

Euripides rejects this Sophoclean optimism, and describes a society in which there are no forces for right or good, no models for the young to take to heart, only varieties of greed, vanity and violence. The almost comic unity of the play's ending reveals a hero who has been absorbed into this society and is welcomed by all with no questions asked. Beneath the "happy ending" of the *Orestes* is a reality more frightening than the horror that preceded it.

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BYBLIS AND MYRRHA: TWO INCEST NARRATIVES IN THE *METAMORPHOSES*

In two consecutive books of the *Metamorphoses* occur episodes of incest (9.450-665; 10.298-502). Byblis' passion for her brother Caunus is narrated by Ovid himself, as an illustration *ut ament concessa puellae* (454). Myrrha's desire for her father Cinyras is part of the cycle of Orpheus' songs, one of those on the theme . . . *inconcussisque puellas/ignibus attonitas meruisse libidine poenam* (153-154).¹ The two stories naturally have a number of parallels because of the similarity of subject, as well as differences, some of which can be attributed to Orpheus' personal bias. His narrative is more tendentious, but, curiously, more prurient. Despite the tendentiously stated moral purpose of his story, Orpheus exploits the horror² of Myrrha's incest in a melodrama of "pietas perverted," whereas Ovid presents a sympathetic and relatively restrained account of Byblis. Many of the differences between the styles of these two narratives arise from one underlying difference—the attitude of the narrator toward his main character. Ovid is consistently sympathetic toward Byblis, whereas Orpheus is ambivalent toward Myrrha, with his initial revulsion ultimately giving way to sympathy.

Ovid frequently puts a story in the mouth of one of his fictional characters. Scholars have noted this, both in the present case of Orpheus, and in others elsewhere, but they have offered a variety of explanations for why Ovid does this. The device of stories-within-a-story had been part of the epic tradition from the tales of Odysseus through the neoteric epyllia.³ As for Ovid's particular motives for attributing stories to his characters in the *Metamorphoses*, scholarly explanations fall into two broad categories, those which relate Ovid's motives to structure and theme, and those which relate them to tone and mood. Structural and thematic explanations are common in Brooks Otis, as a consequence of his overall approach to the poem. For Otis, Orpheus links the stories of Pygmalion, Myrrha, and Venus and Adonis (183), while the stories "attributed to the Minyades" achieve variety and anticipate a thematic transition (152). Before Otis, Hermann Fränkel noted that the Pygmalion story, put into the mouth of Orpheus, implicitly underscores parallels in these two characters' situations; L.P. Wilkinson explained the phenomenon in general as

¹In fact, Orpheus' story of Myrrha is "the only one which accurately carries out" that theme; as William S. Anderson rightly observes in his commentary edition, *Ovid's Metamorphoses: Books 6-10* (Norman, Oklahoma 1972) 501, hereafter cited as "Anderson."

²Brooks Otis, *Ovid As An Epic Poet* (Cambridge 1970, 2nd rev. ed.), hereafter cited as "Otis," states, 421, in his Appendix on sources, that it is reasonably certain one of Ovid's alterations of Cinyras' *Zmyrna* was "that Ovid himself emphasized the horror of the story both to make it the climax of his episodes of *furiosa libido* and to establish a contrast with the 'Pygmalion'."

³See M. Marjorie Crump, *The Epyllion from Theocritus to Ovid* (Oxford 1931) 62-70, on the "digression" as a "rule" in epyllia; for her, the *Metamorphoses* "is really a collection of epyllia" (47). For two more recent studies which deal specifically with Ovid's stories-within-a-story, see K. Giesecking, *Die Rahmenerzählungen in Ovids Metamorphosen* (diss. Tübingen 1965), and Michel Boilat, "Les récits intercalés," *Les Métamorphoses d'Ovide: Thèmes majeurs et problèmes de composition* (Bern and Frankfurt 1976).

a way of including stories which do not fit Ovid's announced chronological scheme.¹ The motive of tone and mood appears in Fränkel's explanation that the battle of the Lapiths and Centaurs is laid "in the mouth of old Nestor," as a way for Ovid to avoid telling this "brutal tale" himself (102). Note that Fränkel's reasoning seems to be—it is a brutal tale, therefore Ovid has Nestor tell it—not—it is a brutal tale because Ovid has Nestor tell it. Wilkinson calls attention to the vividness which results when a narrator tells his own story, in the case of Arethusa's story about her escape from Alpheus (176), and of Achelous' account of his struggle with Hercules (176 n. and 201). Otis, referring to the tone of the story of Cephalus and Procris, asserts (181): "The harsh crudity and indecency of Ovid's sources are softened not so much by Ovid speaking in *propria persona* as by his narrator, Cephalus."

Until recently this has been the extent to which scholars have considered the effect a fictional narrator may have upon a tale.² The fictional narrator has been regarded primarily as a fictional character, with certain personality traits and biographical experiences which Ovid may exploit for reasons of theme or tone. Despite Otis' observation about Cephalus as narrator, his prevailing attitude appears when he refers to the section of the poem which is "nominally attributed" to Orpheus (190). Thus, according to Otis, the story of Cyparissus appears in the catalogue of trees, "told by Ovid in *propria persona*, but Gandymede's (*since he was not a tree*) is put in the mouth of Orpheus" (185, *italics mine*).

Recently, however, scholars have begun to take the fictional narrators more seriously as narrators, and to discover reasons for Ovid's use of them which relate to the self-reflexive nature of his poem, in which the role of the artist is an important concern.³ Zumwalt has shown that Nestor's bias in his version of the Lapiths and Centaurs undermines his otherwise excellent qualifications, thus allowing Ovid to comment upon the possibility of truth in narrative.⁴ In a brief discussion of Ovid's narrative art, Segal has shown the effect of context (including audience, circumstances, and setting, as well as narrator) on the tales of Pyramus and Thisbe and Baucis and Philemon; his excellent recent study of the Cephalus and Procris episode includes consideration of the effect of Cephalus as narrator, as well as other elements of the context.⁵

The Cephalus and Procris episode has also been discussed by Galinsky; for him, the use of Cephalus as narrator allows Ovid to achieve "a fine balance between the 'experience' and the 'artistic' aspects of the story" and "to

¹ Ovid, *A Poet Between Two Worlds* (Berkeley 1945), hereafter cited as "Fränkel," 96-97; Ovid *Revisited* (Cambridge 1955), hereafter cited as "Wilkinson," 147.

² Even the narrative theorists Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg, *The Nature of Narrative* (Oxford 1966) 263, contrast the effect of the "multiplication of eye-witness narrators" with that of "the interlocking tale-tellers of frankly fictional narratives like Ovid's *Metamorphoses* or the *Arabian Nights*."

³ Alison Goddard Elliot, "Ovid's *Metamorphoses*: A Bibliography, 1968-1978," *CW* 73.7 (April-May 1980) 391, remarks on this as one of the emerging trends in the scholarship in that decade, as part of the concern with Ovidian poetics and narrative technique (385).

⁴ *Fama Subversa*: Theme and Structure in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 12," *CSCA* 10 (1977) 209-220, particularly 212-217.

⁵ "Narrative Art in the *Metamorphoses*," *CJ* 66 (1971) 331-337; "Ovid's Cephalus and Procris: Myth and Tragedy," *Grazer Beiträge* 7 (1978) 175-205.

demonstrate that he could tell the story differently and with sustained dignity and even profundity."⁶ The notion of Ovid's desire to tell a familiar myth "differently" is fundamental to Galinsky's interpretation of the *Metamorphoses*. According to him (4), Ovid's concern in that poem was "with the metamorphosis of myth rather than mythological metamorphoses;" the poet was able to accomplish this metamorphosis by following the example of Odysseus, whom he had represented in his own *Ars Amatoria* as responding to Calypso's repeated requests to hear about the fall of Troy by telling "the same thing differently" (*ille referre aliter saepe solebat idem*, *Ars* 2.428).

A special category of this narrative diversification, yet to be examined thoroughly, consists of the tales told "differently" by Ovid's fictional narrators. For this purpose it is especially useful to juxtapose two stories on the same theme, one by a fictional narrator and the other by Ovid, since this allows direct comparison of the narrative style (voice and technique) of Ovid in *propria persona* with that in his character. In comparing the incest narratives of Ovid and Orpheus, I shall be pursuing the insight that Ovid uses some of his characters' stories to mirror or reflect his own aesthetic, narrative principles. Anderson has considered the aesthetic principles contrasted in the weaving contest between Arachne and Minerva; and Leach has discussed the fictional artists in the *Metamorphoses* (both visual, like Arachne and Minerva, and verbal, like Minyades, the Pierides, the Muses, and Orpheus), showing how the epiphyses of their works "mirror" the larger poem.⁷ Anderson comments on a particular detail in the Myrrha episode which is "a reminder that the narrator is Orpheus, not Ovid," but for the most part his comments refer to the narrator as "Ovid."⁸ Leach explicitly and emphatically denies stylistic distinctions between Ovid and the fictional poets (106):

Ovid makes no perceptible stylistic distinction between the stories related by other poets and those he tells in *propria persona*. Their wit, their descriptive techniques and their narrative pacing are the same as that of the larger poem.

This is most probably true, when the fictional narrators are treated collectively (as Leach is doing when she speaks of "their wit, their . . . techniques and

⁶ Ovid's *Metamorphoses: An Introduction to the Basic Aspects* (Berkeley 1975), hereafter cited as "Galinsky," 150-152; among the other versions of Cephalus and Procris to which he refers, Galinsky does not include Ovid's own in *Ars* 3; Segal (above, note 8) 181 rightly observes that the distinctive qualities of the version in the *Metamorphoses* stand out even more in comparison to his own earlier version.

⁷ See Anderson 151-171 on the weaving contest, ideas which earlier appeared in his review of Otis' first edition, *AJP* 89 (1968) 93-104; Leach, "Ekphrasis and the Theme of Artistic Failure in the *Metamorphoses*," *Ramus* 3.2 (1974) 102-142, hereafter cited as "Leach," especially 106 and 117 for the "mirror" metaphor. Turning to theoretical literature on narrative, we find Tzvetan Todorov asserting, in *The Poetics of Prose*, trans. Richard Howard (Ithaca, N.Y., 1977) 72, that an "embedded" tale ("the narrative of a narrative") reflects an image of the embedding tale.

⁸ A good sample of Anderson's procedure appears on 488-489. On each of these facing pages, he refers to the narrator once as "Orpheus" but several times as "Ovid." On 489 *ad* 167-70 he comments on the phrase *meus genitor*: "Orpheus represents himself as Apollo's son." On 488 *ad* 152-54 he comments that "With five dactyls Orpheus lightly moves into his lighter themes;" here Anderson goes further than I do in assessing the effects of the fictional narrator, since I assume (at least provisionally) that metrically and lexically the styles of Ovid and his characters are identical.

their . . . pacing"). It is still worth examining individual cases, especially those cases in which Ovid and a character tell the same kind of story, to determine if any stylistic differences do exist. In my examination of the two incest narratives in the *Metamorphoses*, I shall be focussing on the stylistic differences between Ovid and Orpheus, differences, that is, in those closely interrelated aspects of narrative style which come under the heading of "voice": including pace, tone, mood, selection and arrangement of details, and, most important, since it influences all the others, the narrator's attitude toward his subject.

The incest tales of Ovid and Orpheus are not the only pair of tales one could choose in order to contrast the style of Ovid himself with that of a fictional narrator,¹² but it is a particularly illustrative pair. First, Ovid seems to invite the comparison himself by putting the pair so close together in two consecutive books. He extended a similar invitation near the beginning of the poem with two tales of a god pursuing a reluctant nymph, his own Apollo and Daphne and Mercury's Pan and Syrinx, both in Book 1; the *Metamorphoses* contains several variations on that theme, but the Byblis and Myrrha are the only two incest tales told at any length.¹³ These episodes are also roughly the same length (216 lines for Byblis, 205 for Myrrha), a fact which eliminates one more variable. Both were tales well-known to Ovid's readers, hence offering the challenge to *referre alter*.¹⁴ Finally, Orpheus' cycle of songs in Book 10

¹² Another interesting pair consists of Ovid's own account of the battle between Perseus and Phineus in Book 5, and Nestor's battle of the Lapiths and Centaurs in Book 12. The latter is the *locus classicus*, vigorously censured by critics for sensational violence in Ovid, and figures prominently in Galinsky's discussion (110-153, especially 126-139) of cruelty and grotesque sensationalism in the *Metamorphoses*; thus it is noteworthy that the narrator is not actually Ovid himself. Moreover, Nestor's battle narrative serves as a substitute for the material of the *Iliad*; see Frankel 222 n.81, and more recently, Otis-Steen Ditt, *Changing Forbes: Studies in the Metamorphoses of Ovid*, *Classica et Mediaevalia Dissertationes* 10 (Copenhagen 1974) 150. Hence a comparison of the two battle narratives—Ovid's and Nestor's—is instructive from the standpoint of Ovid's self-reflection on the principles of narrative art and on his predecessors in that art.

¹³ Frankel's remarks on the Pan and Syrinx (85) are brief, but suggestive about Ovid's motivation; see also Otis 385-386 in his Appendix on sources.

Ovid does include very brief allusions to several other cases of incest. An allegedly notorious case of father-daughter incest is alluded to within the crow's warning tale to the raven, before she became Minerva's owl; Nymthemene had committed incest (2.589-593). Mention of Menephron's incest with his mother (7.386-387) is made in connection with Cyllene, as part of the catalogue of places Medea flies over in her dragon chariot. The famous case of Oedipus is omitted altogether in Cephalus' brief reference to *Laudes* (7.759-765), unless the patronymic itself can be construed as a reminder. The equally famous case of Hippolytus is reduced to a three-line reference (15.500-502) to Phaedra's attempted seduction, reported by Hippolytus himself after he has been resurrected as Virbius and relocated in Italy. Elements of Euripides' *Hippolytus*, however, appear in both the Byblis and Myrrha. Finally, within Byblis' story, there are allusions to several other cases of brother-sister incest, which come to Byblis' mind as precedents for her own situation: Saturn and Ops, Ocean and Tethys, Jupiter and Juno, and the sons of Aeolus and their sisters (9.497-499, 507).

¹⁴ Parthenius told Byblis' story in *Pathemata Erotica* 11, and Cinna wrote the famous *Zmyrna*. As Otis puts it (206), "Ovid was here [see in the tragic love stories of Sylla, Byblis, Myrrha, and Proen] dealing with a central topic of Hellenistic and neoteric poetry—a topic that he had already treated at length in his *Heroides*;" he later (217) characterizes the Sylla episode as an "abbreviated" neoteric epyllion, and the Byblis and Myrrha episodes as "complete" or rounded example[s] of the genre." On neoteric epyllia in general see Crump (above, note 3) *passim*, but

mirrors the *Metamorphoses* in several ways: 1) it is a miniature, *carmen perpetuum*, which begins, as does the larger one, with loves of Jupiter and Apollo; 2) Orpheus' stated themes, boys loved by gods, and girls punished for forbidden passions, correspond to major themes in the larger poem; 3) Ovid includes tales about artists, such as Orpheus, and Orpheus in turn tells about Pygmalion; 4) Ovid uses characters, such as Orpheus, as narrators; Orpheus too has a character, Venus, tell a story within his cycle; and 5) Orpheus' cycle is one of a number of groups of stories in the *Metamorphoses*; unlike most of the other groups, however, Orpheus' cycle is not simply a series of tales told under similar circumstances but by different narrators (e.g., the stories of the Minyades, and the tales told in Achelous' cave, but rather it is a sequence of stories shaped by one narrator, and that one the mythical singer *par excellence*.¹⁶

Ovid's introduction to the Byblis episode is brief (7. lines. 9.450-456, compared to Orpheus' 22, 10.298-319) and straight-forward, even understated. The transition from the previous story is genealogical: Cyane bore Melietus twins, Byblis and Caunus. Byblis is an example that girls should love what is allowed; she loved her brother, but not as a sister should. (It is curious that Ovid adopts the version in which Byblis and Caunus are twins, not just siblings, but does not work out nor play up the possibilities of this, nor does he have Byblis do so in her monologues. This is typical of Ovid's restraint in telling this story.)¹⁷ The narrative proper begins with the sympathetic assertion that at first she did not realize what she was doing and did not think it was wrong. In fact, Byblis' whole tragedy is precisely one of self-delusion; she

especially Chapter VI "Catullus and His School" (115-140); Crump asserts (132) that in the *Metamorphoses* Ovid retold all known Latin epyllia (except the *Culex*), and the epyllion-subjects listed in *Eclogue* 6.

¹⁶ Orpheus' divine *amores* are homosexual, in keeping with his own preference and stated role as the founder of homosexual practices in Thrace; on female passion as a major theme of the *Metamorphoses*, see Otis, Chapter VI, especially 166-167, 169, 172-173, and 216.

¹⁷ The group most similar both to Orpheus' cycle and to the larger poem is the Rape of Proserpina sung by the Muse Calliope in Book 5. Like Orpheus she is a singer; in fact he invokes her as *Musa parens* to begin his cycle (10.148). Like Ovid (and Orpheus), Calliope uses the technique of embedding, in fact the deepest instance of embedding in the poem is Arethusa's story of Ceres, within the song sung by Calliope, as it is reported by the Muse to Minerva. Orpheus had alluded to the rape itself in his song to Proserpina in the Underworld (10.28-29). The tale is one told by Ovid, not in the *Metamorphoses*, but in the *Fasti* (4.317-620). The Rape of Proserpina in the *Metamorphoses* is an instance of another sort of narrative self-reflection in the *Metamorphoses*—retelling "differently" myths Ovid told in elegiac works. Galinsky's concept of *referre alter idem* provides a very serviceable alternative to Richard Heinze's long-rejected distinction between "epic" and "elegiac" narrative in the classic *Ovids elegische Erzählung* (Leipzig 1919).

¹⁸ Anderson 450 ad 9.453 comments "In other versions Byblis and Caunus are merely brother and sister; but Ovid's sense of drama hits on a more effective relationship: they are twins (so Nicander)." It is indeed "more effective," but Ovid has, apparently intentionally, not worked it out.

Self-indulgence is assumed by critics to be the Ovidian norm, so that instances of restraint warrant special comment; Galinsky 152 refers to "the unusual reticence and restraint" in the Cephalus and Procris, and Howard Jacobson, *Ovid's Heroides*, (Princeton 1974) 159 praises *Heroides* 11 as "testimony to Ovid's ability, which he did not often exploit, to profit from fact, restraint, and self-control."

never really understands or accepts what she is doing.¹⁸ Ovid's repetition of forms of Byblis' name at the beginning of three consecutive lines of his short introduction (453-455) alerts us to the focus of this tragedy of self-delusion. As Byblis concentrates on herself, (there are a great many first-person and reflexive pronouns and adjectives), so does the narrator. Roughly half of this episode consists of the main character's own words, in two monologues, and a letter which constitutes another monologue, rather than one-half of a dialogue (as is also the case with the comparable love-letters in Ovid's own first fifteen *Heroides*).¹⁹ This procedure has several consequences for the Byblis episode. It stamps the narrative with an Ovidian imprint; the love-letter in particular reminds the reader of the poet's earlier work. Also, casting the episode as a series of monologues makes it static, by concentrating on a single character's thoughts, rather than on interaction between characters. Putting so much of the episode in the character's own words makes it easier to present a sympathetic view of her, but paradoxically, it also allows Ovid to distance himself somewhat, since the rhetorical and melodramatic elements are the speaker's, not the narrator's own.

By contrast, Orpheus' preamble is high pitched and rhetorical. His genealogical transition is ominously contrary to fact: Pygmaion's grandson was Cinyras, who could have been considered *felix*, if he had been childless. Next Orpheus pretends to warn away potentially corruptible listeners (much as the *praeceptor amoris* does at the beginning of *Ars Amatoria* 30; *lira canam, procul hinc natae, procul este parentes* (300)). This seduction by reverse psychology—don't listen to this, it's nasty—is amplified by two conditions which make it clear that Orpheus knows his "warning" will not be heeded: "if you listen to it, don't believe it happened; if you believe it happened, believe also that it was punished (it was, of course, but quite differently from the way one would expect from this prologue, since the punishment comes as a welcome relief to the sinner who has actually prayed for it). This seduction in the guise of a warning reflects Orpheus' own ambivalent attitude towards his subject.²¹ He then smugly congratulates his native land for not spawning such abominations, and willingly concedes to the Panchaeon land its aromatic plants, spices, and flowers, provided that it also produce myrrh, concluding "a

¹⁸Otis 221 speaks of "the relentless process of self-deception."

¹⁹Two of those letters deal with incest; in *Her.* 4 Phaedra addresses an overture to her stepson Hippolytus, and in *Her.* 11 Canace writes to her brother Macareus, about a love which had been consummated, and which, in Ovid's version had been mutual. Jacobson (above, note 17), 163-164, commenting on his discussion of those two in consecutive chapters, explains: "In his *Tristia* (2.383-384) Ovid juxtaposed the tales of Phaedra and Canace. Following his example, so have I, for it is illuminating how Ovid could take two tales of incest and develop them into such strikingly different fashions."

²⁰Otis 227 says, after quoting 10.300-303, "He protests, perhaps, too much." Also, one wonders what prospective audience Orpheus has in mind. His prefatory warning is clearly not intended for the trees which have been drawn to the spot by his singing.

²¹Leach, speaking of the discrepancy between his stated themes and the actual songs, has observed (122) that "Orpheus' thoughts and purpose wander as he sings." The introduction to Myrrha's story can also be viewed as reflecting a hypocritically self-righteous attitude; see Anderson 503 *ad* 304-307 on the puritanical criticism of incest by the pederast Orpheus, and of Orpheus as the type of the "hypocrite moralist."

new tree was not worth so much" (*tanti nova non fuit arbor*, 310) thus reducing Myrrha's tragedy to an aetiological triviality. This hostility will shift to sympathy by the end of the episode when Orpheus refers to the honor and everlasting memorial of the myrrh-tree and its "tears" (501-502). Orpheus next harangues Myrrha herself, to tell her that Cupid refuses responsibility for her passion and blames it on a Fury (Orpheus will revise this too, at the beginning of the Venus and Adonis, when he implicitly blames Venus for Myrrha's passion), and to present the paradox that, while it is a sin to hate a parent, this kind of love is a greater sin (thus beginning the motif of "*pietas* perverted"). He exhorts her, from all her suitors, assembled from all over the East, to pick one for her husband, provided there is one restriction on her choice (311-318). His word-play at the ends of the last two lines (*ex omnibus unum* and *in omnibus unus*), cunningly emphasizes the any one of all she may choose, and the only one she *must* not. Here, in his introduction, is the only time Orpheus directly addresses Myrrha. Ovid, by contrast, shows sympathy and twice apostrophizes Byblis at important junctures in the plot, first, when a servant reports Caunus' rejection (9.581), and again at the end of her wanderings, just before her metamorphosis (649-651).

Orpheus' narrative proper begins with the introduction to Myrrha's opening monologue; unlike Byblis she realizes and resists her foul passion (10.319). This first monologue (320-355) reveals Myrrha's character and thought processes.²² She prays to the gods, and to *Pietas* and the "rights of parents" to help

For the most part, the clinical literature on the psychology of incest sheds little or no light on the episodes of Byblis and Myrrha. S. Kison Weinberg, *Incest Behavior* (New York 1955) is based upon the evidence from 203 cases of detected offenders in Illinois; R.E.L. Masters, *Patterns of Incest* (New York 1963) uses existing case studies to support his argument against the prohibition of incest *per se* (as opposed to rape, child abuse, etc.); Herbert Maisch, *Incest* (Hamburg 1968), is based on various studies in West Germany and the United States; Karin C. Meiselman, *Incest: A Psychological Study of Causes and Effects with Treatment Recommendations* (San Francisco 1978) integrates the previous literature on the psychology of incest with her own findings, based on a "psychotherapy sample" of 58 cases from a Los Angeles psychiatric clinic, gathered during 1973-1976; Robert L. Geiser, *Hidden Victims: The Sexual Abuse of Children* (Boston 1979), includes a section (4-72) on incest; a fairly extensive bibliography can be found in Blair and Rita Ristree, *The Broken Taboo: Sex in the Family* (New York 1979), 293-298.

If one chooses to treat Byblis and Myrrha as "case studies," it is true that parallels with actual incest cases do exist, but they are fairly obvious ones. As case studies, however, Byblis and Myrrha are fundamentally atypical, since they are the initiators of incest. This is rare but not unknown in actual cases, and seems to be more common among sisters than daughters. The reason for the limited usefulness of clinical literature is obvious: Ovid is not presenting case studies of incest. For him, incest is an extreme example of the behavior which female *libido* can prompt (see Otis Chapter VI, *passim*).

Potentially more useful than clinical literature on incest are studies of the incest theme in other works of fiction. Many of these fictional works are referred to in Otto Rank's monumental *Das Incest-Motiv in Dichtung und Sage: Grundzüge einer Psychologie des dichterischen Schaffens* (Leipzig and Vienna 1912, 2nd rev. ed. 1926). There is a brief consideration in the introduction by Donald Webster Cory and R.E.L. Masters to their anthology *Violation of Taboo: Incest in the Great Literature of the Past and Present* (New York 1963). Paul G. Brewster treats *The Incest Theme in Folklore*, *Folklore Fellows Communications* 212 (Helsinki 1972), and includes in an appendix a brief list of literary works on the theme (35-36).

Particularly germane to my discussion of self-reflection on narrative technique and voice in Ovid's two incest tales is John T. Irwin, *Doubling and Incest: Repetition and Revenge: A Specula-*

her resist her *seclus*. The after thought "if it is a *seclus*" leads to a sophistic argument that in fact *Pietas* refuses to condemn this sort of love. Myrrha cites examples of incest between animals and claims there are human societies that permit incest whereby "*pietas* grows with doubled love." Since her very "nearness" is harmful (*proximitas* ambiguously refers to both kinship and geography), she considers leaving the country, "provided I escape my *seclus*," but admits that *malus ardor* keeps her back. Here she could see, touch, speak to, and kiss Cinyras, "if nothing further is granted." At this hint of wishful thinking, she interrupts herself violently: "but you can hope for something further, you *impia virgo*." She asks herself in outrage, "do you want to throw laws and names into confusion, become your mother's rival, your father's mistress, your son's sister, your brother's mother? Aren't you afraid of the Furies and their torches?" Although Myrrha's resistance wavers in the course of this monologue, with its sophistry and wishful thinking, at the beginning, and again at the end, she is herself scarcely less outraged than Orpheus. She uses the same themes in her monologue as Orpheus did in his introduction to it, as if the introduction were a musical overture. The key words *nefas*, *seclus*, and *pietas* all appear, as does a reference to places where incest allegedly is an acceptable practice. Both also associate Furies and their torches with this dire abomination. Orpheus claiming a Fury kindled Myrrha's passion, and Myrrha asking herself if she has no fear of punishment by the Furies, Orpheus' ambivalence in this narrative corresponds to his character's moral dilemma, and together they establish at the outset, in his seductive warning and in her wavering monologue, a recurrent approach-avoidance pattern, which provides the structuring rhythm of the episode.²¹

When Byblis first appears, she is, according to Ovid, ignorant that her displays of affection for Caunus and jealousy over him are other than sisterly.

his Reading of Faulkner (Baltimore 1975). He begins by explaining the book's genesis and presenting its thesis:

One day after teaching Faulkner to a group of undergraduates, I was suddenly struck by the relationship of the story that Quentin Compson tells in *Absalom, Absalom!* to his own story as we know it from *The Sound and the Fury*. The more I thought about it, the more I began to realize that in the relationship between these two books through the figure of Quentin Compson I had found a key to the structure out of which Faulkner's best work is written, for I saw that in that intertextual oscillation between the story a narrator tells and his own story, Faulkner was evoking the oscillating relationship between a writer and his book, evoking it as if kind of incestuous doubling in which the writer, through an oblique repetition, seeks revenge against time.

Considering Ovid's chronological framework and its culmination in an epilogue predicting (rather conventionally) his literary immortality, and in view of Orpheus' special status and prominence among the many-fictional narrators of the *Metamorphoses*, it would seem that some of Levin's insight about Compson and Faulkner could apply to Orpheus and Ovid. Critics have frequently noted the relationship between the stories in Orpheus' cycle and his own story as Ovid tells it in the cycle's frame (for a good survey of these, see Leach 140 n.37). Perhaps the connection between the incest theme and narrative self-reflection is not coincidental.

²¹The remaining instances of the approach-avoidance pattern in the episode are as follows. Myrrha's restlessness during the night after her interview with Cinyras is described by Orpheus explicitly with the simile of a huge tree tottering under ax-blow (332-374). He characterizes her reaction to the nurse's "good news" about the assignation with *discordia mentis*; her emotions are mixed

At this point the narrator's sympathy for his character renders him almost as credulous as she is naive. She does not think she is doing wrong when she kisses her brother too often and puts her arms around his neck *mendacique diu pietatis fallitur umbra* (458-460). Gradually the situation gets worse (*paulatim declinat amor*, 461); she primps before she comes to see him, she wants to look pretty, she is jealous when someone seems prettier (461-463). Even so, Ovid insists that Byblis is not conscious of what she is doing: *sed nondum manifesta sibi est nullumque sub illo igne facit votum* (464-465). But she blazes within, she calls him *dominus*, she wants him to call her "Byblis," not "sister" (465-467). Still, she can repress her desires while awake: *spes tamen obscenas animo demittere non est* *et suo vigilans* (468-469). Then she has an erotic dream about him, and her first monologue (474-516) reacts to that dream. She begins naively asking "What does this mean, this *imago* which I would not want to be real?" She then alternates between fighting against the meaning of the dream, and being won over by it. Fantasy ultimately wins out, and she decides to confess her love to Caunus, in a letter rather than in person.

It is important that Byblis spends much of her monologue figuring out the significance of her dream, whereas Myrrha understands her desires from the start. Myrrha's knowledge prepares her to resist, while Byblis' ignorance makes her vulnerable to fantasy and wishful thinking. From a comparison of the two monologues, it is clear that Byblis' tendency to fantasy and wishful thinking appears throughout, whereas Myrrha has a stronger grip on reality, which can be related to her constant acceptance of responsibility. On the level of plot, this difference contributes to their respective tragedies: self-delusion leads to Byblis' downfall; not even self-knowledge can prevent Myrrha's. Ovid's representation of Byblis as self-deluded contributes to his sympathetic picture of her, whereas in Orpheus' eyes, Myrrha is reprehensible because she does know and understand. Byblis' retreat into fantasy and Myrrha's honest confrontation with reality in each case cause the reader to sense a discrepancy between the character and the narrator's attitude toward her. Byblis does not seem to deserve the sympathy Ovid shows her, except at the very beginning.

infelix non toto pectore sentit
laetitia virgo, praesagaque pectora maerent,
sed tamen et gaudet: tanta est discordia mentis.

(443-445)

Orpheus sums up her approach-avoidance response on the way to Cinyras' bed

quoque suo propior scelere est, magis horret; et ausi
paenitet et velle non cognita posse reverti.

(460-461)

The nurse's intervention makes that avoidance impossible. In the last scene before her transformation, her final desperation finds Myrrha caught in one last approach-avoidance situation, *inter mortisque metus et iacta vitae* (482). Her prayer for relief requests a permanently intermediate status between life and death, which she expresses twice, first as "drive me from both realms (sc. of the living and the dead)" (*ambobus pellite regnis*, 486), then as "deny me life and death through metamorphosis" (*mutataeque mihi vitamque neque negare*, 487).

Orpheus' ambivalence may be due in part to the subject of incest; on this phenomenon see Cory and Masters (above, note 22) 3. Nevertheless, Byblis is also a tale of incest, and Ovid narrates that unambivalently throughout.

before her dream. This sympathy is part of the signature of the poet of the *Heroides*. Admittedly, Ovid provides a foil in the decidedly unsympathetic character of Caunus, whose priggish outburst of concern for his own reputation in response to the slave who delivers Byblis' letter makes Ovid's sympathy for Byblis seem justified. In turn, Myrrha's agonized struggle of conscience seems to deserve sympathy rather than hostility, and indeed Orpheus' initial hostility does turn to sympathy by the end of the episode.

Byblis' precedents for incest (9, 497-499, 507) come from myth and legend, realms of fantasy, and in her examples, the male characters take the initiative. These cases of male initiative perhaps underlie (or at least give expression to) her fantasy of Caunus' possible initiative or interest. Myrrha's emphasis is not on initiative, although in three of the four animal examples she cites the female is grammatically the subject (324-328). In the human sphere the emphasis is on reciprocity in parent-offspring incest, but there too the female (whether *genetrix* or *nata*) is grammatically the subject (331-333). Myrrha draws her examples from more realistic cases, and ones closer to her own situation.

Within Myrrha's tirade occurs the outraged rhetorical question about the confusion of names and relationships her desires would entail (346-348). In Byblis' monologue this idea occurs instead as a wish—how nice *si licet mutato nomine tungi*, she could be his parent's "daughter-in-law" and he could be her parent's "son-in-law" (487-489). With euphemisms such as this Ovid conveys Byblis' self-deception. Myrrha presents her dilemma in a straightforward contrary-to-fact condition: *ergo si filia magis non essem Cinyrae, Cinyrae concubere possem* [337-338]. The phrase *Cinyrae concubere possem* does not mince words. With that frank expression, Orpheus has Myrrha indicate that she knows what she is doing, that she understands exactly what she wants.

Finally, Myrrha ends her opening monologue on a note of true resolve, while Byblis' momentary resolve is broken almost immediately by the thought that, since she might have reciprocated an overture from Caunus, he might reciprocate one from her (511-514). Because of her advantage of self-knowledge, Myrrha is sufficiently detached to address herself frequently in the second person, which Byblis never does. Byblis can not only not dissociate herself from her thoughts, but she also attributes them to Caunus, and bases her actions on that mistaken attribution. Myrrha's ability to discriminate between her desires and reality includes the important recognition of the potency of wishes. She concludes by exhorting herself, "since you have not committed any *nefas*, don't think about it" (351-352). Byblis does not realize the dangers of introspection and of dwelling on her fantasies. In recalling the pleasure of her dream, she invites it to return while averring that she would not do a thing like this while awake (479-480). Later, when Caunus has rejected her overture, she decides to persist, ultimately because she considers what has been thought and said is as good (or bad) as done (626-629).²¹

After the initial long stasis of the two monologues and the letter, the rest of

²¹As Anderson comments (460 ad 9:626-628), "The decisive rationalization is what's done is done."

Byblis' story moves very quickly as Ovid speeds the episode to its now unavoidable conclusion. Once she has deluded herself, Byblis acts with single-minded determination, refusing to take any account of what other characters say or do. Despite her servant's report of Caunus' vehement rejection, she persists. Despite Caunus' revolted flight from her persistence, she pursues him, crazed, throughout Asia Minor. In contrast, the roles of other characters are essential for the development of Myrrha's story, and the explicit passage of time contributes to tension and suspense.

Myrrha's tragedy is not due to her own misunderstanding or ignorance, but to that of others; Orpheus relies on dramatic irony and suspense to create his melodrama of "pietas perverted."²² An interview with Cinyras immediately after her internal debate disturbs Myrrha's hard-won resolve. This episode is brief (356-367), but packed with irony. When Myrrha blushes and weeps in silence at her father's insistence that she choose a husband, he misinterprets this as modesty "believing (*credens*) it is maidenly fear," and in comforting her, he gives her kisses in which she *nimum gaudet*. When he inquires about what sort of man she wants, she responds *similem tibi*. Of course Cinyras misses the irony, but Orpheus makes sure that his listeners do not, saying that Cinyras praises the "misunderstood utterance" (*non intellectam vocem*) and commends her "Always be *tam pia*," which only makes Myrrha more miserably aware of her *scelus*. The next scene takes place in the melodramatically appropriate middle of the night. Myrrha is kept awake by her emotional turmoil (Orpheus uses her patronymic, *virgo Cinyreia*, 369, as a reminder of the cause of her distraught mental state), and decides that suicide is the only way out.

Just before Myrrha hangs herself she says "Farewell, dear Cinyras, and learn (*intellege*) the reason for my death" (380). Not likely, considering the abundance of ironic misunderstanding upon which this episode depends. These words awaken her old nurse, who rescues her. It takes extended interrogation by the nurse to wring from Myrrha what Byblis rashly volunteered in a letter. This episode has a tricolon structure; each of the three sections ends with a reference by the nurse to Myrrha's "father." With this structure and dramatic irony, Orpheus builds suspense and drives the episode toward its inevitable conclusion.

First the nurse begs Myrrha to explain the reason for her suicide attempt, since she knows how to deal with the madness, magic spell, or divine wrath that must have driven Myrrha to that act. There could be no other motive; Myrrha and her family are well—after all *vixit genetrixque paterque!* (401). This elicits a groan from Myrrha which the nurse misunderstands and next ironically assumes that Myrrha is in love. She tells her charge not to worry, she'll help and her father won't find out; the Latin word order—*nec sentiet unquam/hoc pater*—saves the critical word for last (409-410). Myrrha reacts violently, and tells the nurse to go away, or at least stop asking what is the matter, since it is a

²²See Anderson 508 ad 10:377-379 on the involvement of others in Myrrha's tragedy: "Up to this point [i.e. the suicide attempt] she is innocent; she becomes guilty largely through the external pressures applied by her honest Euripidean nurse." (italics mine); 507 ad 359-360 and 509 ad 400-401 on dramatic irony; 513 ad 456-459 on suspense; and 451 ad 9:460 and 507 ad 10:363-367 on Ovid's use of the *pietas* theme.

scelus. The nurse is frightened, but persists; finally, after tremendous effort, Myrrha manages to exclaim only *O . . . felicem coniuge matrem* (422), and then groans. At last the nurse really does understand (423-424): . . . *gelidus matris in artus ossaque—sensit enim—penetrat tremor*. . . . The phrase *sensit enim* is parenthetically emphatic, and is in contrast to her earlier, ironically true *sensimus . . . amas* (408). After the nurse tries to dissuade Myrrha, but realizes she will die if she does not obtain her desire, like Phaedra's nurse in Euripides' *Hippolytus*,⁴⁶ she encourages her charge: "Vive," *ait haec* "potiere tuo"—*et non ausa parente dicere* (429-430). The Latin word order is haltingly suspenseful and emphatic; it also locates the key word *parente* prominently at line's end.

Conveniently it is time for the annual festival in honor of Ceres, during which wives observe ritual abstinence. The nurse seizes this opportunity, and finding Cinyras drunk, describes to him the lovely girl who desires him. To his query about the girl's age, the nurse replies with an irony parallel to Myrrha's own earlier *similem tibi*. The answer—"Par" *ait* "est Myrrha" (441)—is the deciding factor. The nurse reports triumphantly "rejoice, we've won" (*gaude . . . vicimus*, 442-443), but Myrrha's reaction contains as much foreboding as rejoicing (443-445). Orpheus summarizes these mixed emotions epigrammatically as *discordia mentis* (445). Myrrha's ambivalent reaction contributes to the suspense, but it may also parallel Orpheus' own. Although he continues to elaborate the melodrama and will exploit the full horror of the moment of consummation when that time comes, here his sympathy is revealed, when he calls Myrrha *infelix*.⁴⁷ Clearly Myrrha is morally superior to her nurse at least, who has become so involved in her role as go-between that there are no traces of her initial horror, as she triumphantly exhorts Myrrha to rejoice. Juxtaposed to the nurse's *vicimus* is *infelix*, with which Orpheus begins his description of Myrrha's far from unmitigated joy.

The time comes for the assignation—at night, of course. Orpheus elaborates a melodramatic atmosphere and builds up suspense on the way. Nature itself is revolted—the moon flees the sky, black clouds hide the stars. Orpheus singles out for specific mention a constellation illustrative of exemplary devotion of a daughter to her father. There are bad omens—Myrrha stumbles three times, three times a screech owl hoots its cry of doom. Despite this, she goes on, according to Orpheus, the shadows and night diminish her *pudor*, but the other details he provides tend to undermine that assertion, again revealing his own ambivalence as well as hers. She holds the nurse's hand in her left and gropes her way through the darkness with the other. A tricolon of *iam*'s builds suspense (456-457):⁴⁸ *now* she is on the bedroom threshold, *now* she opens the

⁴⁶On the debt to the *Hippolytus* of the Myrrha plot, especially the character of the nurse, see Anderson 501 in his general introduction to that episode, and On 227. On the debts to the Byblis see Anderson 460 *ad* 9.620-621 and On 220, who describes Caunus as "obviously meant to be a kind of Hippolytus."

⁴⁷This passage echoes Ovid's sympathetic description of Byblis just before she appeals to Caunus in person; there too the narrator describes the character's mental state epigrammatically: "*tanta est discordia mentis* (9.630) and calls her *infelix* (632).

⁴⁸Anderson 513 *ad* 456-459 points out that the anaphora of *iam* "heightens our suspense."

door, *now* she is led (note the passive) inside. Her knees knock, her face is pale, her courage is gone. The closer she gets to the *scelus*, the more afraid she becomes; she repents her daring, and wishes she could leave unrecognized. She cannot, since her hesitation and reluctance are overcome from the outside, when the nurse leads her to the bed and hands her over with the ironic words "*accipe*" *dixit*, "*ista tua est, Cinyra*." (463-464).

Orpheus begins the scene of consummation in this way:

Accipit obsceno genitor sua viscera lecto
virgineosque metus levat hortaturque timentem. (465-466)

The first line is so arranged that the *obsceno . . . lecto* encloses the two nouns, and *genitor* is juxtaposed to *sua viscera*.⁴⁹ The gentle thoughtfulness of the next line comes as a surprising contrast, but it does recall Cinyras' earlier fatherly consideration for what he interpreted as "maidenly fear" (*virginis timoris*, 361). This reminiscence of Cinyras' fatherly behavior is given a nasty twist in the next two lines, in which Orpheus' salacious imagination develops the ironic potential of the situation to the utmost:

forsitan aetatis quoque nomine "Filia" dixit:
dixit et illa "Pater," sceleri ne nomina desint. (467-468)

In the next two lines, which state that Myrrha left the bedroom after having committed incest, Orpheus includes three graphic, physical variations to emphasize the incest:

plena patris thalamis excedit et in pia diro
semina fert utero concepta crimina portat. (469-470)

The listener is told that the liaison continued, but is kept in suspense about the exact duration:

postera nox facinus geminat, nec finis in illa est;
cum tandem Cinyras avidus cognoscere amantem
post tot concubitus. (471-473)

The duration is left indefinite, but the words *tandem* and *tot* are surely exaggerations (we were told earlier that the ritual period of abstinence lasted nine days). When Cinyras discovers the girl in his bed is his daughter, he draws his sword, but Myrrha escapes, abetted by the same shadows and night that conspired in her downfall.⁵⁰ Nature aids her escape, an unnamed deity grants her final prayer, and Orpheus concludes on a sympathetic note.

Wandering weary and pregnant, Myrrha prays in desperation between fear of death and disgust for life; first she acknowledges responsibility, . . . *merui nec triste recuso supplicium*. . . . (484-485). In contrast, Byblis refuses responsibility even for the failure of her first overture to Caunus. She will not admit it was wrong, just badly managed—the timing was wrong, she should have gone

⁴⁹Anderson 514 *ad* 564-566 comments on this framing effect.

⁵⁰Myrrha's escape under cover of darkness has verbal echoes in the passage in which she went to the assignation: for echoes of *Myrrha fugit tenebris et caecae munere noctis intercepta neci est* (476-477), cf. *it tamen, et tenebrae minuant noxae atra pudorem* (454) and the reference to the *caecum iter* (456).

Also, Orpheus' description of Cinyras as *avidus cognoscere amantem* (472), just before he discovers his lover's identity, has an echo in Ovid's description of Orpheus as *metuens avidusque vivendi* (567), just before he turns to look back at Eurydice.

in person, she should have heeded the bad omens, it might have been the letter-bearer's fault (but Ovid had already told us *... apta minister tempora nactus adit traditque latentia verba*, 572-573), providing the reader more evidence²⁹ of Byblis' self-delusion). Myrrha takes full responsibility, even though she was in large part the victim of a pandering nurse and a father willing to sleep with a girl his daughter's age. Moreover, Myrrha has shame. Shortly after Orpheus' lurid account of her incestuous consummation, Myrrha utters her prayer for suitable punishment, scrupulously worded to express the concern that she contaminate neither the living nor the dead; this is comparable, in its own way, to her great-grandfather Pygmalion's carefully worded prayer to Venus (for a woman *like* his statue.³⁰) The Pygmalion episode immediately precedes that of Myrrha. Orpheus emphasizes the contrast between those two characters and their ethical predicaments, so it is left to the reader to note the similarity.³²

Despite Byblis' self-delusion, Ovid remains sympathetic to the end. Her crazed pursuit of Caimus brings her near Mt. Cragos, home of the Chimera. Ovid addresses her sympathetically as she collapses there:

defecunt silvae, cum tu lassata sequendo
concidis et dura positis tellure capillis.

Bybli, races fonsdesque tuo premis ore caducas. (O 649-650)

The local nymphs' efforts to console her have no more effect on her than any other action by any other character. Out of frustration³³ and grief she weeps herself into a spring, for which the nymphs dig a channel. Ovid concludes the episode with an aetiology—in that place, under a dark oak, a spring flows even now (*nunc quoque*, 664), which *nomen habet domina* (665).

Whereas Ovid remains sympathetic, Orpheus becomes so. As Myrrha flees for her life, Orpheus' ambivalence turns to sympathy, especially in his description of her metamorphosis into a myrrh tree, which he concludes by asserting:

est honor lacrimis, stillataque robore murra
nomen erile tenet nulloque tacebitur aevo. (O 501-502)

Orpheus' aetiological conclusion is actually more sympathetic than Ovid's. Orpheus' phrase *nomen erile tenet* is reminiscent of Ovid's *nomen habet dominae*, but Orpheus goes further in claiming myrrh will never be forgotten, while Ovid only observes that the spring Byblis still flows at the present time. Furthermore, as Orpheus expresses it, myrrh is not simply a relic of Myrrha, but it is also an honor for her. This conclusion, particularly the assertion *est honor lacrimis* (501, referring to the myrrh-resin) is quite different in tone and

²⁹ The similarity between the two is thematic—the importance of a carefully worded prayer. A more obvious, verbal, similarity exists between Pygmalion's prayer for a wife (*... charitae te, virginem*, 276, and Myrrha's wish for a husband *... uultum tuum*, 364. Anderson 503 calls attention to this similarity in his comment on the phrase *semper ubi* "Myrrha conceals her desire" by the ambiguity of this phrase just as Pygmalion had earlier at 276.

³⁰ As Ois remarks 324, "Iphis is the obvious contrast to Byblis, Pygmalion to Myrrha." Galinsky 88-89 gives an excellent selection of the contrasts between Byblis and Myrrha; he points out the contrasts between Myrrha and Pygmalion (89), but also points out the similarities of Myrrha to Byblis.

³¹ Ois 218 asserts that "The metamorphosis is represented as the direct consequence of her sexual frustration."

content from his initial sarcastic insensitivity that *tanti nova non fuit arbor* (310).

In contrast with the initial stasis of Byblis' monologues and letter, Ovid finishes the story quickly, and he leaves it abruptly and artificially in his transition to Iphis and Ianthe on Crete (9,666-668).³⁴ Orpheus, by contrast, moves more gradually and naturally to the next part of his cycle, from Myrrha to her son Adonis (born after her transformation), to Venus' love for Adonis. At the beginning and the end of the tale of Venus and Adonis, Orpheus reminds the reader of the incest which produced Adonis: when Adonis is gored by the boar, he is called *iuuenis Cinyreus* (717), and Venus herself refers to him as *Cinyreus heros* (730), as she transforms his remains into his memorial, the anemone. In introducing the love of Venus for Adonis, Orpheus refers to the swift passage of time after Adonis' birth until the time when *ille sorore/natus avoque* ... *... iam placet et Veneri matrique uidescitur ignes* (520-521, 524). Here Orpheus is clearly sympathetic toward Myrrha, since vengeance implies a victim and a culprit responsible for that victim's suffering; now Orpheus implicitly blames Venus for Myrrha's passion, whereas initially he had claimed that Cupid had refused the blame, attributing it to a Fury.³⁵ This change in detail reflects Orpheus' change of attitude in the course of narration.

Perhaps the tale of Myrrha is necessarily more horrible than that of Byblis, since the former actually did commit incest.³⁶ Even so, Orpheus' narrative techniques exploit this inherent horror to the fullest. He composes a melodrama of suspense and irony, a true drama, in which the actions of the other characters (the nurse, Cinyras) actually do alter the development of the plot.³⁷ Although Myrrha's moral struggle is ultimately settled by forces outside her control, at the outset Orpheus harshly condemns her, and only implicitly is he won over at the end in spite of his bias. Morally Byblis is Myrrha's inferior, yet Ovid is able to present her in a far more sympathetic light by using interjections at key points, by a credulity closely paralleling his character's naiveté, and by the presentation of much of this tale of self-delusion in the character's own words. Ovid's own treatment of Byblis as a study in self-delusion prepares us to recognize and appreciate Myrrha's excruciating self-knowledge and moral awareness, which transcend the narrow prejudices and initial hostility of the narrator of her story, Orpheus.

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³⁴ Ovid's introductory transition into the Byblis story is also artificial and abrupt; the implication would seem to be that he wanted to tell this story.

³⁵ According to Anderson 520 *ad* 524, versions of Apollodorus and Hyginus attribute Myrrha's passion to the anger of Venus, and Hyginus rounds off by pointing out that Adonis avenged his mother by hurting Venus.

³⁶ Ois 226 remarks that Ovid's "emphasis is on the horror of Myrrha's act (after all Myrrha consummated her incestuous desire as Byblis did not) and on the special nuance which this gives to her metamorphosis."

³⁷ Ois 221 claims of the Byblis episode that "It has all the aspects of a true drama. One step leads fatally to the next." My conception of "drama" here is, however, closer to Galinsky's, when he contrasts the episodes by calling attention to the role of other characters, and the amount of confrontation between pairs of them, in the Myrrha (88).