OVID'S ORPHEUS AND AUGUSTAN IDEOLOGY

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I

Precisely where Ovid seems most Virgilian does one best grasp what is most characteristically Ovidian in him. This observation of Franz Bömer is nowhere so true as in Ovid's handling of the story of Orpheus and Eurydice and of Orpheus' death (*Met.* 10.1–85; 11.1–66).[1]

Curiously enough, most critics of Ovid have been unenthusiastic about this episode. Even so sensitive a lover of Ovid as Hermann Fränkel confessed that "... From my boyhood days I have never responded to it ..."[2] To an Italian critic who made a close study of the episode in the two poets Ovid seemed to lack "the accent of sincerity,"[3] to suffer from "the conventionalism of imitation," and to have rendered Virgil's narrative "emptied of content and impoverished."[4] Brooks Otis has rightly resisted, regarding the episode "simply as an instance of Ovid's woeful inferiority to a great poet," but he does not credit him with aiming at anything more substantial than "parody and comedy."[5]

[1] Franz Bömer, "Ovid und die Sprache Vergils," in *Ovid*, edd. M. v. Albrecht and E. Zinn, *Wege der Forschung* 92 (Darmstadt 1968) 202. For Ovid's use and transformation of the Virgilian epic style see also the remarks of Hans Diller, "Die dichterische Eigenart von Ovids Metamorphosen," in the same volume, pp. 337–39. The parallels between the Orpheus episodes of Ovid and Virgil are discussed in some detail by Giuseppe Pavano, "La discesa di Orfeo nell' Ade in Vergilio e in Ovidio," *Mondo Classico* 7 (1937) 345–58, and by Rosa Lamacchia, "Ovidio interprete di Virgilio," *Maia* 12 (1960) 310–30.

[2] Hermann Fränkel, *Ovid, A Poet Between Two Worlds*, Sather Classical Lectures 18 (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1945) 219, note 69.

[3] Pavano (above, note 1) 358.

[4] *Ibid.*, 354–55.

[5] Brooks Otis, *Ovid as an Epic Poet*[2] (Cambridge 1970) 74 and 184 respectively. W. S. Anderson too stresses Ovid's playfulness and "courtly urbanity": *Ovid's Metamorphoses, Books 6–10* (Norman, Okl. 1972) 475. This useful commentary appeared too late for me to use.

There is little doubt that Ovid deliberately dissolves the "high ethos" of Virgil into lower terms.[6]   Yet, as Bömer observes, Ovid is not merely a poet of the *pueriles ineptiae* with which Seneca reproached him; he is also, as Seneca appreciated, *poetarum ingeniosissimus*.[7]

It was Eduard Norden who most fully realized that Ovid's divergences from Virgil in the treatment of Orpheus resulted not just from his lack of Virgil's "tragic ethos,"[8] but stemmed from a deliberate intention to challenge Virgil's style and outlook with his own.[9]   Yet Norden examined only a few lines in each episode, and his criticism remained largely negative.   He censured Ovid's "lack of participation in the material and in the bearers of the (mythical) events."[10]   His touchstone was still the high pathos and heroic suffering of the classical tradition, and hence Ovid's restriction of "participation" appeared as a fault.   He did not entertain the possibility that Ovid was deliberately setting out to be "anti-classical" and anti-heroic.[11]

This possibility merits serious consideration.   Ovid may be taking a special delight in filling the Virgilian outline with a spirit that directly challenges the lofty, tragic style which Virgil created for the Roman epic.[12]   As he does later in the story of Aeneas in book 14, Ovid challenges Virgil on his own ground, with his own material.   In the Orpheus episode, it is not only the heroic style and the solemnity of tragic suffering and conflict that draw his fire, but also the self-importance of sacrifice and devotion to vast, transcendent purposes.   Ovid continues a direction in Roman literature firmly established by Catullus

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[6] Bömer (above, note 1) 202: "Durch dieses Spiel gelingt es Ovid, seine Selbständigkeit gegenüber Vergil zu wahren . . . Durch das Spiel . . . geht aber auch das hohe Ethos der vergilischen Sprache verloren.

[7] Seneca, *Nat. Quaest.* 3.27.13, à propos of Ovid's description of the flood in *Met.* 1. See also Bömer (above, note 1) 202.

[8] Eduard Norden, "Orpheus und Eurydice," *SB Berlin* (1934) 662–71 = *Kleine Schriften*, ed. B. Kytzler (Berlin 1966) 509–18.   Citations are from the former publication.

[9] *Ibid.*, 666: ". . . Es reizte ihn, im Gegensatz zur maniera grande des Vorgängers, im Gegensatz auch zu dem *magno ore sonare* . . ., artistisches Können zu zeigen, in dem er jenem überlegen war."

[10] *Ibid.*, 665.

[11] See W. R. Johnson, "The Problem of the Counter-classical Sensibility and its Critics," *Calif. Studies in Classical Antiquity* 3 (1970) 123–51, especially 137 ff.   See also Robert Coleman's review of Otis' first edition (above, note 5) in *CR* n.s. 17 (1967) 46–51, especially 49–50, and now Otis' "Conclusion" of his second edition, 306–74.

[12] See Lamacchia (above, note 1) 329.

and continued by Horace (or one side of Horace) and the elegists. Here the individual voices his claims to privacy, autonomy, and even to inactivity and directionlessness.

On this view, Ovid is a poet in revolt. The revolt is subtle, and its weapons are wit and irony; but it is none the less real, as Augustus seems to have recognized when he exiled the poet to Tomi. As Leo Curran has recently written, Ovid recognized the "fluidity, the breaking down of boundaries, lack of restraint, the imminent potentiality of reversion to chaos, the uncontrollable variety of nature, the unruliness of human passion, sexual and personal freedom, and hedonism."[13] He seeks to vindicate individual sentiment and the individual emotional life. He is aware of the chaos to which the passions may lead. And yet erotic love is not all destructive *furor*, as it tends to be in Virgil. Rather, it has a valid place in a world where the person runs the risk of being crushed by a vast, impersonal order. That risk, already subtly and fleetingly hinted at by Virgil, is far more ominous in Ovid.

In Virgil's *Georgics* the story of Orpheus is a tragedy of human passion. Man disobeys the inexorable laws of nature and suffers accordingly. The cosmic order is a major theme in the *Georgics*, and the story of Orpheus itself is part of a larger frame which exemplifies that order, the eternal cycle of death and rebirth, reflected in the loss and recovery of Aristaeus' bees. Aristaeus and Orpheus are complementary figures. The one is devoted to productive work and the continuity of the species upon which depends his glory as a herdsman-farmer (*pastor Aristaeus*, G. 4.317–32). The other is a poet, devoted to his emotional life and given over to his passions. Virgil's two figures, however, have one thing in common: both pay a penalty for yielding to passion. Aristaeus loses his bees after his amorous pursuit of Eurydice causes her death (G. 4.453–9). Orpheus loses Eurydice when his love leads him to yield to *dementia* and *furor* (G. 4.488, 495): he disobeys Proserpina's "law" (G. 4.487) and makes the fateful backward glance. Virgil is sympathetic toward Orpheus but at the same time leaves it clear that Orpheus' passion is culpable and his suffering merited.

[13] Leo C. Curran, "Transformation and Anti-Augustanism in Ovid's Metamorphoses," *Arethusa* 5 (1972) 88.   Views of Ovid along these lines have become more common in recent years. In addition to the works cited above, note 11, see also G. K. Galinsky's essay on the Cipus episode, *TAPA* 98 (1967) 181–91, and my essay on the Pythagoras episode, *AJP* 90 (1969) 257–92.

It is the presence of a stable, unbending world-order which gives
Virgil's Orpheus episode its tragic quality. To violate this order is to
invite suffering. The consequences are almost automatic, inevitable.
In conveying this sense of inevitability, Virgil is the heir of the great
tragic poets of Greece.

Ovid's world is very different. There is no sure and stable divine
order, or, if there is, its orderliness and objectivity are highly question-
able. This world is full of capricious and arbitrary divine powers,
easily aroused to love or to wrath, capable now of inflicting sudden and
terrible punishments, now of bestowing unexpected, miraculous
blessings. The gods' generosity appears in the tales of Iphis and of
Pygmalion which stand in close proximity to that of Orpheus.[14]
In such a world human guilt and human responsibility for suffering
are reduced, although they are not completely removed. There are
still moral laws, and their violation brings punishment, as in the tales
of the Cerastae, the Propoetides, Myrrha, Atalanta, which all follow
shortly upon that of Orpheus and Eurydice.[15] Yet the suddenness with
which lives are turned upside down and the fabulous or mysterious
quality in the metamorphoses with which every episode necessarily
concludes greatly weaken the firmness of this moral order.

Ovid's Orpheus episode, like Virgil's, is still a tale of human folly,
but in a different way. Ovid replaces the heroic and tragic *humanitas*
of Virgil with a humbler, less heroic *humanitas*. It is no less compas-
sionate than Virgil's, but it operates on a smaller scale and in a lower
key, and it makes greater concessions to the foibles and weaknesses
and also the needs of individual life.

Whereas Virgil's *Orpheus* concludes a poem in which the order and
rhythms of nature are a major theme, Ovid sets his *Orpheus* into a
context which virtually destroys Virgil's firm cosmic order, for he
frames it by the miraculous tales of Iphis and Pygmalion. Corre-
spondingly, the gods and the underworld in Ovid's narrative appear
as far less stern or awesome. Finally, Ovid draws Orpheus himself in

[14] On this arbitrary quality in the poem's transformations see my *Landscape in Ovid's
Metamorphoses*, Hermes Einzelschriften 23 (Wiesbaden 1969) chap. 5; also W.-H. Friedrich,
"Der Kosmos Ovids," in Albrecht and Zinn, *Ovid* (above, note 1) 368–69 and 382–83;
W. S. Anderson, "Multiple Change in the *Metamorphoses*," TAPA 94 (1963) 23–24.

[15] For this contrast between tales of licit and illicit love, see Otis (above, note 5)
chaps. 6–7, *passim*, e.g. pp. 185–94, 205 ff.

more human terms.   He emphasizes not tragic *furor*, but the strength
of his love.   He also gives his hero a fuller private life.   Ovid's
Orpheus does not merely reject women, as Virgil's figure does, but
turns instead to homosexual love affairs (*Met.* 10.83–5).   Hence Ovid
breaks down the finality of Virgil's tale, as is to be expected in his
carmen perpetuum.   The *Metamorphoses* allows the erotic life of Orpheus
to continue, albeit on a path different from before.

   The homosexual adventures of Ovid's Orpheus have a necessary
structural function, as Otis and Viarre have pointed out: they link his
tale with the stories of Cyparissus and Hyacinthus which follow.[16]
Yet they are also, possibly, an ironical comment on the absolute devo-
tion of the Virgilian Orpheus to his Eurydice.   Ovid's Orpheus is no
exemplary figure.   He makes his sacrifice for love, but he cannot be
expected to resign himself to utter chastity.   Ovid has here gone back
beyond Virgil to a Hellenistic tradition represented by Phanocles'
Ἔρωτες ἢ Καλοί.   Phanocles used homosexuality to explain the
reason for Orpheus' death (frag. 1, lines 7–10 Powell).   The Bistonian
women killed him

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οὕνεκα πρῶτος ἔδειξεν ἐνὶ Θρήκεσσιν ἔρωτας
ἄρρενας, οὐδὲ πόθους ἤνεσε θηλυτέρων   (9–10).

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(Compare Ovid's, *ille etiam Thracum populis fuit auctor amorem | in
teneros transferre mares, Met.* 10.83–4).   Ovid, however, shifts the em-
phasis of the homosexual theme from the causal sequence of excess and
revenge to Orpheus' inner, emotional life, i.e. the bitterness of his loss
of Eurydice or some pledge to her (*Met.* 10.80–1):

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seu quod male cesserat illi
sive fidem dederat.

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Ovid hints at the affairs themselves only in a delicate and rather attrac-
tive metaphor (84–5): *citraque iuventam | aetatis breve ver et primos carpere
flores*.   Ovid here modifies his Hellenistic source by separating the
homosexuality from the Thracian women's vengeance and letting it
stand simply as a development of Orpheus' personality after his ex-
perience of Eurydice's loss.   He thereby introduces also a realistic note

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[16] *Ibid.*, 185 and his chart on 168; Simone Viarre, "Pygmalion et Orphée chez Ovide
(*Met.*, X, 243–97)," REL 46 (1968) 235–47, especially 237–38.

and a humanizing correction of Virgil. Indirectly he asks us to take
Orpheus down from his tragic pedestal and *humanis concedere rebus*.

II

Ovid sounds his new note at the very beginning. Instead of Virgil's
mysteriously doomed girl, *moritura puella* (G. 4.458), Ovid introduces a
new bride, *nupta . . . nova* (*Met.* 10.8-9), who meets her death as she
rejoices among the companions of her now past girlhood (*Met.* 10.8-10):

> nam nupta per herbas
> dum nova naiadum turba comitata vagatur,
> occidit in talum serpentis dente recepto.

Despite the humorous twist in the last phrase the mood is one of high
pathos, asking our commiseration for the innocent victim. Norden
has pointed out how closely the scene approximates to the situation of
funeral epigrams with their pathetic contrast of joy and grief and the
sudden transformation of the day of highest happiness into the day of
black despair.[17] The contrast with the happy marriage of Iphis and
Ianthe, which provides the narrative link between tales and between
books, intensifies this pathos.

By omitting Aristaeus and thereby making Eurydice's death purely
accidental, Ovid eliminates Virgil's complex moral scheme of crime
and retribution. He also focuses attention more fully on Orpheus.
His Eurydice remains a more shadowy figure than Virgil's.

In both authors the descent to the underworld follows almost at once:

> ipse cava solans aegrum testudine amorem
> te, dulcis coniunx, te solo in litore secum,
> te veniente die, te decedente canebat.
> Taenarias etiam fauces, alta ostia Ditis,
> et caligantem nigra formidine lucum
> ingressus manisque adiit regemque tremendum
> nesciaque humanis precibus mansuescere corda (G. 4.464-70).

> quam satis ad superas postquam Rhodopeius auras
> deflevit vates, ne non temptaret et umbras,

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[17] Norden (above, note 8) 658: "Ein schlichtes Motiv, lebensnahe wie manche Grab-
epigramme, in denen die Antithese von Freud und Leid ergriefenden Ausdruck findet—
irgendeine ξυντυχίη knickt die Blume, die sich eben entfaltet hat."

ad Styga Taenaria est ausus descendere porta
perque leves populos simulacraque functa sepulcro
Persephonen adiit inamoenaque regna tenentem
umbrarum dominum pulsisque ad carmina nervis
sic ait . . .   (*Met.* 10.11–17).

Ovid has dropped the elegiac tone and the extreme emotionality
conveyed in Virgil's anaphoric repetition, four times, of *te*. Virgil's
solans aegrum testudine amorem becomes simpler and more immediately
human: *quam satis . . . deflevit vates* (11–12). *Satis* suggests a human
limit and measure lacking in the wild grief of Virgil's hero. By
omitting the "pathetic fallacy" of the remote mountains' lament
(G. 4.461–63) and suggesting timidity and despair in *ne non temptaret et
umbras* and in *est ausus* (*Met.* 10–12–13), Ovid achieves this same lower
and more human characterization.[18]

Ovid thereby presents Orpheus not merely as a heroic bard endowed
with supernatural powers, but also as a single mortal, armed only with
his love and his art. This polarity between the lone singer and the
terrible powers of the underworld is, of course, given in the myth and
suggested by Virgil too. Yet by developing the human side of Or-
pheus more fully than Virgil, Ovid makes the contrast especially
pointed. A few lines later he opposes the personal pronoun *ego* to the
full measure of Hades' terrors (*Met.* 10.29): *per ego haec loca plena timoris*.
And in the next lines he juxtaposes the name of Eurydice and the simple
verb of entreaty, *oro*, against "huge Chaos and the silences of (Hades')
vast realm" (*Met.* 10.30–1):

per Chaos hoc ingens vastique silentia regni,
Eurydices, oro . . . retexite fata.

In his descent Virgil's Orpheus witnesses all the grim power of death.
There is a strong evocation of Homer's underworld (G. 4.475–77):

matres atque viri defunctaque corpora vita
magnanimum heroum, pueri innuptaeque puellae
impositique rogis iuvenes ante ora parentum.

The lines are a condensation of *Odyssey* 11.36–41. The Homeric
echo not only adds solemnity, but also places this vision of death in an

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[18] Norden (above, note 8) 668 relates this *ausus* to an earlier source: cf. παραδόξως
ἐτόλμησε in Diod. 4.25.4.

ancient and venerable tradition.   Hence it appears as a reflection of an
objective, inexorable, timeless reality.   Virgil found his lines suffi-
ciently lofty to include them in his epic treatment of another, more
important descent to the underworld (G. 4.475–77 = Aen. 6.306–8).
Ovid borrows one of Virgil's phrases, but reduces the entire description
to a single line.   Here mothers, heroes, boys, girls, youths are general-
ized to far more neutral "peoples" and "shades" (Met. 10.14): *perque
leves populos simulacraque functa sepulcro.*   Ovid does, in fact, dwell on
mortality, but his description of death appears not as a part of the
narrative frame, but in the rhetoric of Orpheus' speech (Met. 10.32–37).
By this displacement Ovid changes the heroic tone and the impersonality
(relatively speaking) of Virgil's treatment of death to a mood of personal
response and rhetorical emotionality.   He treats death not with a grim
factuality, but as part of an attempt to persuade.   By presenting the
universality of death through the suffering participant's eyes, Ovid
makes us perceive it less as the manifestation of eternal laws than as the
particular experience of a single man.

   As Virgil's tone of lofty removal stresses the universality of death, so
his account of Orpheus' journey stresses the inexorability of Hades'
decrees.   Three times he speaks of this inexorability:

                     regemque tremendum
     nesciaque humanis precibus mansuescere corda   (G. 4.469–70).

     ignoscenda quidem, scirent si ignoscere Manes   (G. 4.489).

                     immitis rupta tyranni
     foedera terque fragor stagnis auditus Averni   (G. 4.492–3).

As the last passage makes clear, Orpheus in Virgil has violated firmly
fixed *foedera*, and there is no further recourse.   He pays the price of his
furor; and the three-fold thunder over the Avernian lake, like the awe-
some thunder at the end of Sophocles *Oedipus at Colonus*, seals his fate
irremediably.[19]

   Ovid has no equivalent to such verses.   His world is characterized by
fluidity and marvels rather than *foedera* and inexorable cosmic laws.
The intractability of the gods plays only a minor role in Ovid's tale.
Near the end of the episode Orpheus laments that Erebus' gods are

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   [19] Soph., O.C. 1606 ff.; cf. Norden (above, note 8) 678–83.

cruel (*esse deos Erebi crudeles questus, Met.* 10.76), while Eurydice does not lament at all.

The inhabitants of the two underworlds illustrate analogous differences. Virgil's Furies are grim and horrible, enforcers of the poet's stern order. They may "be amazed" (*stupuere, G.* 4.481) at Orpheus' art, but they are still monstrous creatures, with their dark blue, snaky hair (*G.* 4.482). Virgil strongly emphasizes their strangeness by in fact writing "snakes entwined with hair" (*implexae crinibus anguis*), instead of the expected "hair entwined with snakes." In keeping with the more yielding quality of his underworld, Ovid foregoes any physical description of the Furies. When he does describe them, they are not merely "amazed," but they weep and wet their cheeks with tears, for the first time, as report has it (*Met.* 10.45–6). The picture of the awful goddesses with tears running down their cheeks might, if pressed, verge on the ridiculous[20] and Ovid's self-conscious *fama est* shows his awareness of the strangeness of the scene. Yet Ovid has chosen this artificial picture to underline the emotional sympathy between the singer and the underworld.

To reinforce this same gentler and more fanciful tone, Ovid not only dampens the Furies' cheeks, but also makes "the bloodless ghosts weep" (*exsangues flebant animae, Met.* 10.41). Whereas Virgil had mentioned the amazement of only Cerberus and Ixion (*G.* 4.481–84), Ovid adds Tantalus, Prometheus' vulture, the Danaids, Sisyphus (*Met.* 10.41–4). He pushes the image of Ixion à l'outrance by having the wheel not merely "stop," but "be struck dumb." We may compare Virgil's *Ixionii vento rota constitit orbis* (*G.* 4.484) and Ovid's *stupuitque Ixionis orbis* (*Met.* 10.42). Through this and related modifications Ovid transforms Virgil's stern and unbending underworld into a fanciful realm which shares the emotional coloring and erotic sympathies of the rest of Ovid's world. By becoming more fantastic, Ovid's Hades also becomes, paradoxically, more human.

Ovid's breaking down of Virgil's finality about death is especially marked in the case of Eurydice. In Virgil she dissolves into emptiness,

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[20] See Pavano (above, note 1) 353–54, who considers the lines an infelicitous compromise between the simple and the recherché. Fränkel too (above, note 2) misses the effect when he finds in *Met.* 10.41–76 "the delicate idea [of love's conquest of death] . . . drowned in the din of elaboration."

like smoke into wind, and leaves Orpheus grasping empty shadows
(G. 4.499–502). Ovid takes over the detail of the winds (*nil nisi cedentes
infelix adripit auras*, *Met.* 10.59), but develops it less poignantly than
Virgil and replaces the final *fugit diversa neque illum . . . / . . . praeterea
vidit* (500–2) with the milder *revolutaque rursus eodem est* (*Met.* 10.63)[21],
a phrase which prepares the way for the reunion of the couple in the
next book.

Ovid also lessens the effect of Orpheus' grief by interposing an
elaborate comparison with two obscure myths, one of a man turned to
stone at the sight of Hercules with Cerberus, another of Olenus and
Lethaea, turned to stone because of the latter's pride in her beauty
(*Met.* 10.64–71).[22] The second tale is especially important for softening
the harshness of inconsolable grief, for it places the union of lovers and
nature's sympathy with them above the pride and folly which cause
their doom (*Met.* 10.69–71):

> tuque, o confisa figurae
> infelix Lethaea tuae, iunctissima quondam
> pectora, nunc lapides, quos umida sustinet Ide.

Iunctissima pectora turns our attention away from the tragic outcome of
the lovers' error to the gentler pathos of their bond. The stones now
resting on wet Ida solemnize that bond and immortalize it even in its
sadness. This purely decorative addition also points ahead to the
bitter-sweet reunion of Orpheus and Eurydice in the next book.

After the loss of Eurydice Virgil's Orpheus wanders in the barren
north "lamenting Eurydice snatched away and the cancelled gifts of
Hades" (*raptam Eurydicen et inrita Ditis / dona querens*, G. 4.519–20).
His death at the hands of the Ciconian matrons follows at once (G.
4.520–22). Virgil's context suggests the continued passion and emo-
tional violence of Orpheus: he fails to recognize the absoluteness of the
lex (G. 4.487) which he disobeyed, and thus he continues to lament his
loss as a "gift cancelled out" by cruel gods. Ovid borrows Virgil's
expression, *inrita dona* (*Met.* 10.52), but it occurs *before* Eurydice's loss,
as part of the conditions of her return. Orpheus is not to look back,

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[21] See Haupt-Korn-Ehwald-von Albrecht, *P. Ovidius Naso Metamorphosen*[5] (Zürich-
Dublin 1966) *ad loc.*

[22] For the legend see P. Burmann's edition, *Publii Ovidii Nasonis Opera Omnia* (Amster-
dam 1727) *ad loc.* (vol. 2, p. 690).

aut inrita dona futura. Ovid's phrase foreshadows the outcome, but does not, as Virgil's does, convey the hopelessness of interminable suffering.[23]

<div style="text-align:center">III</div>

The corollary of Ovid's dissolution of Virgil's mixture of tragic loss and austere philosophical generality is a weaker, but more human Orpheus.   The fact that Ovid relates Orpheus' speech in Hades while Virgil does not is symptomatic of such differences.[24]   All the world loves a lover; and Ovid's Orpheus wins over the reader, as he wins over the gods, by a touching avowal of his utter subjection to love.[25] From the rhetorical elaboration and mythical paradigms of his prologue (*Met.* 10.17–22) Orpheus turns suddenly to the human pathos of Eurydice's premature death (*crescentesque abstulit annos, Met.* 10.24) and his inability to overcome his grief (*Met.* 10.25–6):

> posse pati volui, nec me temptasse negabo:
> vicit Amor.

These lines have been the most admired of the whole episode.   Even Fränkel excepted them from his general condemnation.[26]   Pavano says of them: "The accent of sincerity finds again, sometimes unexpectedly, the secret pathos of our humanity."[27]   The lines combine simplicity with pathos.   The pathetic note is sounded in the immediately preceding *crescentes abstulit annos.*   This phrase reinforces the pathos of the death of the "new bride" (*Met.* 10.8–9).   It suggests also the young couple's loss of the happiness of their best years.   We may compare the *concordes annos* of the aged Philemon and Baucis (*Met.*

[23] See Pavano (above, note 1) 354, note 2, who remarks on G. 4.487 and *Met.* 10.50 ff., "Forse in Ovidio la scena è troppo intimamente borghese per giustificare la *lex* che viene dall' alto."

[24] Norden (above, note 8) 668 suggests that Ovid may be closer to the tradition in having Orpheus speak to persuade the dead: cf. Diod. 4.25.4 and Apollodorus 1.14. For the literary effect of speech versus silence in the two episodes see also Norden 669 with note 1; Diller (above, note 1) 338.

[25] I cannot agree completely with Fränkel (above, note 2) 219, note 69, that Ovid "relied less upon the effect on the reader of the speech than upon the force of the plot itself, with Love conquering (26) even inexorable Death."

[26] Fränkel, *loc. cit.*

[27] Pavano (above, note 1) 351.

8.708) and the expression, *dulces concorditer exegit annos*, of Procris and
Cephalus (7.752).

We have already mentioned the juxtaposition of Orpheus "I" and
the underworld's horrendous power in lines 29–30. Here, as Fränkel
sensitively observes, "A very human voice, tender and melodious,
makes itself heard over the horror and silence of Death's vast realm." [28]
It is just this voice which Virgil suppresses, for he seeks to set Orpheus'
dementia and *furor* into relief against the laws which he violates. Ovid's
Orpheus goes on to make the infernal gods themselves his companions
and fellow-sufferers in love: *vos quoque iunxit amor* (*Met.* 10.29). This
short sentence reveals how different Ovid's gods are from Virgil's.
The previous books have fully illustrated Orpheus' point, and the bard
will himself sing of those amours later in the book (*Met.* 10.152 ff).

Even the defiance of Orpheus at the end of his speech has a winning
humanity (*Met.* 10.38–9):

> quodsi fata negant veniam pro coniuge, certum est
> nolle redire mihi: leto gaudete duorum.

This bravado in the face of the immutable laws of death is pathetic,
but it also underlines his devotion and his lover's assumption that the
display of his devotion can move even the shadowy hearts of the deities
below. In a sense, Orpheus' assumptions are also the source of his
victory. In this respect, as we shall see, he parallels Pygmalion.
Assuming a world sensitive to love, he can speak with a confidence and
a naive revelation of a lover's weakness which are virtually irresistible.
He projects his own sensibility upon the gods. Acting on his imagin-
ings, he proves them correct. In this respect Ovid's tale is exactly the
opposite of Virgil's. He presents the triumph of imagination, emo-
tionality, the interior life over external reality. Victorious both as a
poet and a lover, Orpheus vindicates the two realms which for Ovid
form the surest and finest basis for human happiness: love and art.

Amid the elaborate and artificial description of the underworld
which follows Orpheus' speech (40–48), Ovid once more introduces a
surprisingly poignant and unexpected detail. He actually permits us a
glimpse of Eurydice in Hades (*Met.* 10.48–9):

[28] Fränkel (above, note 2) 219, note 69; W. C. Stephens, "Descent to the Underworld
in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*," *CJ* 53 (1957/8) 179 also notes the "simple beauty" in Orpheus'
request of line 31, *Eurydices, oro, properata retexite fata.*

> umbras erat illa recentes
> inter et incessit passu de vulnere tardo.[29]

The concrete picture of Eurydice's underworld existence helps prepare
for the ultimate union of the pair in book 11. Ovid, however, has
borrowed a detail from another Virgilian source, the appearance of
Dido before Aeneas (*Aen.* 6.450): *inter quas Phoenissa recens a vulnere
Dido*. The echo of this famous, highly charged scene gives an even
greater, and more startling, emotionality to Ovid's narrative. He
enriches his story with the evocations of the most tragic love story of
Roman literature.

Though Ovid closely follows Virgil in his account of Orpheus'
actual loss of Eurydice, he presents his turning around not as *furor* or
dementia, but as the solicitude of a lover or husband for the weakness of
his beloved (*Met.* 10.56–7):

> hic, *ne deficeret, metuens* avidusque videndi
> flexit *amans* oculos, et protinus illa relapsa est.

In Virgil it is Eurydice who stretches out her arms; in Ovid it is
Orpheus:

> invalidasque tibi tendens, heu non tua, palmas   (*G.* 4.498)
>
> bracchiaque intendens prendique et prendere certans   (*Met.* 10.58).

Ovid has eliminated Eurydice's pathetic sigh (*heu non tua*) and made
Orpheus more energetic. Both poets have Orpheus reach for the
empty air (*G.* 4.500–1, *Met.* 10.59), but here, as in the preceding detail,
Ovid gives our sympathies more directly and unambiguously to Or-
pheus. He is *infelix* (59), a word which harks back to the foreboding at
the beginning to the tale (*nec felix attulit omen, Met.* 10.5).[30]   In Virgil,
on the other hand, Eurydice claims the greater sympathy: it is she who is
"unhappy" (*misera, G.* 4.494), the victim of Orpheus' lack of self-
control.

Ovid's sympathy for Orpheus is even more marked in his next lines
(*Met.* 10.60–61):

> namque iterum moriens non est de coniuge quicquam
> questa suo (quid enim nisi se quereretur amatam?). . . .

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[29] See Pavano (above, note 1) 354: "E qui un tratto nuovo ci sorprende e ci dà un
senso di trepida attesa: la figura di Euridice aggraziata nella lentezza del suo incedere."

[30] C. M. Bowra, "Orpheus and Eurydice," *CQ* n.s. 2 (1952) 121, speaks also of "the
frantic gestures of Orpheus in Ovid."

Virgil emphasized the bitterness of Eurydice's disappointment in Orpheus' failure (G. 4.494–96):

> illa "quis et me" inquit "miseram et te perdidit, Orpheu,
> quis tantus furor? en iterum crudelia retro
> fata vocant . . ."

Ovid has replaced bitterness with a womanly gentleness and sweetness. His Eurydice does not judge; she accepts.   She understands, resignedly, that the very failure of her spouse is a proof, sadly, of his love.   There is almost a tacit forgiveness, for the weakness of Orpheus is the pardonable weakness of love.   The emphatic *amatam* (61), echoing *amans* a few lines before (57), stresses the fact that the bond between them, the bond between "lover" and "beloved," is still unbroken.   It is still there to be fulfilled in the next book.

Ovid takes over from Virgil the final farewell:

> iamque vale: feror ingenti circumdata nocte
> invalidasque tibi tendens, heu non tua, palmas   (G. 4.497–8).

> supremumque vale, quod iam vix auribus ille
> acciperet, dixit revolutaque rursus eodem est   (*Met.* 10.62–3).

In Virgil communication is utterly severed, and the next lines stress the finality of the separation (G. 4.499–503).   Ovid's Orpheus, however, can still hear the final farewell, though "scarcely" (*vix*).   As noted above, the intensity of grief is tempered by the literary allusions and the theme of *iunctissima pectora* in 65–71.   It is only after these lines that Ovid repeats the Virgilian details of excluding Orpheus from Hades (*Met.* 10.72–3; cf. G. 4.502–3).

In the account of Orpheus' mourning Virgil moves further into the realm of myth and fancy.   They say (*perhibent*) that Orpheus lamented for seven consecutive months and that his plaint soothed tigers and moved oaks (G. 4.507–10).   Ovid, however, keeps his tale on the level of humanly comprehensible emotions.   He reduces the period of mourning to seven days of fasting (*Met.* 10.73–4) and localizes this grief right by the banks of the Styx (*Met.* 10.74) rather than under the remote, gelid caves (or stars, reading *astris*) of the Strymon (G. 4.508–9).   The grief of Ovid's Orpheus is more tangible, more natural.   We can understand more easily the short, intense agony which leaves one without

desire to move or to eat than a strange journey to the mysterious north and seven months of lamentation.[31]

The general effect of Ovid's modifications of Virgil in the scene of *Met.* 10.50–75 is to transfer sympathy from Eurydice to Orpheus and in so doing to replace the Virgilian theme of passion violating cosmic order with the Ovidian theme of the pardonable weakness of human affection.   What Brooks Otis observes of the Ceyx–Halcyon episode is (with an important reservation to be made later) true here also: Ovid shows himself "the West's first champion of true, normal, even conjugal love."[32]

IV

What has been said of the Orpheus episode in book 10 applies also to its sequel in book 11.   Here, however, the different genres and structures of the two poems involve a crucial difference.   The episodic character of Ovid's narrative in itself breaks down the causal structure of the myth and with it the Virgilian presentation of Orpheus' fate as the condign punishment for his violence of passion.   As the decorum of his didactic, non-erotic poem demands, Virgil is silent about Orpheus' homosexual loves.   Since Ovid places an entire book between Orpheus' homosexuality and his death, there is no suggestion of a causal link between them.   Indeed, as noted above, he even suggests that these affairs result from the depth of his devotion to Eurydice (cf. *Met.* 10.80–81).   Hence they are no obstacle to their reunion in the underworld.   That reunion, in turn, cancels out the hero's aberrant amours and restores him, like Iphis and Pygmalion, to the number of normal, heterosexual lovers.

Virgil makes Orpheus' death appear as a kind of inverted fertility rite (*G.* 4.520–22):

> spretae Ciconum quo munere matres
> inter sacra deum nocturnique orgia Bacchi
> discerptum latos iuvenem sparsere per agros.

[31] See Pavano (above, note 1) 356, who censures Ovid's handling of this point in *Met.* 10.73–5—unjustly, in my opinion.

[32] Otis (above, note 5) 277 and see in general 265–77.   For qualifications see Coleman (above, note 11) 49 and Curran, cited below, note 44.

His death exemplifies a certain poetic justice. Having refused to participate in nature's cycles of renewal and regeneration, he is "scattered over the fields" by "mothers" in an orgiastic ceremony. His death, then, stands against the background of the universal laws of nature to which he has refused obedience.[33]

Ovid eliminates entirely this sacral, ritual element and with it the cosmic and moral structure of Virgil's narrative. Following the Hellenistic version, he stresses instead the utter madness of the Ciconian women (*Met.* 11.14): *insanaque regnat Erinys*.[34]   It is not the poet's body which is "scattered over the fields" (*sparsere per agros*, G. 4.522), but the farm implements which the women use as weapons (*dispersa per agros*, *Met.* 11.35). By echoing the Virgilian phrase in a different context, Ovid calls attention to the totally secular character of his story. These women are, in fact, themselves *sacrilegae* (*Met.* 11.41); and the civilizing art of this *vatis Apollinei* (*Met.* 11.8) opposes the insanity and wild chaos of his murderers.   The details of stones turned aside by his song at times verge upon a grotesque blend of fantasy and blood-thirsty horror (cf. *Met.* 11.10–13, 39–40). Yet these details place the pathos of Orpheus' end above the justice of natural laws.   This pathos reaches its logical climax in the Hellenistic motif of nature's lament for the dead poet (*Met.* 11.44–9).[35]

Toward the end of the episode Ovid checks the gory exuberance of his narrative. He tones down the violence of the decapitation (cf. G. 4.523, *marmorea caput a cervice revulsum*) and replaces the unassuaged and unassuageable grief of its cry, *Eurydicen . . . a miseram Eurydicen* (G. 4.525–7) with a more neutral *flebile nescio quid* (*Met.* 11.52).[36]

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[33] On this aspect of Virgil's treatment see my essay, "Orpheus and the Fourth *Georgic*: Vergil on Nature and Civilization," *AJP* 87 (1966) 319–20; also Dorothea S. Wender, "Resurrection in the Fourth *Georgic*," *AJP* 90 (1969) 433–36.

[34] In Phanocles (frag. 1 Powell) the women are κακομήχανοι (line 7) and the murder is ἔργα γυναικῶν ἄγρια (23–24), which are subsequently punished by the Thracian men.

[35] Drawn largely from Moschus, *Epitaph. Bionis*, though there are naturally Theocritean and Virgilian echoes too.   Virgil had reserved the pathos of this conceit for Eurydice: G. 4.461–63.

[36] Even here, however, Ovid injects a note of deliberate mock-epic exaggeration that warns us not to take him entirely seriously: the rivers increase with their own tears, which, as E. J. Bernbeck remarks, is "eine Vorstellung, die den Ernst ihrer Trauer bereits wieder in Frage stellt," *Beobachtungen zur Darstellungsart in Ovids Metamorphosen*, *Zetemata* 43 (Munich 1967) 109.

Some critics have seen here a rationalistic correction of Virgil,[37] others a comical parody.[38]   Ovid perhaps felt the lament of a decapitated head as too much even for his fanciful world.   A dying man may utter his wife's name as his last word, but not the dismembered head of a corpse.[39]   There is another difference too.   The three times repeated "Eurydice" of the Virgilian Orpheus stresses the irrevocable loss of the individual person, the hopeless destruction of the one-and-only love, as the name of the unique beloved echoes over the pitiless Hyperborean wasteland (G. 4.517–18).   Ovid reduces this supreme pathos of in-dividual souls torn apart.   His lovers are to meet again.   Like Virgil's, his tale shades off into the miraculous, but the improbability in Ovid becomes increasingly kindlier.   Given the fluidity of his world order, the fairy-tale element can become as irrationally beneficent as maleficent.

The gods can also work miracles in Orpheus' favor: Apollo defends the severed head by turning to stone the serpent who would devour it (*Met.* 11.56–60).   Ovid now moves fully into the realm of the grotesque (*Met.* 11.56–7):

> hic ferus expositum peregrinis anguis harenis
> os petit et sparsos stillanti rore capillos.

The snake sums up everything that is marvelous, mysterious, and terri-fying in this mythical world.   Yet this exotic and fantastic detail is only the foil for the tender, human ending of his story, the reunion of Orpheus and Eurydice.

The horror of Orpheus' previous descent now gives way to recogni-tion (*Met.* 11.61–2): *quae loca viderat ante / cuncta recognoscit.*   He seeks and finds Eurydice "in the fields of the blessed" (*Met.* 11.62).   The fulfillment of his lover's devotion is signalled in the eagerness of his embrace (*Met.* 11.63): *cupidisque amplectitur ulnis.*   These "desirous arms" mark him as still a lover (cf. *Met.* 10.57 ff.), and this ending is the triumph of his love.

Ovid has accomplished something of a tour de force.   A pre-Virgilian version of the legend, used by Euripides in the *Alcestis* and by

[37] See Haupt-Korn-Ehwald-von Albrecht (above, note 21) *ad Met.* 11.50 ff.
[38] See Otis (above, note 5) 185; Bernbeck (above, note 36) 98.
[39] Norden (above, note 8) 671.   He points out (670) that Ovid repeats his *flebile* three times, just as Virgil does with his *Eurydicen.*   Phanocles (frag. 1 Powell) line 16 keeps the motif of the sound more naturalistic and speaks only of the song of the lyre in the sea: ἠχὴ δ' ὡς λιγυρῆς πόντον ἐπέσχε λύρης.

Hermesianax, made Orpheus successful in recovering Eurydice.[40]
Ovid follows the Virgilian version: Orpheus fails. Yet even while
following Virgil's version, Ovid manages to suggest Orpheus' success.
The tragic backward look of Virgil's Orpheus (*victusque animi respexit*,
G. 4.491) becomes now the fond glances of a happy pair (*Met.* 11.66):
Eurydicenque suam iam tutus respicit Orpheus.[41] Eurydice is now "his"
(*suam*), and he can "look back" at her without fear of loss (*tutus*).[42]
Ovid ends his *Orpheus*, then, with the happy glances of lovers. Instead
of tragic loss or epic monumentality, he concludes with a small, per-
sonal, intimate gesture.[43]

Yet the reunion of the two lovers has a less happy side. It vindicates
the power of love, but it also shows us that love fulfilled only in a world
beyond our own. Here Otis' view of Ovid as a poet of "normal"
love needs qualification.[44] The happiness of such love has no place
in the real world. In this respect the tale of Orpheus and Eurydice
complements that of Iphis and Ianthe, even though the two stories are
initially coupled as forming a contrast of happy with unhappy love
(cf. *Met.* 10.1–8). In both episodes lovers are united, but only in a
world of miracles.

V

Ovid's *Orpheus* exemplifies not only the victory of love, but also, in
a certain sense, the victory of art. It is both as poet and as lover that

[40] See Eurip., *Alc.* 357–59; Hermesianax frag. 2, 1–14 (Powell). See in general Bowra
(above, note 30) 113–26; also Friedrich Klingner, *Virgil, Bucolica Georgica Aeneis* (Zürich
and Stuttgart 1967) 351–52.

[41] See Viarre (above, note 16) 241–42: "On dirait une réussite, vengeresse: *tutus*,
respicit; ce n'est pas une vraie mort, puisque, comme si'l n'avait pas subi l'influence du
Léthé, il reconnaît tout" (242).

[42] See Otis (above, note 5) 185: "(Ovid's) most masterful touch is the description of
the reunion in Hades where he tells of how Orpheus deliberately indulged in any number
of the glances that had once been so disastrous . . ."

[43] See Norden's fine remarks (above, note 8) 670–71: "Das Tragische dieses Mythus,
dessen katastrophenhaften Augenblick ein griechischer Künstler in Marmor, ein römi-
scher Dichter in wehmutvollen Versen festhielt, liess ein anderer Dichter, den die Anmut
der hellenischen Sagenwelt mehr anzog als ihr Ernst, in einen befreiend-heiteren Akkord
ausklingen: *Eurydicenque suam iam tutus respicit Orpheus* lautet die graziöse κορωνίς."

[44] See above, note 32. Curran (above, note 13) 74, points out, correctly, "The
Ceyx-Halcyone story is only a brief glimpse of a better world which elsewhere in the
poem Ovid shows cannot exist in this world of real men and women."

Orpheus wins over the deities in the underworld of book 10.   Though
the Ciconian women finally destroy him, the power of his song tem-
porarily neutralizes their missiles, and his rhythms move the natural
world to spontaneous sympathy for his fate (*Met.* 11.44–49).

In this theme the story of Orpheus closely parallels that of Pygmalion
which soon follows it (*Met.* 10.243 ff.).[45]   Both men abstain from
intercourse with women.   Both, through the magical power of their
art, animate inert nature and break through the division between matter
and spirit.   Orpheus moves stones and trees and causes the laws of
death to relax; Pygmalion sees the statue which he has created come to
life.   In intertwining the two myths Ovid provides a metaphorical
reflection of the creative and restorative power of his own art, its
ability, as one critic has put it, "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 the poet also suggests "that of all human enterprises
only the fine arts are capable of performing such miracles."[46]

It is one of the paradoxes of Ovid's style and Ovid's world view that
he can humanize his mythical material through exaggerating the non-
human, fantastic elements of his tales to the point of grotesqueness.
This paradox is a corollary of that pointed out by Brooks Otis, that the
fanciful, Alexandrian, erotic mythology contains a kind of humane
seriousness and an ultimate symbolical truth—a truth, that is, to the
constants of human nature—which Ovid could not find in the con-
temporary, historical, Augustan mythology.   In human terms, Ovid
finds the remote, fairy-tale myths "truer" and more "real" than the
contemporary myths of Augustan ideology.[47]

[45] See Viarre (above, note 16) *passim*, especially 240–41, 246–47; also D. F. Bauer,
"The Function of Pygmalion in the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid," *TAPA* 93 (1962) 13, who
speaks of the connection of the two episodes in terms of "the art of love . . . the love of
art."

[46] Bauer (preceding note) 13.   See Fränkel (above, note 2) 93–96, who considers the
Pygmalion story "one of the finest apologues on the marvel of creative imagination"
(96); also Anderson (above, note 14) 25–6.

[47] See Otis, (above, note 5) 373–74, especially 374: "Here we can perhaps speak of a
symbolically true as opposed to a symbolically false mythology and conclude that the
tension between myth and reality is not in this sense ultimate.   The 'false' mythology
was Ovid's inheritance from epic, from Homer, the Cyclics and Virgil: the 'true'
mythology was, basically, Alexandrian and neoteric and in some degree originally
Ovidian."

The complexity of the *Metamorphoses* lies in no small part in this double-barrelled attack on heroic seriousness. Ovid found a way of coupling together epic mythology and Augustan ideology and of standing both on their heads at the same time. The achievement was rendered possible by the devices of Callimachean narrative, especially discontinuity, erudite allusion and periphrasis, wit. As Coleman has recently observed, Ovid had not only "brilliantly demonstrated how ἔπη τυτθά could be welded together to produce an unheroic ἄεισμα διηνεκές but he had proved that epic themes of μέγα ψοφέουσαν ἀοιδήν can be effectively toppled not by rejecting them but by presenting them in mock-heroic tone within a context of capricious fable." [48]

Augustan morality and Augustan monumentality provided, as it were, a negative armature. Ovid's very opposition to Augustan ideology and to the Augustan epic which went with it could hold his poem, albeit in a negative way, close to the experience of his own times and could thus give it a freshness and immediacy which Callimachus could not attain. Something of the *Metamorphoses'* revolution against the heroic and the serious had its roots in Ovid's personal experience and doubtless spoke, if only indirectly, to his contemporaries.

For Callimachus the implications of the heroic style and the *mega biblion* did not extend beyond the aesthetic, purely literary realm. Outside the study or the Library the *mega biblion* was not a threat. For Ovid and his contemporaries style and ideology, poetry and politics, had again become intertwined. Since the *Aeneid*, the heroic style carried with it conceptions of commitment and sacrifice to a larger order which a more private outlook could not accept. Yet Ovid, though differing fundamentally in outlook, still shares with Virgil and Horace their peculiarly Roman ability to mould Greek mythology into the shape of historical experience and to discover a disturbing personal and social relevance in the umbratile learning of Alexandria.

It is in part because of this attempt to overturn the serious content and the stable, tragic world-order of the heroic tradition that Ovid so often runs the risk of the grotesque. When Ovid transforms Virgil's austere tragic tale of Orpheus into the fantastic and rhetorically colored atmosphere of his own poem, he does not entirely escape that danger

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[48] Robert Coleman, "Structure and Intention in the *Metamorphoses*," CQ n.s. 21 (1971) 477. See also Norden (above, note 8) 670–71.

(cf. *Met.* 10.40–46, 11.15–43, 56–60).   Yet that grotesqueness may be an essential part of Ovid's revolt against Augustan and heroic seriousness. On the other hand Ovid's presentation of a fluid, fabulous world can at times transform the harsh limitations of reality into something responsive to man's emotional needs.   Behind the lust and violence to which human lives are prone, he reveals a capacity for tenderness and devotion that can sometimes create their own reward.

Here the artist's imagination spins its own world of happy dreams and makes those dreams come true.   Orpheus and Pygmalion reap the rewards of their artistic ability to transform unbending matter into the pliant warmth of their desires.

By dissolving the ordinary laws of reality, Ovid allows the weakness of the human condition to stand out all the more sharply. · Ovid's heroes, unlike Virgil's, need not always resist or overcome emotion in obedience to laws of destiny.   Those laws give way, and emotion exists for its own sake.   Love's very defencelessness wins over the stern gods of the lower world, and ultimate reunion cancels out Orpheus' tragic failure.   The bitterness of death as eternal separation is overridden by a vision of death as eternal union.

Ovid allies love and art as the major creative forces in a world of arbitrary powers.   In Virgil's firmer and harder world-order, love and art, though capable of miracles, are also potentially aberrant and destructive.   For Virgil's Aristaeus, as for Virgil's Orpheus—as also for Virgil's Corydon and Gallus in the *Eclogues*, his Dido and Aeneas in the *Aeneid*—love clouds the mind and leads to death and loss.[49]   Over against the refractory, potentially disruptive emotionality of the lover/poet/artist, Virgil sets the realm of productive work and the attitude of cooperation with and subservience to nature's laws: Aristaeus; the bees with their sexless life; Augustus, the conqueror and restorer of order, the giver of laws (G. 1.499 ff, G. 4.561–62).   In Ovid's world love, not law, is the measure of existence.   Art and love then fuse as means toward reaching truth and bringing happiness into human life.

In myths like those of Pygmalion and Orpheus, the poet—Ovid

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[49] This aspect of *amor* in Virgil applies primarily to erotic love.   *Amor* in Virgil may also be a creative force: *E.* 10.73; *G.* 2.476, 3.112, 4.117, 4.325, *A.* 4.347, 6.889.   On this positive side of Virgilian *amor* see now R. R. Dyer, "Ambition in the *Georgics*: Vergil's Rejection of Arcadia," *Auckland Classical Essays Presented to E. M. Blaiklock* (Auckland, N.Z. and Oxford 1970) 143–64, especially 153–59.

himself—finds his artistic life confirmed and its highest aspirations clarified: the creation of the possible out of the impossible, spirit out of matter, happy love out of tragic death. Yet all this exists, after all, only in imagination, in the unreal world of fable. If Ovid's dissolution of a firm and demanding cosmic order frees the individual and his emotional life, it also exposes him to the violence of those emotions and to the arbitrary, elemental forces, both divine and human, which are thus let loose in his world.