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The Rhetoric of the Body from Ovid to Shakespeare

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CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

support, I am deeply indebted to Carla Kaplan, Jonathan Lamb, Jeff Nunokawa, Bridget Orr, Adela Pinch, and Sharon Willis. I count myself fortunate indeed to call each a dear friend. Mark Mushkat has always believed in me and for that I remain grateful.

1 Pursuing Daphne

Purple notes

At the center of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* lie violated bodies. Sometimes male, at other times female, a few of these ruined forms elude the grasp of gender and its reductive nominations. Fractured and fragmented bodies from Ovid's poem cast long, broken shadows over European literary history. Sometimes, these shadows fall back on the poem that gave them shape. As Quintilian put it when deliberating the frequently heard charge that Ovid's manner is too ingenious, there is "some excuse" for his invention, since so much of it is required if this poem's author is to "assemble" such extremely diverse things into "the appearance of a unified body" ("res diversissimas in speciem unius corporis colligentem").[1] That a poem fascinated with the fracturing of bodies should have been passed down through the middle ages and into the Renaissance, thanks to Lactantius, predominantly in fragments, a reordered collection of pieces torn away from their original arrangement, is one of the ironies of literary history that continues to echo and ramify.[2] For it is not merely that the body's violation is one of the poem's prominent thematic concerns. As Philomela's severed "lingua" mutely testifies – her "murmuring tongue" designating both the bodily organ and "language" as such – dismemberment informs Ovid's reflections not only on corporeal form, but linguistic and poetic as well.[3] An elaborately self-reflexive poem, the *Metamorphoses* traces, in minute and sometimes implacable detail, the violent clashes between the poem's language and the many bodies of which it speaks. In this book, I contend that the violated and fractured body is the place where, for Ovid, aesthetics and violence converge, where the usually separated realms of the rhetorical and the sexual most insistently meet.

I take my cue in the following chapters from Philomela's severed *lingua*, "murmuring on the dark earth." In them, I analyze the complex, often violent, connections between body and voice in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and several Renaissance texts indebted to it. In addition to

Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, I read lyric, narrative, and dramatic works: Petrarch's *Rime Sparse* (1359–74), John Marston's *The Metamorphosis of Pigmalions Image* (1598), Shakespeare's *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594) and *The Winter's Tale* (1610–11). My general purpose is twofold: to interrogate the deeply influential connections between rhetoric and sexuality in Ovid's text; and to demonstrate the foundational, yet often disruptive, force that his tropes for the voice exert on early modern poetry, particularly on early modern representations of the self, the body, and erotic life. After demonstrating the complex connections between Ovid's rhetorical strategies in the *Metamorphoses* and his distinctive way of portraying the human voice, I turn to works by Petrarch, Marston, and Shakespeare in which tropes for the voice allow each author to restage, in his own way, many of the dilemmas central to Ovid's representation of subjectivity, sexuality, and gender. I do not try to offer an exhaustive account of Ovid's presence in early modern poetry. Others have already attempted that greater task.[4] Rather, I have selected a few prominent texts to consider in detail, texts in which Renaissance writers are as captivated in their turn, as was Ovid, by the idea of the voice. At the same time, I have chosen texts in which desecrated and dismembered bodies are imagined to find a way to signify, to call us to account for the labile, often violent, relationship between rhetoric and sexuality as it was codified, transmitted, and rewritten in an Ovidian mode. In the chapters on Petrarch, Marston, and Shakespeare, I argue that Ovid's rhetoric of the body – in particular his fascination with scenes of alienation from one's own tongue – profoundly troubles Renaissance representations of authorship as well as otherwise functional conceptions about what counts as the difference between male and female experience.

To recall something of the extraordinary cultural reach of Ovidian narrative, and therefore something of my reasons for returning to analyze this legacy, I should observe here that Ovid's stories fascinate contemporary feminists writing about female subversion and resistance much as they once did medieval and early modern writers preoccupied with stories about love and male poetic achievement.[5] As the story of Philomela's tongue should make clear, an important hallmark of Ovidian narrative – by which I mean not only Ovid's poem but also the many European texts that borrow from it – is its unerring ability to bring to light the often occluded relationships between sexuality, language, and violence. The poems arising from that reflection have been at once deeply influential (in poetic practice) and sorely neglected (in critical practice). Such neglect of the foundational yet unsettling consequences of Ovidian rhetoric has come about, in part, because when viewed from the

perspective of the history of classical scholarship, it is only in recent years that literary critics have reinvigorated a serious study of rhetoric by analyzing the ways that various practices and forms of writing raise difficult epistemological, ethical, and political questions. Much of this theoretical work has just begun to reach criticism of the *Metamorphoses*.[6] The habit of treating Ovid's stories piecemeal, rather than in light of the poem's larger narrative strategies and self-reflexive fantasies, may have furthered such neglect. Selective reading informs not only literary appropriations of Ovidian material but critical reception of it, too. As one critic observes, because we inherit the *Metamorphoses* as a kind of collection or anthology, "the temptation to read Ovid's tales and not Ovid's epic is very strong."[7]

The opening chapter therefore situates several stories central to feminist criticism – among them, Philomela, Medusa, Echo, Arachne, the Bacchae – in the context of Ovid's larger narrative and rhetorical strategies. It argues that Ovid's penchant for ventriloquizing female voices occupies a crucial, if mysterious, place in the *Metamorphoses* as a whole. But I open this study with the example of Philomela's amputated, "murmuring" tongue because it so succinctly captures the characteristic way that Ovid uses stories about bodily violation to dramatize language's vicissitudes. Other bodies will be put to similar use as the Renaissance authors examined here revisit Ovid's poem. Fantasies of fragmentation permeate Ovidian narrative, and they do more than convey a message about the body's vulnerability or, more importantly, the violence that subtends the discursive production of what counts as the difference in sexual difference. Scenes of dismemberment and rape, of course, do convey both of these culturally laden meanings and I endeavor to keep them in mind. But as Philomela's tongue suggests, violated bodies also provide Ovid with the occasion to reflect on the power and limitations of language as such. Before being cut out, for instance, Philomela's tongue speaks about rape as a mark of the difference between what can and cannot be spoken: she says "I will move even rocks to share knowledge" of an act that is, literally, *ne-fas*, or "unspeakable" ("et conscia saxa mouebo" 6.547; and "nefandos" line 540, derived from the verb *fari*, "to speak or talk"). Of Ovid's representation of the rape itself – "and speaking the unspeakable, he overwhelmed her by force, a virgin and all alone" ("fassusque nefas et uirginem et unam / ui superat" lines 524–25) – Elissa Marder points out that Ovid's text tellingly "insists on the convergence between speaking the crime and doing the deed. One cannot speak 'rape,' or speak about rape, merely in terms of a physical body. The sexual violation of the woman's body is itself embedded in discursive and symbolic structures."[8] When Tereus "speaks the unspeakable,"

language becomes a productive, violent act that is compared to rape even as the act of rape resists representation.

This book attends to the many places in Ovidian narrative where the idea of a speaking body – often literalized as the figure of a moving tongue – becomes a single, memorable image that brings together the usually separate realms of aesthetics and violence, representation and the body, language and matter. Further brief elaboration of the way Ovid tells the story of Philomela's tongue will therefore be a useful way to introduce the problems guiding the analyses that follow. In the middle of his story, the narrator begins to stutter over the word "unspeakable." Ovid's iterated *nefas* signals a kind of narrative impasse, a fixation on the poem's troubled failure to speak about an event that defies speech. *Nefas* stresses that all we get, from Philomela or the narrator, are mere words and signs about an event that escapes words and signs. Resistance to narration, however, only induces further narrative. Thus when Tereus literalizes his "unspeakable" act by cutting out her tongue, giving her an "os mutum" line 574 – literally, "speechless mouth" – Philomela finds recourse in art, weaving a tapestry to represent the crime. "Great pain" begets in her the very "talent" to which Ovid elsewhere often lays claim as a poet ("ingenium," line 575). She sits at a "barbaric loom" ("barbarica tela" line 576) that is, etymologically speaking, a loom of incomprehensible utterance (derived from the onomatopoeic Greek word, βάρβαρος, for the meaningless sounds on other people's tongues). On such an instrument, Philomela manages to weave threads that are "skillful," "expert," or "practiced" ("stamina ... callida," line 576), turning her body's bloody mutilation into "purple marks" on a white background ("purpureasque notas," line 577). Like her narrator, Philomela struggles at the limits of representation: where the narrator stutters at the effort to turn an unspeakable act into verse, Philomela is imagined to coax an expert weaving out of an unintelligible, hence "barbarous," instrument.

The work that Philomela produces, moreover, amplifies the problems raised by her "moving" tongue: her tapestry takes up where her tongue left off, telling us that in this story, presumed distinctions between language and action, the speakable and the unspeakable, aesthetics and violence verge on collapse. On her tapestry, Philomela weaves a set of purple "notae," a noun that, as Marder observes, suggests several divergent yet crucial meanings. *Nota* may signify a written character – a mark of writing used to represent "a sound, letter, or word." It may signify the "vestige" or "trace" of something, like a footprint. It may also designate a mark of stigma or disgrace, particularly an identifying brand on the body. And in the plural form used in Ovid's narrative,

"notae," can, by extension, also suggest "a person's features."[9] Artist of her own trauma, Philomela sits down to translate something – an event, a body – that cannot be translated: rape is an "unspeakable" sound; the medium of its communication, a "barbaric" loom; the "notes" that represent it, neither letter, mark, nor physical imprint. Philomela's "purple notes" on a white background hover somewhere between being a self-portrait, a physical remnant of the crime (like a bruise), and a stigmatizing "brand or tattoo" that re-marks the violated body it was supposed merely to represent.[10] This weaving, in its turn, proves every bit as persuasive as the tongue Philomela once hoped would "move the very rocks to consciousness" (6.547). It moves her sister, Procne, to terrifying action. The tapestry then extends the confusion between the "speakable and the unspeakable" to another person (again, "fasque nefasque," 6.585) because the crime conveyed in these marks resists the "indignant words" Procne seeks with her "questing tongue" ("uerbaque quaerenti satis indignantia linguae / defuerunt," 6.584–5).

All the aspects of language enacted in this story of Philomela's rape and mutilation are not necessarily compatible, though each fleetingly shades into the other. Through her murmuring tongue and bruised marks Ovid invites us to reflect on the power and limitations of language in its several overlapping functions: instrumental, poetic, and rhetorical. As an instrument of communication or expression, language is necessary but inadequate to its task. As a sign hovering between literal and figural meanings, Philomela's "lingua" or "tongue" functions as a productive yet potentially violent distortion of the world (and body) it claims to represent. On Philomela's loom, signs become objects of aesthetic appreciation. And as a rhetorical tool, language wields enormous power, although its force may, without warning, exceed the control of the one who uses it. The figure of Philomela's severed "lingua" and her bruised "purple notes," moreover, refuse any final distinction between language and the body, or between ideas and matter. Ovid's narrator knowingly poises his text on a divide between what can and cannot be represented, aesthetic form and violence, poetic "ingenium" and barbarism, language and the body. And he mercilessly draws our attention, all the while, to the fading of that divide. Disquieting erasures such as these characterize the *Metamorphoses*: in Ovid's rhetoric of the body, poetic and rhetorical self-reflexivity can become "grotesquely violent and yet intensely moving."[11]

When I refer to Ovid's "rhetoric of the body," I mean not merely to designate a language that describes the body, but to draw attention to several other, more elusive issues. First, I mean to suggest that in the *Metamorphoses* Ovid refuses commonplace distinctions between the

body's ability to speak and its ability to act: the narrator continually draws attention to such mysterious and complex images as that of Philomela's "moving" tongue. Capturing in one figure a Roman commonplace for the aims of rhetorical speech (*mouere*, to "move" one's audience), Ovid tells us that her tongue has motion and that it "moves" those who listen. Rhetoric, in the story of Philomela's tongue and tapestry, means taking the idea of symbolic action very seriously. It means acknowledging that the body is both a bearer of meaning as well as a linguistic agent, a place where representation, materiality, and action collide.

Second, by Ovid's "rhetoric of the body," I am referring to the sense conveyed throughout the *Metamorphoses* that our understanding and experience of the body itself is shaped by discursive and rhetorical structures. Ever alert to language's shaping force on what we know about our own body and the bodies of others, Ovid's poem frequently dramatizes in minute detail the action and effects of this productive, at times even performative, process. In it, the mark of an image, sign or figure repeatedly falls between the body and a character's perception of it. Between Narcissus and self-understanding falls an *imago*; between Pygmalion and womankind, a *simulacrum*; between Perseus and the body of the Gorgon, a protective, mirroring shield; between Actaeon's experience and understanding of his swiftly changing shape, a strange sound that "neither human nor any deer could make." Representation, in fact, becomes foundational to how we perceive the human race: the narrator imagines new beings arising from the stones of Deucalion and Pyrrha, but between our eyes and the bodies of these new humans arise forms "such as statues just begun out of marble, not sharply defined and very like roughly blocked out images" ("uti de marmore coepta / non exacta satis rudibusque simillima signis" 1.405–06). I call this introduction "Pursuing Daphne" in order to suggest the way that the form of the body – Daphne's sense for *figura* – both inspires and eludes the capture of language – Apollo's sense for *figura*. Like Daphne, the bodies in Ovidian narrative take shape under the formative pressure of figural language. And yet something about those bodies remains, like Daphne, forever fugitive.

To understand why Ovidian poetry insists on drawing such close connections between language, sexuality, and violence, this book directs attention back to the often overlooked scene of writing in the *Metamorphoses*. By "scene of writing" I am referring to two, related, matters: the poem's systematic self-reference, its complex engagement with its own figural language and with the fact of having been a written rather than a spoken epic; and its equally complex engagement with the materiality of reading and writing practices in the Roman world. Symbolically and

historically resonant, this scene of writing, I contend, left indelible traces not only on Ovid's representation of the body but also on many of the later European works derived from his epic. The Ovidian narrator habitually emphasizes the poetic, rhetorical, and corporeal resonance to the various "forms" (*formae*) and "figures" (*figurae*) about which the poem speaks, deriving many of the *Metamorphoses*' erotic and violent scenes out of the entanglement of poetic and bodily "form." For example, Ovid's interest in the double nature of Daphne's beautiful "figure," for example, turns a story of rape into one of the first book's successive stories about the birth of certain poetic forms (in this case, epideictic). Similarly, the vacillation between the literal and figural meanings of "lingua" allows Philomela's mutilated tongue to tell another, related story about the uneasy relationship between a body and what is usually taken to be its "own" language. The specific metalinguistic resonance of one memorable scene in the *Metamorphoses* has grown somewhat dim, perhaps, because of material changes in practices of writing. But in Book 10, Pygmalion's statue undergoes a change from marble to flesh by passing through a stage like wax growing soft under pressure from the thumb:

> subsidit digitis ceditque, ut Hymettia sole
> cera remollescit tractataque pollice multas
> flectitur in facies ipsoque fit utilis usu. (10.284–86)

The ivory yields in his fingers, just as Hymettian wax grows soft in the sun and molded by the thumb is changed into many forms and becomes usable through use itself.

In a poem that habitually renders its interest in the "forms" and "figures" of its own language as erotic stories, it is no accident that this simile for the ivory maiden's animation refers to an actual tool for writing in the Roman world. As the narrator of the *Ars Amatoria* suggests in another erotic context when advising lovers to be cautious when counterfeiting, wax was the malleable surface used to coat writing tablets: "nor is it safe to write an answer unless the wax is quite smoothed over, lest one tablet hold two hands" (3.495–96). Ovid conveys Pygmalion's rapt attention to the body taking shape like wax under his fingers with a metaphor as weighted, in his day, as was the one Shakespeare uses for *Much Ado*'s Hero, stained with slander: "O, she is fall'n / Into a pit of ink" (4.1.139–40).

Renaissance authors, particularly those educated according to a humanist model of imitating classical precursors, were extremely sensitive to Ovid's rhetorically self-conscious verse. An important phase in the history of rhetoric is embedded in the subtle details of Renaissance

returns to Ovidian narrative. Each chapter therefore focuses on the particular problems raised by a later writer's equally self-conscious revision of Ovidian rhetoric. Because of Ovid's frequent metapoetic, metalinguistic, and metarhetorical turns, however, he has often been condemned as an author marred by rhetorical excess, insincerity, and misplaced ingenuity.[12] It is therefore a revealing index of a shift in both taste and critical practice that *Titus Andronicus* – the Renaissance play that most consciously endeavors to bring the violated Ovidian body to the stage while rivalling his self-reflexive word play and rhetorical inventiveness – was once an embarrassment in the Shakespearean canon and yet has become, in recent years, the object of critical fascination.[13] One notable speech in that play, of course, prominently leans on a truly Ovidian juxtaposition of aesthetics and violence. When Marcus sees the tongueless and handless Lavinia before him, raped and mutilated because her attackers have read Ovid's story of Philomela, he speaks about her as if she were an aesthetic object, a marred beauty best understood in terms of the dismembering rhetoric of the *blason*. Pulled apart by the language of lips, tongues, hands, and fingers, hemmed in like Lucrece by Shakespeare's Petrarchan tropes of red and white, Lavinia endures yet one more male reading. She hears her "crimson ... blood" likened to "a bubbling fountain stirr'd with wind" that flows between "rosed lips;" she can signify very little as her cousin remembers the way her "lily hands" once trembled "like aspen leaves upon a lute" (2.4.22–47). Borrowing from Ovid's text as the two rapists did before him, Marcus reads Lavinia as more than Philomela: with her "body bare / Of her two branches," she exceeds Ovid's Daphne; the "heavenly harmony" of her former singing betters Ovid's Orpheus (2.4.17–18 and 44–51). Even Lavinia's reluctance to be interpreted yet again by the book written across her wounded body – her apparent attempt to flee when Marcus first sees her – is immediately, relentlessly pulled back to the story of Philomela. In a play dedicated to enacting the literal and figural pressure of the *Metamorphoses*, Marcus' demand, "Who is this? my niece, that flies away so fast?" (2.4.11) chillingly recalls Philomela's final flight, as a bird, to escape Tereus' angry beak ("petit ... siluas ... prominet inmodicum pro longa cuspide rostrum" *Metamorphoses* 6.667–73). Given the supremely literary origin for the horrible events written on Lavinia's body, Marcus' speech perpetuates the violence it haltingly tries to comprehend. But it does more than exemplify the play's larger fascination with language's devastations. A point of rupture in the history of literary taste, the speech has also become a kind of touchstone for each critic's sense of the relation between text and the social world, aesthetic form and cultural violence.

In a similarly well-known, if ostensibly more refined, poem that involves critical in ethical judgment, Ronsard captures in one word the collapse between language, a sense of aesthetics, and sexual violence that characterizes all the texts in this study. Wishing he were like Jove, transformed into the bull that raped Europa, the love poet aspires to write about a beauty that is "ravishing." In so doing, the poem imports Ovid's story of rape into its sense of its own attractions:

> Je vouldroy bien en toreau blandissant
> Me transformer pour finement la prendre,
> Quand elle va par l'herbe la plus tendre
> Seule à l'escart mille fleurs *ravissant*.[14]

I wish I were transformed into a whitening bull in order to take her subtly as she wanders across the softest grass, alone and isolated, ravishing thousands of flowers.

In the *Metamorphoses*, Europa is raped as the result of her aesthetic sense. The bull is so white, its bodily "form" so beautiful ("tam formosus"), its horns so "various" that "you would maintain that they were by someone's hand." Europa "admires" this bull ("miratur") and is, therefore, raped (2.855–58). Ronsard, too, imagines his beloved to be both subject and object of aesthetic appreciation; his brief phrase for her pastime, "ravishing flowers," joins her capacity for aesthetic pleasure to violence in true Ovidian fashion.[15] A chiasmatic exchange takes place between speaker and his second Europa – a suspicious slippage of agency that, as we shall see again in the chapter on Shakespeare's *Lucrece*, characterizes Ovidian narratives of rape. Here, the poet derives his aesthetic sensibility from "elle" while his own desire to "ravish" – expressed in his opening wish to be like the golden shower that fell into the lap of Danaë – suddenly becomes hers.[16] Through Ronsard's pun on *ravir*, moreover, Ovid's already metapoetic story becomes yet another meditation on the conjunction between rape and the "flowers" of rhetoric – in this instance, as in much Renaissance Ovidian poetry, Petrarchan rhetoric. Similarly, Perdita's desire, in *The Winter's Tale*, for the flowers that Europa, "frighted," let fall "From Dis's waggon" (4.4.116–18), borrows Ovid's favorite technique of turning metaphors – particularly metaphors about poetic language – into literal objects in the landscape. Invoked in the context of a debate about the relationship between nature and art, Ovid's text surfaces in the form of Proserpina's lost "flowers" and forces us to reflect yet again on the disquieting conjunction between poetic form and sexual violence.

This book is devoted to reading figures such as Philomela' "purple notes," Marcus' "lily hands," Ronsard's "ravissant," or Perdita's

flowers. In such figures, poetic language and the ruined body insist on being read together. By taking us on sometimes intricate pathways through the erotic landscape of Ovidian and Petrarchan rhetoric, these figures keep asking us to ask: what, precisely, is the relationship between literary form, cultural fantasy, and sexual violence? And what, moreover, do these jarring conjunctions mean for the subjects of Ovidian narrative? It perhaps does not go without saying that I find the conjunction between aesthetic form and culturally inflected sexual violence disquieting, and hence illuminating, because I do not believe they are the same thing.[17] Ovid's deliberately troubling juxtapositions compel me to extend an already well-developed feminist critical tradition in which the question of how to read rape has become central to the question of how to read the *Metamorphoses*. But in order to expand the feminist critique of the thematics of sexual violence in Ovid's text, this book considers how representations of the body, subjectivity, and sexual difference are bound up with, and troubled by, the poem's intense rhetorical and aesthetic self-reflection.[18] If I direct attention to Ovid's characteristically ironic move from admiring the beauty of a *figura, imago,* or *simulacrum* to a distinctly rapacious "love of having" ("amor ... habendi" 1.131), it is because I believe the narrative's incessant turn of attention to the beauty of a mediating screen of poetic form allows one a certain (though certainly not inviolable) space for reflection, distance, and critique. To address the frequent juxtaposition of poetic language and violence in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and to understand the place of the embodied subject in it, therefore, I have taken a lesson from Philomela's purple notes and moving tongue, analyzing the scene of writing out of which such urgent figures emerge. I do so because I believe it important to understand the *conjunction* of aesthetics and violence, rhetoric and sexuality, in this influential tradition. I understand this to be a critical and productive interference between two different orders, not an utterly saturated translation of one into the other.

These readings suggest, moreover, that the problems raised by Ovidian rhetorical practice alter the sense of certain terms crucial to discussions of the relationship between representation, sexuality, and violence. That is, his rhetorical practice continually calls into question what we mean when we make such distinctions as those between male and female, subject and object, author and reader, agent and victim. At the same time, it also tells us that the relationship between a speaker's discourse and his or her mind, feelings, or experience is far from transparent. Ovidian narrative therefore troubles the link that, as John Guillory argues, is often made in debates over the canon between "representation" understood as a literary term and representation understood as a political

term.[19] In this regard, the story of Philomela's severed tongue may once again be instructive. Marder observes that Philomela's murmuring *lingua* directs attention to a rupture between "access to language" and her "experience of violation." Ovid's emphasis on Philomela's "os mutum" and writhing tongue tells us that such an experience exceeds any words its victim can utter – that the very sense of violation is measured by the extent to which that experience is "unspeakable." Both Philomela and Procne are bound together by Philomela's bruised, purple notes and their brutally symbolic act of stopping the rapist's mouth with the body of his own child. The enraged sisters may speak a kind of body language, but it remains "a language without a tongue." In other words: "to speak in rage is to be 'beside oneself.' It is to abandon the possibility that one's speech coincides with the place of one's experience."[20] But such a rupture between one's discourse and "the place of one's experience" in the story of Philomela's rape characterizes many other Ovidian stories as well. One thinks of Echo in the *Metamorphoses* but also of Io, Semele, Byblis, and Actaeon; in the *Heroides*, of Cydippe; in the *Fasti*, of Lucretia.[21] This characteristic rupture between experience and discourse in Ovid's texts tells us that they cannot be understood merely to reflect this or that person's or social group's experience (the slide from textual to political "representation"). In fact, one could argue that the moment of speaking "beside oneself" that Marder locates in the story of Philomela and Procne typifies Ovidian narrative: the poet who developed the art of female complaint in the *Heroides* into its own influential genre also gives us a narrator in the *Metamorphoses* who constantly engages in acts of ventriloquism. Over and over, Ovid tries to speak as if he were a woman, to find a convincing "voice" for female suffering. He continually speaks "beside" himself in his poetry, a trademark displacement of voice with which Shakespeare in particular was fascinated. As soon as Ovid's poems provoke the Barthesian question – "whose voice is this?" – one can no longer say, with any certainty, whose "experience" of violence or desire the text is representing, or for whom its stories may be said to "speak."

Medusa's mouth

To analyze the relationship between rhetoric and sexuality in this tradition, then, I concentrate not on violated bodies alone but also on the voices imagined to issue from them. What Shoshana Felman calls "the scandal of the speaking body" has particular resonance for this tradition, concerned as these Ovidian texts are with bodies whose stories testify to the power, failure, and disturbing unpredictability of the human voice.[22] In all the texts examined here, the moment when the voice either fades or

spirals out of the speaker's control is also the moment that speech is revealed at its most material. Recall, for example, the important yet evasive signifiers that neither Io nor Actaeon can utter because of the other, frightening noises that issue from their lips; or the unexpectedly deadly power of one word – *aura* – that the unfortunate Cephalus speaks in the forest. At such moments, we are also asked to consider language not merely as a mode of representation but as a (deeply unreliable) mode of action. As many characters discover to their peril, the performative dimension of Ovidian rhetoric is in excess of, or to the side of, thought. A material effectivity of rhetoric in the poem exceeds any functionalist account of language defined by the concepts of matter or intention. Though volatile, language's action in the *Metamorphoses* can be extremely effective – its forms of action at once profound and unpredictable for the speaking subject and the world to which that subject addresses herself.

Renaissance authors revisit these Ovidian rhetorical problems, moreover, because they were acutely sensitive to the way that Ovid tends to invoke a *uox* at the moment it is lost. Fascination with lost voices is crucial to this tradition's literary representations of a self. Thanks in large part to Petrarch's rendition of Ovidian figures, Philomela's lost tongue, Orpheus' failed voice, Actaeon's vanished speech, and Echo's subtly subversive repetitions became commonplace in the mythographic vocabulary of Renaissance self-representation. And yet in Ovid's and Petrarch's texts, each of these stories undermines generally functional assumptions about subjectivity, authorship, and language *from within* the voice itself. Merely mentioning Echo, Actaeon, or Orpheus here reminds us how important the fading of the human voice is for the *Metamorphoses*. Ovid's signature habit of intertwining figures for the voice with reflections on the poem's own scene of writing – captured most memorably in the story of Echo but prominent throughout the epic – gave rise to what I call a kind of phonographic imaginary in Ovidian poetry. Losing one's voice becomes a precise index of a variety of linguistic dilemmas that hollow out the poem's "speaking subjects" from within. Paying attention to the dilemmas specific to each text's mode of representation, I argue that in the Ovidian tradition these dilemmas are sometimes a matter of language as a differential system; sometimes a matter of a text's own rhetorical fabric; sometimes of its scene of address or enunciative structure; and sometimes of the specific literary history informing a particular narrative or trope. I call Ovid's trope of the voice "phonographic" because the kinds of self-endorsing fantasies that Derrida describes as "phonocentric" are no sooner entertained in the *Metamorphoses* than they are eroded.[23] Like much theoretical work undertaken in light of Derrida or Lacan, Ovid's text effectively dismantles empiricist conceptions of the voice. These chapters therefore consider tropes for the voice in Ovid's poem and its Renaissance heirs from a number of directions, demonstrating how these texts paradoxically endorse and unsettle the fantasies of phonocentrism. In them, I consider such problems as the bodily figure of the speaking tongue and the listening ear; how the voice itself may become an object of desire, even a fetish; the unexpected erotic consequences of apostrophe; voice and the language of music; the unconscious dynamics set in motion by ventriloquism; and the often unpredictable connections between speaking and carrying out an action.

The second chapter sets the stage for those that follow by examining the phonocentric illusion that sustains many of the stories in the *Metamorphoses* and yet is also eroded by them. I pay particular attention to the Ovidian narrator's place in the poem's recurrent fantasies and anxieties about the body's vocal power. Chapter 3 argues that Ovid's rhetoric of the body has a significant impact on the relationship between voice and idolatry in Petrarch's *Rime Sparse*. I place Petrarch's self-portrait as one obsessed by his own words in its Ovidian frame, analyzing the part that such figures as Ovid's Pygmalion, Narcissus, Actaeon, Echo, and Medusa play in constituting the fetishizing unconscious of Petrarchan autobiography. Chapters 2 and 3 provide a foundation for the rest of the book, since those that follow presume knowledge of the increasingly codified Ovidian-Petrarchan lexicon from which both John Marston and Shakespeare derive their figures. Chapter 4, on Marston's *Metamorphosis of Pigmalions Image*, considers the role that apostrophe, a privileged trope for poetic voice, plays in that poem's barely suppressed homoerotic scene and its attendant attempt to distinguish between pornography and what the narrator calls his own merely "wanton" verse. I place my analysis of Marston's epyllion between chapters on Petrarch and Shakespeare because his satire pushes Petrarchan discourse to its extreme, excising female voices altogether. Indeed, Marston's *Pigmalion* forges a path that Shakespeare quite pointedly does not take. Chapters 5 and 6 turn to *The Rape of Lucrece* and *The Winter's Tale*. Chapter 5 connects the problems haunting Lucrece's voice with the poem's representation of authorship and argues that in order to examine the consequences of Petrarchan rhetoric, Shakespeare stages a return to Ovid's text that differs profoundly from Marston's. And I analyze the unravelling of voice, authorial agency, and gender "identity" in *Lucrece*'s various Ovidian figures by looking at Shakespeare's language of musical "instruments" and of the borrowed tongue. Finally, chapter 6 examines what female voices in *The Winter's Tale* have to say about the play's

Orphic desire for a truly performative utterance. In the voices of Paulina and Hermione, Shakespeare stages an ethical critique of Petrarchan autobiographical discourse – a critique that hinges on a return to Ovid's text to listen once more to a number of its forgotten but still troublesome female voices.

In thinking through the many complex problems raised by figures for lost voices in the Ovidian tradition, I discovered a peculiar but telltale sign of Ovid's presence in Renaissance poetry: the scene of an impossible demand. This is usually, but not always, the demand for love or for pity from someone who will give neither. In the *Metamorphoses*, very few characters ever persuade their listeners to respond. Narcissus pleads in vain with his image, Echo with Narcissus, Apollo with Phaethon, Pentheus with his aunt and mother, Actaeon with his hounds, Orpheus with the horde of Bacchic women, Apollo and Pan with Daphne and Syrinx. It is as if the hopelessness of the scene – which Petrarchanism will codify as the lady's stony resistance to persuasion – augments the beauty, pathos, or rhetorical ingenuity of words spoken to no avail. This refusal does not become a question of deep psychological significance for the addressee, since nothing will change his or her mind. But it does instigate considerable aesthetic and rhetorical significance: resistance to another's address underlines language's formal beauty, its unexpected and uncontrolled duplicity, or, more generally, its moving force (for readers and audiences if not for the implacable addressee).

Let me illustrate this general observation with a few brief examples. When Lucrece speaks to persuade Tarquin to refrain, the delay caused by her words merely fuels his desire; his violent purpose, born from her resistance, "swells the higher by this let."[24] At the moment Lucrece utters the plea we know will have no effect, Shakespeare turns her into a second Orpheus. In *Titus Andronicus*, similarly, Lavinia becomes another Philomela when she fails to persuade the inexorable Tamora to relent: "'Tis present death I beg, and one thing more / That womanhood denies my tongue to tell. / O, keep me from their worse than killing lust / And tumble me into some loathsome pit ..." (2.3.173–75). Lavinia's way of wording the request for what we know she will not get – pity – suggests the very Ovidian rape it hopes to fend off. Much like Lucrece's painfully naive *double entendres* in her bedchamber, Lavinia's "tumble me" encourages what it tries to evade. Tamora responds only, "let them satisfice their lust on thee" (2.3.180). In Shakespeare's narrative poem and tragedy, the failure to persuade throws thought back upon how readily words escape control of the one who utters them. This insight about the conditions of becoming a speaking subject, as I hope to show, is deeply Ovidian. It is all the more so because this crisis is embodied in a

story of rape. In Petrarch's hands, the beloved's refusal of the speaker's demand for love provides the very condition for writing poetry. It is therefore as a second Apollo, unable to persuade his Daphne to stay, that Petrarch inaugurates his autobiographical version of Ovidian narrative.[25] The *Rime Sparse*, and much love poetry derived from it, elevate this Ovidian scene of the failure to persuade into a virtual poetic ontology. Both the beauty of words themselves – Petrarch's famous form of "idolatry" – and the subjective condition of "exile" emerge as a kind of after-effect of language's failure to bring about the changes of which it speaks. My third chapter traces how deeply this Petrarchan "subjectivity effect" is indebted to Ovidian rhetorical self-consciousness, particularly as embodied in failed aspirations for the human voice. Actaeon's dismemberment, rather than Philomela's rape, becomes an emblematic analogue in the *Rime Sparse* for the voice's failure.

Understood most generally, this book analyzes the many ways that Ovid's fantasies and anxieties about the performative power of his own rhetoric inform each text's libidinal economy. It shows that the failure of the voice and attendant fascination with the scene of an impossible demand – the demand for love or pity, the demand that death return to life, the demand that words change the world rather than merely represent it – shape the Ovidian narrator's self-representation in the *Metamorphoses* and give distinctive shape to his representation of art, passion, and the body. Based on such an understanding of Ovidian rhetoric, the rest of the book shows that Ovid's many tropes for lost voices, at once foundational and disturbing, continue to unsettle Renaissance representations of authorial and sexual identity, whether male or female. In other words, I ask why Ovid's stories about lost voices or voices that fail to effect the change they seek draw to a close only when the body containing that voice is destroyed, dismembered, or raped. Such dire endings tell us that a struggle over the meaning of the human body – as molded by and yet resistant to culture's differential law – casts a shadow over what might otherwise seem to be the most abstract formal, symbolic, and tropological concerns of each text.

By exploring the paradoxical conditions of subjectivity that Ovid's influential tropes for lost voices reveal, I demonstrate something further still. In this tradition, it is the *female* voice – even when it falls resoundingly silent – that puts greatest strain on each poem's thinking about itself and its effects, about the connection between rhetoric and aesthetics, rhetoric and violence. The example of the way Marcus reads Lavinia's bleeding mouth in Ovidian-Petrarchan terms may have suggested as much. Female voices are not always heard (or rather, quoted) in these texts. Sometimes their glaring excision from representation is as

important to my argument as any speech could be. For example, one of Ovid's most mysterious yet influential figures, that of Medusa, never utters a word in the *Metamorphoses*. Thanks to Freud's 1940 essay "Medusa's Head,"[26] we usually refer to the Gorgon's "head" and think of her effect predominantly in terms of a visual trauma. But in Ovid's text it is not Medusa's "head," or even her gaze, that petrifies. Rather, it is primarily her silenced "face" or "mouth" (*os, oris*) that does its enigmatic work. As I explore further in chapter 2, Ovid singles out Medusa's *os* as the instrument of petrification. When laying what we might loosely translate as her "head" on the sand, Perseus puts down Medusa's "os" rather than, say, her "caput"; when the narrative of her ghastly effect draws to a close in Book 5, it is again the "mouth" or "face" of her final victim that, gaping across a line break, reflects the speechless mouth of Medusa ("*ora*que regis / *ore* Medusaeo" [5.248–9]). The Latin noun, *os, oris*, is at the root of the English "oracular." But "os" is difficult to translate into one word, particularly as Ovid uses it. For the narrator constantly reminds us of its etymological resonances, tracing a tropological sequence with rich cultural significance for his thinking about poetic voice and for some of our most deeply ingrained ideas about language and persons. First designating a literal place on the body, "the mouth as the organ of speech" or "the lips," *os* soon comes to mean "the voice." In Augustan usage, it may designate specifically "the mouth of a poet."[27] The phrase, *in ore habere*, means "to have on one's lips;" *in ora uenire* means "to come into other's mouths," or (significantly for writers like Ovid, Petrarch, and Shakespeare) "to become famous." This noun for the mouth or lips then travels, as it were, *per ora* ("from mouth to mouth") to develop related meanings: in general, a "mode of utterance, pronunciation, eloquence"; then "the front part of the head, the face," "the features"; then, a person's "expression." And finally, the *os* signifies the face insofar as the face is interpreted to imply someone's "gaze," "mood," or "character."

In Ovid's poem, an "os" or face deprived of the capacity to speak acquires tremendous affective power. Over and over, the narrator stresses the etymological link between a character's countenance and his or her mouth, evoking the idea of a speechless face in order to signify the moment when a self is most alienated from itself. Narcissus first perceives that the beautiful "face" he loves (3.423) is merely a reflection when he notices that the "lips" before him are moving without making a sound ("quantum motu formosi suspicor *oris* / uerba refers aures non peruenientia nostras" 3.461–2). And when no voice issues from Actaeon's mouth, tears pour down the face that can no longer be said to be his ("uox nulla secuta est. / ingemuit: uox illa fuit, lacrimaeque *per ora* / *non*

sua fluxerunt," 3.201–03). In referring to the decapitated Medusa by her "os," then, Ovid is drawing on the rich phonographic imaginary of his "perpetual song," in which a speechless face reveals a terrifying otherness within the self. A long Greek tradition associating the Gorgon with disturbing oral fantasies, moreover, suggests that Ovid has a strongly vocal conception of Medusa's "os": "the name 'Gorgon' itself is from the Indo-European root *garj*, denoting a fearful shriek, roar, or shout." Similarly, "the visual arts of the seventh and sixth centuries BC show the Gorgon with a huge frontal face, a distended and grimacing mouth, a protruding tongue, and often sharp and prominent teeth."[28]

Medusa's implacable, silent mouth ("ore Medusaeo"), like Philomela's "speechless lips" ("os mutum"), will serve as an icon for the way that the *idea*, if not the actual sound, of the female voice is crucial to Ovidian reflection on the conditions, effects, and limitations of poetry and rhetoric. In this tradition, I found that whether the female voice is imagined to speak or to fall silent, it wields a telling (if unpredictable) power.[29] Therefore it is not the difference between speech and silence – nor the differences between male and female, power and impotence so often allied with it – that draws my attention. Even in silence, Medusa and Philomela achieve stunning effects. The perceived opposition between speech and silence, this book suggests, does not allow us to grasp anything new about the complex entanglement of rhetorical figures in the politics of sexual difference. Rather, such received antinomies as that between female silence and male speech (an antinomy that appeals to intuitive rather than critical notions of personal agency), betray what is most telling about each of these texts, deflecting attention from the way Ovidian rhetoric undoes carefully guarded presumptions about persons, subjectivity, agency, and gender.

Implicit in the way these readings are structured is my own deepening conviction that we cannot listen to female voices alone, or for that matter know what we (or these texts) mean by "female," without attending to the vicissitudes that are imagined to haunt male voices. Chapter 2 demonstrates that Ovid's representation and enactment of a "voice" – his own and those of his many characters – are crucial to the epic's larger narrative project and deeply affect its stories of violence and desire. As my brief comparison of Medusa's silent "os" to those of Narcissus and Actaeon should suggest, it is only in the context of, and in relation to, Ovid's many "male" voices that what counts as a "female" voice takes shape in the *Metamorphoses* and, in turn, in that poem's Renaissance heirs. It is only by analyzing the symbolic and libidinal economy of voices like those of Apollo, Orpheus, and Pygmalion that we can grasp the significance and force of what is said, or remains unsaid, by female

characters such as Ovid's Echo, Philomela, and Medusa; Petrarch's Laura; and Shakespeare's Lucrece, Paulina, and Hermione. Reading each of these characters in light of the persuasive stories about male poetic activity that give both form and texture to their forms of resistance, I demonstrate that like Echo and Narcissus – or perhaps like Salmacis and Hermaphroditus – male and female voices in the Ovidian tradition are locked in a mutually defining, differential embrace.

When I use the term, "the female voice," therefore, I aim to designate a pervasive and seductive *trope*. I do not presume there to be a given – or more importantly, intelligible – phenomenon anterior to the language that gives it shape (for instance, "woman" or "the female subject"). In my last book, *The Tears of Narcissus: Melancholia and Masculinity in Early Modern Writing*, I analyzed the maternal body as a crucial figure in the discourse of early modern, "male" melancholia: this trope provided a number of authors with an effective chronological and material alibi for masking what is in fact a recurrent dislocation in poetic language.[30] The trope of a maternal body allowed each author to deflect and disguise the melancholic, "male" subject's ongoing displacement in language – a displacement that can be grounded neither in time nor in the material world, much less in the original loss of an empirical body. This seeming thing, the maternal body, turned out to be an *effect* rather than a cause of the symbolic order it is said to disrupt. In this book, I similarly understand the apparently intuitive concept of a "female voice" as a discursive effect rather than a prediscursive fact. At the same time, I also understand "subjectivity" to be a contradictory and fragile linguistic effect. Here, as in *The Tears of Narcissus*, I take the speaking subject to be always "in process," as much at risk in language as produced by it. Indeed, this fundamentally psychoanalytic insight – that the speaking "subject in process" is ceaselessly subject to failure – motivated my choice of topic. For there are few poems as relentless as the *Metamorphoses* in representing the speaking subject as an evanescent, fragile thing best grasped at the moment of its fading. As we shall see, the trope of the voice is crucial to this Ovidian insight about the self's fragility, for the poem captures such fading by attending to the sound a voice makes when it fails to work.

I believe that the misfiring implicit in any speaking subjectivity in the Ovidian tradition, moreover, is matched by a similar recalcitrance at the level of "gender identity." First, however, it must be said that the trope of a "female voice" easily invites and reinforces long-standing assumptions about what constitutes womanhood. One could certainly argue that the Ovidian-Petrarchan tradition both reflects and helps to reproduce culturally and historically restrictive definitions of what counts as natural

and proper for "women." At first glance, we might decide that because the poems studied here generally associate proper feminine behavior with silence and improper, unchaste, or dangerous femininity with a too voluble tongue, they reinforce historically coded gender positions.[31] Such an idea does find solid endorsement in some aspects of Ovid's poem: oppositional female noise wends its dangerous way through the *Metamorphoses* in the form of the Bacchic horde. Because Ovid's poetry was an important part of the humanist curriculum taught young boys in Elizabethan grammar schools, we do well to be suspicious of its possible effects on the way women are represented in the literary texts of the period. Not only was the *Metamorphoses* extensively excerpted in the lower schools, but in the upper schools it was read in its entirety, set to be memorized as a model for rhetorical imitation.[32] As the flowering of Ovidian poetry in the 1590s by many such former school students indicates, Ovid's narrative and rhetorical manner were highly influential. The marginal notes to John Brinsley's school text translation of *Metamorphoses* Book 1, a work he undertook "chiefly for the good of Schooles," interpret Ovid's text for young students in order to promote prevailing ideologies of proper womanhood. Dedicated to the humanist pedagogical claim that imitating classical authors helps "reduce" the "barbarous" "unto civility ... whereby their sauage and wilde conditions may be changed into more humanity," Brinsley recommends Ovid's "singular wit and eloquence" for grammar school training because "neuer heathen Poet wrote more sweetly in such an easie and flowing veine." His schoolroom version of Book 1 ends, however, not where Ovid ended, but with a story he wants to emphasize: Apollo and Daphne. The laurel is useful "in physicke" and is, more importantly, "pleasant for students." The pedagogue's marginal comments tell pupils that Daphne's fate is generally about the voice – "of *lao phone*" – "because when a leaf or a branch" of the laurel "is burned, it seemeth to send forth a voyce by cracking." He further interprets this story of the voice as one that endorses marriage, chastity, and appropriate silence in a woman. "The Poet intending here to set downe the power of loue ... and withall the reward of chastitie, descendeth unto this next Fable, how Apollo ... was yet ouercom with the loue of Daphne, and how she for her chastity was turned into a Laurell." Before her metamorphosis, Brinsley describes Daphne as one who "cannot endure to heare of loue ... but contrarily solaceth herselfe to liue in the woods." She was therefore a "malcontent" because she lived "all alone without a husband, ranging of the unwayed woods." But after her metamorphosis into the laurel tree, Brinsley adds a note of approval: "*oscula ab os*, seemeth here to be taken for her little mouth" – a trait which, of course, "especially commends a virgin."[33]

Despite Brinsley's confidence about the text's collusion with the banal dictates of gender, however, the trope of the female voice – in the *Metamorphoses* and in many of the works to which it gave rise – unsettles the very ideas about gender hierarchy and identity on which it also relies. To take one of the tradition's more intractable problems: the claim that beauty causes rape permeates the *Metamorphoses* and finds its way into later representations of the crime. But as Katherine Gravdal points out, the Ovidian narrator "systematically" turns attention to the reactions of the victim: female characters in the *Metamorphoses* speak at length of their "pain, horror, humiliation, and grief." In numerous interior monologues or, as I hope to show, by such signs as Arachne's tapestry, Medusa's snaky locks, and Philomela's bruised message to her sister, "Ovid highlights the cruelty of sexual violation, showing the part of violence and degradation as clearly as the erotic element. Rape is not mystified or romanticized, but presented as a malevolent and criminal action."[34] Through numerous female voices in Ovid's poem and others, we see that "beauty" is more than merely the object of desire. Someone must become subject of and to beauty; and the *Metamorphoses* does not shy away from showing *at what cost*. As the following chapter will demonstrate, moreover, the narrator's poem-long meditation on the connections between rhetoric and violence gradually produces a series of voices and figures that contest the alliance between rape and poetry first proposed in the story of Apollo and Daphne – voices and figures that establish a position of considerable distance from the narrator's opening dramatization of poetic inspiration.

But this book contends, as well, that female voices do more work in this tradition than that of merely carrying the burden of protest against definitions violently imposed upon them. For example, Leontes' suspicion of his wife's too "potent" tongue, the subject of chapter 6, draws on deeply ingrained misogynist alignments of too much talk with lascivious feminine behavior. But *The Winter's Tale*, of course, is highly critical of Leontes and his jealous fantasies. I demonstrate that Shakespeare, in fact, leans on several of Ovid's stories about the power of female tongues to produce a kind of homeopathic cure for the king's delusion. Through the sound of the very "female" voice that triggers Leontes' jealousy, the play distances itself from the king's essentialist reduction of Hermione's tongue to her body and at the same time criticizes the psychologically and politically damaging effects implicit in such culturally pervasive ideas as those pertaining to "male" speech and "female" silence.

More important still, by focusing on Ovidian narrative, I am looking at texts characterized by ventriloquism, a mode Elizabeth Harvey aptly

describes as a kind of vocal cross-dressing.[35] In addition to the frequent female monologues of the *Metamorphoses* – Byblis, Myrrha, Scylla, Medea, Hecuba – Ovid honed his art of transgendered *prosopopoeia* in his *Heroides*, an influential series of letters that explore the passions of legendary women as diverse as Penelope, Dido, and Phaedra. His distinctive talent for cross-voicing spawned a tradition in which subsequent male authors took Ovid's poetry as the *locus classicus* for their attempts to speak in or through the voices of women. It is a tradition renewed with remarkable vigor in late sixteenth-century England by such poems as Shakespeare's *The Rape of Lucrece* or Drayton's revision of the *Heroides* in *England's Heroical Epistles*. Taken together, these chapters suggest that a penchant for examining passionate female emotion through the device of interior monologue, the displacements inaugurated by the Ovidian practice of ventriloquism, the mutual implication of male and female voices, and the habit of disrupting the subject from *within* the voice itself – all of which characterize this tradition – trouble our assumptions about identity, personal or sexual. The problems raised when male writers try to "speak as a woman" inform my readings of the rhetoric of animation in the *Metamorphoses*, the connection between exile and autobiography in the *Rime Sparse*, and the displacements of personal and poetic agency in *Lucrece*. The chapter on *Lucrece* especially concentrates on the surprising effects of ventriloquism, for Shakespeare, while engaged in the highly self-conscious act of "lending a tongue" to the virtually silent heroine of Ovid's *Fasti*, undermines the certainty of difference that his trope of a "female voice" and the story of rape presume. And my final chapter follows ventriloquism into another genre, for one of the stranger effects of Leontes' vexed relation to the female "tongue" in *The Winter's Tale* is that the play should emphasize such a tongue in the context of transvestite theatrical practice.

Rhetoric is, above all, an art based on contingency. The intersection between Ovid's rhetorical practice and that of the poets borrowing from him, therefore, takes on the particular color of historical circumstance. I understand early modern impersonations of Ovid's "female" voices in light of the historically specific discursive or institutional practices that inform them. In the case of Petrarch's humanist return to the texts of ancient Rome, Ovidian metamorphosis comes to define a complex relation to figurative language that allows Petrarch to distinguish between his notion of the self and what *The Secretum* represents as Augustine's. In such Ovidian figures as Petrarch's Pygmalion, Augustine's theological and semiotic definition of idolatry runs aground on the shoals of Ovidian eroticism. In Marston's *Metamorphosis of Pigmalions Image*, I read the dynamics of apostrophe, a favorite Ovidian trope, and

the narrator's lascivious invocations of female silence in relation to the homosocial institutional arrangements of the Inns of Court, for which the poem was written. In the chapter on *The Rape of Lucrece*, I situate Lucrece's attempt to gain a voice by imitating the *exempla* of Philomela and Hecuba in relation to contemporary pedagogical theory and practice, in which imitation of texts like Ovid's was integral to a humanist theory of rhetorical education. In the final chapter on *The Winter's Tale*, I argue that although Leontes hastily turns his rhetorical anxiety over Hermione's "potent" tongue into fantasies about her body, the play's own highly metatheatrical rhetoric reminds us that the material practice of cross-dressing on the English stage resists the very essentializing turn the king's jealousy takes.

It will be clear by now that throughout this book I view the voice as embodied. My readings suggest that linguistically, culturally, and historically determined ideas about what bodily differences signify give grain and texture to that seemingly most abstract entity, the voice.[36] What "embodiment" might mean is in flux, subject to the vagaries and contingencies of material practice and culturally sedimented fantasy.[37] If the writing ego is, throughout this book, a "bodily ego," that does not mean that I take either the ego or the meaning of the body as a given. The Ovidian tradition, in my view, tells us that the speaking subject's sense of the body's significance is always in process, at once corresponding to and at odds with its own and other bodies as given significance by a differential field of culturally invested meanings. I take it as axiomatic that these differential meanings are always shifting – that they do not actually work, in the end, to impose the law of difference and identity on which these violent stories about bodies and voices paradoxically depend.

I am transformed

My approach to the Ovidian tradition implies that by focusing on the trope of the voice, particularly at the moment of its fading, we come to a fuller understanding of what rhetorical and poetic dilemmas Ovid's erotic narratives bequeath to his heirs. And because I understand the embodied ego in Ovidian poetry to be an unstable, composite linguistic effect subject to recurrent failure, these chapters trace how this subject emerges in the wake of linguistic crisis. My approach therefore also implies that the various dilemmas inherent in Ovid's numerous metapoetic stories about embodied voices have profound consequences for the kind of speaking subjectivity they generate, both in the *Metamorphoses* and later works indebted to it. In Elizabethan England, the habit

of allegorizing Ovid's poem gave way to another, transpersonal mode of reading: Ovidian metamorphosis was understood to be, as Jonathan Bate puts it, "psychological and metaphorical instead of physical and literal." New ways of reading Ovid – developing alongside but beginning to outweigh the practice of allegorical interpretation – led to an "implicit internalizing" of Ovidian narrative. Bate finds such internalizing "key to Shakespeare's use of Ovid" and I concur.[38] But a further question arises from this literary-historical observation. Exactly what kind of subjects emerge as a result of this collective "internalizing" of Ovidian narrative? We may come to a sufficiently detailed understanding of the impact that Ovid's rhetoric had on early modern English representations of the self, I believe, by thinking through at least three related issues: the specific rhetorical problems intrinsic to Ovid's representation of the voice in the *Metamorphoses*; the distinctive inflections that Petrarch, in turn, gave Ovid's stories and passed on to sixteenth-century readers; and the way Ovid's poetry was read and interpreted in Elizabethan grammar schools.

As to the first two aspects of Ovid's impact on literary subjectivity, my third chapter analyzes the way his rhetorical practice in the *Metamorphoses* influenced the poetic subject of the *Rime Sparse*. It is not Shakespeare alone who read Ovid's poetry as having internal and psychological significance. Petrarch, that eternally divided Actaeon, forges a new and highly influential representation of the self, I argue, by using Ovidian narrative against Augustinian autobiographical writing.[39] Petrarch does more than merely internalize Ovid: his autobiographical revision of Ovidian figures produces a radically fragmented subject that is always partially blind to its own history, a subject that never coincides with itself and that emerges only as an after-effect of the failure of self-representation. Petrarch's exile from himself, that is, his "partial" forgetting of "the other man" he once was (1.4), is constituted in the very movement of writing. The present iterative of Petrarchan autobiography – *mi trasformo* ("I am transformed" 23.159) – transfers the ceaseless displacements of Ovidian metamorphosis to the very process of trying to write one's own history. In the *Rime Sparse*, such constitutive blindness-in-representation recapitulates, as a trope of writing, the distance from self that in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* inhabits the moment of speaking.

Because of Petrarch's persuasive rendering of metamorphosis as the melancholy condition of a writing and desiring self, Elizabethan poets – be they Petrarchan or anti-Petrarchan – habitually read Ovid and Petrarch together, playing one off the other for different effect (ranging from satiric to tragic). Shakespeare, too, mined the poetry of both Ovid and Petrarch, using their texts as a kind of combined lexicon for representing the condition of the signifying and desiring subject. As

Petrarch read Ovid, and Shakespeare read Ovid and Petrarch together, they produced versions of the "voice" that must change our understanding of that term. Far from being expressions of a self that is given beforehand and that remains somehow greater than whatever can be forced into words, these voices anticipate the theory of the subject's simultaneous production and dislocation in language advanced by Lacan's "return to Freud." Where Lacan reads Freud's observation that "the ego is not master in its own house" as an insight into the conditions of speaking subjectivity, Petrarch and Shakespeare borrow Ovidian rhetoric to *enact* such an understanding of the self. Petrarch sees self-dispossession as the condition for poetic utterance:

> le vive voci m'erano interditte,
> ond'io gridai con carta et con incostro:
> "Non son mio, no . . ." (23.98–100)[40]

Words spoken aloud were forbidden me; so I cried out with paper and ink: "I am not my own, no . . ."

Shakespeare, when taking up the task of "lending" Lucrece a tongue, represents her central difficulty in similar – that is, Petrarchan and Ovidian – terms. From Petrarch's constitutive lament, "Non son mio, no," we turn to a Lucrece whose coming into words revolves around a foundational paradox: the subject called by "the name of chaste" and who struggles to speak and write her grief is never fully author to her own "will" because, as the poem tells us, "She is not her own" (line 241). Self-dispossession – which the poem's story of rape presents in gendered terms as a question of Lucrece as someone else's property – is also, thanks to the poem's inaugural act of ventriloquizing Ovid's character, foundational to Shakespeare's representation of what it means to be an author. Reading from this literary-historical angle, we cannot separate the paradoxical condition of Lucrece-as-subject from the fantasies about authorship that so absorb Shakespeare's nondramatic narrators.

Petrarch's contribution to a new way of reading Ovidian narrative marked a decisive turn in European literary representations of self. But there is a second sociological, and therefore more broadly formative, reason for this shift toward an internalized version of Ovidian narrative in Elizabethan poetry. I briefly hinted at this reason above. Early training in classical Latin – aptly described by Walter Ong as a "male puberty rite" and more recently by Richard Halpern as a "mode of indoctrination based on hegemony and consent rather than force and coercion" – was central to humanist pedagogical theory and practice. "Mimetic" rather than "juridical," the humanist curriculum centered on imitation, a practice that "animates not only humanist stylistics but also humanist

pedagogy."[41] Halpern argues that Erasmus's program of imitation as the chief means for achieving rhetorical *copia* inaugurated an educational curriculum in which schoolboys were inducted into self-regulation by way of an imaginary *identification* with a dominant model or, to put it in sixteenth century terms, with an "example." His Althusserian view of the humanist curriculum traces the process of the subject's "interpellation" through the ideological apparatus of the grammar school. Guided by an Erasmian theory of imitation, the schools encouraged students to become socialized in high culture rather than popular culture; and they did so by designing exercises that would encourage students to copy the rhetorical practices of classical Latin in order to internalize these practices as if they were their own. And as Bate and others discuss, Ovid's texts were central to this program for acquiring socially sanctioned rhetorical facility; he was particularly noted among classical authors for "sweetness" of style. The Elizabethan reception of Ovid is, therefore, not merely a matter of the waning of allegory in favor of psychological readings, but touches on the *formative* power of rhetoric in the grammar school's material practice, its attempt to marshal imitation and identification as a means for producing rhetorical facility in its "gentlemen" in the making.

Citing the evidence of Brinsley, who was following Roger Ascham's *Scholemaster*, Bate describes the method whereby the master would give students prose excerpts of classical poets – usually from Mirandula's *Illustrium Flores Poetarum*, which frequently epitomized Ovid – and ask them to translate back not merely into Latin, but into the style of the author in question. For Brinsley, this is "the first entrance into versifying, to turne the prose of the Poets into the Poets owne verse, with delight, certainty and speed, without any bodging; and so by continuall practice to grow in this facilitie, for getting the phrase and vein of the Poet."[42] Bate describes the common exercise of writing letters in the style of Ovid's *Heroides* as "the beginning of dramatic art." But as training designed to inculcate rhetorical facility, it might also be considered an exercise in discovering oneself through identification – or, as Erasmus's theory might formulate this relationship, in adopting the voices of others in order to find out one's own. We may grasp something of the way identification subtends the humanist educational theory of imitation by remembering one of Shakespeare's favorite classical *exempla*: Hecuba. In the schools, Ovid was taught as one of the most "copious" of authors and his Hecuba (*Metamorphoses* 13) provided an exemplary model for how to use *copia* to create great emotion. In humanist educational training, the voice of Ovid's suffering Hecuba became a "mirror" or "example" for pupils to imitate – a lesson for young men learning to

develop their own style. As Bate argues, it is therefore hardly surprising that Gorboduc takes Hecuba to be "the woeful'st wretch / That ever lived to make a *mirror* of" (3.1.14–15).[43] Because of the pedagogical methods of the grammar school, we might consider imitation of classical examples an important social, imaginary, and personal practice as much as a stylistic technique. As I explore in chapter 5, Lucrece finds voice for her own grief by way of imitating Hecuba's just as Hamlet, later, will discover his own "passion" after witnessing someone else imitating Hecuba's. They both use Ovid's suffering Trojan mother as a mirror, that is, in and through which to understand and to express what they claim to be their "own" emotions.

It is important to note, as well, that Ovid's texts were not merely memorized, but set as exercises for learning to write in his style. The cultivation of style served a social function beyond the direct one of producing rhetorically capable subjects. The apparently immoral content of the *Metamorphoses*, once read away by allegory, could now be evaded by a method of education based on the positive valuation of rhetorical style over content. In trying to understand the attitude of schoolmasters toward the wanton material in classical texts such as Ovid's, T. W. Baldwin cites Robert Cawdry:

> As in slaughter, massacres, or murther, painted in a Table, the cunning of the Painter is praysed, but the fact it selfe, is vtterly abhorred: So in Poetrie wee follow elocution, and the proper forme of wordes and sentences, but the ill matter we doo worthily despise.[44]

Citing this text to support his argument for what he calls the humanist "destruction of content," Halpern then invokes the allegory of the *Ovide moralisé* as counterpoint to the humanist project of acquiring rhetorical *copia*: "the older method subsumed dangerous contents within a larger ideological unity; the newer method decomposed this same material into harmless, inert atoms."[45] As he also suggests, however, the aim to imitate "cunning" style alone without approving "abhorred" content did not convince everyone: Juan Luis Vives, for instance, advocated that "obscene passages should be wholly cut out from the text, as though they were dead, and would infect whatever they touched."[46] As subsequent chapters will show, the scandalous content of Ovidian eroticism was barely contained by the humanist cultivation of his rhetorical style. Though Francis Meres famously stressed affinity of style – "the sweete wittie soule of Ovid lives in mellifluous and hony-tongued Shakespeare" – and Thomas Nashe praised the "silver tong'd" and "well-tun'd" nature of Ovidian verbal facility, nonetheless the erotic shape Ovid habitually gave his myriad reflections on rhetoric in the *Metamorphoses* continues

to surface in Elizabethan poetry (particularly in the epyllion) just as allegorical reading never utterly canceled the illicit pleasure some readers clearly gleaned from reading the most heavily annotated of Ovidian texts.[47] Allegorical interpretation imposed an entirely new order of meaning on Ovid's text, and thus subsisted in a different order of understanding (whether accepted by individual readers or not). But an educational practice so thoroughly alert to nuances of rhetorical technique remained very much in touch with the "phrase and vein of the Poet." It was therefore precisely the kind of practice that would alert its well-trained readers to the way that the narrator of the *Metamorphoses* habitually translates rhetorical problems into erotic ones (and vice versa).

Admirable figures

There is a third, formal issue to consider if we are to account for Ovid's impact on literary representations of subjectivity. Understanding what happens in the process of internalizing Ovidian narrative – or what effect the extensive and repeated imitation of Ovid's verse might have had on young students of Latin – means taking careful stock of his language. Certain hallmark rhetorical practices carry within them dilemmas important to later "Ovidian" representations of the self. Ovid's reflections on the power and limitations of language in the *Metamorphoses* are legion, and they are foundational for what passes as a subject in this tradition. I have already discussed the Ovidian phenomenon of the impossible demand, a dynamic that Petrarch would turn into the very condition of love and the self. The failed address or impossible demand – so influential for Renaissance texts – might be thought but an instance of a larger problem in the epic: for Ovid, the self comes most memorably into being when the instrumental function of language breaks down. Such failures are most often dramatized in a story about a mouth that betrays its owner: Io, mooing, "is terrified by the sound of her own voice" ("mugitus edidit ore / ... propriaque exterrita uoce est," 1.637–38) and Actaeon utters an "inhuman" groan that "no deer could make" (3.237–39). Such failures find one of their most resonant, and painful, synecdoches in the literalized figure of Philomela's tongue, murmuring on the dark earth. The voice's excess – the fact that it doesn't always work as an instrument of communication or that it can mysteriously become more than mere instrument – generates a great deal of action in the epic out of words that mean too little (the cryptic oracle given to Deucalion and Pyrrha) or that do too much (Apollo's oath to his son Phaethon to grant him whatever he wishes as proof of paternity). The

narrative veers back and forth between words that do not work and words that work all too well. On the one hand, we read that Pentheus' words are quite audible. His pleas are quoted directly in the text, but they make no difference: neither mother nor aunt acknowledge those "milder words" and therefore tear Pentheus limb from limb ("uerba minus uiolenta" 3.717). On the other, we find that although Jove wishes he or Semele could take back the words they have spoken, they cannot: "already her voice had rushed out into the air" ("exierat iam uox properata sub auras" 3.296). The god is therefore bound to honor the spoken promise that will kill her.

Captivated by the perils of speaking subjectivity – a peril that includes even the gods – Ovid continually renders these dangers as erotic dramas. In his hands, the abstract problems of language – its (often tenuous) role as a form of mediation between mind and world and its power to produce something new in the world rather than merely represent or describe it – assume a distinctly sexual guise. In many of the poem's dramas about lost voices, characters are caught, in rapt attention, by the mediating screen of an image, figure, or form; such devotion to an image alters both the world and that character's place in it. The *Metamorphoses* most memorably characterizes its speaking subjects, that is, by putting them in passionate relation to an image or figure. For love of an image whose "lips" can move but make no "audible sound," Narcissus dies and produces a flower. For love of a speechless *simulacrum*, Pygmalion generates a new race. From the failure of Apollo's voice to hang onto the *figura* he so desires, a new sign for poetry emerges. Here we are not far from Petrarch's ceaselessly announced "martyrdom" to the laurel, his beloved "first figure."

But desire is not the only momentous emotion attached to images in the *Metamorphoses*. As I examine further in chapter 2, because they confront Medusa's terrifying mouth (*os*), numerous male victims stand forever petrified by the force of this *monstrum*. We are told that Athena made the snaky *monstrum* – meaning a "sign, omen, or prodigy" – so that Medusa's rape "not go unpunished" (4.800); the goddess rhetorically extends the crime's effect on the world by memorializing it in an ominously potent sign. (Although it may seem that Medusa is being punished for her own rape, the narrative remains deliberately vague about who is being punished; we should note, for instance, that Medusa's victims are all men.) Petrarch, of course, was quite aware that his love for his one "figure" might lapse into petrification. His desire to be a second Pygmalion by making a picture of Laura speak finds its inversion in his own imprisonment as a marble statue: "The heavenly breeze that breathes in that green laurel . . . / has the power over me that Medusa had over the old Moorish giant, when she turned him to flint . . . Her very shadow turns my heart to ice and tinges my face with white fear, but her eyes have the power to turn it to marble" ("L'aura celeste che'n quel verde lauro / spira . . . / po quello in me che nel gran vecchio mauro/ Medusa quando in selce transformollo . . . / L'ombra sua sola fa 'l mio cor un ghiaccio/ et di bianca paura il viso tinge,/ ma gli occhi ànno vertù di farne un marmo" 197.1–14). A reader as attuned as Petrarch to the rhetoric of the *Metamorphoses* understands that in it, images wield a duplicitous power. He is therefore martyr to a sign that both kindles desire *and* "tinges his face with white fear."

Ovid's narrator, too, dwells in loving detail on his characters' fascination with significant form – be the feeling aroused one of admiration or, in the case of Medusa, terror. One of the more frequent words in the *Metamorphoses* for this moment is "mirari": Narcissus "admires" his image (3.424), Pygmalion "admires" his *simulacrum* (10.252), Europa "admires" the white bull. But so, too, are "haerere" ("to stick," "freeze," or "fasten on with the senses") and "stupere" ("to be struck dumb") other favorite Ovidian words for the effect of an image on its viewer. Thus Narcissus "freezes (haeret) . . . like a statue carved from Parian marble" (3.419) before his watery reflection; and Perseus, half convinced that Andromeda is a "marble statue," is "struck dumb" ("stupet") by "the image of her beautiful face" (4.675–77). In the story of Perseus and Medusa, the hero's immobilized attention to an image turns into a permanent state of affairs: caught by the omen of the Gorgon's "os," one viewer "froze (haesit), a marble statue" (5.183). Like the story of Narcissus's love for the sheer beauty of his own *imago*, Medusa's story tells us that in an Ovidian universe, the capacity for aesthetic pleasure may give way, with but the slightest of turns, to a total evacuation of the self. Ovid's many variations on this delicate balance emerge in Petrarch's hands as the woes of one who, devoted to his "figura," lives forever suspended "mezzo . . . tra vivo et morto" ("a mean between the living and the dead," 23.89).

In the *Metamorphoses*, therefore, significant form does more than mediate between inner and outer worlds. Source of love or of terror, a figure may also *change* both, though not in any predictable fashion. To remember the poem's earliest exploration of language's productive force: telling the story of the world's creation soon becomes, in Book 1, a thinly veiled excuse for telling numerous stories about the constitutive power of poetic language. In the tale of Deucalion and Pyrrha, a second creation of human beings from stones takes place on Mt. Parnassus, the mountain of poetry. The notion that language wields a creative force was important to this creation story before Ovid. As Frederick Ahl reminds us,

etymological play informed the Greek tradition: accounts by Apollodorus (1.7.2) and Pindar (*Olympian* 9.41ff) suggest that the actions of Deucalion and Pyrrha reflect "the derivation of the word 'people' from 'stones'" (people: "ho LAos"; stones: "ho LAas" but also "ho LAos"). In Ovid's handling of the scene, Ahl suggests, human beings ("HUMani ... generis," 1.246) are derived from a gesture of "humiliation," as the pair "prostrate themselves on the earth" ("procumbit uterque/ pronus HUMi," 1.375–76).[48] But this new world is also generated from a metaphorical understanding of language. When the oracle speaks, "throw the bones of your great mother behind you" ("ossaque post tergum magnae iactate parentis," 1.383), Pyrrha recoils from the implied sacrilege in the literal level of the command. But Deucalion steps in, a poetic reader armed with a metaphorical interpretation of oracular speech that creates another world altogether: "our great mother is the earth: and I think that the bones of which the goddess speaks are the stones in the earth's body" ("magna parens terra est: lapides in corpore terrae / ossa reor dici" 1.393–4). In this story, both the literal sounds of words and their capacity to signify in more than one way assume the power to *produce* a perceived world rather than merely reflect or replace it. The Ovidian narrator, characteristically, directs our attention to a prolonged visual spectacle of the verbal mediation Deucalion has just enacted: as I described earlier, we watch the "form" of this second race slowly take shape "*like* the beginnings of forms made out of marble, not sharply defined and very like rough statues" (1.405). Like Deucalion's move into metaphor, Ovid pauses over the transitional moment – the "sed uti" – to make us look, as it were, at the shaping force of his simile as it brings a new race into shape by way of a work of art. The narrator's simile, in effect, works to claim Deucalion's constitutive verbal power as its own.

We may speak of the productive power of Ovid's poetry, then, in social terms – the important imaginary force his poetry exercised on students looking to develop their own voices according to the prescriptions of humanist rhetorical training – but also in poetic and rhetorical terms. In the *Metamorphoses*, language's mediations often acquire a constitutive rather than merely representative power. But we must also remember, as I suggested above, that the effect of appreciation for significant or figural forms may not be so beneficent as it seems in Deucalion's story about creating a new race of beings. Admiration for the beauty of an interposed form can quickly lapse, like the story of Europa's interest in the white bull or Arachne's "polished" tapestry, into narratives of violence. Thus Philomela's "skilled" weaving becomes, in Procne's hands, a dangerous message that inaugurates an act even deadlier than the one it reports. And if Deucalion's story tells us that language has the power to produce a new world rather than merely describe it, any given speaker in the poem may do no more than momentarily harness this power – "if," to phrase this through Diana's taunt to Actaeon, "he or she can." Productive as this rhetoric may be, its effects are not predictable. Nor does its power rest with any one speaker. As even Apollo discovers in his rash oath to his son, words may not always have the effect one intends. In moments such as Apollo's impotent regret for the consequences of his own words, we are not far from Lavinia's "tumble me" or Shakespeare's opening move, in *The Rape of Lucrece*, to blame Collatine's (Petrarchan) words of praise as the verbal event that produces a little too much admiration. The narrator holds "the *name* of chaste" [my emphasis] responsible for engendering in Tarquin a distinctly voracious "appetite" for rape. Alienation from one's own tongue is both a physical predicament in Ovidian narrative and, at the same time, the condition of being able to speak at all.

Pursuing Daphne

We must now return to reconsider an important problem in further detail. When thinking through the relationship between aesthetic form, rhetoric, and violence in the *Metamorphoses* or, for that matter, the relationship between male and female voices, we confront what has proved for some critics one of the poem's most troubling features: the story of rape. What seems to me most striking, however, is not simply that the poem associates sexuality with power or violence. Rather, it repeatedly links sexual violence to a sense of beauty – verbal and visual, general and specifically formal or technical. Out of rape and mutilation, Ovid generates images that are to make us pause and, like so many of the poem's characters, "admire" (mirare). Out of her own rape, Philomela weaves "skilled" threads; out of the rapes of others, Arachne weaves a tapestry so accomplished that it enrages Athena. Daphne's flight from Apollo, similarly, turns into a thinly veiled commentary on many aspects of poetic verse: in the god of poetry's eyes, Daphne embodies a "form" and "figure" in need of arrangement; her flight produces the "breath" that will become the voice of song. And where Philomela's story represents rape through what can or cannot be spoken by the "tongue" ("lingua"), Daphne's also meditates on poetry's specifically oral power. For in it, Ovid uses "os," or mouth, as the one word in which to capture sexual violence and poetic speech at once. In the final simile for Apollo's chase, that of a dog pursuing the hare, the god of poetry's desire to possess Daphne turns into an image of a dog's outstretched mouth: "she

escapes the teeth and leaves *the outstretched mouth* behind her: so the god and the maiden" ("et ipsis/ morsibus eripitur *tangentiaque ora* relinquit: / sic deus et uirgo" 1.537–38). In a poem in which "amor" is, throughout, "amor sceleratus habendi" ("the cursed love of having"), this simile for Apollo's "outstretched mouth" tells us that poetry, too, is implicated in the voracious force of eros, a force whose devastating effects it is the narrator's project to "sing."

As chapter 2 demonstrates, it is not in Daphne's story alone that Ovid associates the violence of rape with the technical beauties of poetry, be they "form," "figure," or rhythm. Critics no longer look beyond rape in Ovid's poem; several have called our attention to the necessity of asking why it happens with such predictable regularity.[49] But it is by no means clear how to read these rapes or, indeed, what questions might expand our treatment of them. My own attempts to address this issue are many. They are scattered throughout these readings, as is my sense of how to ask questions that do not reduce the complexity of either the fact of social and sexual violence or the vicissitudes of poetic language. I can give here a brief sense of my own thinking on the matter by saying that from an Althusserian perspective, one might argue that in the *Metamorphoses*, the call from the law that hails or "interpellates" the female subject *is* rape.[50] One English term translates a variety of Latin ones covering a range of actions from sexual violation to abduction; but Ovid's poem also tends to identify the various acts along this continuum, from Tereus' brutally physical assault on Philomela's body to the abductions of Europa and Persephone.[51] And the poem is inclined, moreover, to identify acts we might prefer to separate because of its (metarhetorical) preoccupation with *forma*, or female "beauty": that is, Ovid's women define what counts as "beauty" by resistance or flight from threatened rape, whether in the form of abduction or violation. Indeed, as my students often tell me, being a woman in Ovid's poem means to embody the principle of resistance. Women discover, like Daphne, that "beauty" ("forma") is not really itself. Beauty is created in the eyes of desire, as one scene after another tells the story of rape as the accident, "one day x saw y." And it is "*augmented* by flight" ("auctaque forma fuga est," 1.530). Or in one of the poem's most influential stories of sexual assault, it is Philomela's verbal and visual resistance to Tereus' multiple violations that allows the narrator to emphasize both the complexities of rhetorical speech (her Orphic attempt to "move stones") and the formal qualities of visual and/or written art (her tapestry's moving "purple notes").

Where Althusser's subject recognizes his subjection in the call of a policeman on the street, Ovid's women recognize their subjection *as*

women when suddenly hailed by a god bent on rape. They recognize themselves as subjects in the violent call of someone else's desire. And they become the female beauty they are called upon to embody by turning Althusser's moment of recognition into flight. But flight only embroils them further in the very *forma* from which they flee, since in the eyes of masculine law in this poem, resistance and flight enhance beauty and nearly come to define it. Thus Caenis, ravished by Neptune, might be a fitting spokeswoman for many of the poem's victims. Bid to choose what she wishes in payment for having been raped, Caenis responds by seeking the only way out: "Grant me that I not be a woman" ("mihi da, femina ne sim," 12.202). Caenis' request strikes my ear, at least, as an epitome of Althusser's notion of "internal distance." For him, internal distance "presupposes a retreat" or "internal distantiation" from the ideology to which a text "alludes and with which it is constantly fed." In its blunt confrontation with the conditions of being a woman in the poem, "Mihi da, femina ne sim" makes us understand "in some sense *from the inside* ... the very ideology" of sexual difference which the *Metamorphoses* also deploys.[52] Such a claim – that in the *Metamorphoses*, rape is represented as the call that interpellates the female subject *as* "femina" – suggests to me that Ovid's text, like many of Freud's, is more a critique of the systematic violence and subordination embedded in patriarchal culture than mere repetition or perpetuation of it.[53]

I believe, therefore, that deciding the "male" narrator's place in Ovid's aesthetically self-reflexive representations of rape is not as straightforward a matter as some would have it. Nancy Miller, for instance, believes she can separate Arachne's art from Ovid's. Reading the story apart from the rest of the *Metamorphoses*, she celebrates Arachne's "feminocentric protest" and censures the narrator's control, personifying Ovid's character to the detriment of her author. When Athena rends Arachne's tapestry and destroys her human shape, Miller blames the narrator for "deauthorizing" Arachne's voice. But before we follow Miller, remember that the status of the voice is not so simple in the *Metamorphoses*. The condition for having a voice at all in the poem, in fact, is that *it will be lost* – or, as Miller puts it, "deauthorized."[54] Even Orpheus loses his body (and therefore song) to the Bacchic horde. And the poem's narrator, the "voice" that stands to benefit most from the voices that others lose, concludes his most blatant bid for immortality – his song will bring him an "indelible name" that lasts as long as the Roman empire lasts – with an irony born of metamorphosis: "*if* the prophecies of bards have any truth to them, I shall live" ("siquid habent ueri uatum praesagia, uiuam" 15.879). In a book where prophecy of Rome's continued status as "eternal city" culminates a narrative of "endless,

cyclical change" that destroys all other cities, Ovid pointedly lets us wonder about the efficacy of linking his own "perennial" fame to Rome's future.[55] Arachne joins the ranks of every other artist in the poem, including, by implication, the narrator. That Arachne's body and art are destroyed only to issue into another story incorporates that story into the narrative movement of metamorphosis; but it is a movement from which the Ovidian narrator is too canny to claim that he alone is exempt, even though he may try. No narrator who tells a story like that of Echo's tricky repetitions can claim, without irony, that though his body may be destroyed, he will live because his words are uttered by other mouths, transferred "on the lips" of other people ("ore legar populi" 15.878).

More important still, Ovid's description of Arachne's skill fashions her in the mold of contemporary aesthetic judgment. Arachne represents many of the poem's previous rapes with a skill that Ovid describes in some detail. Indeed, Ovid brings the contemporary lexicon for poetic excellence to bear on Arachne's indignant representation of rape. Like other neoteric Roman poets she is "docta" (somewhere between learned and cultured).[56] Like the poet's wearing of ivy in Horace or Propertius, her tapestry's border represents "clinging ivy" ("nexilibus ... hederis" 6.128). Of this line, W. S. Anderson comments on the association between ivy and poetry, suggesting that Ovid may be "seeking a floral symbol with connotations to rival those of Minerva's olive."[57] Like the fame Ovid wishes for at the end of the *Metamorphoses*, Arachne has achieved a "memorable name" ("nomen memorabile," 6.12 for Ovid's "nomenque erit indelebile nostrum" 15.876). And like the unnamed Olympian god whose artistic sensibility shapes the world in the first lines of the poem, Arachne generates the material for her work by arranging and organizing a rude, chaotic mass of material. For the "rudis ... moles" of chaos in Book 1, line 7 we find Arachne's "rudem ... lanam," a mass that she weaves on a "polished spindle with smooth thumb" ("leui teretem uersabat pollice fusum," 6.22). The weaving that represents so many violated women is as refined and "polished" as the verses to which contemporary Roman poets lay claim. Arachne's tapestry, moreover, recapitulates the rapes narrated earlier in the poem itself and she finishes her work with a characteristically Ovidian signature: the border of the tapestry is "filled with flowers and clinging ivy intertwined" ("nexilibus flores hederis habet intertextos" 5.128). This line leaves one uncertain whether the flowers are figures *in* the tapestry or actual, "real" flowers incorporated into its weaving. Like the fading of so many of Ovid's figures into objects in the landscape, Arachne's "polished" representation lapses back, at the edges, into the natural world.[58] One might claim that Arachne, far from being "deauthorized," becomes a *surrogate* for Ovid's narrator.[59] Through her tapestry, he may speak about rape through the "as if" of metaphor: Arachne's art allows the narrator to speak, momentarily, "as if" a woman.

In the figures on Arachne's tapestry, then, Ovid recapitulates his own poem by signalling that its seemingly endless series of rapes may look very different if seen through the victim's eyes.[60] Arachne's work gives readers a chance to ponder the details of a female character's version of the subject of rape, a weaving comparable to the one that later in the same book is destined for the eyes of Philomela's sister alone. That Arachne's "perspective" disappears is not unusual. No single perspective survives the bewildering shifts of Ovid's metamorphic narrative, a narrative whose "favorite topic" is, precisely, the dissolution of such identity.[61] Similarly, as I suggest in chapter 2, Perseus borrows Medusa's "mouth" (again, "os, oris") to conquer where his own words could not: when Ovid "speaks" through Arachne's tapestry or Perseus persuades through Medusa's mouth, exact determinations of agency and attendant judgments of culpability become thankless and reductive tasks. Indeed, the stories of Echo, Medusa, and Philomela make clear that one of the central problems in Ovid's poem is that ownership of one's "own" words and control over their effect are endlessly uncertain.

My joint focus on the general influence of Ovidian rhetoric and on the particular pressure exerted by the trope of the female voice on each text offers a view of early modern/"masculine" subjectivity coincident with what I take to be the most promising axiom of psychoanalytic work for feminist criticism: that no subject is ever as coherent, as much an "identity," as it imagines itself to be. The "male" subject in these texts is, rather, internally fractured and fragmented, a composite formation fissured by multiple and contradictory demands. And when a woman is imagined to speak in these texts, we see most clearly that the "male" subject is the *effect*, rather than the cause of signification – that he can never master the field of difference over which he may nonetheless claim dominion. Poetic ventriloquism in the Ovidian tradition, like the theatrical practice of cross-dressing, places enormous pressure on the discourse of masculine "identity." The fractured condition of the subject in Ovidian narrative, by no means implies a reduction in male power, however. On the contrary, the very fragility to which the female voice draws attention in these texts leads to violent fantasies (like rape) that work to reclaim the very hierarchy that seems momentarily at risk.

Stressing the continued pertinence of the hypothesis of the unconscious to early modern literary discourses of the self, my third chapter on "verbal fetishism" in the *Rime Sparse* demonstrates the sometimes unexpected consequences of Petrarch's autobiographical use of Ovidian

figures. Drawing on the distinction between Pygmalion's vocal address and the statue's silence to explore the vicissitudes of his own fragmented voice, Petrarch shapes an influential structure of difference for representing the male self. But as I suggest, Ovid's female voices – Echo, Medusa, Diana – do occasionally break through the reflexive surface of Petrarchan self-absorption, signalling that self's fragility and undoing the explicit representation of sexual difference that founds the discourse of love. Recent feminist criticism, alert to the complex relation between experience and discourse, has turned attention to the rhetoric of the Petrarchan *blason*, a mode of describing female beauty that dismembers the very thing it praises. Stemming from one of two models – Gayle Rubin's "traffic in women" or the analysis of homosociality that runs from Freud to Eve Sedgwick[62] – feminist critics sometimes portray the *Rime Sparse* and the genre the cycle inaugurated as a well-oiled poetic and rhetorical machine, one that produces a discourse of "masculine" desire and self-reflection based on the objectification, exchange, fragmentation, and finally silencing of women. In a highly influential article, Nancy Vickers ends with a persuasive version of this view: in the *Rime Sparse*, "silencing Diana is an emblematic gesture; it suppresses a voice, and it casts a generation of would-be Lauras in a role predicated upon the *muteness* of its player" (emphasis mine). Here Vickers echoes early work by Laura Mulvey, whose "Visual Pleasure" she cites, particularly the claim that "man can live out his phantasies and obsessions through linguistic command by imposing them on the silent image of woman still tied to her place as bearer of meaning, not maker of meaning."[63]

This groundbreaking feminist work clearly enabled my own slightly different version of "verbal fetishism" in the *Rime Sparse*. But it remains only part of the story, occluding the foundational, if disruptive, effect that Ovid's rhetoric had on Petrarchan autobiography – and by that route, on early modern discourses of the desiring self. I emphasize the Ovidian background to Petrarchan autobiography and focus on the differential work of male *and* female voices in the *Metamorphoses* and beyond because I believe that a narrow focus on the Petrarchan *blason*, without an extended consideration of Ovid's influence on the discourse of autobiography in the *Rime Sparse*, can produce a too monolithic view of subjectivity and masculinity (or of gender more generally) and a too pessimistic view of the regulatory force of his rhetorical practice. My third chapter stresses that Diana is not in fact "silenced": instead, her few but crucial words *prohibiting* the poet's speech are foundational to the discursive and erotic paradoxes of Petrarch's self-representation. By focusing on the effects of Diana's quoted taboo, rather than on her being silenced, I hope to reconsider the unconscious currents that trouble the

apparently smooth waters of masculine poetic agency. Taken together, these chapters suggest that if we read Shakespeare's *The Rape of Lucrece* and *The Winter's Tale*, and Petrarch's *Rime Sparse* in light of their complex debt to Ovidian voices, we will enrich current feminist analyses of the reifying *blason* and thereby understand more fully the impact of Petrarchan rhetoric on Shakespeare's representations of gender and subjectivity.

As my last book made clear, moreover, my own understanding of psychoanalytic theory differs from the one articulated here by Vickers or Mulvey. Pursuing lines laid out by critics like Janet Bergstrom on "multiple identificatory positions, whether successively or simultaneously" and Jacqueline Rose on the "failure" of any identity, male or female, I take the import of Freud's analysis of fetishism, for instance, to be that the "male" subject is fractured, always in the process of being forged out of immanent contradictions.[64] I join my focus on the Ovidian intertext with a psychoanalytic analysis of Petrarch's verbal fetishism because such an approach, while reading the speaking subject's symbolic and libidinal economy in a particular way, also maintains that the fetish is an important sign of the subject's splitting. As I discuss in Chapter 3, the fetish signifies both the price of achieving a "masculine" identity and the impossibility of ever entirely doing so. I believe, in short, that the contradictions inherent in the discourse of masculinity – many of which I examine in this book – may begin to explain the extraordinary, and unsettling, proximity of aesthetics and violence in the Ovidian tradition.

And finally, it is to counter what I believe to be an overly pessimistic view of the effects of Petrarch's "scattering" rhetorical practice that I concentrate on the crucial role of Ovidian rhetorical self-reflection in the *Rime Sparse* and beyond. As my discussion of the *Metamorphoses* should make clear, in Ovid's poem rhetoric can indeed be a dangerously potent tool. But it is never merely instrumental – and certainly never merely the instrument of "men." Contrary to Mulvey's description of masculine "linguistic command," the *Metamorphoses* teach one male character after another – Apollo, Orpheus, Pan, even Jupiter himself – that such command is never more than an enticing fantasy. Even the briefest encounters with Echo, Philomela, Medusa, and Arachne, moreover, instruct readers that female characters, even when "silenced," may still be "makers" rather than mere "bearers" of meaning. In Ovid's text, rhetorical speech is never entirely in control of any one subject: no speaker in the *Metamorphoses* is the final owner, author, or controlling agent of the words he or she speaks. In Ovidian narrative, language, like the body, exceeds the speaking subject. What I hope to demonstrate is

that it is most often the voices of female characters – or the idea, if not the sound, of such a voice – that instruct male characters that this is so.

For Ovid the effect of rhetorical speech, while exceedingly potent, remains fundamentally unpredictable. Its power never rests unequivocally with any one party. The *blason* may be determining, therefore, but it is not mechanically deterministic: "a limit on the field of the possible rather than an irresistible compulsion."[65] And it had to share terrain with other aspects of Petrarch's rhetorical practice, among them the ones I stress here: inaugural tropes for the voice that over the course of centuries amounted to a venerable tradition of cross-voicing. "Female" voices in this tradition – Medusa, Daphne, Syrinx, Echo, Arachne, Philomela, Diana, Ceres, the Bacchae, and their early modern daughters, Laura, Lucrece, Hermione, and Paulina – are tropes that carry us beyond identity and the voice as such into a kind of phonographic imaginary. In this imaginary place, unsettling stories of difference echo, pointing beyond what can, in fact, actually be said by or heard in any voice. And though we encounter many terrible moments when silence is violently forced on a woman, this book suggests that if read carefully, phonographic traces of these lost, silenced voices persist long enough to disturb the symbolic and libidinal economy in which they play such a necessary part.

2 Medusa's mouth: body and voice in the *Metamorphoses*

This chapter analyzes the connections among rhetoric, sexuality, and subjectivity in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* to enable us to see why disquieting convergences like the one between Daphne's use of *figura* – the form of her body – and the narrator's – Apollo's poetic tropes – continue to inform Renaissance appropriations of Ovidian narrative, particularly later imitations of Ovid that claim to speak to a difference between male and female experience. By examining what the often violent intersection between rhetoric and sexuality means for the speaking subjects of Ovid's poem, moreover, I hope to give a sense of how important it is for a feminist critique of the *Metamorphoses* and its afterlife that in it we encounter what Simone Viarre, following Roland Barthes, calls a "fusion between poetry and rhetoric" – a thoroughgoing conversion of rhetoric into a "poetic technique."[1] In other words, the punning movement of *figura*, the resonant word that signifies both Daphne's body and the god of poetry's speech, suggests a crucial place where a feminist analysis of the *Metamorphoses* might intersect widely acknowledged aspects of Ovidian poetic practice.

I have already emphasized Ovid's habit of turning poetic and rhetorical self-reflection into stories of desire and sexual violence: Apollo's rapacious desire for Daphne is also a poet's love for a figure; Pygmalion's desire to "move" his statue is also a sexual version of a rhetorician's aim to "move" his audience; Perseus first uses Medusa's *os* (against Atlas) as a kind of rhetorical prosthesis, enforcing the compliance that his "soothing words" cannot; the aetiological story of the Gorgon's head, in its turn, converts a rape and a beheading into the origin of the fountain of poetry; and so forth.[2] My readings in this chapter move between Ovid's pervasive metapoetic and metarhetorical reflection in the *Metamorphoses* and his representations of gender and sexuality, paying close attention to his many figures for the human voice in order to ask what difference these figures make for the poem's distinctive way of defining embodied subjectivity.[3] I suggest that the idea of the voice gives a singularly Ovidian texture to the poem's announced topic – the "form"

of the human body and the myriad possible changes to it. In my introduction I also put particular emphasis on Ovid's trademark habit of ventriloquizing female voices – a rhetorical technique Quintilian calls *prosopopoeia*[4] – because I understand this displacement to be part of the narrator's general strategy of attenuating in order to redirect attention to the connection we generally take for granted between a voice and the body that contains it. I return to consider what Ovid's penchant for ventriloquism implies for the poem's thinking about gender and sexuality at the end of the chapter. But before we can properly understand the effects of Ovid's transgendered *prosopopoeiae*, we must first examine how the narrator's strategy of distancing body from voice impinges on two things: the poem's representation of subjectivity; and those aspects of Ovid's narrative that seem to be matters of strictly formal, symbolic, or rhetorical concern. Both characteristics of the *Metamorphoses* – its particular way of representing subjectivity as alienation from one's own tongue and its corollary fascination with the power, and limitations, of rhetoric – would prove extremely influential in the European poetic tradition to which it gave rise.

In the pages that follow, I analyze a number of the *Metamorphoses*' most influential stories about bodies and voices in light of the narrator's prominent rhetorical strategies and fantasies. Put most generally, the chapter argues that although the metarhetorical economy of the poem may seem, in the beginning, to propose an unsurprising narrative of sexual difference to account for its various voices – unsurprising because consonant with normative ideas about gender and desire – nevertheless Ovid's rhetorical practice undermines that narrative over the course of the poem. But before we can understand how this continuing struggle over the meaning of bodily difference shapes Ovid's various voices (or, for that matter, the many Renaissance tropes for the voice that derive from his), we must first consider the provenance and trajectory of the voice in the *Metamorphoses* as a whole. Over the course of my analysis, this will mean looking closely at a constellation of related Ovidian figures: the lips or face (*os*, *oris*), the breath (*animus*), the tongue (*lingua*), and, more generally, the figure of apostrophe and gestures of address. The first three sections, "Phonographic histories," "Reading lips," and "The rhetoric of animation" delineate how the idea of the speaking voice – the seductive idea behind all these figures – arises from a particular concatenation of literary and material histories, governs the narrator's self-presentation in the epic, and shapes Ovid's investigation of supposed differences between male and female subjects and desires. The final three sections, "Beauty and the breeze," "Resisting voices," and "Other voices, other loves," demonstrate that although Ovid's narrator begins

the *Metamorphoses* by turning his own metarhetorical reflection into a (highly influential) story of gender difference and hierarchy based on sexual violence, we soon discover that his ostensibly "female" voices sharply criticize this opening fantasy – and that they have something very different to say about the intersection between the poem's rhetorical and libidinal economies. Overall, my account of the poem makes two related suggestions. First, Ovid's emotionally charged yet self-reflexive stories about *Amor* epitomize Althusser's notion of "internal distance" – a text's "internal distantiation" from the ideology to which it "alludes and with which it is constantly fed."[5] And second, by so consistently forcing the usually separated realms of sexuality and rhetoric to meet, the narrator draws attention to the fact that while his characters act as if the body's meaning and value are given, that ostensible meaning is nonetheless unstable, the product of a fiercely unresolved cultural and psychic battle.

Phonographic histories

The idea of a lost voice or speechless face occurs over and over in Ovid's poem, suggesting that the link between mind and voice in the *Metamorphoses* is at best a fragile one, easily broken. Ovid's narrator repeatedly attaches stories of bodily transformation and/or violation to moments when characters try, in vain, to change events or reveal their true intentions by speaking about them: the deaths of Actaeon, Pentheus, and Orpheus; the vain protests of Daphne, Io, Syrinx, and Philomela; the impasse between Narcissus and Echo; the tardy regret of either Apollo or Jove for oaths they have already given. Stories like these establish a considerable distance between a speaker's purpose and the effect of the sounds that actually fall from his or her mouth. They tell us that for Ovid, the fiction of the speaking voice is as mysterious as it is foundational. Keeping this mysterious fiction in mind, notice that Ovid's stories about the voice follow a conventional opening claim that this written poem is, instead, a "song" the narrator is singing (1.4). The narrator who claims himself to be "singing" a *perpetuum carmen* habitually frames long sections of the poem as singing contests; dwells on images of the human face insofar as it is an instrument of speech; makes frequent use of apostrophe as the trope best suited for introducing or bidding farewell to various characters; and keeps pointing to speakers' mouths as organs from which fall words of unpredictable force, revelation, or beauty. The narrator's endeavor to sing a song coextensive with the history of the world is thus refracted in the many scenes that concentrate on the potential power of this or that character's tongue, lips, breath, or voice.

This isn't a surprising observation to make about a poem in which an entire book is given over to the singing "voice" of the poet Orpheus. But as the lethal attack on Orpheus' mouth by the Bacchae might suggest (10.7–19), this same narrator with a "singing" voice also keeps inventing nightmare inversions of any implicit claim for the voice's revelatory or instrumental power, inversions that question any necessary, transparent, or even minimally effective connection between the mind and the sound one makes with one's lips. We need to remember, then, that when Ovid's narrator defines extreme alienation of the self from itself as the moment when a character is startled by the effect of her words or the sound issuing from her mouth, these failed voices tell us as much about the narrator and his rhetorical aspirations as do the more confident "programmatic" scenes of the singing contest.[6]

Ovid pairs this larger programmatic interest in singing or speaking voices with a favorite body part: the mouth. References to the *os* – the lips and mouth – traverse the *Metamorphoses*, appearing approximately 250 times. And the *os* provides Ovid, as well, with a resonant figure to frame the epic: in the opening and closing books, the narrator refers to two different speaking faces – those of Lycaon and Pythagoras. That both these prominently placed stories highlight the *os* in particular should tell us that this word occupies a crucial place in Ovid's thinking about his own narrative act. Analyzing these *ora* will also allow us to grasp something of what Ovid's fascination with the idea of the lost voice implies for the poem's thinking about what it means to be subject to language. First, Pythagoras. When the philosopher explains the theory of metempsychosis that brings the last book of the *Metamorphoses* to a close, a conventional trope for ending his own discourse marks Pythagoras as yet another of the narrator's surrogates: "not to wander too far out of my course, my steeds forgetting meanwhile to speed towards the goal ..." (15.453–55). Pythagoras helps the narrator bring his own "steeds" toward the "goal" of the poem in which he plays a part. But the narrator introduces this surrogate by a significant synecdoche: he draws attention not to Pythagoras's person but simply to his "learned mouth." A thinker Ovid calls upon to rival Lucretius' Empedocles, Pythagoras ponders "*primordia mundi / et rerum causas*" (67–68) and was "the first," we are told "to open his lips with these words – learned yet not believed" ("primus quoque talibus *ora* / docta quidem soluit, sed *non et credita*, uerbis" 73–74). Vatic and impotent, the philosopher's mouth may be "learned" ("ora docta") but that learning changes nothing.

Pythagoras' concluding discourse on the nature of things is supposed to remind us of Ovid's opening account of creation – the narrator's own, similar meditation on *primordia mundi et rerum causas*.[7] The figure of Pythagoras' inspired *os*, moreover, reminds us that the *only* part of the body to which the narrator refers when the previously "unknown figures" of humankind first appear on earth after creation is the *os*: "os homini sublime dedit" ("he gave to man an uplifted face" 1.85). But like Pythagoras' unheeded lips, this first story about *os hominis* takes an infelicitous turn. With "indignant lips" (*ora indignantia* 1.181), Jove tells the story of Lycaon, the first character to lose his human shape. And it is Lycaon's inability to speak because of the change in the shape of *his* lips that marks this loss of humanity:

> territus ipse fugit nactusque silentia ruris
> exululat frustraque loqui conatur: ab ipso
> colligit os rabiem ... (1.232–34)

terrified, he himself flees and having arrived at the silence of the countryside, howled and in vain attempted to speak: of itself his mouth collects foam ...

In the section of Book 15 devoted to Pythagoras, Ovid uses the *os* – the lips, mouth or face – as a metonymic figure for person in order to evoke a sense of what counts as "learned" discourse. In Book 1, this same metonymy indicates what in this poem counts as the difference between "human" and animal. But by contrast to Lucretius, who uses *rabies* to indicate the prophetic frenzy on a speaker's lips – "spumea rabies uaesana per ora effluit" (5.190) – and to Vergil, who uses the same noun as an index of prophecy on the Sybil's lips (*Aeneid*, 6.49), Ovid depicts Lycaon's metamorphosis by using *rabies* to capture an attempted utterance of considerable savagery. The foaming mouth of Lycaon, the poem's first human character, evokes the disturbing idea of a mouth not gifted with poetic prophecy but afflicted by the morbid disease of animals.

Framing the *Metamorphoses*, the mouths of Pythagoras and Lycaon seem to be inverse figures: one suggests learning, the cultivation of human potential, the other the complete loss of such cultivation.[8] But before we draw the conclusion that this difference marks some kind of linear, progressive movement across time and the epic – a dubious proposition in a poem dedicated to constant change and tending toward moments of startling irony – we should note that these two characters have rather more in common than might at first seem to be the case. That is, both Pythagoras and Lycaon strike us as human because of their desire to communicate and, more importantly for Ovid, because of their *failure* to do so.[9] Such failure, I submit, defines the human in the register of Ovidian desire – understood not only as "the cursed love of having" ("amor sceleratus habendi" 1.131) but also as the gap between the noise one makes with one's lips and what one actually thinks one wants to say

or do by means of those sounds.[10] Where Lycaon encounters a physical impediment – the actual shape of his lips – Pythagoras encounters a different, but no less intractable, problem: learned though his "mouth" may be, the words he speaks, no matter how true, are "not believed." These two predicaments – a physical change to one's mouth and a misfiring of the words one does, in fact, utter – will continue to characterize Renaissance depictions of subjectivity that arise from figures drawn out of Ovid's poem. Like Lycaon, Pythagoras (and by implication, the narrator) finds a voice that can do little more than cry out in the wilderness.

Both of these stories repeat the significant cultural and etymological trajectory I traced earlier in my introductory remarks on Philomela's mutilated, "speechless face" (*os mutum*). Although it quickly evolved to designate a person's face or features and eventually her "mood" or "character," the noun, *os*, *oris* was first used to denote the "lips" or mouth. The stories of Lycaon and Pythagoras, alongside Philomela's, tell us that a person's identity or character is crucially tied, for Ovid, to its etymological origin in the idea of the capacity for speech. The narrator's pronounced attention to mouths, lips, tongues, and speaking faces as defining features of humanity and personal identity is part of what I have called the "phonographic imaginary" that shapes both the larger narrative strategies of the *Metamorphoses* and the many erotic stories told in it. I call Ovid's representation of the human voice phonographic because, as we have just seen when the subject "Lycaon" flickers briefly into view precisely when estranged from the sounds issuing from his own *os*, the kinds of self-endorsing fantasies that Derrida describes as "phonocentric" are no sooner entertained in the *Metamorphoses* than they are undermined.[11]

Several post-structuralist readings of the story of Echo and Narcissus (by John Brenkman, Clair Nouvet, and Gayatri Spivak) have already attended to one influential place in the poem where the relationship between language, subjectivity, and voice becomes deeply problematic.[12] Commenting on Echo's iterative "replies" to Narcissus, for instance, Nouvet writes that "we must reevaluate our entire understanding" of the dialogue between them "as the story of a distortion introduced into a stable, original statement." Rather, we should see that when Echo "seems to send back Narcissus' utterance with a different meaning than the one he intended (a meaning which would be 'hers' and not 'his')," we are forced to acknowledge the possibility "that this 'other' meaning might already have been 'meant' by the original statement." In other words, "we can no longer decide on its 'true' intended meaning. The echo is not a distortion which affects the intended meaning of a statement. It

marks the impossibility ... of connecting a statement to the intention of a speaking consciousness."[13] Brenkman similarly points out that the Echo scene reveals only to occlude the aberrant grounds out of which we produce "character" as "voice-consciousness" from the impersonal, differential structures of language: "the dissemination of signifiers in the play of repetition and difference between utterance and echo is turned into a character's speech by linking a proper name, 'Echo,' to a set of signifieds. The result is the crystallization of a character and the representation of a voice-consciousness."[14] What is most striking about the *Metamorphoses*, from the perspective of this study, is that the erosion of a speaking subject from within her own voice – or rather, from within the convincing literary *effect* of "voice-consciousness" – is not the import of Echo's story alone. Rather, it is one of the narrator's central obsessions. In other words, Narcissus' question to Echo and, by implication, to himself – *ecquis adest?* ("is anyone there?" 3.380) – is a question we might justifiably ask of many of Ovid's characters, startled as they are by the unexpected sounds that fall from their lips.

Notice, too, that the body part chiefly at issue for Narcissus is once again the speechless *os*. He gazes in rapt attention at the beautiful lips in the pool that make no sound even though they seem to be moving ("quantum motu formosi suspicor *oris* / uerba refers aures non peruenientia nostras" [3.461–2]). From that observation of an *os* that makes no sound, Narcissus deduces the other within: the line that follows next is his famous lament, "iste ego sum." The dissemination of "differential signifiers" in his story means, as well, that we distinguish Narcissus' *os* (with a long o) from another, slightly different, *os* (with a short o) – Echo's *ossa* or the "bones" into which she dissolves: "ossa ferunt lapidis traxisse figuram" (3.399). First, Ovid estranges the idea of the speaking face when Narcissus complains that he cannot hear the words from his own reflected lips. And second, by pairing Narcissus' *os* with Echo's *os*, he opens up a differential movement within one of the poem's central words for speaking subjectivity.

This is not the only time Ovid does this to the *os*. Recall another resonant example of the speechless face, again from Book 1. The story of Io's metamorphosis captures what it means to be a subject by estranging the speaker from the noise that falls from her lips: "and with the effort to protest, a lowing sound issued from her mouth / and frightened by the sounds, she is terrified by her own voice" ("conatoque queri mugitus edidit *ore* / pertimuitque sonos propriaque exterrita uoce est" [1.637–38]). In Io's story, Frederick Ahl detects a complex interlacing of puns and anagrams. But the one that most concerns us here is that on the changed *ōs* of the "cow" or *bōs* she becomes ("bos quoque formosa est,"

3.612).[15] Through such figures as Narcissus' and Io's alienated *ora* and the literal play of signifiers associated with such alienation, the poem reminds us that as speaking subjects, we produce our fictions of person, and of self, from an impersonal network of differential relations (whether oral or graphic). Chief among these fictions of self is the phonocentric illusion of a voice – a voice that the narrator no sooner emphasizes than he dislocates, capturing that dislocation in his frightening motif of lips that may move but whose sounds do not correspond to what either we, or their owners, expect. We may now add to Philomela's story those of Lycaon, Pythagoras, Narcissus, and Io, characters whose sounds cannot achieve the effect their owners intend, whose moving lips are less than, or perhaps more than, mere instruments of the mind. It will not be necessary to rehearse Actaeon's story here to put him on this list as well. Io's terrified moo, Philomela's murmuring tongue, Lycaon's rabid foam, Actaeon's groans, Narcissus' confusion at the sight of his own soundless lips: each of these stories proposes an unnerving distance from the self-endorsing fantasy that Derrida calls "s'entendre parler."[16] Any being-in-language, these alien and alienating faces suggest, is but a fugitive illusion.

Ovid's poem-long preoccupation with the failed voices of both narrators and characters – and with their visual equivalent, the image of an *os mutum* – derives, in part, from his reflection on the history of epic as an oral genre, a song sung by a poet to his listening audience.[17] Mikhail Bakhtin would no doubt remind us that the *Metamorphoses*' many tropes for the voice, the mouth, and the speaking or speechless face are signs of epic's lengthy literary history – that authors like Ovid are "pouring" contemporary "artistic experience" into "pre-existing forms."[18] And indeed, Ovid establishes epic ambitions in the very first lines through the trope of the poet's singing voice and the invocation to the gods to help him sing his *carmen*.[19] But the fact that this momentarily epic "voice" in the poem's opening continues to tell stories about what it means to speak or to be unable to speak, to sing or to be silenced, is not merely evidence of the epic form in general. It also testifies to the particular tradition of Hellenistic poetry from which Ovid's poem springs and within which it defines itself: "the intervention of the figure of the narrator – focussing the reader's attention on the act of narration itself – is a well-known feature of the self-conscious literary stance of the Hellenistic poets."[20]

But Ovid's self-conscious, Hellenistic narrative stance relies on still further fantasies about the poet's voice – fantasies that are graphic as well as oral. I've called the poem's imaginary phonographic not only because Ovid so consistently disrupts the fantasy of phonocentrism but

because his metarhetorical figures continually grapple with the tension between the fiction of a speaking voice and the poem's own self-conscious (Hellenistic) scene of writing. Composed very late in the literary history of ancient epic but still opening with conventional epic diction and figures, Ovid's *Metamorphoses* opens with the fiction of an inspired poetic voice, the voice of a *uates*. But this fiction derived from a proximity between singer and listening audience that Roman readers knew very well had been lost long ago.[21] Ovid's figure of his own singing voice, in other words, could not help but remind contemporary readers of the opposite – that his poem is a *written* poetic performance. The poem's knowingly conventional trope of an inspired singer would remind his readers that they were just that: *readers* rather than a listening audience. By contrast to the conditions presumed to have given rise to the tropes of primary epic, Ovid's "voice" speaks to the reader's distance from the poet's voice and the poem's scene of writing – reminding us of his (and our) own belatedness in his unsettling habit of emptying out the poem's subjects by means of their own tongues. Out of the programmatic conventions of Hellenistic poetry, the narrator of the *Metamorphoses* forges his own, idiosyncratic version of what it means to compose a self-consciously written epic in which the narrator, alongside the various poets in the poem, still lays claim to a singing "voice" despite the fact that the conditions of primary epic have long since vanished.

In addition, we should note that many of the *Metamorphoses*' hallmark figures for the poet's narrative act also speak to the pressure of specific material writing practices far removed from epic origins. As we must examine more closely in a moment, the concluding lines of the *Metamorphoses* propose a complex mingling of the oral and the written. It is a closing consonant with Ovidian practice: he is a poet fond of alluding, both overtly and obliquely, to the medium of the written word. The *Ars Amatoria*, for example, gives explicit writing lessons to lovers; the narrator warns them to obliterate all traces of previous characters left in wax tablets when counterfeiting another's handwriting (3.495–96). The story of Byblis' desire for her brother stages a lengthy writing scene: picking up tablets, Byblis "writes and erases" what she cuts into the wax until the surface is completely filled with her words ("tenet ... ceram. / incipit et dubitat, scribit damnatque tabellas,/ et notat et delet ... plena reliquit / cera manum," "she holds the wax, begins writing and pauses, writes on the tablets and hates what she writes, both noting and erasing ... the wax, now full, releases her hand" 9.522–65). Because of such erotically charged dramatizations, I pointed to the image of wax melting in Pygmalion's fingers as a telling figure, suggesting that the statue melts the way it does because wax tablets were an important medium for

Roman writing.[22] I would also argue that it is no accident that Pythagoras' chief metaphor for his theory of metempsychosis – a theory often noted for its proximity to Ovidian metamorphosis[23] – is that of the changes taking place to a piece of wax. Similarly, the metapoetic figures surrounding Daphne's flight may mean that readers wonder if the bark that surrounds her body suggests, as well, that she has become Apollo's book – since the same noun *liber*, *-bri*, means both the bark of a tree and a book written for publication ("mollia cinguntur tenui praecordia libro" 1.549). Thus by the time we arrive at Byblis' story, whose name in Greek means "book," we can hardly avoid considering the phonographic, as well as erotic, complications of her internal debate about whether a written or a spoken proposition to her brother would have been more convincing.

But alongside Ovid's erotically charged allusions to the material conditions of ancient methods of writing, we would do well to remember, when thinking about the historical conditions that inform this phonographic imaginary, that the *Metamorphoses* was written during the retreat of Roman rhetoric from public debate. It was the product of a poet schooled in the art of declamation who knew, as everyone else knew, that oratory no longer carried the same political weight it was once thought to bear. "School-orations" (*scholastica*), ingenious exercises replacing "genuine public speech," became a highly mediated form of rhetorical display in which the presumed power of a speaker's voice to move or to change anything of which it speaks – rhetoric's aim – was badly compromised from the outset.[24] Ovid's recurrent fantasy about a voice that fails in its purpose may well mark something of such diminished expectations for rhetorical performance. In such political circumstances as those surrounding the shift toward declamation as a form of display under the principate, Ovid's exaggerated tropes of orality – that is, the power of Orpheus's voice to move even stones – as well as his attendant fascination with the many unexpected ways a voice can fail could not help but underline oratory's decline in public life.

But it is not merely because training in Roman declamation was predominantly oral that one might want to look closely at the precise contours of the voice in Ovidian poetics. It is also the case that the voice became the focus of explicit training and comment as the declaimer's chief instrument. Quintilian, for example,

> recommends the learning by heart of passages which will require loud, or argumentative, or colloquial, or modulated intonation ("clamorem et disputationem et sermonem et flexus" 11.3.25), and it seems probable, therefore, that the rehearsal, either by the master for imitation or by the pupil for criticism, of sections of speeches for this strictly limited purpose of *pronuntiatio* was what *declamatio* originally meant. The great exponents of *pronuntiatio*, of course, were the best actors of the stage; and the Roman student of rhetoric, who frequently had . . . to impersonate historical or mythological personages in his exercises, and to simulate their emotions, needed to be something of an actor.[25]

That an intensely rhetorical poem written by a former student of declamation should focus on the voice so frequently cannot surprise when we remember such training. Nor is his penchant for dramatizing the voices of mythological *personae* given the frequency of similar *prosopopoeiae* among declaimers. Read in the context of such an educational program, moreover, a debate like the one Byblis stages with herself – whether the modulations of her voice would have been more persuasive than her written words – might be thought to be a poet's displaced meditation on the difference between writing poetry and training for declamatory display. As we continue to think about the way the narrator represents himself and his own narrative act in the opening and closing lines of the epic, we should remember the historical contingencies – literary, material, political – that influenced Ovid's scene of writing and thus, in turn, helped give such a distinctive shape to his fictions about the power and limitations of the voice.

Reading lips

Once we see that the *Metamorphoses*' many stories about the fate of its characters' voices – male and female – refract the poet's representation of his own, we would do well to take a closer look at the complex figures that represent the narrator's relation to his "song" in the poem's opening and closing lines. In particular, the poem's final verses will enable us better to grasp the specifically "graphic" half of Ovid's phonographic imaginary because, as we will see more closely below, they ask us to imagine that both the poem and the poet's name are a kind of permanent writing never to be erased. But first, remember that Ovid begins the poem by calling on the gods to "breathe on these my undertakings." The poem's opening lines make the narrator a vessel for divine breath or, quite literally, "inspiration":

> In noua fert animus mutatas dicere formas
> corpora; di, coeptis (nam uos mutastis et illas)
> *adspirate* meis primaque ab origine mundi
> ad mea perpetuum deducite tempora carmen. (1.1–4)

My mind is moved to tell of bodies changed into new forms. Gods, *breathe on* these my undertakings, for you yourselves have wrought these changes, and bring down the perpetual song from the origin of the world to my present time.

To begin singing his song, the poet's "mind" "moves" to speak by drawing breath from somewhere else. The very first word that names an authorial presence in the poem is "mind" or *animus*. Strictly speaking, this "mind" is etymologically consonant with the invocation, "coeptis ... *adspirate* meis," ("breathe on my beginnings") because *animus*, the narrator's word for himself, is derived from ἄνεμος, a noun designating the wind both external and internal to the body.[26] Cicero, for example, refers to the Greek root for both *animus* ("mind") and *anima* ("soul") when he derives the former from the latter, observing that he does so because the first meaning of *anima* is "air, breeze, wind" and that it therefore eventually signifies "the vital principle or breath of life."[27] Mind and voice, on such an etymological understanding, are indissolubly linked: the movement of air that enables speech – the ἄνεμος inside the body – defines one's mind or *animus*. Nor is Ovid's opening reference to a speaking *animus* unique in the poem. This constellation of ideas – inner self (both mind and soul), voice, and the breeze – becomes one of the poem's prominent concerns.[28] Both *animus* and *anima* surface hundreds of times in the narrative. We learn, for instance, that the derivation of Pythagoras' *anima* and the narrator's *animus* from "the breath of life" is pertinent to Ovid's representation of life and death: birth is the entry of an *infans* (literally, "without speech") into the "common air" ("infans ... communes exit in auras," 7.126–27); and death comes when a speaker exhales his or her *anima* onto the wind (either *aura* or *uentus*).[29]

As a metaphor for one's mind or thoughts, the wind suggests that like ἄνεμος, *animus* exerts a force that can, without warning, exceed the body that contains it. Thoughts come and go in the mind like the breeze; sometimes they work for the thinker, sometimes against. Ovid's metaphor means that one's thoughts, fickle as the wind, cannot always be said to express what one intends or even what one thinks one desires. Such an analogy between *animus* and ἄνεμος, in other words, entertains an idea of interior life consonant with Freud's theory of the unconscious: the wind is a force that exceeds the subject's declared intentions and desires. And insofar as Ovid associates ἄνεμος with the idea of a speaking consciousness, the poet's opening trope for himself touches on the problem of being subject to language as an impersonal force that a speaker may harness but that always originates elsewhere. Ovid's pervasive idea of *anim*ation, in other words, traces a kind of pneumatic movement through the poem that both fills up speaking subjects and empties them out. For the wind that can give you a voice – the ἄνεμος in *animus* and *anima* – can also take it away. The death of Orpheus, which the final section examines in more detail, succinctly captures the close, etymologically resonant connection that the narrator draws between the mind, the mouth, the voice, and the passage of air inside and outside of the body:

> ... ad uatis fata recurrunt
> tendentemque manus et in illo tempore primum
> inrita dicentem nec quicquam uoce mouentem
> sacrilegae perimunt, perque os, pro Iuppiter, illud
> auditum saxis intellectumque ferarum
> sensibus in uentos anima exhalata recessit. (11.38–43)

... they ran back to kill the bard who, holding out suppliant hands, for the first time spoke in vain, nor did he move any of them with his voice; the impious women slew him and – Oh Jupiter! – through lips that had been heard by stones and understood by wild beasts, his soul fled, exhaled on the winds.

Where the voice or *animus* of the poem's narrator takes inspiration from the movement of external air – the breath of the gods – Orpheus' voice and inner self (his *anima*) mingle, in death, with the breeze circulating around his body. We should not be surprised, therefore, when a series of apostrophes allow the narrator to take his poem back from the dying Orpheus, apostrophes that work hard to suggest that this narrative *animus* or speaking voice is picking up where Orpheus' leaves off ("Te maestae uolucres, Orpheu, te turba ferarum, / te rigidi silices ..." 11.44–45).

The story of Daphne's flight, "swifter than the breeze," to escape the menacing "breath" from Apollo down her neck similarly derives from this network of associations between wind and voice as the vital principle of life. So, too, does the story of Cephalus and Procris. In this story, in fact, the breeze quite literally inverts the rhetoric of animation. Not only is the wind an agent that bears voice and *anima* away, but the word for breeze – *aura* – causes yet another death through the mouth. One day Cephalus indulged in an elaborate apostrophe to the wind or *aura* ("*aura* petebatur ... *auram* exspectabam ... / '*aura* ... uenias' cantare solebam") and was overheard by someone. His signifier is then transformed on other lips into the personal name, "Aura" (7.811–23). No longer master of his own spoken word, Cephalus does not know that the eavesdropper has personified his signifier, telling Procris her husband is in love with "Aura." His spontaneous poem, addressed to the breeze, soon turns deadly: Procris spies on her husband out of jealousy, is herself overheard, mistaken for an animal, and killed by his javelin. Cephalus no sooner identifies his wife's "voice" ("uox ... fidae / coniugis, ad uocem praeceps amensque cucurri," 843–44) than she dies, like Orpheus, orally: "she looked at me and *exhaled her spirit on my mouth*" ("me spectat et in me / infelicem *animam nostroque exhalat in ore*" 7.860–61). Keeping such stories as those of Orpheus and Procris in mind, it is not difficult to see

why Petrarch's seminal pun – *L'aura/Laura* – emerged as a reading of Ovid's poem. The Petrarchan breeze does more than commemorate the story of Apollo and Daphne, fleeing "faster than the breeze." *L'aura* is a figure that captures Ovid's preoccupation with the intimate relation between the poetic subject as "voice-consciousness" and the impersonal (or transpersonal) movement of the wind.

Where Ovid opens his *carmen* with the figure of its author's singing *animus* helped along by the breath of the gods, he imagines an equally compelling fantasy of vocal animation in the final lines of the *Metamorphoses*. In these famous verses, Ovid tells the story of his own metamorphosis, as a poet, into a kind of eternal presence beyond the life of his body.

> Iamque opus exegi, quid nec Iouis ira nec ignis
> nec poterit ferrum nec edax abolere uetustas.
> cum uolet, illa dies, quae nil nisi corporis huius
> ius habet, incerti spatium mihi finiat aeui:
> parte tamen meliore mei super alta perennis
> astra ferar, nomenque erit indelebile nostrum,
> quaque patet domitis Romana potentia terris,
> *ore legar populi*, perque omnia saecula fama,
> siquid habent ueri uatum praesagia, uiuam. (15.871–79)

And now I have finished a work which neither Jove's anger nor fire nor iron nor gnawing age shall have power to destroy. That day which has authority only over my body may when it pleases put an end to the uncertain span of my life; with the better part of me I shall soar immortal high above the stars and my name shall not be extinguished. Wherever the sway of Rome shall extend over the conquered lands, *I shall be read by the tongues of men* and for all time to come, if the prophecies of bards have any truth in them, by and in my fame shall I live.[30]

In a moment we will take a closer look at what the figure of the reader's *os* (l.878) means for the author's self-definition as *animus*. But first, it is important to observe that at the end of his poem, the narrator has added a distinctly graphic resonance to the figures with which he represents himself. In place of his corporeal form, the form of his poem and his name will give the narrator a life beyond that of the body. He tells us, more precisely, that he possesses an "indelible" name that cannot be erased ("nomenque erit indelebile nostrum" 876). The adjective, *indelebile*, is Ovid's invention.[31] It derives from *deleo*, *-ere*, a verb whose first meaning is graphic: "to remove [written characters or other marks] by wiping or scratching out; to efface, to wipe clean (a tablet)."[32]

To see the importance that Ovid attaches to the trope of a name one cannot erase – *nomenque erit indelebile nostrum* – we should remember that he was fond of including his own name as a way of drawing

attention to himself as the author of his poems. In the *Tristia*, he compares himself to Actaeon as someone who saw something he shouldn't, only to distinguish himself as one who managed to achieve a "name" recognized by a "crowd of learned men": "I bear a great name throughout the world; and a throng of learned men are acquainted with Naso" ("grande tamen toto nomen ab orbe fero, / turbaque doctorum Nasonem nouit").[33] In the last line of *Ars Amatoria*, the narrator writes his own name into the poem by imagining the hands of readers as they inscribe "Naso" on the bodies of their erotic victims: "Ut quondam iuuenes, ita nunc, mea turba, puellae / inscribant spoliis 'Naso magister erat'" ("As once the youths, so now let young women, my entourage, write upon their spoils, "Naso was Master").[34] Closing the *Metamorphoses* with a similar signature, Ovid declares his poem will confer on him an "indelible name" that may last as long as Roman *imperium*.

To lay claim to his place as author, Ovid likes to represent himself as a signifier – a *nomen* that will be spoken *or* written and hence recognized by "crowds" of readers. Representing himself as a subject within a social discourse, Ovid lays claim to a place as author or *magister*. But the *Metamorphoses*' newly coined *indelebile* also suggests – as does the imagined scene of readers writing Ovid's name on the bodies of their lovers in *Ars Amatoria* – that we think a little further about the heavily graphic emphasis in Ovid's fantasies about his own social, authorial identity. The written signifier of the author's name inscribes him as the poem's ghostly presence, still there somehow in or around his poem even if his body has disappeared. Ovid's idea of an unerasable name appears, moreover, when the narrator turns to address himself to another. The author's *nomen* can have force only if carried on by the hands or mouths of readers; Ovid's continued presence depends on the fantasy of a reading counterpart who recognizes and is dedicated to speaking or writing his words and his name. The moment of the authorial subject's ostensible immediacy in and transcendence of language is qualified because his identity as author depends on the signifying work of others. I would therefore call Ovid's final scene of address a phonographic *imaginary* in order to evoke the strong, Lacanian sense of "imaginary" as Laplanche defines it: a "dual relationship based on ... the image of a counterpart," of "another who is me" and that "can exist only by virtue of the fact that the ego is originally another."[35]

The form that this constitutive "other" may take is quite specific: the poem's author will transcend writing because his name and his *opus* will be "read aloud" on the *os* or "lips of the people" ("ore legar populi" 15.878). In such an address, the idea of Ovid's written *opus* and *nomen* return to the vocal resonances that have characterized the poem's

depiction of character since the moment the narrator announced he would sing a *perpetuum carmen*. Once again, Ovid asks us to consider the *os* – this time, *os populi*. Because his written words will be spoken on the lips of the people, the poet will "achieve fame for all time." Ovid then ends the poem with the declarative prediction, *uiuam*, "I shall live." Ovid's phonographic imaginary (the dynamic relation between himself and his readers) turns the idea of his poetic voice into a fantasy about the transforming effect of a reader's voice on a poet's "indelible," written letters. The *Metamorphoses* receives its author's signature at the moment that it predicts its own future scenes of spoken reading, readers' lips becoming the corporeal means by which the fictional time of the *perpetuum carmen* extends indefinitely. In a poem devoted to the antithetical processes of *anim*ation and petrification, we must not forget the fiction proposed by the poem's frame: the poetic *animus* that inaugurates the poem first claims to be part of a divine wind and then imagines its own perpetual "animation" by means of an oral reading of his written words. Animation is not merely (or not only) a vivifying principle for Ovid. It is, quite strictly speaking, a *poetic* principle: "breath" and with it the sound of the voice are crucial to the narrator's self-representation in the poem. His poetic *animus* "moves" like the wind ("animus fert . . . dicere") through the "changing forms" of bodies and of written letters to produce a song that is "perpetual" not merely because of its temporal scope, but because it is imagined to be a writing continually revivified by the "lips" and breath of others. Both this signature effect and the oral fantasy of letters spoken aloud are marshalled to animate the poet, to revivify "part of me" by carrying that "me" beyond the body and beyond time ("parte tamen meliore mei super alta perennis / astra ferar").

One further aspect of material history helps to situate this distinctively Ovidian figure of the reader's devoted *os*. Bakhtin observes that because of their formation before the advent of signifying practices bound to writing (or printing), genres like ancient epic and lyric offer so many tropes for the voice because they are not "organically receptive" to the "mute perception" of silent reading.[36] Ovid's closing figure of readers' lips speaking the written words of the *Metamorphoses* out loud, in other words, also asks to be read in terms of ancient practices of writing and reading. And as Bernard Knox has shown, reading in antiquity was almost always a reading out loud.[37] The readerly habit of vocalizing written words provided Ovid with a convincing material substitute for the epic fantasy of singing one's verses to a live audience. The final figure of his reader's speaking *os* does more than call upon a contemporary practice to stand in for the absent audience of primary epic, however. It also allows Ovid to transform the ancient habit of vocalizing written

texts into a kind of authorial ontology: "I shall be read aloud on the lips of the people . . . I shall live" ("ore legar populi . . . uiuam").

As we'll see in subsequent chapters, such a phonographic definition of authorial subjectivity was lost on neither Petrarch nor Shakespeare. If Ovid's mode of self-representation – the figure of the *os* and its attendant rhetoric of animation – derived from a complex network of literary, material, and political histories, we may grasp something of the profound effect that Ovid's particular way of inflecting these histories had on Renaissance authors by remembering Shakespeare's phonographic figures for his poems to the young man:

> Your monument shall be my gentle verse,
> Which eyes not yet created shall ore-read,
> And toungs to be, your beeing shall rehearse,
> When all the breathers of this world are dead,
> You still shall liue (such vertue hath my Pen)
> Where breath most breaths, euen in the mouths of men.[38]

Similarly, Petrarch's recurrent dream about the breezes touching Laura's hair where he cannot (*Rime Sparse*, no. 52) and Shakespeare's Pygmalion fantasy about a "chisel that can cut breath" (*The Winter's Tale*, 5.3.77–79) indicate that Ovid's rhetoric of the speaking subject's *anima*tion carried considerable persuasive force.

There is yet another text worth remembering briefly alongside the written *imperium* imagined to hold sway over the tongues of the *Metamorphoses*' readers. Two epistles from the *Heroides* – by Acontius and Cydippe – draw on ancient reading practices quite directly to entertain the fantasy of an author whose words are potent enough to conquer a reader's tongue and body. These letters tell us that Cydippe's sexual subjection to Acontius is the literal subjection of a text's reader to its author. Because she is a creature of habit and therefore read aloud the words of a marriage vow that Acontius had inscribed on an apple and rolled in front of her, Cydippe is pledged by her tongue against her will to marry the writer of those words. She begins her complaint, therefore, by noting that she has had to remember, contrary to custom, to read Acontius' second missive in silence: "Pertimui, scriptumque tuum sine murmure legi / iuraret ne quos inscia lingua deos" ("All fearful, I read what you wrote without so much as a murmur, lest my tongue might swear, without knowing it, by some divinity").[39] Reading another's words aloud in this story subdues the unlucky owner of that tongue to the hand of the one who wrote them. Cydippe surrenders, and the *Heroides* ends by acknowledging the inescapable power of one more author: "doque libens uictas in tua uota manus" ("and I freely yield my vanquished hands in fulfillment of your prayers" 21.240). In this story,

the *Metamorphoses*' subjection of reader's lips to writer's words for the sake of authorial self-representation becomes a relationship of sexual domination.[40]

Despite the similarity between Acontius' triumph over Cydippe's tongue and Ovid's claim that his words will survive on the lips of readers, however, important differences separate Ovid's narrator from Acontius. The ostensibly animating, vocal figures representing the narrator in the *Metamorphoses*' frame suggest something unexpected: the voice "singing" this *perpetuum carmen* can never entirely be said to belong to its author. The breath that inspires his song comes from somewhere else (from the gods) and will be passed, at the poem's closing, onto the lips of future generations (his readers). The voice that enables the narrator to "sing" about "bodies changed to new forms" precedes the poem's author and carries on beyond the life of his body. More striking still, the phrase that appears in the final lines of the poem so unequivocally to declare the narrator's eternal presence turns out, as well, to originate with someone else. Thus when Ovid claims "ore legar populi ... uiuam," he is echoing Ennius' famous epitaph, "uolito uiuus per ora uirum" ("Living, I fly through the mouths of men").[41] Like his predecessor, this author claims to "live" *per ora*. Similarly, commentators often note that beginning with *iamque opus exegi*, the narrator revisits a series of highly conventional topoi in his closing passage. Most obviously, he echoes Vergil and Horace (particularly *Odes* 3.30, "exegi monumentum"). But he also draws on a host of other texts known to us now only in fragments.[42] In other words, Ovid's final lines may claim to represent something essential to the author – *parte ... meliore mei* – and thus to constitute a culminating moment of authorial self-presentation.[43] But the self depicted in these lines turns out to be a palimpsest of other voices, a complex fabric of quotations.

Such a narrator, phrasing the fantasy of his own survival by way of commonplaces and quotations, resembles no character in his poem so closely as his own Echo. Like the narrator she, too, reveals herself by piecing together the sounds made by others. She, too, is preserved beyond the death of her body merely as "voice" and "sound":

> ... uox tantum atque ossa supersunt:
> uox manet, ossa ferunt lapidis traxisse figuram.
> inde latet siluis nulloque in monte uidetur,
> omnibus auditur: sonus est, qui uiuit in illa. (3.398–401)

... only voice and bones remain; then voice remains, as they say her bones were transformed into a figure of stone. Then she hides in the woods and is seen nowhere on the mountain, but is heard by everyone; it is sound that lives in her.

With this sound heard by "omnes," we are very close to the narrator's self-portrait as sound – a sound heard by everyone because carried along on reader's lips for as long as Rome's *imperium* lasts.

There is, of course, an even more general sense in which Echo is a compelling figure for Ovid's narrator. Few writers have so fundamentally based their poetic project on recycling the stories, and sometimes the words, of other previous discourses and texts. Recalling the revisionary declaration, *in noua fert animus* (1.1), E. J. Kenney observes that "the whole scope of his poem demanded that he reshape and reinterpret the myths."[44] Like Echo's literal repetition of Narcissus' words, Ovid's metamorphic project reshapes both the stories of myths and, quite often, the particular form given them by previous poetic texts. That Echo should dissolve to "uox" alone, then, I take as another sign of our phonographic narrator – or at least, of his imaginary. In her capacity as *uox* preserved beyond the body, Echo doubles her narrator, struggling to find precisely such vocal preservation himself: "it is sound that lives in her" ("sonus est, qui uiuit in illa"); and "I shall live, read aloud on the tongues of people" ("ore legar populi ... uiuam"). We therefore find an unexpected turn in the poem's final line because Ovid makes repetition a condition not merely of his character's fate but of his own. Derrida has variously demonstrated that sheer iterability is the condition of language. Ovid appears to make it the condition of being an authorial subject. By so doing, the poet confronts the fact that despite his own desire for survival in and through his verse, his written text is also, precisely *because* it is written, "made to do without him."[45]

The relationship Ovid sets up in the last line is not entirely analogous to Echo's, however. As an author who hopes to be given life on the "lips of the people," the narrator is, rather, proposing to play Narcissus to the *reader*'s Echo. I have suggested that by signing the last lines of his poem with his *nomen*, Ovid tries to lay claim to ownership of the poem and hence (according to this fiction) of himself. And though something of Ovid may indeed be preserved in his poem – or the many poems generated out of his – the form of such preservation continues to call into question the status of the subject behind the utterance. Although the poet pictures his own survival on his readers' lips, his own earlier story of the same circumstance stresses two problems the final lines occlude: even the most faithful, literal revoicing alters the original; and every "original" utterance is, as Nouvet suggests, inhabited by an echo within. Taking Narcissus' position in the fictional game of voicing and revoicing does little to secure authorial presence in the poem's words and generates, instead, an unending future of echoing readers. Because Echo's repetitions tell us that meaning is no one's to own – a problem of *différance* not

obliterated by mere temporal priority – and because Ovid recalls this scene in the final lines of self-representation, the projection involved in "connecting a statement to the intention of a speaking consciousness" is also part of the predicament in which the poem's author finds himself (either with respect to his poem as linguistic artifact or as part of literary history).

Ovid's final lines, then, erode their own declaration of transcendence in a variety of ways. Both the figure of readers's lips, repeating the text out loud, and the borrowed phrases that Ovid pieces together to imagine his transformation-by-reading tell us that Ovid's place as author of this text – what he calls "the better part of me" – is, like Echo's, neither that of origin nor final destination. Despite the dream that somehow the poem's words will preserve their author somewhere "beyond the stars," the author's "voice" is in a strange way displaced and temporary. The only voice the narrator finds, we might say, is a collective, transpersonal fiction: as a speaking subject he is inhabited by the Other; his voice exists only in relation to the voices of others, at the level of the imaginary. The poem's closing figure of the reader's *os*, in sum, tells us that the author's voice in the *Metamorphoses*, like the many failed voices that make up the body of the poem, exceeds the command of its imagined "speaking" subject.

Will the poem's future readers, repeating Ovid's words out loud, be any more faithful than Echo? Certainly the literary history of the *Metamorphoses* would suggest otherwise. These readings, even the most faithful "translations," return to the initial text only to change it. The course of European literary history will therefore tease out an effect similar to the echo-effect that Nouvet locates within the poem. That is, ensuing revisionary returns to Ovid's poem ask us to consider whether the "other," new meanings revealed in later poetry "might already have been 'meant' by the original" narrative.[46] We might well believe that something of the author, like something of Narcissus, persists even in the alteration. But despite the last lines, that "something" is not "voice-consciousness." Self-dislocation rather than self-presence defines the narrative "voice" of the *Metamorphoses*. We see evidence of such negative knowledge about the author's disarticulation in the impersonal, differencing networks of language, I submit, in the many scenes in Ovid's poem in which speakers are startled by the sound of their own tongue.

Ovid's tone in these final lines about his survival as vocalized text is therefore quite complex. At once assertive and ironic, he prefaces his final declaration of eternal life, *uiuam*, with a qualification: "*if* the prophecies of bards have any truth in them," ("siquid habent ueri uatum praesagia," 15.879). Such a mixed tone is entirely consonant with the last

book's equivocal subject matter: the fate of Rome and the status of the other poets who had praised it. As Leonard Barkan comments, Ovid's final book points straight toward the contradiction between his declaration of eternal Roman *imperium* and Pythagoras' view of "history as an arena of unending change." Because Pythagoras' "example is of the passing from Troy to Rome," Barkan writes, "we can hardly avoid the implication that the present form will also dissolve ... Whether we see the subject of the speech as mutability, dissolution, metempsychosis, or endless cyclical change, we must recognize that Pythagoras is no celebrant of the eternal *pax Romana*." And because Pythagoras' speech is "tightly bound up with the spirit of Ovid's whole poem and rather strikingly at odds with the Augustan empire,"[47] Ovid's last line – "if the prophecies of bards (*uatum praesagia*) have any truth in them" – also implicitly criticizes Vergil, conveniently caricatured as celebrant of that empire.[48] For Ovid, the honorific Roman word for the poet as a bard or "seer" – *uates* – is often less than honorific. Satirizing Vergil's status as *uates* in the opening of the *Amores*,[49] Ovid uses the word again in the closing moments of the *Metamorphoses* to let us know that his predecessor is one of his targets. Although Ovid claims that his fame will last as long as Rome's *imperium*, he also connects Rome's fate to Troy's. The context of Book 15 therefore signals that this *imperium* is rather less secure than the narrator's seeming boast – or his account of Vergil's claims – might lead one to think.

Ovid's last lines strike a precarious balance between irony and confidence in the matter of Rome's future. My analysis of Ovid's phonographic figures suggests that such precariousness applies, as well, to the author's figures for himself as vocalized text. Indeed, Ovid links the idea of his own permanence as a writing and speaking subject to the idea of Rome's *imperium* by way of a strangely mixed series of figures. At once boasting and funereal, his concluding verses turn the poem into a kind of epitaph that perpetually announces its author's continued absent presence. Like the final lines of the *Ars Amatoria*, the last verses of the *Metamorphoses* imagine the appearance of the author's name, written or spoken, as a kind of military victory; for the author's triumph over the bodies of lovers in the first ("inscribant spoliis") we find another over the poet's own body and the tongues of the rest of the Roman world in the second. Such conclusions, clearly the product of a poet skilled in the discourse of *militia amoris*, are more than merely assertive. They bring together two literary and cultural practices that are worth briefly remembering here: the epic boast (or εὖχος) and funerary epitaphs.[50] With respect to the εὖχος, Sheila Murnaghan describes the function of the hero's boast in the *Iliad* as part of the "constant impulse to replace

bodily engagement with speech." She observes that "by boasting, a hero is able to go on using his voice rather than his body as a way to impress himself upon the world." Such an impression takes two characteristic verbal forms: "a name and a narrative, perhaps a genealogy."[51] In place of a hero's particular genealogy, Ovid has written the genealogy of the world, appending his name to that rather grander story. In Ovid's rendition of the epic εὖχος – at once aestheticizing and ironic – it is precisely the poet's narrative ("iamque *opus* exegi") and the poet's name ("*nomen*que erit indelebile nostrum") that are to replace his body in its battle against time. He claims that his words subdue not a particular antagonist on a particular battlefield, but time and the tongues of everyone else who speaks in the Roman world.

And with respect to the funeral monument, Jean-Pierre Vernant describes the Greek epic hero's relationship to language and body in death, a description that may help us see a little more clearly why the closing lines of Ovid's poem sound like an epitaph for its author:

> When his body disappears, vanishes, what remains below of the hero? Two things. First of all the σῆμα, or μνῆμα, the stele, the funeral memorial erected on his tomb, which will remind the generations of men to come of his name, his renown, his exploits ... Second, parallel to the funeral monument, there is the song of praise that faithfully remembers high deeds of the past ... the poetic word ... snatches them from the anonymity of death.[52]

Two artifacts, stele and song, replace the hero's body upon its death; signs remain the only means for the hero to "impress himself upon the world." Ovid's final lines turn the poem itself into a kind of stele, turning his written text into a kind of monumental verbal artifact that will impress its author upon the world after his death. And indeed, several phrases in Ovid's closing lines for *his* song – *iamque opus exegi* and *nomen indelebile* – have long reminded commentators of the highly conventional trope of building a poem as building a monument.[53] As Jesper Svenbro points out of epitaphs on Greek funerary monuments, moreover, these texts frequently called upon passers-by, as does Ovid in these final lines, to lend their voices to the letters inscribed on the stone by reading the words out loud.[54] When Ovid echoes the suggestive line attributed by Cicero to Ennius' epitaph ("Living, I fly through the mouths of men"),[55] he is engaging in a literary version of a complex phonographic, social ritual. The ritual can extend life from Ennius to Ovid, we are asked to imagine, by way of a multitude of animating tongues.

If we keep both the heroic boast and the epitaph in mind when reading Ovid's final lines, we come to see that in addition to political irony there is also something we might call an irony of the subject. On the one hand, if we attend to ancient reading practices – for poems as well as epitaphs – we hear a seductive fantasy behind the figure of the reader's speaking lips: Ovid marshals the ancient habit of vocalizing written texts into a kind of vivifying, epic battle against the mortal body and time. Because the very idea of metamorphosis, as Charles Segal comments, "militates against [the] preservation of the unique personality and his unforgettable deeds," we are not surprised to find Ovid close with the figures of a *nomen indelebile* and a poetic text as a kind of stele as a way of overcoming that contradiction.[56] As passers-by are summoned to read words carved in tombstones out loud, to lend their breath and life to letters carved on a monument, readers' speaking lips are to give voice to the poem's written words and thereby assure the author's continued presence "above the stars." And as my comparison of this boast with Acontius' trick for conquering the reluctant Cydippe should suggest, the poet's continued presence beyond death requires subjection – the subjection of all other living tongues in Roman territory. But on the other hand, if we attend to what these lines *do* – to how they come to signify these ideas – we feel a significant skeptical undercurrent pulling against this boastful proposition for authorial presence and mastery. The self-conscious interlacing of conventional topoi, the citations of Ennius and of Horace, the graphic figure of an unerasable name, the (funerary) idea of a reader's speaking lips lending life to written letters, the allusion to Echo's iterations in the mouth of the reader as Other: all these poetic and rhetorical concerns mean that deeply Ovidian questions remain. Whose "voice" are we supposed to be hearing? Whose conquering "poetic word" is this? Ovid's closing figures may well propose a phonographic rhetoric of animation predicated on a fantasy of subjecting others to the overwhelming power of one's words. But at the same time they also convey a certain skepticism about whether anyone really owns these words. Impersonal and disconcertingly hollow, the poem's concluding verses ask us to inquire along with Narcissus – or is it with Echo? – "is anyone here?"[57]

The rhetoric of animation

We've seen that the narrator of the *Metamorphoses* oscillates between a dream of linguistic animation – the tenacious fiction of voice-consciousness – and an uneasy sense that language, especially (and disturbingly) *spoken* language, exceeds the subjects who try to use it. Once we perceive that the numerous stories the narrator tells about alienated and alienating voices have as much to do with the predicaments of the poem's author as they do with the those of his characters, we are in a better position to ask how the poem's many dislocating voices bear upon Ovid's representation of the body in general and of gendered bodies in par-

ticular. I have implicitly been suggesting that figures such as Echo's *uox*, Io's terrified moo, and Philomela's murmuring *lingua* unhinge the fantasy about the self as speaking consciousness that Ovid's opening rhetoric of animation initially proposes. Such figures remind us of the various ways that we are subject to the impersonal, mechanical functioning of language, by which I mean that it is, by definition, made to do without us. They therefore darken the narrator's closing vision of personal transcendence by way of the voice. Similar effects often follow from the sound of women's voices in Ovid's poem, as we'll see in further detail. But before we look at the way the idea of a female voice qualifies the more optimistic overtones to Ovid's rhetoric of vocal animation, I must first be a little more precise about what kind of relationship pertains between the poem's various voices and the bodies that contain them. I will then be able to clarify exactly what sort of story the narrator proposes in order to give that relationship an erotic, and distinctly gendered, shape.

When Ovid imagines his own preservation as author in the poem's final lines, he proposes a dialectic between two apparently different entities: the mind (represented as voice-consciousness) and the body. The poet's body will die but the "better part of him" will survive because other lips read his poem out loud.[58] The first thing to notice is that Ovid's closing fantasy of surviving beyond his body's death – and the materiality of the written word – repeats the images that Pythagoras used to describe the process of metempsychosis earlier in Book 15. Specifically, Ovid tells us that as a voiced name and text, the author will survive whatever "fire ... or the gnawing tooth of time" can do to his body (15.871–12, "nec ignis / ... nec edax abolere uetustas"). These tropes explicitly recall those that Pythagoras used: *anima*, the philosopher declares, persists despite "the burning pyre or the wasting power of time" ("siue rogus flamma seu tabe uetustas" [15.156]). Concerning Ovid's self-representation in the last lines, therefore, Simone Viarre remarked that the evident parallels with Pythagoras transform the narrator into "un héros ... pythagoricien."[59]

Pythagoras' narrative about transcending the body depends on a distinction between *anima* and the *formae* and *figurae* it temporarily occupies:

> omnia mutantur, nihil interit: errat et illinc
> huc uenit, hinc illuc, et quoslibet occupat artus
> spiritus eque feris humana in corpora transit
> inque feras noster, nec tempore deperit ullo,
> utque nouis facilis signatur cera *figuris*
> nec manet ut fuerat nec *formas* seruat easdem,

> sed tamen ipsa eadem est, animam sic semper eandem
> esse, sed in uarias doceo migrare *figuras*. (15.167–72)

All things change, nothing dies: the spirit wanders and comes now here, now there, and occupies various bodies, moving from animals into human bodies and from human to animal form, but never dies – just as pliant wax, stamped with new *figures*, does not remain the same as it was nor preserve the same *forms* yet still is the selfsame wax, so the soul is always the same, but I teach that it passes into a variety of *figures*.

At the end of his long speech, Pythagoras again describes the process of moving through bodies as one of changing *formae* (455).

With this simile, Pythagoras tells another of the poem's many narratives about the body that carry metapoetic weight. The two nouns Pythagoras opposes to *anima* – *figura* and *forma* – convey both corporeal and linguistic meanings.[60] As with Ovid's pun on Philomela's *lingua*, these nouns, too, vacillate between designating the form of the body and forms of language. I have already outlined the various meanings of *figura*. *Forma* bifurcates in the same two directions. *Forma* can refer to corporeal form, material appearance, contour, figure, shape; it can also refer to physical beauty: the narrator tells us that Daphne's *forma* is "augmented" by flight and that the *forma* of Pygmalion's statue captivates its maker. But as the rhetorical undercurrent in both stories about beautiful female "forms" should also alert us, *forma* also refers to style of composition and generally to poetic or rhetorical forms of speech.[61] The word certainly occurs in numerous ekphrastic scenes in Ovid's poem that ask readers to compare the poem's "form" to other forms of art – which, given the narrator's interest in the connections between visual and verbal registers, is often sculpture (i.e. 1.405–6; 4.675–77). And finally, *forma* also came to designate the grammatical quality, condition, or "form" of a word. Varro uses the word *forma* to designate the literal means by which one discerns the inflected *differences* between words in Latin.[62] In his description of writing love letters in *Ars Amatoria*, Ovid directly plays on these corporeal and linguistic senses: "barbarous language" in a woman's letter, the narrator warns, may do harm to her compositional style or "pretty form" ("et nocuit formae barbara lingua bonae," 3.482). It should therefore come as no surprise that the god of poetry wants to lay hands not only on Daphne's *figura* (1.547) but also on her *forma* (489, 530): when figure and style are missing, a poet's words are indeed "inperfecta" (526).

We might therefore understand the distinction Pythagoras proposes between *anima* and its changing bodily "forms" as the culminating thematic expression of the poetic, rhetorical, and grammatical aspects of *forma* and *figura* that occasionally surface in the *Metamorphoses*. That

Pythagoras should choose wax as the vehicle for his simile indicates, as would a similar comparison to "ink" today, that something other than corporeal form is also at issue. When Ovid alludes to this speech in the context of his closing meditation on the power of his poem to defy the ravages of time, he reminds us to think again about the metapoetic undercurrent of Pythagoras' speech. The narrator's allusion draws on that undercurrent in order to propose a significant analogy for his rhetoric of animation: like the *anima* that Pythagoras claims moves through the material forms of bodies, the narrator's *animus* moves through the material forms of the poem's letters (an idea derived, in part, from the culturally persuasive practices of vocalizing written letters in texts and epitaphs). When the last lines move from Ovid's written text to the reader's speaking *os*, we are reading a poet's specifically verbal rendition of the theory that material form is a vehicle for the soul or mind that lives beyond it.

If we read the figure of the poet's speaking *animus* in the *Metamorphoses'* first line alongside Pythagoras' theory of the imperishable *anima*, we may also wonder if the *mutatas formas* of which the narrator's "mind turns to speak" in the poem's opening are indeed something more than "the changing forms of bodies." Suspended by the grammar of Ovid's opening construction, particularly by the delayed agreement between the general neuter plural, *noua*, and the noun it modifies, *corpora* – "*In noua* fert animus mutatas dicere formas / *corpora*" – we are briefly encouraged to think of *mutatas formas* very generally – perhaps even as the changing "forms" of language that provide this revisionary, Hellenistic narrator with the material for his poem. Over the course of Ovid's narrative, this double focus expands. In addition to *forma* and *figura*, Ovid uses a number of words to convey a corporeal, physical meaning on the one hand and a rhetorical, poetic, graphic, or generally linguistic one on the other. Recall some of the poem's more prominent words for designating corporeal and poetic form at once: *pes* (physical foot and metrical foot); *membrum* (part of the body and part of a speech or literary work); *imago* (visible form or shape and representation, simile); *lingua* (corporeal tongue and language); *signum* (an identifying mark and the impression or mark in a piece of wax); *simulacrum* (a body's outward appearance and statue or image); and *mouere* (to move physically and to move by means of words). As increased scholarly attention to Ovid's metapoetic moments attests, this double focus only grows as the narrative proceeds. By the time we arrive at the death of the poet Orpheus, his *anima* "exhaled on the winds," we should not be surprised to read that Orpheus's *membra* – fragments of the poet's body and of his sentences[63] – lie scattered on the shores of a river. Such a double focus is, of course,

consonant with the feature so often noted about the *Metamorphoses*: the continual movement between literal and figural meanings.

I am comparing Ovid's closing figures to Pythagoras' in order to suggest that Ovid's narrator develops a kind of metempsychotic poetics: the changing "forms" and "figures" of the poet's words are the material means by which his *animus*, his internal wind or voice, shapes the poem and at the same time allows him to develop the compelling fantasy that its author may achieve continued presence in the world by means of that poem. "Mutatas formas" provide an exceedingly convenient topic, one that enables the narrator to speak about bodies and the forms of poetry at the same time (hence the overall impression that the poem keeps shifting through the various poetic forms or genres as it proceeds). Ovid therefore makes sure to remind us that this is the case in the story of Apollo's love for Daphne's *figura* and *forma* and again in the tale of Pygmalion, where an artist falls in love with a "form" of his own making. By calling attention to the poem's double focus, of course, I am proposing nothing more than the kind of reading early modern writers proposed for Ovid's text. By confessing to an idolatrous, Apollonian passion for the name or *figura* of Laura, Petrarch made clear that he interpreted Ovid's changing "forms" and "figures" this way. Marston named his Ovidian narrative *The Metamorphosis of Pigmalions Image* in order to ring satiric changes on "image" as a word that can mean statue and reflection as well as poetic trope. But it is perhaps Andrew Marvell who most succinctly captured the sense of the other story that was always implicit in Ovid's treatment of corporeal "form":

> Apollo hunted Daphne so,
> Only that she might Laurel grow.
> And Pan did after Syrinx speed,
> Not as a Nymph, but for a Reed.[64]

If Ovid's narrator encourages us to draw an analogy between Pythagoras' theory of metempsychosis and his own poetic practice, however, this analogy is haunted by certain contradictions. Pythagoras posits an absolute distinction between mind and body, between *anima* and its material *formae* or *figurae*. Such a division between immaterial *anima* and material *forma* might reassure as a theory for the soul. But as a poetic practice it encounters some resistance. First, the voice so closely associated with the narrator's *animus* is, like the wind, itself a material substance. It seems to me that Ovid turns to sound and air because they are the least substantial substances he can find – and therefore less likely to direct attention to the contradiction. Second, a metempsychotic poetic, strictly adhered to, means that the forms and figures of language

that so fascinate this poet's poet are merely contingent; what happens when the poet's *animus* moves between forms and figures is finally beside the point. The logical consequence of such a metempsychotic poetic creed is, in fact, profoundly antipoetic.

And third, we might well object that the one *forma* from which the poetic mind cannot distinguish itself is linguistic form. And we have already seen that when the poem draws attention to *that* form (its own form), it quickly becomes clear, as in the case of Echo, that the poetic *animus* depends upon previous forms and figures of language for continued existence. Such a "mind" or voice is *shaped* by the very forms it wants, according to the end of the poem, to transcend. In this regard, we cannot fail to notice that to clarify his theory, Pythagoras must lean heavily on a poetic figure:

> utque nouis facilis signatur cera figuris
> nec manet ut fuerat nec formas seruat easdem,
> sed tamen ipsa eadem est, animam sic semper eandem
> esse, sed in uarias doceo migrare figuras. (15.169–72)

Just as pliant wax, stamped with new *figures*, does not remain the same as it was nor preserve the same *forms* yet still is the selfsame wax, so the soul is always the same, but I teach that it passes into a variety of *figures*.

Pythagoras' simile claims that there is a certain organic unity to *anima* that persists despite all changes of figure: "animam sic semper eandem." Understood this way, it could be read as the narrator's *apologia pro figuris suis*. Such an *apologia* implies that the poem's unity and coherence revolve around the poet's own *animus* – a "mind" that remains *sic semper idem* despite the poem's teeming array of changes. But the poem's evident preoccupation with the forms and figures of literary history, as we've already seen, encourages a certain skepticism about the scheme of temporal priority assumed by such a comparison. One is encouraged to ask several questions. If poetic *animus* or voice-consciousness anchors the poem's bewildering diversity of changing *formae* and *figurae*, whose *animus*, precisely, is it? How do we know when (or if) the many voices of literary history, on which the poem so deliberately relies, become one voice? And if we claim to hear a single voice (or controlling intention) in what is, rather, a subjectivity-effect achieved from a relationship *between* voices, do we not participate in the error of personification that the narrator so relentlessly exposes in stories like those of Echo and Procris?

The tenor of Pythagoras' simile for metempsychosis, moreover, is that *anima* subsists despite the changes in its material embodiments. But the vehicle represents this imperishable, immaterial *anima* as a piece of "pliant wax." Pythagoras claims, on the one hand, that *anima* differs

from its material forms. But on the other hand, he uses a simile that equates *anima* with precisely that from which it is said to be distinct: a material form (wax). In this unexpected reversal where *anima resembles* matter, the philosopher's simile begins to unravel his careful distinction. This waxy figure, one might say, resists its speaker's mind; it leaves something of its own form behind, shaping the very mind that wants to argue the proposition that it is absolutely "the selfsame" apart from the forms it takes. One could say that Pythagoras' "mind" requires the mediation of poetic form in order to appear just as much as Ovid's revisionary narrator requires the many forms and figures of literary history to bring his *animus* to light. Pythagoras' unstable figure, in other words, inaugurates the kind of struggle between the speaking subject's expression in language and dislocation by it that we have seen hollow out the narrator's voice as well as the voices of his many characters.

Beauty and the breeze

In Pythagoras' speech, the distinction between *anima* and *forma* seems supremely indifferent to which of the two genders *anima* assumes as it migrates through various bodies. This is, of course, unusual in a poem so preoccupied with the vicissitudes of erotic life. But we need not look far to find such engendering. Elsewhere in the *Metamorphoses*, the corresponding difference that Ovid's narrator proposes – between the singing voice of poetic *animus* and the forms and figures of which it speaks – is not nearly so neutral. The important and highly influential metapoetic and metarhetorical reflections of Book 1, for example, transform the distinction between material form and poetic breath into a violent story about sexual difference. In the first book of the *Metamorphoses*, whose subject is not only the creation of the world but the creation of poetry, the stories of Apollo and Pan mirror each other. In each case, a poetic voice emerges at some considerable cost to the female body to which it tries to speak: both Daphne and Syrinx change beyond recognition. In each, the narrator proposes a brutal division of labor – male voice versus female *forma* – in the production of poetic song. Such a division defines what counts as "female" and what "male" by pitting one against the other. Most important to this analysis, however, is the fact that the narrator associates these singing male voices quite carefully and literally with the movement of ἄνεμος – internal breath and external breeze. The poem's first two attempts to dramatize the narrator's proposed rhetoric of animation, in other words, embody that rhetoric in rape, characterizing sexual violence as an aggressive collusion between the male voice and the wind.

In the first of Ovid's stories to embody the difference between *animus* and *forma* – Apollo's attempt to subdue Daphne – we find that the narrator dwells once again on one particular part of the speaker's body: the mouth. In an extended epic simile, the narrator compares the god of poetry's *os* – from which beautiful words should fall – to that of a dog's voracious muzzle, "outstretched" and snapping in pursuit of its prey:

> ut canis in uacuo leporem cum Gallicus aruo
> uidit . . .
> alter inhaesuro similis iam iamque tenere
> sperat et extento stringit uestigia rostro,
> alter in ambiguo est, an sit conprensus, et ipsis
> morsibus eripitur tangentiaque ora relinquit:
> sic deus et uirgo . . . (1.533–39)

Like a Gallic hound that sees a rabbit on the open plain . . . the one hopes now, even now, that he has her and grazes her footsteps with outstretched muzzle while the other does not know whether she is caught and flees those jaws, leaving behind the mouth closing on her: so the god and the virgin . . .

Moving in concert with Apollo's impending jaws, Ovid's poetic principle of ἄνεμος turns as rapacious as the god of poetry. When Apollo "breathes down" Daphne's fleeing neck ("et crinem sparsum cervicibus adflat" 1.542), the breeze joins in. The breeze, in fact, accomplishes the very things Apollo cannot. Unlike the frustrated god, the wind lays Daphne's body bare of clothing. Where Apollo longs in vain to arrange her dishevelled hair ("inornatos capillos"), the wind is more successful:

> Plura locuturum timido Peneia cursu
> fugit cumque ipso uerba inperfecta reliquit,
> tum quoque uisa decens; nudabant corpora uenti
> obuiaque aduersas uibrabant flamina uestes
> et leuis inpulsos retro dabat aura capillos
> auctaque forma fuga est . . . (1.525–30)

While he was trying to say more, the daughter of Peneus ran away in timid flight although still pleasing in appearance, and left him with his words imperfect; the winds laid her body bare, vibrating her opposing garments with gusts of air that block her path, and a light breeze blew her dishevelled hair behind her; her form is augmented by flight . . .

The *aurae* cooperate with Apollo's breath and increase his desire. And it is, of course, a golden arrow (*aura*tum) allied with the wind (*aura*) in both name and action that causes this strife since it kindles Apollo's unrequited love. But the wind also anticipates Daphne's transformation into a sign for Apollo's status as a poet. There are several synonyms for "wind" in this passage: *uentus*, *aura*, *flamen*. One of them, *flamen*, can mean either "gust of wind" or "breath." But it also can mean "a note sounded on a wind instrument." Thus the line about the wind as *flamen* – "obuiaque aduersas uibrabant flamina uestes" – begins the reluctant Daphne's metamorphosis into a poet's instrument: the *flamen* strips her bare by making her "opposing" clothing "vibrate" (*uibro, -are* being a verb used to describe movements of both body and voice).[65] Daphne therefore must flee the wind as swiftly as she flees the wind's ally, the god of poetry. We come to understand that when Daphne flees "faster than the breeze" ("fugit ocior aura" 1.502), she is more than merely agile. She is also a very good reader of the poem in which she appears.

Hard on the heels of Daphne's story follows a condensed version of the same circumstance: Pan pursues Syrinx in a manner as violent as poetic. As if she has learned a lesson from her predecessor, Syrinx doesn't stick around long enough to hear any of Pan's attempt to persuade her ("talia uerba refert restabat uerba referre" 1.700). But the form that Pan finally seizes nonetheless gives a poetic shape to the wind that comes from inside his body. In place of the failed voice of rhetoric, Pan acquires the "sweet" breath of pastoral poetry:

> corpore pro nymphae calamos tenuisse palustres,
> dumque ibi suspirat, motos in harundine uentos
> effecisse sonum tenuem similemque querenti.
> arte noua uocisque deum dulcedine captum
> "hoc mihi colloquium tecum" dixisse "manebit,"
> atque ita *disparibus calamis conpagine cerae*
> inter se iunctis nomen tenuisse puellae. (1.706–12 [emphasis mine])

Instead of the nymph's body Pan held marsh reeds, and when he sighed, the winds moving through the reed made a soft sound, like a complaint. The god, captivated by the sweet new art for the voice, said, "this conversation with you is left to me," and so the reeds of disparate length, *held together by wax*, kept the name of the maiden.

In his first book, Ovid uses the fate of Daphne and Syrinx to unfold two influential, etiological accounts for the poetics of animation. In each, moreover, he makes a suggestion seminal for the literary history his poem inaugurated: aesthetic form is born from a woman's resistance to rhetorical persuasion.

When the two gods next appear together in concert – in Book 11 Pan challenges Apollo to a contest by disparaging his skill – Pan is still playing the reed pipes that once were Syrinx, and Apollo is still wreathed in the laurel that once was Daphne ("ille caput flauum lauro Parnaside uinctus" 165). And once again, the narrator represents poetry as a matter of the *os* and of animating the natural world: Tmolus, god of the mountain and judge of the contest, turns "his face to Phoebus's face" ("sacer *ora* retorsit / Tmolus *ad os* Phoebi" 163) and the entire forest

follows suit ("uultum sua silua secuta est" 164). But in this contest, female form has become an utterly silent partner in the collaboration between *animus* and *forma* necessary for a male voice to sing. Wreathed in Daphne's laurel, Apollo is no longer a lover encumbered by imperfect words. Rather, he is the very picture of an artist ("artificis status ipse fuit" 169) and so triumphs over Pan and his reed pipes. But Apollo's former ally, the wind, must assist the god's voice nonetheless. That is, everyone listening agrees that Apollo is a better singer than Pan, except for Midas. The god avenges himself by giving Midas ass's ears. But Midas, for his part, manages to keep his disgrace hidden – except from his barber. And the barber, unable to keep the news to himself – literally, "wanting to let it out to the wind" ("cupiens efferre sub auras" 184) – relieves his desire for speech by "burying his voice" in a hole in the ground. But a patch of reeds (what else?) springs up on the spot. When they are full grown, the wind moves through these reeds, releases the buried words, and so completes Apollo's revenge by exposing Midas' shame to the world in its own kind of disembodied voice ("leni nam motus ab austro / obruta uerba refert" 192–93).

In this battle between female form and male ἄνεμος – the partnership between breath and the wind – we encounter a fierce economy for poetry that is at once symbolic and sexual. Nor does this economy, with its terrible effect on female form, stop with the metapoetic reflections of Book 1. But it does take unexpected turns. We have already seen that Cephalus' brief poem to *Aura* – a series of apostrophes amounting to the tripartite anaphora dear to Roman poetry – comes out into the air only at the cost of his wife's death. Although *aurae* seem to move in concert with Apollo's voice when he wins the laurel and his singing contest with Pan, in Cephalus' case the allegiance between wind and voice can no longer be said to correspond in any way to the speaker's desire. Rather, the wind severs the link between what Cephalus loves (Procris) and what he says ("Aura," wind). And this divorce transforms the speaker's poetic figures into a verbal event with lethal consequences. As we have already seen in the narrator's self-portrait and in many of the poem's other stories about the *os*, however, a speaker's intention has little to do with Ovid's definition of the voice. Cephalus therefore finds, like his narrator, that both voice and wind may suddenly veer out of control.

By the time we reach the story of Orpheus' attempt to bring his wife back to life, the narrator has developed a full-blown, complex fantasy about the power and limits of vocal animation. Indeed, it is complex enough that it can be extended to the realm of the visual arts: Orpheus rewrites his own failure by telling the wish-fulfilling story of Pygmalion's life-giving art. When the narrator uses Orpheus' story to dramatize his own rhetoric of animation, he expands his dream about the voice to include the fantasy of a poet whose song conquers death – a dream that, as we've already seen, shapes the narrator's self-portrait in the poem's closing lines. But in Book 10 we read about this dream only in light of its failure; the league between poet and wind shifts once again. The book opens with Hymen traveling "through the upper air" ("aethera digreditur" 10.2) because he has been called upon by "the voice" of Apollo's son, Orpheus ("uoce uocatur" 3). But we learn immediately that his voice called Hymen "in vain." Clearly Orpheus' desire for his wife means that he *wants* to reverse his father's infelicitous poetic legacy. That is, Orpheus wants to use his voice to animate a beloved form ("auidusque uiuendi," 56). But he fails in his attempt. Taken together, the stories of Apollo, Pan, Cephalus, and Orpheus tell us at least two unsettling things about the relationship between *animus* and *forma*, mind and body: the voice and its effects are easily separable from intention and may all too easily betray the speaker's mind or desire; and one of several kinds of violation – rape, metamorphosis, death – are nonetheless required of beautiful female forms if male voices are to be raised in song. The first predicament, as we have seen, is applicable to *all* speaking subjects in the poem, regardless of gender. But the second appears to displace this problem within the voice, about which the poem is always aware, onto a story of sexual difference. Such displacement effectively occludes the contradictions inherent in the phonocentric fantasy of voice-consciousness, disguising a problem *within* any speaking subject as a sexually violent clash *between* gendered subjects. The narrator embodies the potential for any poetic speaker to be alienated from his/her own tongue in stories about the difference between "his" voice and "her" resistant form.

Pygmalion's animating art also conforms to this narrative, extending from Apollo to Orpheus, about a conflict between female form and male voice. As we come to expect, Ovid turns a story about desire into one that is also about art – since the lover in Ovid's source was a king, not a sculptor – and he is therefore able to use the story to comment on the power and limitations of the poem's own rhetoric of animation. In addition to the graphic trope of softening wax, the narrator satirizes the sculptor's delusion in terms that are as rhetorical as they are sexual. He tells us that Pygmalion believes his statue "wants to be moved" ("uelle moueri" 10.251); points out that it is Pygmalion's *words of prayer* to Venus, rather than his technical prowess, that really do the trick; and tells us, moreover, that the organ to begin the process of animation is not the sculptor's hand but his *os*. First, the prostitutes whose behavior disgusts Pygmalion change to stones, their "faces" or "mouths" hard-

ening to flint – "sanguisque induruit *oris*" (241). Therefore, it is the sculptor's mouth rather than his hand that brings his new, improved female form to life: "he kissed her while she was lying on the couch; she seems to grow warm; he moves his mouth to her again" ("incumbensque toro dedit oscula: uisa tepere est; / admouet *os* iterum," 281–82). In place of women's hardened *ora*, Orpheus tells of Pygmalion's animating lips. In later chapters we will see that when Petrarch and Shakespeare read the story of Pygmalion in relation to that of his narrator, Orpheus, they were similarly struck by the poetic and rhetorical aspects of a tale that seems, on first reading, to be simply about the visual arts.

But if we do think of Pygmalion's story in rhetorical terms, we notice a certain sexual division of labor once again. Pygmalion's beloved *simulacrum* acquires neither name nor voice; like Orpheus' dead wife, the statue remains merely object, rather than subject, of the poem's representational economy. And like Eurydice, who says only "goodbye" to the husband who says so much, Pygmalion's statue says nothing about what she thinks of her lover's desire. In other words, both Eurydice's death and the unnamed statue's silence in the Orpheus–Pygmalion sequence of Book 10 conform to the larger fantasy first proposed in Book 1 with Apollo and Pan. In this fantasy about a masculinized *animus* as voice-consciousness, the power of the male *os* requires a silent (or silenced) female form if it is to be heard. And this form, moreover, must *resist* the speaker's demand.[66] In this network of related stories, the narrator gives a culturally familiar, gendered hierarchy to the difference between *animus* and *forma*. And in such a hierarchy, the options for female form are grim: silence, rape, metamorphosis, death.

But at this point a complicated question arises. How far does Ovid's narrator participate in the violent conflict inaugurated by Apollo to dramatize the rhetoric of animation? Such a question will take some time to answer. We can begin, however, by thinking about the narrator's role in Book 10, the book whose controlling narrative revolves around animation. It is only after Eurydice dies twice that Orpheus tells the stories that make up this section of the poem, so we might note that Ovid's narrator predicates an entire book of the *Metamorphoses* on Eurydice's absence. But in asking how far the narrator participates, or stands apart from, such fantasies, there is a further aspect to remember about this struggle between male voice and absent or violated female form: between Books 1 and 11, Apollo and Pan pass from heterosexual conflict to homosocial contest. Daphne and Syrinx become increasingly vestigial signs, their bodies first transformed and then understood to be symbolic conduits for a competition between male artists. Similarly, Ovid's narrator engages in a well-known bit of competition with Vergil at

the death of Orpheus, revising his famed predecessor's version at the end of the *Georgics*. Ovid's apostrophes to the dying Orpheus evoke the rhetorically compelling fiction that the narrator gains back his voice when Orpheus "breathes out" his *anima* on the winds. At the same time, however, Ovid's apostrophes to the head of Orpheus are clearly a way of competing with his predecessor, Vergil. When Vergil represents Orpheus' head floating downstream in the *Georgics*, someone also calls out a series of apostrophes. But in this case, Vergil's narrator records, through the voice of yet another storyteller, the apostrophes uttered by the mournful, decapitated head of Orpheus as it devotes its dying breath to call out to Eurydice.

> tum quoque marmorea caput a ceruice reuulsum
> gurgite cum medio portans Oeagrius Hebrus
> uolueret, Eurydicen uox ipsa et frigida lingua,
> a miseram Eurydicen! anima fugiente uocabat.
> Eurydicen toto referebant flumine ripae. (4.523–27)

Even then while Oeagrian Hebrus carried and rolled that head, severed from its marble neck, in midstream, his voice and cold tongue called on Eurydice, oh unhappy Eurydice!, with fleeting breath. The banks of the whole river echoed, Eurydice!

Vergil's *tour de force* of sounding and resounding voices is not one that Ovid, captivated with the idea of animated nature, voice, and "fugitive breath" ("anima fugiente uocabat"), would be likely to forget. Notice that Vergil's narrator is quoting the words of his temporary narrator, Proteus, who is quoting, in turn, the words of Orpheus as they echo down the banks of the river when the poet died. But when Ovid's narrator tells the story of Orpheus' head floating downstream, he puts his own apostrophes to Orpheus in place of those that Vergil's Orpheus addressed to Eurydice. Refusing Vergilian indirection, he stakes a claim for the right as heir to Orphic vocal power. But at the same time, these emulous apostrophes to Orpheus push Eurydice still further into the shadows of the forgotten. Instead of Orpheus' lament for Eurydice, we hear Ovid's lament for Orpheus: "Te maestae uolucres, Orpheu, te turba ferarum, / te rigidi silices, te carmina saepe secutae / fleuerunt siluae ..." (11.44–46) ("The mournful birds wept for you, Orpheus, the crowd of beasts, the flinty rocks, the trees that had so often followed your songs ..."). In the programmatic narrative that brings Vergil's *Georgics* to a close, the connections between Orpheus' voice and the poet's are important but heavily mediated by the divagations of indirect discourse. They are suggestive but understated. In Ovid's rendition, however, the narrator boldly substitutes his tropes for those of Orpheus. Ovid

competes with Vergil, in other words, by assuming the extraordinary poetic voice that Vergil records only second-hand. He changes the focus from Orpheus' personal mourning for Eurydice to his own poetic desire for Orpheus. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that Ovid's desire here is for a voice such as Vergil's. In either case, Ovid derives considerable competitive profit from his predecessor's idea of a tongue devoted to Eurydice even to its last breath. But the glaring light of competition should not blind us to the fact that his self-inflating revision of Orpheus' mournful lament completes the process inaugurated by Apollo and Pan – that of excluding female voices and bodies from a scene that turns into yet another singing contest between male poets.

Resisting voices

When we first consider how far Ovid's narrator participates in the various masculinist fantasies with which he dramatizes his own rhetoric of animation – the stories of Apollo, Pan, Orpheus, and Pygmalion – we discover several disquieting emotions: a desire to rape, a desire to escape from female form altogether, or profound indifference to what the "beloved" woman might say or want. Various kinds of misogyny define the libidinal parameters of what counts as a "male" voice and "male" desire in these connected stories. But further reflection brings us to a contradictory undercurrent. That is, while at times the narrative suggests affinities between the narrator and his ostensibly "male" version of vocal animation, nonetheless Ovid's characteristic, pervasive irony also opens up a certain distance between them. Such distance is particularly obvious, for instance, by the time we reach the Pygmalion–Orpheus sequence. Central though the fantasy of animation may be to Ovid's narrative project, nonetheless the narrator is pointedly mocking the artist's fetishistic exuberance as he describes Pygmalion's activities: "he kisses and thinks his kisses are returned ... grasps it and thinks his fingers are pressing into her limbs, fears that he is leaving bruises ... he brings it gifts pleasing to girls," and so forth. And as classical scholars observe, Ovid's version of the myth of Orpheus is similarly deflationary.[67] Adept at putting an ironic distance between himself and his characters when needed, Ovid's narrator casts a particularly cool eye on the artistry of both Pygmalion and Orpheus. At the same time, it is this ironic narrator who never allows us to forget that the reason for Pygmalion's delusional version of rhetorical animation is misogyny. Imitating Orpheus' turn away from womankind, Pygmalion creates his *simulacrum* because of sexual disgust: he blames prostitution on one party only – calling it one of "the faults nature had so liberally given the

female mind" (244–45) – and, the narrator reminds us, appears to believe that fondling an inanimate piece of ivory is a less repugnant sexual practice.

By the time we reach Book 10, moreover, we can scarcely avoid noticing a certain clash in narrative point of view over the question of "male" desire. Apollo and Pan call rape "love." So, too, does Orpheus: at the opening of Book 10, Orpheus buys into his father's catachresis, calling Pluto's rape of Proserpina *amor* ("famaque si ueteris non est mentita rapinae, / uos quoque iunxit Amor," "If the rumor of that old rape is true, you two were also joined by love" 10.28–29). But the last time we heard the story of Proserpina's rape – in the voice of Orpheus' mother, Calliope – we found a rather different account of the same event. That is, Calliope focuses her version of the rape around another mother's grief and a daughter's fear (5.341–550). Calliope also recalls the comments of a witness to the crime: Arethusa protests to Proserpina's mother that "a woman ought to be asked, not carried off" ("roganda, / non rapienda fuit" 5.415–16). Interested primarily in the victims' anguish and a female witness's complaint, Calliope reminds those who might be listening to the poem's dissenting voices that when her son, Orpheus, calls such sexual violence *Amor*, his is but one view of the matter.

If we are fully to assess how far Ovid's narrator is implicated in the erotic and at times violent fantasies that define the rhetoric of animation, we must ask still further questions. What would happen if we could listen, rather than merely speak, to Eurydice? Or if not to her, to any of her other fugitive sisters? And indeed, if we take time to listen to the female voices that accompany the stories we've been examining thus far, we detect a critique of the fantasies of rape, silence, and death that pervade the poem's metarhetorical reflection. Calliope's mournful version of what her son later calls "love," for example, puts us on notice to listen for other sounds of discord or dissent. These emerge most forcefully when the Bacchae encounter Orpheus. Along with Calliope's song, Bacchic voices register something of the Ovidian narrator's distance from the masculinist love story that shapes Book 10's reflection on rhetoric and animation. Heartily agreeing with the narrator's ironic attention to the permutations and effects of misogyny in Book 10, this roving band of women raise a violent outcry against its singer, Orpheus, as "nostri contemptor" (11.76). Their protest brings this section of the *Metamorphoses* to a close. It is not merely because the Bacchae have the last word that they are important to this analysis of Ovid's phonographic imaginary. It is also because their noise drowns out Orpheus' voice: he dies because neither the women nor the stones they throw can hear the

sounds that fall from his mouth. The powerful vocal *clamor* of Ovid's Bacchic horde constitutes a significant protest against the symbolic and libidinal economy of animation, the predication of successful male poetic voices on repeated violations against the female body.

Indeed, once we've understood the violent and sexual shape that the narrator's rhetoric of animation can assume, we see that this Bacchic interruption carefully opposes the story about poetic voice and form associated with Apollo and his son. Not only does a horde of women conquer Orpheus' singing voice with their own shrill cries, but the narrator defines their appearance on the landscape in terms that should be, by now, extremely familiar.

> Carmine dum tali siluas *animos*que ferarum
> Threicius uates et saxa sequentia ducit,
> ecce nurus Ciconum tectae lymphata ferinis
> pectora uelleribus tumuli de uertice cernunt
> Orphea percussis sociantem carmina neruis.
> e quibus *una leues iactato crine per auras*,
> "en," ait "en, hic est nostri contemptor!" et hastam
> *uatis Apollinei uocalia misit in ora* ...
> clamor et infracto Berecyntia tibia cornu
> tympanaque et plausus et Bacchei ululatus
> obstrepuere sono citharae, tum denique saxa
> non exauditi rubuerunt sanguine uatis ... (11.1–19)

While the Thracian bard led the trees and *minds* of animals and following rocks with such songs, behold, the Cicones, breasts covered with skins of wild animals, perceived Orpheus from a hilltop joining songs to the music of his lyre. And one of these, *her hair streaming in the gentle breeze*, said "see, see, here is the man who scorns us!" and *threw her spear at the tuneful mouth of Apollo's bard* ... the uproar and the Berecyntian flutes with discordant horns and drums and blows and shrill cries of the Bacchae drowned out the sound of the lyre, then at length stones grew red with the blood of the bard who went unheard ...

Various figures in this dense passage reverse the fictions of both Orpheus' voice and his father's. And by doing so, they implicitly criticize the controlling story about vocal animation fundamental to Ovid's *perpetuum carmen*. By the time we reach Book 10, we realize that it is no accident that one of the Bacchae aims her spear at Orpheus' mouth. But other programmatically significant figures gather around Orpheus' last breath. Instead of the mind or *animus* that Orpheus was once able to move even in animals, the Bacchae force the poet to exhale his own *anima* on the breeze. Rather than hair like Daphne's, tossed on the "light breeze" ("leuis ... aura"), Orpheus faces Bacchic hair, streaming on breezes that, although "light," are far less suited to his desire (again, "leues ... auras" 1.6). In place of either Syrinx-as-reed-pipe or the *flamen*

that vibrates Daphne's clothes as she runs, we hear the far less tuneful notes of *tibiae*. The *tibia*, also a reed pipe "consisting of a tube with holes or stops," frequently appears along with the other noisy instruments listed in this passage when Roman poets describe "the wild music of Cybele and Bacchus."[68] And finally, in place of the expressive *os* that has been the poem's primary figure for its rhetoric of animation, we hear the sound of shrieks, howling, and ululation.

Reminiscent of either Echo's unsettling presence within the narrator's story of the self as a speaking subject or Arachne's disturbing version of the story of rape, the Bacchae sound a discordant note – or rather, a death-dealing cacophony – within the misogynist fantasies that attend the poem's reflections on what counts as a "male" voice. Indeed, when Bacchic ululation insures that Orpheus goes "unheard," that rude *clamor* sounds to me like the epitome of Althusser's notion of the text's own critical, internal distance from the ideology from which it springs and on which it is fed. The narrator calls the Bacchae "mad Erinyes" (11.14) – revenging furies. They bring a violent yet precise form of revenge for the symbolic and libidinal economy inaugurated when Apollo tries to rape Daphne only to emerge with an epideictic voice of poetic celebration. Antithetical to the poem's most influential story about the power of poetic *animus* and its primary instrument, the singing mouth, Bacchic *clamor* defeats even the most persuasive and poetic of "Apollonian" voices (10.8). The sheer force of their noise means that Orpheus learns, as we have seen so many other Ovidian subjects learn, that rhetorical power resides only temporarily with any one speaker – even if that speaker is the son of Apollo. Even the singer who nearly conquered death with his song discovers that there are times when any voice will go "unheard," times when ἄνεμος, far from giving breath, will take it away.

Though perhaps the noisiest, Bacchic cries are not the only female voices in the *Metamorphoses* to criticize the poem's programmatic reflection on its own rhetorical fantasies. We've seen that the first book of the *Metamorphoses* proposes a sexual division of labor in the creation of poetry and that the Orpheus segment in Book 10 merely adds death to rape as one of the possible roles for women in the process of inventing poetic song. But readers may already have heard the murmur of a story different from the one that emerges when we attend to the activities of Apollo or Pan. In the line I quoted earlier about Pan's music, for example, Ovid leaves unclear exactly *whose* complaint is audible in these pipes: "Instead of [Syrinx] he held nothing but marsh reeds ... and while he sighed in disappointment, the air stirring in the reeds gave forth a low sound, like a complaint" ("sonum tenuem similemque querenti" 1.708). Ovid lets us wonder, whose unhappy sound is this? The "complaint" here

might be Syrinx's for her near-rape as much as Pan's for his disappointed desire. Although a story about poetic origins, these origins are not connected to a singular voice. Rather, pastoral poetry begins in a *colloquium* (1.710), a sound divided against itself by very different views on the same event.

The female voice troubles the Apollo–Daphne story about the powers of the poetic voice, too. Where Apollo's "imperfect" rhetoric fails to persuade her to stay, Daphne's prayer to lose the "figure" that provokes such violence convinces her father to change her shape. Her words acquire a persuasive force that Apollo's do not; they inaugurate one of the metamorphoses that are the subject of Ovid's poem. Daphne's metapoetic plea – that she lose her "figura" – alerts us that the figural quality of language betrays her just as surely as her bodily form makes her vulnerable to Apollo's violence. For when Daphne prays to lose her figure and is turned into a tree, she may not have meant to lose her human form: when used to signify the body rather than language, *figura* designates not only general shape but also a person's beauty. What Daphne means to ask is to become less attractive, but what she actually *says* prompts her father to alter her human figure altogether. The relief brought her by the unintended power of her prayer is just as constricting as the figural language with which she must speak – language that "departs from the straightforward or obvious" and whose obliquity therefore condemns her to be "immobilized" or "stuck fast" with "sluggish roots" ("pigris radicibus haeret" 1.551). Her voice may *do* more than Apollo's, her words may achieve greater effects, but their action eclipses her intention. Tropological language, poetry's *figurae*, may prove more than mere instrument to the mind or "voice" that tries to use it. This troubling suggestion, as we've seen, pervades Ovid's poem. The recurrent image of the speechless face; the stories of words overheard or gone terribly wrong; the poem's closing echo of Echo: all these images and scenes tell us that Ovid's narrator shares with Daphne the sense that one may be betrayed by the language one tries to use as if it were merely instrumental to one's thoughts and desires. The idea conveyed by Daphne's unexpectedly powerful trope – that we are subject *to* the unpredictable and mechanical nature of language as much as subjects *of* it – may explain, in part, why Ovid so insistently allies the origin of poetry with rape. In an Ovidian universe, subjects may be just as "carried away" by words (the original sense of *raptus*) as by implacable lovers. Much like Echo's *uox*, Daphne's words remind us of the way language exceeds its speakers in the *Metamorphoses* – a predicament in which the narrator is included.

Bacchic *clamor*, the complaining sound issuing from Syrinx's reed,

Daphne's hastily spoken *figura*: the mere idea of the female voice disturbs Ovid's initial programmatic story about Apollo's triumphant voice and its allegiance with the wind. These resisting voices tell us not only that this masculinist version of the poem's dream of rhetorical animation is extremely violent – predicated on repeated violations of other bodies – but that its tone is a little too naive, too quick to claim the laurel leaf of victory. Apollo may not learn this lesson from Daphne directly. But he will learn it soon enough: by the beginning of Book 2, the god of poetry comes bitterly to regret the sound of his own voice after swearing an oath to grant any request that his son, Phaethon, might make ("Paenituit iurasse patrem ... 'utinam promissa liceret / non dare'" 2.49–52). The reed pipe's "complaining sound" and the unexpected effects of Daphne's *figura* prepare the way for Echo's alienating repetitions. For these sounds, just as surely as Echo's *uox*, point to the potential distance between voice and consciousness. They reveal an otherness within the fiction of the poetic voice that profoundly qualifies the rhetoric of animation as we have delineated it thus far. They remind us, in fact, that the ἄνεμος that passes through the subject's body (whether *anima* or *animus*) cannot always be relied upon to work in the speaker's service, no matter how much that speaker tries to hoard its power.

There is yet another female voice in the *Metamorphoses* that performs this critical function, creating a distance internal to Ovid's opening fiction about the origins of poetry in rape and the power of the would-be rapist's voice. But this is a voice that we are never actually said to "hear." I refer to the story of Medusa's silent *os*, a *monstrum* that bridges Books 4 and 5. Like the metapoetic stories of Apollo and Pan, Medusa's story offers yet another account of the origin of poetry. As I have suggested, in fact, her story is also about the movement between rhetoric and poetry, since before giving rise to the fountain of poetry, Medusa's *os* appears first in the narrative as an aid to Perseus' failing words. As such, Medusa's terrifying, speechless mouth offers a rather different account of both poetry and rhetoric than the one Ovid associates with the songs of Apollo and Orpheus. In Medusa's story, Ovid imagines an avenging *os* comparable to the *clamor* of the Bacchae – a frightening pair of lips that constitute an internal form of protest against, and revenge for, the male rhetoric of vocal animation.[69]

In the figure of Medusa, we read at least two stories of origin: in the first, Athena turns Medusa into the Gorgon after Neptune raped her (4.793–803); in the second, the blood flowing from the Gorgon's decapitation gives rise to the Heliconian fountain of poetry. She is, Ovid tells us, the fountain's "mother" ("uidi ipsum materno sanguine nasci"

5.259). Like the stories of attempted rape in Book 1, the poem associates the origin of poetry with extraordinary violence against the female body: Medusa is raped, metamorphosed, beheaded. But in the case of this metapoetic figure, we encounter a strangely decapitated kind of verse that has little to do with *animus* or "mind." As Minerva discovers from the Muses on Helicon, Medusa's blood gives birth to poetry because a winged horse sprang from that blood and the blows from his beating feet – "factas pedis ictibus undas" (5.264) – carved out the fountain. As Stephen Hinds points out in some detail, the horse's beating hooves literally enact the meter of poetry: both *pes* (foot) and *ictus* (a blow or pulse) are the technical Roman terms for the rhythm or "blows" of metrical feet.[70] Such an etiology for poetry points not to the movement of a singer's "mind" or intention – "my mind is moved to tell," "animus fert dicere" (1.1) – but points, instead, to the movement of feet and of accident. These chance blows give rise to a rhythm that becomes the differential structure of poetic verse. Medusa's decapitation, a strange kind of "origin," is an appropriate literalization of this insight into the mechanical conditions of verse, a network of differences between sounds that determines the possible forms a poet's *animus* may take.

Medusa's effect on the voice turns out to be as unsettling as this etiological account of the Heliconian fountain might suggest. When Perseus "holds out the Gorgon's mouth" in battle – "Gorgonis extulit ora" (5.180) – death comes quickly, and significantly, through the voice, the tongue, and the *os*. Perseus subdues one of his foes mid-speech and the narrator records the exact moment of death by interrupting his own indirect discourse:

> "adspice" ait "Perseu, nostrae primordia gentis:
> magna feres *tacitas* solacia mortis *ad umbras*
> a tanto cecidisse uiro"; pars ultima uocis
> in medio suppressa sono est, adapertaque uelle
> ora loqui credas, nec sunt ea peruia uerbis. (5.190–94)

"See, Perseus, the origin of my family: you will carry a great consolation for your death to the *silent shades* for having been killed by such a man" – but the last part of his voice was cut off in the middle of its sound; you would think his open lips wanted to speak but they were no longer a passageway for his words.

When another foe dies at the sight of Medusa's *os*, the narrator again points to the dying man's face and lips: "marmoreoque manet uultus mirantis in ore" ("the astonished face remains with marble lips," 206). The narrator then ends the battle with a fearful mirroring of this soundless *os*: "Perseus ait oraque regis / ore Medusaeo silicem sine sanguine fecit" ("Perseus spoke and with Medusa's mouth, made the

king's mouth a stone without blood" 248–49). And finally, one of the first deaths at the banquet anticipates such work even before Perseus unveils Medusa's implacable mouth. One warrior's decapitated head literally "breathes out" its mind and, half-dead (or literally, "with half a mind") still continues to speak: "ibi *semianimi* uerba exsecrantia *lingua* / edidit et medios animam exspirauit in ignes" ("there the half-animate [or half-conscious] tongue poured out words of execration and in the middle of the altar fires breathed out its mind" 5.105–06). The imminent threat of Medusa's as yet unveiled *os* prompts the narrator to imagine a dead, but still moving, tongue. He associates her fearsome power with a tongue deprived of mind or intention (*semi-animus*) if not, however, of motion.

We have seen the *Metamorphoses* vacillate between a rhetoric of vocal animation and its own internal critique of that rhetoric as wishful fantasy. The narrator opens by dramatizing this rhetoric in an aggressively masculinist form. But he soon asks us to "hear" in many of the poem's female voices what we never can actually hear in any one voice – a phonographic critique of the voice that alienates the subject from within its own tongue. Both the poetics of beating feet and accident, associated with Medusa's decapitated head, and the idea of death through the mouth, associated with her *os*, are particularly memorable embodiments of Ovid's critique of his own fictions of voice-consciousness. Her mouth harbors an unexpected kind of oblivion in the notion of the "voice," the very faculty that Ovid strives to ally with *animus*, to make his own, while at the same time acknowledging his failure to do so. If Medusa's mouth traumatizes in both Ovid's poem, in other words, she does so because her *os* is a *monstrum* – meaning "prodigy, portent, sign" as much as "monstrous thing" – for speaking beings. Consonant with many of the poem's other female voices (Echo's mimicking *uox*, Philomela's tongue), Medusa's mouth draws attention to the narrator's unsettling habit of disentangling the generally functional relationship between language and the mind, between cherished notions of personal agency in language and what it actually means to be the "author" of a text or singer of a song. And if we read the figure of Medusa's decapitated *os* in light of Philomela's severed, yet still murmuring *lingua*, we see that in both, Ovid's critique of the voice operates according to a rhetoric of the dismembered body. Such a rhetoric asks us to think twice about the synecdoches that are the basis for our all too easy transitions from a part of the body – the mouth, tongue, lips, or face – to an idea of a whole body, person, or presence.

But Medusa's *os* does more than play a part in the poem's internal critique of its own rhetoric of animation. It also becomes a form of

revenge for the story of rape allied with that rhetoric. When Athena changes Medusa into the Gorgon, the narrator tells us the following:

> hanc pelagi rector templo uitiasse Mineruae
> dicitur: auersa est et castos aegide uultus
> nata Iouis texit, neue hoc inpune fuisset,
> Gorgoneum crinem turpes mutauit in hydros.
> nunc quoque, ut attonitos formidine terreat hostes,
> pectore in aduerso, quos fecit, sustinet angues. (4.798–803)

It is said the ruler of the sea raped her in Minerva's temple: Jove's daughter, having turned away, hid her chaste face behind her aegis, and in order that this might not go unpunished, she turned the Gorgon's hair into unsightly snakes. And now, in order to terrify her astonished enemies with this horrible thing, she wears the snakes which she made on her breast

Many readers protest, with good reason, that Medusa is being punished for her own rape. But notice that Medusa is not the only one punished by her metamorphosis – or rather, that if this metamorphosis is a form of punishment, it does not stop with Medusa. The poem's deliberately imprecise phrase, "neue *hoc* inpune fuisset," suggests two things with this "hoc": "in order that Neptune's crime not go unpunished" and "in order that this – that is, the crime of rape – not go unpunished." When Minerva transforms Medusa into a sign or portent (*monstrum*), she becomes a kind of talisman to one of the poem's most frequent forms of violence: rape. And the Gorgon-as-sign mysteriously obscures the question of agency, making one wonder who, precisely, is punishing and who being punished by this metamorphosis. That is, the fact that Medusa's metamorphosis originated in rape may explain why her ghastly *os* is wielded *only* against men. Only male lips and tongues freeze, mid-speech or semianimate, before Medusa's severed, snaky *os*. Such confusion about who punishes and who is being punished when Medusa becomes the Gorgon reiterates the rhetorical confusion of agency implicit in Perseus' battle with Atlas, where the hero, frustrated in his attempts to persuade, uses Medusa's mouth in place of his own. And it reminds us more generally of the poem's ongoing, unnerving critique of the speaking subject's belief in his or her own vocal agency. Medusa's mouth wields a negative kind of performative power: petrification by *os* sounds a note of caution within the poem's dream of words capable of conquering death, of bringing about the events of which they speak.

When we are told that Medusa is a *memorabile monstrum* (4.615; 5.216 and 241), she becomes a terrible kind of warning about the crime of which she is also the product. In a poem dedicated to etiology – to explaining the causes of various literalized figures in the landscape – Medusa's memorial function is common enough. But in a poem that

captures its own rhetoric of animation in the visual sign of Daphne's beautiful *hair* tossed on the breeze, the transformation of Medusa's most beautiful feature, her hair, produces a powerfully self-critical image. Those snakes, born of Medusa's violated, "clarissima forma" (4.794), remind readers of the *price* women constantly pay in this poem for being seen to embody the idea of beautiful form on which so many male voices rely. In the terrifying effects of Medusa's raped body-turned-speechless *os*, then, we encounter yet another form of revenge for Apollo's poetic mouth, breathing down Daphne's neck as she turns in flight.

As dramatized by Apollo and Daphne, Pan and Syrinx, Cephalus and Procris, and Orpheus and Eurydice, Ovid's rhetoric of animation proposes a violent version of sexual difference. Embodied in a continuous narrative of crime and revenge – a struggle over poetic voice that leads to a series of ravaged female bodies – the poem's rhetorical reflection pits one sex against the other. At the origin of poetic acts over the course of the poem, Ovid tells us about female bodies that are raped (Daphne, Syrinx, Medusa), dead (Eurydice, Procris), and dismembered (Medusa). We should include in this list the violated body of Mother Earth, too, since not only a new race, but the idea of metaphor, springs from Deucalion's interpretation of the following sentence: "throw the bones of your mother over your shoulder" ("*ossa*que post tergum magnae iactate parentis" 1.383). From one *ōs* (face or lips) to another *ŏs* (bone): here, as with the story of Medusa giving birth to the Heliconian fountain, the generativity of poetry's differences (between sounds, between literal and figural meanings) derives from the idea of a mother's body in bits and pieces. But such violence does not "go unpunished." As if in payment for the violence that poetry's "voice" does to language's material forms, Orpheus encounters the devastating effects of Bacchic noise and the rest of the world of men the terrifying portent of Medusa's mouth.

Other voices, other loves

Bacchic *clamor*, Echo's repetitive *uox*, Syrinx's complaining sound, Daphne's unhappy *figura*, the Gorgon's implacable *os*: all these female "voices," whether low, shrill, or chillingly inaudible, are integral to the poem's critique of its own seductive, mutually reinforcing fantasies of animation and speaking consciousness. Over the course of the *Metamorphoses*, they trace the poem's internal distance from its own rhetorical practice, speaking – if they can be said to speak – for Ovid's critique of the fictions of voice-consciousness. Having seen this much, we are now in a position to notice something further. If the poem's opening symbolic

economy, its rhetoric of animation, encounters fierce pockets of resistance over the course of the narrative, so, too, does its opening *libidinal* economy. To conclude my analysis of the trope of the "female" voice in the *Metamorphoses*, I want to suggest that just as these voices unhinge the persuasive fantasy of the single voice, they work just as surely to unravel the culturally pervasive fantasy of a single direction (or object) for desire, or, for that matter, of a single connection between erotic life and the gender of one's body.[71]

One of the poem's most frequently narrated events, rape, is crucial to any analysis of the poem's sexual politics. Since Leo Curran first tried to grapple with this issue in Ovid's poem, critics have often noted that rape is one of its most prominent and disturbing narratives.[72] By reading this narrative of sexual violence against the background of Ovid's larger rhetorical practice, we have perceived the internal distance that the trope of the female voice establishes from it. And I've suggested in this regard that the idea of absolute difference signified by rape serves to displace a problem within any speaking subject onto a story of conflict between gendered subjects – that as part of Ovid's phonographic imaginary, the metapoetic story of rape defines "male" bodies and desires in opposition to "female" ones in a way that leads, with a leaden sense of inevitability, to a vicious circle of crime and revenge. If we are to understand anything further about how rape functions in the *Metamorphoses*, or about the kind of role it plays in Ovid's representation of gender and sexuality, however, we must also read it in the context of the poem's larger libidinal economy. And central though it may be to the poem's metarhetorical reflections, rape is, nonetheless, one story among many others in a poem dedicated to the permutations and vicissitudes of *amor*. When we remember Ovid's increasingly polymorphous representation of sexuality, eroticism, and fantasy over the course of the *Metamorphoses*, we begin to see that he is as adept at unsettling the rigid binarisms of gender identity proposed by his opening stories of poetic origin as he is at undermining the fictions of personal identity conferred by the idea of the human voice.

Put schematically, the *Metamorphoses* questions the coherence and inevitability of sexual difference in a number of ways. First, when the poem ostentatiously engenders its own important distinction between *anima* and *forma* in the story of rape, it requires us to pay attention to the *process of conferring* gender to the way that its various poetic tropes and genres impose meaning on bodily forms (and, by extension, on the desires portrayed as attached to those forms). And if we are asked to attend to the violence of this process, it is not hard to realize, in turn, that conferred meanings can also be contested. Certainly we have heard a number of voices in the poem raised in protest. Second, as the *Metamorphoses* progresses, the narrator famously tells multiple, contradictory, and polymorphously labile stories about the many forms of desire. Repeatedly imagining that his characters discover the cultural or natural "law" governing acceptable desires and objects only when they have already violated or decided to revise it,[73] the narrator continues to juxtapose these other "unlawful" loves to the heteronormative ones that rule the newly created world in the opening of the poem. Because the *Metamorphoses* represents so many erotic possibilities other than the ones with which it begins, the narrative eventually disentangles the gender of one's body from traditionally coded objects of desire. It does not take long to discover that in an Ovidian universe, just about *any* object can become erotic. Orpheus devotes himself to "tender boys" and one woman falls in love with another (Iphis and Ianthe). Narcissus falls for an *imago* and then himself, and Pygmalion falls for a statue of his own making. Byblis tries to seduce her brother and Myrrha succeeds with her father, who enjoys calling the disguised Myrrha "filia" in bed while she calls him "pater." Many characters simply prefer the hunt, or the company of other chaste hunters, to anything else, while still others devote themselves with such passion to memory of the dead that they, too, change their form. Even the exact shape of the beloved object's body means very little: we learn that Jupiter thinks Io just about as lovely in the form of a cow as a girl ("bos quoque formosa est" 1.612) and that Apollo is also pleased by Daphne's arboreal form. And through Europa's eyes, the narrator tells us just how very attractive that lovely white bull was, wandering through the fields ("formosus obambulat herbis / quippe color niuis est," etc. 2.851ff). In addition to *amor* written as rape, other desires and dispositions are entirely possible in Ovid's poem: among them, desire for a family member, for oneself, for someone of the opposite sex, for someone of the same sex, for boys who look like girls, for girls who dress as boys, for inanimate objects, animals, the chase, or simply no sexual relations at all.

Because of the exuberant exchange of objects in the *Metamorphoses*, as well as the permutations of passion that are *without* object, the poem begins to separate desire from its apparent rootedness in objects. Indeed, the narrator appears to be far more interested in the sheer force of *amor* (akin to Freud's notion of the *Trieb* or drive) than in the particularity of what this or that character desires. In some cases, passion exceeds not only the object but the subject, too. Thus figures like Midas, with his unlucky lust for gold, and Erysichthon, stricken with a hunger so overpowering that he eventually eats himself, are but further extensions of the poem's representation of *amor*, represented throughout as the "cursed love of having" (*amor habendi*).[74] Indeed, the combined effect of

discovering what is "permitted" or "lawful" by way of transgressing the law – the definition of what counts as "normal" by way of what counts as "perverse" – and the overall impression that subjects and objects are far less important than the sheer force of desire and fantasy means that Ovid's poem bears a strong resemblance to Freud's antifoundationalist theory of polymorphous "perversity" in the *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*. Indeed, one may wonder about the infinite variety of objects in Ovid's poem whether Laplanche's reformulation of Freud's hypothesis in *Three Essays* doesn't apply, as well, to the *Metamorphoses* – that is, whether sexuality in the poem isn't, "from the beginning, without an object."[75]

One therefore may wonder whether the myriad narratives of this love or that love aren't about objects at all but are, rather, fantasies invented to answer primary questions. That is, fantasies work to explain, and to cover over, a traumatic misfiring between experience and understanding (what Lacan calls "the Real" and what Petrarch, as we shall see in the next chapter, represents as love's constitutive blindness to its own history). As Laplanche comments with evident pertinence to a poem devoted to etiological myths, original fantasies, "like myths," claim "to provide a representation of, and a solution to, the major enigmas" that confront us as we enter into language and culture: "whatever appears to the subject as something needing an explanation or theory, is dramatized as a moment of emergence, the beginning of a history."[76] Taken as a whole, the dizzying erotic permutations of the *Metamorphoses* make the poem seem less a fixed representation of gender, difference, and desire than a series of originary histories that are offered, albeit provisionally, as ways of explaining the overwhelming, traumatic nature of *amor*. Certainly the poem's fascination with the phantasm of bodies "in bits and pieces" suggests that sexuality remains, for Ovid, fundamentally traumatic.

Of the *Metamorphoses*' many ruined bodies, however, Orpheus' is one that speaks eloquently to the poem's contradictory rhetorical and libidinal currents. Son of Apollo who equates rape and *amor*, Orpheus' "moving" voice carries on the poem's masculinist dream of animation; but he also pays dearly at the hands of the Bacchae for embodying this performative dream of a voice that can change the world. His *membra* lie scattered on the stream, his dying tongue still moving in his severed head as sign of the poem's mournful distance from its own fantasy about the voice's power: "flebile lingua / murmurat exanimis, respondent flebile ripae" ("mournfully the exanimated tongue murmured, and the banks mournfully responded" 11.52–53). At the same time, Orpheus' own erotic history – turning away from all women once one woman has died

to give his "love to tender boys" – recalls the misogyny of his character, Pygmalion, and mirrors Ovid's homosocial gesture of replacing Orpheus' dying address to Eurydice in the *Georgics* with his own final apostrophe to Orpheus. And yet the momentary fit between Orpheus' homoeroticism and poetic homosociality is fleeting. Apollo's son goes on to sing a song teeming with discordant, unruly, and polymorphous desires that challenge the heteronormative rules governing the poem's metarhetorical story of rape and homosocial contest. "Author of giving love to tender boys,"[77] Orpheus begins with his father's own shifting erotic allegiance – his grief for the lovely Hyacinthus – and then convincingly impersonates, in turn, a man's passion for his statue; a daughter's unquenchable lust for her father (Myrrha); a goddess's fearful plea to her beloved boy (Venus); and the conflicting desires of a young man in love with a woman who might bring him death and the woman who is herself torn between her deadly contest for chastity and unexpected love for a *puer* (Hippomenes and Atalanta). Standing in the contradictory crosscurrents of the poem's libidinal as well as symbolic economy, Orpheus' scattered body and dying tongue attest to the Ovidian subject's internal contradictions – as subject of language and of desire.

But Ovid's narrator does more than conduct a thematic critique of gender, more than simply pry apart the seemingly inevitable or "lawful" relationship between genders, desires, and objects. He accompanies this critical dramatization of what desires count as lawful with the equally unsettling rhetorical practice of ventriloquism (or, as Quintilian and the declaimers might have it, *prosopopoeia*). Just as Orpheus gives a convincing voice to the passions of Myrrha, Venus, and Atalanta, the poet who would write the many "female" letters of the *Heroides* is also constantly engaged in a process of cross-voicing over the course of his epic. Perhaps the *Metamorphoses*' most resonant figure for its narrator's penchant for transgendered *prosopopoeiae* is Tiresias, the "seer" in the poem who inhabited both a male and a female body. We've seen that Ovid's zero-sum game of rape and revenge provides a powerful (and powerfully influential) definition of what it means to occupy a male or a female body. And yet, his narrator so often speaks "as a woman" during the course of narrating a rape – speaks, for instance, in the voices of Calliope, Philomela, Arethusa, Arachne, Caenis – that his means of telling the story unsettles the very differences that this deeply cultural form of sexual violence appears to confer. Indeed, the frequency with which Ovid tells the story of rape in a woman's voice reminds us how profoundly our sense of the meaning of what counts as male or female depends for its definition upon the other gender; such consistent cross-voicing enacts an elliptical critique of

identity reminiscent of the one proposed by the psychoanalytic view of "sexual difference."

To take full stock of the poem's libidinal economy, in short, it is crucial to remember that its various dissonant female sounds, tongues, and lips – those of the Bacchae, Medusa, Syrinx, Echo, Daphne, Philomela, and others – are just as much surrogate figures for Ovid's narrator as those more tuneful voices attributed to Apollo, Pygmalion, Orpheus, or Pan. By remembering them, we come to see that Ovid's transgendered *prosopopoeiae* disturb the story of gender identity, difference, and desire that the poem's repeated narrative of rape produces. Taken overall, the many voices in Ovid's poem speak *against* each other. Rather than coalescing into one authorial voice, the poem's many voices speak against this compelling fantasy, alienating the fictions of identity (for both voice and sexuality) from within the very stories that also propose them. But that *clamor* need disturb us only if we subscribe to a view of fixed identity, gender, and desire that Ovidian rhetoric continually puts into question.

I may bring my reading of the *Metamorphoses* to a close by returning to the figure of Philomela's severed *lingua*. Like the figure of Medusa's mouth, I take Philomela's tongue to be emblematic of the work that Ovidian ventriloquism performs – as a kind of ongoing internal critique of the poem's own rhetorical and libidinal economies. For when Philomela protests Tereus' rape, her outcry does more than register yet another protest against sexual violation. It also allows the narrator to interrogate his own position as author by using Philomela's severed tongue to signify his own contingent relation to the text. That is, Ovid's narrator engages in a provocative act of cross-voicing that relies on a highly charged sense of sexual difference that it also confounds. The enraged "tongue" that speaks out against rape/is, and is not/Philomela's; it/is, and is not/Ovid's. "Her" moving but voiceless *lingua* becomes a terrible indexical sign of sexual difference, the violent residue of rape. But at the same time, it is also a sign for the narrator, striving through this speaker to find words that will capture an event that is *nefas*, "beyond speech." Signifying the narrator's predicament as well as Philomela's – how to speak about the unspeakable – the severed tongue marks an elliptical movement of "differential articulation" that makes each gender's story begin to revolve around the other's.[78] Justifiably famous for such acts of cross-voicing – the monologues of Byblis, Myrrha, Medea, Hecuba, Scylla, to name a few beyond the ones examined here – Ovid's narrator engages in a series of transgendered *prosopopoeiae* that counters the violent story of absolute sexual difference (difference, we might say, unto death) with a more elusive, elliptical narrative of mutual determination. Ovidian ventriloquism reminds us that even in such predicaments of difference as the one conferred by rape, the fate and definition of one sex relies on that of its "other."

Through the anxious figure for authorship that is Philomela's murmuring *lingua*, moreover, the narrator reminds us that while our understanding of what the gendered body means (both culturally and personally) derives from symbolic structures – a *lingua* is at once an organ, the "tongue," and "language" – our bodies are nonetheless just as resistant to the differencing semiotics of culture as they are molded by them. Indeed, we could say that the figure of Philomela's *lingua* testifies to the discursive shape of *all* bodies regardless of the gendered "form" they take. Understood etymologically, the pun on *lingua* tells us that like the "dying" organ that follows in "the footsteps of its mistress" ("et moriens dominae uestigia quaerit" 6.560), our "tongue" returns to us, insofar as it can return, only after having taken shape and meaning through the tongue we have learned to speak. But read in context – the context of distance and protest – Philomela's murmuring tongue also suggests that despite language's shaping force, despite the "tongue" we are given with which to speak, signs of resistance against that culturally determined form remain to be read. Both the poem's protesting female voices – their tones of anger, sorrow, and complaint – and the narrator's fondness for adopting those voices as figures for his own situation as author powerfully register that resistance.

The figure of Philomela's murmuring tongue, like the other female tongues we have heard, testifies to the recurrent dislocations of Ovidian rhetoric. Understood in light of the larger ventriloquizing narrative in which it appears, her *lingua* signifies that our tongues are both makers and bearers of meaning, at once agents in language and subject to the linguistic agency of others. Perseus and Medusa, Narcissus and Echo, Orpheus and the Bacchae, Apollo and Daphne, Pan and Syrinx, the narrator and the reader: we have seen that each one of these partners defines the other, that each voice comes to signify in a complex, differential relationship that challenges any recourse to phonocentric notions of singular agency in discourse. A story like that of Philomela's *lingua*, murmuring its discontent while separated from its owner, is but one telling moment in a narrative highly conscious of its own ventriloquizing and elliptical maneuvers. And highly conscious, as well, of the destabilizing effect that these rhetorical turns may have on generally functional conceptions about both identity and gender. Her ventriloquized story speaks, as do these other stories, to the subject's phonographic alienation from its own voice. But her story also speaks to the poem's fiercely unresolved conflict over what the differences between

human bodies mean. Along with the many other female figures for Ovid's contingent position as author of this text, Philomela's ventriloquized tongue tells us that the voices in the *Metamorphoses* may come to signify only at some considerable distance from the body whose coherence, meaning, and value we mistakenly take as immanent.

3 Embodied voices: autobiography and fetishism in the *Rime Sparse*

Writing in the name of love

Petrarch's complex encounter with Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, as critics of Renaissance literature know well, left an indelible mark on the history of European representations of the poet – particularly as that poet represented himself, or herself, as the subject of language and of desire. In rereading and rewriting Ovidian stories, Petrarch necessarily worked through a relationship fundamental to the *Metamorphoses*' poetic project: the mutually constituting, and mutually interfering, relationship between rhetoric and sexuality. Any attempt to account for Ovid's place in the *Rime Sparse*, therefore, will implicitly be commenting on rhetorical and erotic problems that ramify, extending throughout the mythographic lexicon of Renaissance poetic self-representation.[1] In order to examine how the rhetoric of Ovidian eroticism affects Petrarch's portrait of himself in love, I consider several Ovidian characters crucial to Petrarch's representation of himself as a "martyr" to an idol "sculpted in living laurel" (12.10; 30.27): Apollo, Pygmalion, Narcissus, Actaeon, Diana and, finally, Medusa.[2] In this chapter, I ask several related questions: precisely how – and with what formal and libidinal effects – does Petrarch read Ovid? What does that reading suggest about the relationship between language and sexuality in the *Rime Sparse*? And what does Ovid's presence in the *Rime Sparse* mean for the Petrarchan subject, particularly when the poet who would rival Pygmalion is tormented by language as well as desire? For Petrarch, like Apollo, gets his laurel leaf – a signifier in return for his impossible demand – but as soon as he reaches the tree, he finds only "such bitter fruit" that his "wounds" are more aggravated than comforted (6.13–14).

The characteristic turn to Petrarch's Ovidianism that affected the way future writers appropriated the *Metamorphoses*, of course, was his project of adapting Ovidian figures to his own epideictic purpose by turning them into figures of his own story. The sheer metamorphic virtuosity of Petrarchan autobiography in the first canzone (23) suggests how pro-

foundly autobiography would become, in the poetry of "Petrarchism," a gravitational center anchoring the difficult, often violent, certainly labile relationship between rhetoric and sexuality in the *Metamorphoses*. But Petrarch, by writing that the "first laurel" casts its shadow over all other "figures" (23.167–69), defines himself through a desire that Ovid saturates in the vagaries of language. The story of Apollo and Daphne – as the god of poetry violently, erotically, but nonetheless poetically "breathes" down her neck and yearns to "arrange" her tangled hair – concisely captures Ovid's penchant for turning stories about bodily "form" into commentary on poetic form. For Ovid characterizes the extremity of Daphne's reluctance linguistically – "immediately, the one loves but the other flees *the name* of love" – just as he turns her "beauty" to poetically useful purpose: Daphne's *forma* provokes the god of poetry and so it is her *figura* that she prays to lose (1.489, 530, 547). Indeed, the struggle between "the one and the other" (*alter* and *altera*) becomes as much one of the god of poetry's ability to *persuade* Daphne as to catch her. But his prayer breaks off with words "imperfect," for though he "would have said more," she runs away too quickly. In this metarhetorical scene of failed persuasion, Ovid systematically couples the erotic story with various aspects of rhetorical speech. He turns to trope by making Daphne's *figura* the body and the "figure" that the god of poetry wants – Apollo's similes being the verbal means deployed to lay his hands on that figure – and shifts from tropological to semiotic self-reflection when Apollo plucks the laurel, the sign for poetry.[3] His ensuing paean then plays on the much loved palindrome in Latin on the words for love and for Rome (AMOR-ROMA) after he plucks the laurel leaf from another anagram: the branches, or RAMOS, of her tree. That one needs to account for the collapse of the rhetorical and the sexual becomes somewhat brutally clear when one remembers that Latin writers use *ramus*, or branch, as a euphemism for the penis.[4] Following in Apollo's footsteps, Petrarch too would generate poetry from anagrammatic play on the actual letters of his laurel tree.[5] Ovid's text, in forging a connection between body, desire, and language – witness the frequent metalinguistic puns on *forma*, *figura* and *membra* – constantly confronts the violence latent in both rhetoric and sexuality. Yet the *Rime Sparse* poses a question underlying the *Metamorphoses* with new urgency: in Petrarch's internal landscape of Ovidian stories, the question becomes, what precisely is the poet's place, as a subject, in relation to the often violent interplay between language and *eros*? The much studied figure of Actaeon, suspended between his vision of beauty and the dismemberment attending his loss of voice, attests eloquently enough to the complexity of this intersection in both poems: "and still I flee the belling of my hounds" (23.160).

Although numerous artists in the *Metamorphoses* become surrogates for the narrator,[6] and such stories as Apollo's or Pygmalion's seem to comment on and to complicate that narrator's continuing and intense self-reflection, Ovid nonetheless distances himself from the erotic component of his own stories. No longer declaring himself, however ironically, "master" of erotic experience (*magister* in the *Ars Amatoria*) or victim of love (as in the *Amores*), the narrator of the *Metamorphoses* weaves no erotic fiction for himself. The narrator's distance – his habit of directing attention away from eros and violence as content to the violence and erotics of signification – is differently worked into the texture of Petrarch's exclusively, even obsessively, poetic relationship to Laura. Of course, his allusions to the *Metamorphoses* shape a persona very different from Ovid's narrator, for Petrarch weaves a new, suffering "voice" by directing Ovidian irony against himself. In the *Rime Sparse* a distance seems to surface *within* the poetic subject, pitting the self against itself, rather than, as in Ovid, *between* the narrating subject and his erotic stories.[7] In Petrarch's hands, Actaeon's dismemberment becomes an emblem of his internal condition. Such a distance within – named by turns error (*errore*) or exile (*'l duro esilio*) – might, in a Christian vocabulary, be called a sense of sin. In psychoanalytic terms, it might be called the effects of denial or the splitting of the subject.[8]

By shifting to a psychoanalytic account of the signifying subject, however, I aim to do more than experiment with another way of reading Petrarch's self-alienation. Looking behind the Augustinian frame for Petrarch's linguistic and erotic predicament to focus instead on the Ovidian figures with which Augustine may seem to be at odds, I am emphasizing the aspect of Petrarch's self-portrait that transgresses the theological discourse within which his semiotic and erotic project is often read. I stress the Ovidian texture of Petrarch's "martyrdom" to a figure and bring psychoanalytic theory to bear on that intertextual relationship in order to explore the complex connection between rhetoric and sexuality without subsuming one to the other. But I am also suggesting something specific about the Petrarchan subject: precisely by reaching back to Ovidian metamorphosis as a way to counter the discursive logic of conversion, memory, and right reading that governs "Augustinus'" understanding of the self,[9] Petrarch's specifically autobiographical revision of Ovidian stories paradoxically produces a discourse of the self in love that looks forward to the alienated linguistic subject and the story of its desire, adumbrated by recent psychoanalytic theory. Where in the *Secretum* Augustinus says of his conversion "I was transformed into another Augustine" ("transformatus sum ... in alterum Augustinum"), one realizes when reading canzone 23 that in calling this a transformation,

Petrarch uses the very verb that evokes Ovid's metamorphoses: *trasformare.*[10] In contrast to a past split that produced two Augustines – *transformatus sum* signalling the difference between a narrating and a narrated self – the poet-as-Actaeon writes, "I *am* transformed" (159). He thus modifies the temporality of Augustine's autobiographical division into two selves with an Ovidian representation of subjectivity *as* crisis: the poetic subject is caught in a continual process of metamorphosis, "a mean between living and dead" ("mezzo ... tra vivo et morto," 89). Neither this nor that, the poet rivals many an Ovidian subject's anguish when caught between forms. A *spirito doglioso,* he is trapped in a process of self-alienation that includes the very process of writing about that self: "I shall speak the truth; perhaps it will appear a lie, for I felt myself drawn from my own image and into a solitary wandering stag from wood to wood *quickly I am transformed* (*mi trasformo*) / and still I flee the belling of my hounds" (159–60). The difference between *transformatus sum* and *mi trasformo* marks a shift from autobiography divided between a narrated and a narrating self to autobiography as a continuing process of metamorphosis in which the self's alienation through transformation includes the very attempt to write a history of the self. This continuing disjunction emerges most forcefully in the *Rime Sparse* as forgetting and repetition. Both suggest that the self's inability to totalize or transcend – an inability modeled on time's differential movement in Augustine's *Confessions* – is the condition of memory and of writing.[11] The effect of this transforming process becomes most resonant for a psychoanalytic understanding of the signifying subject when Petrarch, complaining of martyrdom, claims he can neither relinquish the "one" figure that torments him nor remember, though he try, the whole of his own history: "And if here my memory does not aid me as it is wont to do, let my torments excuse it and the one thought which alone gives it such anguish that it makes me turn my back on every other and makes me forget myself beyond resistance" (15–20). With this painful fixation on an idolized sign that forces the self to "forget" itself we might compare Freud's theory of the unconscious – the blind spot that nonetheless shapes one's desire.

In the *Confessions,* the autobiographical text that profoundly influenced Petrarch's poetic practice, Augustine represents desire as cause and effect of language: for Petrarch, as for Augustine, "language engenders desire, and it originates in desire."[12] But the question still remains how one is to read this language. For the sense that language both constitutes and impoverishes the self – which Petrarch certainly shares with Augustine – fuels many of Petrarch's favorite stories from the *Metamorphoses.* Throughout Ovid's poem, some kind of figure, representation, or sign intervenes between a subject and his or her world, forever altering that relationship. In the stories of concern here, an *imago* "like a statue" (*signum*) falls between Narcissus and any other lover, a statue (*simulacrum*) falls between Pygmalion and womankind, and a laurel leaf as a sign for poetry bars Apollo from the beautiful figure of his desire. While such intervention directs attention to the beauty of the "form" in question, the subject's captivation with this form also gives rise to an absence – or better, an indefinite postponement – that nonetheless seems to constitute the subject. Thus Apollo becomes "himself" – produces an epideictic poem rather than *verba inperfecta* – when he receives a signifier in return for his demand for love. In the scene anticipating Petrarch's conversion of Laura as absent referent into linguistic absence, the only thing the god actually gets for the body he demands is the laurel leaf as "his" signifier. Daphne's resistance, we might say, is moved within, displaced in the scene's seeming resolution, for this signifying "closure" withholds as much as it gives. As the leaf replaces Daphne's body – the literal object Apollo said he wanted – a certain refusal of his demand is reified, turned into a signifier. The laurel leaf signifies poetry and, since it is part of an etiological story, its origin in Daphne's refusal. When the laurel replaces bodily form, the poem shifts attention from the absent referent to the absence that constitutes signification.[13] The Ovidian narrative crucial to Petrarch's self-portrait shadows the displacements founding desire in language when Apollo stops demanding an object (even as a tree she recoils from his kisses) and turns his demand for love into discourse, which takes the form of a poem in praise of something *other* than Daphne (Rome).

Addressing himself to this question of desire in language, John Freccero offered a powerful account of Petrarchan idolatry by reading the linguistic condition of the self in Augustinian terms, contrasting the *Rime Sparse* with Augustine's attempt to render the world intelligible by grounding language and desire in God as "the ultimate end of desire." To Augustine, Petrarch's pose would be "deliberately idolatrous," challenging the allegorical project of right reading: on Freccero's account, Petrarch undermines the "fig tree," the allegorical conversion story, by remaining with the laurel, the "autoreflexive" story of idolatry. Deploying the distinction between right and wrong reading in *De Doctrina Christiana,* he writes that Petrarch is self-consciously guilty of enjoying what he should use: "to deprive signs of their referentiality and to treat poetic statement as autonomous, an end in itself, is [Augustine's] definition of idolatry." Freccero thus reads Petrarch's idolatry – his dream of "an autonomous universe of autoreflexive signs" – according to a "theological problematic."[14] But the *Rime Sparse,* I have been

suggesting, offer another frame of reference for reading linguistic idolatry: the rhetorically self-conscious world of the *Metamorphoses*, whose characters appear in the cycle as so many figures for the laurel, the "first figure" of the poet's adoration (23.167). When Petrarch represents his own condition through Pygmalion's formally mediated fascination with himself – *operisque sui concepit amorem* ("with his own work he falls in love" 10.249) – his allusion to the elaborately and explicitly sexual rendition of "idolatry" in the Ovidian sense asks critics to think again about the discourse of verbal fetishism. For Petrarch concludes the paired sonnets on Simone Martini's painting of Laura by alluding to a distinctly sexual subtext for his love:

> Quando giunse a Simon l'alto concetto
> ch'a mio nome gli pose in man lo stile,
> s'avesse dato a l'opera gentile
> colla figura voce ed intelletto,
>
> di sospir molti mi sgombrava il petto
> che ciò ch'altri à più caro a me fan vile.
> Però che 'n vista ella si monstra umile,
> promettendomi pace ne l'aspetto,
>
> ma poi ch' i' vengo a ragionar con lei,
> benignamente assai par che m'ascolte:
> se risponder savesse a' detti miei!
>
> Pigmaliòn, quanto lodar ti dei
> de l'imagine tua, se mille volte
> n'avesti quel ch'i' sol una vorrei! (78)

When Simon received the high idea which, for my sake, put his hand to his stylus, if he had given to his noble work voice and intellect along with form

he would have lightened my breast of many sighs that make what others prize most vile to me. In appearance she seems humble, and her expression promises peace;

then, when I come to speak to her, she seems to listen most kindly: if she could only reply to my words!

Pygmalion, how much you must praise yourself for your image, if you received a thousand times what I yearn to have just once! (translation modified)

Petrarch compares this visual *figura* to the poet's written *figura*, the "idol sculpted in living laurel."[15] As is usual with Petrarch's veiled eroticism, "that which" Pygmalion "received a thousand times" seems not to refer to sexual favors (which crown Pygmalion's activities in the *Metamorphoses*), but merely to the lady's verbal response. When he turns away from the blunt sexuality of Ovid's scene, that which the poet would have "just once" – words – seem themselves to become erotic. As with Apollo,

Petrarch substitutes words for sexual relations. But in a further turn toward Pygmalion's love for his sculpted *simulacrum*, linguistic form usurps bodily form when this verbal artist makes words themselves the objects of his desire.

It is because of Pygmalion's rather startling literary career, the sheer persuasiveness of his poetic-erotic project, that I think a feminist and psychoanalytic reading is called upon to study the considerable literary appeal of fetishism. For feminist criticism, as many have argued, might have much to gain by reconsidering the poetic inscription of subject–object relations according to a linguistically attuned psychoanalytic theory. By means of this fetish, Laura is preserved, as Daphne for Apollo, or the statue for Pygmalion, for her lover's exclusive "use" – a use that conforms itself with stunning instrumental virtuosity (and considerable Ovidian irony) to exactly the shape imposed by the subject: like wax, the statue warms to Pygmalion's fingers, becoming "usable through use itself" ("ipsoque fit utilis usu," 10.286). In his apostrophe to Pygmalion, Petrarch figures an Augustinian understanding of idolatry through an intensely Ovidian meditation on the self's love for the figures of its own making. In Ovid's poem, Petrarch discovers not only idolized or reified signs (Augustine's sense of idolatry), but a peculiarly self-reflexive idolatry: in the stories of Narcissus and Pygmalion, the fixated subject is himself the author of the figure or sign he adores.[16] In the *Secretum*, Petrarch makes amply clear that for him Pygmalion's fixation on the ivory image of his own making recapitulates the predicament of Narcissus, frozen in front of the "image" of his own "form" (3.416). In Ovid's text, Narcissus' story does obliquely anticipate Pygmalion's sculpture: Narcissus freezes before his *imago* and is himself compared to a statue, "a figure (*signum*) formed from Parian marble" (419). The precise symmetry of these two stories, in which either the loving subject or the beloved object may be a statue, anticipates the mirroring reversals that characterize the relationship between Laura and her author.

From a subject like a sculpture to an object that is a sculpture, Ovid's stories of Narcissus and Pygmalion are implicated in each other: through the story of the statue, of becoming inanimate or animate, love for oneself as an "other" and obsessive love for oneself in another object are placed in complex chiasmatic relation to each other. Where looking at this sign or figure (*signum*) prompts Narcissus to declare *iste ego sum* only to dissolve in tears, Petrarch depicts himself as one similarly fascinated, to his harm, by an image. And so Augustinus refers to Simone's painting when he rebukes Franciscus not merely for loving an image for its own sake, but for loving himself, as poet, in that image:

"What could be more senseless (*insanius*) than that, not content with the presence of her living face, the cause of all your woes, you must needs obtain a painted picture by an artist of high repute, that you might carry it everywhere with you, to have an everlasting spring of tears, fearing, I suppose, lest otherwise their fountain might dry up?"[17] In this fetish, Narcissus and Pygmalion meet. Once again, Petrarch turns a dense Ovidian image to autobiographical account (weeping before a painting). In sonnet 78, moreover, the poet's imagined attempt to speak to the painting reminds us that these two stories were also about rhetoric, as both Ovidian lovers attempt to persuade, to invoke, or to move the image into a response by some kind of speech. Where Narcissus pleads his case with the *imago* itself, Pygmalion strikes upon a happier idea, turning away from the image to pray to Venus for a woman "like" his ivory maiden. In both cases, Ovid closely records the actual words the lover speaks to hold onto the image of which he is the author.

Such a fantasy as that of Pygmalion's animating success implicates the artists who use him in the very narcissistic relationship they outline. Ovid turned a story about a king in love with a statue into a story specifically about an artist's love for his own work; his version makes Pygmalion's a story about the artist's "escape into creative art from the defects of reality."[18] He then places Pygmalion's successful artistic endeavors in the frame of Orpheus' song: the sculptor's desire, and his success in giving life by giving form, thus become part of the wishful *fort-da* game of Orpheus' own desire.[19] And as we saw in the last chapter, Orpheus, for his part, is one of the *Metamorphoses*' most prominent figures for the rhetorical achievement to which the narrator aspires. In a similar, artistically self-reflexive move, Petrarch compares Pygmalion's desire to his own and in so doing, eroticizes his own words. But he does far more than this. In sonnet 78, Pygmalion himself turns into a very precise version of the poet. He becomes a love poet in the *epideictic* tradition. To Petrarch, Pygmalion's pleasure is more than pleasure: "Pigmaliòn, quanto lodar ti dei / de l'imagine tua" (literally, "Pygmalion, how much you must praise yourself for your image" [12]). This "lodar ti" casts Pygmalion in Petrarch's image, reminding the reader that Petrarch is indeed the poet of praise, the one who derives his poems and the name of his object from the same word: *lodare*, or the Latin *laudare*, is the etymological and literal basis for the changes on *laura* which generate the figures of the *Rime Sparse*. Petrarch thus becomes a consummate Pygmalion, as had Ovid before him, by reshaping a previous story into one made better because reconstituted in his image and thus made "useful through use itself."

Actaeon ego sum

Though the *Rime Sparse*'s structure of address gave a distinctive turn to the conventions of erotic description by which male poets in the Renaissance fetishized and dismembered the female body,[20] these conventions owe much to Ovid's rhetoric of the body. As soon as Apollo looks on Daphne, a *blason* seems to emerge: "He gazes at her hair ... he looks at her eyes gleaming like stars, he looks on her mouth ... he praises her fingers and her hands and her arms ... what is hidden, he believes even better" (1.497–502). This amorous look – and the enumeration of eyes, lips, fingers – would generate a long and varied literary history of erotic idealism. But it is important to remember that the *Metamorphoses* regularly fragments the human body and that dismemberment produces effects as horrifying as Apollo's gaze is idealizing. Thus Ovid frames Pygmalion's love for his *simulacrum* by recalling Actaeon's fate: when Pygmalion's narrator, Orpheus, dies, he is compared to "a doomed stag in the arena" falling "prey to dogs."[21] Whether violent (the death of Actaeon or Orpheus) or erotic (Apollo's lingering enumeration), dismemberment is one of the *Metamorphoses*' chief (dis)organizational principles as the narrator "turns his mind to tell of bodies changed into new forms" (1.1).

Petrarch reworks Ovid's rhetoric of body parts by incorporating it into the epideictic strategies of poetic autobiography. He captures the aesthetics and the violence of dismemberment in Ovid's poem: praising the body of Laura, as Apollo praises Daphne's, as so many beautiful parts, he also takes the story of Actaeon as his own. Where a fantasy of the *corps morcelé* – the "body in bits and pieces" – informs the *Rime Sparse*'s dismembered subject and fetishized object, so it frames the seemingly happy story of Pygmalion's *simulacrum*, for his narrator's *membra* are scattered, torn apart by instruments also "scattered" across the landscape (10.35, 50).[22] As Nancy Vickers suggestively argues in comparing Freud's theory of castration to Petrarch's "scattered rhymes," dismemberment and fetishism are part of the same amatory and defensive process.[23] According to Freud's simultaneously sexual and signifying etiology, Pygmalion's exclusive love for his statue, the object of his own making, would be a fetishistic love for a substitute – a transference of significant value from a prized body part to an external object that is henceforth required for gratification. Thus Pygmalion's *simulacrum* and Petrarch's *figura* eclipse the subject's interest in any other erotic investment: all pleasure (corporeal or aesthetic) is invested in this idol alone. Pygmalion's ivory maiden permanently replaces womankind in her maker's eyes; Petrarch is "governed" by Laura's veil only.[24] But as Freud makes

clear, the fetish works precisely to defend against dismemberment – specifically, the dismemberment of castration. And it is this form of dismemberment, Vickers suggests, that the rhetoric of bodily fragmentation seems both to evade and to evoke.

What psychoanalytic theory shares with Ovid's and Petrarch's Pygmalion is a sense that while the fetish reveals much more about the loving subject than about the object with which he is captivated – remember that in Ovid the *simulacrum* is not named, while in Petrarch she takes her name from *his* rhetorical activity of praise – the fetish so absorbs the subject because it compensates for a profound disappointment with the "defects of reality." As we shall see, both Pygmalions suggest that the loving subject rejects the real world as deficient, incomplete. For Freud, of course, the fetish is both a memorial to, and an attempt to cover up, a particular lack that affronts the young boy's narcissistic investment in the form of his own body: the fetish replaces "a quite special penis that had been extremely important in early childhood but was afterwards lost. ... It is a substitute for the woman's (the mother's) phallus which the little boy once believed in and does not wish to forego." Symbol and symptom, the fetish signifies the price of masculine identity, for masculinity achieves its (always contradictory) coherence by acknowledging the law of exogamy. This taboo on incest, in turn, is personified in "the father." The fetishist, however, "attempts to substitute the rules of his own desire for the culturally predominant ones."[25] As his object-sign acquires "value" and "significance" by displacement, his devotion becomes an "artful" evasion of what the child "ascribes" to the father's "role."[26] A symbolic substitute – and symptom of a culturally demanded renunciation only nominally accepted – the fetish works by contradiction: it both affirms and denies the traumatic loss that it replaces (and preserves).

For Vickers, the "scattered rhymes" work according to this logic of fetishism, denying the very dismembering the poet practices and to which he alludes: "Woman's body, albeit divine, is displayed to Actaeon, and his body, as a consequence, is literally taken apart. Petrarch's Actaeon, having read his Ovid, realizes what will ensue: his response to the threat of imminent dismemberment is the neutralization, through descriptive dismemberment, of the threat. He transforms the visible totality into scattered words, the body into signs; his description, at one remove from experience, safely permits and perpetuates his fascination." The subject's memory (the play on *membra / ri-membra*) and the "body" of his poems are constituted by signs that "re-member the lost body" and thus, "like fetishes, affirm absence by their presence."[27] Here it is important to remember that the male child's "troubling encounter with intolerable female nudity" (103) is a cultural encounter with woman's body as it is read – and *given* significance – as "lacking parts." Woman's body is interpreted, that is, according to the taboo that legislates exogamy and that the sheer weight of cultural practice personifies in the father. If Freud's little boy sees a woman's body as dangerously mutilated, he does so because that body is offered to him to read as it has been rendered legible for him by a symbolic, not a natural, order. Legislated, that is, as that which comes to represent all those losses under the sign of what he may *yet* lose if he does not obey the law.[28] A symbolic cover for the lack the "male" subject wants to refuse but must "know" just the same to become socialized, the fetish allows him to love women by occluding their difference. The fetish is riddled with ambivalence, a historical relic of the narcissistic subject's attempt to retain his pleasure without submitting to the law of sexual difference through which "he" may come to be.

The Lacanian proposition – that sexual difference be read literally – is concisely distilled in the differential, enunciative structure through which the *Rime Sparse* so persuasively transmitted Ovidian stories: difference between *io* and *voi* depends on a difference between laur*o* and laur*a*. Pygmalion's fetish, however, would signal a certain resistance to the meaning attributed to this differential structure. And the *Rime Sparse*'s figures do indeed dismantle any simple gender identity. As both Giuseppe Mazzotta and Nancy Vickers rightly stress, the images for possible gender positions remain remarkably fluid. "If the analogy between Actaeon and the poet collapses," Mazzotta observes of madrigal 52, "he now insinuates he is like Diana. The shift of perspective is hardly surprising in Petrarch's poetry: he often casts himself, as is well known, in the role of Apollo and, in the same breath, casts Laura as the sun. The shift implies that the categories of subject and object are precarious and reversible."[29] In canzone 29, for instance, the poet becomes Dido: "My thoughts have become alien to me: one driven like me once turned the beloved sword upon herself" (29.36–9). Or in canzone 23, giddy transformations of gender are nonetheless articulated within a binary structure that shapes the fictions of a self represented as "male" or "female" by turns.[30] Defined by what Mazzotta aptly calls the "elliptical" structure of the *Rime Sparse*, the autobiographical subject's masculinity is always at risk, confronted with an other that is, by turns, his other *and* a mirror. Read psychoanalytically, dismemberment and idolatry suggest that the formal relationships of Petrarchan (and, by extension, Ovidian) poetics implicate the libidinal, and thus social, history of two different subjects resisting a tradition that is extremely consistent – rigid even – when it comes to representing the meaning and cultural value of sexual difference. But that entanglement of formal and historical concerns, however,

will not be the history of conscious understanding (a history of ideas), but rather a study of its disruption – of the effect of a subject as it is produced in (an unpredictable) relation to a larger discursive field that is already laden with the weight of tradition.[31]

Like the story of Actaeon's dismemberment, Pygmalion's idol has struck many as having a phallic resonance.[32] In Ovid, Pygmalion's artistry is caused specifically by a flaw in womankind: after "seeing" female sexual crimes (the prostitution of the Propoetides), he carves his statue out of "disgust" for the "faults nature had so liberally given the female mind" (10.243–45). In the *Rime Sparse*, Petrarch renders his idolatry less specifically and rather more retroactively than Ovid's Pygmalion. But he nevertheless effectively conveys the sense that he finds the rest of the world impoverished by comparison: in his state of arrested infatuation, the poet "breathes many sighs," that, to him, "make what others most prize vile" (78.5–6). In the fiction of sonnets 77 and 78, of course, the poet is commenting on a painting of Laura by someone else's hand. Because he must distinguish Simone from other painters who have won fame "in the art of looking" in order to praise him as a painter of Laura (77.2, 5–14), the poet's explicit disdain is turned against a vague, general group of "others."

> s'avesse dato a l'opera gentile
> colla figura voce et intelletto,
>
> di sospir molti mi sgombrava il petto
> che ciò ch'altri à più caro a me fan vile. (78.3–6)

... if he had given to his noble work voice and intellect along with form

he would have lightened my breast of many sighs that make what others prize vile to me.

This broad censure may include Simone's *figura*, the visual image being inferior to the poet's *figura*. Turned into a vague "something dear" or valuable "to others," that which is "vile" to the poet may also be understood specifically – that is, as other women, particularly in a poem that ends with an apostrophe to the artist who was "disgusted" with the female mind. But Pygmalion's particular distaste seems to have turned into a far more general disgust with worldly things. The poet's sweeping revulsion seems to have been produced by occluding its origin in the very specific distaste of Ovid's Pygmalion for what nature gave womankind; these lines seem to fashion the poet's disappointment by alluding only very evasively to Pygmalion's generative misogyny. True to the split in fetishistic pleasure, the poems to his painted idol affirm and deny their origin. Sonnet 78 relies on the Ovidian text, with its very specific reason for Pygmalion's creative act, and deflects attention from it by referring so very generally to "that which others most prize" as "vile to me." Similarly, Petrarch's self-designation as an Actaeon suspended *before* mutilation by his hounds hints at these contradictory, but nonetheless entangled, attitudes. Though invoked, Actaeon's dismemberment is never recounted in the *Rime Sparse*; this suspension renders his fate all the more indelibly as a dark subtext resonating beneath or beyond the cycle.

Taboo, and the punishment for violating it, informs the libidinal scene of both poems. As is frequently noted, Pygmalion's love for the image of his own making is not only fetishizing, it is incestuous. The artist himself does not "dare say" in his prayer what he really wants ("timide ... non ausus ... dicere" 274–6) and the desire of Myrrha for her father retrospectively casts some doubt over her grandfather's desire. When lying to her father to say she would like to marry someone "like" him, Myrrha quotes the words of her grandfather, Pygmalion, turning the narrative back on itself: Pygmalion's prayer, "'similis mea,' dixit 'eburnae'" reappears in her metrically identical answer, "'similem tibi' dixit at ille" (10.276, 364). Pygmalion and Myrrha employ the language of substitutes in order to avoid saying what is prohibited – that neither wishes, in fact, to enter into the play of substitutions at all.[33] This sense of violation, moreover, informs the visual and the vocal imagination of both poems. Petrarch's very rhymes, of course, violate Diana's injunction against speaking about what he has seen ("Make no word of this" [23.74]). Similarly, Ovid's story of Pygmalion exists precisely because of a violated prohibition on looking: Orpheus takes over the narrative of the poem, and tells the story of Pygmalion, only because he has lost Eurydice by disobeying Pluto's injunction not to "look back." We are thus able to read the narrative of Book 10 in the first place only because Orpheus disobeyed an injunction not to look. Recall, too, that the Actaeon story, central to the rhetorical and phantasmatic work of the *Rime Sparse* and echoed in the death of Orpheus, revolves around a taboo against looking. As Vickers suggests, criminal offense hangs heavy in the air when Diana forbids the intruder to speak about what he has, mistakenly, seen: "You would now tell the story of me seen before you, my robe put aside, if it were permitted that you be able to tell it" (3.192–93). The mountain on which unlucky Actaeon is torn to pieces is already "stained with the blood of many slaughtered beasts"; nymphs smite their breast and cry out when he enters the grove (143, 178). In the *Rime Sparse*, not only does the poet as Actaeon stumble on what he should not see, but he writes poems about what he should not tell.

As Freud conceived it, a fetish is a contingent, foundationally *acci-*

dental object attached to the traumatic scene of castration. Few texts, I might add, stress as repeatedly as the *Metamorphoses* that the occurrence and the object of desire are accidental: in the continuing narrative of that *amor sceleratus habendi* ("cursed love of having" 1.131), the emphasis falls heavily on the sheer transgressive force of *amor* rather than on the many objects desired. A statue or an image, that is, can become just as desirable as another human, and those human forms designated as forbidden by "law" easily become erotic.[34] In the story Petrarch chooses to represent his own desire, of course, the bad luck of stumbling across Diana naked proves fatal. *Fortuna* and *error*, the Ovidian narrator tells us, rather than *scelus*, are to blame. And so, in the *Rime Sparse* too, it is "the contingency of the encounter, the involuntary experience that Petrarch stresses."[35] Freud's account of fetishism is comparable to Ovid's and Petrarch's unlucky Actaeon because it is the accidental quality of the traumatic scene that founds the possibility of the "perception" of castration: "The setting up of the fetish seems to take its cue from a process which is reminiscent of the halt made by memory in traumatic amnesia. Here too interest stops on its way, perhaps at the last impression before the uncanny, traumatic one is seized as a fetish."[36] In Freud's exposition, a threat alone – and the eventual traumatic inscription in the subject of sexual difference as castration – produces in *some* males the socially sanctioned "normal" result of heterosexual desire. Thus I understand the ideological persuasiveness of the "experience" or "perception" of castration, or of the "truth" of sexual difference, according to a view of sexuality's traumatic and social character as set forth by Slavoj Žižek: "Ideology is not a dreamlike illusion that we build to escape insupportable reality ... it is a fantasy-construction which serves as a support for our 'reality' itself: *an illusion which structures our effective, real social relations and thereby masks some insupportable, real, impossible kernel.*" Not only will subjects never have a nonimaginary relation to their real conditions of existence (Althusser), but their representations (such tenacious "fantasy-constructions" as the Diana–Actaeon story) structure social relations so effectively precisely because they offer a means of evading or "masking" trauma – which, in Žižek's terms, amounts to the construction of the unconscious in the subject around the Law's "senseless" and "non-integrated" "injunction."[37]

Further reflection on the relationship between the poetic "I" and his linguistic practice suggests that Petrarch's verbal fetishism occludes another disappointment: although the beloved, like Daphne, disappears as the cycle's absent referent – her body ceding place to his letter – Petrarch's language is itself marked by the very absence it decries in the real world. Citing Freccero's assessment that Petrarch's language is

"idolatrous in the Augustinian sense," Thomas Greene stresses that his remains a self-consciously failed attempt. Where Freccero allows that "pure auto-reflection of the sign" is impossible, Greene observes that "the question is whether this service" to the signifier *laura* "ever really works." Though Petrarch attempts to "create" himself in relation to the signifier, *laura*, "one might argue rather that he creates himself out of *failed* signifiers."[38] When it comes to Laura, his *ingegno* and *arte* are somehow "lacking" (308.12–14). Her absence as referent returns to haunt the language of the cycle as language's own lack: poetic-erotic melancholy repeats thematically as an erotic story what happens in actual semiotic practice.[39] Petrarch's differential signs – the difference between *lauro* and *laura*, or between *velo* and *vela* as self-reflexive signs for poetry – repeat the differential structure of the cycle itself. In an observation that describes Petrarch's lyrics in terms reminiscent of de Saussure's definition of the sign as a relational entity produced from a synchronic network of differences, Mazzotta writes: "each poem's autonomy is unreal ... the origin of each lyrical experience lies always outside itself ... and each reverses and implicates others in a steady movement of repetition." Rendering the logic of differentially produced signs explicit, the cycle evokes "plenitude and wholeness" only as they vanish; "emblems of origin" remain "unavoidably elusive."[40]

Such language about language as something that fails, or as a structure without an origin, suggests a further connection between the *Rime Sparse* and psychoanalytic theory. First, Lacanian theory and Petrarchan practice converge around the dismembered body "in bits and pieces," not simply as a theme or a symbol for erotic danger and desire – Actaeon as motif – but around the weaving of this story of sexual difference (as male visual trauma) into a specifically linguistic problem of meaning and structure.[41] In both, a synchronic network of differential, interdependent signifiers constitute a system in which any one element is meaningful only in relationship to what it is not. Absence haunts the erotic and the linguistic self-understanding of the cycle; the loss in one reflects loss in the other. The poetic form that most succinctly captures such a conception of semiotic functioning in the *Rime Sparse* is, of course, the sestina. The signifier, Lacan insists, is constituted in its absence from itself, an absence in which the subject, as a "speaking subject," is utterly implicated. It is in the translation of a linguistic into a sexual scene that Lacan locates the work of culture: "The phallus is our term for the signifier of his alienation in signification," by which he means to suggest that "it is in the *name of the father* that we must recognize the *support* of the symbolic function which, from the dawn of history, has identified his person with the figure of the law."[42] On this account of the signifying subject,

Petrarchan self-consciousness concerning his words' failure and his own linguistic "exile," receives the support of "the name of the Father" in the form of Actaeon and the prohibition on the female body in the form of a naked Diana.

Ovid and Petrarch place particular stress on the linguistic crisis from which dismemberment follows, or better yet, to which it is compared. As we saw earlier, Petrarch's allusion to Actaeon's vision replaces a past conversion into two selves (*transformatus sum*) with a continuing crisis of metamorphosis (*mi trasformo*). This Ovidian crisis includes the attempt to write an autobiographical account of the self's continuing alienation from itself. After he "stood to gaze on" the only sight that "appeases him," the poet undergoes a transforming process continuous with the moment of writing:

> ... l'acqua nel viso co le man mi sparse.
> Vero dirò; forse e' parrà menzogna:
> ch' i' senti' trarmi de la propria imago
> et in un cervo solitario et vago
> di selva in selva ratto mi trasformo,
> et ancor de' miei can fuggo lo stormo (23.155–160)

... she sprinkled water in my face with her hand. I shall speak the truth, perhaps it will appear a lie, for I felt myself drawn from my own image and into a solitary wandering stag from wood to wood quickly I am transformed and still I flee the belling of my hounds

In a canzone whose every word transgresses Diana's foundational command – "make no word of this" – the poet's own shape is drawn, like his words, away from its "proper image" ("la propria imago"). No sooner is he returned to his earthly body ("terrene membra," 151) than he must flee his hounds; no sooner does he wish to coincide with his utterance than his words appear to lie. Where the speaker remarks that he was returned to his body only that he might suffer more (152), the dual figure of the *imago* also implies that the language in which he finds himself serves the same purpose – to increase his torment. Drawn from a *proprio imago*, an "image" in both a linguistic and a corporeal sense, the poet uses bodily disfigurement to figure the linguistic error of which the poem speaks and from which it cannot escape ("Vero dirò; forse e' parrà menzogna"). For as itself a poetic figure, the vanishing "proper image" reinscribes the very problem to which it refers.

In Ovid's text, dogs tear Actaeon's flesh because he cannot say his own name – because Diana's prohibition interferes between the subject and a language that, quite literally, is no longer merely his instrument, no longer the transparent medium of his intention: "He longs to cry out, 'I am Actaeon (*Actaeon ego sum*). Know your master.' But words fail his spirit (*uerba animo desunt*); the air resounds with barking" (III.229–30). This is the linguistic crisis that becomes the very condition of poem 23: "Make no word of this." The horror in Ovid's scene is attached, as much as anything else, to the way the sound of human words recedes before the sound of hounds barking. But, as Lacan would suggest of this not-speaking, "no one would think of that ... if there weren't beings endowed with an apparatus for giving utterance to the symbolic ... so as to make one notice it." One might ask, why are animals represented as beings that don't speak? Because of the human habit of projecting itself as a signifying subject: "You only know what can happen to a reality once you have definitively reduced it to being inscribed in a language."[43] Because his mouth changes to a stag's, Actaeon cannot pronounce his *nomen* and the subject is lost before the barbarity of the nonsignifying animal world. Further, it is on the change in the shape of Actaeon's lips that the representation of canine "reality" hangs: before Actaeon's metamorphosis, each dog achieved a quasi-human status because he, too, bore a name given by his master. Ovid draws out the pathos of the hunter hunted, increasing the barbarity by citing every name no longer available to Actaeon: "While he hesitates he sees his hounds ... Melampus and keen-scented Ichnobates are the first to give signals by barking ... then others run faster than the quick wind: Pamphagos and Dorceus and Oribasos ..." and so on (206–25). At the intersection between human and nonhuman, the signifying and the nonsignifying, the dogs appear all the more inhuman precisely because, once personified by names and trained by "signals," they now devour the speaker who defined each in a community founded on a rudimentary sort of language. When *Actaeon ego sum* literally fails to work, the dogs lapse back into a state understood only in relation to not-speaking, or "known," as Lacan puts it, once "reduced to being inscribed in a language." In this soon to become emblematic crisis of identity, we should recall Lacan's position that the subject represents itself as a subject for "the Other," which is not another subject, but another signifier. This is what Actaeon is trying to do – to use a signifier (Actaeon) to represent himself, as a subject, for another signifier (in this case, the other names for his hounds). But all he gets in return is barking because his lips cannot form that word and the dogs, once personified through signifiers of their own, literally cannot recognize the "sound" that "though not human, is still one no deer could utter" ("gemit ille sonumque,/ etsi non hominis, quem non tamen edere possit/ ceruus" 237–39). If one is defined retroactively as a subject by means of the differential movement of the signifier within a system of exchange with other speakers, it is because one's address to another

requires the impersonal intervention of the Other. In this intervention, the fact of getting an answer or meeting with silence on the part of the actual interlocutor is beside the point: it is to the chain of signification in which both parties are assumed to be embedded, as subjects, that the signifier is addressed.[44]

The proper name – crucial to Actaeon's linguistic impasse – is also crucial to Ovid's representation of his place as a subject, as author, in his text. As we have seen, Ovid often inscribes his own name in his work. At the end of the *Metamorphoses*, he imagines his own permanence by way of signifiers: his name (*nomen*) and his work (*opus*) will survive because readers will read his text aloud. In the *Tristia*, he compares himself to Actaeon as someone who saw something he shouldn't only to distinguish himself as one who managed to achieve a name recognized by a "crowd of learned men": "grande tamen toto nomen ab orbe fero, / turbaque doctorum Nasonem nouit" ("I bear a great name throughout the world, and a throng of learned men recognize Naso," 2.119–20). In claiming a place as author, Ovid repeatedly represents himself as a signifier – a *nomen* heard throughout the world. In both the *Metamorphoses* and the *Tristia*, moreover, he offers this signifier to an audience who, in contrast to Actaeon's hounds, are fully signifying subjects (readers who are "learned"). Like Petrarch, who represents himself as a *lauro* in poems addressed to *Laura*, Ovid's favorite way to represent himself as author is as a signifier for the Other.

This shared habit of self-representation means that Actaeon becomes a very dark figure for authorship in both poems. Actaeon's failure to control language – his being controlled by the words usually taken to be instruments of the mind – is woven into a story of a prohibited looking that causes bodily dismemberment. As Jane Gallop observes, "castration for Lacan is not only sexual ... it is also linguistic: we are inevitably bereft of any masterful understanding of language, and can only signify ourselves in a symbolic system that we do not command, that, rather, commands us."[45] The Symbolic order is for Lacan a "phallic" order because linguistic absence is grafted onto a culturally organized sexual "absence." Such a theory could find few stories more apt than Actaeon's. The subject's sudden, unexpected imprisonment by the language he (mistakenly) assumed to be secondary or instrumental to thought is precisely what both the Petrarchan and the Ovidian Actaeon, in different ways, enact. But in taking up Actaeon's story as a figure for his own as a poet – which Ovid does in the *Tristia*, Petrarch in the *Rime Sparse* – each represents the condition of the poetic subject so that, as Žižek puts it, "the subject of the signifier is a retroactive effect of the failure of its own representation ... *the failure of representation is its positive condition.*"[46]

It is not that there is more to "Actaeon" than he can say, that he exists somehow more completely outside the distortions of language. Rather, it is because he must represent himself as a signifier for another signifier – for the Other – that the lack that founds the possibility of this exchange becomes the "positive condition" for his existence as a subject.[47] The structure of address (Actaeon's to his hounds, Ovid's to his readers, Petrarch's to Laura) introduces the lack in the signifier by referring to the Symbolic network of language that is the condition of the possibility of both parties to the exchange. From a Lacanian perspective, it is no accident that the subject's precipitation in such a differential structure – his alienation from "him"self in signification – is rendered as a sexual story about seeing the female body as a trauma leading to a phantasm of the viewer's dismemberment. Nor is it an accident that so many future self-defining male writers used Actaeon's predicament as an emblem for their own condition. That story, however, would be precisely a "support" lent to the absence necessary to symbolic functioning, a support in which culture has, in practice, identified the "person" of the father "with the figure of the law" (though it need not). In Ovid's text, the scattered members of Pygmalion's narrator, Orpheus, recall those of Actaeon and qualify Pygmalion's happier fate. These *membra* remind one that culture's foundational story of sexual difference informs not only the erotic but also the linguistic project of both poems. That this horrible fate transcends personal pathology is suggested by the ever increasing popularity of Actaeon as a figure for expressing the inner condition of "man."[48]

The stories of Actaeon and Pygmalion suggest that the different forms of the human body – as given meaning by cultural laws – continue to cast a shadow over what might seem to be the most abstract formal, linguistic, and rhetorical concerns of both poems. Actaeon's story collapses bodily dismemberment into the disappearance of a name (in Ovid) or into the foundational distortions of poetic "images" (in Petrarch). Each poem reads the first in terms of the second, inscribing the accidental sight of a naked woman into "male" subjectivity realized *as* linguistic crisis. So, too, both Pygmalion stories weave desire into linguistic or rhetorical self-reflection, attesting to the body's continuing pressure on each poem's figurative strategies. In *The Ego and the Id*, Freud wrote that "the ego is first and foremost a body-ego." Of this evocative comment, Laplanche elaborates that the ego is an imaginary organ, a "projection or metaphor of the body's surface" that "is constituted outside of its vital functions, as a libidinal object." This body-ego would take its shape, moreover, "from the perception of a fellow creature," which "perception," I have argued, is inseparable from

the social codes of sexual difference that give perception meaning.[49] A certain phantasm of the body's unity structures the subject's perception – but also its symbolic activity. In both poems, it is in the recurrent images of dismemberment, as well as in Pygmalion's fetishized statue, that one may recognize the ego of the writing subject.[50]

The art of looking

By focusing on Petrarch's Ovidian alienation from his own voice, we have understood that an unresolved struggle over the meaning of the human body in the *Rime Sparse* informs the cycle's figurative and rhetorical strategies. But we are also in a position to ask what Petrarch's representation of himself as alienated from his own tongue means for the nature of the poet's vision; his interrogation of the visual in relation to the verbal order repeats a similar investigation in Ovid's stories of Pygmalion, Narcissus, and Actaeon. Remember, then, that Petrarch's paired sonnets move between a poem in praise of a painting to one in search of that painting's missing words. The sequence opens with Simone's visual act:

> Per mirar Policleto a prova fiso
> con gli altri ch'ebber fama di quell'arte,
> mill'anni non vedrian la minor parte
> della beltà che m'àve il cor conquiso.
>
> Ma certo il mio Simon fu in Paradiso
> onde questa gentil donna si parte;
> ivi la vide, et la ritrasse in carte
> per far fede qua giù del suo bel viso.
>
> L'opra fu ben di quelle che nel cielo
> si ponno imaginar, non qui tra noi,
> ove le membra fanno a l'alma velo;
>
> cortesia fe', né la potea far poi
> che fu disceso a provar caldo et gielo
> et del mortal sentiron gli occhi suoi. (Sonnet 77)

Even though Polyclitus should for a thousand years compete in looking with all the others who were famous in that art, they would never see the smallest part of the beauty that has conquered my heart.
But certainly Simon was in Paradise, whence comes this noble lady; there he saw her and portrayed her on paper, to attest down here to her lovely face.
The work is one of those which can be imagined only in Heaven, not here among us, where the body is a veil to the soul;
it was a gracious act, nor could he have done it after he came down to feel heat and cold and his eyes took on mortality.

From Simone's heavenly vision that transcends mortal eyes, the poet turns in the next sonnet to lament that Simone's painting neither hears nor responds to his address.

In pondering such interference between visual and verbal art,[51] Petrarch revisits a problem central to Ovid's narrative: the bereaved Orpheus sings a song that includes the story of Pygmalion's visual pleasure only after having himself disobeyed Pluto's command not to look back. Orpheus may either look on Eurydice or sing about her – but not both. From the disastrous, prohibited glimpse of Laura-as-Diana in canzone 23 to his praise for Simone's transcendent vision – "ivi la vide ... non qui tra noi" ("there he saw her ... not here among us") – Petrarch revisits the narrative trajectory of *Metamorphoses* 10 and 11. His engagement with Ovid's poem reminds us that both poets are writing, with infinite care, about the complex relationship between acts of writing and speaking and acts of looking. As we saw in canzone 23, Diana's injunction prohibits the Italian poet from gazing on the body he desires. But by rewriting Pygmalion's story in sonnets 77 and 78, Petrarch finds a mediated way to gaze at his idol. He can imagine getting a glimpse of Laura, that is, if he looks through one of two screens: Simone's painting or Ovid's poem. True to the double epistemology of fetishism, Laura's veil both has and has not been "stripped off." The poet may gaze on the painting as often as he likes, but veils of allusion and of paint still stand between his loving eyes and the figure that eludes him.

The "art of looking" in sonnets 77 and 78 recapitulates the difference between the position of Ovid's Orpheus (who sings only before and after his disastrous look) and that of Ovid's Pygmalion (whose art grants him the luxury of gazing upon his beloved). In other words, the narrative displacements of *Metamorphoses* 10 define Petrarch's visual desire in these sonnets: an unmediated glimpse of his beloved – the "Paradise" granted to Simon or to Pygmalion – will never be his own. Such a glimpse may be had only from an Orphic distance, in one artist's song about another artist's vision. Hovering between Orpheus and Pygmalion, Petrarch reads his own story out of the vacillation between one figure and another. Once again, the Ovidian narrator's ironic critique of a character in his poem (his knowledge that Pygmalion's story is but a phantasy) defines and divides the Petrarchan subject from within.

If we read sonnets 77 and 78 together, then, we understand that despite the idea of a heavenly vision, seeing is no more a transcendent experience than speaking for the autobiographical subject of the *Rime Sparse*.[52] In the first sonnet Petrarch writes about another man's visual

paradise; and he certainly hopes to give himself a place among those other artists who compete in "the art" of looking. But by the end of the second sonnet, the desire to look on Laura ends by *depriving* the speaker of something important: "if only she could respond to my words" (78.11). The visual figure of Laura merely echoes Paradise. It cannot heal the "exile" or "death" that inhabits the poet's mind, art, and world. Indeed, the long shadows of several Ovidian prohibitions fall on Petrarch's version of the sculptor's infatuated gaze. Because he condenses so many Ovidian characters into a mythographic palimpsest of his own unhappy situation, Petrarch's unending desire to gaze on Laura is defined by Diana's taboo *and* Pluto's. The combined stories of Actaeon's and Orpheus' prohibited gazes tell us that this poet may see only the veil of Laura's painted or written *figurae*, never the woman herself. It is not merely that Petrarch and Ovid, as poets, prefer verbal to visual signs. These various love stories and the theory of fetishism both suggest, rather, that the preference for verbal over visual signs means that when it comes to being a speaking male subject, there is *something very wrong with looking*.

In the *Metamorphoses*, the fantasy of Pygmalion's gaze on his beloved is differently mediated, but even in his "success" story, mediation intervenes. Ovid's narrator, Orpheus, imagines a magical moment when the veil of sculpture slips away to reveal a woman's bodily form. He describes an idyllic moment when Pygmalion may touch, love, and look without the interference of a screen of any kind: "nec nuda minus formosa uidetur" ("no less beautiful is the statue naked" [10.266]). The line implies that Pygmalion can take off the statue's clothes as easily as he has put them on. But we cannot forget that this moment of her unveiling is narrated by the poet whose gaze on his beloved deprived him of the very presence he so anxiously desired. Because of the look forbidden by Dis ("ne flectat retro sua lumina . . . . flexit amans oculos" 51–57), Orpheus loses the Eurydice whom his voice had almost won. Because of the power of his voice, the infernal couple call Eurydice but after his look, "she instantly slipped into the depths" (10.57).

It may be tempting to suggest that Ovid resolves these displacements when Orpheus dies because at the end of his song (and his life), Orpheus is permitted precisely those things permitted his character, Pygmalion to look and to touch. But at this point, a third voice intervenes: that of Ovid's narrator. In a scene that carries Orpheus' nostalgia for his mate into the poem's own discourse, the narrative turns round on itself, circling back around the pivotal figure of the rediscovered Eurydice. The narrator describes how Orpheus may now "look back" on Eurydice once more:

> umbra subit terras, et quae loca uiderat ante,
> cuncta recognoscit quaerensque per arua piorum
> inuenit Eurydicen cupidisque amplectitur ulnis,
> hic modo coniunctis spatiantur passibus ambo,
> nunc praecedentem sequitur, nunc praeuius anteit
> Eurydicenque suam, iam tuto, respicit Orpheus. (11.61–66)

His shade fled under the earth and he recognized those places he had seen before, and searching through those fields of the blessed he found Eurydice and embraced her with loving arms. Here now both walk with conjoined steps, now he follows her as she proceeds, now he walks before her and now Orpheus may look back safely on his Eurydice.

Where his terrible mistake was to turn his eyes back, in death Orpheus repeats his act. But it is only after his soul has been exhaled through his mouth (Ovid's version of Petrarch's "non qui tra noi") that he may walk before her and look back ("re-spicere") without loss.

In this *re-* of *re-spicere*, Ovid involves Orpheus' visual act in his own narrative act as he "looks back" to the poem's earlier story. Indeed, the happy couple appear to embody the narrative's temporal disjunction: though "joined" in their steps, the two still walk apart. Ovid pictures them as she walks before him or as he before her ("uiderat *ante*/ cuncta *re*cognoscit . . . iam . . . *re*spicit). The last line, too, captures the "look back" at the level of proper names. Ovid frames the line with Eurydice's name first and Orpheus's last ("Eurydicenque suam, iam tuto, respicit Orpheus"): the proper name Orpheus therefore "looks back" across the final line to the name of "his Eurydice." In other words, their union and Orpheus' visual pleasure must still be told sequentially, unfolded in sentences. Similarly, one name must always "follow the preceding" name ("praecedentem sequitur"). Although the scene conveys a desire for a here and a now ("nunc . . . nunc . . . iam"), such immediacy always evades Orpheus. In whatever situation he finds himself, the acts of speaking and of looking always interfere with each other. Orpheus' forbidden look was once the reason for his singing. And now, the moment of his safe looking must pass back to another voice – that of Ovid's narrator. As in the earlier scene, when Pygmalion's unimpeded view of his statue's "beautiful nakedness" was mediated through the voice of one who was forbidden such a view, this scene also carves out a certain deferral, a certain distance, in the now of Orpheus' imagined visual pleasure.

Wherever we enter Ovid's overlapping stories about artists who want to speak about the beauty they see, we find only displacement, deferral, and mediation. The story of Orpheus' transgressive gaze frames that of Pygmalion's gaze, one that risks transgression but is miraculously fulfilled because the artist does not "dare" utter the words that would

actually say what he wants. It is the narrator, Orpheus, and not Pygmalion, who "utters" the exact words that Pygmalion fears to let pass his lips: "he did not dare say, 'my ivory maiden,' but said, 'one like my ivory maiden.'" When it comes to saying the actual words that reveal his desire, Pygmalion's voice slips away, ceding place to Orpheus'. Orpheus' voice occupies the ternary place from which a story like Pygmalion's can be told. Similarly, when Orpheus' own desire to look on Eurydice is fulfilled, the poem's narrative passes back to the narrator; his intervention allows the singer's transition from speaking back to looking. This is the Ovidian distance, this the narrative disjunction between the look and the voice, that Petrarch captures in the image of Laura's ever present veil. Laura's veil, the sign that he may not see everything, prompts poetry in praise of what it hides. An inescapable (linguistic) distance haunts the desire to look in both Ovid's and Petrarch's poems just as it haunts the desire for a speaking voice.[53] A consistent deferral of, and prohibition on, the now of visual pleasure persists in the way both poets represent Pygmalion's "success" story. In the visual register of both the *Rime Sparse* and the *Metamorphoses*, the misfiring that produces desire persists, in the Lacanian sense that desire is the remainder produced by demand because one must speak.

In Orpheus' song as much as Petrarch's *Rime*, of course, this misfiring is enabling: it generates considerable discourse about the failure of speech. If in canzone 23 the poet's voice falls away like Actaeon's, in sonnet 78 the lady's fetishized "form" seems to come to his aid in the form of Pygmalion's statue. Both the conceit of Laura's silent picture and the trope of apostrophe are the technical means by which the poet wrestles with the larger deferrals that language's written form insinuates into the imagined plenitude of "voice." As we have seen, the poem ends with a seductive figure, an apostrophe: "Pigmaliòn, quanto lodar ti dei / de l'imagine tua, se mille volte / n'avesti quel ch'i' sol una vorrei!" Silenced by Laura-as-Diana in 23, here the poet derives the fiction of his own speaking from *Laura*'s silence. Now it is the lady, not the poet, who is silenced by an image, a painted *figura*, whose very materiality seems to draw her from herself. In the painting, this would-be Pygmalion confronts a visual form that refuses vocal animation. It seems that the poet can throw his voice only so far:

> ma poi ch'i' vengo a ragionar con lei,
> benignamente assai par che m'ascolte:
> se risponder savesse a' detti mei! (Sonnet 78)

... but then when I come speak to her, she seems to listen most kindly: if only she could reply to my words!

Here Petrarch stresses what critics often omit in discussing Ovid's version of Pygmalion. The statue-turned-maiden never speaks: the only "speaking" agency in Ovid's poem is the artist's – and the narrator's, as he articulates, through Orpheus' story and the story Orpheus tells, his own impossible demand for a poetics of animation.

Within the thematic frame of sonnet 78, Simone's painted "figure" seems to produce, by means of Laura's mute opposition, the fiction of the poet's voice. From a "figure" without "voice or intellect" Petrarch derives his own vocal performance, his apostrophe to Pygmalion. When Petrarch returns to Ovid's story of Pygmalion through the trope of apostrophe, such a figure for the poet's voice should make readers aware how deeply the fantasy of the living statue is a visual and tactile expression of the phonographic imaginary that shapes Ovid's rhetoric of animation. As Petrarch cannily reads Ovid in these lines, it is "intelletto" ("voce ed intelletto," l.4) – the understanding mind or "animus" in Ovid – that his narrator's many projections of "voice" in the *Metamorphoses* are trying to bestow.

And so on first reading, we might think Petrarch achieves temporary relief (or closure to the poem's dilemma) by means of the fiction of vocal address to his more successful predecessor. Where in 23 Laura-as-Diana forbids his speech, in 78 it is she who remains as silent as a picture. Defined in eternal opposition, in a negative relationship to "Laura" in her many guises, here the poet produces an apostrophe in opposition to her silence. The reversal implies that the poet has the voice and "intelletto" that she lacks. On this reading, the final apostrophe would be quite enabling, a return from the melancholy writing about self-dispersal in writing, "non son mio, no." But this apostrophe, I submit, offers a solution that is, at best, provisional. Even as he invokes the fiction of his own speaking consciousness in contrast to her figural silence, the speaker's words recall the Ovidian narrator's irony about Pygmalion's delusion. And that undercurrent of irony turns the speaker, once again, against himself. For Petrarch uses a conditional clause to allude to Pygmalion's joy: "Pigmaliòn ... *se* mille volte / n'avesti" ("Pygmalion ... *if* you received a thousand times"). The "se" echoes the first "se" of the poet's own impasse, "se risponder s'avesse a' detti mei" ("if only she could reply to my words"). The position of the poet and of Pygmalion mirror each other syntactically: and Ovid's sculptor is recast in Petrarch's (unsuccessful) image. As we saw earlier, the Ovidian artist similarly enters Petrarch's poem in the shape of the epideictic poet, of one who uses the signifier "lodar" or "laudare" to "praise," as well as to enjoy, his statue ("quanto *lodar* ti dei"). We expect the "se" clause of the apostrophe to apply to Petrarch alone: if only I could have what Pygmalion had! But "*if* you received ... what I yearn to

have" applies here, instead, to Ovid's Pygmalion. In other words, the "fact" of his forbear's success becomes provisional, a matter of the loving artist's *desire* rather than his achievement.

The conditional wording of Petrarch's apostrophe therefore reminds us that Ovid tells the story of an inanimate "form" that responds to its maker's amatory address with considerable irony: "he gives kisses and *thinks* his kisses are returned" ("oscula dat reddique *putat*"). It is Pygmalion, not the narrator, who "*thinks*" the statue "wants to be moved."[54] What Petrarch recalls when he says "if" is the sculptor's deluded attribution of emotion to his statue. The apostrophe to Pygmalion relies, in part, on the idea of a moving voice, on the fiction of an Orphic voice that can animate the inanimate. But it simultaneously signals, because it says "if" – and because the entire scene is staged as the poet's frustrated wish – that this trope, along with Pygmalion's story, is a fantasy. Pygmalion's animating success with his "figure," evoked in the apostrophe, is the dream that everywhere else the poet tells us is impossible. One might say that the poem points to apostrophe as itself the illusion, acknowledged by the preceding stanza to be one: the poet knows very well that speaking cannot animate a figure. Like Pygmalion before him, the poet writes that "she *seems* to listen most kindly" ("benignamente assai *par* che m'ascolte"). But unlike his predecessor, the poet signals in his self-conscious allusion to Ovid's ironic narrator that such "seeming" response on the part of Laura's dumb and mute painting remains but his own deluded projection.

The concluding apostrophe, though offered as a kind of resolution, subtly points out its own lack of authenticity. This is the only kind of "voice" the poet finds. In sonnet 78, then, we find a fetishistic fluctuation over the poetic voice itself. "I know, but still . . ." captures both the wish and the irony subtending the rhetoric of animation. The only difference, though a crucial one, between the Latin and Italian poet is this: where Ovid usually embodies the epistemological split between two agencies (between the author and his characters),[55] Petrarch assumes both in one agency, carrying Ovidian irony within the voice of the writing "I." In her many guises, Laura – as the prohibiting Diana, as the mute statue – captures the poet's knowledge that his voice will fail, will never recuperate the deferrals of which and through which he "speaks." Within the apostrophe to Pygmalion – a trope that endeavors to project a voice that may then redound to the credit of the speaker – the allusion to Ovid's poem constitutes yet one more self-ironizing performance because the poet is doing what he knows very well to be an illusion.

If we attend to Petrarch's complex engagement with Ovidian rhetoric, then, we discover that it is not the thematics of speech and silence, nor

the fact of one character's speech versus another's silence, that is most important for understanding the generative force of sexuality on the poetics of the *Rime Sparse*. Rather, the dilemmas confronting the poet when he "speaks" keep recalling the (Ovidian) pressure of prohibition and transgression – a pressure that shapes and interprets the male or female body for the gazing subject in a deeply cultural way. In the *canzone delle metamorfosi* and the apostrophe to Pygmalion, moreover, we have seen it is not the fact of Laura's speech or silence but rather the disruptive relationship *between* his voice and hers that matters most for understanding the implications of verbal fetishism. In sonnets 77 and 78, the poet's voice is both established and emptied out in its relation to Laura's mute picture. As Mazzotta observes of this deprivation, it is mutual: "Like Narcissus, who gazes at his reflected image – discovers that he, too, is a shadow – Petrarch looks at Simone's painting of Laura and 'sees' in it his own mute reflection."[56] Laura does not speak often in the *Rime Sparse*. But when she does, her voice commands unusual power. In canzone 23, when the poet translates Actaeon's linguistic crisis into the story of dismemberment, he does so because of a few simple words from her: "Di ciò non far parola." Out of Laura's words of taboo, Petrarch forges the portrait of himself as one condemned to try to look at and speak about what is forbidden. In other poems he calls the sound of Laura's voice "angelic" ("in voce . . . soave, angelica, divina" 167.3–4) and claims that it draws him "like the sound of the sirens" ("di sirene al suono" 207.82). I therefore believe it is the *idea* of Laura's voice, if not the actual sound, that is foundational to the errancies of Petrarchan autobiography. Whether in speech or in silence, the trope of Laura's "voice" becomes a telling index of the poet's blindness to himself – to his own history and his own love – a blindness that goads him to still further attempts at self-representation.

Memorable monsters

One further Ovidian figure – Medusa – ominously captures Petrarch's sense that there would be something very wrong with looking at the beloved form that he claims he so much wants to see. This figure, of course, inverts the story of Pygmalion on which we've been concentrating. As Freccero aptly puts it,[57] Medusa's petrifying power attests to "Pygmalion's folly." In sonnet 197, for instance, the idea of turning to stone tells us that the speaker, rather than his beloved, resembles Pygmalion's statue: "ma gli occhi ànno vertù di farne un marmo," "but her eyes have the power to turn it [my heart] to marble" 197.14). Medusa is thus an extremely revealing figure for the discourse of verbal fetishism.

The first time Medusa appears in the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid calls her a "memorable monster" (4.615). We should understand *monster* in its primary sense here (from *moneo, -ere*, to point out, to warn) as a memorable "sign, portent or prodigy." In sonnets 51 and 197, Petrarch uses the figure of Medusa much as he does Actaeon or Pygmalion – to signal a complex autobiographical engagement with both the rhetorical and sexual registers of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

Although modern readings of Freud's "Medusa's Head" essay tend to associate Medusa with a strictly visual trauma, Petrarch's return to Ovid's Gorgon points, instead, toward a trauma that is both visual *and* oral. Before we can explore the dynamic interference between seeing and looking, however, we need to understand Medusa's effect on the thematics of sight in the *Rime Sparse*. In sonnet 51 – a poem that immediately precedes yet another famous allusion to Actaeon's vision of the naked Diana (52) – the poet avoids naming Medusa directly. But by alluding to a specific moment in Ovid's text (when Perseus uses the Gorgon's head against Atlas), he conjures her elusive presence and thereby is able to name himself. For Medusa's effect – petrification out of "fear" – allows him to inscribe the word "petra," or rock, that is his signature. Combining Ovid's story of Apollo and Daphne with that of Perseus and Medusa, the poem opens with a beautiful, dazzling sight only to close with a terrifying vision:

> Poco era ad appressarsi agli occhi miei
> la luce che da lunge gli abbarbaglia
> che, come vide lei cangiar Tesaglia,
> così cangiato ogni mia forma avrei.
>
> Et s'io non posso trasformarmi in lei
> più ch'i' mi sia (non ch'a mercé mi vaglia),
> di qual petra più rigida s'intaglia
> pensoso ne la vista oggi sarei,
>
> o di diamante, o d'un bel marmo bianco
> per la paura forse, o d'un diaspro
> pregiato poi dal vulgo avaro et sciocco;
>
> et sarei fuor del grave giogo et aspro
> per cui i' ò invidia di quel vecchio stanco
> che fa co le sue spalle ombre a Marrocco.

Had it come any closer to my eyes, the light that dazzles them from afar, then, just as Thessaly saw her change, I would have changed my every form,

And, since I cannot take on her form any more than I have already (not that it wins me any mercy), my face marked with care, I would be today whatever stone is hardest to cut,

either diamond, or fair marble white for fear perhaps, or a crystal later prized by the greedy and ignorant mob;

and I would be free of my heavy, harsh yoke, because of which I envy that tired old man who with his shoulders makes a shade for Morocco.

Nearly exhausted by desire, the poet claims to envy Medusa's first victim, the "tired old man," Atlas (13), who was transformed into a mountain in the fourth book of the *Metamorphoses*. Laura's dazzling visual form reminds the poet of Daphne and Medusa at once. This troubling link tells us that Laura's is a form he both wants and does not want to see. Because the story allows Petrarch to name himself in his verse ("di qual petra . . ."), it momentarily suggests a transparency of the self to itself. But the letters of his name appear in the sonnet only in the context of Ovidian metamorphoses that displace his sexual identity. Here, the gender fluidity that is the effect of the cycle's larger elliptical rhetorical strategy becomes overt. Dazzled by Apollo's light, the poet compares himself to Daphne, changing his form as she changed hers ("come vide lei cangiar Tesaglia / così cangiato ogni mia forma avrei" 1–4). He then claims that though he has failed, he has nonetheless tried very hard to be "transformed" or metamorphosed "into her" ("trasformarmi . . . in lei" [5]).

Such indeterminacy about the gendered and sexual meaning of the body, as we have seen, is a hallmark of a psychoanalytic definition of fetishism – a sign of the failure immanent in even the most persuasive cultural fictions of masculine identity. And such indeterminacy leads, moreover, to the poem's final allusion to Ovid's Medusa (13–14).[58] Much like Freud's (in)famous interpretation of Medusa as a sign of castration anxiety, Petrarch's sonnet alludes to Medusa in the context of an imaginary scene in which a male observer fantasizes being "transformed into her." But I read Freud's equation between Medusa and castration in light of his larger theories of sexuality in which, as we have seen in his speculation on the fetish, "castration" is a name for the way in which for speaking beings, events are separated from understanding – a disjunction that renders the regime of masculinity at once traumatic and incomplete. Understood in light of such essays as "The Splitting of the Ego in the Process of Defense" or "Fetishism," castration designates a young boy's encounter not with the female body *per se*, but with the cultural taboo that retrospectively interprets that body for him in a culturally significant, and terrifying, way.[59]

In the figure of Medusa in sonnet 52, the blindness at the heart of Petrarchan autobiography and of fetishism converge. Because here, as in canzone 23, the speaker conveys the alienating effect of an Ovidian figure

on his sense of self in the present iterative verb for metamorphosis, *trasformare*. And true to the hesitations of fetishism we've traced throughout the *Rime Sparse*, Petrarch's representation of Medusa mixes ideas of sexual difference with those of sexual indeterminacy: the speaker perceives her as other, as alien, and yet *also* longs to be transformed into her. Thus the figure of Medusa evokes both the culturally pervasive regime of identity-through-difference and a sense of resistance to that regime. The emotions the speaker associates with seeing Medusa and becoming a rock – and thus, for Petrarch, with naming him (or is it her?) self – are both desire and "fear." Desire and terror converge when the self – "qual petra" – can be named only at the cost of a certain oblivion to itself.

But the Medusan effect – the self's internal distance from itself – is not confined to the poet's vision alone. In sonnet 197, we understand how profoundly it affects his voice, too. When Petrach actually names Medusa (197.6), he alludes to the same moment in Ovid's text as he did in sonnet 51, the conflict between Perseus and Atlas: "L'aura celeste ... po quello in me che nel gran vecchio mauro / Medusa quando in selce transformollo" ("The heavenly breeze ... has the power over me that Medusa had over the old Moorish giant [Atlas], when she turned him into flint" 197.1–6). As we've seen, the confrontation between Perseus and Atlas is the first time Medusa appears in the *Metamorphoses* and her ghastly *os* shores up Perseus' failing physical *and* rhetorical power. He asks for hospitality but Atlas refuses and, "adding force to his threats" ("uimque minis addit" 4.651), pushes Perseus away. The hero persists in trying to persuade Atlas "with soothing speech" ("placidis miscentem fortia dictis" 4.652), but when he realizes that neither his strength nor his words are strong enough, he reaches for Medusa: "he held out from his left hand the ghastly Medusa face/mouth" ("ipse retro uersus squalentia protulit *ora*," 656). And as Perseus' victory at the wedding banquet reminds us, Medusa's *os* derives its power from the idea of a trauma that is at once visual and oral, the "portent" of her face becoming one of the *Metamorphoses'* most frightening metarhetorical figures for the self's distance from the sound of its own voice.[60] In three of the stories crucial to Petrarch's representation of his own condition – that of Narcissus, Actaeon, and Medusa – we encounter the unsettling work of Ovid's critique of the fantasy of voice-consciousness. Just as Medusa's *os* is associated with the idea of a dead yet moving tongue, Narcissus first perceives that the beautiful *os* or "face" he loves (3.423) is merely a reflection when he notices that the *os* or "mouth" before him is moving without making a sound.[61] And when no voice issues from Actaeon's mouth, tears pour down the face that can no longer be said to be his.[62]

What I am suggesting is that Petrarch associates Medusa not only with the general idea of rhetorical power, but specifically with Ovid's phonographic imaginary – with the estranging distance of the self from its own speech that Petrarch will call his peculiar form of linguistic "exile." We can best see the consequences of this association in sonnet 197, "L'aura celeste." Remember that throughout the *Rime Sparse*, Petrarch uses the pun on "l'aura/Laura" to recall the breezes that blow through the *Metamorphoses* as the poem's chief fiction for poetic inspiration (poetic *animus*, derived from the Greek ἄνεμος for wind or breeze, and particularly prominent in the story of Apollo) and embody them in his beloved. *Laura* is more than a name for Daphne; it is also *l'aura*, Petrarch's rich word for Ovid's pneumatic, animating definition of poetic voice. And the slightest orthographical alteration – either "a" or "o" – allows him to name either his beloved or his voice. But by the fifth line of sonnet 197, however, we discover that this shared poetic principle, this Apollonian breeze, is itself the Medusa.

> L'aura celeste che'n quel verde lauro
> spira ov'Amor ferì nel fianco Apollo
> et a me pose un dolce giogo al collo,
> tal che mia libertà tardi restauro,
>
> po quello in me che nel gran vecchio mauro
> Medusa quando in selce transformollo;
> né posso dal bel nodo omai dar crollo
> là 've il sol perde, non pur l'ambra o l'auro.
>
> dico le chiome bionde e 'l crespo laccio
> che si soavemente lega et stringe
> l'alma, che' d'umiltate et non d'altro armo.
>
> L'ombra sua sola fa 'l mio cor un ghiaccio
> et di bianca paura il viso tinge,
> ma gli occhi ànno vertù di farne un marmo.

The heavenly breeze that breathes in that green laurel, where Love smote Apollo in the side and on my neck placed a sweet yoke so that I restore my liberty only late,

has the power over me that Medusa had over the old Moorish giant, when she turned him to flint; nor can I shake loose that lovely knot by which the sun is surpassed, not to say amber or gold:

I mean the blond locks and the curling snare that so softly bind tight my soul, which I arm with humility and nothing else.

Her very shadow turns my heart to ice and tinges my face with white fear, but her eyes have the power to turn it to marble.

Consonant with the problem that Medusa's *os* raises for the relationship

between mind and voice in the *Metamorphoses*, Petrarch's poetic breeze, "l'aura," turns against him, making the poet's face ("il viso") "white with fear."[63] The speechless face of Ovid's Medusa metamorphoses, in Petrarch's hands, into the poet's own terrified face. An Ovidian distance between the voice and the face, or of the poetic subject from his own inspiration, defines the action of the breeze in this Medusan sonnet. Petrarch's repeated allusion to the story of Perseus' rhetorical extension of Medusa's *os* tells us that his compelling, mythographic story about a dangerous vision of his beloved cannot be disentangled from the self-dispossession that haunts his voice. As in Petrarch's allusions to Actaeon and Pygmalion, these allusions to Medusa testify to an unsettling distance within the voice and the gaze, estranging the self from eyes and tongue at once.

In this anxious phonographic moment, moreover, it is impossible to disentangle the poet's voice from Laura's with any assurance. Sonnet 197 tells us that the speaker, as much as Laura, can be reduced to the silence of a statue. But as in the *Metamorphoses*, male and female voices are locked in a mutually defining embrace. And so in this sonnet, both the poem's speaker and his forbear, Apollo, are subjected *to* "L'aura celeste." Ovid's first book might encourage us to associate Petrarch's "l'aura" with Apollo's voice alone, the conventionally gendered version of this trope. But in this poem, Petrarch's pun on *L'aura/lauro* in line 1 draws renewed attention to the usually unmarked fact of each word's gender: the breeze seems, then, to pass *between* Daphne, "L'aura celeste," and the (masculine) "lauro." Over the course of the first line, a female breeze breathes through a male body: "L'aura celeste che'n quel verde lauro / spira" ("The heavenly breeze that breathes in that green laurel").[64] Formerly inanimate and mute before the solicitations of Petrarch's version of Pygmalion, Laura as Daphne and then Medusa inspires the speaker (read "inspire" in the strict etymological sense). *Her* breath, "l'aura celeste," opens the poem and eventually wields a rhetorical power over him as formidable as Medusa's over Atlas.

"L'aura celeste che 'n quel verde lauro" captures, in a single line, the unending vacillation of voice between bodies that occasionally surfaces in the present iterative metamorphoses of the *Rime Sparse*. If in sonnet 51 the poet sought to be "transformed into her," in this sonnet the breeze that breathes through both parties answers his wish by changing him into her at the level of the signifier: a *l'aura* moving in a *lauro*. Petrarch's Medusan sonnet therefore captures the strange displacements of rhetorical and sexual agency in Ovid's text when Perseus uses Medusa's "face" or "mouth" to effect the change his words could not. A surrogate mouth, a rhetorical tool of tremendous force, Medusa's *os* comes to Perseus' aid

(and later Petrarch's), as a mysteriously dangerous image of vocal and sexual power. In Petrarch's fetishizing autobiographical version of Ovid's text, Medusa signifies the poet's voice *and* Laura's – a "heavenly" yet restless "breeze" that transforms one into the other, ties one to the fate of the other. Neither the actual sound of this voice, could we but hear it, nor a vision of the particular body that contains it would reassure us that the speaking voice of this poem (or the *Rime Sparse*) is the same thing of which it speaks.

Petrarch's autobiographical return to metamorphosis – to the voices of Pygmalion, Actaeon, and Medusa – evokes a danger that is at once sexual and rhetorical. We've seen that Petrarch's way of representing verbal fetishism through these Ovidian figures consistently signals "two epistemological scenes" when it comes to the linguistic form through which a poetic subject comes to be. But it seems to me crucial, nevertheless, to distinguish between an actual fetish and these poems about verbal fetishism. For according to psychoanalytic theory, the fetish would be the one substitute that freezes the signifying process, denying the "senseless" injunction of the letter that offers the female body to the male subject-in-the making as the visual explanation for his traumatic inscription in language. Founded on an initial substitution, a fetish allows the subject to fix on *one* image as that which cannot be substituted for others like it. This refusal of substitution is, of course, a refusal to enter into the network of language's structure of deferral and difference. But the fetish, initially a substitution, does not continue in a tropological sequence: thus, as Julia Kristeva argues, a fetish "is not a sign," nor can a sign be a fetish. In *The Revolution in Poetic Language*, she asks, "isn't art the fetish par excellence, one that badly camouflages its archaeology?" If entry into the Symbolic requires obedience to the Law-of-the-Father, she further asks, doesn't the subject continue to believe that "the mother is phallic, that the ego – never precisely identified – will never separate from her, and that no symbol is strong enough to sever this dependence?" For her, though "the subject of poetic language clings to the help fetishism offers," nonetheless it is a symbolic subject; though the "poetic function" may "converge" with fetishism, "it is not identical to it." In contrast to a fetish, the figures of poetry continue to signify.

In the *Rime Sparse*, of course, Laura's exceedingly textual veil is never stripped away. And though Medusa conjures a terrifying vision of petrification, that freezing produces further signifiers – "petra" or "l'aura" – for which others are substituted. In the *Metamorphoses*, it is only as a veiling *simulacrum* that the maiden may be, as it were, "seen" in the narrative *nuda*; once she becomes flesh, the narrative glances away. This *simulacrum* may be "seen" at all, it seems, because it signifies the

desire of its narrator, Orpheus. "The text is completely different from the fetish because it signifies ... it is not a substitute but a sign (signifier/signified) and its semantics unfurled in sentences."[65] Because it "signifies the unsignifying," a text is still a sign even as it gestures to the other side of signification. On such an understanding of linguistic subjectivity, and of the difference between fetishism and poetic language, I would suggest that these seemingly fetishized female figures be read as signs pointing to the cultural conditions legislated for becoming a "speaking-subject." They are assigned a peculiar place: these idols become signs of what the culturally fashioned male subject of poetic language must renounce if "he" is to accede to symbolic form. Diana, Eurydice, Pygmalion's maiden, Medusa, Laura: over and over in the *Metamorphoses* and the *Rime Sparse*, female forms become signifiers for what is in excess of the voice, in excess of signification, and in excess of the culturally imposed order of sexual difference. But the female "form" thus positioned only returns as a reminder that represents what is missing in language, and thus in the subject. Female form, that is, is not merely turned aside on the threshold of the linguistic. Her form returns from this initial turning aside to represent that (enabling) absence that is the "positive condition" of the poetic "speaking" subject. The absence of Laura – but also of Eurydice – always informs the fantasy of Pygmalion's love for a nameless, living idol. Both Ovid's and Petrarch's Pygmalion suggest that although the poet's voice may be empty, it is not, however, disembodied.

4 "Be not obsceane though wanton": Marston's *Metamorphosis of Pigmalions Image*

In tracing the nature and effects of Ovid's phonographic imaginary, we have seen that tropes for the voice – both male and female – shape the representation of subjectivity in both the *Metamorphoses* and Petrarch's autobiographical revision of that poem in the *Rime Sparse*. At the same time, these tropes play a crucial role in each poem's fiercely unresolved struggle over what human bodies mean and what their differences signify. We've also seen that various figures of vocal self-dispossession – Philomela's tongue, Echo's repetitive *uox*, Medusa's mouth, Actaeon's lips, Diana's prohibition, Bacchic noise – darken the dream that both poets entertain, in their different ways, of an Orphic voice powerful enough to bring about the changes of which it speaks. Such figures betray a profound anxiety about the voice's limitations as an index of authorial subjectivity as well as its unpredictable relationship to both mind and world. Most important of all, the violent narratives of desire and dismemberment within which these figures for lost voices emerge warn us that we cannot separate the contradictions haunting this phonographic imaginary from the way each poem grapples with the question of the sexualized body's significance and value.

Ovid's culturally laden fantasies and anxieties about embodied voices are no less foundational to John Marston's *The Metamorphosis of Pigmalions Image*, one of the most biting satires in the tradition that Ovid inspired. Dedicating himself to the task of exposing and satirizing the connections between rhetoric and sexuality in Petrarchanism, Marston selects Pygmalion, the figure who so memorably visualizes the Ovidian–Petrarchan dream of vocal animation, to conduct his critique. One of the clearest indications of what drew Marston's attention to the story of the inspired statue is his emphasis on Ovid's carefully chosen verb, "to move" (*mouere*). This verb for the ends of rhetorical speech appears frequently over the course of Marston's short poem. The narrator uses it to point out Pigmalion's predicament ("his dull Image, which no plaints could move" stanza 13); to capture the aim of Pigmalion's spoken prayer ("thus having said, he riseth from the floor ...