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I. The Function of Pygmalion in the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid

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In the last generation of Ovidian scholarship, several heterodox studies have obliged us to modify our notions concerning the mood and the motive of the *Metamorphoses*. The verdict of tradition, that the work is merely a spicy *Bulfinch's* and "a collection of all the strangest myths",¹ has been superseded by the belief of Hermann Fränkel² and Wade C. Stephens³ that in the *Metamorphoses* some loftier inspiration, some deeper significance, and some broader application can be found. It is my design in this paper* to reveal the fundamental thesis of the poem, to analyze its organic architecture, and to examine the array of devices, including poetic imagery and symmetry as well as mathematical proportion, which the poet has marshaled for the most effective expression of his attitude towards the fine arts and belles-lettres.

¹ G. Highet, *Poets in a Landscape* (New York 1957) 183.

² H. Fränkel, *Ovid: A Poet Between Two Worlds* (Berkeley 1945).

³ W. C. Stephens, *The Function of Religious and Philosophical Ideas in Ovid's Metamorphoses* (Princeton University dissertation, 1957); subsequently in his "Two Stoic Heroes in the *Metamorphoses*: Hercules and Ulysses," *Ovidiana: Recherches sur Ovide* (ed. N. I. Herescu [Paris 1958]) 273-82; and his "Cupid and Venus in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*," *TAPA* 89 (1958) 286-300.

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I

Of all the themes in the *Metamorphoses*, none recurs either as frequently or as patently as that of stone. The variety of its manifestations—now functioning literally and at the same time symbolically as the subject-matter in the account of a bizarre petrification or its inverse, now as the metaphor of physical or moral insensibility, and now as a complementary simile or verbal echo—warrants its distinction as the dominant image. By the perplexing word *image* I mean not merely a decorative leit-motiv, but rather the recurrence of concrete, verbal figures, drawn from a particular area of perceptual experience, which by directly referring to the material order of things lend vividness to the analogous area of conceptual speculation that has been made a major thesis of the poem, and which thus expedite the communication of that thesis. Because the stone image has such an important function in the scheme not only of the whole work but also of each individual book, Ovid has at the outset equipped us with the Deucalion and Pyrrha episode (1.313–415⁴), a complete catalogue of the vocabulary to be used throughout and a forecast of the countless permutations the image will undergo.⁵

After the deluge, Deucalion prays that by the arts of his father Prometheus (*artibus* 364) he might again breathe life into molded earth (*formatae . . . terrae*), and with his wife kneels upon the earth to kiss the cold stone (*gelido . . . saxo* 376) steps of the pale (*pallebant* 374) temple. Joined (*iunxit, iungunt* 353) in perfect love, they entreat the gods to soften (*remollescunt* 378) and bend their wrath (*flectitur*) in order that the relenting (*mitissima* 380) Themis might reveal the needed art (*arte*). When instructed to throw the bones (*ossa* 383) of Mother Earth behind them, the couple are struck dumb (*obstupere* 384) until Deucalion softens (*mulcet* 391) his wife by ascertaining that stones (*lapides* 393 etc.) are the bones in the flesh of the earth (*in corpore terrae ossa* 393–94). At once the stones (*saxa* 400 etc.) lose their toughness (*duritiem* 401) and their rigidity (*rigorem*), become soft (*molliri, mollita* 402), and assume a bodily mold (*formam*) and a softer nature (*natura . . . mitior* 403). Their mold (*forma* 405) is not quite human, however, but rather like figures blocked out of marble (*de marmore*) and statues yet

⁴ For all references to and quotations from the *Metamorphoses*, I have used the edition of B. A. van Proosdij (Leiden 1959).

⁵ Cf. Fränkel (above, note 2) 77–78 and 210, note 11.

unpolished (*rudibus . . . simillima signis* 406). What was earthen (*terrena* 408) becomes flesh (*corporis*), what was solid (*solidum* 409) and unable to bend (*flecti*) is turned to bone (*ossa*), and the veins (*vena* 410) remain; each stone assumes the likeness (*faciem* 412) of its thrower. Because of this origin, we are told, our human race is tough (*durum* 414).

Random combinations of these words and ideas, coupled with their respective antonyms and inverses, recur in scores of episodes, of which the following inventory embraces the major symbolic, metaphorical, and simile usages. For minor verbal recurrences, both the literal and the figurative, the *Concordance*⁶ should be consulted under the basic terms catalogued above and their cognates.

Book 1. In the beginning God directs mountains of stone (44) to arise, and, using unpolished and figureless earth (87), Prometheus models the molds of men (88) in the likeness of the gods (83). After the regeneration of the human race by Deucalion (above), lesser creatures are also produced from earth with yet unpolished flesh (428–29).

Book 2. In this book Clymene warms with her tears the marble tombstone of her son Phaëton (338–39) and, pledging to be as silent as stone (696–97), the bluffer Battus is changed to hard flintstone (705–7). Jealousy, who inhabits a cold cave (760–64) and is herself barely able to rise (771), inert (772), pale in complexion and scant of flesh (775), petrifies the girl Aglauros, who rooms amid ivory and tortoise shell (737), and makes her unable to rise or to bend (820–21), inert (821), cold and stiff in her joints (823), pale with bloodless veins (824), and numb with coldness (827); neck-first she hardens into a bloodless statue (830–31), not of white stone but of black (832), as punishment for her betrayal of love (833).⁷

Book 3. By the hardness of its skin a serpent resists the stone hurled by Cadmus, a massive boulder which could otherwise have felled stone walls and towers (59–65). A cave of stones so neatly joined together by nature as to imitate a low archway (29–30) resembles the cave of Gargaphie which was molded,

⁶ R. J. Deferrari, M. I. Barry, M. R. P. McGuire, *A Concordance of Ovid* (Washington 1939).

⁷ For Aglauros, cf. Fränkel (above, note 2) 209, note 9.

not by the art of man but by the cunning of nature in imitation of art (158–59), into an archway of soft, living stone (159–60). The flesh of the unloved nymph Echo withers away (398), and her bones are turned to a mold of stone (399). Next, her beloved Narcissus is struck numb and stands motionless with stiff expression (418) like a statue molded from white marble (419), while a blush colors the pale whiteness of his ivory neck (422–23, 491); pummeled by his marble hands (481), his breast also assumes a rosy blush (482), just as white apples and grapes yet unripe blush red on one side only (483–85); and finally the fire of passion softens his flesh just as wax is melted by gentle heat (487–88).

Book 4. Immediately following the shepherd Daphnis, whom a most unchivalrous nymph turned to stone in order to thwart a rival coquette (276–78), innocent Hermaphroditus blushes with the becoming blush of love (329–30), while his ivory neck (335) reddens like ripening apples (331) or rouged ivory (332) or the moon when it eclipses the sun, red under white (332–33). At seeing his soft flesh (345) the nymph is struck numb (346 [Heinsius]); as he splashes through the joint-softening (286) waters of Salmacis, he resembles an ivory statue encased in crystal (354–55); then, bending to the charms of the nymph, his flesh grows soft (381, 386). Ino, her infant son dashed against a rigid stone (518), plunges to her own death from the brow of a rigid, rock cliff molded by the sea (525–27); and four Theban women who had accompanied her to the top of the rock (544) are joined to the stone on which they stand (553, 560), become rigid (555), and are made statues in stone (557) with hardened fingers (559), each preserving her former pose (560) as a monument (550) to the wrath of Juno. Bound to another cliff of hard stone (672), Andromeda seems to Perseus to be a marble statue (675), and he is struck numb by the fine mold of the likeness (676). With the head of Medusa, Perseus turns Atlas into a mountain (657), a cold mass of solid rock (772–73), and his bones into stone (660); men and wild beasts also become statues in stone (780–81); and even shoots of living vegetation are made to harden and assume a strange stiffness (744–46), just as coral hardens when exposed to air and becomes stone (750–52).

Book 5. The massive stone against which brave Perseus stands (160) reflects the weapon of his attacker (172), while the head of Medusa exercises its petrifying faculty on no fewer than two hundred of the foe (209). First Thescelus becomes a marble statue in the attitude of a javelin-thrower (183); next Ampyx stiffens to a similar pose (186) and his partner Nileus is transformed into a stone joined to the earth (198), as if a motionless statue in full armor (199), although Eryx claims that they both were numbed by their own cowardice and not by the dispensation of the Gorgon (195-96); an accidental glance at the monster turns Aconteus, a soldier of Perseus, to stone (202), while the sword of Astyages, who had resumed the attack believing his opponent still alive, is reflected from the stone with a sharp noise (204); he is struck numb by this (205) and assumes the same attitude, an expression of wonder on his marble face (206); then, neck-first, Phineus himself stiffens and hardens into stone (233) and preserves his pose in marble (234), a likeness to stand as a monument through the ages (227-29); and finally Polydectes, hardened by his hatred and not softened by the virtues of Perseus (243-45), is turned to bloodless stone (249); in short, too many to name (207-8) see their flesh transformed to marble (214) by the stone-making head of Medusa (217). Later in the book Ceres, at hearing that the earth yawned open (501) before Arethusa, is struck numb as if turned to stone (509).

Book 6. The limbs of the daughters of Cinyras are petrified into temple steps (99-100), and Pelops has a shoulder of ivory rather than of flesh (405), for when the gods joined him together again (408) an ivory patch was substituted for the devoured part (411), and the nightingale Philomela, who could once have moved stones with her song (547), but now deprived of her voice, overcomes the rigid walls of solid stone which imprison her (573) by means of a less exuberant, but more permanent, art (575-78). Upon seeing the cold flesh of her children (277), the insolent Niobe grows stiff (303), loses her sanguine complexion (304), and becomes a lifeless likeness (305); her mouth and veins harden and grow cold (306-7), her neck cannot bend, and her limbs cannot move (308-9); finally her vitals turn to stone (309), and she stands joined to a rock (311), a marble statue weeping tears (312).

Book 7. Bulls will breathe on Jason and an enemy sprung from seeds will face him (29–31), confesses Medea, proving that she does not have iron or stone in her heart (33); first the bulls, obedient to her prediction, hiss like stones in an earthen kiln (107), and then the teeth which Jason has sown are softened in the ground (123) and full-grown likenesses of men spring forth from the womb of the pregnant earth (128). Yet, surprised by the volume of the crop, the enchantress is pale, bloodless, and cold (136) and, plying her arts (138), she kneels upon the hard earth (191) to invoke artful (195) Hecate, with whose inspiration her song can move the living stones (204). Also, a likeness of a serpent molded in stone stands at Pitane (358), and the bones of Sciron, strewn on the earth (445), harden into rocks (446–47).

Book 8. To conceal the offspring of an unnatural love (157–58), Daedalus, famous for his art (159), molds a labyrinth so deceptive that he himself is almost hoaxed (167–68); later, he uncovers arts formerly concealed from man (188) and, by softening and molding wax (193, 198–99), overcomes his predicament. For their neglect of nymphal piety, the five Echinades are transformed into rocks in the Ionian Sea (580, 587–89), islands so closely joined as to deceive distinction (578). The flesh of Perimele, thrown from a rock (594) by her unsoftened (599) father, grows hard (607); her heart is covered over by earth (608), and she becomes a solid island (591, 610). In the same book, Apollo is said to have mounted the watchtower on a wall, a songful (14) wall, and with his song to have set the stones resounding (16); a boar attacks like a boulder hurled from a sling against stone walls and towers (357–58); the wooden props of the cottage of Philemon become stone columns when the earthen floor becomes marble (700–2); and Proteus often turns himself to stone (735).

Book 9. Discovered under a rock cliff (211) and pale with fear (215), Lichas is hurled by Hercules as if from a sling (218), grows stiff (219) just as cold rain solidifies into snow or hail (220–22), becomes bloodless (224), and turns to rigid stone (225); preserving a likeness to the human mold (227), this small rock (226) in the Euboic Sea is believed to be sentient (228). Also, Achelous stands like a boulder beaten by the sea (40–41), Alcmene can move hard stones with her song (303–4), and Byblis, although

wrecked on the rocks of fate (593), admits that her beloved has neither rigid stone nor solid iron in his heart (614).

Book 10. Approximately five-sixths of this book come from the mouth of Orpheus, to whose song the power to move stones was attributed by as early an author as Apollonius Rhodius (1.26-27, cf. Apollodorus 1.3.2); in accord with this tradition, Ovid has even the stone of Sisyphus stilled by the minstrelsy of the bard (44). But later, at the loss of his love, Orpheus himself is struck numb (64), like the anonymous fellow whose flesh turned to stone at the sight of Cerberus (65-67), or like Lethaea who, overproud of her own mold (69), was petrified as punishment (70-71), or like her innocent husband Olenus who voluntarily shared her fate to be forever joined with his beloved (68). Shameless prostitutes called the Propoetides, who deny the divinity of love, harden into rigid, bloodless stones, for them only a slight transformation (238-42). In brilliant contrast is Pygmalion (243-97), whose ivory statue in response to his love softens to life and bursts into a modest blush; later I shall examine more closely the vocabulary of this episode, the keystone of the imagery system. Defying love, Atalanta too has ivory shoulders (592), and when a blush spreads over the pale whiteness of her flesh it is as when a crimson awning is drawn over a white marble hall (594-96); as she finally succumbs to the lust of her pursuer in a cave molded from native stone (692), even the sacred statues there turn their eyes away (696).

Book 11. Orpheus, who with his song enchants stones to follow him (2), causes the first stone hurled at him to fall at his feet and to beg his pardon (10-13); indeed, all the weapons of the Bacchantes would have been softened by his song (15), had not his lyre been struck numb (18); but finally the stones blush red with his blood (18-19), and the same stones that once listened with rapture to the bard of Rhodope (42) now grow rigid with grief (45). Furthermore, Apollo turns a serpent to cold and stiff stone (58-60), Midas lifts a stone from the earth and converts it to pale gold (110), Psamathe changes a wolf to marble, a true likeness save for the pale color of its flesh (404-6), and Phantasus, proficient in divers arts, transforms himself at will to lifeless earth or stone (641-43). When posed with his ivory lyre (167), Apollo seems to be the work of a sculptor (169);

on the other hand, whether the beautiful, rock cave of Thetis is the work of nature or of the art of man is uncertain (235–36).

Book 12. Yet another serpent turns to stone, preserving its former likeness (23); living flesh reflects a blow just as would a solid, rock cliff (124), and a sword resounds on flesh as if on marble (487–88); finally, the centaur Cyllarus is described, neck-first, as resembling a statue by a sculptor (397–98).

Book 13. Here, Philoctetes moves stones with his laments (48), and at Ambracia a judge is transformed to a likeness in stone (714–15). Hecuba, who had embraced the tombs and bones of her dead sons (423–24) and who was later struck dumb with grief (538) and stood like an inert, rigid stone (540–41), is pitilessly stoned to her death (566–68). Galatea, described as white (789) and soft (796) and well-molded (797), becomes hard (799), as immovable as rocks (801), and unsoftened (804) for Polyphemus, who lives in a cave molded from living stone (810); her beloved Acis, whom the Cyclops killed with a huge stone (882–84), loses blood and turns pale (887–88), and is reborn from the stone with a changed appearance (892–94).

Book 14. A statue of Picus, an image molded from white marble (313) surpassed in beauty only by the living flesh (322–24), recalls the rivalry between his aptly-named wife Canens, so gifted with the art of song that she could move and soften stones (337–39), and Circe, who, struck numb (350) with love for the same man, molded by the sorcery of her own song (357) a fleshless likeness of a boar (358–59) as a lure to trap him and caused the earth to groan, the surroundings to pale (407), and even the stones to rumble (409). Also in this book, under the auspices of a softened (704) nurse, a youth wooes Anaxarete, although towards love she is harder than either iron (712) or living stone (713), her words are unsoftened (714), and even her door seems hard against his soft flesh (709–10); rejected, he hangs himself in that same doorway and his flesh turns cold (743) and pale (747); because Venus hates the hard of heart (693) and those who do not bend and soften to her will (697), the flesh of hard-hearted (749) Anaxarete is made to stiffen, lose its warm blood and turn pale (754–55), her feet are joined to the floor (756), and her whole body is changed to stone as hard as her heart (758);

to this day the image stands in a temple of Venus (759-61). Plying her arts to eliminate yet another competitor in love, Circe transforms Scylla into a great stone in the sea, a hazard to navigation (73-74), and finally the ship of Alcinoüs grows stiff, and its wood turns to stone (564-65).

Book 15. The excretions of the lynxes of Bacchus, they say, grow hard in contact with the air and turn to stone (415), just as soft coral hardens when exposed from water (416-17). A plowman is struck numb (553) when a lump of earth of its own accord assumes the mold of a man and acquires the gift of prophecy (554-57); called Tages, he teaches the Etruscans his art (558-59). And in a thousand places ivory statues weep for the dead Caesar (792).

II

Although the stone image is a kaleidoscope of variety, no circumstances can be shown to occasion its play nearly as often as antipathy and passivity towards the miracle of love, the familiar theme which the indefatigable *praeceptor amoris* has ranked second to the stone imagery in prominence. Just after the Deucalion episode, Ovid abruptly awakens us to the dawn of passion (1.452):

primus amor Phoebi Daphne Peneia,

both to recall the exhausted subject of his past, and to introduce the refreshing ornament of his present, work. Furthermore, an entire book, significantly situated at the turning point from Hellenistic mythology to Trojan and Roman history and thus bridging the East and the West,⁸ is dedicated to the loves of the

⁸ So Stephens, "Cupid and Venus" (above, note 3) 293, who writes of the Orpheus cycle (10.1-11.84): "This passage is placed at a climax of the *Metamorphoses*, where Ovid is on the point of shifting his focus from the realm of myth to the legendary past of the Trojan War and Rome's genesis." Similarly, Fränkel (above, note 2) 75 sees in Books 11-15 the principle of historical sequence replacing the eclectic mythology of the earlier books; cf. 101 and 222, note 80, where the story of Byblis (9.450-665) is seen as initiating the "massive compositions, each of them devoted to a single subject." L. P. Wilkinson, *Ovid Recalled* (Cambridge 1955) 147-48, sees three parts with an introduction on the creation: part 1, Greek gods (1.452-6.420); part 2, Greek heroes (6.421-11.193); and part 3, "historical personages" (11.194-15.870). Van Proosdij (above, note 4) viii demonstrates four geographical movements: Thebes (Books 3-5), Athens (7-9), Troy (11-14), and Rome (14-15); furthermore, the Orpheus cycle, with its central stories set on Cyprus, is situated precisely at the center of this scheme. All, however, are agreed that a significant tergiversation occurs between Books 9 and 11.

gods in heaven, of the men on earth, and of the shades in the world below: it is Book 10. The hero of the book is Orpheus, who enjoyed a renown at Rome not only for his musical artistry and his quest of Eurydice but also for his patronage of Orphism, the sister cult of neo-Pythagoreanism with positive pronouncements on the human passions. Wade C. Stephens was the first to demonstrate⁹ that the *Metamorphoses* is permeated with the doctrines of this cult and that the amatory theme is not merely a sequel to the elegies but rather an integral part of the Orphism to which Ovid subscribed.¹⁰ Driven by his heart before the sovereigns of the underworld, Orpheus supposes that love is omnipotent there as elsewhere (10.26-29):

vicit amor! supera deus hic bene notus in ora est;
an sit et hic, dubito. sed et hic tamen auguror esse,
famaque si veteris non est mentita rapinae,
vos quoque iunxit amor.

Later he begins to contradict this (148):

cedunt Iovis omnia regno,

but corrects himself at once, for even the king of heaven submits to love (155-56):

rex superum Phrygii quondam Ganymedis amore
arsit.

Furthermore, he announces that love and the punishments of those who dishonor it will be the topics of his song (152-54):

puerosque canamus
dilectos superis, inconcessisque puellas
ignibus attonitas meruisse libidine poenam.

The nine erotic narratives which form Book 10 are, I believe, disposed in a deliberate symmetry, three concentric frames or recessed panels outlining the one episode radically dissimilar to the other eight.

Frame 1. At the opposite ends of the book Orpheus and Venus, the masculine and feminine personifications of love, function as the outermost frame; the former loses his beloved Eurydice because he observed her face, and the latter loses her beloved Adonis because he did not observe her warning.

⁹ Stephens, *Function* (above, note 3) 1-24.

¹⁰ Stephens, "Cupid and Venus" (above, note 3) 294.

Frame 2. The *pueros dilectos superis* announced by Orpheus are the subjects of the second, third, and fourth episodes of the book, which by reason of their brevity should be grouped together as a compact survey of homosexual lust among the gods. The desire of Jupiter for Ganymede is flanked by the desires of Apollo first for Cyparissus and then for Hyacinthus; Cyparissus becomes a cypress, Hyacinthus becomes a hyacinth, and Ganymede becomes hated by Juno. These three stories, told by Orpheus, together with the story of Atalanta, told by Venus, function as the second frame. From an earlier monograph (*Ars amatoria* 2.683–84) it is known that Ovid condemned homosexuality on the grounds that from it satisfaction is not derived equally by the participants; similarly, among men rather than gods, the love of Hippomenes was not shared equally by Atalanta, for she feared all men, and it was furthermore sacrilegious, for he defiled holy ground to satisfy his lust.

Frame 3. The *inconcensis puellas ignibus attonitas* also announced by Orpheus are the subjects of the innermost frame of the book: the prostitution of the Propoetides and the incest of Myrrha. The Propoetides earned divine punishment by their bold denial of love (10.238–39):

sunt tamen obscenae Venerem Propoetides ausae
esse negare deam;

but Myrrha earned her punishment by committing the most heinous of all sins against love (314–15):

scelus est odisse parentem;
hic amor est odio maius scelus!

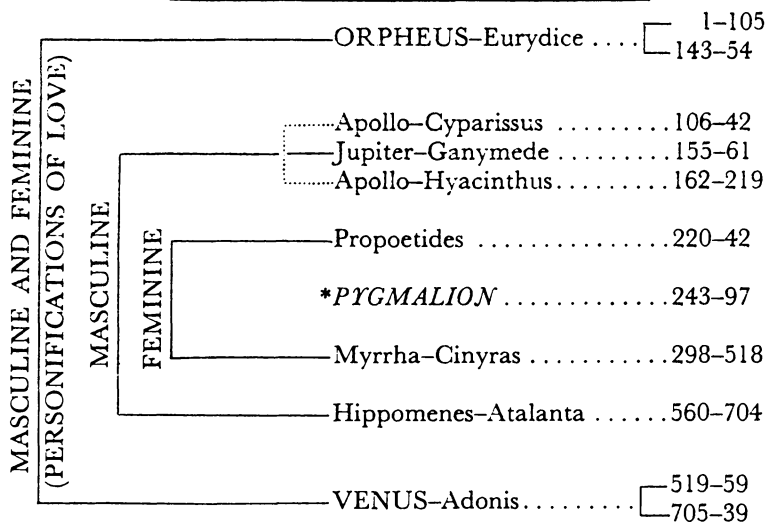
In a diagrammatic form, the symmetry of Book 10 is shown in the table on page 12.

The Pygmalion episode is the cardinal link in this purposeful concatenation. Furthermore, it must be observed by the skeptical that Ovid had distinguished this fable in two additional ways. First, whereas each of the other myths advances to a grim tragedy, the happy resolve of the Pygmalion episode is unique on the pages of Book 10. And secondly, whereas each of the other myths adheres to a firm tradition, "it is quite possible, and in fact likely, that in all relevant respects the invention was his."¹¹

¹¹ Fränkel (above, note 2) 95; for confirmation of this, see below, 14–16.

Pygmalion is the most conspicuous nexus between (1) the stone imagery on the one hand and (2) the love motif on the other:

1. The story employs the essential elements of the vocabulary forecast by the Deucalion episode. With marvelous art (*arte* 247) Pygmalion beautifully carves from white ivory (*ebur* 248 etc.) a bodily mold (*formam*). So well does his art (*ars* 252) conceal his art (*arte*) that the likeness (*facies* 250) seems to live and its sham flesh (*simulati corporis* 253) no longer to be ivory. After



praying to Venus the sculptor returns to the statue (*simulacra* 280) on its soft (*mollibus* 269) pillows; it feels warm (*tepere* 281). The ivory grows soft (*mollescit* 283) at his touch and loses its rigidity (*rigore*), just as wax is softened (*remollescit* 285) by heat and is bent into many likenesses (*flectitur in facies* 286) by the thumb. Pygmalion is struck numb (*stupet* 287), but flesh (*corpus* 289) it is. The veins (*venae* 289) pulse beneath his thumb and she blushes (*erubuit* 293).

2. But the passage also has a bipartite design, at the very heart of which stands Venus herself halving it into a before-and-after portrait of the artist. That is, following his introduction in the first verse (243), the contempt of Pygmalion for womankind does not diminish for twenty-seven verses until the goddess of love appears (270); in exactly as many verses the flames of

passion melt the frigid indifference of the maiden, and in the final verse Paphos is born (297), child of a perfect love.

III

If any one of the remaining themes in the *Metamorphoses* may be ranked third in consequence, complementing the art of love, it is the love of art. To draw examples only from among those episodes examined above, Alcmene, Apollo (twice), Canens, Circe (twice), Daedalus (twice), Deucalion, Gargaphie, Medea, Orpheus (twice), Phantasus, Philomela, Prometheus, Tages, and Thetis all practice one or more of the fine arts in surmounting their obstacles, performing their transformations, and realizing their designs. But the Pygmalion episode, even in modern literature the most celebrated exemplar of the potentialities belonging to the fine arts,¹² presides again over all the others, for its hero effects a masterpiece without parallel in the entire composition by wedding an ingenuous nobility of purpose with a studied refinement of approach. In order that he might promote the figurative interpretation of this passage aside from its literal sense and confront us with the fundamental thesis of his poem, Ovid in a contemporary work has addressed himself metaphorically to the sculptor who can soften stones (*Fasti* 3.832):

qui . . . facis docta mollia saxa manu,

and then in the couplet immediately following has claimed precisely the same animative faculty for his own art, poetry. Thus he has underlined that his ultimate purpose in the *Metamorphoses* was not merely to compose a florid catalogue of the myths shunned by others as pedantic figments, but rather to introduce subtle transformations into the repertory of tradition, to breathe new life into the torpor of its players, and to resurrect the heritage of antiquity for the benefit of posterity, and also that of all human enterprises only the fine arts are capable of performing such miracles. Furthermore, the figurative equation between the sculpture of Pygmalion and the art of the poet may be intentionally foreshadowed in our text by the appearance of the curious Propoetides, already a part of both the stone image and the love motif, who are usually explained to be the daughters of

¹² The modern history of the myth is comprehensively outlined by W. Brewer, *Ovid's Metamorphoses in European Culture (Books 6-10)* (Boston 1941) 343-45, although his work has been outdated by a generation.

an unknown *Propoetus*,¹³ but who are actually placed *pro poeta* in the series of episodes in order to alert the attentive reader to the allegory before him. Only Hermann Fränkel, however, has extricated the significance of the Pygmalion episode from this labyrinth of innuendo; "In a word," he writes, "Ovid was enough of a conscious artist to conceive one of the finest apologies on the marvel of creative imagination; and his *Metamorphoses* is, moreover, one of the greatest examples of just such creative imagination."¹⁴ And since it is known from the surviving collection of its hymns that the Orphism to which he subscribed dealt with the whole spectrum of classical folklore and that "the Orphic interpretation of mythology sometimes raised the old stories to a new level of meaning,"¹⁵ the *Metamorphoses* is also the greatest of Orphic hymns.

The study of the dependence of a great poet upon his predecessors deserves encouragement only when it yields the secret of his artistic originality; I am justified, therefore, in examining the pre-Ovidian history of Pygmalion¹⁶ because that examination reveals how a poet bent on demonstrating the vitality of the arts can remold and animate the fragments of a lifeless legend. The most archaic condition of the myth appears in Euripides, in the morbid pledge of Admetus to eternalize his love (*Alcestis* 348–53):

σοφῇ δὲ χειρὶ τεκτόνων δέμας τὸ σὸν
εἰκασθὲν ἐν λέκτροισιν ἐκαθήσεται,
ὧ̃ προσπεσοῦμαι καὶ περιπτύσσω χέρας
ὄνομα καλῶν σὸν τὴν φίλην ἐν ἀγκάλαις
δόξω γυναῖκα καίπερ οὐκ ἔχων ἔχειν
ψυχρὰν μὲν, οἶμαι, τέρψιν,

of which the resurrected queen herself, cold and dumb, is a figurative fulfillment when in the exodus she is stood before him,

¹³ Elsewhere the name appears only through an emendation in Plutarch, *Moralia* 777D: ταῖς τοῦ Προποίτου θυγατράσι, where the readings *προπόλου* and *προσπόλου* of the MSS. have been rejected solely in order to comply with Ovid. Cf. *RE* 23 (1957) 826 s.v. "Propoitides," where M. C. van der Kolf observes: "Ein Vatersname Propoitos wird nirgends bestätigt. Ob der Name Pro(s)polos einem Irrtum zu verdanken ist, bleibe dahingestellt. Es ist möglich, dass die Benennung der Mädchen als Dienerinnen (πρό[σ]πολοι) der Göttin den Irrtum herbeigeführt hat."

¹⁴ Fränkel (above, note 2) 96; cf. 4: "His Pygmalion story alone, properly understood and appreciated, should suffice to prove that Ovid is not only a very successful entertainer, but has substantial ideas of his own to offer."

¹⁵ Stephens, *Function* (above, note 3) 4.

¹⁶ For an interesting bibliography of equivalent legends in other folk-literatures, the Finnish, Breton, Germanic, Babylonian, Semitic, Hindu, Indonesian, Australian,

like a statue. Another myth, perhaps equal in age, concerns a similar means for the assuagement of loneliness devised by Laodamia and recounted by Ovid (*Heroides* 13.151-56):

dum tamen arma geres diverso miles in orbe,
 quae referat vultus, est mihi cera, tuos.
 illi blanditias, illi tibi debita verba
 dicimus; amplexus accipit illa meos.
 crede mihi; plus est, quam quod videatur, imago.
 adde sonum cerae, Protesilaus erit.

Philostephanus of Cyrene, the pupil of Callimachus, records a few more details in an aetiologic work entitled *Περὶ νήσων*, giving Pygmalion his name and Cypriot nationality and making the statue a likeness of a nude goddess (Clemens Alexandrinus, *Protrepticus* 4.57.3):

ὁ Κύπριος ὁ Πυγμαλίων ἐκεῖνος ἐλεφαντίνου ἡράσθη ἀγάλματος· τὸ
 ἄγαλμα Ἀφροδίτης ἦν καὶ γυμνὴ ἦν· νικᾶται ὁ Κύπριος τῷ σχήματι
 καὶ συνέρχεται τῷ ἀγάλματι.

His account reflects an actual religious ceremony in prehistoric Cyprus, which Sir James Frazer has conjectured thus:

The story of Pygmalion points to a ceremony of a sacred marriage in which the king wedded the image of Aphrodite, or rather of Astarte. If that was so, the tale was in a sense true, not of a single man only, but of a whole series of men . . . As the custom of religious prostitution at Paphos is said to have been founded by King Cinyras and observed by his daughters, we may surmise that the kings of Paphos played the part of the divine bridegroom in a less innocent rite than the form of marriage with a statue.¹⁷

And Apollodorus dresses his Pygmalion in the royal purple but traces a genealogy quite different from the Ovidian adaptation (Apollodorus 3.14.3):

...Κυύραν· οὗτος ἐν Κύπρῳ, παραγενόμενος σὺν λαῷ, ἔκτισε
 Πάφον, γήμας δὲ ἐκεῖ Μεθάρμην, κόρην Πυγμαλίωνος Κυπρίων
 βασιλέως, Ὁξύτορον ἐγέννησε καὶ Ἀδωνιν.

So shallow and destined for oblivion was the legend before Ovid, and so visceral and deserving of celebration was his metamorphosis of the Torres Straits, of New Guinea, and of the North American Indian, see S. Thompson, "Motif-Index of Fold-Literature," *Indiana University Studies*, Nos. 96-97, 100-1, 105-6, 108-10, and 111-12 (Bloomington [Ind.] 1932-36) item D 435.1.1; cf. item T 11.2.1.1, the Chinese.

¹⁷ J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, "Adonis," Chap. 3; abridged as here in *The New Golden Bough* (ed. T. H. Gaster [Garden City 1961]) 173.

of it, that Pygmalion may be said in all relevant respect to be his creation. That the ivory statue melted to life under the loving touch of Pygmalion, surely the most significant feature of his story and the one on which his entire allegory hinges, occurs nowhere else. That he made his hero an artist, in open contradiction of the tradition that he was a king, was also necessitated by the nature of his thesis. That Pygmalion was an offended observer of the first prostitutes and not their colleague in primitive ritual, and that his statue was the likeness of a woman and not of a goddess, are both finishing touches that befit the masterpiece of a master artist. Again Fränkel correctly supposes, "If this was, as it may well have been, all that Ovid had before him, then his crude material was cheap and insignificant by comparison with what he has made of it."¹⁸

Six times in his version we read that Pygmalion fashioned the marvelous statue from ivory (*ebur* 248, *ebur* 255 *bis*, *eburnea* 275, *eburnae* 276, *ebur* 283), doubtless the most challenging medium, for it exacted a skillful joining of numerous pieces and fragments; yet no obstacle can frustrate the truly gifted artisan (252):

ars adeo latet arte sua.

The subsequent comparison of the vitalization of ivory to the mollification of wax (283-86):

temptatum mollescit ebur positoque rigore
subsidit digitis ceditque, ut Hymettia sole
cera remollescit tractataque pollice multas
flectitur in facies ipsoque fit utilis usu,

although it has been disparaged by modern commentators,¹⁹ is defended not only by its manifest affinity with the dominant imagery but also by an interesting relevancy to the artistic theme. Wax, because its pliability and porosity are so suggestive of flesh, was used by antiquity both for the manufacture of portrait busts (*Heroides* 13.155-56, *Remedia amoris* 723-24) and for encaustic painting upon statuary of the more rigid materials (Pliny, *HN* 21.85, 35.49, 35.122). In the case of ivory, the application of a wax would surely have concealed the myriad joints and minute blemishes of its surface. But the number and felicity of the transitions uniting the many segments of the *Metamorphoses* place

¹⁸ Fränkel (above, note 2) 95-96; Brewer (above, note 12) 343 concludes similarly.

¹⁹ E.g., Brewer (above, note 12) 343.

a further, figurative significance upon this allusion to joinery. The attention of Ovidian scholars is often given to studying the continuity thus achieved,²⁰ which neither the conclusion of an individual episode nor the climax of a great cycle nor even the division between books imposed by the length of a papyrus roll ever interrupts. Moreover, the same learned simile between the plastic and the poetic arts is frequent in the literature of the first century, for example (Persius 1.63-65):

carmina molli
nunc demum numero fluere, ut per leve severos
effundat iunctura ungues.

And Quintilian himself remarks (4.1.77):

illa vero frigida et puerilis est in scholis adfectatio, ut ipse transitus efficiat aliquam utique sententiam et huius velut praestigiae plausum petat, *ut Ovidius lascivire in Metamorphoses in solet*, quem tamen excusare necessitas potest *res diversissimas in speciem unius corporis colligentem*.

The epic eloquence of the Pygmalion episode as a statement of the Ovidian attitude regarding the miracle of art, an eloquence inspired by his romantic temperament, designed by his Alexandrine scholarship, and animated by his creative genius, is emulated only by the proud, nine-line epilogue which follows the final book and confidently boasts the durability and the immortality of the whole. Its theme recalls the brief epilogue of Horace (*Odes* 3.30), and the pair, despite their very different meters, exhibit a number of verbal and pleonastic similarities:

Horace, *Odes* 3.30

EXEGI monumentum (1)
PERENNius / . . . ALTIus / (1-2)
QUOD NON . . . NON (3)
NON *imber* EDAX . . . POSSIT
diruERE (3-4)
INnumERABILIS Annorum.sERIES
(4-5)

Ovid, *Met.*, Epilogue (15.871-79)

opus EXEGI (1)
ALTA PERENNIS / (5)
QUOD NEC . . . NEC . . . NEC . . . NEC
(1-2)
NEC POTERIT . . . EDAX abolERE
vetustas (2)
INcerti spatium . . . Aevi (4)

²⁰ The best is F. J. Miller, "Some Features of Ovid's Style: III. Ovid's Methods of Ordering and Transition in the *Metamorphoses*," *CJ* 16 (1920-21) 464-76.

| | |
|--|---|
| multa . . . PARS MEI / <i>vitabit</i> (6-7) | PARTE . . . meliore MEI . . . / . . . <i>ferar</i> (5-6) |
| / dicAR (10) | / ore legAR (8) |
| / et QUA . . . Daunus . . . <i>regnavit</i> | / QUAQUE <i>patet</i> . . . Romana |
| POPULORUM POTENS (11-12) | POTENTIA . . . POPULI (7-8) |

His dip into the Venusian lamp is conspicuously unattended with the humility becoming a plagiarist, for it is intended, as Ovid implies by his initial *iamque* ("Now I *too* have built . . ."), rather as a learned reference to, and a grateful acknowledgement of, his renowned predecessor.²¹ Behind this obvious paraphrase, I believe, there lies a more subtle allusion to the elaborate symmetry in the twelve central odes, which frame the twin lyrics dearest to the heart of Horace;²² Ovid thus calls the attention of a symmetry-conscious age both to the complex framework and to the bipartite panegyric at the core of his own superlative work. Yet, whereas the internal symmetry of the Horatian model is in no way linked with the epilogue which follows it, in the *Metamorphoses* the durability of the arts and the immortality of the artist are the themes of the Pygmalion episode and the epilogue alike.

IV

Furnished only with inadequate materials, always obscure, usually defective, and often contradictory, the modern classicist is reduced to catalogue, to compare, and to conjecture; but occasionally the accumulated speculations of a score of centuries are suspended by the discovery of some new and incontestable fact, which either confutes or confirms each conjecture. For

²¹ For another instance of *iam* introducing a poetic rebuttal to Horace (i.e., Vergil, *Ecl.* 4.4-10), cf. G. E. Duckworth, "*Animae Dimidium Meae*: Two Poets of Rome," *TAPA* 87 (1956) 290.

²² I.e., *Odes* 2.1-12, which are both preceded and succeeded by 38 poems. W. Ludwig, "Zu Horaz, C. 2, 1-12," *Hermes* 85 (1957) 336-45, demonstrates their symmetry, which may be simplified as follows:

| | |
|---|-------|
| Asinius Pollio as historian: Past . . . | 1 |
| Philosophy | 2-3 |
| Love | 4-5 |
| *FRIENDSHIP | |
| Future | 6 |
| Past | 7 |
| Love | 8-9 |
| Philosophy | 10-11 |
| Maecenas as historian: Future . . . | 12 |

The different patterns which others have seen here require needlessly strained interpretations of the poems in question; see N. E. Collinge, *The Structure of Horace's Odes* (Oxford 1961) 43-46.

instance, in 1960 George E. Duckworth,²³ following an earlier study by Father Guy Le Grelle,²⁴ conclusively demonstrated that the entire *Aeneid* has a mathematical structure based upon an aesthetic criterion, highly esteemed among the Pythagoreans and in all ancient arts, which is best known as the *Golden Section*; the same phenomenon also occurs in Catullus, in Lucretius, in the *Ars poetica* and *Sermones* of Horace, and, as Robert J. Getty has most recently revealed,²⁵ in Lucan. "The Golden Section . . . is that ratio according to which the greater part is to the lesser as the sum of the two is to the greater."²⁶ These greater and lesser parts of the structure are respectively called the *major*, denoted by M , and the *minor*, denoted by m ; the ratio is expressed thus:

$$\frac{m}{M} = \frac{M}{(M + m)} = 0.618,$$

computations of which have been found slightly more precise by the formula $M/(M+m)$ than by the simpler m/M . Now if a similar mathematical architecture could be discovered within the *Metamorphoses*, and it can, then my preceding analyses might be promoted from the gray shadow of conjecture into the clear light of fact. The count of verses in each of the fifteen books is as follows:²⁷

| | <i>Book</i> | <i>Total Verses</i> |
|-------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| $M = 7377$ verses | 1..... | 778 |
| | 2..... | 875 |
| | 3..... | 733 |
| | 4..... | 803 |
| | 5..... | 678 |
| | 6..... | 721 |
| | 7..... | 865 |
| | 8..... | 885 |
| | 9..... | 797 |
| | 10.1-242..... | 242 |

²³ Duckworth, "Mathematical Symmetry in Vergil's *Aeneid*," *TAPA* 91 (1960) 184-220; more fully treated in his *Structural Patterns and Proportions in Vergil's Aeneid* (Ann Arbor 1962), especially 36-104.

²⁴ G. Le Grelle, S. J., "Le premier livre des Géorgiques, poème pythagoricien," *Les Études class.* 17 (1949) 139-235.

²⁵ R. J. Getty, "Neopythagoreanism and Mathematical Symmetry in Lucan, *De bello civili* 1," *TAPA* 91 (1960) 310-23, particularly 317-19.

²⁶ Duckworth, "Mathematical Symmetry" (above, note 23) 192.

²⁷ The present totals recognize that 1.546 is an interpolation while 8.600a is genuine; 4.768 has been lost. Cf. van Proosdij (above, note 4) *ad loc.*

| | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|-----|
| <i>Pygmalion episode</i> | 10.243-97 | 55 |
| <i>m</i> = 4554 verses | { 10.298-739 | 442 |
| | { 11 | 795 |
| | { 12 | 628 |
| | { 13 | 968 |
| | { 14 | 851 |
| | { 15 | 870 |
| <i>Epilogue</i> | (15.871-79) | 9 |

To the third decimal place, the ratio between the 7377 verses (*M*) which precede the Pygmalion episode and the 4554 verses (*m*) which divide it from the cognate epilogue is exactly 0.618, the Golden Section.²⁸ As the precision of the arithmetic suggests the premeditation of the poet, so his familiarity with other notions of the mystical Pythagoreans is evidence, and the demonstrated importance of the featured passages is verification, of the same premeditation. It seems a most reasonable and obvious conclusion, then, that Ovid has deliberately adopted a science made fashionable by his literary associates and has adapted it in such a way that the most scrupulous attention of his readers might be focused upon the very soul of his creation.²⁹

V. CONCLUSION

So frequently have our predecessors condemned Ovid for his lack of both profundity and sobriety that we hesitate to embrace any new interpretation, however profound or sober it might proclaim his poetry to be, lest we should relapse into the allegorizing and moralizing frenzy which prevailed from the twelfth to the sixteenth century. Innumerable perversions, produced whenever the scholastic mind has been inflexibly applied to the quest of a new and unexplored frontier, support these melancholy reflections. But if the weight of my evidence should prevail

²⁸ Duckworth, *Structural Patterns* (above, note 23) 104, sensed the presence of this basic structural device, although he had not discovered it: "I have found several ratios in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, but these may be the result of chance; I have not yet discovered the close correlation between the narrative units and a mathematical structure which is so characteristic of Vergil's procedure."

²⁹ Wilkinson (above, note 8) 147 prudently evaluates the problem to which the Golden Section was one solution: "The organization of this immense work (longer than the *Aeneid* or *Paradise Lost*) must have been a great labour, but we may be sure that it had a fascination for the author, solving his jigsaw puzzle, far greater than it can have for us, who merely survey the completed picture."

over the improbability of my interpretation, then the fundamental thesis of the *Metamorphoses* is indeed that the conscious poet must function to eternalize the ephemeral and to resurrect the obsolete, a precept implied on several levels of significance in the Pygmalion episode. Anxious to direct the attention of his audience to this episode, Ovid has utilized a variety of devices: (1) three dominant and organic motifs, sustaining interest within the text, (2) three extended allusions to contemporary literature, directing interest outside the text, and (3) the heterodox contents of the text itself.

1. First, the stone imagery with symbolic, metaphorical, and simile variations; secondly, the love motif involving complex symmetry and bipartite structure; and thirdly, the paramount theme of fine arts are all interwoven in Pygmalion.

2. First, the inevitable comparisons with other works of Ovid; secondly, the obvious echoes from Horatian lyrics; and thirdly, the mathematical proportioning professed by Vergil, Lucretius, Catullus, and Horace are all concentrated on Pygmalion.

3. And the subtle, yet very material alterations which have been performed with deliberation on this most abject of legends give still further emphasis to Pygmalion.

In short, Ovid has handed down not only the most captivating and exuberant thesaurus of classical mythology in the celebrated manner of Orphic hymns, but also "one of the finest apologues on the marvel of creative imagination."