

making, presents it to Telemachus and instructs him to give it to his bride on his wedding day. Whether Homer intended such a gift from Helen to carry ominous implications is impossible to tell,⁴ but it seems safe to say that Virgil read his *Odyssey* in just this way and thus transferred the theme to the ill-fated story of Dido and Aeneas.⁵

OID METAMORPHOSES 15.88–90

Heu quantum scelus est in uiscera uiscera condi,
Congestoque audum pinguescere corpore corpus
Alteriusque animantem animantis uiuere leto.

That there are Lucretian influences in Ovid's Pythagoras-episode has long been noticed.⁶ Some have well observed that, in spite of the Lucretian influence, the tenor of the passage is decidedly anti-Lucretian.⁷ Ovid is Lucretian and anti-Lucretian at one and the same time. This is most marked in the culmination of Pythagoras' speech, his declaration of the immortality of the soul (158–9).⁸ But for the above lines (88–90), commentators remark the Lucretian side (in the style and language), but fail to see the anti-Lucretian side (in the substance). The Lucretian colour is used to condemn a Lucretian position. There is polemic in the argument that lends irony to the tone. In Lucretius' view of the workings of the universe death and life are cyclical and *alteriusque animantem animantis uiuere leto* is the working principle of the universe. *Viscera* will ultimately be transmuted into *uiscera*, *corpus* will grow fat *corpore*, as part of the natural and necessary process (see e.g. 2.72–9, 3.964–70, 5.828–36). Indeed, *alteriusque animantem animantis uiuere leto* is a rephrasing of *DRN* 1.263–4, *nec ullam/rem gigni patitur nisi morte adiuta aliena*.

FIERE

That the form *fiere* was in use as the infinitive of *fio* is well known.⁹ But there is a second form *fiere* that is in use in later Latin, e.g. at Aug. *Ep.* 153.4.11, *quanto sis celsior potestate, tanto humilior fiere pietate*. It is, clearly, used as the imperative. But nowhere in the pertinent reference works does it appear to be noted and

⁴ I do not know of any commentator, ancient or modern, who reads the Homeric passage as ironic, but Jasper Griffin stops just short of this, 'She [Helen] is aware that the dress will have special value because of its maker . . . Any bride will be flattered to wear what the legendary Helen made. And Helen is a legendary figure not for her great achievements, not even for her womanly virtue, like Penelope, but for her guilt and suffering' (*Homer on Life and Death* [Oxford, 1980], 97–8).

⁵ Perhaps Virgil knew the story of the gruesome outcome of Telemachus' marriage to Circe (Lycophron *Alex.* 808–10).

⁶ Indeed, Pythagoras is presented as an *alter Epicurus*. Thus, at 62–72 Pythagoras is represented as seeing remote realities not with his eyes but with his mind (cf. *DRN* 1.72–4) and as teaching mankind the true nature of the world (cf. *DRN* 1.75–7); at 144–52, Pythagoras journeys high above the earth and relieves humankind of their irrational fears (cf. *DRN* 1.72–9).

⁷ See e.g. L. P. Wilkinson, *Ovid Recalled* (Cambridge, 1955), 215, 217–18; K. S. Myers, *Ovid's Causes* (Ann Arbor, 1994), 137–42, 158; also, O. S. Due, *Changing Forms* (Copenhagen, 1974), 29–31.

⁸ See Myers (ibid.), 144. With reference to these verses, Due remarks (ibid.), 31, 'The gospel of Pythagoras is exactly the opposite as that of Lucretius'. Contrast *Met.* 15.252–7, which is Lucretian both in language and substance.

⁹ See e.g. Skutsch *ad Ennius Ann.* 11 (p. 165).