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Title of extract: **Ovid, Vergil and Augustus**

Name of Author: **Galinsky, G.K.**

Title/Author of book/edition (if applicable): **Ovid's Metamorphoses: An Introduction to the Basic Aspects. Galinsky, G.K.**

Name of Visual Creator or other acknowledgement (if applicable):

Journal details –title/Vol/Year (if applicable):

Publisher: **Basil Blackwell**

Pages scanned: **210 - 265**

Course of Study (Module name and number): **Muses' Playground CLCS5001**

Name of Designated Person

authorising scanning: *E.L. Harris*

Date authorised: 05.04.17.

Moodle/Powerpoint

CHAPTER FIVE

Ovid, Vergil, and Augustus

I: 'AUGUSTANISM' AND 'ANTI-AUGUSTANISM'

Perhaps no other period of Roman literature is as much in need of a hermeneutics of criticism as that which has been discussed most, i.e. the Augustan age. Therefore, before we try to assess Ovid's attitude towards things Augustan as it appears from the *Metamorphoses*, it is important that we set it into a defined perspective, especially as the terms 'Augustan' and 'anti-Augustan' are another pair of facile labels that have been overused with uncritical looseness. There are certain guideposts which suggest the appropriateness of a more circumspect and careful use of 'Augustanism' and 'anti-Augustanism', especially with reference to Ovid.

In the first place, we should not forget that some of our critical approaches are inherently relative, because we are influenced by the prevailing *Zeitgeist* and may look at certain aspects of Ovid's poetry with far different eyes than did his contemporaries, including Augustus. This does not mean that some passages in the *Metamorphoses*, such as the Cypus episode (15.565-621), cannot be read as subtle, ironic allusions to the princeps.¹ They may—or may not—have been read that way by Ovid's Roman readers and even by Augustus, although Ovid complains in *Tristia* 2.77-80 that Augustus apparently did not read much of his poetry. When it comes to evaluating Ovid's intent in such passages and the Roman reader's understanding of it, we are dealing with nuances. Their appreciation is not helped by the identification, which is convenient rather than precise, of political attitudes with literary ones. Our recent and ongoing experience with authoritarian regimes and ideologies and with the attempted manipulation of literature and public opinion has made us sensitive to presumed analogies in antiquity. Since the

Spartans produced no great literature, the search has stopped, for all practical purposes, with the reign of Augustus. While the attempt to find ancient analogies to modern phenomena is a valid part of the classicist's task, we must guard against reversing the procedure in the process by projecting modern analogies back into antiquity. As for the *Metamorphoses* specifically, we must not assume that Augustus or the Roman public scrutinized them for 'anti-Augustan' allusions as anxiously as modern scholars do today. Nor does such Ovidian irony, which must be viewed in the context of his use of irony throughout the *Metamorphoses*, warrant the heavyhanded interpretation that it expressed deep-seated political convictions on Ovid's part.

This suggests a second guideline for the criticism of Augustan literature. We cannot go beyond the ancient evidence to determine the princeps' reaction to a work like the *Metamorphoses*. The evidence is limited, and the rest is mere guesswork and speculation. It is fine for the scholar to engage in the latter, so long as he does not try to pass off his self-assumed role *in loco principis* as the real thing. The influential picture which Sir Ronald Syme, for instance, has developed of Augustus' view of Ovid is compelling in its simplicity and remarkable for the neglect of much of the primary evidence. 'Ovid was a disgrace. He had refused to serve the State . . . Augustus was vindictive,'² and that was all it took to hustle the poet off into exile. Apodictic assertions like these have provided a great impetus to Ovid's anti-Augustan career in contemporary scholarship. Considering that the *Art of Love*, the ostensible *carmen* (and lesser of the two reasons) that led to Ovid's banishment, had been published nine years before the event whereas the *Metamorphoses* were almost finished in A.D. 8, more than one scholar has suggested that it was really the *maius opus* (*Trist.* 2.63) which exhausted the Emperor's patience.³ Even if this is an extreme view, the quest for the anti-Augustanism of the poem continues.

Our knowledge of Augustus' literary preferences comes mostly from Suetonius, in particular his *Life of Augustus* and the fragments of his *Life of Horace*. A passage from the former has become the *locus classicus* for the Emperor's view of literature (89.2):

In reading the writers of both tongues there was nothing for which he looked so carefully as precepts and examples

instructive (*salubria*) to the public or to individuals; these he would often copy word for word and send to members of his household, or to his generals and provincial governors, whenever any of them required admonition.

This reflects Augustus' attachment to the utilitarian and pragmatic bias toward literature that was common enough in the Republic, and Augustus was a traditionalist. In spite of the numerous *sententiae* for which Ovid was much quoted in later Roman literature, this was clearly not the type of literature he produced. Augustus' concern for his own treatment in literature also is pertinent to the *Metamorphoses* (89.3):

He took offence at being made the subject of any composition except in serious earnest and by the most eminent writers, often charging the praetor not to let his name be cheapened in prize declamations.

There is no question that Ovid was a most eminent writer, but it remains to be seen whether he treated Augustus seriously in the *Metamorphoses* or whether his flattery of the princeps would have seemed anything but serious to his contemporaries.

Two questions derive from these passages that we must discuss briefly to do justice to the problem. The first is Augustus' reaction to the refusal of eminent authors to write the kind of value-oriented literature he preferred. The second is the extent of his insistence on seriousness. Did he have a fanatically serious disposition that was averse to jokes at his own expense and would suggest a gradual penning up of resentment against light-hearted *littérateurs*, which he finally vented by meting out a disproportionately harsh sentence to their most prominent representative? Let us turn to this second question first.

The important point is not to take the *Metamorphoses* out of context. If they contain pinpricks at Augustus, they are quite minor compared to the heavy fare of personal detraction which the emperor, due to his position, had to live with and, in fact, managed to live with. Suetonius devotes an entire chapter (51) to the 'numerous and strong evidences' of Augustus' clemency and moderation *vis-à-vis* badmouthing, literary attacks, and outright assassination threats.

He mentions the case of one Aelianus, who was accused of habitually 'expressing a bad opinion of Caesar'. Augustus angrily turned on the accuser and asked him to prove the point: *hoc mihi probes*. It is an apt response also to those who perceive, on largely unprovable premises, a criticism of Augustus in the most diverse episodes of the *Metamorphoses*. Augustus, Suetonius continues, 'made no further inquiry either at the time or afterwards'. The Emperor's lack of vindictiveness about personal attacks is illustrated even better by his reply to Tiberius, who was rather more indignant about such matters (Suet., *Aug.* 51.3). 'My dear Tiberius,' wrote Augustus in return, 'do not be carried away by the ardor of your youth in this matter, or take it too much to heart that anyone speak evil of me; we must be content if we can stop anyone from doing evil to us.' This is the advice of a seasoned ruler, which Augustus was at the time when Ovid wrote the *Metamorphoses*.

There is more evidence. Whatever Tacitus might say, freedom of expression certainly was not dead in Augustan Rome. In another chapter (54), Suetonius mentions several examples of *libertas* and insolence (*contumacia*) on the part of senators *vis-à-vis* Augustus, only to conclude that no one suffered for it. Augustus was bothered, as is evident from the subsequent chapters in Suetonius (55 and 56), by lampoons and jests of the scurrilous and spiteful kind. He took pains to reply to them even publicly, but he did not abrogate to the Romans the right to criticize him; in fact, he even vetoed a bill to check freedom of speech (*licentia*) in wills (56.1), which often served the Romans to express their pent-up feelings about public men and affairs. He was sensitive to the opinions his friends expressed of him in their wills and obviously weighed their words carefully (66.4), but this is a special case and we cannot simply apply it to his reading of the *Metamorphoses*. Finally, Suetonius makes it a point to mention that Augustus' leniency in such matters extended even to his slaves (77.1), who were punished not nearly as severely as they would have been by other masters for personal insults. All this suggests that Augustus was used to every kind of personal criticism—subtle and broad, literary and verbal—and was not easily disconcerted by it.

What is more, he had a great appreciation of humor, jesting, and even literary humor and self-irony. There was, as Suetonius puts it, 'no form of gaiety in which he did not indulge'—*nullo denique*

genere hilaritatis abstinuit (Aug. 98.3). Augustus' penchant for *iocus* therefore is a recurring theme of Suetonius' account. It is a *iocus* ranging from simple jesting and *bon mots* (53.2) and the 'festive spirit' of Roman holidays (75) to literary wit (85.2, 98.4) and involving even his own position and apotheosis. 'My generosity in gambling', Augustus wrote the somewhat dour Tiberius, 'will exalt me to immortal glory' (*ad caelestem gloriam efferet* 71.3). Even when he was stricken with terminal illness, he demanded *iocandi licentiam* at a dinner party (98.3), played literary games with his friends as Ovid did, laughed and *in iocos effusus est* (98.4). The rest is history: Augustus looking at himself in the mirror on his deathbed as if he were an actor, asking his friends whether he had played the comedy (*mimum*) of life well, and answering his own question with a standard comic tag (Suet., Aug. 99.1). All this makes us doubt that the *imperator ludens* would have considered the *poeta ludens* of the *Metamorphoses* as an 'anti-Augustan', or levity as un-Augustan, quite aside from the fact that Ovid's total silence about the *Metamorphoses* in connection with the causes of his exile must be considered conclusive.

What was Augustus' reaction to poets who refused to write his kind of poetry? He did, to say the least, not make it overly difficult for Horace, Propertius, and even Ovid to go on writing the sort of poetry they preferred. The *recusatio* poems they wrote do not tell us exactly how strong the pressure was on them to write on 'grand' themes. That the mere writing of apologetic poems, however, was accepted and sufficed as an answer suggests that Augustus was not a censorious zealot in these matters. 'No poet', as Oscar Wilde has observed, 'sings because he must sing. At least no great poet does,'⁴ and we may credit Augustus with that much insight. More importantly, the *recusatio* poems, at least in the case of Ovid, are the result of literary motivation rather than imperial pressure. Ovid writes *recusatio* poems not because he refuses an actual request by Augustus or Maecenas, but because he wants to demonstrate that he can write *recusatio* poems, a genre that has Hellenistic origins.⁵ The same motivation may well have been behind some of Horace's and Propertius' *recusatio* poems.

The most direct piece of evidence we have of Augustus' exerting some pressure on a poet ultimately leads to the same result. It is found in one of Augustus' letters to Horace, which is quoted by

Suetonius.⁶ There Augustus complains that Horace has hardly made mention of him in the *Epistles*. The way Suetonius sees it, Augustus thus forced (*expressit*) Horace to write his famous *Letter to Augustus* (*Epist.* 2.1). This extraneous explanation, however, is totally inadequate as it accounts neither for the genesis of this important and complex literary document nor for its character and aims. This points up the central issue which any hermeneutic approach to Augustan literature must take into account: the primacy of literary over ideological considerations. It is all the more distressing, therefore, that especially in recent times when the techniques of literary criticism have made a promising start in classical scholarship, a probing of the ideological stance of the Augustan poets often takes precedence to an evaluation of their literary achievement and artistry.

The usage of the terms 'Augustan' and 'anti-Augustan' is the semantic result of this misplaced emphasis. For good reasons, the term 'Augustan' found its way into the post-classical literatures because it connoted a high point of literary sensibilities, and not political/ideological orientation, even though Augustans commonly preferred political order because it was essential to undisturbed creativity. It is to this meaning that we should return because it is based on a true, even if sometimes intuitive, evaluation of the character of Augustan literature in Rome. Vergil, who devoted more poetry than any other poet to the exposition of Augustan values, is an excellent case in point. His choice of Aeneas as the hero of his epic afforded him, by ancient and any standards, an almost unprecedented creative opportunity. Augustus' desire to have Vergil write an epic in which the *gens Iulia* figured prominently is of subordinate significance compared to the literary, esthetic, and psychological novelty of the *Aeneid*, which is explained as little as Horace's *Letter to Augustus* by this particular external impulse. Besides, Vergil's concern, which accounts for the timelessness of his epic, is with the human condition even more than with the Roman destiny, although the two are intertwined.⁷ That this larger aspect of the *Aeneid*, including, as it does, Vergil's emphasis on the price of suffering that has to be paid in the pursuit of great achievement, has come to be considered as 'anti-Augustan' is a sad comment on the inadequacy of a confined critical perspective and falls short even of providing any valid insights into the poet's attitude towards Augustus. As for Horace, the great bulk of his poetry is occasional and personal, and

even his political odes have, for good reasons, received more attention *qua* poetry than *qua* ideology. Similarly, Livy, who cherished many of the same values as the emperor, 'is not an Augustan in any significantly political sense'.⁸

That is precisely the point. We will never be able to explain—and this should be the first task of literary critics or scholars—the Augustan writers' literary eminence and appeal to later readers if we try to read too much ideological or political significance into their works. The fate of Propertius' fourth book of Elegies provides another instructive example. For a long time, it was considered as a forced concession to 'Augustan' sentiment. Then its supposedly pervasive 'anti-Augustanism' was discovered, and only recently scholars have begun to look more closely at its properly poetic structure, artistry, design, and affinity with Propertius' earlier elegies. But it was in its application to Ovid, the most neglected of the Augustan poets, that the binary ideological approach has had the most spectacular and heavy-handed consequences, producing—with occasional *bouleversements*—two diametrically opposed Ovids even in the *Metamorphoses*. Most assuredly, however, it has not been this posited war between these two Ovids that has captured the imagination of the readers of the *Metamorphoses* and endeared the poem to vast audiences through the ages. Nor does the tortuous and contrived explication and diffuse qualification of the presumed conflict between the 'Augustan' and the 'anti-Augustan' Ovid shed any light on the enjoyment that he wanted his readers to derive from his telling of the myths, let alone on his central achievement of reviving myth. There is nothing *per se* objectionable to constructing theses about secondary aspects of the poem. When, however, they need to be supported, because of their awkward and artificial nature, by banal and unsupported value judgements such as that 'the "problem" of Ovid is really why a good poet could write such an unconscionable amount of bad poetry'⁹ it is time to re-examine the methodology and, if necessary, discard it. The 'problem', in other words, may have been created by us, and not by Ovid, and we may have to start reading the *Metamorphoses* and, for that matter, other Augustan poetry, from premises that are more centrally related to the poet's primary aims and achievement.

To offer a more detailed hermeneutic précis would be beyond the scope of this book. Before we turn to some additional criteria, which

apply more specifically to the *Metamorphoses* than to most of Augustan poetry, let us summarize the basic inadequacies of the political and ideological usage of the terms 'Augustan' and 'anti-Augutan' in literary jargon. First and foremost, they implicitly postulate the primacy of ideological and political values over literary and aesthetic values in Augustan literature, a primacy that is flatly contradicted by the ancient evidence, including the texts themselves. The method further ignores the relevant attitudes on the part of Augustus and its own historical limitations. Used as a schematic *modus interpretandi* and without discretion, it has detracted much needed attention from and failed to produce significant insights into the central, literary qualities of its objects.

2: OVID'S 'AENEID'

Still, as is commonly known, Ovid's temperament was not Augustan in the sense that he shared the Emperor's, Vergil's, Livy's, and Horace's veneration of the Roman past and Augustus' stubbornly idealistic attempts at a moral reconstruction of the Roman people. He was born too late, as we remarked earlier, to have any sincere appreciation of what is usually called the Augustan program. He is, if we need a label, un-Augustan and indifferent to the moral and political values propagated at his time. These values to a great extent found their most splendid poetic expression in the *Aeneid*, although that is, as we have seen, not the only aspect of Vergil's epic. Ovid's adaptation of the myth of Aeneas in *Metamorphoses* 13.623–14.608 therefore provides the best focus for his attitudes. Consequently, we will analyze it in some detail to determine whether and to what extent Ovid debunks the Vergilian myth or destroys its basic meaning and seriousness.

Before we do so, we again must be careful not to view this part of the poem in artificial isolation; but in its natural context, i.e. the *Metamorphoses* in general and Ovid's techniques and attitudes in the other parts of the poem. Although Ovid in Books 12–15 for the first time includes many myths that stood in a special relation to Roman history, the tone and spirit of the narrative are not different from those in the earlier books of the *Metamorphoses*. His description of *Fama* (12.39–64), ingeniously indirect and, for once, less

exoteric and grotesque in comparison to the Vergilian 'model' (*Aen.* 4.173-90), his brilliant manipulation of rhetoric for character portrayal in the debate of Odysseus and Ajax (13.1-398), his amusing treatment of the Cyclops and Galatea theme, the full-blown literary parody of the *exclusus amator* and the paraclausithyron in the story of Iphis and Anaxarete (14.698-758), his treatment of Hecuba's transformation in a spirit entirely different from his Hellenistic sources (13.558-75), the charm of the Pomona-Vertumnus tale (14.609ff.), his humanization of Vergil's Sibyl (14.101-53), and even the entire speech of Pythagoras—these are only a few examples which demonstrate amply that neither was Ovid's 'delight in invention flagging' or 'the quality of his poetry declining', nor did he make 'a conscious effort to raise the poem into a "higher" strain' or was he 'striving for greater sublimity of subject and treatment'.¹⁰ In Books 12-15 we find the same Ovid whom we encountered earlier. His attitude of play and irony in particular should not be taken out of context and presented as applying uniquely to his adaptations of Vergilian themes or his treatment of Augustus.

Still, one may ask whether Ovid's decision to treat Roman national myths and Caesar's deification on the same basis as a multitude of Greek myths does not *ipso facto* constitute a diminution of the former. Does the procedure not imply that Ovid considered Aeneas' descent to Hades or the apotheosis of Romulus to be on the same level as stories such as those of Salmacis or Byblis? In answer, we should again be careful not to read ideological criticism into the essentially literary strategy of the *Metamorphoses*. For as we have noted on many occasions, the *Metamorphoses* represent the most massive and consummate celebration of *variatio*, which is a literary principle. The juxtaposition of the serious with the comic, and the sublime with the ridiculous does not reflect the poet's ideologically inspired value judgement on these myths or his intention to reduce them to the same schema, but the contrast effect that is achieved by their collocation is absolutely essential to Ovid's primary and literary concern, that of variety. The phrase *perpetuum carmen*, with all its connotations, programmatically establishes in the poem Ovid's preoccupation with *literary* ideology and concerns. His adaptation of the Aeneas myth, an important myth that at least had to be mentioned if he wanted to bring the poem *ad mea tempora*, therefore presents itself as the same literary problem which he faced in his

adaptations of other myths also, i.e. to tell it *aliter*. When Ovid thus plays with this myth as he plays with all others, his treatment of it *sub specie ludi* cannot *a priori* be construed as a depreciation of the Vergilian version. Ovid simply tells this story, as he tells all others, in other ways than did some of his predecessors.

Yet, as we saw earlier, an essential difference remains. In contrast to Vergil—and Aeschylus and Pindar, for that matter—Ovid did not believe in the traditional verity of myth. Perhaps the most startling expression of this attitude, in the context of 'Augustan' themes, occurs in Ovid's *apologia* to the Emperor, *Tristia* 2. He asks Augustus to read his *maius opus*. The phrase is a deliberate echo of Vergil's proem to the second half of the *Aeneid* (7.44). The poem, Ovid continues, is full of 'beings changed into forms that are not to be believed', and in the next distich he goes on to say that the same *Metamorphoses* are not devoid of praises of Augustus (*Trist.* 2.63-6):

inspice maius opus, quod adhuc sine fine tenetur,
in non credendos corpora versa modos:
invenies vestri praeconia nominis illic,
invenies animi pignora certa mei.

Do *Metamorphoses* 13.623-14.608 and some of his other Vergilian adaptations in the poem provide a clear indication that Ovid was concerned more with destroying the verity of Vergil's Aeneas myth than with merely telling the *Aeneid aliter*? Does he present especially its central character in such a way that would offend the sensibilities of devout readers of Vergil's epic? These are some of the fundamental questions that we must keep in mind in the course of our analysis.

It is obvious that Ovid drastically shortens Vergil's account. What takes up a whole book in the *Aeneid* often is compressed into a few lines by Ovid, such as *Met.* 14.78-81 (*Aeneid* IV) and 14.82-90 (*Aeneid* V). *Metamorphoses* 14.448-53 and 569-73 summarize most of Vergil's *maius opus*, the second half of the *Aeneid*. Ovid avoids repeating Vergil. Less frequently, he expands some episodes, such as Anius' hospitality, for which incidents in the *Aeneid* provided a starting point. Finally, and less frequently again, when he decides to treat an event, such as the story of Achaemenides, at similar length to Vergil's, he varies enough of the detail and tone to make it

different. These three techniques—compression, expansion, and changed emphasis—are the same which characterize, for instance, his adaptation of Callimachus in the *Erysichthon*. They are Ovid's basic literary tools. Let us proceed to the relevant examples.

Ovid wisely decided not to compete with Vergil's lengthy and dramatic account of Aeneas' flight from Troy. Instead, he summarizes it (13.623–7), but even in this condensation, the hallmark of Vergil's episode, Aeneas' *pietas*, is clearly preserved. *Pius*, in fact, is not merely the epithet of Aeneas as it is in the *Aeneid*, but becomes a synonym for him (13.626). The phrase *sacra, et sacra altera, patrem* (624) is a brilliant epitome of the religious meaning of *pietas*. At the same time, Ovid's desire to tell the story *aliter* is reflected by his allusion (626) to a tradition, different from that used by Vergil, according to which the Greeks granted Aeneas an honorable departure from Troy with whatever possessions he cared to choose, and he chose his father. Ovid's constant endeavor to *referre idem aliter* also leads him to pass over the story of Polydorus without narrating the latter's metamorphosis (628–30), quite in contrast to Vergil (*Aen.* 3.37–68). Instead, as we saw earlier, Ovid chose to incorporate elements of this Vergilian episode into his account of the oak tree attacked by Erysichthon (8.761–73).¹¹ The procedure is typical of most of his 'borrowings' of Vergilian phrases and even motifs: he prefers to use them in contexts that are far different from those in which the Vergilian originals occur.¹² This, too, is the result of *variatio* and is one of the reasons why Ovid in his *Aeneid* is keeping direct imitation of Vergilian episodes to a minimum.

To reinforce the point, Ovid dwells on the metamorphosis theme in *Met.* 13.623–14.608 a great deal more emphatically than in many other parts of the poem. It seems to provide him with a thematic justification for treating the Aeneas myth as he does. Of course this unusual prominence of the metamorphosis theme is only a means to avoid the impossible competition with the ultimately inimitable *Aeneid*, and not the result of Ovid's concern for the stated subject of his poem, because more often than not, metamorphosis is not the most important subject of his stories. But in his *Aeneid*, it regains its eminence as an actual subject and as a leitmotif. This is exemplified by Ovid's first extended version of a Vergilian episode, the Aeneads' stay at Delos (13.632–704). They encounter king Anius, as they did in the *Aeneid* (3.79–120). Whereas Vergil, however, only

briefly refers to the old friendship between Anius and Anchises and to Anius' hospitality (*Aen.* 3.82–3) in order to concentrate on Aeneas' prayer to Apollo (3.84–9), the god's response (90–8), and Anchises' exegesis of the oracle (102–17), Ovid's procedure is the total opposite. He summarizes the oracle in utmost brevity (13.677–9), and the real function of the *Phoebi sacerdos*, as whom Anchises addresses Anius (640), is to tell the story of the metamorphosis of his daughters (644–674). Thematically this story is not unrelated to the fate of Aeneas and his Trojans because Anius' daughters also were victimized by Agamemnon and the Greek army. The relation of the tale to Aeneas is strengthened by Anius' regret that there was no Aeneas or Hector to help his children. This summary of Aeneas' prowess as a warrior (13.665–6) is adapted, typically enough, from another context of the *Aeneid* (11.288–91). It gives Ovid the opportunity to mention, in his own way, a traditional and essential characteristic of the Trojan although, true to the conciseness of his presentation of Aeneas, he does not develop it in detail.

In the subsequent and final part of the Anius episode, Ovid's technique is similar to what we have observed so far. For the most part (13.681–701) it is the description of the art work on a mixing bowl given by Anius to Aeneas. Ovid's principal motivation was to show, as he had in the Phaethon and Arachne episodes, that he could handle the genre of *ekphrasis* as well as any other. In addition, however, the themes of the story that is represented have some pertinence to the situation of Aeneas and his people.¹³ It is the story of a city afflicted by disaster; although the city is Thebes and the disaster is the plague—Ovid's starting point may have been Vergil's account, which Ovid omits, of the plague that struck the Trojans after they left Anius and landed in Crete (*Aen.* 3.137–46)—the scenes of grief and mourning are reminiscent of Troy and its destruction. The city survives because of the *pietas erga patriam* of two girls and so, even if differently, does Troy. The story ends with the metamorphosis of the ashes of the girls into two young men, and it seems likely that Ovid invented this particular version to stress the aspect of regeneration.

This attempt to create some thematic affinity with the situation of Aeneas contrasts effectively with the near total absence of any such endeavor in other stories, which are not inspired by the *Aeneid* and with which Ovid intersperses his sketch of Aeneas' voyage from

Troy to Rome. Whether these interruptions amount to a deliberate deflation of Vergil's epic is a separate question to which we will return later. At this point, it may suffice to note that this contrast is another effective form of *variatio* and that the procedure to focus on the titular protagonist of a story with varying degrees of intensity is by no means restricted to Ovid's *Aeneid*. It is exemplified very well, for instance, by the *Erysichthon*.

Ovid moves Aeneas out of the picture for more than three hundred lines (13.730–14.74) to narrate the stories of Scylla, Galatea, Glaucus, and Circe. In keeping with the emphasis on metamorphosis in this part of the poem, he describes the metamorphoses in these stories with a wealth of graphic detail. Before he drops Aeneas, Ovid summarizes in nineteen lines (13.711–29) the hero's wanderings from Crete to Sicily, which took up almost 450 lines in Vergil (*Aen.* 3.121–569). The procedure, however, is not inappropriate especially to the third book of the *Aeneid* because Vergil there followed it also when he selectively adapted the massive tradition that had accumulated about Aeneas' voyage. Vergil's pronounced emphasis, however, on the divine guidance of the Trojans also becomes a victim of Ovid's compression of the story and this requires additional comment.

We saw that in the Anius episode Ovid shrank the prayer of Aeneas to the deity (*Aen.* 3.84–9) and the god's awesome reply (*Aen.* 3.90–8) into a minimal summary. The same is true of his treatment of the prophecy of Helenus (*Met.* 13.722–3; *Aen.* 3.374–462). There are good literary reasons for it; Ovid strives to avoid repeating the exact details of the mythological versions of Vergil or any other writer, and when he uses a Vergilian version he prefers to place it into a different context. This is the case with Helenus' prophecy, which Ovid integrates into the speech of Pythagoras (15.438–9) even though, true to his usual tendency, he drastically shortens it anyway. But Ovid's de-emphasis of the religious and the numinous function of the gods also is a factor. Again this is characteristic of the *Metamorphoses* in general and not only of Ovid's adaptation of Vergilian material. Frequent as the gods' intervention is in Ovid's poem, he minimizes or humanizes scenes such as the supplication of them and, even more, their hearing of human prayers or providing spiritual guidance. Since one of the main impulses for the *Metamorphoses* was Ovid's desire to create a mythological counterpart of epic

length to the *Aeneid*, his portrait of the gods to some extent is a response to Vergil's. Primarily, however, it is a reflection of Ovid's temperament rather than the desire to ruin or destroy the *Aeneid*. The *Metamorphoses* are totally different from the *Aeneid*, but they are not an anti-*Aeneid*.

Even though Ovid does not flesh his *Aeneid* out and does not dwell on its heroism, whether inner or external, or on the sense of mystery so characteristic of Vergil, we should not overinterpret the resulting reductions. Instead of recounting, for example, the plague by which the Trojans are struck on Crete, Ovid simply says that they *ferre diu nequiere Iovem* (13.707) and therefore sailed on. At first sight, this looks like cavalier treatment indeed—'the Trojans could not stand the weather'—and like an implicit deflation of the events told by Vergil in *Aeneid* 3.135–91. Actually, however, the phrase is an ingenious combination of two Vergilian phrases. One (*corrupto caeli tractu*; *Aen.* 3.138) denotes the unsalubrious climate, whereas the other (*Dictaea neget tibi Iuppiter arva*; *Aen.* 3.171) expresses that *Iuppiter* denies the Trojans the stay on Crete. Coming at the end of a prophecy as it does, *Iuppiter* here refers to the god and is not a synonym for climate or weather, as it ostensibly is in Ovid's version. Yet Ovid's usage is not at all inconsistent with the events described by Vergil, let alone a debunking of them. By turning the phrase as he does, Ovid combines the two reasons cited by Vergil, the pestiferous climate and Jupiter's action, into one. This makes sense because the climate is the result of Jupiter's doing. As usual, Ovid presumes on the reader's part an exact knowledge of the original. This will keep the reader from taking *Iovem* merely in its demythologized sense.

When the poet returns to the story of Aeneas in Book 14 (75ff.), his mode of adapting the Vergilian material remains unchanged. Books Four and Five of the *Aeneid* are quickly summarized, and the summary of the latter is overshadowed by the account of the metamorphosis of the deceitful Kerkopes into apes, who give the islands they inhabited their name, Pithecusae (14.91–100). The tale is not found in Vergil, but Ovid goes beyond a mere re-emphasis of the metamorphosis theme by injecting into the story a moral note that is far more typical of Vergil than of the *Metamorphoses*. The story of the Kerkopes had a long, well-attested tradition in literature and art, but Ovid either invented or followed a version which is

otherwise not extant and according to which Jupiter punished the culprits. He is a highly moral and awesome Jupiter at that (14.91-3):

quippe deum genitor fraudem et periuria quondam
Cercopum exosus gentisque admissa dolosae
in deforme viros animal mutavit.

[For the father of the gods, hating the tricks and lies of the Kerkopes and the crimes committed by that treacherous race, once changed the men into ugly animals.]

The god's reasons, though succinctly stated, are far better than his lengthy argument against Lycaon and for killing the human race.¹⁴ He is the Vergilian Jupiter, but Ovid has no intention to characterize him as such in more than a minimal fashion. He immediately adds a light touch by his playful summary of the result of the metamorphosis (14.93-4)

ut idem
dissimiles homini possent similesque videri

[so that they could seem both dissimilar and similar to man.]

And he follows it up by describing some details of the metamorphosis with the kind of visual overexplicitness that he often uses to produce amusement (14.95-100).

The attempt to adapt *Aeneid* VI, Aeneas' descent to Hades, was perhaps the most direct confrontation for Ovid between his sensibilities and Vergil's. No other book of the *Aeneid* incorporates with equal density the peculiarly Vergilian endowment of myth with a sense of mystery, the numinous, and the metaphysical transfiguration of history. Not surprisingly, these qualities are found in Ovid's version (14.101-57) as little as they are found anywhere else in the *Metamorphoses*. Quantitatively also, Ovid's adaptation of *Aeneid* VI is typical of his adaptation of the *Aeneid* in general: he omits most of it, and we can now specify some of the reasons. He was not concerned with an *aemulatio* of Vergil's masterpiece, which he rightly recognized to be inimitable. He could not narrate the Aeneas myth at remotely the same length as Vergil because it would unduly

have swelled the volume of his poem, which already was somewhat longer than Vergil's, nor could he significantly add to the myth unless he, too, gave it extended treatment. Nor was he temperamentally equipped to enrich the myth in a manner comparable to Vergil's. Compromise, both in length and spirit of treatment, was impossible if he wanted to leave Vergil's achievement intact instead of burlesquing or parodying it. Consequently, Ovid restricted himself to presenting an outline of the *Aeneid*, choosing, at various length, one or two of the main episodes of a given book of the *Aeneid* and not entangling himself in the rest. He leaves us, thus, an only external picture of the *Aeneid*. We will return to some of the questions suggested by all this at the end of our discussion of Ovid's *Aeneid*. His adaptation of *Aeneid* VI, however, may shed some light on the question whether Ovid's purely external presentation of the events and meaning of the *Aeneid* results from his prudent recognition of Vergil's inimitability or from a deliberate endeavor to profane Vergil's renderings.

One Ovidian line, which has served as a central argument in support of the contention that Ovid indeed profaned Vergil,¹⁵ is a fairly typical example of the problem and of the need for caution and avoidance of over-interpretation. When the Sibyl sees Aeneas, she addresses him as (14.108-9):

vir factis maxime, cuius
dextera per ferrum est, pietas spectata per ignes.

[You man of mighty deeds, whose hand, by sword, whose *pietas*, by fire, has been well tried.]

It has been argued that this provides a clear instance of 'profanation' because Ovid puts Aeneas' *pietas* on the same level as his sword. All the passage does, however, is reflect the common collocation of Aeneas' chief virtues. His primary claim to fame before Vergil, as we mentioned before, was his martial prowess. Vergil greatly expanded the far less developed notion of Aeneas' *pietas* and gave it equal importance—or, if one so wishes, put it on the same level—as Aeneas' warrior heroism. Therefore Vergil's Sibyl introduces Aeneas to Charon emphatically as

Troius Aeneas, pietate insignis et armis (6.403).

It is on this line and similar instances in the *Aeneid* that Ovid's phrase is modelled. Similarly, Ovid preserves, in his drastic abridgement, Aeneas' other essential and serious characteristics, such as *virtus* (14.113, cf. *Aen.* 6.130) and *labor* (14.121, cf. *Aen.* 6.103). That Aeneas eases his labor by conversation (*mollit sermone laborem* 14.121) is not only a humanizing touch by Ovid, who cherished cultivated *sermo* for the same purpose, let alone a deflation of Aeneas' heroic stature. It also recalls Vergil's Aeneas and Achates, who

multa inter sese vario sermone serebant

[were discussing many things among themselves with varied talk]

on their way to the sad *labor* of burying Misenus (*Aen.* 6.160).

While Ovid does not tamper with the dignity of Aeneas, he gives his version of the descent to Hades a decidedly human, unreligious, and unheroic focus by ignoring the profoundly metaphysical character of *Aeneid* VI and concentrating, instead, on the all too human fate of the Sibyl and her gradual metamorphosis. To make the contrast with Vergil quite explicit, Ovid has Aeneas address the Sibyl in terms consistent with her characterization in *Aeneid* 6.65ff. (esp. 65, 78-9). She is divine and Aeneas will render her divine honors by building a temple for her (14.123-8), just as Vergil's Aeneas had promised (*Aen.* 6.69-74). The descriptions, however, of the Sibyl's reaction epitomize the difference between the two poets. Vergil spends six lines presenting the awe and terror emanating from the prophetess and her seizure by the deity, her *enthusiasmos*. It is a gripping depiction that is the enactment of Aeneas' apostrophe to her (6.65) as *sanctissima vates* (6.77-82):

at Phoebi nondum patiens immanis in antro
 bacchatur vates, magnum si pectore possit
 excussisse deum; tanto magis ille fatigat
 os rabidum, fera corda domans, fingitque premendo.
 ostia iamque domus patuere ingentia centum
 sponte sua vatisque ferunt responsa per auras.

[Struggling in vain, impatient of her load,
 And lab'ring underneath the pon'rous god,
 The more she strove to shake him from her breast,
 With more and far superior force he press'd;
 Commands his entrance, and, without control,
 Usurps her organs, and inspires her soul.
 Now, with a furious blast, the hundred doors
 Ope of themselves; a rushing whirlwind roars
 Within the cave, and Sibyl's voice restores.

(Dryden's translation)]

By contrast, Ovid's Sibyl merely sighs (14.129) and says what is true of Ovid's characterization of the gods in general: *nec dea sum*—'I am no goddess' (14.130). She rejects the idea of being worshipped, because she is only human (*humanum caput* 14.131). She proceeds to tell Aeneas the story which proves it. Seven hundred years ago, she was a beautiful virgin and Apollo desired her. In order to win her over, he promised her eternal life and she wished to live for as many years as there were grains of sand in a nearby mound. But

excidit, ut peterem iuvenes quoque protinus annos.
 hos tamen ille mihi dabat aeternamque iuventam,
 si Venerem paterer: contempto munere Phoebi
 innuba permaneo; sed iam felicior aetas
 terga dedit, tremuloque gradu venit aegra senectus,
 quae patienda diu est; nam iam mihi saecula septem
 145 acta diu: superest, numeros ut pulveris aequem,
 ter centum messes, ter centum musta videre.
 tempus erit, cum de tanto me corpore parvam
 longa dies faciet, consumptaque membra senecta
 ad minimum redigentur onus, nec amata videbor
 150 nec placuisse deo; Phoebus quoque an forsitan ipse
 vel non cognoscat vel dilexisse negabit:
 usque adeo mutata ferar nullique videnda,
 voce tamen noscar, vocem mihi fata relinquent.
 (14.139-53)

[I should have
 Asked that those years should be forever young,
 But I forgot. He granted me the years,

And promised endless youth if he could have me,
 But I refused Apollo, and no man
 Has ever had me. Now my happier days
 Are gone, and sick old age comes tottering on,
 And this I must endure, for a long time.
 I am seven hundred years of age; I have
 Three hundred still to go before I equal
 The tally of those grains of sand. The time
 Will come when I shall shrivel to almost nothing,
 Weigh almost nothing, when no one, seeing me,
 Would ever think a god had found me lovely.
 Even Apollo, it may be, will see me
 And not know who I am, or, if he knew me,
 Would say he never loved me. To such change
 I am borne onward, till no eye can see me,
 And I am known by voice alone; my voice
 The Fates will leave me.]

There is no question that this portrait of the Sibyl is as different from Vergil's as can be. Ovid has completely humanized her. But, and this is the important point, he has not made her into a ridiculous, undignified figure. Vergil's Sibyl is moving because she is a prophetess; Ovid's is because she is a human being. The subject of her story is such that Ovid could have treated it easily with irreverence and *iocus*. Instead, he imparts to the story as much pathos as we will find anywhere in the *Metamorphoses*. The reason may not primarily have been respect for Vergil, because Ovid did adapt other Vergilian episodes, mostly outside of his *Aeneid*, in the spirit of *perpetua festivitas*, but the thematic relation of the Sibyl's tale to many other stories in the *Metamorphoses*. As it is, it serves as a melancholy comment, more than ten books and seven hundred years later, on the many divine love stories of the 'Divine Comedy' of the early books of the poem. It recalls stories such as Apollo's amorous pursuit of Daphne, and Ovid realistically states the true nature of Apollo's love for the Sibyl, which the tradition by his time had palliated as *pious amor* (cf. Servius, *Ad Aen.* 6.321). The erotic aspect, however, which dominates in Ovid's earlier stories of the type, now is forsaken as the poet uses the unique time perspective to point up the serious side of such divine love affairs. In his earlier

stories he had not ignored the reactions of the victims, such as Daphne and Io, and even described them in detail, but the note he strikes here is different. It is the passage of time, and time does not heal. The problem-solving metamorphosis for the Sibyl is not immediate, but delayed by a thousand years—the precise amount of time that the souls in *Aeneid* 6 (748) spend in Hades before returning to the earth. By that time, the libido and passionate ardor even of the immortal gods, which Ovid described with so much gusto in Books 1 and 2, have turned into neglect and disavowal.

In his own way, then, Ovid treats the Sibyl as seriously as did Vergil, and he gives her story a meaningful, though totally different function in his poem than it had had in the *Aeneid*. The ultimate reason for this may be found in his fascination with the effects of the passage of time on beauty and love. He expressed it movingly and in an entirely serious vein in a famous passage in the Second Book of the *Art of Love* (2.113–20), the very passage that leads up to his description of Odysseus, who had no beauty but knew how to tell the same story *aliter*. Ovid's version of the story of the Sibyl epitomizes the confluence of two of the essential impulses for the *Metamorphoses*: his own, earlier poetry and the inspiration of the *Aeneid*. This accounts, to a large extent, for its peculiar characteristics.

But Ovid never sustains unmitigated seriousness for too long. The speech of the Sibyl, comprising twenty-four lines, is just long enough for it; when Ovid proceeds to treat the Achaemenides episode (14.154–440) at even greater length than Vergil did (*Aen.* 3.588–691), we return to the alternation of tone that is typical of most extended passages in the *Metamorphoses*. Scholars have generally conceded a great deal of narrative autonomy to Vergil's story of Achaemenides, considering it a 'stitched-on piece of brilliant colors' or 'narrated in good part for its own sake', if not downright 'unessential'.¹⁶ This may help to explain why Ovid felt encouraged to adapt it as a full-blown narrative. This episode could be more easily detached than others because it was not woven into the fabric of the *Aeneid* as tightly as most. Vergil invented Achaemenides; Ovid thus could imitate him by inventing Macareus, another of Odysseus' sailors, who in turn relates some of the adventures of Odysseus and his crew, notably the episodes of the winds of Aeolus, the Laestrygonians, and Circe.

Ovid, in short, combines elements from the *Aeneid* and the *Odyssey*, and this alone accounts for the mixture of tones in his version. For in spite of its apparent epyllion character, Vergil's Achaemenides episode certainly does not stand outside the design of the *Aeneid* but has a significant function in it.¹⁷ It reverses the story of Sinon, the treacherous Greek, and the Trojans now show mercy to their former conquerors. Achaemenides' description of the peril that confronted him recalls the danger the Trojans faced the day and night before at their landing site near Mt. Aetna. Vergil reinforces the theme by making the Cyclops the common enemy of Achaemenides and the Trojans and by stressing the resonance of his threat in nature (3.672-4):

clamorem immensum tollit, quo pontus et omnes
contremuere undae, penitusque exterrita tellus
Italiae curvis que immugiit Aetna cavernis.

[He raised a mighty roar, at which the sea and all its waves
shuddered and the land of Italy was affrighted within, and
Aetna bellowed in its winding caverns.]

Odysseus, the arch-enemy of the Trojans, now becomes a sympathetic figure, *infelix Ulysses* (3.613, 691), since he faced the same peril as the Trojans and voiced civilized man's outrage at the cannibal's lawlessness (3.626-9). In short, for all its narrative flourish, much of it due to Vergil's mimicry of Greek excitability in the speech of Achaemenides, the episode has a profound function and meaning: it establishes a definite link between Greek and Trojan heroes, who overcome their enmity. It thus prepares for the second half of the epic, Book Eight in particular, where the Greeks and Trojans will face another common enemy.

Since Ovid's *Aeneid* makes only the skimpiest mention of the war in Latium and none of Sinon, his Achaemenides episode perforce cannot have the same function as Vergil's. Ovid sets the stage in a removed and external way, for we encounter Achaemenides not at the moment of peril, but at the time he is landing, much later, with Aeneas' men in Italy. To make him tell his story, Ovid resorts to his frequent device of producing an interlocutor *ex nihilo*. While Aeneas busies himself with burying his old nurse Caieta—an action that is

interrupted for more than four hundred lines—an old companion of Achaemenides and Odysseus turns up and wants to know why Achaemenides, a Greek, is sailing on a 'barbarian' ship (14.163-4). Ovid, it can be seen, sounds the central theme of Vergil's account, but he does not develop it, because Vergil already had done so. Macareus later simply summarizes what had been the subject of thematic development in Vergil (14.245-7):

tuque, o iustissime Troum,
nate dea—neque enim finito Marte vocandus
hostis es, Aenea—moneo, fuge litora Circes!

[You also, most just of the Trojans, son of a goddess—for you
should not be called enemy after the end of war, Aeneas—
flee, I warn you, the shores of Circe.]

Even more succinctly, this theme is the emphatic conclusion of Achaemenides' speech (14.220): *Graiumque ratis Troiana recepit!* Once more, the essence of the Vergilian account is preserved.

Since Ovid, however, presents this essence in his typical summary fashion, he clearly will have to make different themes take the place of Vergil's in the Achaemenides story proper. Ovid strongly suggests his capacity to treat the story differently already in the introduction to it. These instances also set the tone for the playfulness of his adaptation, because he playfully disassociates himself from Vergilian precedent. Vergil, who cared more about the function of the Achaemenides episode than its *Realien*, had written (*Aen* 3.617-18) that Achaemenides was deserted by his companions and left in the Cyclops' cave. This contradicts both the Homeric account, according to which all of Odysseus' party were surprised by the Cyclops in the cave, and Vergil's subsequent description when it turns out that Odysseus and the others are in the cave, after all. Ovid 'corrects' Vergil by writing that Achaemenides was deserted 'amidst the rocks of Aetna' (14.160). And he completely reverses Vergil's description of the physical appearance of Achaemenides by playfully reusing Vergil's terminology (14.165-6; *Aen*. 3.590-4).

As we could expect, then, the story is a mixture of adherence to serious Vergilian motifs and Ovid's own characteristic tendencies. The label 'parody' ignores the bi-tonality of the Ovidian narrative.

For, besides playing with motifs from *Aeneid* III, Ovid develops a serious Vergilian theme to take the place of the theme of the newly found community of Greeks and Trojans, which he only summarizes. This serious theme is, emphatically, Aeneas' *pietas*. Vergil's Achaemenides was seen by the Trojans when they were already ashore. Ovid's Aeneas, by contrast, is at sea and diverts the course of his ship to rescue Achaemenides (14.218–20). He, and not Anchises as in Vergil's account, is responsible for the Trojans' merciful actions. No wonder Achaemenides praises him from the bottom of his heart; he would be *impius* (14.173) if he did not express his gratitude in this way. The paean on Aeneas' selflessness forms the beginning (170–6) and the end (213–20) of Achaemenides' account, but Ovid always is uncomfortable with total seriousness and eases it with some light touches. The conclusion of his first praise of Aeneas is a transition to the lighter tone of the middle section which deals with the behavior of the Cyclops. Achaemenides is grateful that

aut tumulo aut certe non illa condar in alvo (14.176)

[I shall be buried in a tomb, but surely not in that monster's maw.]

Tumulo makes us think of the action in which Aeneas is presently engaged, i.e. he is building such a *tumulus* for Caieta. The contrast with *illa alvo* is a bit of graphic over-explicitness, especially as Ovid, as in the Tereus story,¹⁸ returns to this notion again (14.204) and again (14.209).

Exoteric details of this kind take the place of Vergil's emphasis on the relation between the monstrous Cyclops and nature, and of the telluric horror with which he fills the surrounding countryside, Sicily, and Italy. As so often, Ovid reduces his 'model' to its external aspects. His Polyphemus is a cannibal pure and simple. This depiction, however, is not at all inconsistent with his characterization as a primitive brute in the Galatea and Acis episodes. To transpose him all of a sudden into the Vergilian world of high poetry is a contrast which Ovid, for once, eschews, although it would have made for effective epic parody. Instead of raising the *clamor immanis* which has near-cosmic repercussions in Vergil (*Aen.* 3.672–4; cf.

Met. 13.876–7), Ovid's Polyphemus utters a few cliché threats (14.192–7) whose final phrase, *lucis ademptae*, is a painful reminder of Ovid's deliberate dissipation of the suggestive poignancy of Vergil's

monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens, cui lumen ademptum
(3.658).

Vergil also describes the ghastliness of the monster's behavior, but he does not stop at that. He comments on the scene of the monster's cannibalism (3.619–27) with the impassioned reaction, in the name of all civilized decency and justice, of Odysseus. And he follows up his graphic, but very brief depiction of the Cyclops' washing out the bloody mess in his socket (3.662–3) with the description of his awesome *clamor* and the evocative scene, reinforced by a simile, of the gathering of Polyphemus' 'Aetnean brothers' (3.678), a phrase which makes manifest the sameness of the threats faced by the Trojans at Mount Aetna and by Achaemenides.

By contrast, Ovid, true to his taste for the cruel and the grotesque, is content with drawing out the scene of the Cyclops' cannibalism to the point of exaggeration. The grotesque and gory details exist in their own right and become the source of bathetic amusement. Ovid has Achaemenides echo the Vergilian reference to the empty socket of Polyphemus—*inanem luminis orbem* (*Met.* 14.200)—only to have him say, two lines later, that he had death before his eyes: *mors erat ante oculos* (14.202). The rescue by Aeneas comes just in time to save Achaemenides from death and his story from Ovid's gimmicks.

The stories which Macareus tells in turn continue both the serious and the playful attitude of Ovid to the *Aeneid*. In Vergil's epic, the description of Aeolus and his incarcerated winds is a powerfully suggestive symbol and leitmotif (*Aen.* 1.52–63).¹⁹ In the *Metamorphoses*, the Aeolus episode (14.223–32) once more becomes the mere adventure account which it was in the *Odyssey*. Ovid follows the pattern of reducing Vergilian subjects to their external aspects, but in this case he suggests, speciously of course, that it is not due to his own temperament, but to valid literary exigencies: Macareus, is, after all, Odysseus' companion and therefore his narrative is modelled on Homer, and not Vergil. Still, the echoes of the Vergilian account are strong enough to alert the reader to Ovid's deliberate, if cleverly

justified, externalization of it. There follows a short description of the reception of Odysseus and his crew in the land of the Laestrygonians (14.233-43), while the bulk of the narrative is taken up by the episodes of Circe, and Picus and Canens (14.243-434).

Although this may not be the primary *raison d'être* for these stories, they do establish an effective contrast to the account of Achaemenides. The negative counter-examples make Aeneas' actions appear even more positive. The Laestrygonians are cannibals, like Polyphemus, and Circe's cruel treatment of the men and of Picus and his companions is not much better.²⁰ This is far from the unselfish and forgiving actions of Aeneas, with whose appellation as *iustissime Troum* (14.245) Macareus significantly introduces the story of Circe and emphasizes the contrast between her and the Trojan. This contrast, to be sure, is developed explicitly as little as was the contrast between the impious Erysichthon and the devout Philemon and Baucis because, as in those stories and others, other subjects and moods soon come to the fore and prevail. But it is important to note that Macareus' tale characterizes Aeneas indirectly and that Ovid, even if he does not impart to Aeneas the inner heroism and fateful mission that would require a much more extensive treatment, does not lessen the dignity of the Vergilian figure.

True to his strategy in his *Aeneid*, Ovid emphasizes and re-emphasizes the metamorphosis theme. He treats us to one of the most graphic and detailed metamorphosis descriptions in the poem, that of the men into swine (14.279-90), followed by their re-metamorphosis into humans (299-305), the transformation of Picus into a woodpecker (386-96), of his companions (412-15), and of Canens (431-2). Circe in fact personifies two of the main themes of the poem, sexual passion and metamorphosis,²¹ and this is another reason Ovid gives her far more prominence than Vergil did in the *Aeneid* (7.10-20). The thematic significance which he accords her in the *Metamorphoses* may, like other instances of his *imitatio* of Vergilian passages, be the result of his perceptive recognition of the function of Vergil's account. Though the latter is short, its evocation of the sinister, demonic, and brutalizing aspects of Circe stands in close thematic relation, which is enhanced by the position of the passage at the beginning of the second half of the *Aeneid*, to the events in those six books, Vergil's *maius opus*. Instead of simply reverting to the Homeric description, as he had in the story of

Aeolus, Ovid adapts the story's function, which he found in the *Aeneid*, for his own purposes by giving it a corresponding function in his own work.

This amounts to anything but a depreciation or parody of his predecessor. It is, however, another useful epitome of the difference between the two poets' styles. Instead of the powerful density and evocative symbolism of Vergil's characterization, Ovid makes the same point in an expansive, concrete narration. It is the work of a master *raconteur*, which thrives, as usual, on the introduction of ever new details and, as one might expect, is not devoid of humorous touches. With the preference for anachronism typical of him, Ovid casts the scene of Circe's receiving the Greeks as if it were taking place in the house of a Roman matron (14.259-63). She is surrounded by her slaves, while other slave girls lead the guests into the room. The incongruity is amusing between this description and the immediately preceding depiction of Circe's magic animal farm. Fantastic and bourgeois elements are humorously juxtaposed. The description also echoes that of the preparations taken by Vergil's king Latinus before he meets the Trojan embassy in *Aeneid* 7 (169; cf. *Met.* 14.261-2). This again makes for humorous incongruity because the two situations and characters are, of course, as different as can be. The Ovidian play becomes even more poignant in the light of the mythological connection between Circe and Latinus—she was his mother²²—which is Ovid's implicit justification, if he needed one, for adapting the Vergilian scene to Circe.

In the brief summary of *Aeneid* 7 and 8, which he gives after the tale of Macareus (*Met.* 14.441-56), Ovid preserves Vergil's innovative emphasis on the Trojan landing at the mouth of the Tiber (14.447-8), and the notion of Turnus' *furor*, though the latter is assimilated to the human love theme of the *Metamorphoses*. Turnus rages to keep his promised bride (451), and there is no hint of Vergil's portrait of Turnus' conflicting motivations and complex and tragic character. The remaining stories, beginning with that of Diomedes, continue Ovid's chosen emphasis in his *Aeneid* on metamorphosis as an actual subject, so that the procedure of telling the relevant stories *aliter* does not seem to be the result of imaginative fancy or subjective playfulness, but has, to all appearances, an objective thematic *raison d'être*. To reinforce this impression, Ovid indeed subordinates his narrative innovations in these stories to the subject-matter of metamorphosis

instead of engaging in the play of free association as he does in many other of the poem's episodes in which metamorphosis is not the controlling subject.

The story which Diomedes tells, as he does in Vergil's *Aeneid*, in reply to the Latins' request for help against Aeneas, is a good example (*Met.* 14.457-511). Vergil's account (*Aen.* 11.243-95) has two principal themes. Diomedes refuses to help because he has had enough of the impious war against Troy for which the Greeks suffered unspeakable tribulations on their return. These tribulations were the punishment for their crimes (11.258). In this connection, he mentions the transformation of his own companions into birds (11.272-4) and views it as the punishment for his attack on Venus, when she was rescuing Aeneas from him in battle. The recall of the confrontation, which Homer tells at length in *Iliad* 5, leads him to his second theme, the formidable martial prowess of Aeneas, which he stresses at length (282-92). His motive, however, for not coming to the Latins' aid is not cowardice but the desire to forget the past evils and crimes (279-80). It is the same motive that impelled the Trojans to be merciful to Achaemenides.

Ovid therefore could have made a virtue of his selective adaptation of the *Aeneid* and developed the Diomedes story as a clearer pendant to the *Achaemenides* than it is in Vergil's epic, where eight books intervene between the two episodes. But Ovid, as we saw in Chapter 2, is not interested in consistently tying his poem together in this manner. His story culminates with the metamorphosis of Diomedes' men into birds, and to this immediate end yield both the interest in larger unity and the Vergilian distribution of emphasis. The metamorphosis is the central element of the story, hence it must be connected with Diomedes' refusal. The latter thus is baldly motivated by the lack of men at his disposal (14.463-4). To illustrate the point, Ovid's Diomedes, like Vergil's, gives an account of the attrition of the Greek fleet and its leaders on their return from Troy. In contrast to Vergil, however, Ovid does not present these events in moral terms of crime and punishment. Instead, they simply happen that way. Venus' action therefore is prompted not by Diomedes' sacrilegious attack on her or by the war crimes of the Greeks in general, but by the arrogant claim of one of his companions that the goddess cannot possibly do them any more harm than she already has done. Ovid hereby assimilates the story to the

prevailing type of divine vengeance tales in the *Metamorphoses*: an angered (*irata* 494) goddess acts out of spite (*iram* 495) on the spur of the moment, and the metamorphosis is graphic and drawn out (496-507). Diomedes completes its description by trying to specify to the Latin ambassadors, who might just possibly have ornithological interests, exactly what kinds of birds resulted from the metamorphosis (508-9):

si volucrum quae sit dubiarum forma requiris,
ut non cynorum, sic albis proxima cynis.

[If you ask what kind of birds they were, they were,
if not swans, at least something like white swans.]

After this, there can be no doubt that Diomedes has hardly any men left and it is on this note that his speech concludes (510-11).

As can be seen, Ovid once more reduces the Vergilian episode to its externals which, as so often, he emphasizes and expands. The result, however, is not parody. It is a transformation into a metamorphosis story, and it was inherent in the nature of the metamorphosis theme to eschew great problems and to offer non-moral solutions. Ovid often does so even in stories in which the metamorphosis theme is tangential. In the Diomedes story, he does not go so far, but emphasizes the correlative exigencies between subject and treatment. As for the traditional character of Aeneas as a warrior, he has highlighted it before and can therefore eliminate it from the Diomedes story especially since he, unlike Vergil, does not retell the battles in Latium in which the hero's martial prowess is essential.

To affirm the new motive that leads the deity to effect the metamorphosis, Ovid follows it up with the story of the Apulian shepherd, whom some nymphs transform into a tree for the same reason Venus metamorphosed Diomedes' companions: verbal effrontery (14.512-26). Ovid was not concerned about the geographical impossibility²⁸ of connecting this story and the preceding one, but such neglect of *Realien* in favor of the ideas expressed in a given story is anything but un-Vergilian. The story also is a clever link to the next, where the process is reversed as structures made of trees, i.e. the ships of Aeneas, are metamorphosed into nymphs.

This episode (14.527-65) is a reminder of the fundamental differences between Vergil's view of myth and Ovid's. The gods exist in the *Metamorphoses*, but the supernatural does not. In Vergil's *Aeneid*, by contrast, it does; the integration of the mysterious and the numinous into the epic is precisely one of the greatest triumphs of Vergil's genius. The contrast which it creates between 'this world' and 'visions of some other world' has been well recognized as one of the major themes or tensions of the *Aeneid*,²⁴ and Vergil explores the implications of this contrast to the fullest in *Aeneid* 9. He describes the metamorphosis itself in two lines (120, 122) because, in typically Vergilian fashion, it is the meaning of the events that matters, and not events themselves. Vergil alerts us to its importance by an invocation of the Muses (9.77-9). The description that follows formally is a triptych. It commences with the prologue in heaven between the Magna Mater and Jupiter, continues with her intervention, and culminates with the reaction of Turnus. The primary purpose of the episode, which has baffled both ancient and modern commentators, is indeed to bring us face to face with the tragic limitations of Turnus. The episode is an integral part of Vergil's portrait of Turnus and of the contrast between Turnus and Aeneas. The events themselves are described only briefly, whereas the divine prelude and the reaction of the human protagonist are developed in full and, purposely, at almost identical length.

The first part needs little comment. It impressively establishes the fact that the events have moved clearly to the confines of the supernatural. It concludes with the solemn ratification of the compact between the two deities, and its sweep is beyond mortal comprehension (9.104-6):

dixerat idque ratum Stygii per flumina fratris,
per pice torrentis atraque voragine ripas
adnuat, et totum nutu tremefecit Olympum.

[He spoke, and by the waters of his Stygian brother, by the banks that seethe with pitch in black swirling abyss, he nodded assent, and with his nod made all Olympus tremble.]

Then, Vergil continues, the fated day had come. If we kept our feet firmly planted in the world of factual reality, we could criticize the poet for forgetting that some ships had sunk off the Libyan

coast and others had burned in Sicily, but we would only shut ourselves off from the transcendental aspects of the poem. The emphasis in Vergil's actual description of the event is totally on the preternatural: first there is a strange light, then a large cloud and the 'Idaeon choirs'. Vergil does not present graphic, descriptive details but leaves the actual appearance of the phenomenon quite undefined and hence, more suggestive and evocative. The goddess does not appear, only her voice is heard. At her command, the ships by themselves break loose, dive into the sea, and emerge as nymphs.

Thereafter, Vergil takes us to the third part of the episode, the epilogue on earth, i.e. Turnus' reaction. It is almost exactly of the same length as the initial scene with the deities, with which it is meant to contrast. It centers on one theme: Turnus has no conception whatsoever of the workings of the supernatural. He resembles Oedipus in seeing the hand of the supernatural at work, but refusing to acknowledge it for what it is. He thinks the events can be understood entirely within the framework of this world—at *non audaci Turno fiducia cessit* (9.126). All he can perceive is that now the Trojans cannot escape over the sea again. Thus, he argues, Jupiter has forsaken them. Vergil emphasizes Turnus' blindness by having him connect this misconception with another delusion dear to his heart, i.e. that the war in Latium is simply a repetition of the Trojan war. To Turnus, one reading of the events complements the other, but he construes only the wrong pattern and embroils himself even more in the self-delusion that is so essential to his tragedy.

Ovid's version is an illustrative result of his characteristic desire first and foremost to *tell* a story, and then also of his concentration, in this part of the *Metamorphoses*, on the metamorphosis theme. As we saw earlier, the very choice of the theme itself intrinsically leads to a neglect of moral or metaphysical questions. The probing of the inner dimension of man, whenever it takes place, is exclusively psychological. To such psychological interest, as we have seen,²⁵ the metamorphosis theme also was conducive. But the sole agent in Ovid's psychological interest is intellect, and Vergil's sense of mystery in portraying human psychology is alien to him. Thus Ovid tells the story of the metamorphosis of Aeneas' ships for its own sake and not for some ulterior purpose as Vergil had. Turnus plays as little a role in Ovid's *Aeneid* as Dido, a fact that sheds considerable light on Ovid's intentions, which we will discuss shortly. This,

and the lack of the supernatural in the *Metamorphoses*, make it plain that Ovid could not give his version a remotely similar function, let alone meaning, to Vergil's.

Ovid, therefore, starts *in medias res*. Turnus attacks the ships, as he had in the *Aeneid* (9.72ff.), but the action is not interrupted by a scene in heaven. Instead, the deity straightway appears. There is nothing mysterious about her appearance as she drives onto the scene on her chariot drawn by lions, amid the clashing of cymbals and shrill music from boxwood flutes. The *nimbus*, whose nature Vergil deliberately had left undefined (*Aen.* 9.111), becomes a naturalistic cloud of hail in Ovid (14.543). Whereas Vergil presents the goddess as a *numen*, she is highly visible in Ovid's version and even proceeds to cut the ships loose herself. The suggestive account of Vergil becomes an explicit, graphic scene. It is reinforced by Ovid's eagerness not to let the rare opportunity pass that is provided by the unusual metamorphosis of inanimate into animate beings. Hence, he leaves nothing to the visual imagination and playfully reverses the usual, anatomical metamorphosis scheme (14.549-54):

robore mollito lignoque in corpora verso
in capitem facies puppes mutantur aduncae,
indigitos abeunt et crura natantia remi,
quodque prius fuerat, latus est, mediisque carina
subdita navigiis spinae mutatur in usum,
lina comae molles, antemnae brachia fiunt.

[Straightway the wood softened and turned to flesh, the ships' curved sterns changed to heads and faces, the oars to toes and swimming legs; what had been side before remained as side, and the keel which ran under the middle of the ships was changed to serve as spine; cordage became soft hair, and sail-yards, arms.]

Ovid proceeds to play with two motifs that frequently figure in his description of transformation. The first is the element of permanence amid change;²⁶ the color of the nymphs is the same as that of the ships—*caeruleus, ut fuerat, color est* (14.555). The second is Ovid's exploitation of the logical consequences and paradoxes resulting from a given situation²⁷ (14.555-8):

quasque ante timebant,
illas virgineis exercent lusibus undas
Naiades aequoreae; durisque in montibus ortae
molle fretum celebrant, nec eas sua tangit origo.

[And now, as water-nymphs, with maiden glee they sport in the waters they feared before. Though born on the rough mountain-tops, they now throng the yielding waves and no trace of their first state troubles them.]

In short, it is the compleat metamorphosis description, as none of the characteristic elements is lacking. Ovid goes on to demonstrate once more his lack of concern for over-all thematic development by characterizing the nymphs as unreconstructed Trojan partisans, who hate the Greeks. The stories of Achaemenides and Macareus are already too remote and, as most of the time, it is the immediate purpose that matters for Ovid. In his story, the nymphs' hatred of the Greeks gives him the opportunity to use the reference to the destruction of Odysseus' ship as a 'stepping stone' to the mention of a further metamorphosis, i.e. that of the ship of the Phaeacians into a rock (14.564-5).

For reasons that we have already discussed, Ovid, unlike Vergil, does not have us take a look into Turnus' soul. But, as is always the case, he understood Vergil's intentions very well. He gives a direct and terse summary of what had been the point of the Vergilian episode (14.566-7):

spes erat, in nymphas animata classe marinas
posse metu monstri Rutulum desistere bello

[After the fleet had been changed to living water-nymphs, there was hope that the Rutulian, in awe of the portent, would desist from war.]

The question why the war goes on is bound up in the *Aeneid* inseparably with the character of Turnus. This character does not exist in the *Metamorphoses* and thus, once more, merely the external fact is stated: *perstat*—the war goes on (14.568), although Turnus

had been warned explicitly by the deity that he was committing a sacrilege (539–40). Here as elsewhere, Ovid preserves the gist of the Vergilian account.

This is one of the factors which suggests that a one-sided interpretation of Ovid's version as polemic, parody, or debunking of the Vergilian story would be misplaced. The difference between the two stories is fundamental and illustrates the difference between the two poets and their utilization of myth. It is precisely because this episode is strongly related to Ovid's general treatment of myth that it should not be narrowly interpreted as an implied criticism of Vergil's handling of the transformation of Aeneas' ships. Ovid tells the story *aliter* because it cannot, within the framework of his poem, have the same profundity as Vergil's. There is no indication that Ovid wants us to infer that Vergil's treatment is less valid than his own. His version is an effective literary *variatio*, but it also is a demonstration on Ovid's part that myth can survive by being told vividly and palpably and without the Vergilian sense of mystery and metaphysics. The narrative emphasis on myth takes its place next to the speculative one and both exist in their own right, though separately. We would read too much into the text, on the basis of no external evidence, if we postulated that Ovid's treatment was a deliberately antithetical desecration of the Vergilian story. He tells the story *aliter*, but not *contra*.

Again, however, we have to make allowance for the varied tonality of the *Metamorphoses*, of which this *Aeneid* is a part. Ovid's attitude to some aspects of Vergil's epic is by no means bland or neutral. Before he ends his *Aeneid* on a markedly playful note, Ovid contrasts this mood with an extremely cutting and prosaic comment on the motivation of the combatants in Latium. Forgotten is the motive that Ovid earlier gave at least for Turnus, i.e. Lavinia and, for that matter, the dowry and the rule over Latium (14.451). War is not a means to an end, but has become an end in itself. The parties fight for the sake of victory itself and they are afraid to lose face if they end the war without a victory (14.569–72):

nec iam dotalia regna,
nec sceptrum soceri, nec te, Lavinia virgo,
sed vicisse petunt deponendique pudore
bella gerunt.

Both the motivation of Vergil's heroes and his own attitude to the war are different from this simple formula and more complex, but the development of such complexity and of the 'inner' aspects of the problem are too deeply rooted in the fabric of his epic to stand easy and concise transference. Ovid wastes no time in following up the serious and profoundly pessimistic note by glossing over the final scene of the *Aeneid*, the death of Turnus, and by playfully elaborating the metamorphosis of Turnus into an Ardea-bird, a heron. Ovid's inspiration was the figurative metamorphosis of Ardea on which Vergil comments at a prominent juncture of the *Aeneid*, the introduction of Turnus. It is an ominous evocation of the past power of Ardea and its transformation into a mere name (*Aen.* 7.411–13):

locus Ardea quondam
dictus avis, et nunc magnum manet Ardea nomen,
sed fortuna fuit.

[There was a place once called Ardea by our ancestors, and now the great name Ardea still remains, but her fortune is past.]

The solemnity of the passage is heightened by the fact that it is one of the rare instances in the *Aeneid* in which Vergil refers directly to a contemporary state of affairs (et *nunc* manet nomen).²⁸ Ovid, by contrast, relegates even the fame of the city to the past and presents a literal, visual metamorphosis. He evidently plays with the concept of the Phoenix rising from the ashes.²⁹ The potential sublimity of the picture, however, is undercut by the temporally limited nature of this rebirth—no reference is made to Ovid's own time—and by the culmination of the visual event in a typically Ovidian, 'logically' resultant paradox: 'Ardea's self is beaten in lamentation by her own wings'—

cadit Ardea, Turno
sospite dicta potens; quem postquam barbarus ensis
575 abstulit et tepida latuerunt tecta favilla,
congerie e media tum primum cognita praepes
subvolat et cineres plausis everberat alis.
et sonus et macies et pallor et omnia, captam

quae deceant urbem, nomen quoque mansit in illa
urbis, et ipsa suis deplangitur Ardea pennis (14.573-80)

[Ardea fell, counted a powerful city in Turnus' lifetime. But after the outlanders' sword destroyed it and warm ashes hid its ruins, from the confused mass a bird flew forth of a kind never seen before, and beat the ashes with her flapping wings. Her sound, her meager look, her deathly paleness, all things which are fitting for a captured city, yes, even the city's name remained in the bird; and Ardea's self is beaten in lamentation by her wings.]

The end of Ovid's *Aeneid*, quite in contrast to Vergil's, is the apotheosis of Aeneas. This again is typical of the difference between the two poets. Vergil likes to work through suggestion, whereas Ovid likes to make things explicit. In the *Aeneid*, Jupiter prophesies the deification of Aeneas (1.259-60), and this perspective is operative, though implicit, through the rest of the poem just as the announced, but untold, founding of *altae moenia Romae* (1.7). Ovid clearly had the Vergilian scene in mind because he precedes Aeneas' apotheosis with a description, which alludes to Vergil's, of Venus' plea to Jupiter (14.585-95). Besides, the mechanics of the apotheosis, which is a special kind of transformation, attracted his visual and descriptive temperament. Thus this final scene is marked by the characteristically Ovidian interplay between seriousness and humor. Venus sets the proceedings in motion like a Roman politician (*ambieratque* 585), a theme that Seneca later exploited with even more amusing detail in his satire on Claudius and his unsuccessful attempt to become deified (*Apocol.* 8-9). It does not matter at what divine rank Aeneas is appointed, so long as he somehow becomes a god.³⁰ Jupiter's compressed phrase *quaeque petis pro quoque petis* (595) has a mock-solemn ring to it. The description of the preparation of Aeneas' body for deification is explicit (602-7), but Ovid does not let it degenerate into over-explicitness and includes an apposite echo (605-7) of the epiphany of Venus to Aeneas in Vergil's *Aeneid* (1.402-5). We should also keep in mind that the Romans were far more interested in the ritual and external aspects of a sacred action than we are today. Finally, the reference to one of the most hallowed cults of Rome, that of Aeneas *Indiges* at Lavinium (608), ends the

description and Ovid's *Aeneid* on a very dignified note indeed. It is in keeping with the constantly shifting tonality of the *Metamorphoses* that there follows, after a brief catalog of kings, the lighthearted tale of Vertumnus and Pomona (14.623ff.).

It would be unwarranted to read profound intentions into the lack of organic connection between the tale of Aeneas' apotheosis and the preceding stories. Far more often than not, it is Ovid's structural procedure not to develop one story organically out of the other. More significant, at first sight, may be Ovid's technique to intersperse his *Aeneid* with the amorous stories—'frothier stuff', as one recent critic has called them³¹—of Glaucus, Scylla, the Cyclops, Galatea, and the immediately following tale of Vertumnus and Pomona. Was this done to undercut the *Aeneid*?

This is more than doubtful. It is Ovid's standard procedure to loosen the narration of mythical cycles in this fashion. It may suffice to refer, in this connection, to our earlier discussion of the Cadmus cycle, one of the longest in the *Metamorphoses* (3.1-4.603). It comprises 1335 lines, 530 of which are taken up by the argument between Jupiter and Juno about sex, the story of Narcissus and Echo, and the various and sundry tales of the Minyads. All of these are unrelated to the *series malorum* of the Cadmeans. We have noticed, even within individual stories such as those of Erysichthon, Phaethon, or even Ceyx and Alcyone, a similar autonomous tendency of individual scenes. For this reason alone, it is by no means unusual that Ovid should devote 311 out of the 954 lines of the Aeneas cycle to the narration of unrelated episodes.³² Such *variatio* is a fundamental characteristic of the *Metamorphoses*.

The question arises whether Ovid does not sometimes arrange stories in a deliberate sequence so that one comments upon the other. Of course he does so at times; the pattern of a story within a story as we find it, for instance, in the episodes of Vertumnus and Pomona and Iphis and Anaxarete is a good example. It would be imprecise, however, to argue that Ovid juxtaposes 'serious' and 'comic' episodes with a view to 'undercutting' the serious. For, in the first place, few episodes are entirely serious or entirely comic; most are bi-tonal, if not polytonal. In the case of his *Aeneid*, we could speak of deliberate undercutting only if Ovid had either taken over the Vergilian episodes virtually unchanged or striven to render them as Vergilian as possible, with an emphasis on the tragic, the numinous,

the metaphysical, the profound inner conflicts of the characters, etc. To juxtapose such 'great' poetry, for example, with the wooing song of the Cyclops would indeed have amounted to the bathetic kind of incongruity that serves to destroy and erode the serious. Such, however, is not the case, and we can therefore return to our principal question, i.e. whether Ovid's adaptation of the *Aeneid* proper is not an irreverent destruction of Vergil's masterpiece.

The salient point is that Ovid's *Aeneid* is not a poetic *agōn* with or *aemulatio* of Vergil's. It is much too short for that and Ovid makes it even shorter by presenting only the barest minimum of a factual outline of the events. The Roman reader was familiar with this procedure from Livy's presentation of the story of Aeneas (1.1-2). There is no reason to assume that Ovid's use of the same procedure should have been construed as a depreciation of Vergil's achievement or that Ovid was expected to produce a version that would match Vergil's. Is it not sounder to argue that Ovid limited his account precisely because he was aware of the inimitable qualities of the *Aeneid* and of the impossibility of producing another version, which would be similar to Vergil's, unless he went to far greater lengths? The argument that Ovid's reduction of the *Aeneid ipso facto* amounts to a depreciation of it is based implicitly on the premise that no poet after Vergil could tell the story of Aeneas unless he wrote another full-blown *Aeneid*.³³ This argument is convenient rather than precise.

It is clear that in the years right after the appearance of the *Aeneid* any adaptation of the Aeneas myth in poetry would be compared to Vergil's work, which set the standard for dignity and sublimity. Ovid tries to accommodate this myth to the spirit and exigencies of his poem as much as is possible without detracting from the Vergilian version. Aeneas is as dignified as any character in the *Metamorphoses*. Ovid clearly preserves his basic qualities such as *pietas* and, to a somewhat lesser extent, warrior heroism. We do not, of course, see these qualities in action or involved in complex situations because Ovid merely summarizes Vergil, whereas Vergil explores Aeneas' character in depth.

In this summary, and in adaptations of episodes like the transformation of the ships, neither Aeneas nor the events have the same spirituality, grand destiny, or relation to the supernatural as they have in Vergil's epic. Ovid's *Aeneid* is another good example of the

reduction of a speculative or iterative myth to a narrative one, with the concomitant refusal to become involved in metaphysical problems or to depict tragic themes tragically. This was, as we have seen, the result of Ovid's choice of the metamorphosis theme, which he found most congenial to his temperament. Ovid's *Aeneid* in general and episodes such as those of Anius and the metamorphosis of the ships are, therefore, without question, more 'external' than their Vergilian counterparts. Ovid seems to have wanted to emphasize that his mode of treatment was the result of his chosen theme by making metamorphosis, in contrast to his usual practice, the central and reiterated theme of virtually all the Vergilian episodes he adapts. The result is not parody or mock-epic. Because he emphasizes the metamorphosis theme so much in these episodes, Ovid intersperses them with tales unrelated to the *Aeneid*, such as the myth of Galatea and the Cyclops. In that story in particular, metamorphosis is not nearly as prevalent and therefore it makes for an effective *variatio*.

It might still be argued that Ovid's elimination of all the spiritual, fated, supernatural and 'inner' aspects of the *Aeneid* amounts to a considerable deflation and that such was precisely Ovid's intent. This seems like a case, however, where we would be prudent to beware of the pitfalls of the 'intentional fallacy' and of interpreting Ovid's aims too narrowly. If Vergil's stories could not be told *aliter* after Vergil, his epic would have been the death-knell for mythological narration, rather than a stimulus. To some extent, the effect of Vergil's rediscovery of the epic and of his unique treatment of myth set an oppressive standard for the Latin poets after him. Lucan's epic is a good example of an attempt, and the difficulty, to escape from it,³³ and the lack of significant adaptations of Aeneas in the later literary tradition—quite in contrast to the literary fortunes of Odysseus and Herakles—testifies to the feeling that Vergil's achievement had the inhibiting aura of being definitive. It is more than likely that Ovid recognized the implications of Vergil's effect on the treatment of myth. This is one of the reasons he decided to write a continuous hexameter poem, superficially resembling an epic, on mythological subjects in which he used myth *aliter* from Vergil, whom he greatly respected, as is clear from his direct references to him, and of whose normative influence he was fully aware.³⁴

The same applies to his treatment of the *Aeneid* proper. To construe Ovid's intentions as a deflation or 'undercutting' of Vergil's

epic is both unduly narrow and misleading. Rather, Ovid's aim was to present a successful alternative to Vergil's adaptation of myth and to suggest that the narrative possibilities of myth, as exemplified by the episodes of Achaemenides, the Sibyl, Circe, and others, were by no means exhausted. Ovid's playfulness, which is so characteristic of the *Metamorphoses*, is not only essential to his revivification of myth, but also to preserving his poetic and creative independence *vis-à-vis* the otherwise inhibiting influence of Vergil's achievement.³⁵ How valid the Ovidian alternative was is suggested by the response it found in later European literature. It did not diminish Vergil's richly deserved impact on the later tradition, and our complex and soul-searching times may provide a more congenial reception for Vergil than for a superb *raconteur*. Still, European literature would have been incalculably impoverished if Ovid had not provided a timely response and alternative to Vergil. For example, 'Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Milton seem to have known and used the *Metamorphoses* more than anything written by Vergil.'³⁶

Mere parody and burlesque of what Vergil had done in the *Aeneid* would not have constituted an equally enduring alternative. This is why Ovid, in his *Aeneid*, largely eschews them. Opportunities were not lacking and Ovid's versatile imagination could have made the most of them, as it did in the stories of Io, Coronis, Tiresias, and many others. The best example is provided by the Dido episode. According to Ovid himself, Vergil's Dido story was that part of *Aeneid* which, like the love story genre in our days, was read most (*Trist.* 2.535-6):

nec legitur pars ulla magis de corpore toto,
quam non legitimo foedere iunctus amor.

[No part of the whole poem is read more than the story of the love that was consummated without a legally binding contract.]

In the *Metamorphoses*, however, Ovid gives the barest summary of the encounter. He keeps it from striking a tragic note by the use of stylistic figures such as the same syllepsis (14.78) that he had used earlier in other erotic contexts (*Her.* 6.55; *A.A.* 2.407; *Met.* 9.279), a litotes (14.79), and a play on words (14.81) which highlights the

kind of paradox that was dear to Ovid's taste. But such avoidance of the tragic is Ovid's customary procedure, and casual as it is, his summary is not a caricature (14.78-81):

excipit Aenean illic animoque domoque
non bene discidium Phrygii latura mariti
Sidonis inque pyra sacri sub imagine facta
incubuit ferro deceptaque decipit omnes.

[There the Sidonian queen received Aeneas hospitably in heart and home, and she would not bear well the departure of her Phrygian husband. On a pyre, built under pretense of sacred rites, she fell upon his sword and so, herself deceived, she deceived others.]

The suggestion that Ovid's earlier treatment of the subject in *Heroides* 7 was the main reason he did not take it up again in the *Metamorphoses* is contradicted by his retelling, *aliter*, in the *Metamorphoses* stories like those of Cephalus and Procris, Ceres and Proserpina, and Daedalus and Icarus. Yet comparison with his earlier adaptations of Vergilian themes and tropes is helpful because it sets into relief the fact that in his *Aeneid* Ovid is far less of the *nequitiae poeta* than one might expect, e.g., from his utilization of the *Georgics* for the *Art of Love*.³⁷ It is remarkable that, differently from Vergil as he treats stories such as those of the Sibyl and Circe, Ovid gives them a meaningful function. It corresponds, within the thematic framework of the *Metamorphoses*, to the similar, if 'grander' role these episodes had had in Vergil's poem. Even in the Anius story Ovid refrains from the kind of utter banalization of a Vergilian subject, which characterizes *Heroides* 7, but finds some meaningful connection, although it is not nearly as profound as Vergil's, between the episode and the events that befell Aeneas. In sum, the Vergilian episodes which he recasts—and they comprise the bulk of his *Aeneid*—indeed prove that Ovid succeeded in his task to find a convincing alternative to Vergil's treatment of myth. Mere trivialization of stories from the *Aeneid* would not have achieved the same purpose. It would not have been substantial enough, and Ovid realized this, for the kind of enduring poetic achievement, leading to immortality, which he envisaged. For basically, his poetic

aim was quite serious: to demonstrate that the non-moral, non-metaphysical, playful, witty, humorous, visual, and purely narrative treatment of myth could validly exist next to Vergil's. It did.

Ovid adapts motifs and, to a lesser extent, entire stories from the *Aeneid* throughout the *Metamorphoses*, but his own *Aeneid* is his most direct confrontation with Vergil's epic—that it was intentional is also shown by Seneca's comment (*Suas.* 3.7)—and therefore affords the best insight into his attitude to the mythopoeia of his predecessor. The Vergilian adaptations outside of *Met.* 13.623–14.608 often serve an immediate parodic or amusing purpose within the story in which they occur rather than be parodic comments on the *Aeneid* itself. Besides, we cannot ignore that Ovid chose to exclude from his own *Aeneid* those episodes in Vergil's epic which he recast with great, playful exuberance or sustained, overt parody, such as his description of the underworld and the contention between Aeneas and Turnus over Lavinia. The former is part of the story of Athamas and Ino (4.432–80) and makes for a highly entertaining interlude, whereas the latter is the allusive background of Herakles' and Achelous' fight over Deianeira (9.1–92) and subtly parodies both Vergil's and Achelous' account.³⁸ Instances like these are part of Ovid's metamorphosis of his models. Taken collectively, they support the judicious opinion of J. M. Frécaut that 'it (i.e. the *Aeneid*) is neither harshly caricatured nor systematically desecrated, but subtly utilized for other ends. The parody is underlying, it comes to the surface at times, but it does not take possession of everything and does not turn the model into derision.'³⁹

This agrees well with Ovid's own statement, that he was not malicious in his imitations of other poets.⁴⁰ It is also worth considering that Ovid's most obvious and sustained parody⁴¹ of a Vergilian passage is the story of Orpheus (10.17ff.), which Vergil told in the *Georgics* (4.453–527) and not in the *Aeneid*, and it is the *Aeneid* that is the true antipode to the *Metamorphoses*. Even though Vergil's *Aeneid*, therefore, has a special place among Ovid's 'models', it is doubtful that each of the scattered adaptations of passages or motifs from the *Aeneid* has the same, almost programmatic significance in the *Metamorphoses* as Ovid's direct treatment of the *Aeneid* in *Met.* 13.623–14.608. Sometimes they may simply serve the same purpose as, for instance, Ovid's parody of Homer in the speech of Salmacis.⁴² Taken together, they help to round out the picture we

derived from Ovid's *Aeneid* and give added emphasis to the element of play by which Ovid was able to assert his mythopoeic and literary independence in the face of Vergil's momentous achievement.

3: AUGUSTUS AND ROME

One of the opinions about the *Metamorphoses* which, for no particular reason and despite the widely differing views of the exact structure of the poem, has tended to become crystallized and been accepted as something approaching orthodoxy, is the presumed 'Augustan culmination' of the poem. The Augustan passages in Book 15, notably the account of Caesar's apotheosis and the events preceding it (745–851), the praise of Augustus (852–60), and the prayer for Augustus' health (861–70) have come to be considered the climax of the poem, the 'end in view'⁴³ toward which the *Metamorphoses*, for all their thematic discontinuity, seem to gravitate. This claim provides a good fulcrum for determining the importance of Augustan and Roman themes in the *Metamorphoses*. What kind of conclusion can we draw from their existence or non-existence and what sort of attitude do Ovid's direct references to Augustus reveal?

In the absence, which we shall analyze shortly, of a persisting thread of Augustan themes throughout the *Metamorphoses*, the cornerstone of the case for the Augustan culmination is Ovid's programmatic indication that he will bring the poem *ad mea tempora* (1.4). It is worth noting that he does not say, as he does later in *Tristia* 2.560, in . . . *tua tempora, Caesar*.⁴⁴ In the *Metamorphoses*, the phrase is indeed a mere temporal indication, devoid of any ideological or patriotic intent, just as the death of Cleopatra was the *terminus ad quem* for the tragic pantomime. This temporal indication was needed to highlight the peculiar Ovidian innovation of combining metamorphosis poetry with a chronological scheme and thereby underlining the universal significance of myth.⁴⁵ The reference *ad mea tempora* calls attention to Ovid's literary strategy, and not to his ideological orientation.

This seems, at first sight, to be contradicted by Ovid's restatement of his intent in the *Tristia* passage which we have just quoted. Besides noting its corrected phraseology, however, we should be careful not to take it at face value. In this poem and others (e.g.,

Pont. 1.1.27–8), Ovid makes several claims, which patently cannot be substantiated, about the frequency of his references to Augustus in his earlier poetry. He contends that even the books that were his *crimina* are ‘full of your (i.e. Augustus’) name in a thousand places’ (*Trist.* 2.61–2). In fact, the *Art of Love* and the *Remedies of Love* together contain no more than six such references.⁴⁶ The same is true of Ovid’s claim that in the *Metamorphoses*, Augustus will find many praises of his name (*Trist.* 2.63–6). It is useful, therefore, to trace the actual presence and use of Augustan and Roman themes before Book 15.

They are not an important thematic element of the poem. Most of the scattered allusions to contemporary Rome or Augustan practices occur in Book 1 and are characterized best as ‘the natural references to his own social environment which any writer might be expected to make’.⁴⁷ We have already discussed the references to *magni . . . Palatia caeli*, the Roman sociology and topography of heaven, and the *Penates* in 1.171–6, and to the murder of Caesar in 1.199–205.⁴⁸ In addition, Ovid alludes in 1.145 to Caesar and Pompey, as Catullus (29.4) had, to the triumph and the temple of Apollo on the Palatine in 1.560–5, to the custom of young Roman women to wear amber jewelry (2.366), and to the Capitoline geese in 2.538–9. The list of rivers dried up by the conflagration caused by Phaethon concludes with the Tiber (2.259). Further, as we have seen, there is *color Romanus* in stories such as those of Philemon and Baucis and of Battus (2.676–707), who is changed into the kind of stone Romans would hold in their hands when swearing a solemn oath.⁴⁹ All this, however, does not constitute a thematic movement toward a Roman–Augustan climax. Myths like the gigantomachy (1.151–62) and the exploits of Hercules (9.1–272), which were used by other writers for a poetic glorification of Augustus’ deeds, have no such overtones in the *Metamorphoses*.

When we reach Books 12–14, where Ovid takes up myths which for the Romans were at least ‘para-history’,⁵⁰ it again is not Ovid’s purpose to give them a Roman or Augustan import. The story of the fall of Troy, which Ovid had already singled out in the *Art of Love* as the supreme example of narrative flexibility,⁵¹ provides the opportunity for just that. The *controversia* between Ajax and Odysseus, and the vicissitudes of Hecuba and Memnon are all well told and, as is often the case, only loosely connected. The fall of Troy is not

set against the backdrop of the destiny of the new Troy, Rome. In the subsequent part of the *Metamorphoses*, his ‘*Aeneid*’, Ovid’s concern once more is with the narrative possibilities of myth rather than thematic grandeur or even consistency. If anything, metamorphosis, and not the destiny of Rome, is the controlling theme of his *Aeneid*. The same is true of the speech of Pythagoras which, together with the story of Hippolytus (15.492–546), accounts for more than half of Book 15. The Roman–Augustan topics that crop up in between, i.e. the list of Alban kings (14.609–21), whom the Julian family claimed as their ancestors (cf. *Fasti* 4.40), and the apotheoses of Romulus and Hersilie (14.805–51), are separated from one another and overshadowed by yet another variant of a familiar type of Ovidian story, whose protagonists this time are Vertumnus and Pomona (14.622–771). The brief account of the conflict with the Sabines (14.772–804) centers on the timely metamorphosis of a cold spring into a hot one and contains one of the most succinct summaries of the founding of Rome (14.774–5):

festisque Palilibus urbis

moenia conduntur.

[On the festival of Pales, the city walls were founded.]

Even with all due allowance for Ovid’s practice of interspersing mythological cycles with unrelated stories, there is no Rome cycle in the same sense that there is one about the Cadmeans, Perseus, or Hercules.

The eulogy of Augustus and the account of Julius Caesar’s apotheosis are not the organic end of a persistent thematic development. They are ‘dedicatory in intent and, as dedications, stand outside the course of the narrative’.⁵² On the other hand, a good case can be made for the Roman purpose of the Asclepius episode (15.626–744), which precedes them. It is the only story in the entire *Metamorphoses* which Ovid introduces by invoking the Muses (15.622–5). The underlying idea of the rather extensive account of the god’s sojourn from the *omphalos* of Greece to Rome is indeed, as Fränkel has observed, ‘that Rome has become the center of the civilized world’.⁵³ It is entirely in keeping with Ovid’s usual practice in such long episodes that even here the humorous touches are not missing.

They consist mostly in the visual over-explicitness with which the movements of the snake and his use of the ship are described. Ovid's treatment of the situation is another testimony that he is still the same Ovid as in the earlier books. As we saw earlier, his humor would be given too one-sided a function if it was interpreted as existing for the sole purpose of undercutting or parodying the serious.

What are we to make of the fundamental irrelevance of Augustan and Roman themes to the *Metamorphoses*? It would be too facile to call them, as if often done, a 'Greek poem', because no Greek, and certainly no Greek at the time of Augustus, ever produced anything like the *Metamorphoses*. Modern practice to the contrary, ethnic denominations are inadequate for defining the essence of *ingenium*. It is more pertinent to elaborate what we said earlier about Ovid's modification of the idea of *Roma aeterna* in the speech of Pythagoras (15.420ff.) and its supersession by the idea of the eternity of poetic achievement.⁵⁴ It is possible that the word *perpetuum*, which Ovid chose in lieu of the more common and metrically equivalent *continuum* (*carmen*), may imply this notion besides its obvious recall of Callimachus' *ἄεισμα διηνεκές*.⁵⁵ The idea is clearly expressed, of course, in the epilogue which is the formal counterpart to the poem. Here Ovid pointedly asserts that the perpetual fame of the *Metamorphoses* is impervious even to *Iovis ira*, the wrath of Jupiter (15.871).

In the *Tristia*, Ovid uses this phrase to refer to Augustus.⁵⁶ The argument, however, that Ovid wrote the epilogue to the *Metamorphoses* after his banishment is not especially compelling because, as we have seen, this epilogue is the natural culmination of the intensely personal achievement which the *Metamorphoses* constitute for Ovid. It is an integral part of the poem rather than a belated polemical afterthought. The case for the identification of Jupiter with Augustus in 15.871 therefore rests with the context of Book 15. In 15.857-8, Ovid compares Caesar and Augustus to Saturn and Jupiter, and in lines 858-60, he speaks of the similar roles of Jupiter in heaven and Augustus on earth, a comparison reminiscent of the beginning of Horace's Fifth 'Roman' Ode. In line 866, however, Ovid discontinues this analogy. Jupiter now is quite distinct from Augustus as Ovid invokes Jupiter Capitolinus to grant Augustus a long life. When the reader reaches the phrase *Iovis ira*, it is the distinctness of Jupiter and Augustus, and not their identification, that is foremost in his mind. Moreover, with *Iovis ira* Ovid reuses a motif (*fulminis*

iram; 15.811) from his account of the indestructibility of the books of the Fates (15.806ff.), specifically the fates of the Julian family. This echo is a forceful expression of Ovid's conviction that the eternity and imperviousness of his own poem to the ravages of time will not be inferior to anything. His own claim to fame is equal to that of the Julians. Unlike theirs, however, it does not depend on divine guarantors. Ovid does not mean to be condescending here. After his de-emphasis of the positive, divine functions of the gods throughout the *Metamorphoses* he could hardly invoke deities in such a capacity. The epilogue is an unequalled expression of confidence in the inherent immortality of creative literature; after Ovid still had asked for the gods' guidance for his undertaking in his proem, he now stresses the imperviousness of the completed work even to the power of their foremost representative. Since it serves as the best established analogue, the eternal quality of the Julian achievement is not depreciated, and *Iovis ira* is not simply a polemic defiance of the Augustan house. But Ovid's creed is that the nature of his own achievement, which is creative, literary, and non-political, is even more enduring than political power and attainment. Poetic fame is even more indestructible than the greatness of political order or empire.

It would be forcing the evidence if we construed the absence of Roman-Augustan themes in most of the poem and their treatment in Book 15 as a polemical, *engagée* antithesis between the Ovid of the *Metamorphoses* and the Augustan state. Those who have argued this case may point to the analogy of the problem that *ars latet arte sua*, which we confronted earlier,⁵⁷ and say that outright, openly stated defiance was hardly possible. Hence, they argue, we need to look out for subtle nuances. By its nature, the method is prone to overinterpretation, as it perhaps has to be. We should note, however, that in the *Amores* and the *Art of Love* Ovid could be outspoken in stating his disagreement with Roman-Augustan values.

The chronology of the poems sheds some light on this contrast between the earlier poems and the *Metamorphoses*. At the time he wrote the *Amores*, the Augustan program or the *pax Augusta*, and the welcome difference it provided from the upheavals and the system by which it had been preceded, were momentous events that called for and found poetic response and discussion. But as Augustus' reign wore on, the generation of Vergil and Horace,

which had witnessed the pre-Augustan dislocations, passed away. When Ovid wrote the *Metamorphoses*, he wrote for his generation, a generation whom Tacitus viewed as having been reduced to political inertia by the deliberate exploitation, on the part of Augustus, of *dulcedo otii*—the attraction of leisure (*Ann.* 1.2). It is doubtful that this state of affairs was the result of Augustus' scheming rather than the natural product of decades of unprecedented peace and prosperity. The poetry that was written for the society of the late Augustan age reflects the changed ambience. It would be unnatural to expect it to have the same fervor and concerns as the wartime and post-war poetry of the generation of Vergil and Horace.

The change from the *Art of Love* to the *Metamorphoses*, which were substantially completed within ten years of one another, may seem more startling. Permeated as it is with allusions to the Roman locale and Roman customs, the *Art* is as Roman a poem as can be, though the quality of its nationalism is totally different from the poetry of Vergil, Horace, and even Propertius' fourth book of elegies. On several occasions, Ovid takes issue with central aspects of Augustus' antiquarianism only in order to disassociate himself from it.⁵⁸ The absence of such overt criticism in the *Metamorphoses* has been interpreted either as Ovid's conversion to Augustanism or as a change to latent anti-Augustanism. Neither can be adequately supported from the text of the *Metamorphoses*, and this is one indication that this binary system is not applicable to the poem. When Ovid does not accord much mention to Augustus and his policies and programs in the *Metamorphoses*, it is not because he is 'anti-Augustan' but because 'for Ovid and his generation, the *Pax Augusta* was not hard-won and still precarious, it was the natural state of things and could be taken for granted. By the time Ovid came to write the *Metamorphoses*, it had been the normal condition of Roman life for over thirty of his forty-three years. It did not need celebration, nor even particular acknowledgement.'⁵⁹

There is no evidence for an organization of literary activity and opinion in the late Augustan reign comparable to the fallacious parallel with such attempts in Mussolini's Italy. If anything, as is clear from Dio's and Suetonius' accounts, free speech was as rampant as ever and so was its toleration. More germanely to Ovid's literary purposes, there are no cogent grounds for the assumption that thirty years after the battle of Actium a long hexameter poem *a priori* was

expected to deal with *gesta Caesaris*. The literary taste of late Augustan society was a far stronger element of 'pressure', if one wishes to approach literary activity under Augustus in those terms, than any interference on the part of the emperor, and there is no indication that such interference took place. Reflecting the change of interest and the untroubled ambience of the times, themes that intrinsically were more literary than patriotic became the center of preoccupation. The *Metamorphoses* are 'Augustan' in the literary sense of the word. They are another masterpiece written during a period of high literary refinement. Their aim, the revivification of myth, is anything but trivial. They were not written under the same historical circumstances as the *Aeneid*. Therefore they are not concerned with the same themes and they are not a searching of the Roman soul. It is extraneous, however, to use this difference as the basis for value judgements or ideological inferences.

The change—a metamorphosis itself—that is exemplified by a poem like the *Metamorphoses* in comparison to the earlier Augustan poetry, has been noted. Like so many other aspects, however, of the poetry of the period it is in need of more judicious definition and appreciation. We do it little justice by writing off all Roman poetry after 8 B.C., the death of Horace, as 'decadent',⁶⁰ nor is Ovid's poem the 'silver' lining on the firmament of the history of Latin literature. It is, in a way, the kind of 'courtly' poetry we know from later ages and literatures. It is literature largely written for its own sake, apolitical, and designed for the enjoyment of a leisured and sophisticated audience.

It would also be overzealous to attribute bitterly anti-Augustan animus to Ovid's playful allusions to the emperor. In his description of Hercules' apotheosis, for instance, Ovid says that the hero is becoming *augusta gravitate verendus* (9.270)—'awesome with august weightiness'. Part of the irony of the phrase consists in the play on both the literal and the figurative meaning of *gravitas*. Ovid goes on to emphasize the literal meaning by following it up with *pondus* three lines later and with a reference in line 287 to the *gravitas*, pregnancy, of Alcmena which figures so prominently in the comic tradition. Above all, in the light of the common association of Hercules and Augustus, *augusta*, an adjective Ovid uses only three times in the poem,⁶¹ is almost certainly an ironic allusion to the emperor. It is the kind of playful irony which Ovid applies to

everything, including his own role as a poet, and there is nothing biting, subversive, or political about it.

Another example is Ovid's treatment of the Cipus story (15.565-621). In contrast to the other extant version of the story (Val. Max. 5.6.3), Ovid does not emphasize the *pietas* of the man, but his regal aspirations and insignia, which he tries to cover up with a laurel wreath. The latter was the well-known personal badge of honor of Augustus.⁶² But again such sophisticated playfulness—and it also is Ovid's comment on the contrived nature of many Roman myths into which one could later read almost anything—is not a *cri de coeur* or part of Ovid's 'revolt' against Augustus. Augustus himself jested about his true status when he asked Maecenas to send Horace to his *regia*, the house of the king.⁶³

It remains to place the tone of the eulogy of Augustus in Book 15 into its proper perspective. To modern taste, it may appear overdone and crude, and a case can thus be made that Ovid engaged in deliberate exaggeration to undermine the credibility of his flattery. Even though this view prevails at the moment, it has by no means been shared by all modern scholars. A more important criterion is that by the standards of Ovid's own society and contemporary poetic practice, he was not grotesquely fulsome. Compare, for instance, a stanza from one of Horace's later Odes (4.5.5-8):

lucem redde tuae, dux bone, patriae:
instar veris enim vultus ubi tuus
adfulsit populo, gravior it dies
et soles melius nitent.

[Bring back the light of day to your country, good leader;
for when your face has shone upon the people like the spring-
time, the day passes more pleasantly, the suns shine more
brightly.]

What seems overdone by modern standards in fact is a tactful and tasteful tribute to the emperor in the light of the ancient tradition of imperial panegyric.⁶⁴ Ovid may not match Horace in the exquisite phrasing of his laudation, but this is due to general reasons of style in the *Metamorphoses*. As elsewhere in the poem, this style is more expansive and exoteric than that of an Horatian ode.

Other Vergilian and Horatian passages can be adduced. In *Met.* 15.858, for instance, Ovid rephrases the idea, which Vergil expresses in *Aeneid* 6.792-4, that Augustus will supersede Saturn. Similarly, Ovid's prayer to the gods for Augustus' welfare (15.861-70) is, even formally, not parodic. The parody of prayer in ancient literature is a subject which happens to have been studied in some detail,⁶⁵ and none of its characteristics are evident in the Ovidian passage.

Finally, there is the evidence from Ovid's other poems. If his account of Julius' Caesar's apotheosis in *Metamorphoses* 15 had been intended as a parody, it is highly unlikely that Ovid should have wanted to refer to it in *Ex Ponto* 4.13.25-6. In this poem, however, 'on the occasion of Augustus' demise in 14 A.D., he completes the picture he had begun years before and explains the death and deification of Augustus in exactly the way in which he had related the apotheosis of Julius'.⁶⁶ Ovid wrote the poem for the purpose of asking his friend Carus to intercede on his behalf with Augustus' successor. Some scholars have argued that Ovid, though in the *Tristia* rather than in the *Epistulae ex Ponto*, often weakens his case by sounding a contradictory note of defiance.⁶⁷ It is doubtful, however, that we can impose this interpretation on the passage at hand because Ovid takes the occasion in his exile poetry to correct his earlier, frivolous treatment of imperial themes such as the triumph.⁶⁸ Evidently he saw no need to revise his treatment of Caesar's deification and therefore could let it stand on its own serious merits in the very first poem he sent, filled with desperate hope for a commutation of his sentence, from Tomis after the news of Augustus' death. Nor is his flattery of Augustus in the *Metamorphoses* any more 'grotesque' than in many similar passages in the *Fasti* and the exile poetry, in which the likelihood of satiric purpose often is even more remote.⁶⁹

Above all, we should not misinterpret as anti-Augustanism or criticism of the principate the problem which Ovid faced in his laudations of Augustus and which resulted from his writing in the last decade of Augustus' long reign. When Horace prays that Augustus may return to heaven only after a long life—*serus in caelum redeas* (C. 1.2.45)—his wish is entirely natural, coming as it does at the beginning of Augustus' rule in 28 B.C. When Ovid makes the same point almost four decades later, it seems somewhat out of date. Similarly, Ovid's description of the portents that preceded the

murder of Caesar (*Met.* 15.779-802) cannot possibly be imbued with the same fervor and anxiety as the description of Vergil (*Geo.* 1.467-97), who wrote it only a few years after living through the events and at a time when the future was still far from certain.

In the *Metamorphoses*, such descriptions or praises are superannuated rather than satirical. Ovid's problem was how to praise Augustus differently from the way in which he had been eulogized since the beginning of his reign. The Horatian Ode which we cited earlier, *Carmen* 4.5, is an interesting attempt to solve the problem. A recent critic has discussed it perceptively and his comments are worth quoting. This Horatian Ode, he writes, 'points the way to a view of poetry whereby the poet's task, if he chose to speak about the state, was to find ever more ingenious formulas, more skilful and original rhetorical tricks, to praise the emperor. Reality and genuineness of emotion cease to be relevant criteria. . . . Political poetry, after the great Augustans, was dead, and its death is foreshadowed in Horace, *Odes* IV.5.'⁷⁰ For Ovid, who wrote his eulogy of Augustus some twenty years after the Horatian poem, the problem was even more acute. He decided to solve it by falling back on the established conventions and topics of praising the emperor, and the procedure contrasts sharply with his usual inventiveness and originality of treatment throughout the *Metamorphoses*. The discrepant note struck by the Augustan passages in Book 15 results from the contrast between the successful adaptation of the tone and spirit of the *Metamorphoses* to the taste of late Augustan society, and the style of the Augustan laudations, which are written in the same terms as they could have been written thirty-five years earlier and as they had been written many times since.

The alternative would have been 'to find ever more ingenious formulas, more skilful and original rhetorical tricks, to praise the emperor'. If Ovid had done so, his 'reality and genuineness of emotion' would have been even more questionable than they already seem to be, to so many of his critics, in the actual manner in which he chose to laud Augustus in Book 15. It is another instance where it is easy to damn Ovid if he does and damn him again if he doesn't. There is no indication and, of course, no evidence that any other poets in Augustus' late reign, after the death of Horace, could cope with the problem any better than Ovid did. The important point is that, again, this is more of a literary problem than an ideological or

political one. It is another useful reminder that if we persist in viewing the poem too much from the constricting and often distorted perspective of 'Augustanism' or 'anti-Augustanism', we will only obstruct the way to a better understanding of the essential, literary and mythopoeic qualities of the *Metamorphoses* and the aims of the genius who wrote them.

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NOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE

1. See below, p. 258. On the general problem of historical perspective, cf. the remarks of W. G. Woodhead, *Thucydides and the Nature of Power* (Cambridge, Mass. 1970) ix-x and W. Kraus, *AAW* 11 (1958) 130.
2. *The Roman Revolution* (Oxford 1939) 468. But see, e.g., A. Dalzell, 'Maecenas and the Poets', *Phoenix* 10 (1956) 151-62.

3. For earlier scholars, see J. C. Thibault, *The Mystery of Ovid's Exile* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1964) 36-7, cf. now Coleman (Bibl. to Ch. 2) 477. For extended anti-Augustan interpretations of the *Metamorphoses* or Book 15 see especially Otis, Segal, Curran, and Holleman.
4. *The Critic as Artist* (1891). Wilde, to be sure, meant 'must' in a different sense from coercion, but it is an apt quotation nonetheless.
5. *Amores* 1.1; 1.15; 2.1; 2.18; 3.1; discussed by W. Wimmel, *Kallimachos in Rom* (Wiesbaden 1960) 295ff., who concludes (p. 330): 'Für Ovid besteht in der Tat weder der kallimacheische noch der augusteische Zwang zur Apologetik'.
6. *De poetis*, pp. 116-17 (Rostagni). See C. Becker, *Das Spätwerk des Horaz* (Göttingen 1963) 9ff., 194ff.
7. See R. W. B. Lewis, *Furioso* 5 (1950) 52 and my article in *Festschrift für Joseph Vogt* II.4 (Berlin 1974).
8. P. G. Walsh, *Livy. His Historical Aims and Methods* (Cambridge 1961) 287. Cf. S. Commager, *The Odes of Horace* (New Haven 1962) 31-3.
9. Otis xii.
10. The quotations are taken, in order, from Wilkinson 221, Fränkel 105-6; Wilkinson 221; Fränkel 107. But see Marg, *Gnomon* 21 (1949) 55-6; Guthmüller 133, and Coleman (Bibliogr. to Ch. 2) 472.
11. See Ch. 1, p. 11.
12. See Bömer 183ff. and Lamacchia I, pp. 315ff. for more examples that are not cited in our discussion.
13. Cf. Guthmüller 89-90.
14. Cf. Ch. 4, pp. 169-70.
15. Bömer 188-9. By these standards, Aeneas' marked anxiety to receive the oracle in oral rather than written form—because the draft might blow the leaves away—in *Aen.* 6.74-6 (cf. *Aen.* 3.443-52) could also be considered less than sublime. E. J. Kenney's (in Binns, *Ovid*) careful analysis of Ovid's diction shows how Ovid 'profaned' Vergil in the sense that he perfected 'a poetic *koine*, a stylistic instrument which was freely manageable by writers of lesser genius. The Ovidian manner . . . is imitable; Virgil's is not' (p. 119). Ovid's awareness of Vergil's inimitability also applies to content; see below.
16. The quotations, in order, are from R. D. Williams' commentary on *Aeneid* 3 (Oxford 1962) 181; R. B. Lloyd, *AJP* 88 (1957) 398; J. W. Mackail, *The Aeneid of Vergil* (Oxford 1930) Appendix B.
17. For more detail, see *AJP* 89 (1968) 161-4.
18. See *Met.* 6.651, 655, 665, and Ch. 3, p. 131.

19. See V. Pöschl, *Die Dichtkunst Vergils*, 2nd ed. (Vienna 1964) 23ff.
20. In contrast to Homer, *Od.* 10.392ff., Ovid omits any mention of the men's looking younger and more beautiful after their re-metamorphosis, and of Circe's benefactions to them thereafter.
21. Cf. C. P. Segal, *TAPA* 99 (1968) 442.
22. Hesiod, *Theog.* 1011-13; Callias *apud* Fest. 269, p. 329 (Lindsay); Dion. Halic., *Ant. Rom.* 1.72.5; Servius, *ad Aen.* 7.47; 12.164; Serv. auct., *ad Aen.* 1.273. See S. Weinstock, *JRS* 50 (1960) 117-18.
23. See Ehwald's commentary on 14.512ff.
24. R. D. Williams, 'The purpose of the *Aeneid*', *Antichthon* 1 (1967) 36-40.
25. Cf. Ch. 1, pp. 51, 60-1.
26. Cf. Ch. 1, pp. 46-8.
27. Cf. Kraus 118 and our Ch. 4, p. 182.
28. Cf. Bernbeck 121-2. On a second-century *cista* depicting the triumph of Aeneas (see my *Aeneas, Sicily, and Rome* [Princeton 1969] pl. 34) Aeneas' standard is a heron, the heraldic animal of Ardea; see A. Alföldi, *MDAI(R)* 78 (1971) 22.
29. The subject is treated more seriously by Pythagoras in 15.391-407.
30. Cf. Ch. 4, pp. 170-1.
31. Segal 270.
32. *Met.* 13.732-14.74. These episodes, however, in contrast to corresponding episodes in other cycles, have the same protagonists that appear in the Aeneas cycle itself, i.e. Circe and Polyphemus. The characteristics of Circe and Polyphemus are the same both in the interspersed stories and the '*Aeneid*'. All this contributes to greater unity than we usually find in Ovid's narration of other mythological cycles. For the Cadmus cycle, see Ch. 2, pp. 92-3.
33. It is not surprising, therefore, that Ovid's influence on Lucan, so far as we can establish such matters, is second only to Vergil's and goes beyond mere verbal or phraseological parallels. See W. Rutz, *Studien zur Kompositionskunst und zur epischen Technik Lucans* (Diss. Kiel 1950) 174-7; O. C. Phillips, *The Influence of Ovid on Lucan's Bellum civile* (Diss. Univ. of Chicago 1962); M. von Albrecht in *Lucain. Entret. Fond. Hardt* 15 (1970) 293-77; cf. M. P. O. Morford, *The Poet Lucan* (Oxford 1967), Index s.v. 'Ovid'; R. Pichon, *Les sources de Lucain* (Paris 1912) 231-5.
34. See the passages cited in Ch. 4 n. 55.
35. Cf. Stitz 120.
36. Anderson 5.
37. See E. J. Kenney, in *Ovidiana* 201-9.

38. For details see Bernbeck 16-26, and my article in *Wien. Stud.* 85 (1972) 94-8; cf. Ch. 1, pp. 30-1.
39. Frécaut (Bibl. to Ch. 4) 245.
40. *Trist.* 2.563-6, quoted in Ch. 4, p. 192.
41. See Otis 184-5.
42. See Ch. 4, pp. 186-90.
43. L. P. Wilkinson in *Ovidiana* 232; Ludwig (Bibl. to Ch. 2) 82 and passim; Otis 354, 368 and passim; V. Buchheit, *Hermes* 94 (1966) 80-108; F. W. Lenz, *Helikon* 7 (1967) 504-5; cf. E. J. Kenney. *CR* n.s. 17 (1967) 52, who accepts 'the Augustan significance . . . of the great progression from Chaos to Cosmos'.
44. For this kind of correction, cf. *Trist.* 2.247-50, which is a quotation of *A.A.* 1.31-4, except that Ovid replaces *nos Venerem tutam* (*A.A.* 1.33) with *nisi legitimum* (*Trist.* 2.249).
45. See Ch. 1, p. 3 and pp. 68-9.
46. *A.A.* 1.176-216; 3.119, 389-92, 526-7, 614; *R.A.* 155-6.
47. Little (Bibl. to Ch. 2) 178. Many other valuable details are found in his perceptive discussion on pp. 170-88 and 209-21, and in his article listed in the Bibliography to this Chapter.
48. See Ch. 4, p. 170, 1, p. 29 and 4, pp. 190-1.
49. For details, see R. Holland, *RhM* 75 (1926) 160-1; on the Romanization of the *Philemon and Baucis* see Ch. 4, pp. 201-2.
50. See the valuable discussion of M. Grant, *Roman Myths* (London 1971), esp. pp. 217ff.
51. *A.A.* 2.123-42; see Ch. 1, p. 4.
52. Little 399.
53. Fränkel 108.
54. See Ch. 1, pp. 43-5.
55. See Ch. 1, pp. 24-5 with note 39.
56. *Trist.* 1.5.78; 3.11.62, further explained by *Caesaris ira* in line 72; see K. Scott, *TAPA* 61 (1930) 57-8. More important, besides the exegesis of the phrase in its proper context in the *Metamorphoses*, is the use of the idea of Jupiter's wrath in Ovid's earlier poetry, where Jupiter clearly is *not* identified with Augustus. See especially *Amores* 2.1.11-20, where Ovid renounces the undertaking to write a traditional epic, i.e. a gigantomachy (cf. *Trist.* 2.3.31-4 and Ch. 1, p. 25). G. Luck, *op. cit.* (Ch. 1 n. 41) 462-79 has, quite plausibly, emphasized that Ovid seriously contemplated and even began such an undertaking. It was replaced, however, by the *Metamorphoses*, an anything but conventional long hexameter poem of epic proportions. Hence, a reference to Jupiter's wrath was entirely appropriate in the epilogue to that poem.

- Comparison of the occurrences of certain themes in the *Met.* with their occurrences in Ovid's earlier, rather than later, poetry is essential for a balanced perspective (see Ch. 1, p. 25ff.) and needs further detailed study. The examples could be multiplied; *Amores* 2.1.30, e.g., where Ovid speaks of the sons of Atreus in terms of an epic subject, contradicts the 'anti-Augustan' interpretation of *Met.* 15.855 by Holleman 49-51.
57. See Ch. 2, p. 79.
 58. See especially *A.A.* 1.637-46 and 3.121-8 and Otis, *TAPA* 69 (1938) 208-11.
 59. Little 400. Little, however, goes on to argue that 'this ready acceptance of one aspect of the Augustan order, this willingness to disengage himself from political reality which is reflected in the *Metamorphoses*, was to have unfortunate consequences for Ovid'. (400-1.) He cites, among others, R. Humphries (Introduction to the translation of the *Metamorphoses*, p. vi): 'The work on which Ovid's reputation was founded shows a great deal of the spirit of the Restoration; unhappily for this happy man, there was in Augustus a great deal of the spirit of Cromwell.'
 60. This traditional prejudice is retained by Williams (Ch. 4 n. 47) vii.
 61. Besides here, in 6.73 and 15.145. Cf. Anderson 436-7, Livy 1.7.9 where *augustior* is allusively applied to Hercules, and Ovid, *Trist.* 1.1.71.
 62. For details, see *TAPA* 98 (1967) 181-91.
 63. Suetonius, *De poetis*, p. 114 (Rostagni).
 64. See E. Doblhofer, *Die Augustuspanegyrik des Horaz in formalhistorischer Sicht* (Heidelberg 1966) 86-91.
 65. H. Kleinknecht, *Die Gebetsparodie in der Antike* (Stuttgart-Berlin, 1937). Against Coleman's (Bibliogr. to Ch. 2) contention (p. 476) that the comparison of Augustus with Jupiter is satirical in intent because of Jupiter's philandering in the *Metamorphoses*, see Little (Bibl. to Ch. 2) 209-10, who rightly points to the thematic discontinuity of the poem and to the various and disconnected roles in which Jupiter appears in the *Metamorphoses*.
 66. Scott (note 56, above) 50.
 67. See the articles of Marg (Ch. 3 n. 51) and R. Marache, 'La révolte d'Ovide contre Auguste', *Ovidiana* 412-19.
 68. See *Wiener Stud.* 82 (1969) 104-7.
 69. See, e.g., *Fasti* 1.650; 2.132-3, 144; 3.157, 160; 4.123-4; *Ex Ponto* 2.2.71; 3.1.17-18, 145, 150; Scott (note 56, above) 52ff.; (Little, Bibl. to Ch. 2) 210-14.
 70. Williams (Ch. 4 n. 47) 100.