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Ovid's Epyllia: Genres within a Genre

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OVID'S EPYLLIA: GENRES WITHIN A GENRE

by

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VITA

Sister Marilyn Pechillo, the daughter of the late Henry Pechillo and Lucy Maune Pechillo, was born on April 15, 1943, in Baltimore, Maryland.

After completing elementary school in Baltimore, she attended Notre Dame High School in Bridgeport, Connecticut, graduating in 1961.

Having entered the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, she attended Emmanuel College in Boston, Massachusetts, where she received the degree of Bachelor of Arts with a major in Latin. In May, 1973, she received the degree of Master of Arts in Latin Language and Literature from Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut.

For several years she taught Latin on the secondary level. During this time she was active in the Classical Association of New England and served as President of its Connecticut section during the 1976-1977 academic year.

In September, 1977, she received a doctoral fellowship at Loyola University of Chicago, where she subsequently received teaching assistantships in Classics. She was elected a member of Alpha Sigma Nu in 1982. Currently she is Instructor of Classics at Trinity College, Washington, D.C. She is also a member of the American Philological Association and the Classical Association of the Middle Atlantic States.

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Introduction

In his Metamorphoses Ovid has created an ostensibly epic poem which, however, combines features common to other literary forms, especially the epyllion and the epic catalogue. Using epyllion and epic catalogue as organizational devices, Ovid combines within these frames the characteristics of several genres, including didactic or elegiac poetry, as well as rhetorical forms found in drama and oratory. Ovid exploits this combination of genres to create unusual effects: epic heroes, for example, act in an unheroic way; rustics become ludicrous in their attempts to display pietas; gods appear ridiculous as they behave in a manner worse than that of the most wicked mortals, and love stories most often focus on illicit and unnatural passion. The few stories centered on legitimate, natural love end tragically.

Several scholars have commented on Ovid's clever use of genres. Some have analyzed a specific section to show Ovid's inversion of a particular genre.¹ Others have discussed Ovid's attitude toward his subject matter, as it appears in different parts of the poem.² It

¹ See, for example, Nicholas Horsfall, "Epic and Burlesque in Ovid, Met. VIII 260 ff.," CJ, 74 (1979), 319-332.

² See, for example, Charles Segal, "Myth and Philosophy in the Metamorphoses: Ovid's Augustanism and the Augustan Conclusion to

seems useful to combine these two approaches to gain insight into Ovid's method of working throughout the Metamorphoses. Certainty in this matter is, of course, impossible, but insight can be gained by looking at extended passages. The present study will, therefore, analyze two substantial sections of the Metamorphoses with a view to shedding light on the poem's overall structure and meaning, at the same time that it demonstrates Ovid's manipulation of genres for his own purposes within the sections considered.

The emphasis of this study then, will be literary appreciation, that is, it will attempt to judge the Metamorphoses on its own terms, to gain an insight into the genius of its author, not only by comparing his work with that of others, but also by clarifying his treatment of genres within the poem itself. Perhaps the greatest fruit of this study will be, not so much a deeper appreciation of Ovid's genius as shown in the sections analyzed, but rather, the illustration through this analysis of an approach which could be extremely useful for arriving at a deeper appreciation of other sections of the Metamorphoses and ultimately of the poem as a whole.

In order to demonstrate Ovid's combination of genres within the basic structures of epyllion and epic, two epyllia, the Orpheus (10.1-11.66) and the Theseus (7.404-9.97), will be analyzed.

Marjorie Crump³ has recognized the unity of the Orpheus, but no one has, to my knowledge, considered the Theseus as a whole. Because the Orpheus demonstrates tighter epyllion organization, analysis of it will precede that of the more loosely organized Theseus.

Although their combined length of over two thousand lines and their combination within a framework of the features of several genres makes them a good basis for speculation about the rest of the Metamorphoses, the choice of these two epyllia rests primarily on the usefulness of this contrast for arriving at a broadly based appreciation of Ovid's art. The structural similarities and organizational contrasts of the Orpheus and Theseus demonstrate Ovid's ability to create variety within a basic unity. The Orpheus has a carefully arranged main subject which frames the digression and narrates one story, that of Orpheus and Eurydice. Its digression, Orpheus's song, serves as a frame to link together several epyllia. The Theseus, on the other hand, has a less unified structure for two reasons. First, Theseus's activity in the main narrative is quite limited. Although his presence in the opening lines and again at the closing unifies the main subject, the narrative portion of the closing consists of the tales in Achelous's house, tales to which Theseus listens, but in which he has no part. Secondly, the Minos which forms the first

³ Marjorie M. Crump. The Epyllion from Theocritus to Ovid (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1931), pp. 217-218.

digression in the Theseus has a weak connection with the main subject since it does not concern Theseus. In this it resembles Catullus 64 where the coverlet's description has nothing to do with Peleus and Thetis. In that poem, however, the digression is unified by the continual presence of Ariadne, but the digression to the Theseus is barely unified by the figure of Minos as participant in a few narratives. Both the Orpheus and Theseus, therefore, have basic epyllion structure with a digression which frames several stories, but they contrast with each other in the way they are organized, since the Orpheus has tighter and the Theseus has looser organization.

This introductory chapter will explain the theory of literary classification used as a basis for subsequent analysis. It will also establish descriptive definitions of the literary genres to be considered. Because systems of literary classification are debatable, the present discussion will not attempt to evaluate one theory vis-a-vis another. Instead, it will draw on generally accepted theories of literary criticism.

Definitions of Genres

Several theories of literary classification draw on Aristotle and recognize three or four broad categories of literature, called forms, within which are more specific categories called genres. James Craig LaDrière, for example, considers the major literary forms to be

narrative, dramatic, and expository⁴. Others add lyric and some omit expository.⁵ Because expository writing is not a poetic genre, the present study will base its organization on the major forms of narrative, dramatic, and lyric poetry. First, however, these three forms must be defined briefly. Narrative literature relates a story through the spoken or written word, and the ancients employed epic meter for all narrative poetry. A definition of lyric poetry presents a difficulty because the meaning of the term has changed. Originally applied to poetry which was accompanied by a lyre, the term "lyric" later indicated poetry which conveyed the emotional state of the narrator along with, or even in place of the narrative. Today, however, it refers to all poetry which is neither epic nor dramatic. The present study accepts, for the sake of convenience in establishing broad categories, the modern definition as stated by Pfeiffer, "In modern times all non-epic and non-dramatic poetry is usually called lyric."⁶ Dramatic forms, finally, employ both words and actions.

⁴ J. Craig LaDrière, "Classification, Literary," Dictionary of World Literature, ed. Joseph T. Shipley (1953; rev. ed. Totowa, N.J.: Littlefield, Adams & Co., 1968), pp. 62-64.

⁵ W.P. Ker, Form and Style in Poetry, ed. R.W. Chambers (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1928), pp. 146-153; G.N.G. Orsini, "Genres," Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, ed. Alex Preminger (Princeton: Univ. Press, 1965), p. 307; René Wellek and Austin Warren. Theory of Literature (1942; New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1949), pp. 236-237.

⁶ R. Pfeiffer, History of Classical Scholarship From the Beginnings to the End of the Hellenistic Age (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), p. 182.

Because in the Metamorphoses characters often employ rhetorical forms, especially the suasoria, these forms have been included with the dramatic forms. Rhetoric clearly pervades all genres, including epic, but in the sections analyzed in this study it is found most often in the speeches of a heroine addressing herself.

Although some theorists apply the term genres to these or such broad categories, LaDrière uses the term for the narrower classifications. He bases these on subject matter, such as epic referring to heroes, and on the attitude taken toward the work's subject, for example, a satiric attitude, or on a combination of subject matter and attitude. Thus La Drière considers only three types of literary form, but as many genres as there are subjects and attitudes in different works.⁷

Definition of these narrower genres also causes difficulties for modern critics because the ancients used only meter as a differentiator of genres. The ancients did, however, consider certain genres as appropriate for certain subjects, such as epic for heroic deeds and elegy for love poetry. They also associated different poetic attitudes or styles with different genres, thus expecting an exalted style in epic and a more colloquial style in elegy.

The present study follows LaDrière in distinguishing the major categories from the more specific genres. It classifies literary

⁷ J. Craig LaDrière, "Classification, Literary," DWL, p. 64.

genres within one of the broad categories. Significant devices used in several genres are classified in the category where they occur most frequently. Because the Metamorphoses is written in dactylic hexameter, the meter of epic, this study will prescind from metrical considerations, but it will consider style and narrative technique as well as subject matter in the definitions of poetic genres.

As a basis for the analysis in chapters two and three, the present chapter will provide descriptive definitions of the literary genres and devices employed by Ovid in his Orpheus and Theseus. The structure of epyllion and epic which Ovid uses as organizational devices will be delineated. The definitions given here will provide the basis for the use of terms throughout this study.

The following categories provide a convenient basis for discussion.

Genres included in the Orpheus and Theseus

I Narrative forms

Epic

Epyllion

Didactic Poetry

Idyll

Hymn

Literary Devices

epic catalogue

ekphrasis

II Lyric forms

Hymn

Elegy

III Select dramatic and oratorical forms

Dramatic soliloquy

Messenger speech

Controversia

Suasoria

IV Rhetorical elements common to drama and oratory

Sententia

Exemplum

The order of the definitions derives from their importance in Ovid's Metamorphoses. Since the poem is ostensibly epic, this genre will be defined first, followed by the epyllion which Ovid plays against the epic structure. Other narrative forms will next be defined, followed by literary devices. Lyric, dramatic, and oratorical forms, with rhetorical elements common to them, will conclude the definition of terms.

A. Epic

In his Ovid as an Epic Poet,⁸ Brooks Otis clearly situates Ovidian epic within the context of Greek and Roman epic, and the first

⁸ 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Univ. Press, 1970), pp. 331-339.

chapter of his Virgil: A Study in Civilized Poetry,⁹ provides an excellent survey of the development of Greek and Roman epic. The following discussion will, therefore, draw on Otis to indicate the originality of Ovidian epic.

An epic is a long narrative poem, composed in dactylic hexameter, involving the deeds of gods and heroes. It is generally set in the remote past; its actions occur in the palaces of kings and queens and on battlefields where heroes mingle with the gods and achieve glory through their deeds. Because of its lofty themes, epic poetry has its own poetic devices and maintains a distinctive narrative style. Its language also reflects its elevated setting and themes. Epic poets employ a variety of devices, some of which derive from the nature of oral poetry, and all of which increase the sense of epic grandeur. Poetic devices include the invocation of the Muse, descriptive epithets, developed similes, ekphrasis, ring composition, and catalogue. Although these devices may be used in other genres, they appear consistently in epic. When Ovid uses them he seems to imitate, and on occasion even to parody, their use in Homer and Vergil. In the Metamorphoses Ovid parodies particularly the epic poets' use of catalogue and ekphrasis.

The language of epic poetry reflects its exalted theme and remote setting by employing archaic or archaizing and compound words, circumlocutions, numerous synonyms, and epithets. These features of

⁹ (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), pp. 5-40.

language occur in both oral and literary epic, although the oral composer differs from his literary counterpart in the techniques of language usage. Oral epic stresses repetition to facilitate oral composition whereas literary epic strives for clever variations to delight the reader. What had been for the composer of oral epic practical techniques become for the writer of literary epic archaizing devices. The former works more with phrases and formulas whereas the latter pays greater attention to single words and details. These differences spring from the differences in composition and presentation, but both kinds of epic demonstrate careful use of language to create a sense of epic grandeur.¹⁰

A leisurely pace and expansiveness, continuity of narrative and a sense of objectivity mark epic narrative style. The leisurely pace allows the poet to linger over certain scenes, expanding the narrative of everyday activities like bathing and dressing, eating, and participating in athletics. He thus creates a sense of grandeur and provides a glimpse of a lifestyle which is fuller than that of the poet's contemporaries. Such expansiveness does not, however, interrupt the narrative. Although the pace is leisurely, the narrative always moves forward, carrying the audience through the broad sweep of a continuous story. Because the narrator does not intrude, the poem has an aura of objectivity. This is particularly true for the epics of Homer and

¹⁰ For a comparison of folk and literary epic, see C. M. Bowra, From Virgil to Milton (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1945), pp. 1-32.

Apollonius, but even in Vergil there is what Otis calls, "at least the formal pretence of epic objectivity."¹¹

Ovid clearly intended the Metamorphoses to be an epic poem because he carefully marked it with epic features, including its fifteen book length, epic meter, and exalted theme. Ovid states at the outset his intention of writing a continuous poem, a carmen perpetuum, whose range extends from creation to Ovid's own time, and he invokes divine assistance to attain his end (1.1-4):

In nova fert animus mutatas dicere formas
 corpora; di, coeptis (nam vos mutatis et illas)
 adspirate meis primaque ab origine mundi
 ad mea perpetuum deducite tempora carmen!

Having clearly stated his intention to create an epic poem, Ovid maintains epic appearance throughout the Metamorphoses by employing epic conventions. Otis states:¹²

"There are gods, heroes, long 'epical' speeches, epic descriptions or ekphraseis, similes and epithets, above all a 'continuity' of narrative and an objectivity of viewpoint that are quite unlike the jerky, syncopated, subjective narrative of elegy."

Although he employs epic conventions, Ovid uses these to achieve non-epic effects. He thus distinguishes the Metamorphoses from other types of epic as well as from other verse forms. Otis delineates three features which both link the Metamorphoses with other

¹¹ Ovid as an Epic Poet, p. 336.

¹² Otis, Ovid, pp. 331-332.

types of epic and yet mark it as distinctly Ovidian. These features include continuity of narrative, a subjective point of view, and stylistic precision and lucidity.¹³

Ovid maintains a sense of narrative continuity by linking each story with what precedes and what follows it. The various plans of the Metamorphoses proposed by Otis, Ludwig, and Van Bosselaar,¹⁴ demonstrate the narrative unity which distinguishes epic from elegiac poetry. On the other hand, Ovid's use of epyllion structure and the structure of epic catalogue combine with his variation of tone to create what Otis calls a, "Hesiodic or discontinuous medley of narratives."¹⁵ The Metamorphoses thus differs from Vergil's Aeneid and Homeric epic. Ovid combines narrative styles but achieves an overall sense of continuous narrative.

The second Ovidian feature is subjectivity. Ovid's subjectivity not only distinguishes him from Homer, but it also differs from that of the opponents of long epic because Ovid's subjectivity is, "far more pervasive and far more deeply embedded in the narrative texture."¹⁶ It likewise differs from that of the elegists because it

¹³ Otis, Ovid, pp. 332-343.

¹⁴ Otis, Ovid, pp. 45-90; Walther Ludwig, Struktur und Einheit der Metamorphosen Ovids (Berlin: Walther de Gruyter & Co., 1965); D.E. Van Bosselaar, ed. P. Ovidii Nasonis Metamorphoseon Libri I-XV, rev. B.A. Van Proosdij (1951; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1968).

¹⁵ Otis, Ovid, p. 333; Otis, pp. 332-335, discusses fully Ovid's narrative continuity.

¹⁶ Otis, Ovid, p. 336.

elegists because it always remains subordinate to the narrative. Although he resembles Vergil in employing subjective style, Ovid exceeds the subjectivity of Vergil who had maintained, "at least the formal pretence of epic objectivity."¹⁷ Ovid intrudes as narrator and insists that the reader get the point of the narrative, thereby giving up any claim to objectivity.

Ovid employs repetition, similes and other stylistic devices for his own purposes, namely, to, "clarify rather than complicate the thought."¹⁸ By using epic devices in unepic ways, Ovid modernizes the language and content of epic. He employs stylistic and epic devices to achieve "pictorial" accuracy rather than epic grandeur. In discussing Ovid's style, Otis concludes that it is neither Vergilian nor elegiac and can thus be directed to achieve either an epic or an elegiac effect.¹⁹

B. Epyllion

Major twentieth century studies of the epyllion include Marjorie Crump's The Epyllion from Theocritus to Ovid²⁰ and Kathryn Gutzwiller's dissertation, The Hellenistic Epyllion, a Literary Reexamination.²¹ These two studies, published in 1931 and 1978

¹⁷ Otis, Ovid, p. 336; Otis, pp. 335-339, discusses Ovid's subjectivity.

¹⁸ Otis, Ovid, p. 339.

¹⁹ Otis, Ovid, pp. 339-341. ²⁰ See n. 3.

²¹ Kathryn J. Gutzwiller, Diss. Madison, WI, 1977 (Ann Arbor:

respectively, provide the basis for the present discussion of epyllion.

The epyllion, or short epic, attained the height of its development in the Alexandrian period, but it had its beginnings much earlier, in the catalogue poem, with its episodic structure, and in the Homeric Hymns. Although both of these forms retained epic meter and language, they differed from Homeric epic in substituting episodic for continuous plot development, and in their use of digression to vary the narrative. Homeric epic contained inset episodes like Demodocus's lay in Od. 8, but such episodes remained subordinate to the main narrative. Catalogue poems and the Homeric Hymns, on the other hand, emphasized short episodes rather than developing one plot at great length.²²

With the exhaustion of grand epic, writers turned to new literary forms, to lyric, drama and prose. Gradually the heroic ethos died, and with it the meaning of epic and the tragedy as created by Aeschylus and Sophocles. Although it retained the old formal structure, drama took a new turn with Euripides' questioning of

Xerox Univ. Microfilms, 1978); see also Carl N. Jackson, "The Latin Epyllion," HSCP, 24 (1913), 37-50; C.W. Mendell, "The Influence of the Epyllion on the Aeneid," YCS, 12 (1951), 203-226, and Lawrence Richardson, Jr., Poetical Theory in Republican Rome (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1944).

²² I am indebted to Crump, pp. 6-20, for my discussion of epyllion development.

heroic values and the role of the gods vis-à-vis human suffering. By the early third century, literary demands in Alexandria differed from those in Athens. Because literature had become the pursuit of learned audiences, writers aimed at displaying virtuosity. They emphasized form and method, delighting in learned details and preferring shorter works to longer ones. In the field of drama, the short mime gained in popularity; in lyric the epigram was popular, and grand epic yielded to the epyllion, the idyll, and the elegy.

Three writers, all of whom flourished in the third century, B.C. in Alexandria played a major role in developing the Alexandrian epyllion. Apollonius wrote long epic, but his narrative style differed from that of Homeric epic and thus influenced later epyllion writers. This is particularly true of his *Medea* episode with its romantic theme and psychological interest. Furthermore his Argonautica demonstrated the Alexandrian qualities of display of learning, clever use of language, and attention to details. Callimachus, on the other hand, preferred short rather than long epic. His Hecale, the first formal narrative epyllion, centered its interest on plot and character. Although the text is fragmentary, it is evident that the poem contained a long digression apparently unconnected with the main narrative. Finally, some of Theocritus's poems are epyllia since they are short narratives on epic subjects and contain digressions. Apollonius, Callimachus, and Theocritus thus established the epyllion as a distinctive literary type.

The pastoral poets, Moschus and Bion, who composed heroic idylls, followed Theocritus. Moschus's Europa illustrates epyllion form by setting the story of Io within the idyll's main subject, Zeus and Europa. Bion's Epithalamium of Achilles, although its remains are fragmentary, appears to have similar features. Both Moschus and Bion, therefore, contributed to the development of epyllion.

Euphorion of Chalcis whose work is fragmentary, and Parthenius of Nicaea whose Love Romances were stories suitable for elegy and epyllion, may provide the link to the Latin epyllion, but the evidence is inconclusive. The earliest extant Latin epyllion is Catullus 64, the Peleus and Thetis. The Culex and Ciris in the Appendix Vergiliana date from the early Augustan period. Finally, Vergil's Aristaeus (Georgics 4.315-558) and the epyllia in Ovid's Metamorphoses indicate the heights which the epyllion could attain in the hands of great writers.²³

The poems just mentioned have similarities of structure, stylistic features and content. They thus form a class to which the name epyllion may be applied. All are short narrative hexameter poems which have Alexandrian characteristics and a mythological or romantic subject. Admittedly, the stories in Ovid's Metamorphoses as well as

²³ For discussion of problems about the designation of certain poems as epyllia, see Allen, "The Non-existent Classical Epyllion;" Richardson, Poetical Theory. Richardson considers Catullus 63, the Attis and the Moretum from the Appendix Vergiliana, as epyllia; he agrees with Crump that the Megara is not an epyllion. Cf. also Gutzwiller, The Hellenistic Epyllion, p. 265.

vergil's Aristaeus are parts of longer poems, but the stories themselves do not exceed epyllion length.

The term epyllion is problematic first, because the ancients did not use it to describe a class of poems, and secondly, because modern definitions differ in what they consider essential epyllion features of style and subject matter. A brief survey of ancient uses of the term will precede discussion of its modern usage. This discussion will help to establish a working definition of epyllion.

Hesychius's lexicon of the fifth century A.D., defines epyllion as a "versicle" or "scrap of poetry;" it thus reflects Aristophanes' use of the term to poke fun at Euripides (Ach. 399-400, Pax 531-532, Ran 941-942). Athenaeus, at the beginning of the third century A.D., applied the term to a poem but one without epic subject and possibly not in hexameters.²⁴ The ancient use of epyllion, therefore, differs radically from its modern application. This difference has caused some scholars to reject its use altogether. Gutzwiller, on the other hand, recognizes the problem but retains the term for the sake of convenience.²⁵

The modern use of epyllion to describe members of a class of short narrative hexameter poems originated in the nineteenth century. Its exact point of origin is unknown, but it seems to have been commonly accepted in this sense when Moritz Haupt applied it to

²⁴ Gutzwiller, The Hellenistic Epyllion, pp. 1-2.

²⁵ The Hellenistic Epyllion, p. 7.

Catullus 64 and other Alexandrian poems. His dissertation, De Catulli carm. LXIV, appeared in 1855.²⁶ The term appeared in other nineteenth century studies, and in 1904 with the publication of Heumann's dissertation, De Epyllio Alexandrino, its modern usage seems firmly established. Heumann defined the epyllion as, "a small, independent, narrative poem on a mythological subject, written in hexameters."²⁷

The characteristic epyllion structure is that of a framing subject with an inset story or digression. The digression often compares or contrasts with the main subject in content and style.²⁸ The Aristaeus's main subject, for example, tells of the destruction of Aristaeus's bees, his search, and his discovery of a way to restore them. The digression is connected with the main subject through the figure of Orpheus, whose wife Aristaeus had caused to die. Both parts of the epyllion narrate a loss, but they contrast in subject matter

²⁶ John F. Reilly, "Origins of the Word 'Epyllion,'" CJ, 49 (1953-54), 111; for discussion of the ancient uses of "epyllion" and the difficulty of using it to describe the class of poems under consideration, see in addition to Reilly, 11-114, Walter Allen, Jr., "The Epyllion: a Chapter in the History of Literary Criticism," TAPA, 71 (1940), 1-26, and "The Non-existent Classical Epyllion," SPh, 55 (1958), 515-518; Gutzwiller, pp. 1-7; D. W. T. C. Vessey, "Thoughts on the Epyllion," CJ, 66 (1970), 38-43; and Gordon W. Williams, Tradition and Originality in Roman Poetry (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), pp. 242-243.

²⁷ Reilly, 112, quotes Heumann's definition, given in his dissertation, De Epyllio Alexandrino, 1904.

²⁸ Crump, p. 189; Gutzwiller, however, disagrees with Crump about the importance of a contrast between main subject and digression.

because Aristaeus regains his bees whereas Orpheus finally loses Eurydice.²⁹ The picturesque style of the main subject also contrasts with the digression's greater emphasis on plot and character.³⁰ Ovid's digressions likewise compare or contrast in style and content with the main subjects of his epyllia.

The effort to contrast with epic and epic values influenced the epyllion writers' choice of subjects. They preferred the mundane to the exalted, and they emphasized women, children, the old and the weak, rather than the young and strong. Even when the subject was a hero or a god, his actions were on the ordinary human rather than on the heroic or the divine level.³¹

Epyllion's narrative technique likewise contrasts with that of epic. Whereas the narrative pace of epic is leisurely and expansive, that of epyllion is rapid and allusive. Narrative summaries and brief allusions replace the lengthy tales and developed explanations common in epic. Instead of striving for narrative continuity and objectivity, the epyllion writer focuses on details, slowing or even stopping the forward movement by elaborate descriptions and inset stories. Contrary to epic practice, the epyllion writer frequently intrudes as narrator to comment on the situation. Other features of epyllion

²⁹ For a discussion of Vergil's treatment of the Aristaeus, see Gordon Williams, Tradition and Originality in Roman Poetry (Oxford: Clarendon Press), 1968, pp. 242-243 and L. P. Wilkinson, The Georgics of Virgil: A Critical Survey (Cambridge, 1969), p. 114.

³⁰ Crump, pp. 189-190. ³¹ Gutzwiller, pp. 11-12.

narrative technique include realistic treatment of everyday situations and a playful, lighthearted approach, which contrasts with epic seriousness.³²

C. Didactic Poetry

Didactic poetry is poetry primarily intended to instruct. It can teach a moral or provide factual information on such matters as astronomy, mathematics, and philosophy. On the basis of its meter, dactylic hexameter, the ancients classed didactic poetry with epic. Many didactic poems, notably Hesiod's works, employ the basic structure of epic catalogue, but they also contain many developed narrative passages.

Hesiod's works illustrate the two kinds of instruction which didactic poets sought to provide. His Theogony exemplifies the first type and his Works and Days the second. The first type of didactic poetry sought to provide general instruction, conveying myths, teaching about the nature of the gods and the universe, and providing information about human obligations and cultural ancestry. The second type of didactic poetry, supplied practical, technical information about how to accomplish various tasks, for example, farming in the Works and Days.³³

³² Otis, Ovid, pp. 332-342.

³³ Smith Palmer Bovie, "Didactic Poetry," Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, ed. Alex Preminger (Princeton: Univ. Press, 1965), pp. 190-191; I am indebted to Bovie for my discussion of didactic poetry.

By the fifth century, B.C., Greek didactic poetry had run its course, and it remained for the Alexandrian Age to revive it. Alexandrian writers, including Aratus and Nicander of Colophon, revived the practical or handbook type of didactic poetry. Their work reflected the Alexandrian preference for, "technical, erudite verse packed with information."³⁴

Roman didactic poetry reached its height in the first century, B.C. The two masterpieces of Roman didactic poetry are Lucretius's De Rerum Natura and Vergil's Georgics. Lucretius's poem typifies the first type of didactic poetry, that is, it provides speculative knowledge about the nature of the universe and Epicurean philosophy. The Georgics, on the other hand, contain much practical information about farming, although their purpose goes beyond being a manual for farmers. Lucretius and Vergil thus revived the two types of didactic poetry that had flourished in ancient Greece.

Both Horace and Ovid also wrote didactic poetry. Horace's Ars Poetica provided aesthetic rather than mythological instruction. Ovid wrote mock didactic, parodying the didactic genre in his poems, the Ars Amatoria, the Medicamina Faciei Femineae, and the Remedium Amoris. His Metamorphoses also may be considered didactic because Ovid purports to instruct his readers about changes that have occurred from the beginning of things to Ovid's own time. Ovid, however, again mocks didactic tradition by his frivolous tone

³⁴ Bowie, p. 191.

and choice of subject matter.

D. Idyll

The term idyll, derived from eidyllion, "little picture," signifies a predominantly picturesque work. It refers to short poems or prose works which provide vivid and charming descriptions most frequently of rustic life. Some idylls, like Theocritus's Hylas, treat heroic subjects, but the picturesque rather than the narrative element predominates. Others picture the life of shepherds and describe in detail country scenes and activities. Because of Theocritus, Bion, and Moschus, who stressed the pastoral element, idyll sometimes is considered almost synonymous with pastoral.³⁵ In fact, not all idylls are pastoral or heroic, but all emphasize description rather than character delineation, and the poet strives for a simple, clear style.³⁶

E. Hymn

Hymns, both in lyric meters and in hexameters, addressed gods and goddesses.³⁷ The lyric hymns employed various meters and

³⁵ J.E. Conington, "Idyl(1)," Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, ed. Alex Preminger (Princeton: Univ. Press, 1965), p. 362.

³⁶ Crump, p. 51

³⁷ Some scholars feel that an ancient hymn could also honor a hero or a famous man. See, for example, Albert Thompson Shaw, "Hymn," Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, ed. Alex Preminger (Princeton: Univ. Press, 1965), pp. 356-357; for evidence of an ancient distinction of the hymn as addressed to gods not mortals, see A.E. Harvey, "The Classification of Greek Lyric Poetry," CQ, N.S. 5 (1955), p. 165.

structures, such as the strophe and antistrophe. The Homeric and Callimachean Hymns, on the other hand, were composed in dactylic hexameter. Of the Homeric Hymns, the shorter probably served as preludes to longer recitations, whereas the longer ones, relating incidents in the life of the deity, resembled epyllia.³⁸ Callimachus's hymns take their literary form from the Homeric Hymns. Except for the elegiac Bath of Pallas, they also employ dactylic hexameter.

Features common to ancient hymns include an address to the deity at the beginning and end of the hymn, as well as the narration of his major deeds. The first line, often the first word, names the addressee whose major attributes are mentioned in the opening lines. The hymn addresses the deity by several names and epithets. It provides a genealogy and narrates the story of his birth. It also relates his major accomplishments, often in great detail. Finally, the hymn returns to direct address, closing with a prayer and often with a promise to celebrate the deity in song.³⁹

The presence of the features just mentioned marks a poem as a hymn, raising certain expectations in the reader. The use of these features, therefore, for purposes other than praise or supplication of a deity signals a change in a hymn's purpose.

³⁸ Crump, p. 7.

³⁹ For characteristics of the hymn, see Gutzwiller, pp. 38-41 and p. 184.

Literary Devices

Two devices frequent in epic, although found in other genres, are the catalogue and the ekphrasis. Because of the way they were used in antiquity, these devices raise certain expectations on the reader's part. Ovid, however, uses them for his own purposes, often changing the tone to achieve a novel effect. Although he does this with many literary devices, these two have a prominent place in the Orpheus and Theseus epyllia. It therefore seems appropriate to focus briefly on them in this section.

The catalogue is defined as a list of, "persons, places, things, or ideas which have a common denominator such as heroism, beauty, death, etc."⁴⁰ Famous catalogues include the catalogue of ships in Iliad 2, parts of the Nekyia in Odyssey 11, and the catalogue of heroes in Aeneid 7.

Ekphrasis, as the Greek term indicates, is a device whereby the poet stops the narrative to describe in detail a work of art or a scene in nature. Famous ekphraseis include the picture embroidered on the coverlet in Catullus 64, which, however, is developed into a narrative, and the description of the shields of Achilles and Aeneas in Iliad 18 and Aeneid 8, respectively.

Elegy

The ancients distinguished elegiac poetry from other forms by

⁴⁰ Roger A. Hornsby, "Catalogue Verse," Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, ed. Alex Preminger (Princeton: Univ. Press, 1965), p. 106.

its meter, which consists of couplets comprising one line of hexameter followed by a line of pentameter. Although they used this form for a variety of purposes, they recognized as appropriate to elegy certain features of style and content.

Heinze⁴¹ has admirably explained the distinction between the epic and elegiac styles. Elegy emphasizes the sentimental whereas epic stresses solemnity, and this fundamental difference accounts for other differences in content and style. One stylistic distinction is the frequent intrusion of the author in elegy and his concealment in epic. A more important difference is the asymmetrical character of elegiac narrative as opposed to the continuous and symmetrical character of elegy; thus elegiac narrative, like that of epyllion, moves much more rapidly than epic, passing over or briefly alluding to many actions.

Elegiac meter formed a couplet which, especially in Roman elegy, influenced the grammatical structure. Sentences generally ended with the couplet's end; thus elegiac meter favored discontinuous narrative, lack of symmetry and a lighter effect than that of epic.⁴² Ovid, for example, in his Fasti rarely carried a sentence from one couplet to the next. His meter, therefore had a formalism which, Otis⁴³ says:

⁴¹ Richard Heinze, "Ovids elegische Erzählung," in Vom Geist des Römertums, 4th ed. (Stuttgart, 1972), pp. 338-403. Otis, Ovid, pp.23-24, summarizes Heinze's conclusions.

⁴² Otis, Ovid, pp. 40-42. ⁴³ Otis, Ovid, p. 42.

limited his narrative not only by interrupting its continuity but also by preventing the cumulative build-up of emotional and even intellectual effects--in short, by decidedly lowering or reducing its tone.

Roman elegy had great affinity with Alexandrian elegy. As the Alexandrians had created epyllion by lightening epic tone and introducing a subjective manner, the Roman elegists likewise wrote in a familiar style and expressed personal feelings. They emphasized details rather than the main event and preferred colloquialisms to formal language. Their choice of words created a diction which surpassed the vulgar language but was less elevated than that of epic. Their tone was reflective and their style subjective; that is, the poet freely expressed his own reactions to the events he narrated. Elegiac poetry's emphasis is, in fact, on reflection about the events narrated rather than on the story per se. Finally, Alexandrian elegists such as Callimachus, Philetas, and Hermesianax, freely blended genres, combining seemingly opposite characteristics. Luck⁴⁴ describes this combination well:

It is characteristic of the Alexandrian elegy that it can be didactic and entertaining at the same time, pathetic and amusing, objective and emotional, narrative and lyrical. The boundaries between the 'classical' genera of poetry tend to disappear. The result is a slightly hybrid creation, an artificial gem, as it were, glittering with many facets. Melancholy and erudite wit, dry facts and decorative passages follow each other without transition.

⁴⁴ Georg Luck, The Latin Love Elegy (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1959), p.33; for features of Alexandrian elegy, see also Otis, Ovid, pp. 4-90.

The Roman elegists, including Propertius, Tibullus and Ovid, followed the Alexandrians in the use of elegiac characteristics. Their major use of the genre, however, was for love poetry, although they did use elegiac meter for a variety of purposes. The development of the love elegy is, in fact, a major literary contribution of the Romans.⁴⁵ Ovid's Amores are love elegies; in his Metamorphoses he often reflects the motifs of love poetry, picturing in the Hyacinthus, for example, Apollo acting like a distraught lover.

The Roman elegist used his poetry to pour out his emotions, to express the joys, sufferings, hopes, and despair he experienced in his love affairs. He pictured himself as the victim of Amor, an all-absorbing passion which struck its victim with the force of a disease. He expressed his occasional joy at fulfillment, his more frequent frustration at being deprived of his beloved. In the paraclausithyron he described his vigils before the lady's closed door, complaining of the cruelty of guardians, parents and the lady's legal husband, all of whom interfered with the couple's plans. When his beloved was away, the poet struck the pose of a forlorn lover, mentioning her name to the birds and inscribing it on the back of trees.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ James J. Donohue, The Theory of Literary Kinds II: The Ancient Classes of Poetry (Dubuque, Iowa: Loras College Press, 1949), p. 99.

⁴⁶ Otis, Ovid, pp. 9-10 and p. 265; for discussion of the paraclausithyron, see Frank O. Copley, Exclusus Amator: A Study in

Roman elegists expressed the ancient virtues of fides, pietas, and castitas, which they applied not to legal marriage but to the union of lover and mistress. They sought a foedus aeternum but in the ideal love affair rather than within marriage. Likewise they adopted terms like officium, gratia, and amicitia from the Roman social code and applied these to their love unions. In short, Roman elegists applied motifs from other situations to their central concern, the relation of lover and beloved.⁴⁷

Roman elegy reflected that of the Alexandrians, but it had a unique Roman stamp. It was employed mainly for love poetry, and that poetry employed the conventional terms of marriage union and social obligations, but it directed these to a new end, the description of the emotions and the bonds between a lover and his mistress.

Dramatic forms and Rhetorical Elements

In the Metamorphoses Ovid employs elements from drama and rhetoric. Those from drama include the dramatic soliloquy and the messenger speech. The soliloquy, however, is frequently a suasoria, and the speeches in the Orpheus and Theseus all fit the rhetorical forms used in law courts in Ovid's time. These speeches have, therefore, been analyzed in chapters two and three from the point of

Latin Love Poetry (TAPA Monographs, Baltimore: J. H. Furst Co., 1956), passim.

⁴⁷ Luck, pp. 11-16, and R.O.A.M. Lyne, The Latin Love Poets (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1980), pp. 24-25.

view of rhetoric.

The present discussion will begin with the dramatic forms of soliloquy and messenger speech. It will then consider the development of rhetoric and the three kinds of oratory. After showing the influence of rhetoric on drama, it will define specific forms used in rhetorical exercises.

Dramatic soliloquy

In the dramatic soliloquy a character addresses himself or herself. "A soliloquy is spoken by one person that is alone or acts as though he were alone."⁴⁸ Famous soliloquies include the watchman's speech in Aeschylus's Agamemnon, that of Aias in Sophocles's Aias,⁴⁹ and Dido's ruminations in the Aeneid when she realizes that she has lost Aeneas. In the Metamorphoses Ovid's characters frequently employ the soliloquy. Some of these soliloquies are the speeches of Byblis (Met. 9. 474-516), Myrrha (Met. 10. 320-355), and Scylla (Met. 8. 44-80). The two latter soliloquies will be analyzed as suasoriae in chapters two and three respectively.

Messenger speech

The messenger speech had an important place in Greek drama because of the classic unities which imposed restrictions on time and place. A further restriction came from practical considerations and

⁴⁸ Roberta Morgan, "Monologue," DWL, p. 273.

⁴⁹ Thomas D. Goodell, Athenian Tragedy: A Study in Popular Art (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1920), pp. 42-43.

the sense that violence should not be presented on stage. The messenger's narrative enabled the dramatist to inform the audience of events and circumstances which happened outside the play's dramatic time or location. It also enabled him to describe in vivid detail violent events which could not happen on stage. Moulton⁵⁰ sees epic influence in the messenger's narrative. The messenger narrates events so vividly that the audience perceives them as clearly as if they had occurred on stage. Greek tragedy abounds with such speeches, for example, the messenger speech in Euripides' Medea (1136-1230). This speech covers almost one hundred verses, and narrates in gruesome detail the working of Medea's vengeance.

Development of Rhetoric

Oratorical forms used by Ovid include the legal oration and the suasoria. These had developed in fifth century Athens because of the practical need to train ordinary people in judicial oratory. As the judicial process became more democratic, litigants had to present their own cases in one set speech with, perhaps, only one opportunity for rebuttal.⁵¹ The popular nature of the jury led the speakers to employ emotional appeals and irrelevant digressions. Hence rhetorical

⁵⁰ Richard G. Moulton, The Ancient Classical Drama: A Study in Literary Evolution 2nd. ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898), p. 145; see also Goodell, p. 103.

⁵¹ George Kennedy, The Art of Persuasion in Ancient Greece (1963; Princeton, N.J., 1964), p. 27; I am indebted to Kennedy, pp. 26-29, for my discussion of the development of rhetoric in ancient Greece.

handbooks began to expound effective techniques of judicial oratory for ordinary citizens.

As people with little political background began to share more fully in government, the sophists began to teach methods of political oratory. The relationship to democracy of deliberative oratory, with its emphasis on rhetorical methods, is indicated by the suppression of rhetorical training during the rule of the Thirty Tyrants in Athens. When democracy was strong, however, rhetoric flourished as citizens recognized the power of effective speaking.

As the appreciation of judicial and political oratory grew, there arose a type of oratory which existed for its own sake, namely, epideictic oratory. This may have begun with funeral orations and continued in the oratory of the sophists. It finally became, "a form of display—oratory for the sake of oratory."⁵²

The development of rhetoric affected Athenian drama. Moulton⁵³ cites three instances of rhetorical influence on drama. These include, first, rhesis or set rhetorical speeches in which a character expounds a theme suggested by the scene; second, the parallel or stichomythic dialogue in which one remark balances another, reflecting rhetorical teaching on balance of sentences; and third, the agon or contest in which characters argue with each other in speeches of about equal length. The chorus serves as moderator,

⁵² Kennedy, The Art of Persuasion in Ancient Greece, p. 29.

⁵³ Moulton, pp. 141-146.

and a section of parallel dialogue follows the long speeches. The agon resembles court cases in which orators have equal time to debate an issue. The section of parallel dialogue suggests the quick exchange of cross-examination.

Rhetorical influence continued to grow during the fourth century B.C., and throughout the Hellenistic period.⁵⁴ Schools of rhetoric began in Rome in the second century, B.C., employing at first only the Greek language, but later moving to Latin.⁵⁵ Seneca the Elder provides testimony about rhetorical instruction in Ovid's time, explaining the teaching methods of Arellius Fuscus and Porcius Latro, both of whom taught Ovid.⁵⁶

Many of Ovid's rhetorical forms will be analyzed where they occur in the Orpheus and Theseus, but they will be introduced briefly here. Although the Controversia does not occur in those two sections, it will be included here because it is an important rhetorical form which Ovid uses so well in Met. 13. The sententia and

⁵⁴ George Kennedy, The Art of Persuasion in Ancient Greece, provides a thorough discussion of the rhetorical practice and teaching of the Attic orators and the Hellenistic rhetoricians.

⁵⁵ George Kennedy, The Art of Rhetoric in the Roman World 300 B.C. - A.D. 300 (Princeton: Univ. Press, 1972), pp. 91-92. See also Donald L. Clark, Rhetoric in Greco-Roman Education (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1957), pp. 223-224, M. L. Clarke, Rhetoric at Rome: A Historical Survey (London: Cohen & West, Ltd., 1953), pp. 87-90, T. F. Higham, "Ovid and Rhetoric," in Ovidiana, ed. N. I. Herescu (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1958), pp. 32-48.

⁵⁶ Adolphus Kiessling, ed., Annaei Senecae Oratorum et Rhetorum Sententiae, Divisiones, Colores (1872; rpt. Stuttgart: B.G. Teubner, 1966).

the exemplum, although they occur in several genres, are included here because of their importance in Roman rhetorical training.

Suasoria

The suasoria was a school exercise designed to train the future orator to speak effectively on a variety of topics. In it the student developed an assigned topic into a soliloquy or he offered advice to a historical or legendary character, theoretically gaining experience in adapting his speech to the audience and subject matter. In reality, because of the artificiality of the exercise, suasoriae often differed radically from the type of speech which would be effective in a courtroom.⁵⁷ In actual deliberative oratory the speaker tried to persuade an individual or a group to act in a certain way. Thus the orator considered in his speech the pros and cons of an issue. Ancient rhetoricians recommended three questions to discover all the reasons for and against an action. These questions were, as Donald L. Clark indicates, "Is it possible? Is it expedient? Is it honorable?"⁵⁸ These questions followed the sophists' idea that an action should be eikos, sympheron and dikaion.

Controversia

The controversia was an imaginary case on some disputable

⁵⁷ For discussion of the suasoria, see D. L. Clark, Rhetoric in Greco-Roman Education, pp. 223-224 and M. L. Clarke, Rhetoric at Rome: A Historical Survey, pp. 89-90.

⁵⁸ Rhetoric in Greco-Roman Education (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1957), p. 219

point of law.⁵⁹ Its purpose was to train the future advocate in presenting testimony in a light favorable to his client. If he were to succeed, the advocate needed to determine what issue was in doubt. Donald Clark gives three questions which the advocate used to determine the doubtful issue or the status of the case:⁶⁰

(1) Does the issue hinge on a question of fact? (an sit) Did it happen? Did A kill B?

(2) Or, the facts being admitted, is it a question of definition? (quid sit) Is the killing, for instance, to be defined as murder or manslaughter?

(3) Or does the issue hinge on the interpretation of the nature of the act? (Quale sit) Was it good or bad?

Most of the cases used by the students were fictitious, and some were based on non-existent laws. Although some of the ancients criticized the use of fiction, others felt its use was justified because the students were stimulated to useful intellectual activity.⁶¹

Sententia

M.L. Clarke defines the sententia and discusses its use. The sententia, was "the brief statement of a general truth," which enlivened an orator's speech and enabled him to display his own cleverness. He considers the sententia as, "the characteristic

⁵⁹ M.L. Clarke, Rhetoric at Rome, p. 90.

⁶⁰ Donald L. Clark, Rhetoric in Greco-Roman Education, p. 235.

⁶¹ Donald L. Clark, Rhetoric in Greco-Roman Education, p. 230.

feature of the declamatory style." At first, the term sententia had referred to a memorable expression of some general truth, but by Quintilian's time it was applied to any clever remark. Orators sought to earn applause from the impressive ending a sententia gave to each passage.⁶² Ovid sprinkled sententiae throughout the Metamorphoses, either by intruding as narrator or by having one of the characters offer the comment.

Exemplum

An exemplum may be defined as a parallel cited from history or fable, frequently employed by orators to convince others of their ideas. These exempla could be brief allusions to a precedent, or they could be actual stories designed to stir the emotions.⁶³

Aristotle (Rhetoric 2.20) stated that there were two kinds of example, either the mention of actual facts or the speaker's invention of facts. The latter could be by the use of analogy or of fable.⁶⁴

The exempla employed in Ovid's Orpheus and Theseus are presented by those who offer them as factual. In the Venus and Adonis, for example, the goddess presents to Adonis an exemplum, which she offers as fact.

⁶² M.L. Clarke, Rhetoric at Rome, p. 35 and p. 95.

⁶³ Elizabeth H. Haight, The Roman Use of Anecdotes in Cicero, Livy, & the Satirists (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1940), p. 8.

⁶⁴ Donald L. Clark, Rhetoric in Greco-Roman Education, pp. 124-128, discusses exempla.

The Metamorphoses demonstrates the effect of Ovid's rhetorical education on his writing. He includes numerous sententiae, and several of his speakers, e.g., Lelex (Met. 8. 617-724), employ the exemplum. In the dispute of Ulysses and Ajax (Met. 13. 5-381), Ovid presents a fully developed controversia. The soliloquies of his heroines, e.g., Myrrha (Met. 10. 321-355) and Scylla (Met. 8. 44-80), are really suasoriae in which the speaker convinces herself to yield to her passion.⁶⁵ Finally, Ovid has Orpheus address the king and queen of the Underworld as a Roman orator might address the bench.

The number of genres discussed in this chapter indicates the variety of elements found in the Metamorphoses. That variety, in turn, reflects Ovid's general versatility as a writer. Before creating the Metamorphoses, he had composed love poems, mock didactic works and one tragedy. All these earlier works, except for his Medea, were written in elegiac couplets, and each of them earned critical acclaim, thus demonstrating the richness of Ovid's genius.

Ovid has included within the Metamorphoses genres that fit the three major literary forms: narrative, lyric, and dramatic. In addition he employs a number of rhetorical forms, as well as devices common to several genres. He employs this rich variety within the two basic structures of the epic poem and the Hellenistic epyllion.

⁶⁵ Otis, Ovid, p. 173.

The analysis in chapters two and three will elucidate the literary statement which Ovid makes in the Metamorphoses through its continual interplay of different genres within one poem. Ovid's statement, it will be demonstrated, includes three points. First, by his display of literary virtuosity, Ovid lays claim to an ability to write in any and all genres as well as or better than the next poet. Secondly, his treatment of genres composed in epic meter and his consistent suggestion of the value of "lesser" forms over grand epic demonstrate his readiness to laugh at the major works of his time, even while he admires and respects these works. Finally, Ovid emphasizes the ambiguity inherent in his constant shifting of genres, thereby implying that he sees ambiguity at the center of life itself.

The present study, then, builds on the generally recognized fact that Ovid has combined several genres within one epic poem, but it moves beyond it. The analysis of two lengthy segments of the poem not only demonstrates the consistency with which Ovid works, but it also indicates the functional effect of his method. The main point of this study, in other words, is not what Ovid does, but how and why he does it. Critics have generally, at least in recent years, recognized the originality with which Ovid treats genres, but this study attempts to demonstrate the way in which Ovid uses constantly shifting forms to express his view of the constant change that permeates all of literature and life. Drawing upon the analysis presented in chapters two

and three, and setting this in the context of Ovid's own statements of purpose (Met. 1. 1-4; 10. 252; 15. 871-879), the concluding chapter discusses the poet's presentation of the Metamorphoses as his literary manifesto, his Ars Poetica. It demonstrates how the variety of forms and their interplay with each other perfectly fit form with function to make a comment on the poet's ability (or, perhaps, his inability; for Ovid is a master of ambiguity!) to influence reality.

The Orpheus Epyllion

Ovid has structured his Orpheus as a long epyllion whose digression contains several shorter epyllia. Its main subject narrates Orpheus's loss of Eurydice and the results of his failure to retrieve her from Hades. The narrative includes Orpheus's descent to the underworld, his second loss of Eurydice, and his subsequent mourning. Following a long digression, the main subject resumes with the tale of Orpheus's death at the hands of the Thracian women and his final reunion with his wife. In the long digression Orpheus sings of boys beloved by the gods and of girls struck by illicit and unnatural passion. Within this song there are several episodes and long digressions which often constitute separate epyllia.¹ Two of these digressions, the Hyacinthus and the Pygmalion, are just over sixty lines, while the Myrrha and the Venus and Adonis each slightly exceed two hundred lines. The Venus and Adonis itself contains a digression of almost one hundred fifty lines. The Orpheus, then, has one long digression containing several digressions and linking episodes. In one instance there is a third digression within another

¹ Marjorie M. Crump, The Epyllion from Theocritus to Ovid (Oxford: Blackwell, 1931), p. 277. For commentary on Ovid's Orpheus, see Franz Bömer, ed., P. Ovidius Naso Metamorphosen: Kommentar, V (Heidelberg: Winter, 1980), 9-254. On the unity of the Orpheus, see G.K. Galinsky, Ovid's Metamorphoses: An Introduction to the Basic Aspects (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1975), pp. 86-92.

digression. The present analysis of Ovid's Orpheus epyllion will consider each of its parts and note the presence there of elements of various genres. The following schema indicates the structure of this epyllion:

Orpheus Epyllion 10.1-11.66

Main Subject: Orpheus and Eurydice 10.1-147

Digression: Orpheus's song 10.148-739

Main Subject: Orpheus's death 11.1-66

Ovid links the Orpheus with the preceding section by announcing the approach of Hymenaeus who comes from the wedding of Iphis and Ianthe. In contrast to Iphis whose prayer has been answered, Orpheus invokes the god of marriage in vain, nequiquam (3).² Within the first ten lines, Ovid introduces the main subject and relates Eurydice's death. The narrative continues with Orpheus's descent to Hades, his pleading with the underworld powers, his return to the upper air, and second loss of Eurydice. After three years of mourning, Orpheus moves to a grassy but treeless hill to which he summons numerous shade trees by his song. The epic catalogue of trees closes the first part of the main subject, and it contains an episode, the Cyparissus, which links the main subject thematically with the digression because Cyparissus's story reflects Orpheus's situation,

² Textual references for Book 10 of Ovid's Metamorphoses are to the text in William S. Anderson, ed., Ovid's Metamorphoses, Books 6-10 (1972; rpt. Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1977); for Book 11 they are to the text in G.M.H. Murphy, ed., Ovid Metamorphoses, Book XI (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1972).

and because it foreshadows the love tragedies of the digression proper.³ Further, the Cyparissus forms a digression in the catalogue, whose concluding lines follow Cyparissus's metamorphosis (143-44).

The digression begins very naturally as Orpheus sits among the trees playing his lyre and sensing the harmony of his music. He then invokes the Muse and announces a lighter tone and subject of his song: boys dear to gods and girls struck by unlawful passion. The boys of whom Orpheus sings include Ganymede, Hyacinthus, Pygmalion, and Adonis; his female subjects are the Cerastae, the Propoetides, and Myrrha.

Almost six hundred lines later, Ovid resumes the main subject with a two-line link at the beginning of Book 11. Whereas his song charms stones and beasts, Orpheus's killers, the Thracian women, do not respond to his music. Ovid draws the reader's attention to these callous women by the phrase (3): "ecce nurus Ciconum." First they attack Orpheus's audience and then savagely turn against the bard himself. Ovid then inserts a metamorphosis, but it is not Orpheus who is changed. Rather Apollo turns to stone a snake which would devour Orpheus's head. Despite Orpheus's tragic death, the epyllion ends happily with a picture of the couple finally united in the underworld and bound by no prohibition.

³ Robert Coleman, "Structure and Intent in the Metamorphoses," CQ, NS 21 (1971), 467.

Ovid carefully links the Orpheus with the material that follows it. Coleman,⁴ for example, has pointed out links between the Orpheus and Midas stories. A major link is the figure of Bacchus who mourns Orpheus as one of his favorites and punishes the Maenads by changing them to oak trees. Ironically, those who resist Orpheus's music become trees, the very creatures which had responded to his playing and singing. Another link is Silenus's absence from Bacchus's company which leads to the story of Midas. The Midas has thematic links with Orpheus's songs. As Coleman puts it: "For the King, lured as Atalanta had been by gold, is punished for his greedy folly by a fate that is the reverse of Pygmalion's: all that he loves is turned to inert matter."⁵

Main Subject

To begin, this study will examine the Orpheus epyllion's main subject for its elements of different literary genres. This analysis will focus on how Ovid changes the tone expected in epic and rhetorical genres. Ovid, for example, lightens the tone of the Orpheus and Eurydice story, which had been for Virgil a tragic tale.⁶ Within the main subject Ovid not only includes elements of several genres, but he also provides a clever twist to those genres. Likewise Ovid's subject

⁴ Coleman, 461-477. ⁵ Coleman, 470.

⁶ Many scholars have noted Ovid's lowering of epic tone. Among them see especially Coleman; Charles P. Segal, "Ovid's Orpheus and Augustan Ideology," TAPA, 103 (1972), 473-494, and Anderson, Ovid's Metamorphoses, pp. 475-535.

often contrasts with his style. He speaks of weighty matters in a playful manner, thus creating a tension between subject matter and narrative style.

Ovid achieves a lofty tone through the use of elements commonly found in epic. Among elements which suggest elevation he includes descriptive epithets. For example, he describes Hymenaeus's saffron cloak, croceo amictu (1), and he gives each tree in the catalogue an epithet (90-105). Two of these, amnicolae (96) to describe the willow and flexipedes (99) for the ivy, are, as Anderson points out, unique to Ovid,⁷ and they resemble compounds like suaviloquenti used by Ennius.⁸

Ovid uses the standard poetic devices, such as litotes and anaphora, both of which are found in verses 4-5 with the repeated, "nec and in the catalogue of trees; non . . . abfuit (90), non . . . non . . . nec . . . nec" (90-92). The catalogue also is a standard epic element. Ovid also mentions the stock mythological characters of the underworld (22, 41-52) and uses common narrative elements. The latter include the catabasis, or descent to the underworld, (12-52), mourning conventions (11.44-53), and double similes (10.64-71; 11.24-27). In addition the Maenads' attack on Orpheus suggests an epic battle scene. The style and the content of the story of Orpheus and Eurydice, therefore, contain many elements

⁷ Anderson, Ovid's Metamorphoses, p. 483.

⁸ Quoted by Cicero, Brutus 15.58.

which suggest epic.

Closer analysis of each section of the main subject indicates, however, a deliberate lightening of the tone. In the opening lines of the story, for example, Ovid's dense narration makes too much happen too quickly. Within one sentence, three verses long, Ovid not only tells the whole of Hymenaeus's travels, but he also indicates the futility of Orpheus's prayer. Ovid continues to pack several ideas into a few verses as he describes the unhappy omens at the wedding. The onomatopoeic phrase for the marriage torch's sputtering, "lacrimoso stridula fumo" (6), adds a clever touch by stressing the sound of sputtering while describing an omen that forebodes tragedy. The next sentence warns of the omen's fulfillment, tells of the circumstances surrounding the tragedy, and narrates the actual event (8-10). Verse 10, "Occidit in talum serpentis dente recepto," evokes laughter at the specific detail rather than tears at Eurydice's fate.⁹ The ablative absolute, "dente recepto," coming at the end of the sentence, focuses attention on the bite rather than on Eurydice's death, and it surely understates a terrible tragedy. This verse also makes the circumstance more important than the actual event, since it expounds the cause in five words but tells the outcome

⁹ Anderson, *Ovid's Metamorphoses*, pp. 475-476, recognizes the playful tone of 10.1-85. For differences between Ovid's and Vergil's treatment of Orpheus and Eurydice, see especially Coleman, 466; Segal, 479-480; C.M. Bowra, "Orpheus and Eurydice," *CQ*, 2 (1952), 113-126, and Giuseppe Pavano, "La Discesa di Orfeo nell' Ade in Vergilio e in Ovidio," *MC* (1937), 345-358.

in one. Further, the placement of cause after event is anti-climactic. Finally, the reader expects a parallel clause after occidit but instead finds a subordinate construction giving the circumstance. Ovid's narrative style in the opening lines of the Orpheus thus prepares the reader for a continued lightening of tone in the narration of serious events.

Instead of developing Orpheus's grief and making his decision to enter Hades a final desperate attempt, Ovid relates this decision in a matter of fact way. The word "satis" in verse 11 as well as the negative purpose clause hurry the grieving along, thus contributing to a lighter tone.¹⁰ Likewise the catabasis holds no terrors. Whereas Aeneas (Aen. 6.236-425) had approached the underworld with fear and reverence, taking care to fulfill prescribed rites, Ovid's Orpheus enters the underworld and moves directly to the throne of the rulers, just as if he were entering a Roman court and approaching the bench.

Ovid introduces Orpheus's address with the words, "sic ait" (17), an expression suitable for a speech rather than a song.¹¹ At the song's conclusion Ovid says, talia dicentem (40), thus connecting in both instances the words for speech with Orpheus's playing of the lyre. The theme, therefore, of the power of Music is interwoven

¹⁰ Segal, 478-479, notes that satis sets a human limit to Orpheus's grieving.

¹¹ For an analysis of this speech, see H. Gugel, "Orpheus' Gang in die Unterwelt in den Metamorphosen Ovids (Met. X 1-71)," Z. Ant., 22 (1972), 46-52.

with that of the power of Rhetoric. Orpheus delivers a clever suasoria to the rulers of the underworld.¹² One can imagine an assigned topic in a school of rhetoric, "Orpheus enters the underworld to regain his Eurydice. What does he say to the rulers there?"

Since the suasoria was an exercise to train the future orator for the court, it is no surprise that Orpheus's speech contains elements, although much abbreviated, of a typical Roman oration.¹³ Orpheus begins with an exordium, the opening designed to gain favorable attention. In addition to rendering the audience attentive (attentum) and receptive to information (docilem), the exordium served as a captatio benevolentiae, that is, it sought to render the audience well disposed (benevolum). Ovid thus has Orpheus appeal to the underworld powers by flattery, recognizing their power over all mortals (17-18), and humbly requesting permission to speak, "Si licet . . . sinitis" (19-20). By listing the reasons why he has not come, Orpheus separates himself from those who have inflicted violence on the realms of the dead. On the other hand, Orpheus has come for a serious purpose, not merely out of curiosity or to see what he has no right to see, "non huc, ut opaca viderem Tartara" (20-21). Orpheus's narratio, or statement of the case, is brief and to the

¹² Brooks Otis, Ovid as an Epic Poet, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: The Univ. Press, 1970), p. 184.

¹³ For the parts of a Roman oration, see Donovan J. Ochs, "Cicero's Rhetorical Theory," in A Synoptic History of Classical Rhetoric, ed. James J. Murphy (New York: Random House, Inc., 1972), p. 94.

point, "Causa viae est conjunx" (23-24). He has tried to bear his loss, but love has conquered him (25-26). His confirmatio, or argument for his case, proves the power of love with a reference to Pluto's rape of Persephone (29). Orpheus thus strengthens his case by reminding Pluto of the god's own helplessness in matters of love. In the peroratio Orpheus begs, "oro" (31), for Eurydice's return. He argues persuasively that the underworld rulers will win in the end, since all mortals, including Orpheus and Eurydice, must eventually come to them. Earlier Orpheus had indicated the unfairness of Eurydice's premature death, "crescentesque abstulit annos" (24). He emphasizes again this prematurity by the clause, "cum iustos matura peregerit annos" (36). Like the courtroom orator of Ovid's day, Orpheus ends his speech on a dramatic note. If the infernal powers will not yield Eurydice, then let them rejoice in a double death. Orpheus speaks directly, "leto gaudete duorum!"(39).

Ovid presents in Orpheus's speech an effective use of the major elements in a legal oration. He puts into Orpheus's mouth a rhetorical speech, in which Orpheus uses words to achieve something quite different from what his speech makes apparent. In his spoken words, Orpheus appears to submit to the Underworld powers, but, in fact, he controls these powers by his words. The king and queen of the Underworld yield to Orpheus by summoning Eurydice at his request. Ovid thus presents Orpheus as one who uses rhetoric effectively to accomplish his purpose.

Immediately following the song's conclusion, Ovid details its effects on the inhabitants of Hades, beginning with the unprecedented effect of causing the shades to weep in sympathy with Orpheus and Eurydice.¹⁴ He inserts himself into the narrative by addressing Sisyphus directly (44) and distances himself from the incredible tale of the Eumenides weeping by use of the phrase: "fama est" (45). While appearing to yield to the rulers of the underworld, he asserts and exercises his power over the dead. Ovid, by using words which indicate speech rather than song, has subtly shifted the focus from music to rhetoric. A question, of course, remains about the real effectiveness of rhetorical and musical skill because of the condition attached to Eurydice's release.¹⁵

After narrating Orpheus's second loss, Ovid continues to lighten the tone of his material. In two epic similes he compares the stunned bard to three obscure mythological characters changed to stone (64-71). As Segal demonstrates, this choice of similes, especially the second simile, lessens the effect of Orpheus's grief. In that simile the lovers, Olenus and Lethaea, are united after death. It thus gives greater import to the lovers' union and nature's sympathy

¹⁴ Gugel, 54, notes that this is the first instance in Latin literature where shades weep because of human sympathy. Anchises had wept at sight of Aeneas, but his sorrow was for the condition of the shades.

¹⁵ Whether or not Orpheus ultimately succeeds depends on how one interprets ll.61-66. For a discussion of the Orpheus's conclusion, see Bowra, 113-126.

with them than it does to Lethaea's foolish pride.¹⁶ Within the double simile, Ovid plays with "quam" and "antequam." Three out of four consecutive verses begin with "quam." In verses 65 and 68 the "quam" introduces an element of the simile. In verse 67, however, the quam belongs with ante of the preceding line, an example of tmesis. In addition, the repetition of quam suggests anaphora, but the tmesis disappoints the reader's expectation rather than fulfilling it. Ovid, therefore, uses the similes to display his erudition because of the obscurity of the myths and to show his verbal dexterity through the play on words. He also lightens the seriousness of Orpheus's mourning by indulging in aetiology in making Orpheus the source for male homosexual love.¹⁷

Catalogue of Trees

When Orpheus settles down to assuage his grief through music, he chooses a grassy plain which, however, lacks shade trees. The approach of various trees affords Ovid the opportunity of presenting an epic catalogue.¹⁸ A brief scenery description introduces the catalogue using three words in initial position to state Orpheus's problem: "Umbra loco deerat" (88). Ovid parallels these words two

¹⁶ Segal, 482.

¹⁷ Anderson, Ovid's Metamorphoses, pp. 481-482.

¹⁸ For the significance of scenery descriptions in the Metamorphoses, see Jerzy Danielewicz, "Some Observations on the Technique and Contextual Role of the Scenery Descriptions in Ovid's 'Metamorphoses'," Eos, 59 (1971), 301-307.

verses later with the solution, "Umbra loco venit" (90), emphasizing the parallel by the use of "loco" instead of a prepositional phrase. Such simple phrasing, moreover, implies a facile solution to the problem. In fact, the relief is readily attained since Orpheus's music has magical power. Ovid thus employs a pastoral motif, "umbra" or refreshing shade. As Charles Segal¹⁹ indicates, however, Ovid transforms this motif by using the shade as a setting for violence and death rather than for a peaceful encounter.

As Viktor Pöschl²⁰ demonstrates, Ovid has composed the catalogue of trees (86-105) with great care. It has all the features of an epic catalogue, like Homer's catalogue of ships (Il. 2. 494-759). More than twenty trees, each with its own epithet, come to Orpheus. The order in which they arrive indicates Ovid's intricate structuring of this catalogue. Because Pöschl provides a thorough analysis of the catalogue's meter and content, it seems best to summarize his work.

Pöschl points out, first, that the trees at the beginning and end of the catalogue, that is, the tree of Chaon (the oak tree) and

¹⁹ Landscape in Ovid's Metamorphoses: A Study in the Transformation of a Literary Symbol (Wiesbaden: Steiner Verlag, 1969), p. 80. For discussion of a play on the word, umbra, see Wade C. Stephens, "Descent to the Underworld in Ovid's Metamorphoses," CJ, 53 (1958), 180.

²⁰ Viktor Pöschl, "Der Katalog der Bäume in Ovids Metamorphosen," in Medium Aevum Vivum, Festschrift für Walther Bulst, ed. Hans R. Jauss and Dieter Schaller (Heidelberg: Winter, 1960), pp. 13-21.

the cypress, are relevant to Orpheus's situation. The myths of both Chaon and Cyparissus involved the accidental destruction of someone dear, as well as the guilt and pain stemming from this. Likewise the second and second-to-last trees listed reflect Orpheus's sorrow. Excessive mourning caused metamorphoses of the Heliades and Attis to poplars and the pine tree, respectively.

Paralleling the unity of content there is, as Pöschl again indicates, a chiasmic arrangement according to type of trees. Verses 90-94 and 101-104 name stately trees, those suited to epic. In verses 95-98, on the other hand, are trees which love water and those with idyllic characteristics like the plane tree. These form a bridge from the epic sphere to that of love poetry. The plants named in verses 99-100 are those which depend on others, clinging vines which symbolize love in Greek and Roman poetry. The following schema indicates chiasmic arrangement:

A Stately trees: Epic 90-94

B Idyllic trees: Love Poetry 95-98

B Dependent plants and clinging vines: Love Poetry 99-100

A Stately trees: Epic 101-104

The catalogue's rhythmic movement also reflects, in Pöschl's view, careful arrangement. The opening verses (86-90) have a swaying rhythm which mirrors Orpheus's musical charming of the trees. The idyllic character of the second set of trees finds expression in the faster, more sportive rhythm of verses 95-98. Verses ninety-five and

ninety-six each have five dactyls, and verse ninety-seven has four dactyls. The rhythm slows and becomes heavier as the catalogue moves from idyllic trees to plants associated with love. In verses 98-104, spondees are more evenly mixed with dactyls.

Ovid has carefully created an epic catalogue to describe a non-epic situation. Trees moving to a hill hardly compare with the usual catalogue subject of heroes or nations going to war. In fact, the catalogue does not serve as prelude to an epic scene; rather it functions as a way to introduce the Cyparissus episode. The catalogue of trees, then, seems to exist for the sake of its own digression, the Cyparissus, and its links with the longer digression, Orpheus's tales of love.

Cyparissus

The Cyparissus episode stands just before the catalogue's conclusion. Because its content reflects Orpheus's situation, the Cyparissus forms part of the main subject of the Orpheus epyllion. At the same time, it links this subject to the digression.

Cyparissus, a boy beloved by Apollo, foreshadows the major theme of Orpheus's song. Its elegiac and pastoral elements look ahead to the large part these elements will have in the stories of Orpheus's song. Cyparissus's love for the stag which he has accidentally killed causes the boy to kill himself. Elegiac lovers considered it an honor to die for love,²¹ and if they learned of their girl's infidelity, they

²¹ Cf., e.g., Propertius 2. 1.47-48.

desired death, especially death together with the beloved.²² The description of the summer noontime is clearly a pastoral element²³ which Ovid changes, making it the setting for death rather than for the union of lovers.

Ovid ends Orpheus's song with the last verse of Book 10. As he had joined Book 9 to Book 10 by a two verse link, so the first two verses of Book 11 signal the song's conclusion and the resumption of the main subject. Ovid continues to mingle epic and elegiac elements as he had done in the earlier section. The attack on Orpheus resembles an epic battle scene, but nature's lament for him suits elegiac or pastoral rather than epic poetry.²⁴ Ovid again focuses on specific details, describing Orpheus's lyre and tongue murmuring as they float along the river. His picture of a tree shedding its leaves as though tearing its hair (ll. 46-47) adds a touch of lightness to an epic mourning scene. In describing the attack Ovid employs epic similes in which he first compares the women to birds attacking a night bird caught wandering in the daylight (24-25). The second simile, although its structure parallels the first, compares Orpheus to a stag attacked by dogs (26-27). By changing the subject of comparison within a parallel structure, Ovid has once again displayed his skill with words.

²² Cf., e.g., Ovid, Amores 3. 14.37-40.

²³ Cf., e.g., Vergil, Eclogues 3.55-59.

²⁴ Cf., e.g., Vergil, Eclogues 5.20-44.

The closing scene of the Orpheus epyllion has a thematic relation to the earlier part. The word "inrita" (40) recalls the theme of frustration present in Book 10. There Orpheus had invoked Hymenaeus in vain, "nequiquam" (3). Here for the first time, Ovid says, Orpheus speaks in vain, "primum inrita dicentem" (40). The reader realizes, however, that this is not the first time. In addition to the futile invocation of Hymenaeus, Orpheus had failed to gain a second entrance to Hades: "Orantem frustra" (72). The same voice which had moved the underworld powers at one time had failed with them later; the bard who had charmed all nature with his song now fails against the maddened women. Perhaps related to the idea of futility is the vagueness of complaint. Eurydice had not known what complaint to lodge against her husband (61): "quid enim nisi se quereretur amatam?" Now Orpheus's tongue and lyre make some vague complaint, "flebile nescio quid queritur" (11.52).

Orpheus's destruction contrasts with the Cyparissus episode. The women deliberately attack Orpheus whereas Cyparissus had wounded the stag inadvertently. The presence of Apollo and a metamorphosis, however, unite the two episodes. Whereas in the Cyparissus Apollo had been powerless to save his beloved, now he does have the power to save Orpheus's head from the snake. In both situations, however, the god succeeds only in accomplishing a metamorphosis which does not really restore either Cyparissus or Orpheus.

The presence of a serpent at the death of both Eurydice and

Orpheus connects the ending of the Orpheus epyllion with its beginning, creating ring composition. As he had for Eurydice's death, Ovid focuses attention on the vivid details of the snake's attack. The present participle, "parantem" (58), and the picture of the snake's open jaws, "rictus serpentis apertos" (59), make the reader an eyewitness of the attack and metamorphosis. Phoebus changes the serpent to stone, but what good does this really do? Although Orpheus's head remains unconsumed, he has, in fact, died. On another level, of course, Orpheus has succeeded because he now receives what he had requested in vain earlier. He enters the underworld for a second time and joins his Eurydice.

Ovid has united his main subject by similarity of style and themes, continuing a narrative style which has, however, many descriptive elements. His tone has been deliberately too light for such a sorrowful story in order to remind the reader that he is writing something different from epic, something which may aptly be called epyllion.

Digression

Orpheus's song, which tells of lighter themes, forms the digression in the Orpheus epyllion. The song immediately follows the catalogue of trees. In it Orpheus narrates several love stories, each closely connected to the other parts of the digression and to the main subject.²⁵ The transition from one to the other is usually brief

²⁵ For analysis of Ovid's careful structuring of the Orpheus

and direct; one or two verses connect the two tales. The Myrrha and the Venus and Adonis, however, have rather elaborate introductions. The song concludes with the ending of the Venus and Adonis, and Ovid neatly announces the return to the main subject in the opening verses of Book 11. The following schema indicates the parts of Orpheus's song:

Digression: Orpheus's song 10.148-739

Ganymede 155-161

Hyacinthus 162-219

Cerastae and Propoetides 220-242

Pygmalion 243-297

Myrrha 298-502

Adonis's birth 503-518

Venus and Adonis 519-739

Ovid indicates that Orpheus's song begins a new section by paralleling its opening, "Ut satis" (145), with the earlier, "Quam satis" (11). The tales told by Orpheus include elements of several literary genres: epyllion, epic, elegy, pastoral poetry, drama, and rhetoric. Some of these tales are epyllia, and some are simple episodes which, however, form suitable preludes to the longer stories.

epyllion, see particularly, Douglas F. Bauer, "The Function of Pygmalion in the Metamorphoses of Ovid," TAPA, 93 (1962), 1-21, and Coleman, 466-470.

Ganymede

Orpheus's first tale is about Ganymede whom Jove loved. It thus introduces Orpheus's song and fulfills his prayer that he might begin from Jove. The fact that this beginning narrates Jove's passion for a boy sets the mood for Orpheus's tales of boys beloved by gods. It also provides a contrast between Jove's ability to possess his beloved and Apollo's frustration in that regard. Orpheus suggests the parallel to Jove by his opening words to Hyacinthus, "Te quoque" (162). This parallel emphasizes the contrast between one god's frustration and the other's success. The story of Ganymede, therefore, forms a suitable prelude to the Hyacinthus. It does not include any significant elements of genres, but its whole purpose appears to be to introduce the next story which imitates elegiac poetry.

Hyacinthus

The Hyacinthus contains many features found in elegiac love poetry. Orpheus's personal address to Hyacinthus recalls the elegiac poet's address to his beloved.²⁶ Apollo's love for Hyacinthus, in fact, closely resembles a mortal lover's passion. Like the Roman love poet, Apollo neglects his usual occupations to pursue Hyacinthus without interruption.²⁷ In addition, Apollo persists in love just

²⁶ Cf., e.g., Propertius 1.11.

²⁷ Cf., e.g., Ovid, Amores 2.3.

as Ovid advises lovers to do.²⁸

Ovid places at midday the greatly altered athletic contest, and he imitates epic time descriptions. Verse 174 reflects metrically the sun's position almost halfway between night and day, for the word, "Titan," stands almost at the halfway point in the hexameter. The contestants then prepare for the contest as heroes would, but their preparations are described very briefly. The discus throw, on the other hand, and its tragic outcome receive greater elaboration. Again Ovid inserts an elegiac touch with the address to Hyacinthus in verses 185-189. Apollo's efforts to save him prove futile, and an epic simile compares the boy's drooping head to a flower with a broken stem. The simile is epic in length and developed detail, but its subject in both parts of the comparison is non-epic. It does not describe a dying hero but a boy beloved by Apollo. In addition, the detailed description of the flowers to which Hyacinthus is compared suggests idyllic or pastoral poetry.²⁹

Apollo's address to the dying Hyacinthus reflects the elegiac lover's lament for the loss of his beloved. Like the distraught lover, Apollo blames himself for the loss.³⁰ At the same time he questions whether it can be considered a fault (200): ("Quae mea

²⁸ Anderson, Ovid's Metamorphoses, p. 489, cites Ars Amatoria 2.345.

²⁹ Segal, Landscape, discusses Ovid's use of the flower motif, pp. 34-36.

³⁰ Cf., e.g., Ovid, Amores 3.12.

culpa tamen?") to have played with Hyacinthus and to have loved him. Like the typical lover, Apollo would like to die in place of or with Hyacinthus (202-03). He then expresses the distraught lover's complaint and the elegiac poet's promise to immortalize his beloved in song (203-05).³¹ Apollo's creative ability will provide, besides songs, a tangible memorial. A new flower will have markings to indicate Apollo's groans because of losing Hyacinthus.

Ovid has Apollo speak a typical lover's complaint, but the tone is not one of pathos. Anderson³² has commented on the witty linking of "dolor" and "facinus" (298), the irony of "culpa" (200-01), the playful phrasing and the light meter in verses 200-01, all of which serve to reduce pathos. The last two verses with their concern to include a learned allusion, suit an Alexandrian scholar rather than a lover consumed by grief (207-08): "Tempus et illud erit, quo se fortissimus heros / Addat in hunc florem folioque legatur eodem." Ovid could have kept this information for the narrative of the metamorphosis. Its inclusion within the lament suggests a deliberate attempt on Ovid's part at humor. Perhaps Ovid is poking fun at Apollo who laments at length but actually has little power to accomplish what he desires. Ovid had parodied the god's helplessness when smitten with love for Daphne (Met. 1.452-567).

The Hyacinthus narrative exhibits ring composition. In its

³¹ Cf., e.g., Ovid, Amores 2.18.

³² Ovid's Metamorphoses, p. 491.

opening verses Orpheus had indicated Hyacinthus's annual return in the spring flowers (164-66):

. . . quotiensque repellit
 Ver hiemem Piscique Aries succedit aquoso,
 Tu totiens oreris viridique in caespite flores.

He concludes the story with the annual festival of the Hyacinthia (217-19):

. . . honorque
 Durat in hoc aevi, celebrandaque more priorum
 Annua praelata redeunt Hyacinthia pompa.

Ring composition is an epic element, but Ovid has closely linked it with pastoral poetry. Immediately preceding the conclusion, Orpheus as narrator describes in explicit detail the color and shape of the Hyacinthus flower. "Ecce cruor" (210) makes the reader an eyewitness of the metamorphosis, which receives triple mention. At the end Orpheus gives exact details of the change which he had predicted at the outset and which Apollo had promised. He adds another aetiological note, namely, the Hyacinthia festival.

The Hyacinthus parallels the main subject, Orpheus and Eurydice, in subject matter and tone. In both stories, the bereaved desires to take further steps to express his grief over the loss of his beloved. Ovid uses "satis" to describe Orpheus's grief in the upperworld before he decides to enter Hades (11). He uses the same word with a negative to indicate Phoebus's desire to do more than

create a flower for Hyacinthus (214). Each story contains a reference to a universal law to which the lover admits subjection. Orpheus admits that Eurydice will one day be under Hades' law (37): "Turis erit vestri." Apollo recognizes his inability as an immortal to die with Hyacinthus (203): "quod quoniam fatali lege tenemur." Both lovers make speeches which effect what they say. Orpheus begs for and gets his Eurydice; Apollo promises and accomplishes a metamorphosis. Finally, the parallel is deepened by the underlying theme of the lover's guilt at causing his beloved's loss.³³

As already indicated, Ovid lightens the tone in both stories by witty phrasing and exaggeration, for example, by describing Apollo's throw of the discus as scattering the clouds ("disiecit pondere nubes" 179).³⁴ He also combines elements of various genres to create humor. Apollo's lament would be pathetic if it were not rather silly for a god to react as a typical elegiac lover. The double aetiology and the repetition of the metamorphosis appear to be less than tragic. In fact, the ending draws the reader away from Hyacinthus to the Spartan festival by noting that Sparta was not ashamed to have given him birth (217): "Nec genuisse pudet Sparten Hyacinthon."

³³ Coleman, 467.

³⁴ Anderson, *Ovid's Metamorphoses*, p. 489, remarks on this exaggeration. Throughout his commentary on this passage, he refers to Ovid's lighter tone.

Cerastae and Propoetides

The episode which links the Hyacinthus to the following Pygmalion reveals careful structuring to connect these two stories. Having provided two aetiologies in the Hyacinthus, Orpheus uses a double aetiology as a bridge between it and the Pygmalion. The story of the Cerastae explains why these women have horns, while the Propoetides reveals how these women hardened into stone.³⁵

Besides the double aetiology, both the Cerastae and the Propoetides concern Venus's punishment of those who insult or deny her. This concern, of course, prepares for the tale of Pygmalion who honors Venus and receives a reward. His situation, in fact, reverses theirs; the Propoetides denied Venus and were turned to stone, whereas Pygmalion honors the goddess and has his stone statue turned into flesh. In addition, the Propoetides' behavior caused Pygmalion to avoid marriage for a long time, until Venus rewarded his reverence for her. Finally, both Hyacinthus and Pygmalion brought honor to their country, whereas the Cerastae and Propoetides caused disgrace to their birthplace. This brief linking episode, therefore, reveals the same cleverness which Ovid exhibits in his treatment of genres.

³⁵ For the connection of the Propoetides with the Pygmalion, see Alan H.F. Griffin, "Ovid's Metamorphoses," G&R, 24 (1977), 65-67, Wade C. Stephens, "Cupid and Venus in Ovid's Metamorphoses," TAPA, 89 (1958), 295-297, and Simone Viarre, "Pygmalion et Orphée chez Ovide (Met. X, 243-297)," REL, 46 (1968), 238-239. Bauer, 14, has an interesting interpretation of Propoetides as pro poeta.

Pygmalion

The Pygmalion comments on the functions of both art and love. Ovid reflects this combination of functions by his mingling of literary forms in the narrative. Pygmalion the artist creates a statue which Ovid describes briefly, passing over the opportunity for an ekphrasis. He mentions the statue's snowy beauty and stresses its lifelike appearance (247-52). The sententia (252): "Ars adeo latet arte sua," expresses the artistic value of a work that seems natural. Toward the end of the story, Ovid speaks of Pygmalion as expressing the fullest thanks to Venus. The Latin of verses 290-91 suggests the work of a literary artist: "Tum vero . . . concipit heros / Verba. . ." Ovid thus seems to use Pygmalion to represent not only the sculptor and worker in plastic arts but also the literary artist like himself whose work imitates nature.³⁶

Having created the perfect work of art, Pygmalion falls in love with his creation. The description of his adornment of the statue and of the gifts offered to the beloved represents a typical theme of elegiac poetry. As Anderson has noted, "Pygmalion treats the statue exactly as the elegiac lover would his puella."³⁷ Likewise Pygmalion's stroking of the statue both before (254-69) and after (281-88) the festival of Venus imitates the elegiac poet's description

³⁶ Bauer, 14-17, Griffin, 65-67, and Danielewicz, 306, n.31, refer to the Pygmalion as commentary on art.

³⁷ Ovid's Metamorphoses, p. 497, with references to Roman poets, including Propertius 3.3.

of making love to his girl. The detailed description of the gifts offered and the step by step vivification of the statue suits ekphrasis, which is appropriate since the subject of the description is, in fact, a statue. The catalogue of gifts also brings in an epic element. Hence the elegiac themes, the ekphrasis, and the epic catalogue intermingle with each other.

Throughout the Pygmalion Ovid keeps himself as literary artist clearly in view. He employs several literary devices, such as anaphora and polysyndeton (255-61), much alliteration (e.g. 245-46; 250; 262), and chiasmus in two successive verses (264-65). Besides reminding us of his literary skill, Ovid displays his erudition with the aetiological detail of the naming of the island of Paphos.

Like the Hyacinthus, the Pygmalion both compares and contrasts with the main subject in theme and tone.³⁸ Both Pygmalion and Orpheus are artists who use their skill creatively to satisfy their desire for love. Both present their desires to the gods and receive what they request. For Pygmalion, however, the happy result endures whereas Orpheus suffers frustration at his second loss. His frustration leads Orpheus to reject women. He shares this rejection of female love with Pygmalion for whom it was an initial state, left behind as he experienced the beauty of his creation. Finally, in both these stories Ovid employs a tone that is lighter than epic, through

³⁸ For a comparison / contrast of Orpheus with Pygmalion, as well as a discussion of the Pygmalion's setting within the Orpheus epyllion, see Viarre, 236-241.

combining elements of different genres and displaying his own literary ability. He provides a contrast in style because the style of the Pygmalion is descriptive and elegiac rather than narrative and rhetorical like the Orpheus.

Myrrha

The Myrrha, like the Orpheus, begins on an ominous note. Orpheus precedes the story with a series of admonitions to the reader. First of all, he states that Paphos's son, Cinyras, would have been better off childless. Then the bard gives a series of prohibitions and warnings to the pure of heart to stay clear of this tale or accept it as fiction, or if one believes it, to believe also the punishment of the crime. The prohibitions, as Anderson notes, beginning with, "procul hinc" (300) parody the formula used by the Romans to warn away from a religious rite the profani who might spoil its purity.³⁹ These prohibitions are piled up in such a way that they arouse the reader's curiosity and ensure close attention! Orpheus begins firmly (300): "Dira canam: procul hinc natae, procul este parentes." In fact, he protests too much, but he quickly weakens the prohibitions by introducing two conditions, indicating alternatives to the opening command. Orpheus continues to indicate his disgust at the content of the story he is about to relate by congratulating Thrace on its distance from Cyprus, Myrrha's land, and

³⁹ Anderson, Ovid's Metamorphoses, p. 503. For the sources of the Myrrha and Ovid's treatment of the story, see pp. 501-517.

by stating Cupid's disavowal of any part in this passion, and finally by placing the blame on one of the Furies. He ends with a plea to Myrrha to choose any suitor except Cinyras.

The introduction to the Myrrha parodies prohibitions to the profani because of its rapid movement, the quick offering of alternatives, and the immoral character of those who express shock at Myrrha's conduct. Orpheus, who congratulates himself that his land is free of such passion, indulges in pederasty, and Cupid, although he claims no part in Myrrha's affair, inspires numerous illicit loves. Neither these two nor the Thracians, whom the Romans considered characteristically lustful, qualify to judge Myrrha!⁴⁰

Orpheus mocks the excessive horror of these would-be moralists by using overly clever language. Some examples of this use of language are the employment of so many literary devices in one speech. These include anaphora with "si" and "procul" (298-304), the effective alliteration and repetition of the syllable te in: "Stipite te Stygio" (313). Anderson has already noted the chiastic arrangement in verses 314-15 and the paradoxical wording of Orpheus's final exhortation to Myrrha.⁴¹

Myrrha begins her soliloquy with a brief prayer before entering

⁴⁰ Anderson, p. 503, has noted the possibility that Ovid is poking fun at Orpheus here by casting him in the role of the hypocrite moralist. He also notes the Roman prejudice against the Thracians, and recalls Ovid's earlier comment on Thracian lust in the Tereus (Met. 6.458-460).

⁴¹ Ovid's Metamorphoses, p. 504.

into a type of suasoria in which she deliberates about her erotic desires.⁴² She is, therefore, employing a form familiar to Ovid's contemporaries. She asks herself the three questions about possibility, expediency, and honor, that characterized legal orations, but in reverse order. Immediately after praying to resist her passion she marshals examples to show that Pietas allows incest among the animals, and that in some places humans marry their closest kin. Myrrha ends her list of examples with a cry of self-pity. She implies that if she had been born elsewhere, her passion would not be dishonorable (334-35) : "Me miseram, quod non nasci mihi contigit illic / Fortunaque loci laedor! . . ." She again tries to reject her passion but immediately moves back to her fancies of what could be if she were someone else's daughter. She quickly notes what advantage there is in staying rather than fleeing. She can at least see and touch Cinyras. This thought leads Myrrha to question the expediency of yielding to her passion. She considers it as inexpedient because of the confusion of relationships that would result, as well as the vengeance of the Furies that would pursue her (345-52). A final attempt to eject the passion from her mind has no effect. Her concluding words indicate that she recognizes the impossibility of union with Cinyras and yet still clings to her passion. Fulfillment of her desires is impossible because Cinyras would never allow it. Myrrha expresses her frustration in a final pitiful cry (335): "et

⁴² On Medea's soliloquy, see Brooks Otis, pp. 172-173.

o vellem similis furor esset in illo!" Myrrha thus concludes her deliberations about whether or not to yield to her passion. Ostensibly she has tried to persuade herself to reject her desires. In reality she has presented herself with reasons for indulging her passion if such indulgence were possible. Myrrha's soliloquy, therefore, represents a perversion of the suasoria since she uses it to convince herself that indulgence is proper.

Orpheus relates how Cinyras's attempts to comfort his daughter cause conflicting emotions in Myrrha until she finally determines on death as a release. As she addresses her final words to Cinyras, the nurse overhears her and enters the room. Thus the scene is set for the dramatic dialogue between Myrrha and her nurse, a scene which enables Ovid to display his skills as a dramatist. He employs elements from drama. In fact, the dialogue between Myrrha and her nurse imitates that between Phaedra and the nurse in Euripides' Hippolytus. Elements which are similar in both scenes include the nurse's questioning of the distraught younger woman, the woman's reluctance to reveal the reason for her suffering, her eventual revelation of unnatural desires, and the nurse's initial shock and subsequent assistance in fulfilling those desires.

In relating the scene between the nurse and Myrrha, Ovid is performing much the same task as the messenger in a Euripidean tragedy or a Homeric hero relating his past adventures. Ovid's narrative, however, lacks the vivid detail of these and moves much more quickly

than either. The quick movement of his story diminishes the solemnity and emotion-stirring function of drama. Ovid, the epyllion writer, deliberately tantalizes his readers with hints of solemnity combined with an action that is too quick to allow emotion to grip its viewer. In verses 385-387, for example, he cleverly presents the bustling nurse by piling up successive clauses, employing polysyndeton (que occurs three times in verse 386) and alliteration with s (again 386) to create a rushing effect. The nurse might well be expected to rush in and cut the bonds, but Ovid has her see the hanging, cry out, strike her breast and tear her garments. She then removes the bonds. All these actions occupy a mere two and one half verses!⁴³ All the while the nurse has been weeping, since Orpheus says, immediately following the rescue, that she finally stopped weeping (385-87):

Instrumenta videns spatium conclamat eodem
 Sequae ferit scinditque sinus ereptaque collo
 Vincula dilaniat. tum denique flere vacavit

Throughout this scene Ovid through the narrator, Orpheus, uses alliteration effectively, for example, t in verses 389-90, p in verse 411, and d in verse 413. The pleonastic, "Muta silet virgo" (389), intensifies the description of Myrrha's morose silence. The nurse's fear finds expression in a zeugma as Orpheus describes her hands trembling with age and with fear (414). When she realizes the truth, her physical appearance expresses horror. Orpheus provides

⁴³ See Anderson, Ovid's Metamorphoses, p. 509.

specific details of her horrified reaction, but he does not develop her response to Myrrha. Anderson⁴⁴ has noted the dramatic improbability of such a brief response. The story rushes toward its climax. The scene includes elements familiar from tragedy, but the dramatic effect has been lightened, and the narrative moves more rapidly. At the same time Orpheus as storyteller has taken pains to demonstrate his narrative ability.

Orpheus uses a descriptive style, that is, he provides vivid details of the dark night (446-451), of the hesitating approach of Myrrha (452-461), and of her entrance into Cinyras's chamber (462-464). In the climax of the Myrrha, which he sets during the annual feast of Ceres when women remained away from their husbands' beds for nine nights, Ovid also employs elegiac motifs. The nurse plays the part of a procurer, advertising Myrrha's beauty and her love for Cinyras. Having succeeded, she expresses her joy in a triumphant, "Vicimus!" (443). She is the one who will guide the hesitant Myrrha and present her to Cinyras with the ironic words (464): "Ista tua est, Cinyra."

The narrator creates an appropriate setting, specifying the time as midnight and detailing the withdrawal of the usual luminaries of night. Two triple omens intensify the somber atmosphere. The initial

⁴⁴ Ovid's Metamorphoses, p. 511. He also notes, p. 510, the fact that the serious use of zeugma in 10.14, is contrary to Ovid's usual practice. For further study of Ovid's use of zeugma, see Jean-Marc Frécaut, "Une figure de style chère à Ovide: le zeugma ou attelage," Latomus, 28 (1969), 28-41.

dactyl of verse 454, "It tamen," shifts the focus to Myrrha. The dark night only serves to aid her crime rather than to inspire fear. She holds the nurse's hand in her left hand, thus indicating a disregard of bad omens. At the same time she hesitates, as indicated by the three successive stages of her entrance into Cinyras's room. The symptoms of her reluctance are described in a clinical fashion. These very symptoms, however, would fit anyone overcome by a strong emotion, for example, the elegiac poet describing his symptoms of love.⁴⁵

Orpheus stresses the irony inherent in the love-making between the innocent Cinyras and the guilty Myrrha. He imagines their using the words, "pater" and "filia," terms appropriate to their age discrepancy and yet literally true. Myrrha leaves the room, "Plena patris;" she bears in her womb, "in pia . . . semina," and she carries, "conceptaque crimina" (469-70). Thus Orpheus emphasizes the criminal nature of the love-making. Cinyras too recognizes the horror of the crime when he finally sees who his partner has been.

Ovid briefly narrates Myrrha's flight, her confession of guilt and plea to any god who hears the prayer of those who admit their guilt. She prays for a metamorphosis to avoid polluting either the living or the dead. A sententia introduces her metamorphosis

⁴⁵ Francis Cairns, Generic Composition in Greek and Roman Poetry (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 1972), sheds light on the various genres and topoi employed by elegiac poets. Ovid is not, of course, composing a poem entirely within a particular genre, but he often suggests different topoi employed in elegiac poetry.

(488-89): "Numen confessis aliquod patet: ultima certe / Vota suos habuere deos; . . ." Ovid proves this sententia by relating Myrrha's metamorphosis. He lists each step of her transformation. The story ends with an aetiological detail. Myrrha's tears are a precious resin that will always be valued.

The Myrrha parallels and contrasts with the Orpheus both in style and themes. Both stories are mostly narrative and rhetorical in style, but the Myrrha adds dramatic and descriptive elements. Orpheus and Myrrha each beg the gods for a favor, thus seeming to submit to their rule. This prayer, however, turns into a suasoria designed to further their own wishes. Orpheus directs his rhetoric toward Pluto and Persephone; Myrrha presents cogent arguments to herself. The speakers are, however, making contrasting requests. Orpheus seeks his wife, thus a fulfillment of natural and licit love. Myrrha struggles with an illicit passion. Both pleas also have contrasting results. Orpheus succeeds in obtaining his request but is ultimately frustrated and deprived of his love. Myrrha at first chooses to die rather than yield, but she finally fulfills her desires.

The ending of both stories reveals some parallels. Both involve destruction because of love: Orpheus because he had rejected the Thracian women, Myrrha because of her incestuous love. In both a metamorphosis leads to the establishment of a monument in the person's memory. Whereas Apollo spares Orpheus's head by turning its attacker

to stone, Myrrha finds refuge in becoming a tree whose resin will be a precious ointment for later generations. After the metamorphosis Myrrha's unborn child struggles to free himself from the bonds of the tree. Because the mother has already been metamorphosed, she cannot call on the goddess of childbirth. Lucina, however, sees the tree's suffering and enables the boy to be born.

Venus and Adonis

Ovid's artistry is evident in the link which moves the reader from the distress and ugliness of Myrrha's situation to the pastoral setting of the Venus and Adonis. Ovid introduces a pleasant setting by noting the similarity of Adonis's beauty to that of painted Amores.⁴⁶ In this description a reverse ekphrasis compares the child to a work of art rather than comparing art to nature. Ovid underlines the comparison by the repetition of "aut" in verse 518.

After elaborating Adonis's birth in sixteen verses (503-18), Orpheus relates his entire childhood and early youth in ten lines (519-28). Ovid enjoys rhetoric here, opening the passage with a sententia about the swiftness of the years (519-20). He then illustrates that speed by describing Adonis's growth in what Anderson has aptly called a "playfully rhetorical way."⁴⁷ The repetition of

⁴⁶ See Anderson's discussion of this simile in Ovid's Metamorphoses, p. 519.

⁴⁷ Ovid's Metamorphoses, p. 519.

"nuper" in succeeding verses and the fourfold use of "iam" accent the rapidity of that growth. Ovid makes it obvious that these are details to be gotten quickly out of the way so that he can get to his story.

That story has an elegiac theme, Venus's passion for Adonis, and it is set in a pastoral landscape, the mountains and woods which are Diana's haunts.⁴⁸ At the same time Ovid uses it as a vehicle for rhetoric. A second sententia, this time addressed by Venus to Adonis serves as part of her monita or advice to him (543-44):
 ". . . 'fortis' que 'fugacibus esto!' / Inquit 'in audaces non est audacia tuta." Avoidance of dangerous beasts on the hunt is a typical elegiac theme. Propertius, for example, had stated that he would hunt only gentle animals so that he would be safe and thus able to see Cynthia again (2.19).⁴⁹ Venus elaborates her warning against fierce animals, stressing the need to avoid boars and lions. Adonis's question about the reason for her hatred of lions provides the opportunity for the digression. Venus answers Adonis with a long exemplum, ostensibly to warn him against lions but actually to warn

⁴⁸ Cf. Segal, Landscape, pp. 16-17, for the function of dark woods in the Venus and Adonis and in the Atalanta. He also treats the aestus-umbra and the flower motifs in the Venus and Adonis, pp. 79 and 35, respectively.

⁴⁹ Jean-Marc Frécaut, "Echos de quelques vers de Propertius dans les Métamorphoses d'Ovide," Latomus, 35 (1976), 748-749. He also mentions Propertius 3.13, 25-26, as a place where the hunt is limited to birds and hares, 749-750.

against slighting her divinity.⁵⁰

Following the exemplum Orpheus resumes the main subject. Venus has just warned Adonis to flee all beasts which do not offer their backs (705-07). Orpheus then relates the wounding and death of Adonis. He narrates in a direct manner the wounding of Adonis and Venus's recognition of his groans, but the mood quickly becomes that of love elegy, focusing on Venus's lament. Venus, like Myrrha's nurse, acts quickly, performing several of the motions of mourning simultaneously. She then addresses the Fates, Adonis, and Persephone in quick succession. Ovid obviously expects to amuse his readers by the piling up of elements of mourning and complaints.⁵¹

Venus's petulant tone in expressing her jealousy of Persephone's power contrasts with Apollo's assurance of his own power in creating a memorial for Hyacinthus. Like Hyacinthus, Adonis will have his annual memorial. His flower, however, will be as fleeting as the winds. Orpheus thus ends his song with an indication of the whimsical nature of Venus. Her passion is intense, but her devotion is, in the long run, fickle, ready to look in another direction.

Atalanta and Hippomenes

The story of Atalanta and Hippomenes is a digression from the main subject of the Venus and Adonis. Introduced as an explanation

⁵⁰ See Coleman, 469.

⁵¹ Anderson, Ovid's Metamorphoses, pp. 533-534, notes Ovid's amusement in verses 719-23.

of Venus's hatred of lions, it functions, nevertheless, as an exemplum. Venus states the moral of the story before relating it: "Dicam, 'ait 'et veteris monstrum mirabere culpae" (553). Venus appears, then, to advise Adonis to flee wild beasts; her main point, however, is that just as she rewards piety, so Venus punishes those who neglect her.⁵²

Venus's story concerns Atalanta and Hippomenes, how they fell in love, Hippomenes' victory with Venus's aid, his subsequent neglect of Venus and her vengeance on him. Only the final detail, the couple's metamorphosis to lions because they violated Cybele's shrine, refers back to Venus's hatred of lions. She has thus taken Adonis's question as a starting point for a warning not to neglect her. Adonis's apparent lack of response to Venus may have prompted her warning.⁵³

The background material for the contest of suitors with Atalanta abounds in rhetorical elements. There is an oracular warning, a monitum advising Atalanta against marriage (565-66). Hippomenes quotes a sententia (586): "Audentes deus ipse iuvat." Atalanta soliloquizes (611-635), addressing a suasoria to herself and then, in imagination, attempting to dissuade Hippomenes. Hence her suasoria moves in two directions. She tries to convince herself

⁵² See Coleman, 469.

⁵³ V. Emeljanow, "Ovidian Mannerism: An Analysis of the Venus and Adonis Episode in Met. X 503-738," Mnemosyne 22 (1969), 67-76. On 73, Emeljanow notes the one-sided nature of the love between Venus and Adonis. His article affords an excellent analysis of the entire episode..

that she is indifferent, but she struggles to save Hippomenes' life, thus proving the ineffectiveness of her self-persuasion. Her sentiments rush together, creating a confusing speech. This confusion reflects Atalanta's state of mind. Ovid reminds his readers (636-37) that this is her first experience of love.

Ovid uses Atalanta's soliloquy to poke fun at rhetorical eloquence. She denies the obvious truth, thus recalling Myrrha's perversion of the suasoria. First she claims that she does not consider herself worth so great a price. She, however, is the one who initiated the contest to save herself from the self-obliteration foretold by the oracle! Secondly, she denies that it is Hippomenes' beauty that attracts her, but she immediately admits that she could be so moved. Third, she states nobly that it is his youth that moves her rather than Hippomenes himself. Her three rhetorical questions, however, indicate how closely she has followed his every word. She considers each of his points in turn. There is humor in the piling up of short questions, each introduced by, "Quid, quod" (616-18), and in the paraphrase she employs for Hippomenes' glorious ancestry. His descent from Neptune she calls a, "watery origin:" "aequorea . . . origine" (617).⁵⁴ Her deliberation proves ineffective because she follows her questions with a command, unspoken, of course, to Hippomenes to go away and save himself (620). Atalanta next redoubles her efforts to convince herself that if Hippomenes persists in seeking

⁵⁴ See Anderson, Ovid's Metamorphoses, p. 526.

her, he deserves to die (624-25), yet simultaneously she questions this judgment (626-27). She expresses pity for Hippomenes and admits that he is the one whom she would marry if the fates permitted (631-35). The end of her soliloquy finds Atalanta madly in love with Hippomenes despite her attempts to convince herself of the opposite. In using a soliloquy ineffectively, Atalanta resembles Myrrha. One wonders if Ovid intended the futility of Atalanta's attempts to reflect Venus's helplessness in the face of her passion for Adonis.⁵⁵

The description of Atalanta's beauty as she runs (586-96) provides an idyllic element. Venus paints a detailed picture of the breeze's effect in enhancing her beauty and the flush brought over her body by the effort of running.⁵⁶ The sight of Atalanta proves more persuasive to Hippomenes than any speech could have been. He determines to join the suitors since the prize is worth the risk.

In narrating the race and its outcome, Venus combines elegiac and epic styles. She begins in the first person, describing Hippomenes' prayer to her, the grove sacred to herself and the gift of the golden apples. With the signal to start the race, Venus assumes an epic manner, depicting in the third person the typical athletic

⁵⁵ On Venus's overwhelming passion for Adonis, see Coleman, 469.

⁵⁶ For discussion of this passage, see Anderson, Ovid's Metamorphoses, pp. 523-524, and his article, "Talaria and Ovid, Met. 10. 591," TAPA, 97 (1966), 1-13.

contest where the spectators urge on their favorite. Hyperbole and metaphor indicate the runners' speed, comparing them to wing-footed creatures who could run above the heads of standing grain. The contest varies as now one, now the other gains the lead. Only with the thrust of the third apple does Venus resume her personal tone, giving herself credit for Atalanta's defeat and the fulfillment of her promise. She complains petulantly (676-80): "Dignane, cui grates ageret . . . Adoni, fui?" (681-82), and admits that anger and resentment prompted her to establish a concrete exemplum lest she be spurned in the future.

Venus returns briefly to objective narrative, relating how Hippomenes was struck with uncontrollable passion, thus earning Cybele's anger for polluting her shrine. Venus includes an ekphrasis, describing the sacred grove which was the setting for Hippomenes' sacrilege. She continues with the description of the lions into which the guilty couple were changed. The step by step picture could well describe a work of art. The metamorphosis ends with Venus's warning to Adonis (705-07): "Hos tu, care mihi . . . / Effuge, ne virtus tua sit damnosa duobus!"

In the Atalanta and Hippomenes Ovid employs a rather long exemplum but turns it upside down. Orators used exempla to persuade others to their point of view. Some were brief, merely citing a mythological or historical person or action as precedent. Others were, "stories within stories . . . all calculated to play upon

the thought or emotions of the hearer and so to convince his opinion or move his feeling to action."⁵⁷ The elegists had used exempla to give their subjective experience a universal significance. Ovid in his Amores had deliberately introduced inappropriate exempla to poke fun at the use of mythological exempla and to increase the mock tragic tone of a particular poem.⁵⁸ In this digression he criticizes the oratorical practices of his contemporaries by having Venus narrate an exemplum whose real intent differs from its ostensible purpose. The following analysis will show how Venus offers what appears to be a friendly warning to Adonis to take care of himself, while she is actually threatening Adonis that he had better care for her or else!

Venus, the all-powerful love goddess, introduces the exemplum to warn against spurning her. She addresses it to Adonis but veils her harsh warning by making it an explanation of her hatred of lions. Why does she protect Adonis from wild beasts and yet warn him not to spurn her? Clearly she cannot control her passion for Adonis. At the same time she recognizes his lack of interest and tries to gain his love by a threat, the warning contained in Hippomenes' punishment.

⁵⁷ Elizabeth H. Haight, The Roman Use of Anecdotes in Cicero, Livy, & the Satirists (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1940), p. 8.

⁵⁸ John T. Davis, "Exempla and Anti-exempla in the Amores of Ovid," Latomus, 39 (1980), 412-416. For study of the Roman use of exemplum, see especially Haight, and Bennett J. Price, "Paradeigma and Exemplum in Ancient Rhetorical Theory," Diss. Univ. of Calif., Berkeley, 1975.

Adonis's death causes her sorrow, but she introduces Persephone's ability to metamorphose a favorite nymph as an exemplum to justify her own desire to change Adonis into a flower.

Ovid has thus used rhetorical elements to indicate the ultimate futility and the frequent deception involved in the orator's efforts. The Venus and Adonis, therefore, relates to the Orpheus through the use of rhetoric. As Orpheus had used rhetoric effectively but had ultimately failed, so Venus, despite her warnings, finally loses Adonis. Orpheus had deceived his listeners by pretending submission as he actually controlled them, and Atalanta deceived herself about her true feelings for Hippomenes.

Orpheus was punished for excessive passion which caused him to look back at Eurydice, and Hippomenes was struck by excessive passion as a punishment. Venus too was powerless in the face of her extreme desire for Adonis. Adonis, it must be remembered, was the result of Myrrha's wrongful passion. Adonis was killed because he neglected Venus's advice; Orpheus was destroyed for rejecting the Thracian women. Hence the Venus and Adonis fits thematically into the Orpheus epyllion.

Summary

Ovid's Orpheus is a tightly structured epyllion of just over eight hundred lines. Its main subject, the tale of Orpheus's loss of Eurydice (10.1-147) and his own destruction by the Thracian women (11.1-66), constitutes about one-fourth of the entire epyllion. The remaining three-fourths (10.148-739) comprise the digression formed by

Orpheus's song. The digression has within it several epyllia and linking episodes. Ovid's Orpheus thus displays his layering of genres within a genre. In this case, he layers shorter epyllia within the digression of a lengthy epyllion. Within both the digression and the main subject he juxtaposes elements of several genres. Within the Hyacinthus and Pygmalion elegiac elements are combined with rhetorical and epic elements. The Myrrha emphasizes dramatic and rhetorical elements but concludes with elegiac motifs. The Venus and Adonis combines elegy with the rhetorical exemplum. All these epyllia, therefore, demonstrate Ovid's inclusion of the elements of several genres within the epyllion form.

Within the main subject the Orpheus epyllion combines epic, rhetorical, and elegiac elements. It thus has the same combination of genres as does the digression, but the proportion of each differs. Whereas the digression emphasizes the combination of elegy with rhetoric, although it includes epic and dramatic elements, the main subject stresses epic and rhetorical elements, even though it includes some elegiac motifs. Ovid lightens the tone of the epic sections and has Orpheus use rhetoric to achieve his own aims while pretending submission to the underworld powers.

Ovid's structuring of several shorter epyllia within the digression of the Orpheus, and the presence of a second epyllion within the Venus and Adonis emphasizes the epyllion genre. This emphasis, as well as Ovid's continual lightening of epic tone,

suggests that Ovid gives greater weight to epyllion than to epic. In addition, his consistent stress on the deceptive and futile nature of rhetoric suggests a critique of the rhetorical practices of his time. Finally, the fact that the Pygmalion offers a comment on the literary artist at work supports the idea that Ovid's combination of several genres within the Orpheus forms part of the broader literary statement which Ovid makes in the Metamorphoses.

The Theseus Epyllion

Ovid has organized several stories in the Metamorphoses around the hero, Theseus, who serves as a unifying element for the material covered from Book 7.404 through 9.97.¹ Because Theseus reappears at intervals between his arrival in Athens ("Iamque Theseus aderat" 7.404) and his departure from Achelous's house ("Discedunt iuvenes" 9.94), he provides the main subject for a loosely structured epyllion.

One might question calling the Theseus an epyllion, since Theseus disappears after 7.452 and does not reappear until 8.303, where he is listed as a participant in the Calydonian boar hunt. After the hunt Theseus stops at Achelous's house, and the main subject of the Theseus is resumed. Otis² considers Theseus as parallel to two other heroes, Aeacus and Cephalus. Neither of these, however, reappears once his story has been told. Theseus, on the other hand, reappears at intervals, although briefly. He finally reappears on his return journey after the Calydonian boar hunt. In

¹ For schemata of this section, see Franz Bömer, ed., P. Ovidius Naso Metamorphosen: Kommentar, III (Heidelberg: Winter, 1976), p. 299, and B. A. Van Proosdij, rev., D. E. Van Bosselaar, ed., P. Ovidii Nasonis, Metamorphoseon, Libri I-XV, Textus et Commentarius (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968), pp. 202-203 and Brooks Otis, Ovid as an Epic Poet, 2nd ed. (1966; Cambridge: The Univ. Press, 1970), p. 168. For specific references to Theseus in Book VIII, see Lawrence Giangrande, "Mythic Themes in Ovid. Met. 8," CB 50 (1973-74): 17-21. Cf. also M. Marjorie Crump, The Epyllion from Theocritus to Ovid (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1931), p. 213.

² Ovid, p. 174.

many epyllia, as noted in the introductory chapter (p. 18) the main subject serves merely as a frame for the digression. The Theseus seems to form such a frame for the Minos and the Meleager which in turn frame other epyllia.

As in Catullus 64 the wedding of Peleus and Theseus frames the central narrative of Ariadne's desertion, so the heroic feats of Theseus frame a core of narratives relating to Minos. On the one hand, the two epyllia differ, since in Catullus 64 the digression has greater unity than do the Minos tales which form the digression within the Theseus. On the other hand, the epyllia are parallel because Peleus and Thetis, as well as Theseus, have a passive rather than an active role in the events surrounding them. In Catullus's poem the opening narrative focuses on the unusual number of guests who emptied the countryside to attend the wedding, and it catalogues the immortals who celebrated with the couple. Its ending, the song of the Parcae introduces an entirely new idea. Ovid's Theseus shows a similar playing down of the role of the participants in the main subject because Theseus does not take an active part. Instead, Ovid emphasizes the rejoicing that occurred when Theseus was spared from death, and he makes Theseus a listener to the tales in the House of Achelous. In addition, he briefly mentions the hero's presence at the Calydonian boar hunt, narrated in the Meleager epyllion. The main subject is thus united by the hero's presence, but his deeds are not the focus of the narrative. Ovid's Theseus, therefore, is a loosely

structured epyllion whose main subject concerns events in which Theseus is involved, and whose major digression narrates tales connected with Minos. Although the structure of the Theseus is much looser than that of the Orpheus, Theseus's presence at the beginning and end, as well as his fleeting appearance at Calydon, justifies calling Ovid's Theseus an epyllion.

The first and longer digression within the Theseus is itself an epyllion, narrating as main subject tales connected with Minos, king of Crete. Like the Theseus, the Minos has a main subject which frames a digression. The figure of Minos unifies several narratives whose major focus is on participants other than Minos. In organization, therefore, the Minos parallels the Theseus to which it forms a digression. The Minos has within its digression two smaller epyllia, the Aeacus and Cephalus and the Scylla, after which it returns to the main subject with narratives about Minos at Crete. These narratives do not have the usual epyllion structure of digression or long speech (Cf. Introduction, p. 18); hence they will not be analyzed here as epyllia.

The second, shorter digression within the Theseus narrates Meleager's participation in the Calydonian boar hunt. Its digression concerns Althaea's conflicting emotions as she seeks to avenge her brothers' murders.

Just as Theseus provides a broad framework for the Minos, the Meleager and the Achelous, so the Minos frames the Aeacus, the

Scylla, and several stories which refer to Minos. The Minos, therefore, parallels the Theseus in loosely connecting epyllia. The Aeacus and Cephalus, the Meleager, and the Achelous have a tighter epyllion structure.

The schema for the Theseus indicates its complex organization:

Theseus epyllion 7.404-9.97

Main subject of Theseus 7.404-452

Digression₁ within Theseus: Minos epyllion 7.453-8.263

Minos main subject: Minos's war preparations 7.453-489

Digressions within Minos: Aeacus and Cephalus epyllion
7.490-8.5

Scylla epyllion 8.6-151

Minos main subject: Minos at Crete 8.152-269

Digression₂ within Theseus: Meleager epyllion 8.8.270-546

Main subject of Theseus Achelous epyllion 8.547-9.97

An analysis of these stories as epyllia demonstrates Ovid's skill in manipulating genres. Further, analysis of the several genres contained within each section of the Theseus proves Ovid's care in combining the elements of several genres within each section. Genres included are didactic poetry, the hymn, the pastoral idyll, and the prayer formula, epic elements such as ekphrasis, battle descriptions, and catalogues; dramatic elements like the soliloquy and messenger speech; rhetorical elements, including the sententia and the exemplum, and elegiac elements like the complaint of a lover.

Main Subject of Theseus

The major elements contained within the main subject of the Theseus are the lyric hymn to Theseus (7.433-450) at the beginning and the Achelous epyllion at the end. The latter includes within its digressions an idyll told as an exemplum, and stories which contain epic elements. Although Theseus's deeds are mentioned briefly in the Minos, he does not again become the subject of major attention until the Achelous. The Theseus may be analyzed thus (omitting lines that are merely connective passages):

Main Subj.₁ Introduction: Theseus's arrival at Athens 7.404-424

Celebration at Athens (including Hymn to Theseus) 425-452

Digression₁ within Theseus epyllion: Minos (7.453-8.263)

Digression₂ within Theseus epyllion: Meleager (8.270-546)

Main Subj.₂ Achelous epyllion 8.547-9.97

Main subject of Achelous: Epic banquet scene 547-574

Digression 1: Echinades 577-610

Digression 2: Baucis and Philemon (Idyll

offered as an exemplum) 620-724

Digression 3: Erysichthon 738-878

Digression 4: Achelous and Hercules 9.4-88

Main subject of Achelous: End of banquet 89-92

Main Subj.₃ Departure of Theseus 93-97

Ovid connects the Theseus with the preceding Medea through Aegeus, who accepted her and failed to recognize his own son. Aegeus deserved condemnation for one thing only, his acceptance of Medea (402): "facto damnandus in uno." The use of "facinus" (423) to represent the near poisoning of his son echoes the earlier "facto," thus strengthening the link between the Theseus section and the Medea.

The introduction to the Theseus epyllion (404-424) has epic elements, but Ovid lightens the tone by the way he has proportioned his material. Two lines (404-405) introduce the hero, but attention immediately shifts to the aetiology of the poison Medea uses against Theseus. The lack of proportion between the lengthy preamble and the briefly stated main point places more emphasis on the poison's origin than on its intended use for murder. The main point, in fact, receives only one third the consideration given to the preamble, since the explanation of the poison's origin occupies fourteen lines, whereas five lines suffice to relate the near tragedy, Aegeus's recognition and rescue of his son, as well as Medea's escape. Ovid attributes to others the explanation of the poison's origin and the reason for its being called aconite. Twice he disassociates himself from the story; in line 408 he uses "memorant" and in line 416 "putant." The epic periphrasis, "Tirynthus heros" (410) suits Hercules, but the reference to Cerberus as, "Echidneae . . . canis" (408-409) provides the dog with an epic epithet that recalls

Hesiod's Theogony (304-312). The intricate word order in 411-413 reflects the monster's resistance to being brought into the light, and in line 415 the chiasmus accents the color contrast between green and white (7.411-415):

Restantem contraque diem radiosque micantes
 Obliquantem oculos nexis adamante catenis
 Cerberon abstraxit, rabida qui concitus ira
 Implevit pariter ternis latratibus auras
 Et sparsit virides spumis albetibus agros

The whole passage exploits epic pedantry to direct epic elements to achieve non-epic effects.³

Ovid continues the elevated tone as he describes the sacrifices offered by Aegeus and maintains it until the lines which immediately precede the hymn to Theseus. The ancients recognized that wine aids in the creation of song, but Ovid's phrasing: "nec non et carmina vino / Ingenium faciente canunt: (432-433), emphasizes the wine as the creator of talent, and implies that if the singers were not drunk, they would not praise Theseus.⁴

Hymn to Theseus

The Hymn to Theseus which the common people sing follows the pattern of a hymn to a god or hero, described in the introduction (pp.

³ William S. Anderson, ed., Ovid's Metamorphoses, Books 6-10 (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1972), p. 288; Anderson comments on the comic aspects of this description. Latin quotations in this chapter are from Anderson's edition.

⁴ For a similar use of an ablative absolute to create a humorous effect, see Met. 10.10.

22-23). Such a hymn includes an address to the honored one and a cataloguing of his exploits. In this instance the people address their hero as "maxime Theseu" (433) and catalogue his heroic feats. Ovid gives an interesting twist by changing the grammatical subject of each of Theseus's deeds. Although Theseus receives the credit, the reader's attention focuses on Marathon, Epidaurus, Eleusis, and the other beneficiaries of Theseus's labors. The hymn's closing words, "bacchi tibi sumimus haustus" (450), suggest a drinking song rather than a solemn hymn, yet at the same time the closing lines (448-450) flatter Theseus and thus maintain the hymn form.⁵ The hymn concludes the opening section of the Theseus's main subject.

The Achelous

Ovid does not focus on Theseus again until 8.547, when he reintroduces the hero with the words, "Interea Theseus" (8.547). Almost immediately Achelous appears to block Theseus's passage. Ovid thus resumes the main subject of the Theseus epyllion, and introduces a smaller, carefully structured epyllion, the Achelous. Its four digressions vary in tone from the lofty language of epic to the realistic details of an idyll. They follow closely upon each other with only brief returns to the main subject. They are, however, clearly set within the banquet scene, each answering a question or proving a point. After the final resumption of the main subject, the

⁵ Anderson, p. 292, comments on these lines, pointing out the flattery at the end of the hymn which enables the catalogue of deeds to be shortened.

Achelous ends simultaneously with the Theseus epyllion. By introducing Hercules in its last digression, Ovid paves the way for his next section, the story of Hercules and Nessus. Contrast of the loss of Achelous's horn with the loss of Nessus's life provides a clever bridge between the story of Theseus and that of Hercules.⁶

The structure of the Achelous is as follows:

Main subject: epic banquet scene: 8.547-576

Digression 1: Echinades and Perimele: 576-610

Main subject: 611-616

Digression 2: Idyll: Baucis and Philemon: 617-724

Main subject: 725-727

Digression 3: Erysichthon: 728-878

Main subject: 879-9.2

Digression 4: Achelous and Hercules: 2-88

Main subject: 89-92

The main subject of the Achelous epyllion has an epic setting, that of heroes at a banquet as Theseus and his companions engage in after dinner conversation with the river god Achelous. It also burlesques, by taking it to its logical absurdity, the epic convention whereby a river god personifies the river itself. Achelous blocks

⁶ Anderson, p. 424, comments on the cleverness of 9.98-100; he also, pp. 423-424, indicates the parallels between Theseus and Hercules.

Theseus's way and warns him against the river's violence. He greets Theseus as "inclite", (550) and formally invites him to enter his house. The god then launches into a series of brief examples to warn Theseus against braving the river's swollen waters. On the one hand, the god humbly receives the hero, but on the other, he warns Theseus of his own greater power, the river's destructive force. Because the river and the god are one, the warning veils a threat⁷ to which Theseus responds laconically: "utor . . . Acheloe, domoque / Consilioque tuo" (560-561); he thus employs zeugma with utor to achieve a playful effect.⁸ The god unifies the epyllion because his house is its setting, and he narrates three of the four digressions. As Hollis⁹ notes, Achelous is a rather pompous creature whose high-flown language reflects his personality. Ovid emphasizes Achelous's pomposity by having him treat the heroes as subordinates and tell stories which reflect his own prowess. It is Achelous's personality intruding between digressions two and three and forming the subject of digressions one and four, which unifies the entire epyllion.

Ovid describes Achelous's cave in epic language, creating a

⁷ Cf. Anderson, p. 382, note to lines 553 and 556.

⁸ Anderson, p. 383, mentions Ovid's, "typically humorous zeugma." See also Jean-Marc Frécaut, "Une Figure de Style Chère à Ovide: Le Zeugma ou Attelage," Latomus, 28 (1969), 28-41.

⁹ A. S. Hollis, ed., Ovid Metamorphoses Book VIII (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 99.

compound adjective "multicavo" (562) to describe the volcanic rock, and picturing an elegantly panelled ceiling. Theseus and his companions recline in the cave as they would in a king's palace. Although Ovid carefully explains the seating arrangement (566-570), he wastes no time on the actual meal. Within two lines all is ready for the after dinner wine and its accompanying conversation.¹⁰ In the Odyssey (Od. 7.75-179), however, Homer describes at length the surroundings of Alkinoos's palace and the welcome given Odysseus. Vergil likewise (Aen. 1.631-642); 695-735) developed Dido's reception of Aeneas, but Ovid compresses into a mere eight lines (8.562-570) an epic scene which covers more than one hundred lines in Homer. He thus employs to quite an extent the epyllion technique of shortening epic passages.

A question commonly serves to introduce a digression. In the Achelous, the first and the fourth digressions are responses to Theseus's questions. The second answers Pirithous's challenge, and the third fulfills Theseus's wish to hear of more wonders.

Ovid has Achelous present himself as a pompous individual who expects to have his demands fulfilled and who does not know how to be humble even before other deities. In his tale of the Echinades he reveals his vengeful nature, and in the prayer he addresses to Neptune on behalf of Perimele, he reveals his arrogance. Achelous pretends to observe hymn requirements by flattering the god and humbly making a

¹⁰ Cf. Anderson, p. 384.

specific request, but he undercuts the effect of these elements by the manner of his address to Neptune. Achelous's pomposity permeates the whole Achelous, culminating in the boastful narrative of his contest with Hercules and his efforts to keep the travellers with him.

Echinades and Perimele

The first digression contains two stories, one referring to a whole group of nymphs and the second to a single nymph. The common point in both stories is that all the nymphs have now become islands, and Achelous, delighted with his captive audience, moves from one to the other without pause. He tells the story first of the Echinades, nymphs who neglected to worship him. He then moves directly to the tale of Perimele who suffered from the god's violence and her father's cruelty.

Achelous introduces the story of the Echinades as an exemplum, indicating a parallel with the vengeance of Diana: "Quoque minus . . . Dianae" (579). Theseus, who has just experienced Diana's wrath in the destruction wrought by the Calydonian boar, will scarcely miss the point. Achelous, then, provides a rather humorous display of verbal pomposity. He emphasizes his own rhetorical skill as he takes advantage of his identity with the river's physical force. He juxtaposes words effectively and makes the word order reflect his own actions.¹¹ The river god is obviously trying to impress his

¹¹ Anderson has carefully analyzed lines 583-589; see his commentary, pp. 385-386.

audience with his ability to use words effectively and his power to achieve what he desires. By the time they were driven into the sea, the nymphs were finally mindful of Achelous (586): "nymphas memores tum denique nostri.

After the tale of vengeance, Achelous's manner suggests that he is about to narrate a tender love story. He points out very carefully an island that is dear to him. He says, "procul, en procul (590), indicating the effort needed to see this island. His eagerness and care in pointing out the island that is dear to him sets the mood for love rather than for violence, but Achelous immediately disappoints his listeners' expectations. What follows is a second tale of violence, Achelous's rape of the maiden Perimele and her father's subsequent attempt to destroy her. Although Achelous claims to have saved Perimele from her father's cruelty, he had first offered her violence. She also shares the same fate as those Achelous had punished.

In his prayer to Neptune, Achelous parodies the usual attitude of a suppliant. He does this by employing a form of address that is too involved to be taken seriously and by a choice of words which suggests lack of sincerity and humility (595-596): ". . . 'o proxima mundi / Regna vagae' dixi 'sortite tridentifer undae." His request for help for the victim of her father's cruelty sounds less than sincere, especially since Achelous accepts none of the blame.¹²

¹² Beginning with line 595 there are textual difficulties

Finally, he prays not for Perimele's rescue, but rather that she be given a place or herself become a place: "Da, Neptune, locum vel sit locus ipsa, licebit." (602), and he receives an immediate answer to his request. While she is still swimming, Perimele feels the effects of Achelous's prayer and shares the fate of the Echinades. The clever word play of the request suggests that Ovid may be laughing at his own cleverness as well as at Achelous's prayer.

Baucis and Philemon

The second digression, occasioned by Pirithous's challenge of the gods' power, has the same purpose as the preceding story, but it contrasts with it in form and tone. When Pirithous challenges the river god by denying the ability of the gods to bring about metamorphoses, Lelex responds with the story of Baucis and Philemon. In form the story is an idyll,¹³ although it serves as an exemplum to

which affect the interpretation of this section, making Achelous sound more or less humble. Anderson, discusses these lines, noting, for example, what he considers an interpolation in 599, since confession of guilt does not fit Ovid's presentation of Achelous. I have based my discussion on the text used by Anderson, leaving aside possible alternatives. For a discussion of textual problems in Met. 8, see Franz Bömer, ed., P. Ovidius Naso Metamorphosen: Kommentar, IV (Heidelberg: Winter, 1977), pp. 182-184, Anderson, pp. 387-388, and Hollis, pp. 102-104.

¹³ Cf. Georges Lafaye, Les Métamorphoses d'Ovide et Leurs Modèles Grecs (1904; rpt. New York: Georg Olms, 1971), pp. 89-90; Brooks Otis, Ovid as an Epic Poet, 2nd ed. (1966; Cambridge: The Univ. Press, 1970), pp. 413-414, and Charles P. Segal, "Narrative Art in the Metamorphoses," CJ 66 (1971), 335. For a discussion of the Baucis and Philemon as Märchen and as Idyll see Godo Lieberg, "Zur Kombination Literarischer Gattungen," Aevum 54 (1980), 35-41.

prove the gods' power. Ovid emphasizes the contrast in narrators of the two tales by describing Lelex as (617): "animo maturus et aevo," unlike the pompous, self-indulgent Achelous, or the spretor deorum who denies the gods' power.

In the Baucis and Philemon Ovid presents a bucolic poem which contains a theophany and whose ostensible purpose is to prove the gods' power. Ovid, however, treats the bucolic motifs in an original way, with sympathetic humor. He includes the usual motifs of such poetry, for example, simple fare and cheerful acceptance of hardship, but the meal he describes consists of hors d'oeuvres, an ample main course and a variety of desserts.¹⁴

Ovid accepts the conventions of Roman bucolic poetry by picturing Baucis and Philemon as having a sufficiency for living, although they lacked any semblance of luxury. His treatment of Baucis and Philemon is original, however, since he stresses the pitiable aspects of their situation instead of idealizing their simple life. Guillemín¹⁵ comments on Ovid's emphasis on their hardships and compares Ovid's efforts to win his readers' sympathy for Baucis and

¹⁴ G. K. Galinsky, Ovid's Metamorphoses: An Introduction to the Basic Aspects (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1975), pp. 202-203, discusses Ovid's description of the meal as: "a mildly parodic comment on the patriotic exhortations angustam . . . pauperiem pati (Horace, C. 3.2.1) and the glorification, by poets like Horace and Tibullus, of the simplicity of country life."

¹⁵ A. M. Guillemín, "Ovide et La Vie Paysanne (Met. 8. 626-724)," in Ovidiana: Recherches sur Ovide, ed. N.I. Herescu (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1958), p. 321. See her entire article, pp. 317-323 for an analysis of Ovid's presentation of country life.

philemon to a miseratio employed by an orator to evoke the judge's sympathy for his client. Two details not mentioned by Guillemin are the use of "anili" (643) to describe Baucis's breath as she blows on the embers and the emphasis on the couple's cheerful acceptance of poverty (633-634; 678). Guillemin does mention, however, the lack of slaves and the difficulty of the old couple in climbing the hill with the gods, a difficulty of movement evident in Ovid's report of the goose chase. Such details seem calculated to arouse sympathy at the same time as they provoke a smile. Ovid's Baucis and Philemon, therefore, is an idyll with a twist. Whereas other Augustan poets idealized rustic simplicity, Ovid stresses the hardships involved in country life and the difficulties of old age.

In the Baucis and Philemon Ovid presents a detailed picture of country life. The lowly hut, the simple furnishings, and the rustic meal reflect the ideals of Roman peasant life. Ovid dwells on the details of the couple's physical surroundings: the rough cover for the chair, the beechwood tub, the willow couch, the uneven table, the earthenware vessels, and yesterday's fire in need of rekindling. The reader follows every action of the meal's preparation, from Baucis's blowing on the embers and lopping off of the cabbage leaves to her rubbing of the table with mint. An added realistic detail is the slowness of the old woman's movements, which Ovid indicates by a simple reference to whiling away the hours with conversation (651). He describes the meal by listing every ingredient, even the pleasant

company (677-678)! " . . . super omnia vultus / accessere boni
nec iners pauperque voluntas."

The emphasis on realistic details reflects the conventions of bucolic or idyllic poetry. Ovid, however, inserts humor into his descriptions. He does so, first, by including apparently every possible detail. Secondly, he personifies inanimate objects, making them take an active part. The tub, for example, is filled with water and receives limbs to be kept warm (654-655a): "Is tepidis inpletur
aquis artusque fovendos / accipit." Another instance of humor is the complex manner of describing Baucis's treatment of the table which has just been balanced. Three words state the balancing, but then Ovid uses a relative clause to make the same point; he ends with an unusual use of the active voice, which has the mint leaves doing the rubbing (662-663): "Testa parem fecit; quae postquam subdita clivum
/ Sustulit, aequatam mentae tersere virentes." Finally, after such long preparations, Ovid speaks of little delay before the hearth sends forth a warm banquet. Presumably, the banquet is the pork and cabbage. Ovid makes the hearth active and glorifies the cheap meal into a banquet (671):¹⁶ "Parva mora est, epulasque foci misere
calentes."

Before their formal declaration the gods reveal themselves by replenishing the wine. The couple recognize this as miraculous, and

¹⁶ Anderson's commentary on the meal and wine, pp. 396-397, is very useful; cf. also Hollis, pp. 119-120.

they honor the divinities present by praying with uplifted hands. Ovid states simply that they asked pardon for the banquet and lack of provisions (683): "Et veniam dapibus nullisque paratibus orant." Surely the juxtaposition of dapibus with nullisque paratibus has a humorous intent, since the idyll has focused mainly on the meal's preparation and its contents. The gods declare themselves formally after the goose flees to them for its safety. If Baucis and Philemon had not already recognized their guests as gods, they would not have tried to kill the goose. Hence the gods' statement linked to their protection of the goose seems merely a formal declaration of divine authority to reward and punish (689-691):¹⁷

'Di' que 'sumus, meritasque luet vicinia poenas
 Impia' dixerunt; 'vobis immunibus huius
 Esse mali dabitur. . . .

The closing lines of the Baucis and Philemon make the point asserted at its beginning.¹⁸ The gods do have power to accomplish what they want. Ovid's use of the word superi in verse 689 recalls Lelex's opening statement (619): "quidquid superi voluere, peractum est." The gods save the goose; they also punish the inhospitable

¹⁷ For Ovid's use of "-que" in linking a verb of saying with another verb, see J. Marouzeau, "Un Procédé Ovidien," Ovidiana, pp. 101-105.

¹⁸ Jerzy Danielewicz, "Some Observations on the Technique and Contextual Role of the Scenery Descriptions in Ovid's 'Metamorphoses'," Eos 59 (1971), 302, indicates the return at the end of the Baucis and Philemon to the story's opening scene.

neighbors and reward the old couple's piety. The results are immediate; before they have reached their destination, Baucis and Philemon see their house changing, step by step, into a temple. Although the change is fantastic, Ovid provides a blueprint for the new temple. A second instance of the gods' effective power is their answer to the couple's wish that they both die at the same time. Their wish is more than fulfilled through their simultaneous metamorphosis into trees. Ovid describes this change in a step by step fashion. The reader and Lelex's audience become eyewitnesses of the gods' complete power.

Lelex had begun his story by naming himself as an eyewitness, but he had only seen the place. He had stated (622): "Ipse locum vidi." Because his story followed soon after this statement, he gave the impression of having actually viewed the events he narrated. At the story's end, however, Lelex names as witnesses the resident who still points out the twin tree and the sensible old men who told him and who would have no reason to want to deceive (721-724):

Haec mihi non vani (neque erat, cur fallere vellent)
 Narravere senes; equidem pendentia vidi
 Serta super ramos ponensque recentia dixi. . . .
 'Cura deum di sint, et qui coluere, colantur!'

The final witness is Lelex's votive offering which he hung on the tree with a rather prosaic prayer that those who have worshipped may be worshipped (724). As Anderson notes, the phrase, "'Cura deum,'" which Vergil had used of Anchises (Aen. 3.476), refers to those

beloved of the gods.¹⁹ Lelex thus concludes his story with a sententia about those dear to the gods.

Ovid's Baucis and Philemon proves his ability to use genres in a unique way and to combine them effectively. He has presented an idyll or a bucolic poem whose function, however, is that of the rhetorical exemplum. Ovid has emphasized the realistic details found in bucolic poetry. By inserting humorous descriptions he has changed the thrust from idealization of rustic life to parody of the bucolic genre. He plays with the motifs of that genre, delighting in revealing the unlovely side of country life and the difficulty of the peasant's life, by stressing the weaknesses and difficulties of the old couple. Rather than glorying in the simple life, Ovid expresses a sympathetic recognition of the hardships experienced by an old couple. Finally, Lelex surprises the reader by offering as his source a story told by old men.²⁰

The Erysichthon

The Erysichthon follows the Baucis and Philemon, with which it contrasts in style and subject matter. The style reflects

¹⁹ Anderson, p. 400, comments on the playful juxtaposition of "deum," "di," and the active and passive forms of "colere." Hollis, p. 127, interprets the line in context of the story's purpose, to mean that the gods can make those they love divine. He also notes the parallel with Hecale who received honors after her death.

²⁰ For further discussion of the Baucis and Philemon in the Metamorphoses, see Bömer, IV, 190-196; Charles J. Doria, "Ovid and Euripides: Studies in Translation," Diss. State Univ. of New York, 1970, pp. 112-119; Hollis, pp. 106-112; Otis, pp. 413-415, and Segal, "Narrative Art," p. 336.

Achelous's personality; it is thus formal and elevated, and the structure is complex. In response to Theseus's desire to hear more wonders done by the gods, Achelous tells the story of Erysichthon's daughter, who had the ability to change forms. Her story, however, depends on that of her father. Here, then, is an epyllion whose main subject, like those of many epyllia, has less importance than its digression. In fact, the narrator entirely subordinates the daughter's story to Erysichthon's insatiable quest for food.²¹

Before telling his main story, Achelous provides a preamble in which he addresses Proteus, employing an epic periphrasis (731):²² "complexi terram maris incola" He then catalogues nine different forms assumed by Proteus. This list progresses from the human and higher animal forms to inanimate nature. The catalogue occupies seven lines, and it is followed by a little more than one line about Erysichthon's daughter. She, therefore, serves merely as a bridge to the Erysichthon narrative.

The tree motif connects the Erysichthon with the preceding

²¹ For discussion of the relation of the Erysichthon to the Baucis and Philemon, see Anderson, pp. 400-401, and Hollis, pp. 132-133. For the Erysichthon's place in the Metamorphoses, see Bömer, IV, 232. Hollis, pp. 129-130, and Lafaye, pp. 132-140, contrast Ovid's treatment of the Erysichthon with that of Callimachus. Hollis, pp. 130-132, discusses the relation of Ovid's Erysichthon to the folktale called "Myrmidonia and Pharaonia" and gives references for further study; see also Bömer, IV, 234. For Ovid's use of a variety of styles in the Erysichthon and in the Metamorphoses as a whole, see Galinsky, pp. 5-14.

²² Anderson, p. 402, notes this. He also comments on the "epic" formation and uniqueness of renovamine.

Baucis and Philemon. In the first narrative, the couple become trees as a reward for their reverence for the gods; in the second, Erysichthon attacks a sacred tree, thus showing irreverence and inviting punishment.

Achelous begins his tale with an epic description of the sacred tree (743-750) which, like an epic hero, looms larger than life. Epic features include the hyperbole by which the tree is itself a grove. Its girth requires fifteen nymphs with hands joined to surround it, and in height the tree surpasses its neighbors by as much as they rise above the grass.

The epic style continues as Erysichthon attacks the tree and those who defend it. He demonstrates the fury and determination of a warrior challenging the enemy. First he asserts blasphemously that the tree will fall, even if it be the goddess herself. This declaration parallels those of epic warriors who assert that the enemy they face is about to die.²³ The tree's reaction recalls that of Polydorus in Aeneid 3.39-46. It also reflects epic descriptions of those wounded in battle.²⁴ Finally, the narrator likens the tree's fall to that of a bull before the altar. Anderson mentions the appropriateness of this simile, since Erysichthon is, in fact,

²³ Cf. Iliad 11.362-367, and 13.824-832.

²⁴ Cf. descriptions of the wounded in the Iliad and the Aeneid.

offering an anti-sacrifice.²⁵

Erysichthon's excessive pride recalls the motif of hybris found in Greek tragedy. Unlike tragic heroes, however, Erysichthon lacks any redeeming motivation. In fact, he is so thoroughly wicked that he would not normally be a suitable subject for tragedy. On the other hand, Erysichthon resembles tragic figures like Oedipus in persisting in the wrong course which leads inevitably to his destruction and in not recognizing the consequences of his action until it is too late. Only when hunger destroys him, does Erysichthon realize what suffering he has brought on himself. Ovid's Erysichthon, therefore, reflects tragic themes.

In describing Erysichthon's attack on the sacred tree, Ovid uses tragic motifs for a character unsuited to tragedy, and epic language and motifs in a non-epic situation. Instead of heroes facing each other in battle, Ovid pits a man against a tree, and as the tree dies, its nymph prophesies vengeance. Such prophecies often occur in both tragedy and epic.²⁶ In Erysichthon's case, the nymph utters her prophecy with great solemnity, but she does not specify the punishment. Rather, she merely states that it will soon follow (771-773):

²⁵ p. 405.

²⁶ Cf., for example, Teiresias's warnings to Oedipus and Cassandra's revelations about the destruction of Agamemnon's house in Sophocles's Oedipus Rex and Aeschylus's Agamemnon, respectively.

'Nympha sub hoc ego sum Cereri gratissima ligno,
 Quae tibi factorum poenas instare tuorum
 Vaticinor moriens, nostri solacia leti."

In answer to the request of all the nymphs that Ceres punish Erysichthon, the goddess nods agreement. That nod shakes the grain-laden fields, thus recalling the effect of Jupiter's nod in Il. 1.528-530, and instead of employing an epithet which suggests divine power, Ovid calls Ceres, pulcherrima. He also limits the effect of her nod to the fields laden with harvests. The motif of full harvests contrasts with the insatiable hunger soon to be inflicted on Erysichthon. On the other hand, such harvests recall the rustic but sufficient meal served by Baucis and Philemon, and they fit the setting for all these tales, the banquet in Achelous's house.

After Ceres determines to punish Erysichthon through the work of Fames, she makes a mountain deity her intermediary. Her speech to the oread resembles those made by the gods to Mercury or Iris when they sent one of these messengers to a mortal.²⁷ Ceres describes the place where the messenger will find Fames (788-791); she next gives the message, and finally, she provides a chariot to cover the distance (791-95). Instead of using a word like dixerat, Ovid signals the end of the message by the presentation of the chariot, "Accipe . . . / Et dedit" (795-796). The epic mood continues

²⁷ Cf. Odyssey 5 and Aeneid 4, where Hermes / Mercury is sent to Odysseus and Aeneas, respectively. For other parallels see Hollis, pp. 138-139.

with the use of the standard formula for introducing an ekphrasis:
 "Est locus . . . illic" (788-790).²⁸

An ekphrasis of Fames follows Ceres's speech to the oread. Ovid is thus employing a device common in epic and Alexandrian literature, but his graphic details mimic didactic poetry, specifically descriptions of disease and its effects.²⁹ The picture he presents is ugly, but it is so ugly that it is humorous. The first details seem appropriate to Fames, but expressions like the place of a belly instead of a belly and the picture of breasts hanging from her spine suggest caricature (805-806): "Ventris erat pro ventre locus; pendere putares" / "Pectus et a spinae tantummodo crate teneri." Finally, Fames's effect on the oread is humorous. Ovid stresses that the messenger kept her distance, yet she felt Fames's effects (809-811):³⁰

Hanc procul ut vidit (neque enim est accedere iuxta
 Ausa), refert mandata deae paulumque morata,
 Quamquam aberat longe, quamquam modo venerat illuc.

Repeated references to the distance and two to the brevity of the

²⁸ Cf. Bömer, IV, pp. 250-251, Danielewicz, "Some Observations," p.301, and Hollis, p. 139, with his reference to Austin's commentary on Aeneid 4, 480 & 483.

²⁹ Cf. Thucydides Book 2 and Lucretius De Rerum Natura Book 6. We will discuss didactic poetry in considering the plague at Aegina (7.523-613).

³⁰ Cf. Ovid's ekphrasis on the cave of Sleep (ll. 592-615) and Vergil's description of Fama (Aen. 4.173-190).

nymph's stay, as well as the repetition of quamquam combine for humorous effect.

Since Fames enters Erysichthon while he is asleep, her first effects are unconscious physical reactions. Ovid provides specific details: the vain movements of mouth and teeth, the throat swallowing air (824-827). Once Erysichthon awakens attention focuses on his quest for food. "Nec mora" (830) indicates the rapidity with which food becomes an all absorbing passion for Fames's victim. The clever paradoxes and the anaphora in verses 831-832³¹ enliven the picture of Erysichthon's vain quest to satisfy his hunger. The epic simile in verses 835-839 contains a double comparison. It compares his insatiable appetite to a strait which continuously receives more rivers and to a fire which ever seeks additional fuel. The point of the comparison is the insatiability which increases with every attempt to satisfy it. The two objects of the comparison, water and fire, reflect two of Proteus's forms. This simile, therefore, ties Erysichthon to the overall theme of changing one's form; it thus prepares for the story of his daughter's ability to change from one form to another.

Ovid neatly contrasts Erysichthon's daughter with her father. His character is base, and necessity moves him to sell even his own daughter. She, however, is noble, generosa (848), and she refuses a master. After being sold, she prays to Neptune. The prayer formula

³¹ Cf. Anderson, p. 410.

includes her request and an address to the god. The address, however, does not flatter; it reminds the god of his earlier violence to the girl. Achelous as narrator sums up the truth of the accusation thus, "haec Neptunus habebat." (851). The rape motif as well as the prayer to Neptune recall Achelous's violence to Perimele. Neptune again answers the prayer; again the results are dubious. He does grant the daughter the ability to change forms, thus saving her from her first master. That ability, however, enables Erysichthon to sell her repeatedly. The noble girl is thus reduced to obtaining unjust nourishment for her father.

Her first master searches for the girl, questioning a fisherman about her. He, of course, does not realize that the fisherman is the girl in changed form. The identity of the man being questioned with the girl who is sought creates a comic situation. This is especially so when the girl is described as having cheap clothing and dishevelled hair. Although cheap dress would suit a slave, Erysichthon's daughter would hardly be flattered by the description. She is, however, delighted to be unrecognized. Her joy at being asked about herself recalls Jove's reaction when, disguised as Diana, he heard Callisto praise the goddess as greater than himself (II, 429-430).

When the master approaches the fisherman, he addresses him in flattering terms (855-856). Anderson³² has noted the mock-epic device of the stilted form of address and the ludicrous epic peri-

³² p. 413.

phrasis, "moderator harundinis." He also analyzes the prayer as using a "quid pro quo" formula in which good fishing conditions are the lure offered to gain what the master wishes.³³ One reason for the overly formal address is surely flattery. The master, however, unwittingly undercuts its effect by the unflattering description of the girl's appearance.

The fisherman answers his interrogator with a petition that corresponds to his earlier request.³⁴ The contrast, however, is significant. Instead of employing an elaborate address and formulaic wish, she merely says (864): "Quisquis es, ignoscas!" She then states a literal truth whose purpose is deception. Sophists and rhetoricians were often accused of using words falsely. This the girl does, even swearing by Neptune.³⁵ The trick succeeds, but Achelous's tale ends sadly for Erysichthon and his daughter. She, as a horse, a bird, a cow and a deer, becomes a pawn used to purchase food for her father. He ends by consuming his own body. Thus Erysichthon's appetite is satisfied only by self-destruction.

In the Erysichthon Ovid has combined elements from epic and tragedy. Eryichthon is a type of anti-hero who contrasts sharply with the usual epic hero. He also reflects the hybristic characters of

³³ p. 413.

³⁴ p. 414.

³⁵ Cf. the criticism of Euripides and the sophists because of their use of the "mental reservation." Anderson, p. 414, comments on the double interpretation of the word, artes (865).

fifth century Athenian drama. Erysichthon's daughter, the digression's main character, serves as a foil for her arrogant father. She acts cleverly and also implores the gods' aid to save herself from degradation whereas he boasted of his lack of respect for the gods. Her prayer to Neptune and her conversation while disguised demonstrate the rhetorical practices of Ovid's time whereby the speaker told the literal truth but spoke in a way designed to deceive the listener. In the main subject and the digression, therefore, motifs and elements of several genres are combined, proving once again Ovid's concern with employing a variety of genres in subtle ways.

Achelous and Hercules

The river god, Achelous, prepares for his next tale by a rhetorical question (879): "Quid moror externis?" He then lists the forms he has power to assume: river god, snake, bull. The number of self-transformations has declined in each tale. Whereas Achelous had catalogued nine forms for Proteus and five for Erysichthon's daughter, he lists only three for himself. In fact, he describes his power as "numero finita potestas." (880). Mention of his ability to become a bull leads to Achelous's expression of regret at the loss of a horn. Theseus very considerately asks the reason for Achelous's groans and his mutilated forehead. Although Achelous complains of the sorrow in granting this request, he cannot hide his eagerness to tell his own tale. In this instance Theseus plays the part of the perfect guest, who provides an opportunity for his host to tell his story.

More usually, the host performs this service for the guest. Achelous responds to Theseus's request by telling of his defeat despite the pain involved, thus playing the role usually played by the guest. Ovid here inverts epic scenes where the hero weeps to repeat his sufferings but does so to oblige his host.³⁶

Although Achelous uses military vocabulary, as Anderson³⁷ notes, the whole Achelous / Hercules episode (9.1-88) is unheroic. Instead of narrating a heroic success, Achelous describes a pancratium, a combination of boxing and wrestling, in which he was defeated. Ovid uses this episode, in fact, to present two contests, the first rhetorical (9.14-26) and the second athletic (32-86). The rhetorical contest looks ahead to the controversiae exchanged by Ulysses and Ajax in 13.³⁸ Because Achelous is narrator, he presents the contest from his own point of view. He reports Hercules' speech indirectly, listing his claims in two verses (14-15). Hercules' claims are that Jove will become the bride's father-in-law and that he has the fame of his labors, ordered by his stepmother, Juno. After listing Hercules' claims, Achelous delivers his own controversia (16-26), in which he first states his strong points and then answers Hercules' claims. Achelous's two arguments are the facts that he is a

³⁶ Cf. Odyssey, 9.2-18, and Aeneid 2.3-13.

³⁷ p. 417. Anderson's commentary on 9.1-88, provides an excellent analysis of Ovid's cleverness in this passage.

³⁸ Cf. Anderson, p. 418.

god and that he is native to the region. He states parenthetically that Hercules was not yet a god (17), ignoring for the moment the fact that Jove was Hercules' father (14). To assert his own godhead, Achelous says that it is base for a god to yield to a mortal. He uses the word "turpe" (16), which he had used in verse 6 in admitting that Hercules had conquered him.³⁹ Then he had found it less base to be conquered than honorable to have struggled with Hercules.

The entire verbal contest reflects the practice of allowing declaimers complete freedom in choosing the arguments they would present. Achelous proves himself ingenious by turning Hercules' claims against Hercules himself. He focuses on the hero's claim to be a son of Jove, a claim which, according to Achelous, reflects disgrace on Hercules. This type of verbal exchange, in which the contestant depends on his own cleverness in thinking up a defense, reflects the practice of declaimers, who were encouraged to base their arguments on any circumstances they could imagine. Achelous's defense that he is a fellow countryman and that it would be base for a god to yield to a mortal, resemble standard controversia arguments, presented in defense of a young man's choice of an unlikely marriage partner.⁴⁰ Achelous, therefore, presents his side of the case in a clever controversia, but he plays down Hercules' ideas by presenting them only indirectly. Naturally Achelous considers himself a victor and

³⁹ Cf. Anderson, p. 418.

⁴⁰ Cf. Kennedy's discussion in The Art of Rhetoric in the Roman World, pp. 330-335.

represents Hercules as allowing him to win in speech, "loquendo" (30), as long as Hercules wins in fighting, pugnando (30).

Immediately after the rhetorical contest, the wrestling match begins. Achelous describes this contest in an epic manner. Anderson⁴¹ has pointed out the many comic touches which undercut the epic style. His observations include the pun on gravitas (39) as, "the heavy solidity that makes a good wrestler immovable and the solemn weightiness that belongs with divinity."⁴² He also notes the humor in Achelous's comparing himself to a bulwark and Hercules to waters (40-41) when the opposite would be more credible. Anderson also comments on the epic simile comparing Hercules's struggle with Achelous to that of bulls fighting for a mate, "coniunx" (48); the usual comparison is to bulls fighting for mastery of the herd. Other playful details mentioned by Anderson are the epic expression, "ore momordi" (61), usually applied to a warrior's death, and Achelous's self-description as "inferior virtute" (62). The latter can refer to Achelous's lack of heroism or his literal lack of manliness, since he is a god.

Unable to escape as a god in anthropomorphic form, Achelous assumed his serpent form which drew sneers from Hercules who had already demonstrated his power over snakes as a baby and during one of his labors. Changed into a bull, Achelous had a better chance, but

⁴¹ pp. 420-422.

⁴² p. 420.

Hercules wrestled him to the ground, breaking off one of his horns. Hercules thus won the wrestling contest, but Achelous wastes no praise on the hero's victory. He concentrates, rather, on the Naidēs who consecrated his horn. Instead of expressing gratitude for this favor, Achelous boasts that Bona Copia was enriched by his horn (88):

"dives que meo Bona Copia cornu est." The arrogant river god then displays his trophy as a nymph brings in the horn filled with apples (89-92). Even after narrating his humiliating defeat by Hercules, Achelous remains undaunted in his sense of self-worth!

After four digressions Ovid has returned to the main subject of the Achelous epyllion. With the conclusion of this epyllion, Ovid also resumes the main subject of the Theseus epyllion. Early the next morning the youths, including Theseus, depart without waiting for the river's waters to subside (93-95). Perhaps they recognize that Achelous likes a captive audience and may keep them indefinitely. As for Achelous, he disappears beneath his own waters (96-97).

Although the structure of the Theseus epyllion is somewhat loose, the Achelous fits epyllion structure very neatly. There is a framing main subject, namely Achelous's welcome of the heroes and their interaction with him. Their after-dinner conversation occasions the digressions, each in response to a question or statement of one of the guests. Because the digressions vary in style, they both compare and contrast with the main subject. Three of them, the Echinades, the Erysichthon, and the Achelous and Hercules are epic in style, and in each epic qualities are deliberately undercut. The

Erysichthon contains echoes not only of epic themes but also of tragic motifs. The non-epic digression, the Baucis and Philemon is an idyll which undercuts the pastoral motif of praise for rustic simplicity by listing several dishes served at one meal. In addition, the Baucis and Philemon serves as a rhetorical exemplum to prove that the gods do have power to do what they wish. The figure of Achelous in the Echinades and the Achelous and Hercules provides continuity of subject matter with the main subject. His digressions frame the others, and the pompous host has the first and last words.

All four digressions accord with the main subject in narrative content because they share certain themes. Common themes⁴³ throughout the epyllion are piety, vengeance, banqueting, hospitality, and Achelous's self-glorification. In the Echinades and the Achelous and Hercules the god boasts of his own power. He does the same in the main subject with his warning of the river's and, therefore, his own destructive power. Vengeance figures most prominently in the Echinades and the Erysichthon where it is directed against the impious, but it also figures in the Baucis and Philemon where it is directed against the inhospitable. In the Achelous and Hercules Hercules is seeking vengeance against Achelous for his insults, as well as fighting for a wife. The theme of banqueting unites the Baucis and Philemon with the Erysichthon; it also links the

⁴³ Cf. Michel Boillat, Les Métamorphoses d'Ovide: Thèmes Majeurs et Problèmes de Composition (Berne: Herbert Lang & Cie SA, 1976), pp. 64-79, and Giangrande, 17-21.

Baucis and Philemon with Achelous's welcoming of his guests.

The Baucis and Philemon and the Erysichthon provide a contrast in subject matter with the main subject of the Achelous, although they do share some of its themes. Their subjects include a scene of rustic simplicity which contrasts with the setting in the river god's palace. The contrast is weakened, however, because Ovid does not describe Achelous's banquet in any detail. There is, however, a strong contrast between Erysichthon's frenzied quest for food and the relaxed attitude of Achelous's dinner guests. The digressions in the Achelous epyllion, then, both accord and contrast with the main subject in style and in narrative content, although the similarities in this epyllion are greater than the differences.

The Theseus contains two digressions framed by the Hymn to Theseus and the Achelous epyllion. These digressions are themselves epyllia. The first, the Minos frames within itself a digression which, in turn, consists of two smaller epyllia and a narrative about Minos at Crete. The Theseus's second digression, the Meleager, contains elements of drama but does not frame any epyllia. With the Minos, to be analyzed next, the discussion moves from the Theseus's main subject to its digression.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Cf. Bömer, III, 313-314, and Van Bosselaar, p. 203, for general outlines of the Theseus and Minos.

The Minos

The Minos narrates the Cretan king's war adventures and domestic difficulties. Minos's threat of war against Athens links his story with Theseus's reception in Athens, and the mention of Ariadne's abandonment by Theseus connects Minos's domestic situation with Theseus's adventures. Ovid thus carefully connects the Minos with its main subject.

In an attempt to gain allies, Minos visits Aegina where Aeacus refuses his request for aid, declaring his loyalty to Athens. Angered by Aeacus's refusal of aid, Minos departs, threatening rather than actually waging war. Almost immediately after Minos's departure, Cephalus arrives from Athens seeking and obtaining Aeacus's support for that city in its defense against Minos. The war against Athens thus unites the Minos with the Aeacus and Cephalus epyllion.

The Minos may thus be analyzed:

Minos epyllion: Digression to Theseus 7.453-8.261

Main subject: War preparations 7.453-489

Digression₁: Aeacus and Cephalus epyllion 7.490-8.5

Digression₂: Scylla epyllion 8.6-151

Main subject: Minos at Crete 8.152-261

The Minos frames the Aeacus and Cephalus epyllion, and it narrates several events connected with the Cretan king, including events during the war, his domestic difficulties and the escape of

Daedalus with his son Icarus. The war events include Scylla's infatuation with Minos, and Daedalus's story contains a flashback to his nephew's murder. Minos then disappears from the Metamorphoses except for a brief mention in book 9.⁴⁵

Ovid emphasizes epic elements in his narrative of Minos's war preparations, 7.453-489. He employs an epic catalogue to narrate Minos's travels in quest of aid. This catalogue displays Ovid's erudition by his use of the Greek names of the islands and appropriate epithets, the inclusion of aetiological details and the intricate structure of the passage.⁴⁶ Anderson and Bömer provide full commentary on this catalogue. Anderson, for example, notes the chiasmic arrangement of verse 462 and the dependence of the six islands in 463-466 on one verb, "iungit" (461). The word order in these lines rivals Vergil's careful arrangement of words. Verse 468, for example, lets black feathers literally surround the jackdaw by placing "velata monedula" between "nigris" and "pennis", thus: "Nigra pedes, nigris velata monedula pennis." The polyptoton with "niger" adds to the cleverness of this line. In verses 469-471, Ovid names the islands which refused aid. He separates by almost two lines the negative "non" (469) from the verb it modifies, "iuvere" (471). The polysyndeton with "et" and "que" (469-470), recalls

⁴⁵ In Met. 9.437-438 and 440-446, Jove cites Minos as one of his favorites who has had to suffer old age; there is also a reference to Minos's harassment by Byblis's father, Miletus.

⁴⁶ Cf. Anderson, p. 293.

the use of te . . . kai in Greek catalogues. The word order in verse 470 also seems contrived, especially since this involved line follows a list of four islands without epithets. The separation of olivae from its adjective emphasizes the epithet and focuses attention on the word order. The catalogue ends with an aetiological detail about the naming of Aeacus's kingdom. The conclusion, therefore, reflects the aetiology found earlier in the catalogue. The simpler structure of verses 472-474, however, contrasts with the rest of the catalogue, thus signaling the transition to Minos's arrival at Aegina.

In describing Minos's reception at Aegina and the conversation between the two heroes, Ovid treats an epic subject in an unepic manner, once again displaying his ability to play with genres. The scene recalls others, such as Telemachus's welcome at Pylos (Od 3.29-42). Ovid, however, omits any mention of a banquet or provisions for the visitors' comfort. He thus neglects the Homeric concept of xenia, which requires a host to entertain a guest before inquiring about his purpose. In addition, Ovid leaves the speeches undeveloped, thereby hurrying his narrative and contrasting his treatment with the leisurely pace of epic. He does, however, employ the epic device of ring composition to link the section with the Aeacus and Cephalus epyllion which follows it. Aeacus's three sons accompany their father; they will appear together again at the end of Cephalus's visit.

With Minos's departure from Aegina, Ovid turns to the arrival of Cephalus, who comes to ask aid for Athens. He thus introduces the first and longer of the two digressions within the Minos. The Aeacus and Cephalus will be analyzed first, followed by analysis of the Scylla. One might prefer to discuss the entire main subject before treating the digression, but the narrative about Minos's adventures in Crete builds on the Scylla; hence, the digressions to the Minos will be discussed next.

Aeacus and Cephalus Epyllion

The Aeacus and Cephalus epyllion contains two digressions. In the first Aeacus tells of the pestilence at Aegina and the origin of the Myrmidons. The second digression, the story of Cephalus and Procris, is itself an epyllion and has its own digression, the story of the marvelous dog, Laelaps, and the foxhunt. At the end of the Cephalus and Procris the main subject resumes. The epyllion ends as it had begun, with a fleet sailing from Aegina. This ring composition ties the whole together and recalls the departure of Minos whose siege of Megara immediately follows the Aeacus and Cephalus epyllion. It thus strengthens the ties of this epyllion with the Minos. The following schema indicates the structure of the Aeacus and Cephalus:

Aeacus and Cephalus Epyllion 7.490-8.5

Main Subject: Cephalus's reception at Aegina 7.490-516

Digression: Pestilence and Myrmidons 517-660

Main Subject: Passage of night; reception by Phocus 661-680

Digression: Cephalus and Procris epyllion 681-862

Main Subj. of Cephalus and Procris 681-755

Digr. to Cephalus and Procris Laelaps and the foxhunt 756-793

Main Subj. of Cephalus and Procris 794-862

Main Subject: Cephalus's departure 863-8.5

Main Subject: Cephalus's reception at Aegina

Ovid focuses on the traditional elements in the hero's welcome, presenting Cephalus's arrival at Aegina and his welcome in a formal and epic style. Cephalus carries the olive branch which is native to his city, and Aeacus's sons recognize the traces of his youthful good looks. As though in a procession, Cephalus advances, followed by the two sons of Pallas. They open their conversation with formalities: ". . . congressus primi sua verba tulerunt." (501). The indirect report of Cephalus's speech adds to the formal tone. Ovid, nevertheless, manages to depict Cephalus as the skilled orator who knows how to marshal arguments effectively. Aeacus's response, although given in direct speech, maintains the air of formality. He holds the kingly scepter and commands Cephalus to take rather than ask for aid. A narrative about Aeacus, the son of Zeus and grandfather of Achilles, suggests and even demands epic treatment. In this brief scene, then, Ovid emphasizes epic conventions by treating an epic subject in a deliberately formal style. He thus adds dignity and solemnity to this

passage⁴⁷ which forms the first part of the main subject. The main subject will be resumed between digressions (661-680) and again at the conclusion (7.863-8.5).

Digression: Pestilence and Myrmidons

Having completed the formalities, the two leaders settle into more relaxed conversation. This conversation provides the narrative setting for the tales told by Aeacus and Cephalus. Both narrators tell their stories in response to a question. Their stories thus fit within the Aeacus and Cephalus epyllion as digressions. The first digression, the story of the plague at Aegina and the origin of the Myrmidons, serves as a response to Cephalus's implied question about the youths he has just seen and those from earlier times whom he now misses. The second digression will respond to Phocus's inquiries about Cephalus's unusual spear. As in the epyllia in the Achelous, the digressions in the Aeacus and Cephalus occur in a conversation between host and guest.

Aeacus responds to Cephalus's curiosity with a lengthy description of the plague that destroyed the earlier inhabitants of Aegina (523-613). He starts with the cause of the plague and its early manifestations among the animals (523-551). He continues with its symptoms as it affects the human populace. He describes as well the various attempts to alleviate these symptoms (552-581). Aeacus

⁴⁷ For comments on the stateliness of this passage, see Hermann Fränkel, Ovid, a Poet Between Two Worlds (Berkeley: Univ. of Calif. Press, 1945), p. 100.

emphasizes the futility of sacrifices when the victim falls because of the plague rather than by the priest's knife (582-601). Finally, Aeacus describes the piling up of corpses and the impossibility of conducting funerals because of the great number of the dead (602-613).

Ovid's passage describing the plague imitates the plague descriptions of Thucydides, Book 2, and Lucretius De Rerum Natura, Book 6. Some of its details also recall Vergil's Georgic 3.⁴⁸ Thucydides, of course, wrote history, and his scientific description of the plague forms part of his record of the second year of the Peloponnesian War. His vivid description of the plague's symptoms, however, suits didactic poetry. It could well serve as a text for a medical handbook, or it may even be taken from such. Lucretius's De Rerum Natura is itself a didactic poem, as are Vergil's Georgics. Hence in imitating these poems, Ovid seems to have imitated in this passage didactic poetry, since he also clearly describes the plague's causes, symptoms, and destructive powers.⁴⁹

Anderson comments on Ovid's creation here of a lues poetica which he defines as: "a melodramatic episode which is particularly amusing and exercises no hold on the audience's emotions."⁵⁰ Ovid

⁴⁸ See Anderson, p. 299. For a detailed comparison of this passage with its parallels in Vergil and Lucretius, see Galinsky, pp. 114-126.

⁴⁹ L. P. Wilkinson, The Georgics of Vergil: A Critical Survey (Cambridge: Univ. Press, 1969), pp. 10-14, discusses the descriptive element in Lucretius and in Vergil's Georgics.

⁵⁰ p. 299. He also contrasts, pp. 295-308, Ovid's treatment

creates his lues poetica by emphasizing different aspects of the plague from those stressed by his predecessors. First, he focuses on the plague's effects on the various species of animals. In this detail he differs from Thucydides who mentions only its destructive effect on the carrion birds and dogs before narrating its ravages on the human community. Second, Ovid concentrates on the amusing details of the effects of the plague. The sheep lose their wool spontaneously; the horse forgets its competition, and the bear no longer attacks the herds. Such details from Aeneas's mouth indicate a certain distance from his tragic loss. Finally, Ovid exaggerates the plague's symptoms and its results, stressing such strange effects as the fact that the ground becomes hot from the feverish victims. Although the number of deaths was large, Ovid emphasizes the great number by saying that the funeral pyres consumed the available space and wood. With a change of focus, therefore, and by exaggeration, Ovid creates a description of the plague to amuse his readers rather than to move them to pity.

Although the plague passage imitates didactic poetry and Thucydidean history, it also has many epic features.⁵¹ These, in addition to the narrator's strongly epic character, include a simile,

of the plague with that of his predecessors; cf. also Otis, pp. 175-176, and Galinsky's comments, p. 115, on Ovid's attempt to create "the complete plague."

⁵¹ Cf. Anderson, p. 299.

references to the gods, descriptions of sacrifices, and attempts at soothsaying (582-601). These epic features, however, are used to stress the futility of calling upon the gods, since the very victims succumb to the plague before the completion of the sacrifice. In addition, the usual means of learning the gods' wishes now fails, since the disease has destroyed the animal's entrails. Whereas Thucydides stressed the moral depravity resulting from the plague's devastation, Ovid indicates the infidelity of the gods who fail Aeacus's people in their time of need. In this he differs from Vergil, who mentioned but did not emphasize the failure of the soothsayers' means of divination (Georgic 3.486-493). Throughout the description of the plague Ovid pokes fun at epic features through sheer exaggeration. Not only do the gods not help, but they cannot be properly invoked, since the plague has destroyed the usual means of divination.

Aeacus introduces the miracle of the Myrmidons by quoting his prayer to Jupiter (615-618). As other sons of gods often did, Aeacus demands a proof that Jupiter is his father.⁵² The proof demanded is either a miraculous restoration of his men or his own death. When Jupiter nods with thunder and lightning, Aeacus employs the technical language of augurs to indicate his acceptance of the sign (620-621).⁵³ The sight of ants in a long column, "agmine longo" (624),

⁵² Cf. Anderson, p. 308.

⁵³ Anderson, p. 308.

moves Aeacus to a second prayer, one springing from hope because of the sign, and yet spoken in desperation as a last resort. The spontaneous rustling of the tree signals for Aeacus the possibility that even this impossible prayer will be granted (629-633). The miracle then occurs in a dream (634-642). Aeacus witnesses the metamorphosis of ants into young men. On awaking, he doubts the miracle and complains once again of the gods' infidelity (643-644). Immediately, however, the sound of voices and his sons' declarations prove the reality of the metamorphosis. Thus Aeacus's story which had begun on a sad note ends joyfully (518): "Flebile principium melior fortuna secuta est."

Aeacus's story of the Myrmidons is unique in the Metamorphoses because only here do insects become human. In fact, it is one of the rare instances of upward metamorphosis. In book one stones become people, and there are a few instances of catasterism and deification, but there are no other changes of animals into human beings. Such changes are, indeed, rare in Greek myth. Aeacus makes an interesting aetiological comment, that the Myrmidons retain the characteristics of their former nature. In this instance, however, they are positive traits such as thrift and tenacity. In many metamorphoses, the changed being retains the bad traits of its former nature. Lycaon (Met. 1), for example, continued as a wolf the savagery he had shown as a man. The metamorphosis of the Myrmidons, then, demonstrates Ovid's creative ability in treating one theme in a variety of ways.

Another feature of Aeacus's tale is the contrast it provides to Cephalus's narrative.⁵⁴ Whereas Aeacus had begun in sorrow but ended happily, Cephalus began happily but ended sadly. For Cephalus the only miracle occurred during the foxhunt where both fox and dog were metamorphosed into statues. His other miraculous possession, the spear which never missed its mark, led to the destruction of his beloved. On the one hand, Aeacus had escaped from loneliness by a miracle; on the other, Cephalus suffered bereavement because of his miraculous possession.

Main Subject: Passage of night; reception by Phocus

A brief return to the main subject links Aeacus's and Cephalus's stories (661-680). As in the opening lines of the Aeacus and Cephalus epyllion, Ovid employs formal and archaizing language, thus giving an epic tone to this bridge passage. He plays with the epic style by exaggerating its features. He uses involved sentence structure, for example, in describing the approach of Pallas's sons to the king (665-667). He also displays his ability with language by the parallel line beginnings, "Ad Cephalum" and "Ad regem Cephalus" (665-666). After such a grandiose beginning one is surprised to find the king asleep. Thus Ovid delights his readers by allowing them to catch the king napping.

Another example of Ovid's play with epic style is the use of so

⁵⁴ Cf. Anderson, p. 296 and Jean M. Frécaut, "Les Transitions dans les Met.," REL, 46 (1968), 261, n. 1.

many epic words in a few lines. He uses, for example, three patronymics within five lines, "Aeacides . . . Cecropidas . . . Aeoliden." (668-672). He also employs an epic periphrasis and a variation on it within two lines, "Pallante sati . . . Pallante creati." (665-666). Finally, Phocus's question employs epic words, including one unique to Ovid and imitated by Statius, "iaculabile" (680).⁵⁵ By employing epic features and archaizing language Ovid emphasizes the parallel between the morning reception of Cephalus by Phocus and his welcome when he first arrived at Aegina. Both passages have an epic tone, and both present a cordial meeting of royalty. Each passage closes with an implied question. In the earlier passage (490-516) Cephalus inquires about the men of Aegina whom he sees and those whom he misses. Here Phocus expresses wonder at the marvelous spear held by Cephalus. In both instances the question introduces a tale of the narrator's joy and grief. Thus the bridge passage, by indicating the parallel between the two stories, strengthens the contrast between Aeacus's happy conclusion and Cephalus's tragic ending.

Digression: Cephalus and Procris epyllion

The Cephalus and Procris narrated by Cephalus is the second digression within the Aeacus and Cephalus epyllion, but it is itself an epyllion. Thus Ovid again layers genres, structuring one epyllion

⁵⁵ Anderson, p. 313. I am indebted to Anderson, pp. 312-313, for indicating the epic and archaic features in this passage.

within another. As an epyllion the Cephalus and Procris has for its main subject a tragic love story with a digression to tell the story of Laelaps and the foxhunt. Its structure, therefore, is:

Main Subject: Cephalus and Procris 681-755

Digression: Laelaps and the foxhunt 756-793

Main Subject: Cephalus and Procris 794-862

The digression on Cephalus and Procris opens with a preview of the tragedy that will follow. One of the Athenians explains the spear's marvelous quality of always hitting its mark and returning of its own accord. The unerring aim and the word "cruentum" (684) foreshadow a tragic end to Cephalus's story. This description whets Phocus's curiosity about the spear. Cephalus responds to his host in part by telling him that the spear was a reconciliation gift from Procris. He is selective about the information he provides, suppressing shameful details⁵⁶ and postponing a full account of his grief until much later in the story. Although he opens his tale by declaring that the spear causes him to weep, Cephalus withholds the reason for this until after he has introduced a digression. He thus, like epic heroes and like Achelous, as noted above, p. 112, indicates great reluctance to speak of his full tragedy.

⁵⁶ For Ovid's suppression of the more sordid details found in his sources, see Otis, pp. 177-180, and Viktor Pöschl, "Kephalos und Prokris in Ovids Metamorphosen," Hermes, 87 (1959), 328-343.

Cephalus begins his tale with language that refers to legal marriage (697): "pater hanc mihi iunxit Erectheus," but he then employs several elegiac motifs. Labate has commented on the juxtaposition in this passage of elements from lawful marriage with those found in elegiac, illegitimate love.⁵⁷ Although Cephalus emphasizes elegiac love motifs throughout the passage, he uses formulae associated with marriage to stress his fidelity to Procris. He invokes his young marriage and the obligations of wedlock as reasons for resisting Aurora (709-710): "Sacra tori coitusque novos thalamosque recentes / Primaque deserti referebam foedera lecti."

Elegiac motifs appear in Cephalus's introduction of Procris, the tale of his abduction by Aurora, and his complaints to her. Cephalus introduces his wife as sister of the abducted Orithyia and as one more deserving of abduction by her beauty and her character. The recurrence of "rapio" (695, 697, 704) suggests elegiac love rather than legal marriage. It thus seems a strange word for Cephalus to use as a reason to praise his wife. The use of the same word for Aurora's abduction of Cephalus suggests an inversion of the usual elegiac motif, since it suits the actions of the lover toward the girl rather than hers toward him. Another anomaly is Cephalus's reference to Procris's character, "mores" (696) as making her worthy of abduc-

⁵⁷ "Amore Coniugale e Amore Elegiaco nell' Episodio di Cefalo e Procri, Op. Met. 7, 661-865," ASNP, V (1975-1976), 108-110. He also, 112-113, parallels Aurora's threat to that made by Calypso to Odysseus (Od 5, 203-213).

tion. This statement, which recalls Tarquin, who was aroused both by Lucretia's beauty and by her virtue, seems a strange comment for a husband to make. Livy⁵⁸ says: "cum forma tum spectata castitas incitat."

A more conventional use of elegiac motifs occurs in Cephalus's references to Procris's beauty, "faciem" (696) and to his earlier happiness, "felix . . . eramque;" (698). When Cephalus reports his arguments against Aurora, he begins with a reference to her physical attraction, "quod sit spectabilis ore," (705) and a triple declaration of his love for Procris (707-708). Both of these references are characteristic of elegy, although Cephalus exaggerates the effect of his declaration by the repetition of Procris's name and the resulting alliteration with p in 707-708: ". . . —Procrin amabam: / Pectore Procris erat, Procris mihi semper in ore."

Perhaps Ovid is attempting to depict Cephalus's struggle to remember his mortal wife when faced with the allurements of Aurora.

The very point which motivated Cephalus's efforts to be faithful to Procris, their sacred marriage bonds, causes him concern when he returns home. Perhaps his readiness to suspect Procris of infidelity betrays his own desire to yield to Aurora. Cephalus, however, gives as reasons for his suspicions Procris's beauty, his own absence, and his recent experience of women's immorality. In fact, he addresses a

⁵⁸ Ab Urbe Condita 1. 57.

brief suasoria to himself (7-4-721).⁵⁹ In this suasoria he presents the evidence for and against suspecting Procris. Her beauty and age, as well as Cephalus's absence, favor suspicion. In addition, Aurora's example of women's infidelity suggests a similar possibility for Procris. The only argument against suspicion is Procris's character. The use of "mores" in verse 717 recalls its earlier use in line 696. At that point Procris's character had made her more worthy of abduction than her sister. Hence the one argument against suspicion suffers from the context of its parallel use. Having weighted the evidence in favor of suspicion, Cephalus exclaims (719): "sed cuncta timemus amantes!" He thus concludes his suasoria with another rhetorical element, a sententia. Cephalus excuses himself in this way for his foolish decision to test his wife. He will later (826) use a similar expression in reference to Procris's credulity.

Cephalus describes his approach to and his testing of Procris in terms that reflect the elegiac lover's attempts to gain access to and win over his girl. Instead of detailing the lover's tricks, Cephalus refers to his "mille dolos" (726), perhaps likening himself to Odysseus, who prided himself on his wiles. Cephalus, however, finds a chaste household, like that of Livy's Lucretia, anxious about its abducted master. The use of "rapto" (725) connects this passage with the opening lines of Cephalus's tale. He employs highly elegiac

⁵⁹ M. Labate, p.114, n. 25, considers verses 714-721 to be a brief suasoria, and, p. 117, comments on the deliberative rhetoric in this passage.

language to describe Procris. Expressions such as "male me . . . Continui" (728-729), "Tristis erat" (730), and "desiderioque dolebat" (731), reflect elegiac themes. As in love elegy anger or sorrow enhances the mistress's charm, so sorrow increases Procris's beauty (730-731).⁶⁰ The exchange between Cephalus and Procris in the seduction attempt, suits that between elegiac lovers. Cephalus sums up his continued folly as fighting to harm himself (738-739): ". . . in mea pugno / Vulnera." He thus reflects once again the plight of the elegiac lover whose passion causes him pain.⁶¹

Cephalus quickly narrates the effect on Procris of his deceit. After failing her husband's test, she flees from all men and joins Diana. His apologies and admission of his own weakness finally win her back, and the couple live happily together. Whereas in elegy the man, usually the lover's rival, offers presents, here it is the woman who bestows gifts. Procris gives her husband an unusually speedy dog and the marvelous spear which Phocus admired.

Cephalus cuts short the story of the reconciled lovers, thus leaving it with a happy ending. Perhaps to avoid the painful part, he introduces a digression. Instead of answering Phocus's question about the spear, Cephalus puts a question into his host's mouth by suggesting that Phocus ask about the fortune of the other gift (757). He

⁶⁰ Labate, 120; see also Danielewicz, "De Personarum Descriptionibus," p. 209.

⁶¹ Cf. Propertius 2.22, for the motif of the lover acting to his own detriment.

introduces his answer, the digression within his epyllion, as a miracle, "Accipe mirandum! novitate movebere facti." (758).

Cephalus thus postpones reality, escaping the tragic conclusion to his story by concentrating on the marvelous dog, Laelaps.

The digression within Cephalus's epyllion contrasts with the main subject in content and style. Its content is heroic, the story of youths hunting a destructive fox. The challenge they face is larger than life, since this fox has been sent as a second scourge to Thebes after the Sphinx's overthrow. The prey also has unusual qualities, since it can leap over nets and outrun hunting dogs. It is as fast as a bird: "non segnior alite." (770). Clearly, only a miracle will enable the hunters to capture such a fox, and Cephalus possesses two miraculous gifts, the spear and the dog. In heroic tones Cephalus describes Laelaps's marvelous speed which compares to that of a spear, leaden bullets, and an arrow shot from a Gortynian bow. Thus Cephalus employs an epic simile with a triple comparison to convey Laelaps's speed.

The setting of a hunt as well as many vivid pictures lend an idyllic tone to the Laelaps. The picture of the hunters removing the leashes from their dogs (669) and of Laelaps straining his bonds (772), enlivens the narrative. Details such as the dogs' footprints in the dust (775) and the tricky path taken by the fox (782-784) make the reader an eyewitness to the hunt. An even more vivid detail is the picture of Laelaps exercising empty jaws because the fox barely

escapes his bite (786). Finally, Cephalus sees two lifelike statues, one seeming to flee and the other to bark (790). Because of its picturesque detail, therefore, Cephalus's tale of Laelaps displays idyllic qualities. These combine with the heroic subject matter and epic simile to create an epic idyll.⁶²

At the end of his digression, Cephalus remains silent, but Phocus persists in asking about the spear (794): "iaculo quod crimen in ipso est?" This question serves to introduce a return to the main subject. It thus functions differently from the usual question which introduces a digression. The question, however, repeats the opening query which had initiated Cephalus's narration of his love story. At this point also, Ovid briefly intrudes as narrator to signal Cephalus's response (795).

Cephalus then continues his love story, emphasizing, as he had in the happy part, elegiac motifs, but these have an ironic twist. Cephalus presents himself as the elegiac lover whose intense passion wounds his beloved, but he also stresses tragic themes. The latter include joy turned to sorrow because of a foolish choice, the destruction of a loved one through the very means taken to save the beloved, and, finally, the desire of a dying person that the partner

⁶² Charles Segal, "Ovid's Cephalus and Procris: Myth and Tragedy," GB, 7 (1978), 175-205, discusses Ovid's treatment of the Cephalus and Procris myth. He also has an excellent analysis, 179 and 184-185, of the function of the foxhunt in the whole Cephalus and Procris.

never marry again.⁶³ Throughout the concluding part of his story, Cephalus intermingles elegiac and tragic motifs.

Still reluctant to relate his sorrows, Cephalus states that joys were the beginning of sorrows for himself and Procris. Anderson⁶⁴ points out the fact that "gaudia principium doloris" (796), reverses Aecus's introduction to his story. He dwells on their happiness, employing language reminiscent of Vergil, and carefully structuring his sentences. He uses, for example, chiasmus with felix in line 799 and parallel construction with "nec" in lines 801-803. The use of such careful structure to assert the utter fidelity of the couple's mutual love indicates an excessive effort to dwell on the happy years. The exaggeration, however, hints at the transience of those years. Although the lovers burned with an equal flame (803): "aequales urebant pectora flammae," Cephalus returned to the hunt, the source of his earlier difficulty. His going out was "iuvenaliter" (805). This adverb may indicate a failure to accept the responsibility of a "vir," that is, his obligations as Procris's husband. Cephalus's description of the hunt's isolation and his confidence in his spear reflect youthful self-satisfaction and indulgence. He thus prepares his listeners for the account of his subsequent foolishness.⁶⁵

⁶³ Cf. Sophocles' Oedipus Rex, Trachiniae, and Euripides' Alcestis.

⁶⁴ p. 325; he also comments on the Vergilian echoes and careful organization of this passage.

⁶⁵ Labate, 108-110, points out the tensions in this episode

After his daily hunt Cephalus rests and invokes the presence of aura. His address to the breeze, however, contains amorous language, thus suggesting that in this daily ritual Cephalus desired more than a breeze. In reporting his address to aura, Cephalus creates an elegiac love poem, using the passionate language of a lover trying to win over his beloved. Mario Labate⁶⁶ discusses the language of love found in this passage. He lists the words which echo Latin elegiac poems. He also cites for each word references to the elegies of Ovid, Propertius and Tibullus. The words and phrases underlined in the passage below are those cited by Labate as suitable for elegiac lovers: (811-820; 837)

Aura petebatur medio mihi lenis in aestu,
 Auram expectabam, requies erat illa labori.
 'Aura,' (recordor enim) 'venias,' cantare solebam,
 'Meque iuves intresque sinus, gratissima, nostros,
 Utque facis, relevare velis, quibus urimur, aestus.'
 Forsitan addiderim (sic me mea fata trahebant)
Blanditias plures et 'tu mihi magna voluptas,
 Dicere sim solitus 'tu me reficisque fovesque,
Tu facis, ut silvas, ut amem loca sola, meoque
 Spiritus iste tuus semper capiatur ab ore.' . . .
 'Aura, veni,' dixi 'nostroque medere labori!'

Anderson comments on "spiritus . . . capiatur" (820) as indicating, "a soulful kiss." He also notes its ironic echo in line 861 when Procris is dying.⁶⁷

between marital love and the irresponsible love of elegiac lovers.

⁶⁶ 126-127. ⁶⁷ p. 327.

Cephalus continues his tale, blaming the false witness who reported this apparent infidelity to Procris. For this report Ovid creates an original adjective, "susurra" (865).⁶⁸ With a sententia Cephalus excuses Procris's giving credence to the tale. "Credula res amor est" (826), echoes the excuse Cephalus had offered for his own mistrust of Procris (719): ". . . sed cuncta timemus amantes!" He, of course, tells her reactions as they were later reported to him, but Procris's response to an accusation against Cephalus contrasts with his earlier attitude toward her. As he had tested her love, Procris determines to test his supposed infidelity. Procris trusts Cephalus too much to believe evil of him whereas he had had too little trust to believe good of her.⁶⁹

The narrative moves quickly to its conclusion. When Procris misinterprets Cephalus's address to the breeze, she utters a groan. Cephalus, in turn, misinterprets her groans and the rustling leaves as signs of the presence of a beast. One line suffices to tell of his mistaken judgment and destructive action (841): "Sum ratus esse feram telumque volatile misi." In describing his futile efforts to save Procris's life, Cephalus employs language that suggests the passionate attack of a lover. He speaks of tearing her dress and

⁶⁸ Anderson, p. 328.

⁶⁹ Segal, "Ovid's Cephalus and Procris," 198-203, and Pöschl, 337-338.

trying to bind up her wounds (848-849): " . . . scissaque a pectore veste / Vulnera saeva ligo conorque inhibere cruorem."

Ovid had elsewhere used similar language to describe the excesses a lover should avoid.⁷⁰ Cephalus's choice of language, therefore, reflects the ambiguity in his entire relationship to Procris. On the one hand, Cephalus is the distraught husband trying to save his wife. On the other, he is the passionate lover who wounds his beloved because of the intensity of his love.

Another elegiac motif is that the beloved is dearer than the lover himself.⁷¹ Cephalus thus speaks of Procris's body as, "meo mihi carius" (847). In her final plea (852) Procris employs still another elegiac motif, the foedus lecti, as she requests that her bed be kept free of her imagined rival. In this she parallels Alcestis who demands perpetual fidelity of Admetus. Procris's plea enlightens Cephalus, who then explains his innocence. Although his explanation comes too late to save his beloved, he takes comfort in her seeming to die at peace.

This death scene also echoes tragedy, as Segal has pointed out, citing Euripides' Alcestis (202f, 250 and 275), and Hippolytus (1456). Indicating the spear as the most effective in a series of reversals in the story, Segal says, "The 'gift' (dona) with which Procris 'gives herself' back to Cephalus (7.753-54) becomes the deadly

⁷⁰ Cf. Ovid, Ars Amatoria, 3.569-570.

⁷¹ Anderson, p. 330.

'gift' that she 'draws from her wound.' (846)."⁷² Cephalus thus concludes his tragic tale. He ends his epyllion as he had begun it, in tears, "lacrimans heros" (863) and, "lacrimis . . . obortis" (689).⁷³

The Cephalus and Procris has an elegiac main subject divided into two parts. The digression which separates the two parts of the main narrative contrasts with it in mood and style. It is a happy story told in an epic manner and presenting a detailed picture. The main subject, by contrast, is sad, and has a tragic ending. It reflects, moreover, elegiac motifs and contains rhetorical elements, a suasoria (714-721) and two sententiae (719 and 826). The Cephalus and Procris, therefore, although it forms the digression in the Aeacus and Cephalus epyllion, has epyllion structure in itself, containing its own digression which contrasts in style and theme with the main subject. This epyllion does not make any parodic comment on the genres it contains. Ovid may be indicating through this omission of parody, that elegy and tragedy are for him the important genres.

As soon as Cephalus has finished his story, Aeacus returns with his two sons. As Pöschl⁷⁴ has noted, there is ring composition. At the beginning of Cephalus's story, Aeacus was asleep and his two sons absent; at the end Aeacus arrives with these two sons. Further, he brings with him the Myrmidons, described as "novoque milite"

⁷² Segal, "Ovid's Cephalus and Procris," 193-194.

⁷³ Labate, 124. ⁷⁴ 328.

(864-865). Thus, at the conclusion of Cephalus's story, Ovid returns to the main subject of the Aeacus and Cephalus epyllion. He also links Cephalus's tale with Aeacus's story of the Myrmidons, thereby adding to the unity of the entire epyllion. Segal⁷⁵ has indicated the verbal echo in "feliciter attulit" (7.659) and "feliciter acti" (8.4). Cephalus's departure, therefore, recalls Aeacus's offer of hospitality at the conclusion of his story. Thus through two rings, Ovid ties together the two digressions in the Aeacus and Cephalus. These rings link the final lines of the main subject (7.863- 8.4) to the earlier section (668-688), which served as a transition from the first to the second digression. Cephalus's departure by sea (8.3-5) forms a ring with his arrival at Aegina (491-493), thus unifying the main subject.

The main subject of the Aeacus and Cephalus epyllion is heroic in content and epic in style. It, therefore, both contrasts and compares with the digression. Aeacus's tale of the plague and the Myrmidons contains didactic as well as epic elements. Cephalus's narrative, an epyllion, is mostly elegiac but with an epic digression which is also an idyll. Like Aeacus's tale, therefore, the Cephalus and Procris both compares and contrasts with the epic main subject. Ovid has thus created in the Aeacus and Cephalus an epyllion with a fairly simple main subject but a very complex digression. He has layered within this epyllion the elements of several genres, while

⁷⁵ "Ovid's Cephalus and Procris," 203.

maintaining basic epyllion structure. In addition, he situates the whole epyllion within the Minos, through the figure of Aeacus who refuses Minos but assists Cephalus. A further connection exists because of Minos's appearance immediately before (7.490-491) and after (8.6) this epyllion.⁷⁶

The Aeacus and Cephalus epyllion demonstrates Ovid's skill in layering genres within the epyllion form. Its complex structure, in fact, reflects that of the entire Theseus and of the Minos. The main subject, epic in style and heroic in content, frames two digressions, one of which is strongly didactic and the other of which is mainly elegiac and tragic. These two digressions thus contrast with each other and, in doing so, they demonstrate the tension which Ovid sets up between elegiac and epic elements throughout the Metamorphoses.

The Aeacus and Cephalus, then, demonstrates Ovid's use of genres in two ways: through its structure as an epyllion and the juxtaposition of genres within that structure. First, the structure is complex, because the epic and heroic main subject is resumed between the two digressions. In this the Aeacus and Cephalus reflects the Minos, within which it is set and which has Minos appearing at intervals. It also reflects the loose structure of the Theseus, where Theseus has a part at the beginning and the end but

⁷⁶ Otis, p. 181, n.2 and chart, outlines the symmetry of the Aeacus-Cephalus-Procris sequence and notes its chiasmic relationship to the Medea-Aeson-Pelias.

receives only brief mention elsewhere. Further, the complex epyllion structure of the Aeacus and Cephalus indicates Ovid's cleverness in using the epyllion genre. The fact that he sets the Cephalus and Procris, a complete epyllion, within the Aeacus and Cephalus, which, in turn, stands within the Minos, suggests a playing with the epyllion form. This play with form, it will be seen, contributes to Ovid's expression of a literary statement.

Not only does the Aeacus and Cephalus have complex structure, but it also juxtaposes the epic and didactic tale of the Myrmidons with the elegiac and tragic Cephalus and Procris. In the Myrmidons Ovid parodies both epic and didactic. In the Cephalus and Procris, however, he avoids parody, even treating the epic and idyllic Laelaps in a straightforward manner. The contrasting way in which Ovid treats these two digressions, demonstrates the tension which he sets up between elegy / tragedy, on the one hand, and epic / didactic, on the other. As does his treatment of epyllion structure, so also Ovid's juxtaposition of these genres contributes to the overall literary statement, which he makes in the Metamorphoses.

The Scylla

After Cephalus's departure from Aegina, Ovid returns to the narrative about Minos. The Cretan king's next adventure, his attack on Megara (8.6-151) sets the stage for the Scylla epyllion, which tells of Scylla's infatuation with Minos and its tragic consequences. Like the Myrrha and several of the shorter epyllia within Orpheus's

song, the Scylla does not contain a digression, but the main subject frames two lengthy speeches which reflect rhetoric, tragedy, and elegy. Both speeches are concerned with Minos, and both employ the same motifs but with very different intent. In the Scylla, therefore, Ovid, as he frequently does, replaces the digression by a set speech. The Scylla epyllion has the following structure:

Main subject: Scylla's infatuation with Minos 11-42

Soliloquy 44-80

Main subject: Scylla's crime and her rejection by Minos 81-103

Tirade against Minos 108-142

Main subject: Nisus's and Scylla's metamorphoses 142-151

Ovid sets the scene and presents the major characters. First, he mentions Minos, who is attacking Nisus's city (6), but he withholds any description of him until the reader sees Minos through Scylla's eyes. He then comments on Nisus's salient feature, namely, the purple lock which is a pledge of his power (8-10). He tells of the time lapse and indecisive nature of the war in one sentence (11-13). Finally, Ovid slows the narrative to set the stage for Scylla's infatuation. He includes an aetiological detail, the reason why the walls resound, and he paints a pleasant picture of an innocent girl's amusement (14-19). This, of course, contrasts with Scylla's subse-

quent behavior.⁷⁷ War contrasts with peace: "pax . . . bello" (19), and Scylla's amusement changes from tossing pebbles to watching the battles below. As she gets to know the different leaders, she focuses too much attention on Minos (24-25): "Plus etiam, quam nosse sat est, hac iudice Minos, / Seu caput abdiderat cristata casside pennis."

In the introductory passage to the Scylla, Ovid has used many epic devices. First, by metonymy he uses the god's name for warfare, "Mavortis" (7), an archaic form, and "Martis" (20). To describe the indecisive war he employs personification, "Victoria", and metaphor, likening Victoria to a bird unsure of its direction (13). The epithet, "Lelegeia" (6), the adjective, "Regia" (14), and the use of "proles Letoia" for Apollo are typical of epic. The polysyndeton in verse 22 has the effect of piling up the various Cretan items which fascinate Scylla. Instead of observing both armies, she gazes at the Cretans and their equipment, finally focusing exclusively on Minos (23). Ovid thus effectively employs several epic devices in this passage.

Once Scylla has focused exclusively on Minos, Ovid changes from objective narrative to a more subjective style. The ablative absolute phrase, "hac iudice" (24), signals a change of viewpoint. The reader will see Minos only through Scylla's eyes. Clearly, her

⁷⁷ For comments on the setting, see Anderson, p. 335, and L. P. Wilkinson, Ovid Recalled (Cambridge: Univ. Press, 1955), p. 170.

infatuation colors her observations.⁷⁸ It increases until she is almost mad with love and envies the weapons Minos handles (35-37):

Vix sua, vix sanae virgo Niseia compos
Mentis erat: felix iaculum, quod tangeret ille,
Quaeque manu premeret, felicia frena vocabat

Through such subjective description Ovid has revealed Scylla's psychological state as her infatuation leads her further away from the ability to reason correctly. Ovid thus prepares the reader for the soliloquy which will reveal the extent of Scylla's derangement. Scylla's soliloquy resembles that of Myrrha (10.320-355) analyzed above, pp. 64-65.

This soliloquy alternates rhetorical and elegiac elements. The opening lines, as Anderson notes, form a dubitatio, "a rhetorical hesitation as to what emotion to express."⁷⁹ Scylla quickly decides that joy is her proper emotion; she transfers her joy to Minos as she ponders the benefits she could bring him as a pledge for peace (47-48). The expression, "pacis pignus," suggests the elegiac motif of "pignus amoris," a pledge of love. Scylla will employ the latter when she presents herself to Minos (92).⁸⁰ The tone of Scylla's

⁷⁸ Georgius, Danielewicz, "De Personarum Descriptionibus in Ovidii Metamorphosibus Obviis," in Ovidianum, ed. Nicolao Barbu, Eugenio Dobriu, and Michaele Nasta (Bucharest: Univ. Press., 1976), p. 210.

⁷⁹ p. 338.

⁸⁰ Cf. Ovid, Ars Amatoria 2.248, Her. 4.100, and 11.113.

speech changes from the rhetorical to the elegiac as she addresses Minos directly (49-50). She praises his appearance by calling him the most handsome of kings (49). She also declares that if his mother shared the same beauty, the god was right to yearn for her (49-50).⁸¹ When Scylla returns to addressing herself, she expresses wishes that are typical of elegiac lovers. She wants to fly to her beloved and confess her love; she desires to be purchased by him.⁸²

Scylla returns to rhetoric, specifically the suasoria, as she presents herself with good reasons for seeking Minos's love at any cost. At first she draws the line at treason, even taking an oath by her desired union (55-56). Immediately, however, she finds good reasons for betraying her country to Minos. Scylla asks herself the three questions recommended in deliberating about an action. The questions, "Is it possible; is it expedient, and is it honorable?" enabled the orator to explore the pros and cons of a particular action. Scylla first answers the question of expediency and then that of possibility. She treats the idea of honor last, and rather weakly. Myrrha, on the other hand, begins by marshaling arguments to prove the honor of fulfilling her desires. She next answers the questions of expediency and possibility negatively, thus deciding not to pursue her desired course. In contrast, Scylla finds betrayal of her country

⁸¹ Cf. Ovid, Ars Amatoria 1.213 and Heroides 4.125 for a similar expression, pulcherrime rerum.

⁸² Cf. Propertius, 4.4, for the motif of giving up all, even one's country to be with the beloved.

both expedient and possible.

Three rationalizations make Scylla's treason expedient. First, the conquered may benefit from a merciful conqueror. Second, Minos is waging a just war and has great strength in his armaments. Finally, since Megara will most likely be conquered, Scylla's treason can eliminate further bloodshed, especially the danger of Minos's being injured. With such arguments Scylla convinces herself of the expediency of her desired course.

Having mentioned danger to Minos, Scylla again addresses him and inserts the elegiac motif of the sacrosanctity of the lover. No one would deliberately wound Minos; injury to him would have to be accidental (64-66).⁸³ Like a judge rendering a sentence, Scylla states her decision to surrender her country together with herself (67-68). With this decision she returns to her suasoria, encouraging herself that what she wants is possible. She considers the obstacles to her love but quickly sees ways of overcoming them (69-73). Scylla next exhorts herself to assume her responsibilities, thus indicating that it is a matter of honor that she do what is necessary to overcome any obstacles.⁸⁴ She chides herself for her slowness and implies that failure to act is due to lack of courage (74-76). Unlike Myrrha, Scylla does not develop her answer about the

⁸³ Cf. Propertius, 2.19 and 3.16.

⁸⁴ Cf. Crump, p. 232, and Otis, p. 64, for comments on the psychological truth in this passage.

honor or dishonor of her actions. She implies, however, that failure to act deserves blame. Hence for her to take the action which she considers necessary is honorable. Scylla ends her soliloquy on a triumphant note. All she needs to accomplish her desires is a lock of her father's hair. One lock of hair will make her happy and powerful (79-80):⁸⁵ "Illo mihi est auro pretiosior, illa beatam / Purpura me votique mei factura potentem."

The ending of Scylla's first speech signals a return to the main subject. Whereas the first part of the main subject narrated Scylla's becoming infatuated with Minos, the second part shows her pursuing the course on which she has determined.

While Scylla is still speaking, night, described as the greatest nurse of cares, interrupts her, thus setting the stage for her action (81-82): "Talia dicenti, curarum maxima nutrix, / Nox intervenit, tenebrisque audacia crevit." Night performs the same function as the nurse in Euripides' Hippolytus and in Ovid's Myrrha epyllion, that is, night encourages the crime and supports the girl in her deed.⁸⁶ The narrative moves quickly. Once the deed has been done, Scylla presents herself and her "pignus amoris" (92) to Minos, who categorically rejects her. His curse banishes Scylla from land and sea. After completing the conquest of Megara, Minos hurries away.

⁸⁵ Anderson, p. 341, notes the position of these adjectives at the end of two successive lines.

⁸⁶ Cf. Met. 10.429-464. Danielewicz, "Some Observations," pp. 303-304, includes this passage among "prognostic sceneries."

Ovid emphasizes his haste by having him order the ship to be rowed, indicating immediate departure rather than a leisurely setting sail.⁸⁷ " . . . classis retinacula solvi / Iussit et aeratas inpelli remige puppes." (102-103).

Minos's hasty exit sets the stage for Scylla's second speech. Her reaction to Minos's departure comes in two stages. She begins by imploring Minos, thus using preces, a form common in Ovid's Heroides.⁸⁸ In this passage, however, Ovid compresses Scylla's lengthy pleading into the ablative absolute phrase, "Consumptis precibus" (106). After Scylla has moved from pleading to violent anger, she delivers a fully developed complaint. Her complaint contains several elements generally spoken by a woman whose lover has abandoned her.⁸⁹ These include a sudden regret for the homeland she has left, the epithet, "perfide" directed against her beloved, and the accusation that her deserter is inhuman and of unnatural birth.

Scylla unleashes her anger at Minos by addressing him as the one preferred to her own country and father (108-109). The use of anaphora emphasizes the accusatory question: "Quo fugis" (108-110). In place of the usual "perfide", Scylla calls Minos "inmitis" (110) and "ingrate" (119). The change is appropriate since her

⁸⁷ Anderson, p. 344, notes the anachronism in "aeratas . . . puppes." The mention of warships also has epic overtones.

⁸⁸ Anderson, p. 344.

⁸⁹ Anderson, pp. 344-347, comments on the conventional elements in Scylla's speech.

complaint is not a lack of fidelity but a failure on Minos's part to show gratitude for her services to him. In order to criticize Minos's birth, Scylla need not imagine strange possibilities. She merely denies his mythological origin from Zeus, claiming that his father was a real bull.

Scylla's two monologues, one spoken before her rejection and one after, compare and contrast with each other. They balance each other, since one covers thirty-six verses and the other thirty-four verses. Both begin with a dubitatio. In her complaint, Scylla expresses hesitation about which way to turn, whereas earlier she had not known which emotion to express. Her questions, "nam quo revertar . . . In patriam? . . . patris ad ora?" (113-115), recall those Medea directed against Jason in Euripides' Medea, and Ariadne's musings in Catullus 64. Hollis in his commentary on Scylla's speech, notes the proximity of poetry and rhetoric, citing the speech of Gaius Gracchus⁹⁰ in which the questions are similar.

In both her speeches Scylla refers to Minos's parentage, but the references are sharply opposed. In the first she praises his mother for her great beauty, but in the second she insults Minos's parents, declaring that his father must have been a bull with an unnatural passion for Europa. Likewise Scylla makes two confessions, which differ vastly in content. In her first speech she confesses her love and expresses a desire to be purchased by Minos, whereas in her second

⁹⁰ Cicero, De Oratore, 3.214, cited by Hollis, p. 48.

soliloquy she admits her guilt and acknowledges that she deserves punishment. Scylla refuses, however, to be punished by Minos and persists in her belief that he owes her a debt of gratitude. Her guilt refers to those she has betrayed, since she feels she has only benefitted and not hurt Minos. A final point of comparison is Scylla's desire to be with Minos, a wish that remains constant. In her early passion Scylla wishes to be with Minos as a hostage who can help him gain a settlement. In her anger she refuses to accept separation and thrusts herself at his ship.

The conclusion of the main subject contains a metamorphosis. When Scylla casts herself at Minos's ship, Nisus has already been changed into a bird and tears at Scylla who, therefore, releases her hold on the ship. Her metamorphosis into a bird preserves her from the sea. At the same time it fulfills Minos's curse; both sea and land are closed to Scylla.⁹¹ Scylla's story ends with an etymology⁹² which reflects in part the cause of her destruction, that is, her father's magical lock of hair (150-151): ". . . in avem mutata vocatur / Ciris et a tonso est hoc nomen adepta capillo." Ovid thus closes the epyllion as he had begun it, tying the whole epyllion together by the epic device of ring composition.

Minos at Crete

A passage of about thirty lines (152-182) intervenes between the

⁹¹ Cf. Anderson, p. 343.

⁹² For commentary on this etymology, see Bömer, IV, 55-56.

Scylla and the Daedalus. This intervening passage performs three functions. First, it describes the situation Minos faced at home in Crete, thus continuing the catalogue of Minos's adventures. Secondly, it refers to Theseus and Ariadne (173-182), thereby providing a link to the main subject of the Theseus epyllion. Finally, this passage provides a reverse image of the Scylla. The king who had thought Crete too good for Scylla, whom he called a "monstrum" (100), faces public disgrace because of the monster, "monstri novitate" (156), born of Pasiphaë. He attempts to hide the family's shame by imprisoning the monster, but the tribute of Athenian blood required by the monster continues Minos's shame.

The story of Theseus and Ariadne continues the parallel with occurrences in the Scylla but it gives those events a contrasting outcome. Ariadne parallels Scylla because both were rejected by the one whose gratitude they expected. Ariadne, however, finally achieved glory through catasterism. She thus benefitted from Theseus's rejection, receiving a type of immortality from the god Liber who rescued her. Scylla, on the other hand, suffered from Minos's rejection, receiving no glory by her metamorphosis into a bird. This metamorphosis served only to fulfill Minos's curse by denying Scylla earth and water. Ovid closes the passage with specific details of the new star's location, thus strengthening the parallel between the stories of Scylla and of Theseus and Ariadne by reflecting the etymology of the Ciris bird. He thus ends both the passages with a

display of erudition.

In telling of Theseus and Ariadne Ovid combines both elegiac and epic narrative styles. The distinction between these two styles has been discussed in the introduction, p.24. In addition, Ovid varies the narrative pace in this tale. He quickly tells of Minos's return home and the difficulties he faced there. He slows the pace, however, by employing an epic simile to describe the maze. He compares its confusing paths to the constantly changing directions of the Meander River (162-168). Following the simile Ovid resumes quick narration. One sentence suffices to relate the minotaur's enclosure and the tribute required by the monster. The same sentence tells of Theseus's victory, his departure and subsequent desertion of Ariadne (169-176). The narrative pace then slows to describe the process of catasterism and the exact location of the new star. Ovid thus combines in one passage the leisurely pace of epic and the more compressed narrative of non-epic poetry such as elegy and epyllion.

In this passage Ovid contrasts epic with elegy and epyllion, but he gives greater weight to epic. By parodying the compressed narrative of elegy and combining it with the more expansive epic style, Ovid surprises his readers by poking fun at elegy. He thus changes his usual object of parody; thus he perhaps is using this passage to hint that the important element in literature is not the form but the poet who uses that form.

Daedalus and Icarus

Daedalus's weariness of exile and his determination to escape from Crete (183-187) introduce the story of Daedalus and Icarus (183-261), which forms a digression within the Minos. This narrative is a bit brief for an epyllion, and its main subject is resumed only briefly after the flashback about Daedalus's nephew Perdix.⁹³ It contains neither a digression nor a long speech. The narrative, does, however, greatly compress both epic and rhetorical elements, and Ovid may be creating here a compressed epyllion. At any rate, Daedalus does appear both before and after the flashback, thereby giving the narrative a framing structure. The structure of the Daedalus and Icarus may be presented thus:

Daedalus and Icarus (183-235)

Perdix (236-259)

Daedalus's burial in Sicily (260-261)

The Daedalus and Icarus parallels in many ways the passage about Minos at Crete. First, Minos suffers a loss of respect in both passages, that is, he suffers disgrace because of the Minotaur and he becomes hateful to Daedalus. Secondly, in order to escape from Minos, Daedalus employs the same skill he had used to serve him. Thirdly, both passages describe Daedalus's work in detail. A fourth parallel is the presence, in the Daedalus and Icarus, of many verbal echoes

⁹³ Cf. Bömer, IV, p. 58, and Anderson, p. 355.

of the passage about Minos. These include clausus (185) and clausit (170); unda (205), undas (185) and (164), undis (162); novat (189) and novitate (156); artes (188) and artis (159); ponit (189 and 160); flectit (194) and flexu (160); lusuque (199) and ludit (163); opus (200 and 160); curras (203) and occurrensque (164). A similarity of vocabulary, therefore, connects the Daedalus and Icarus with the story of Minos at Crete, thus strengthening the link between the two narratives. Finally, both passages compress the elements of the genres employed.

The Daedalus and Icarus contains elements of epic and rhetoric, but these are compressed rather than developed. Epic elements include the two similes, one (191-192) comparing the arrangement of feathers in the wings to that of reeds in a rustic pipe, and the other (213-214) comparing Daedalus's anxiety for Icarus to the concern of a mother bird for her young. Other epic elements are the brief catalogue of places passed by the pair in flight (221-222) and the ekphrasis on the construction of the wings (189-195). The use of "infelix" (231) to describe Daedalus suggests epic because of its association with Vergil's Dido (Aeneid 4). The two aetiologies (230 and 235) indicating the sea and land named for Icarus also parallel a similar explanation in Vergil.⁹⁴

Daedalus's three speeches suggest, but again do not develop rhetorical forms. His first speech hints at the deliberatio, but

⁹⁴ Cf. the story of Caieta in Aeneid 7.

Daedalus has already determined the solution to his difficulties. Having been denied land and sea, he will use the open sky, over which Minos has no control (185-187). Daedalus's precepts about flying and his warnings to his son (203-208) suggest advice that might form part of a suasoria. His final advice, "Me duce carpe viam!" (208) imitates a courtroom orator's final exhortation to the jury. When Daedalus expresses his perplexity over where to look for Icarus, he hints at the dubitatio with two questions (232): ". . . ubi es? qua te regione requiram?" The repetition of "Icare" (231-233) adds to the pathos and demonstrates an effective way to stir the audience's emotions.

Although the flashback is brief (236-259), it has several epic stylistic features. The language is exalted as shown in the use of words such as "natalibus actis" (242), "capacis" (243), "Praecipitem" (251), and "cacumine" (257). To describe the first of Perdix's inventions Ovid uses metonymy, referring to the saw by its material, "ferroque incidit acuto" (245). He employs an elaborate periphrasis to describe Perdix's invention of the compass (247-249),⁹⁵ thereby indicating the process of constructing a compass. This parallels the description of Daedalus's technique in making the maze and creating wings. The passage also exhibits ring composition, since it both begins and ends with the perdix bird on its low perch (258): ". . . limoso . . . ab elice" (237) and "Propter humum

⁹⁵ Anderson, p. 356.

volitat ponitque in saepibus ova." Ovid carefully explains the aetiology of the perdix's avoidance of heights. What the youth suffered in life affects the bird's habits after the metamorphosis.⁹⁶

Ovid concludes, at the same time, the story of Daedalus and the adventures of Minos at Crete. Verses 260-263 place Daedalus in Sicily and refer indirectly to Minos by the mention of the Athenians' lamentable tribute.⁹⁷ This brief mention ends the main subject of the Minos, which was resumed at 8.152 with the activities of Minos at Crete and related adventures.

The preceding analysis of the Minos indicates the presence within it of a variety of elements, including epic, elegy, and epyllion. In addition, it also contains rhetorical features. Some of the narratives in the Minos have been developed into epyllia. These include the Aeacus and Cephalus, the Scylla, and the Daedalus and Icarus. Other passages, which are not epyllia, nevertheless, reveal careful structuring and positioning within the Minos epyllion. These include the Daedalus and Icarus, with its flashback to Perdix, and the narratives about Minos at Crete. The Minos, then, demonstrates

⁹⁶ Anderson, pp. 356-357.

⁹⁷ For discussion of various aspects of the Daedalus and Icarus, see B. Bilinski, "Elementi Esiodei nelle Metamorfosi di Ovidio," in Atti del Convegno Internazionale Ovidiano, II (Roma: Istituto di Studi Romani Editore, 1959), pp. 119-120; Bömer, IV, 66-70 and 82-84; and J. E. Sharwood Smith, "Icarus's Astral Navigation," G&R, 21 (1974), 219-220.

again a layering of one genre within another, and a careful arrangement of genres.

In the Minos Ovid has set a loosely structured epyllion within the Theseus, which has a similar structure. He has made the Minos frame two digressions. The first of these, the Aeacus and Cephalus, has a complex structure, and the second, the Scylla, has a simpler and tighter structure. Within the frame of one epyllion, therefore, Ovid demonstrates two different types of epyllia.

In addition to varying the type of epyllion, Ovid also has each genre affect the others in the same epyllion. As seen in the epyllia analyzed earlier, Ovid almost always parodies epic and didactic poetry, whereas he generally treats elegy, tragedy, and rhetoric in a more straightforward manner. He also emphasizes the deceitful nature and futility of rhetoric, since both Cephalus and Scylla persuade themselves to the wrong course of action, a course on which they have already decided despite their efforts to marshal arguments for a different decision.

Meleager Epyllion

The Meleager, which follows the Minos, forms the second digression in the Theseus and is itself another epyllion. Its main subject is primarily burlesque epic, but it also contains rhetorical and elegiac elements which Ovid continuously exaggerates. As an epyllion, it has an epic main subject and a contrasting digression on Althaea's dilemma. The main subject narrates Meleager's part in the

Calydonian boar hunt, the mourning of Calydon for its hero and, finally, the metamorphosis of Meleager's sisters into meleagrides, or guinea hens. The following is the schema for the Meleager epyllion:

Main subject: Calydonian Boar Hunt 8.267-444

Digression: Althaea's dilemma 445-525

Main subject: Calydon's mourning and metamorphosis of
Meleager's sisters 526-546

Although the genre of the Meleager's main subject is epic, it is epic which juxtaposes a grand manner with comic misadventures. Nicholas Horsfall refers to the treatment of the Calydonian boar hunt as, "Ovid's exploitation of the contrast between his manner and his theme. . . ." ⁹⁸ This juxtaposition creates burlesque since Ovid treats ludicrous actions in an epic manner. ⁹⁹ Horsfall thoroughly analyzes this passage to demonstrate Ovid's burlesque of the epic genre. His analysis includes the following points. First, Ovid exaggerates the boar's appearance by an unusually lengthy description (282-289). Second, he compresses into seventeen lines (300-317) a catalogue of thirty-six companions of Meleager, giving only Atalanta

⁹⁸ "Epic and Burlesque in Ovid, Met. 8.260 ff." CJ, 74 (1979), 319.

⁹⁹ Horsfall, p. 330, quotes the OED definition of burlesque. He then says, "Ovid's huntsmen are great heroes whose heroism and whose competence as hunters are regularly and ludicrously deficient."

an extended treatment (317-323) in this list. Third, he introduces the boar hunt as a maius opus (328), thus echoing Vergil's introduction of the Iliadic Aeneid (Aen. 7.44), but he prepares his readers for something different through exaggeration and the erotic motif of Meleager's reaction to Atalanta (325-327). Fourth, Ovid describes the boar's lair in detail immediately before reporting the boar's attack. He thus establishes a pastoral setting for the outbreak of epic violence. Again, Ovid employs archaic language to dignify not a hero, but a boar (359). Finally, the entire description of the hunters' attack on the boar depicts unheroic actions and ineffectual thrusts. Such actions, as Horsfall indicates, contrast with the epic grandeur of the narrative style, thereby creating an effect of burlesque in Ovid's narrative of the Calydonian boar hunt.

A few points not discussed by Horsfall support his interpretation. As Anderson notes, Ovid employs ring composition for the introduction of the boar.¹⁰⁰ In line 270 he mentions Meleager just before he tells of the boar's destructive actions. He ends this passage with a second mention of Meleager as the leader of the hunt which would rid the Calydonians of the boar (299). Ovid also introduces elements of rhetoric and elegy, although these are brief. In verse 279, for example, he expresses a sententia: "Tangit et ira deos." In his brief address to Atalanta (326-327), Meleager appears more like the lovesick young man of elegiac poetry than the

¹⁰⁰ p. 361.

epic hero. Likewise, Theseus's address to Pirithous (404-407) reflects the elegiac lover's fear of the dangers of the hunt.¹⁰¹ Venus expresses a similar sentiment in urging Adonis to be brave only before animals who turn their backs (Met. 10.543-544). Elements of rhetoric and elegy, therefore, add to the burlesque of Ovid's "epic" tale.

The burlesquing of epic continues in the conclusion of the main subject (526-546). Meleager's sisters mourn excessively and are metamorphosed into guinea hens. Their fate belies the epic flourish with which Ovid introduces their mourning. As Anderson¹⁰² notes, Ovid, like Vergil, multiplies to one hundred the ten mouths Homer had considered insufficient for outstanding narrative passages (Il. 2.488ff.). Ovid continues the exaggeration he has employed throughout the Meleager, now considering all of Mt. Helicon as insufficient to describe the Meleagrides' mourning. He also exaggerates the catalogue of mourners, since he includes mourners not only of every age group, but also of different classes of society (526-528):

Alta iacet Calydon: lugent iuvenesque senesque,
Vulgusque proceresque gemunt, scissaeque capillos
Planguntur matres Calydonides Eueninae.

The mourners, of course, include Meleager's family, starting with his father. The reader expects to hear next of Althaea's grief, but Ovid instead casually mentions her suicide. He does not elaborate on her

¹⁰¹ Cf. Propertius 2.19. ¹⁰² Cf. Anderson, p. 379.

death but presents it as the reason for her absence from the group of mourners. Ovid thus deliberately disappoints the expectations he has raised regarding Althaea's grief. He then continues with Meleager's sisters, but he again undercuts serious effects by stressing the physical aspects of their mourning. He makes them forgetful of decency, "Immemores decoris" (536).¹⁰³ The repetition of "fo-
vent" (537), "pectora" (536, 539), and "oscula" (538), emphasizes the gestures of mourning rather than the intensity of the grief. Even in narrating the metamorphosis of the sisters, Ovid teases the reader by specifying the two who do not undergo change and by calling Deianeira Alcmena's daughter-in-law instead of naming her (543-544). The title, of course, looks forward to the Hercules episodes which occur in book 9. In the conclusion of the main subject, therefore, Ovid continues to create a burlesque by juxtaposing a lofty style with elements which deliberately undercut epic grandeur.

Ovid introduces the digression to the Meleager at the end of the Calydonian boar hunt. Whereas the hunt had been burlesque epic, the digression has a serious tone and emphasizes two dramatic elements, the messenger speech and the soliloquy. The latter is actually a suasoria addressed by Althaea to herself. As Althaea celebrates her son's victory, she learns of her brothers' death and

¹⁰³ Anderson, p. 380, comments on the amusing effect of a reference to decency in this context. Cf. also Galinsky's comments on the grief of the Meleagrides, pp. 135-136.

turns quickly to mourning. Upon the discovery of their murderer, she replaces mourning with a passion for vengeance (450). Anderson¹⁰⁴ comments on the formulaic nature of this passage. It begins with the formula, "stipes erat" (451); it provides information about the firebrand (451-459), and it ends with "hunc" (460), referring to the same firebrand. The narrative then continues as Althaea brings out the firebrand and orders a fire to be kindled. Ovid details Althaea's hesitation and her changing physical appearance as she vacillates between action and inaction, between fear and hatred. He thus separates Althaea's actions from the words she speaks in her soliloquy. Hollis mentions Ovid's uniqueness in separating Althaea's actions from her words.¹⁰⁵

The vivid description in this passage (460-478) resembles that of a Euripidean messenger speech. As the messenger in a Greek drama, for example, the Medea, informs the audience of action which has taken place offstage, Ovid as narrator informs the reader about Althaea's actions. Since the events of the main narrative occur outside Calydon, Althaea's actions at home happen, as it were, offstage. The vivid narrative which reports them enables the reader to witness the effects of different emotions on Althaea's countenance. The narrator describes her shifts from fear to anger, from cruelty to a feeling that deserves pity (465-468). He shows her alternation between lack of tears and weeping (469-470). An epic simile compares

¹⁰⁴ pp. 372-373. ¹⁰⁵ pp. 66-68.

Althaea's vacillation to a ship's uncertainty when it is pulled in opposite directions by wind and tide (471-474). As Anderson notes, Ovid effectively pairs clauses to reflect Althaea's contrasting emotions, introducing one pair by saepe (465-466) and the other by modo (467-468). A dependent and then an independent clause (469-470) also accent the contrast between dry eyes and tears.¹⁰⁶ Through vivid narration Ovid has created effects proper to a dramatic messenger speech; he has made the reader an eyewitness of the actions he describes.

As Althaea holds in her hand the fatal piece of wood, she enters into a soliloquy in which she tries to persuade herself to act. In this she resembles Euripides' Medea, who murdered her own children for the sake of vengeance, and who soliloquized about her conflicting impulses. Ovid's heroines, Procne and Myrrha, also imitate these aspects of Medea. Procne follows in child murder and Myrrha expresses conflicting impulses. Unlike Myrrha, Althaea does not experience a conflict between pudor and amor. Neither is hers a conflict between amor and pietas as is Scylla's struggle. Nor does she share Medea's wrestling between love and hate in killing her children because of hatred for Jason. Contrary to what may appear, Althaea does not waver between her love as a mother and as a sister.¹⁰⁷ At

¹⁰⁶ Anderson, p. 373.

¹⁰⁷ Otis, for example, feels that this is the conflict, p. 200.

this point she hates Meleager and would gladly see him dead.

Althaea's dilemma consists in reconciling the conflicting demands of pietas. As a blood relative, she feels obligated to avenge her brothers' murder. In killing Meleager, however, she will become impious by murdering her own son. An analysis of Althaea's *suasoria* (478-511) confirms that she hesitates to destroy Meleager because of the impiety of the deed, not because of any love for him. It consists of a series of rhetorical questions and solutions to problems which cause her hesitation. The following analysis should prove helpful:

Address to Eumenides 481-485

Rhetorical questions and solution to difficulty 486-490

Hesitation and reason for hesitating 491-493

Rhetorical questions and solution to hesitation just expressed
494-498

Rhetorical question with no answer 499-500

Address to Meleager 501-505

Final hesitation and decision 506-511

Althaea's dilemma about the conflicting demands of "pietas" reflects two major themes considered in Aeschylus's trilogy, the Oresteia. Both Orestes and Althaea feel an obligation to avenge kindred blood, but each risks offending the Furies, since vengeance requires the shedding of kindred blood. In the Eumenides Aeschylus presents the changing of the Furies into the Kindly Ones, the

Eumenides, who will receive honor under the new dispensation.

Althaea's address to the Eumenides, however, in which she asks them to look favorably on her, "furialibus . . . sacris" (481-482), recalls the earlier avenging role of the Furies (481-482):¹⁰⁸

"'Poenarum' que 'deae triplices, furialibus,' inquit / 'Eumenides, sacris vultus advertite vestros!'" There are numerous references in the Oresteia to the destruction of the House of Atreus. Althaea prays for the destruction of her impious house in the words (485): "Per coacervatos pereat domus in pia luctus!" Ovid thus compresses into five lines themes considered by Aeschylus in a trilogy of plays.

After addressing the Eumenides, Althaea asks rhetorically if Oeneus will rejoice in his victorious son while Thestius suffers bereavement. She quickly answers that both will mourn. The use of the future indicative instead of a subjunctive (486-487) suggests that Althaea already knows her answer and intends to bring about mourning for Oeneus. She turns to her brothers' shades, offering them funeral rites, which she calls (490) "uteri mala pignora nostri." In verses 491-493, she hesitates and cites her position as mother to excuse her hesitation. Although Althaea admits that her son deserves to die (492-493), she would prefer someone else to inflict the punishment. With further rhetorical questions Althaea overcomes the hesitation

¹⁰⁸ Anderson, p. 375, comments on the appropriateness of furialibus in this context. He also notes the repetition of triplices as an epithet; in verse 452 it describes the Parcae and here (481) it refers to the Eumenides. The opening of Althaea's speech, thus, forms a ring with the beginning of her dilemma.

just expressed, stating that she will not allow her son to live rejoicing in his victory while her brothers are mere shades (494-498). Once again she hesitates because of being Meleager's mother (499-500). Addressing Meleager, Althaea wishes that she had allowed him to die as an infant. She demands repayment of the gift of life she gave him at his birth and when she snatched the firebrand from the fire. Meleager has lived by her gift; now he will die at her hands through his own fault (501-505). Althaea hesitates one more time but strengthens her resolve with the image of her brothers' murder. Finally she has solved her dilemma. She makes her brothers the victors, asking that she receive a like comfort, namely, that she will follow them (506-511). She thus ends her soliloquy with a second address to her dead brothers; at the same time she turns away her face as she tosses the firebrand into the flames.

Four times in her speech Althaea addresses someone directly. She addresses first the Furies, second and last her brothers, and third her son. This order seems to reflect the value she places on the different claims of pietas. Her first loyalty is to the Furies / Eumenides whose concern is with the shedding of kindred blood. Secondly and finally, she must avenge her dead brothers. Only after these obligations comes her responsibility as a mother. That responsibility conflicts with and so must yield to her stronger duty to the Furies and to her dead brothers.

Ovid closes the narrative of Althaea's dilemma with the burning

of the firebrand. He employs ring composition by using the word "stipes" in line 451 at the beginning of Athaea's dilemma and again in verse 514 after its resolution. Ovid then blends the digression with the main subject by melding the burning of the firebrand with Meleager's being consumed by hidden fires.

As in the narrative of the boar hunt, Ovid again plays with his readers. Although he describes the horrors of Meleager's death and his pitiful calling on relatives, he undercuts the heroic and pathetic aspects by humor and exaggeration. When Meleager laments the fact that he must die without wounds, he expresses a heroic sentiment felt, for example, by Odysseus and Aeneas when they thought they would die at sea. Meleager, however, envies Ancaeus, who surely died a bloody death, but as a fool rather than as a hero.¹⁰⁹ He had boasted of his ability and challenged Diana. Ovid's exaggerated use of polysyndeton (He uses que nine times within five lines), to describe Meleager's dying invocation of his family, focuses attention on the figure of speech rather than on the dying hero. The catalogue of relatives ends with the ironic (522): "Forsitan et matrem." Ovid concludes the passage with the simultaneous death of Meleager and the burning out of the firebrand. The alliteration with p in the last two verses can reflect the dying puffs of a fire. The overall effect leaves the reader not pitying Meleager but admiring Ovid's cleverness.

¹⁰⁹ Anderson, p. 377.

While the Meleager epyllion's main subject employs epic features to describe non-epic behavior, thus creating a mock-epic effect, its digression treats seriously the two elements from Greek tragedy, the messenger speech and the soliloquy. The contrast in tone between both parts of the epyllion is striking. Ovid mocks the Calydonian boar hunt, but he does not burlesque Althaea's dilemma. Instead, he treats the tragic elements in her situation seriously, reflecting a major dramatic theme, the heroine's psychological conflict. Ovid, however, changes the focus of Althaea's soliloquy from the more usual struggle between love and hate or love and decency. By making Althaea's a struggle with conflicting demands of pietas, Ovid subtly links her dilemma with the Aeschylean theme of vengeance for the shedding of kindred blood and the characteristic Roman virtue of devotion to one's family. He thus displays his ability to treat a theme seriously and still develop it in a unique way. In this one epyllion, therefore, Ovid displays two aspects of his genius. In the main subject he parodies a major literary genre, the epic; in the digression he creates serious dramatic effects but subtly changes the source of conflict. His combination of genres within the Meleager epyllion achieves a unique effect.

With the ending of the Meleager, the second digression within the Minos, Ovid returns to the main subject of the Theseus epyllion. Theseus, is returning from the Calydonian boar hunt, when he encounters Achelous. Ovid thus brings his readers full circle back to the

hero and sets the stage for the Achelous epyllion which concludes the Theseus.

Summary

The Theseus epyllion demonstrates Ovid's combination of genres within the epyllion form. Both in its main subject and its digression, the Theseus epyllion contains several genres layered within other genres. The Minos and Meleager, both of which are digressions to the Theseus, each contain within themselves different genres. The Minos contains several epyllia, some of which are layered within other epyllia, and the Meleager is a more tightly knit epyllion. The Theseus's main subject includes the opening tribute to Theseus as well as the concluding Achelous epyllion. The latter contains within itself several smaller epyllia. Most of the epyllia in the Theseus are layered within other epyllia, and all of them contain elements of several different genres. Ovid treats these genres in a variety of ways and carefully organizes his narrative to achieve clever effects. The narrative of Minos at Crete, for example, plays upon ideas presented in the Scylla, and Deianeira's mention in the story of the Meleagrides prepares for her presence in the last of Achelous's tales.

The Achelous, the Meleager and the Minos each contain within themselves different genres. Each of these genres functions as part of the entire Theseus epyllion. The analysis presented in this

chapter indicates Ovid's skill in arranging these genres and suggests a deliberate attempt to include within one ostensibly epic poem as many literary genres as possible. The mark of Ovid's genius, however, is the intricate arrangement of one genre within another and the appropriate placing of one genre beside another.

Conclusion

Chapters two and three have presented the variety of genres with which Ovid works in the Orpheus and Theseus epyllia. They have also indicated his effective combination of genres and have suggested that Ovid uses this combination to make his own literary statement. These chapters have demonstrated Ovid's mastery of form, that is, his ability to observe the conventions of a genre without being limited by them. This mastery of form, it will be suggested, includes Ovid's placing of one genre within another, thus creating a tension between the inset and the framing genre.

The present chapter will summarize the variety of genres analyzed in chapters two and three. It will then explore the functional value of including so much variety in one poem. First, it will present a panoramic view of the genres found in the two epyllia analyzed above and indicate how Ovid plays one genre against another. This will provide a basis for the suggestions which will follow. The overview will, therefore, serve as a necessary prelude to the more important interpretation based on it. Secondly, this chapter will argue that Ovid's manipulation of genres in the Metamorphoses expresses his literary views by providing incisive comment on the relative importance of different genres. Finally, it will demonstrate his match of form to purpose by the use of a continually changing form to create a literary metamorphosis.

Variety of genres

In the Metamorphoses Ovid demonstrates his versatility not only by creating in several genres but also by juxtaposing and layering genres to maximize the tension among them. In other words, the expectations raised by one genre affect the other genres placed alongside or within it. In this way Ovid not only demonstrates his versatility, but he also proves his virtuosity by carefully fulfilling the requirements of each genre. At the same time he cleverly varies the conventions for his own artistic purpose, writing, for example, an epic of fifteen books, not the twelve or twenty-four of Vergil and Homer.

The contrasting structures of the Orpheus and Theseus epyllia demonstrate Ovid's varied arrangement of genres. The Orpheus, which has a simpler and tighter epyllion structure, likewise has greater thematic unity than the more complex and more loosely organized Theseus. The Orpheus (as indicated in chapter two) has as its major theme the deceptive nature and ultimate futility of rhetoric, whereas the Theseus (as seen in chapter three) has no overriding theme. Both the Orpheus and Theseus inset smaller epyllia within the major epyllion. The Orpheus catalogues these within Orpheus's song, while the Theseus has as its digression the Minos, another epyllion, which in turn has two digressions. The first of these, the Aeacus and Cephalus, has its own digressions, the second of which has epyllion structure and frames still another digression. The

digression within the Orpheus, although it contains several epyllia, does not layer epyllion within epyllion as does the digression within the Theseus. A similar contrast is evident in the organization of the main subjects. Orpheus plays a substantial and active role in that epyllion's main subject, whereas Theseus hardly appears and plays only a passive part in the Theseus's main subject. The two epyllia, therefore, contrast both in the type of digression they have and in the amount of narrative content in their main subjects.

The other epyllia which Ovid includes in the Orpheus and Theseus also vary in the way they are organized. Within all these epyllia, furthermore, Ovid employs elements of a number of other genres. Thus, the Orpheus and Theseus each have elements of epic, idyllic, and elegiac poetry, as well as the rhetorical forms of suasoria, exemplum, and sententia. They also include the dramatic soliloquy and messenger speech. In addition to these genres, found in both epyllia, the Theseus includes the hymn, didactic poetry, the dramatic messenger speech, and the controversia. It will become clear from the discussion below that Ovid's treatment of each of these genres indicates his comment on their relative importance. First, however, a summary of Ovid's technical manipulation of genres must provide a basis for that later discussion.

The analysis in chapters two and three suggests that Ovid generally parodies the genres he includes in the Orpheus and Theseus

epyllia. Parody, as applied here to Ovid's treatment of genres, does not imply disapproval or depreciation of the works he parodies. Rather, Ovid's parody aims at humor, at creating novel effects, and at displaying his own ingenium. It is parody which Eidson¹ describes as involving: "both finished craftsmanship and keen appreciation: admiration as well as laughter." Ovid particularly parodies genres composed in epic meter: epic, epyllion, idyll, didactic poetry, and the hymn. He also parodies elegy and drama, but to a lesser extent. On the other hand, Ovid treats rhetoric more subtly to make a point about the rhetorical practices of his contemporaries.

Ovid generally hurries, lightens, compresses, and thus parodies epic conventions. In the Orpheus, for example, he lightens the tone and hurries the flow of events in narrating Eurydice's death and Orpheus's effect in the underworld. In the Theseus, Ovid focuses more on aetiology than on the hero, greatly compresses the welcoming of a guest, parodies an epic battle scene, and burlesques the identification of a river with its god. Likewise Ovid parodies the epic catalogue either by choosing a non-epic subject or by greatly compressing its elements. In the Orpheus, the catalogue of trees indicates careful composition and reflects the most learned catalogues, and yet the application of this epic device to the marshaling of trees rather than heroes plays with epic solemnity. In the Theseus, Ovid burlesques the catalogue by compressing the names of

¹ John Olin Eidson, "Parody," DWL, p. 99.

several heroes into a few lines and developing the treatment of Atalanta, the only woman at the Calydonian boar hunt. Ovid thus has fun with the epic catalogue in both epyllia. He teases about its Homeric use to demonstrate the vastness of an undertaking and its use by the Alexandrians to display erudition. In his use of this and other epic conventions, Ovid frequently imitates Homer and Vergil, but he always exaggerates their use of these conventions. Ovid's attitude toward epic, therefore, suggests humorous comment on the genre, as will be more fully specified below.

Ovid's treatment of idyllic conventions also suggests that he treats the genre lightly. Ovid frequently--for example, in the Hyacinthus and in the Cephalus and Procris--sets violence and death in an idyllic landscape, thus creating an element of shock. In his Baucis and Philemon, for instance, Ovid pokes fun at the glorification of rustic simplicity commonly found in idylls. Further, the Baucis and Philemon demonstrates a rhetorical use of an idyll since it serves as an exemplum. He thus displays his ability to create novelty within the conventions of an established literary form.

As he had already done in his mock-didactic poems, in the Metamorphoses Ovid parodies didactic poetry, particularly the plague descriptions of Thucydides, Lucretius, and Vergil. He mimics these writers and exaggerates the symptoms and effects of the plague which they had described.

Finally, Ovid parodies the hymn form, which he employs twice in

the Theseus. Both times he raises the readers' expectations by presenting what appears to be a Homeric or Callimachean hymn. He then creates a surprise effect by having the speakers express sentiments which belie the attitude of reverence usually expected in praise of a hero or in an address to a divinity.

Ovid's treatment of genres in epic meter, it has been seen, reveals consistent parody. He also parodies non-epic genres by giving them an original twist. When, for example, he imitates Propertius and Tibullus, he achieves a novel effect through the use of an inappropriate speaker or addressee, or through his combination of elegy with other genres. Some elegiac imitations, it is true, do not seek to achieve novel effects. Scylla's complaint against Minos, for example, mirrors the type of complaint spoken by a woman who felt abandoned by her lover. There are, however, instances of highly effective versatility. When Apollo and Venus, for example, express the same helplessness as mortal lovers experience, the picture of these immortals suffering as much as a forlorn human lover would creates humor. Pygmalion's address to his statue, on the other hand, derives humor from the use of an inappropriate addressee, because Pygmalion is wooing a statue as a lover might woo his girl.

Ovid frequently has his speakers use rhetoric to deceive their listeners, but such speakers, although apparently effective, ultimately fail to achieve their purpose. They appear to have one intention whereas their real purpose differs from what their words

indicate. Orpheus, for example, appears to submit to Hades and Persephone, but he actually bends them to his purpose. On the surface, Ovid's speakers appear to succeed in their purpose because their request is granted, but in the end, they lose what they think they have gained. These two ideas of the deceptive quality and the ultimate futility of rhetoric have great importance for Ovid, as will be seen in the discussion of his literary statement.

In addition to the controversia, which occurs once in the Theseus, where it is greatly compressed, Ovid frequently employs in both the Orpheus and the Theseus the rhetorical elements of suasoria, exemplum, and sententia. Once again, Ovid demonstrates his originality when Myrrha, Scylla, and Althaea, for example, address suasoriae to themselves in the form of soliloquies, thus combining an element from drama with a rhetorical exercise popular in Ovid's time. Only Orpheus in the two epyllia analyzed addresses a suasoria to others, but in all these suasoriae the speakers appear to be doing one thing (for example, submitting to Hades) while, in fact, they are doing something quite different (for example, controlling those they address).

Ovid's versatility is illustrated, too, by his use of the exemplum in contrasting ways in the two epyllia. In the Orpheus Venus deceives Adonis by presenting an exemplum, supposedly to advise him to avoid wild beasts, but really to warn him not to neglect her. In the Theseus, however, Lelex offers an exemplum to prove

the gods' power, and his tale, the Baucis and Philemon, does just that.

Ovid's sententiae vary from comments on art to statements about the gods or the credulity of lovers. His comment on art (10.252) has special significance as part of his literary statement and will be discussed below. In both epyllia the sententiae receive their ordinary treatment, making a succinct statement about some generally accepted fact.

Ovid varies the usual treatment of dramatic elements, although he treats these elements seriously. In her struggle Althaea addresses a soliloquy to herself, but this speech is, in effect, a suasoria. She also experiences a conflict, but it differs from the usual one for heroines, the conflict between pudor and amor. Instead she suffers from conflicting claims of pietas, as Orestes did. Ovid also varies both the soliloquy and the messenger speech by having the narrator describe Althaea's struggle, even though he also reports her soliloquy. He thus ingeniously separates her speech from her actions. This type of separation between words and actions, it will be shown, has great significance for Ovid's literary statement.

The preceding summary demonstrates Ovid's versatility as a writer. He uses genres in a variety of ways and cleverly layers them within other genres. He clearly demonstrates his ability to fulfill the requirements of a genre without being hindered by them. He displays his genius in creating an almost limitless variety of genres

and in treating each of them in a unique way. In his juxtaposing and inseting of genres, Ovid makes his Metamorphoses, in a sense, a genre unto itself. Ovid's purpose in all of this will be discussed next.

Literary Statement

Ovid seems, on one level, simply to delight in displaying his versatility and to show that what others do well, he does very well. On another level, however, Ovid appears to be commenting on literature, to be presenting the Metamorphoses as his literary statement, as his Ars Poetica. The poem's opening lines (l. 1-4), its conclusion (15. 871-879), and Ovid's commentary on the literary artist in the Pygmalion episode (10. 243-297) support this idea. In addition, Ovid's continual shifting of forms further indicates that Ovid is using the Metamorphoses to express some of his ideas about literature.

In the poem's opening lines Ovid declares his intention to sing of changed forms, and he speaks of his work as a "carmen perpetuum". These lines, however, take on a new meaning when Ovid concludes the poem with a declaration of his own poetic immortality. Ovid thus transfers the reference of perpetuum from the continuity of epic poetry to the enduring value of his own work. The Metamorphoses, then, is more than one continuous poem, although it is surely that. It is, more importantly, a lasting creation, one that

Ovid's glorification, in the concluding lines, of himself as poet. Segal sees Ovid as declaring the ultimate triumph of the poet over rulers and governments and as giving the last word ("vivam," 879) to the individual.

Ovid's Pygmalion episode, as noted by Bauer (cf. p. 55, n. 25), also comments on his work as literary artist. Couched in that episode, the sententia "Ars adeo latet arte sua" (10. 252) suggests the subtlety or hiddenness of Ovid's literary comment. That subtle comment occurs in three ways which will be discussed now. Later attention will be given also to how skillfully Ovid has fitted the complex and shifting network of literary forms to his metamorphosis theme. Ovid, indeed, hides his art from the casual reader, but he never ceases to amaze those who examine his work carefully.

Ovid's threefold literary comment critiques epic values, genre theory in general, and the rhetorical practices of his contemporaries. In his critique, Ovid emphasizes the ambiguity which for him lies at the heart of literature and life. He stresses the difference between what appears to be and what really is. He plays upon the continual shifting back and forth between the real and the apparent. This constant shift expresses the ambiguity between the poet's ability to

change reality, on the one hand, and on the other, his powerlessness to do so.

First, then, Ovid's use of the epyllion as a structuring element in an epic poem subordinates the greater genre to the lesser one, giving the parvum opus priority over the magnum opus. He thus gives greater importance to the smaller genres than to grand epic. Further, his consistent parody of epic conventions strengthens his critique of epic. By this technique, he calls into question the importance not only of the epic genre but also of the values it expresses. Even as he comments on epic, however, Ovid demonstrates the poetic skill which for him is most important.

Ovid metamorphoses epic into epyllion and other genres by the way he structures the Metamorphoses. His artistry, moreover, changes not only epic but all the genres he employs. By layering genres within the epyllion form, which already is in tension with the epic appearance of his poem, Ovid includes all genres in that tension. He thus creates an ambiguity about genres and causes the reader to wonder what genre the Metamorphoses is, as he presents a continuously changing form. This continual shift puts the literary artist at the center, with his skill as the one unchanging reality.

As mentioned above, when Ovid uses rhetoric, he stresses its deceptive quality and its ultimate futility. He demonstrates the separation of words from meaning, the unreality of what appears to be true. The separation of Althaea's words from her actions strengthens

his point about the difference between words and actuality. Indeed, Ovid himself separates words from the reality they embody. He does this, not only in the Althaea episode, but also throughout the Metamorphoses.

In several passages analyzed in chapters two and three, the genre raised certain expectations, but the speaker's words created the opposite effect. Ovid thus treats genres in much the same way as he treats rhetoric. His emphasis, therefore, on rhetoric's separation of words from reality, points beyond rhetoric to a comment on the deception and futility characteristic of so much of literature and life.

This point brings the discussion to a focal theme in the Metamorphoses, the continual shifting back and forth from one form to another, the constant interchange of appearance and reality. This literary flux mirrors the ambiguity which Ovid sees in life, an ambiguity which Ovid expresses not only in words but in the actual literary forms he uses.

Fit of Form to Meaning and Purpose

Perhaps the greatest testimony to Ovid's mastery of forms is the skill with which he matches form to meaning and purpose. This functional use of form can be seen, first, in each of the two epyllia analyzed, i.e. in both the Orpheus and the Theseus. Its most significant manifestation, however, lies in the match between the constantly shifting genres and Ovid's concept of the tension that

exists between the apparent and the real.

Given his theme of the constant shifting of reality and appearance, Ovid chose the best literary form to express that theme when he composed an ostensibly epic poem that moves quickly from genre to genre and back again. In his Metamorphoses he thus creates a literary metamorphosis in which genres change because of their intermingling with other genres in one poem. This continual shifting of forms substantiates Ovid's belief that all things are in flux, that the only reality is ambiguity, that appearance and reality constantly intermingle and change places. Ovid has Pythagoras express this continual change (Met. 15. 454-455): " . . . caelum et quodcumque sub illo est, / immutat formas, tellusque et quicquid in illa est."

The epyllia analyzed in chapters two and three provide a clear example of Ovid's fitting of form to purpose. The organization of each epyllion fits its thematic unity or lack thereof. The tightly organized Orpheus possesses a greater thematic unity than does the more expansive Theseus. The recurring themes throughout the Orpheus are the deceptive nature and the futility of rhetoric. These themes occur in the main subject when Orpheus apparently succeeds, only to be deprived of what he has gained. They recur in the digression with Apollo, Myrrha, and Venus, all of whom experience ultimate frustration despite their clever use of rhetoric. Venus's use of the exemplum presents the same idea of futility. Like a skilled rhetorician, she subtly deceives Adonis about the point of her

advice, but she still fails to achieve her purpose, to gain his love. The entire Orpheus, because of the connection Ovid makes between the power of Music and that of Rhetoric, stresses the ultimate futility of the orator's persuasive skill. This futility may also apply to the poet's power, since at times the literary artist experiences an inability to change the reality of what he sees in life. The tightness of the Orpheus's organization admirably suits the unity of theme which it expresses.

The loosely organized Theseus has much less thematic unity than the Orpheus. It seems to include as many genres as possible, to give many of them a clever twist, to treat a few seriously, but not to make one particular statement. In this epyllion, Ovid seems to be stressing his versatility. No matter what the genre, Ovid can equal its leading artists, and he can outdo them by giving a clever twist when he wishes to do so. If there is a major theme in the Theseus, it is, perhaps, the versatility of Ovid's talent.

Ovid's richly suggestive virtuosity--perhaps that is the theme of the Metamorphoses, after all. Ovid has created a literary metamorphosis in which he presents his idea of literature. In so doing he demonstrates the versatility of his talent which surpasses genre limitations. Because of this versatility and the subtlety of his literary statement, Ovid leaves the reader in awe of his poetic skill. Perhaps the central figure, the one unchanging form in the Metamorphoses is the literary artist at work. Perhaps, to paraphrase the Greek tragedians, in the end, all is Ovid.

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The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval by the Committee with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

23 May 1984
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