Caenis, offered a reward by Neptune, chooses never to suffer rape again and is transformed into a male (12.201 ff.). And Neptune does much the same for Mnestra (8.850 ff.), allowing her to change into a male at will to escape the amorous desires of men.

For human beings, indeed, love is a transforming experience, whether one is lover or beloved. The brief story of Semele illustrates one aspect of this statement. Often visited by Jupiter and now pregnant by him, Semele becomes proud of her conquest. Outraged, Juno comments as follows (3.268–70):

> concipit! id deerat! manifestaque crimina pleno
> fert utero et mater, quod vix mihi contigit, uno
> de Iove vult *fieri*: tanta est fiducia formae!

To be proud of one's beauty becomes a god, who possesses eternal youth; accordingly, Mercury could safely rely on his *forma* (2.731) in commencing his affair with Herse. When a human counts on

[4] Forgetting, here rendered by *oblita*, frequently occurs in the same context as a violent emotional effect. Most often, love makes gods forget their characteristic habits: cf. 4.208, 677, 10.171, and 13.763.

forma, whether beauty or the permanent shape of things in general, he or she courts disaster. Semele imagines for herself impossible privileges that are reserved for the gods.[5] And Juno fits her revenge exquisitely to the girl's delusions. Disguising herself as an old woman (275), she works on the vain Semele to ask for the rights of a goddess, of Juno herself. Ovid says that she "formed" (*formarat* 288) the unwitting daughter of Cadmus. Delighted with this evil "form" and all too full of confidence (*laeta malo nimiumque potens* 292), Semele asks for a gift that proves to be her destruction. Juno has merely "formed" her in accordance with Semele's own confident view of her *forma*.

The first story that Ovid recounts of mutual love among humans, the skillful tale of Pyramus and Thisbe, deals with the ill-fated desire of man and woman to be united. When the chink in the wall no longer satisfies their passion, they embark upon a course which should bring them together outside the city; but they are joined only in death. Love made her bold (4.96) until she confronted, in the form of a lion, another obstacle to their meeting. Love made Pyramus grow pale (106) when he saw the tracks of the lion. Love made him kill himself, exclaims Thisbe (148), and love will give her the strength to die, too (150). For Ovid, it is more important to study how their love acted on them than how the mulberry tree acquired its blood color; after all, the tree merely emphasizes in symbolic fashion the tragic alteration of these lovers.

Far more complicated is the story of the mutual love of Procris and Cephalus. It seems that Ovid hangs his elaborate romance, in which no apparent metamorphosis occurs, upon the slight tale of the dog's transformation into stone (7.758 ff.). However, seeing that he regularly prefers to study the effects of love rather than an ultimate physical metamorphosis, we should not be surprised to find that he has ignored any final change and so focused all attention on love's transformations. Instead of ending the tale, then, with a change, he punctuates it midway, thereby setting up two interrelated stages in the tragic affair. The story

[5] Ovid uses the same phrase *fiducia formae* seriously to refer to the pride of Cassiope (4.687) and playfully in 8.434 and 14.32. Note that in the latter instance Circe is urging Glaucus to have confidence and unite with her, a goddess. Ovid also refers to Lethaea, whose pride in her beauty (*confisa figurae* 10.69) resulted in her metamorphosis into stone.

opens when Phocus, son of Aeacus, fixes his glance on a specially beautiful (*formosius* 679) spear in Cephalus' hand. Its beauty causes him to marvel and ask about the wood, to which a companion of Cephalus replies: *usum maiorem specie mirabere in isto* (681–82). With that, the story that follows is programmatically announced as *res mira*.

Cephalus now takes over the narrative. This spear, he says, makes him weep and will continue to do so as long as he lives; for it has destroyed him and his beloved wife (690 ff.). Since, as we shall see, his married love was once supremely happy (*felix* 698), the spear has wrought a drastic transformation; though obviously it has "destroyed" him only in a metaphorical sense. But the spear is not to blame; it destroyed the marriage which had already been ruined by the suspicious love of husband and wife. True to habit, Ovid devotes most of his artistic skill to describing the alteration of a happy marriage into a jealous and suspicious relation.

Procris was beautiful (*facies* 696, 716; *formosior* 730); so much so, claims her husband, that she deserved to be raped more than her sister Orithyia. Love united the two (698), and Cephalus was supremely happy. Then, in the second month of their marriage, Aurora saw him hunting and snatched him away to make love to him. Although he grants that the goddess was lovely (*spectabilis* 705), Cephalus, loving only Procris, spurned temptation. Angrily Aurora released him, but planted in his mind the seeds of suspicion. Therefore, while he proceeded home, he began to fear, to doubt that Procris had been faithful. Her very beauty constituted an argument against her (716). In the end, fearful and anxious, he decided to test her loyalty. Once he made that decision, he discovered that Aurora abetted his fear and changed his form: *immutat meam figuram* (722). This marks the completion of the first metamorphosis in the story: Cephalus' psychological change from trust to doubt now eventuated in physical change. He in fact ceased to be her husband.

Arriving home, he found no signs to justify his suspicion. As a stranger, he won access to Procris only through a thousand stratagems (*dolos* 726). And when he saw her in all her beauty, he was astounded (*obstipui* 727) and almost let himself fall under her spell again. Too perverted, however, he resisted his impulse and proceeded in his attempt to seduce his own wife. It was a

paradoxical purpose: he fought to wound himself, says Cephalus (*in mea pugno vulnera* 738–39). Finally, as he offered her more and more money, there came a moment when Procris hesitated. This was enough for the false husband who sought any basis for his suspicion. Not even explaining how he emerged from his disguise—perhaps the disguise was imaginary in the first place—he now triumphantly proclaimed her guilt (741–42):

> exclamo male *fictor*: 'adest male *fictus* adulter,
> verus eram coniunx: me, perfida, teste teneris!'

The ambivalence of *male* is a nice Ovidian touch; so, too, is the ambiguity of Cephalus' claim to have been a "true husband." Apparently he means that, underneath his disguise, he was really her husband after all. In a psychological sense, however, he is incorrect; once he doubted her, he changed his form and his true relation to her. And even now that he resumed his shape (if he did), he still lacked the spiritual readjustment that entitled him to be regarded as a true husband. Procris made no defense, but fled disgusted from her evil husband (*malo coniuge* 744).

Because she had been chaste, Procris devoted herself to the activity which best symbolizes innocence in Ovid, hunting (746). Hunting had symbolized Cephalus' chastity earlier (701) and provides the ironic context for his final disaster. Alone at home, Cephalus felt his passion increasing; finally he went out into the woods to implore his wife to return. He even gilded the truth a little and admitted that, were he exposed to like temptation, he, too, would succumb. (His experience with Aurora invalidates that admission.) Having forced this confession from him and avenged her injured virtue (751), Procris returned. The marriage resumed its delightful form; Cephalus changed back completely to the loving, trusting husband that he once was. As a token of reconciliation, Procris gave him two marvelous gifts connected with her virginal hunting activities. And she willingly abandoned her hatred of men to take up the full role of wife. So ends the first stage of their tragedy, in which occurred two complete metamorphoses of Cephalus, psychological and physical; and Procris herself briefly changed as the result of her husband's doubts.

Before the second stage begins, Cephalus explains the marvelous fate of the hunting dog given him by his reconciled wife. It is,

as the thematic words indicate, a metamorphosis of the conventional type (758):

accipe *mirandum! novitate* movebere facti.

Dramatically speaking, this tale serves merely to mark the break between the two phases of the affair; Ovid clearly does not use it to distract our attention from the far more interesting (to him and to us) psychological changes in Procris and Cephalus. Soon we are back with husband and wife.

The years after the reconciliation proved to be "blessed" (797). Husband and wife were happy (*felix* 799), and mutual love possessed them (800). So content were they that Jupiter would not have tempted Procris from Cephalus and not even Venus would have lured him from his wife (801–2). If we recollect the first act, we will observe that Ovid has repeated his basic motifs. And sure enough, he next concentrates on Cephalus hunting. When the tired hunter called upon Aura, personifying it with ambiguous language that could also be erotic, someone overheard him and believed that he was really in love with a nymph. This person then acted to denounce an entirely imaginary crime (*criminis ficti index* 824). The former deceiver Cephalus (*male fictor*) was thus caught in a train of deception himself. Just as Cephalus excused himself by commenting on the fearfulness of lovers (719), so now he remarks on the credulity of love (826) that made Procris believe lies about him. She gave the imaginary Aura a maiden's form and feared what was nothing (830):

quod nihil est, metuit, metuit sine corpore nomen.

Acting on her fears, then, she determined to test her husband's loyalty.

Procris hid in the woods where Cephalus had been heard calling upon Aura. When he arrived and invoked the breeze, she groaned with an animal sound and moved the brush. Cephalus thought that a wild beast (*feram* 841) made the noise which came from Procris, turned into a wild beast by her *dolor* (cf. 826). The spear which she had given him to confirm their reconciliation became appropriately the instrument of her death. As she was dying in his arms, she revealed her anxiety over Aura, what Cephalus calls a mere mistake about a name (*errorem nominis* 857).

While pleading with him not to marry Aura, she reminded him of her lasting love in recognizably thematic language (854–56):

> per siquid merui de te bene, perque *manentem*
> nunc quoque, cum pereo, causam mihi mortis, amorem,
> ne thalamis Auram patiare innubere nostris.

Under all its outer changes, her love remained constant. Cephalus had enough time to disabuse her, so that she died happy, looking lovingly in his face. It seemed to him, too, that she had changed, that her face became more serene, indicating her relief from jealousy (862):

> sed vultu meliore mori secura videtur.[6]

The power of love to transform human beings and their ideas, its impetus to reshape words and names (*nomina*), illustrated in the mutual love of Cephalus and Procris, manifests itself most clearly in the series of soliloquies attributed to various heroines. Medea, Scylla, Byblis, and Myrrha all debate within themselves the merits of *virtus*, *pietas*, and *pudor* in conflict with *amor*. Unlike the gods, who pursue love without moral scruple, these girls feel great reluctance about yielding to passion, which, in their cases, as they well know and admit, involves some crime. During her long struggle (7.10), Medea remains aware that she tends to pursue the worse alternative (20–21). For a while, she conquers desire (19,73), only once again to fall under the spell of Jason's handsome form (28, 43, 44, 83, 84, 86–88). Reason has told her that she deceives herself with names by calling any relationship with Jason "marriage" (7.69–70):

> coniugiumne putas *speciosaque* nomina culpae
> imponis, Medea, tuae?

However, when love exerts its power, reason yields at the end. Medea goes knowingly, but helplessly, into her *crimen* (92–93):

> quid faciam, video, nec me ignorantia veri
> decipiet, sed amor!

Being deceived by love, as she puts it, is Medea's metamorphosis; for Ovid, it constitutes the deepest change of the story. Whereas

[6] Ovid uses the same phrase in connection with Ceres, to refer to the time when the goddess will be relieved of her anxiety for Proserpina and have a happier face: *cum tu curaque levata et vultus melioris eris* (5.500–1).

the various feats of Jason in overcoming fire-breathing bulls, the armed men, and the dragon are marvelous (and nothing more), Medea's change from virginal innocence involves all the moral strength that she possesses. We watch her degenerate progressively from maiden into fearsome witch without experiencing physical metamorphosis. The other three, Scylla, Byblis, and Myrrha, all undergo physical change, but not in such a way as to distract Ovid or us from the main transformation of his narrative.

Scylla falls in love with the handsome form of Minos (8.23, 26, 32, 49). In her soliloquy, she laments the paradox of her situation: that she loves her enemy (45). The more she talks, however, the less she thinks of him as her foe. Soon, she begins to contemplate the possibility of betraying her father and his city; her father is the person she fears (70–71), her father now her enemy. At one point, she summarizes her paradoxical situation in this way (72–73):

> di facerent, sine patre forem! sibi quisque profecto
> est deus; ignavis precibus Fortuna repugnat.

Finally, ready to be her own god, so changed as to ignore her relationship and eager to make herself fatherless, she cuts the fatal lock and delivers it to Minos. He repulses her with loathing (95–98):

> Minos porrecta refugit
> turbatusque *novi* respondit *imagine* facti:
> 'di te submoveant, o nostri infamia saecli,
> orbe suo, tellusque tibi pontusque negetur!'

This crime which she has committed has acquired a form (*imago*) in Minos' mind, a form with which Scylla is so intrinsically connected that he curses her. The one element that he omits in his curse becomes, after her metamorphosis, her habitat. Even her change into a bird was foreshadowed by her instinctive desires as a lover. From her tower, she longed to plunge down into the Cretan camp (39–40); she imagined herself triply fortunate if only she could glide down on wings to the king and confess her passion (51–52). When her metamorphosis takes place, then, her bird-shape commemorates her love and the crime to which it led (150–51):

> in avem mutata vocatur
> ciris et a tonso est hoc nomen adepta capillo.

Ovid devotes his greatest psychological studies to the internal changes of Byblis and Myrrha. Byblis thinks her brother *formosus* (9.476) and wishes to appear *formosa* (462) to him. At first, however, she does not know what causes her emotions. Embracing Caunus, she herself is deceived into believing that she acts only as an affectionate sister (460):

mendacique diu pietatis fallitur *umbra*.

Inside, though, she begins to seethe (465); instinctively, she begins to hate the name of sister (466). When she falls asleep, dreams come to her which express her true desires (470). After a while, she longs to have these dreams recur (*repetit quietis speciem* 472–73) and obviously allows these dream-wishes to assume real form (480–81):

saepe licet simili redeat sub *imagine* somnus:
testis abest somno, nec abest *imitata* voluptas!

Unable to resist her impulses, she indulges in impossible desires, like Scylla who wished that she never had a father (487–88):

o ego, si liceat *mutato* nomine iungi,
quam bene, Caune, tuo poteram nurus esse parenti!

If only she could change her name! Ironically, though, the letter which she writes her brother makes a virtue of necessity. As if to emphasize how far her love has changed her, Ovid makes Byblis argue that it will be easy to cloak their love under the name of brotherly affection (558). After persistent pursuit and rejection, she slumps to the earth and weeps continuously until finally changed into a fountain (663–65). This physical metamorphosis, hardly a punishment, comes close to being an honor: the fountain overarched by ilex might remind a Roman reader of Horace's *Fons Bandusiae* and its ilex.[7] At any rate, Byblis' most dramatic metamorphosis is clearly the psychological one that changes her from sister to lover.

Ovid studies the change from daughter to lover in the case of Myrrha. She, too, is aware initially that she contemplates *scelus*, but her emotions soon sweep away her scruples. Some nations there are, she has heard, which regard incest as a special mark of *pietas* (10.333). If only she were born among them!

[7] In the case of Myrrha, Ovid actually says that she receives honor, at least for her tears: *est honor et lacrimis* (10.501).

She knows that she is confusing names, in this case of daughter and father (346). Although she considers her father *pius* (354) and herself *impia* (345), she wishes he felt a passion similar to hers (355). When he presses her to describe the kind of husband that she would accept, she answers: "One like you" (364). And Cinyras praises her *pietas* (366). An attempt to commit suicide rather than yield to crime fails. Finally to mark the utter overthrow of *pietas*, Ovid stages the union of father and daughter on the annual holiday of "pious" Ceres (431). And father and daughter, he unknowingly, she entirely aware, perhaps even address each other by their right names to define the crime (467–68):

> forsitan aetatis quoque nomine 'filia' dixit:
> dixit et illa 'pater', sceleri ne nomina desint.

Myrrha's subsequent remorse and physical metamorphosis, to which Ovid devotes 22 lines, appear consistent with her struggle to resist her passion. But the previous 165 lines show Ovid's primary interest in the psychological or moral transformation of her *pietas* into *scelus*. The matter of "names" proves to be crucial when they affect moral terms.

Sometimes human beings wish to change the circumstances of their existence and wish for the impossible, as Scylla, Byblis, and Myrrha, who all seek to escape the obligations of *pietas*. Sometimes they mistake their temporary happiness and think it permanent. Long before Aeschylus and Herodotus, the Greeks had learned to beware of good luck; Ovid, therefore, uses the word *felix* quite regularly to foreshadow misfortune. For only a short time were Cephalus and Procris happy. It is the great error of Niobe to feel confidence in her *felicitas*, as great an error as Semele's pride in her *forma* (6.193–94):

> sum felix: quis enim neget hoc? felixque *manebo:*
> (hoc quoque quis dubitet?) tutam me copia fecit.

When all her sons die, her all too mortal "plenty" is halved. Niobe reacts with anger and amazement (*mirantem* 269) at the god's audacity. And as her great family has altered, so, too, she changes (273–76):

> heu quantum haec Niobe Niobe *distabat* ab illa,
> quae modo Latois populum submoverat aris
> et mediam tulerat gressus resupina per urbem
> invidiosa suis, *at nunc* miseranda vel hosti.

When her sons are carried to the pyre, she thinks of it as her "funeral." Unable to contain herself, however, she persists in sneering at Latona, for she still has more children. Hence, she conquers her conqueror and is *felicior* (282–85):

> per funera septem
> *efferor*. exsulta victrixque inimica triumpha!
> cur autem victrix? miserae mihi plura *supersunt*
> quam tibi felici; post tot quoque funera vinco.

A few moments later, she is childless (*orba* 301), she who had sneered at Latona as childless (200) in comparison with herself. Niobe's principal change is from *felicitas* in 14 children to misery with none. Her physical metamorphosis into a weeping stone merely punctuates the tale.

In the story of Tereus, Procne, and Philomela, Ovid utilizes the theme of deceptive happiness, that of perverted *pietas*, and still another motif: the transforming power of irrational vengefulness. Others think Tereus and Procne fortunate in their marriage and newborn son: little do they understand the facts (*utilitas* 6.438). When Procne sends Tereus back to Athens for her sister Philomela, Tereus falls in love with the girl at first sight: her form is too beautiful (452, 458). He starts burning, because love has changed him. Love "makes" him eloquent (469) in arguing Procne's case (and his own). Because his passion makes him urge his points with tears, he is thought to be *pius*; thus, his criminal desires work to his advantage (474). Philomela presses her father, too, with many affectionate embraces, each of which sets Tereus' imagination working. He feels those kisses himself in anticipation (*praecontrectat* 478). He wishes for the impossible, to be in the place of her father (482): although he would continue to be *impius*. That night, while others sleep, Tereus recalls Philomela's beauty (*repetens faciem* 491) in his mind and even imagines (*fingit* 492) the parts which he has not yet seen. Pandion sends them off the next morning, with a last vain appeal to *pietas* (503).

Tereus has changed from affectionate brother-in-law to lover; the next step is for him to become a beast. Ovid compares him to an eagle eyeing a rabbit which it has caught (516–17), to a wolf that has released a lamb from its jaws (527–28), and to a bird of prey which has let a dove go (529–30). Now, the second change

occurs: Philomela is raped. Tereus, she shrieks, has confounded everything (537). He has changed her into the rival of her own sister (*paelex ego facta sororis* 537), and he himself has become the husband of two women. Back Tereus goes to Procne, after cutting out Philomela's tongue, and, adulterer that he is, naturally plays the part of deceiver (565–66):

> dat gemitus *fictos commenta*que funera narrat;
> et lacrimae fecere fidem.

Deceived, Procne assumes mourning, herself half-changed by grief.

It was Tereus' act of violence that confounded everything; and Philomela endeavors to reveal this deed to her sister. She weaves the story and sends it to Procne. As powerful a force as the deed itself, this wretched inscription of her misfortune (582) transforms Procne, who is marvelously (*mirum potuisse* 583) silent, but ablaze with fury. Her love becomes vengefulness, and she prepares to confound right and wrong (*fasque nefasque confusura* 585–86). In a brilliant phrase that he will use again (cf. 13.546), Ovid captures the full psychological alteration of Procne: she is utterly in the form (or likeness) of her vengeance (*poenae in imagine tota est* 586). Her imagination, we might say, is her real "form."

Now Procne and Philomela have their opportunity to disguise their intentions. Pretending (*simulat* 596) to be inspired by Bacchus, Procne rescues her sister and disguises her (*insignia induit, vultus abdit* 598–99). Ready for any evil (613), perverted enough to claim that in the case of Tereus *pietas* is even a crime (635), Procne, like a tigress (637), kills her own son: he is too like Tereus (622). For the hated father, she plans a dinner composed of the child's flesh, once more lying (*mentita* 648) and pretending that she follows a custom of her father (or fit for fathers), an ironically ambiguous bit of deception. This complex web of deceit, which indicates the extent to which she has been changed, catches the original deceiver, who eats his own son. Outraged *pietas* has in turn outraged Tereus' *pietas*. The physical metamorphosis into birds, which still bear some traces of their human sufferings and crimes (668 ff.), aptly concludes a powerful series of internal alterations.

The desire for vengeance also changes Althaea.[8] When she

[8] Similarly, Venus admits that she was turned into anger: *subitam convertor in iram* (10.683).

learns that her son Meleager has killed her brothers, her violent grief changes into "love"—ironic in this case—of punishing (8.449–50):

> at simul est auctor necis editus, excidit omnis
> luctus et a lacrimis in poenae *versus* amorem est.

Just as Procne was torn by conflicting claims of *pietas*, and oscillated for a while between the obligations of wife and sister, so Althaea feels the tension of two different family bonds, namely, those of mother and sister (463–64):

> pugnat materque sororque,
> et diversa trahunt unum duo nomina pectus.

Her very face shows the dilemma she confronts, for now it seems threatening (*nescio quid similis crudele minanti vultus erat* 467–68), now pitiable. Slowly the sister gets the better of the mother (475), and Althaea is, says Ovid, "pious in impiety" (*impietate pia est* 477). Nevertheless, again and again the claims of motherhood re-assert themselves (*pia iura parentum* 499, *pietas* 508). In her final statement of her dilemma, Althaea reveals that the opposing forces work actively on her imagination (506–8):

> et cupio et nequeo. quid agam? modo vulnera fratrum
> *ante oculos* mihi sunt et tantae caedis *imago*,
> nunc animum pietas maternaque *nomina* frangunt.

Although the form or image of her brothers' deaths does ultimately persuade her to cause Meleager's destruction, her awareness of guilt as a mother pushes her towards suicide immediately afterwards (531–32). It was, of course, impossible for Althaea to alter the name of mother, as much as it was impossible for Scylla, Byblis, and Myrrha to escape the name of daughter or sister.

Names possess a formal quality and define a person or thing in a way similar to outward shape. Changing names, changing the meaning of words can therefore produce results as drastic as those caused by changing forms. Althaea ceases to be a mother only at the cost of her very life; Scylla rejects her duties as daughter and loses her form as well. The many soliloquies in the central part of the *Metamorphoses* all, to a certain extent, analyze the meaning of critical moral terms. Each speaker, aware of the moral responsibilities implicit in the word or words under discussion,

tries to evade these formal obligations; and, when reason fails to justify such evasion or change, he or she then lets emotions overcome reason and morality. Knowingly, they undertake *nefas* or *scelus*, and usually they experience the consequences soon after in their moral depths.

It is, I believe, a variation on the moral soliloquy when Ovid stages the moral debate between Ajax and Ulysses in Book 13. Each tries to persuade the judges, convinced himself, that he is the better man, that he possesses the necessary *virtus* to inherit the armor of the best Greek warrior, Achilles. What then is the definition of *virtus* to which Ajax (21) and Ulysses (153, 235) both appeal? Ajax seems to regard *virtus* in the simple, direct way of the uncomplicated, instinctively brave and honest warrior: *virtus* is an act of manliness or courage in its purest form, unadulterated by slyness, deceit, or other unscrupulous methods. No moral Greek or Roman would have disputed this definition: the quality, not the success, of actions determines their value. For Ulysses, however, *virtus* is success, and success usually results from brains rather than mere bravery (or brawn, as he would pejoratively put it). As he answers Ajax, then, Ulysses slowly changes the valid meaning of *virtus* from honorable bravery to dishonorable success. Thereby, he wins the armor of Achilles; thereby, too, he causes the death of Ajax, whose essential *virtus*, his definitive quality or moral form, has been affronted and negated.[9]

From the beginning, Ajax declares himself a man of action, Ulysses merely a man of words (9–15). And as he finishes speaking, he wishes to appeal to action, not words (120–22). That Ulysses wins by words is the comment of the poet himself (382–83):

> mota manus procerum est, et, quid facundia posset,
> re patuit, fortisque viri tulit arma disertus.

[9] Not everybody would interpret this debate as I do. W. B. Stanford, *The Ulysses Theme: a Study in the Adaptability of a Traditional Hero* (Oxford 1954) 139, suggests that Ovid prefers Ulysses: "Ovid does not disguise his own preference in the end." Two pages later, however, he states: "Ovid's own personal feelings are not involved in the conflict. . . . Neither contestant is a sympathetic figure." L. P. Wilkinson, *Ovid Recalled* (Cambridge 1955) 235, believes that Ovid identifies himself with Ulysses and argues his own cause through Ulysses: "As the poet warms to his task [in Ulysses' speech], he leaves no doubt where his sympathies lie. He is hitting back at 'gnawing Envy.'"

Ulysses "moved" the judges, changed their beliefs to fit his words. Ulysses is the sly man, the dissimulator *par excellence*, and his ability to conceal himself, disguise his actions, and deceive by argument has always brought him success and does so here. But this amoral disguise and deceit render him no more admirable to Ovid's audience than the amoral disguise and deceit by which the gods achieve their erotic successes. Although Ajax dies as a direct result of Ulysses' perversion of *virtus*, the essential meaning of the word persists to enable us to evaluate the "victor."

After Ajax' relatively short, blunt, angry speech, Ulysses rises and artfully waits for silence. Then, pretending tears (*veluti lacrimantia* 132), he begins to talk regretfully of Achilles. Since Ajax introduced the matter of *nobilitas* and contrasted Aeacus with thieving, unscrupulous Sisyphus (Ulysses' father, according to Ajax 31–32), Ulysses argues away the relevance of inherited nobility (140 ff.). Next, he says that he saw through the disguise of Achilles (163) and persuaded him to join the Trojan expedition; therefore, according to his casuistical reasoning, everything that Achilles did to win the war for the Greeks is really Ulysses' deed (171). At Aulis, Ulysses played a key role, of which he boasts: he "turned" (*verti* 188) the fatherly thoughts of Agamemnon to the advantage of the army, and he deceived (194) Clytemnestra into sending Iphigenia to be sacrificed. When Agamemnon was deluded by his dream (*deceptus imagine somni* 216), Ulysses, who deceives but is never deceived by false forms, saved the army from scattering to the ships. Therefore, his casuistry prompts him to claim as his whatever act of bravery took place from that day (236–37). Nobody praises Ajax, he argues, because Diomedes chose Ulysses (not Ajax) for the reconnoitering expedition at night (238). The fact that he was wounded, Ajax never, implies that he is braver (264 ff.): a dramatically specious assertion. Even Ajax' single combat with Hector can be contemptuously dismissed by the orator (271 ff.).

Only at this point does Ulysses feel ready to take up Ajax' charges against him as deceiver, traducer, and criminal plotter. Ajax had reminded the Greeks of the way Ulysses pretended madness (*furore ficto* 36–37) in order to avoid going on the expedition; as urger of crimes (*hortator scelerum* 45) had tricked Philoctetes into staying on Lemnos; and finally had invented and proved

(*finxit fictumque probavit* 59) a false charge against Palamedes. To each of these, Ulysses produces a specious reply. Yes, he pretended to be mad, but it was no crime; he did exactly what Achilles did, and both acted from *pietas* (296 ff.). And was it vicious to have accused Palamedes falsely (*falso crimine* 308) if the Greeks condemned him to death on visible evidence (planted, he omits to mention, by Ulysses, who deceived his fellow Greeks)? As for Philoctetes, why, the rest of the Greeks agreed to his plan, and anyway it was all for the good of Philoctetes! (313 ff.)

Thus, the debate between Ajax and Ulysses is an extended argument over the meaning of moral terms and past acts, and it parallels in function the shorter soliloquies, internal debates over the morality of future acts. But there is one sharp difference, too: reason condemns the erotic purposes of the girls, and they commit crimes of passion entirely aware of their guilt; on the other hand, the skillfully deployed reason of Ulysses cloaks his actions in a mist and presents them as virtues. Ajax, the honest warrior, not Ulysses the clever, suffers from the perversion of morality. Yet in both types of argument, internal and external, Ovid devotes his attention principally to the way human beings try to change the forms of morality. The physical metamorphosis that follows does not hold his or our attention anywhere near so tightly.

III. Conclusion: Form and Substance

One of the most important themes that emerges from the *Metamorphoses* is that *forma* has more than a passive quality. Not only is it changed, but it also causes change. Acting primarily to deceive, it makes people believe in the material things surrounding them. In his lighthearted manner, I believe, Ovid applies his thematic terms with great versatility to explore the complex nature of form. Those stories which best illustrate his poetic genius are also those which best present the series of changes initiated by *forma*.

Form is outward shape, mere appearance (especially when rendered by *imago*), assumed likeness (*imago*, *simulacrum*). When the shape is beautiful (*formosus*, *speciosus*), it can be dynamically

deceptive. The mere sight of lovely *forma* transforms gods and men into new creatures. Gods become amoral demons; humans become agonized beings struggling with their moral awareness. Obviously, though, when gods and men go into flames over *forma*, they are deceiving themselves or letting themselves be deceived by a transitory thing. Their very amazement at beauty suggests their irrational inclinations. The gods exploit human beauty only long enough to damage or destroy it, and Tereus does the same with Philomela. Human beings either distort the beauty they seek or deform themselves pursuing it, unless, that is, they come to realize that what they really crave is not mere outward beauty, but the human spirit underneath that shape. Form changes; the human personality persists, the substance underlying changing form.

Gods and human beings are deceived by beauty. Mortals even place confidence in beauty (*fiducia formae*) as though it were eternal. To increase the chances of deception for mankind, gods can disguise themselves. Human beings possess less freedom or license to disguise themselves or mask their feelings, for they cannot practice deceit upon others without in some way altering their consciences. Cephalus, doubting Procris, pretends to be someone else; Tereus, lusting after Philomela, pretends to be *pius*; Procne, thirsting for vengeance, feigns the high emotions of the Bacchante. Deceptive forms assail the eyes and the mind constantly. When awake, people see elusive beauty, reflections (*imagines*), human shapes in rocks or statue (*simulacra, signa*) or shadows (*umbrae*); when asleep, they seem to see shapes of living and dead (*imagines somni*).

Even though various shapes and forms lure the human mind and heart into deception, men can control themselves and see through the impermanent to the lasting. Pythagoras teaches Numa to look for the permanent in things. Often, although succumbing to the deception of *forma*, humans manifest so vividly the qualities of the human spirit that necessarily something survives from their disaster. Niobe, for all her blasphemous arrogance, still loved her children; her tears allowed part of her to persist, mistaken though she was about the "form" of her large family. Procris dies reminding Cephalus of her abiding love; that love continues in the living Cephalus. Io, Callisto, and Actaeon, transformed into animals retain their human reason

(*mens*) and struggle to express their personalities through their deceptive animal shapes.

Man, so commonly the victim of cheating forms, of the images produced by reflections, echoes, shadows, even dreams, can also be the creator of forms and images, not for the purposes of deceit, but to please or help. Man's imagination (which Ovid can sometimes render by the word *imago*) may be the slave of distorted emotions, as is the vengeful imagination of Procne or the diseased imagination of Byblis longing for her dream-world; or it may be the master of passions. Arachne possessed a creative imagination; she was an "image-maker," a transformer. Through her weaving she had sought and acquired a distinguished name (6.12). From far and near, nymphs came to behold her amazing creations (*opus admirabile* 14). Visitors stared with admiration not only at what she had made, but also enjoyed watching things in the process of being made (or transformed, *cum fierent* 18); such was the beauty of her artistry: *tantus decor* [=*forma*] *adfuit arti* (18).[10] Because she provoked Minerva, Arachne courted destruction. But it is significant that her weaving was faultless even to the eyes of the angry goddess (129–30). Taking as her subject the deceptive disguises of the gods in pursuit of love, Arachne depicted what Minerva considered *caelestia crimina* (131). Image-maker that she was, though, Arachne wove the false forms objectively, herself not deceived.[11] All that Minerva could do was to destroy the artistic creation and deform Arachne. However, she respected the artist, who continued to exist and exercise her weaving genius (145) as a spider.

Another image-maker of purer motivation is Pygmalion. As Fraenkel has brilliantly demonstrated, Pygmalion is the creative artist *par excellence*.[12] Inspired by a vision of womanhood far more perfect than the real women of Cyprus who have so offended his sensibilities, Pygmalion "forms" a woman of his own, a marvelous, life-like statue. Ovid describes the act of sculpture

[10] For *decor* as the equivalent of *forma*, see 1.488–89, where *decor* and *forma* appear together in the same context as synonyms. See also 7.733, where Cephalus describes Procris' beauty. Similarly, *decora* serves as a synonym for *formosa*: see 2.773 and 6.167.

[11] Ovid seems to favor the motif of the artist exposing gods' disguises. The blasphemous song of the Pierides (5.319 ff.) had as its subject the false forms adopted by the deities when in terror of Typhoeus.

[12] H. Fraenkel, *Ovid: a Poet between Two Worlds* (Berkeley 1956) 93 ff.

with the typical thematic language of metamorphosis (10.247–53):

> interea niveum *mira* feliciter arte
> sculpsit ebur *formamque dedit*, qua femina nasci
> nulla potest, operisque sui concepit amorem.
> virginis est verae *facies*, quam vivere credas
> et, si non obstet reverentia, velle moveri:
> ars adeo latet arte sua. *miratur* et haurit
> pectore Pygmalion *simulati corporis* ignes.

The metamorphosis of mere ivory into female form elicits general admiration; its realistic beauty stirs such marvel in Pygmalion that he falls in love with his own creation. Like the typical lover, he feels the fire of passion conceived inside himself. Perfect artistic beauty can enthrall the soul, even though the mind knows full well that the work of art is but a fabrication. Soon, love has transformed the realistic ivory into real flesh. By some miracle of Venus, the image-maker has created life itself, and a better life than the sordid existence from which he turned in disgust.

Some artistic products are doomed to destruction because committed to impermanent materials. Thus, Minerva could tear apart the weaving of Arachne. And it was obvious to Ovid that statuary of marble, bronze, ivory, or any other material could be called at best semi-permanent. Many image-makers, therefore, recreate life, represent it but for a limited time: *ars longa, sed non aeterna*, we might say. But the poetic product can defy time. We, of course, know that many great poems have disappeared or have been as mutilated as ancient statues; but we also know that we possess no thing from antiquity so complete and magnificent as Homer's epics or, for that matter, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Not as external form, a series of marks scratched or scribbled on the impermanent material of papyrus, parchment, or paper, does the poem defy time, but as the product of the human spirit, a changeless substance, living as much now as it did when it first emerged from the poet's mind in the most marvelous of all metamorphoses. Ovid says nothing new when he claims that his work will survive; Horace had made the same claim in *C.* 3.30 with perhaps greater justice. And it was a commonplace that, while life is short, art lives long. However, when Ovid resorts to the commonplace, he presses it into thematic relation with his whole poem. As he had

playfully demonstrated through Pythagoras in Book 15, all things change, but nothing entirely perishes (165 ff.); for the spirit or soul, always the same (171), assumes various forms. Behind the variable forms exist unaltered the spirit, the soul, the substantial being.

In reverent affection for Augustus' creation, Vergil and Horace, though no doubt knowing better, suggested that their poetry would live only as long as Rome. Ovid, less reverent, knew (and showed it) that there was no such thing as *Roma aeterna*: his juxtaposition of rising Rome to the fallen cities of the past, nothing but names (15.429 ff.), indicates clearly what he foresaw for his city. Thus, although he politely says that his work will be read wherever Roman power exists over the earth (15.877–88), he goes on to predict for himself a permanence that he implicitly denies to *Romana potentia*: "Through all ages I shall live in fame" (878–89). The poet of change, because his images are true and living, inspired by the eternal human spirit, triumphs over change.[13]

[13] Ovid says in 1.1 that his *animus* impels him to speak of metamorphoses. That same *animus* (or *mens*) defies the forces of time that can corrupt the physical body (15.873–74) and lives on, expressing the poet's personality, in his poem.