Hermaphroditus, is a close doublet of the tale of Echo and Narcissus at the heart of book 3, and tells of boundary confusions of a Dionysiac cast, between childhood and adulthood, between male and female.[59] The ephebic Hermaphroditus, at the age when he looked like both his mother and father (4.290) is thwarted of further maturation by his total physical commingling with the libidinous nymph Salmacis to produce an androgyne. But this is also an image of Bacchus, who in the hymn is invoked both as *puer aeternus* 'eternal boy' (18) and as the owner of a *uirgineum caput* 'head of a maiden' (20), and who had been discovered by the sailors in Acoetes' narrative in the shape of 'a boy with the form (or beauty) of a virgin' (3.607). The god is already inside the house.[60]

[59] See Segal (1982) ch. 6 'Sex roles and rites of passage'.
[60] Henderson (1990) 17 (on the Minyeides episode) 'Bacchus is at work in this stretch of the poem as the logic-bending, shape-shifting inspiration of Ovid's poetry.'

CHAPTER 6

# *Pygmalion. Art and illusion*

## ECPHRASTIC PRESENCES

Gianpiero Rosati has stressed the importance of seeing in the *Metamorphoses*, as the poem makes its constant demand on the reader to visualise the marvellous events narrated; Rosati identifies a 'poetics of "spectacularity"'.[1] The reader's view is frequently focalised and guided through the astonished gaze of spectators within the text, so inviting our own presence at the visual feast of the poem. Rosati also points to the coincidence between the Ovidian language of viewing and spectating events as they are narrated, and the language used in ecphrasis, the verbal evocation of the vision of something, commonly a work of art, that is described rather than narrated; Rosati speaks of Ovid's 'quasi-ecphrastic' procedure.[2]

Literary ecphrasis incorporates a double structure of absent presence. At the first level it exploits the power of the visual arts to create an illusion of presence, as the painter or sculptor deceives the beholder into believing that what is represented is really present. At the second level, in a *paragone* between the powers of verbal and visual artists, ecphrasis tests the writer's powers of *enargeia* (see pp. 5–6) in creating a textual illusion of visual images. If the writer is successful, we will 'see' the artwork, 'before our very eyes', perhaps in an imaginary likeness more lifelike than any actual painting or statue could ever be. The writer has the power to break through the obstacles of immobility and externality that separate any statue or painting from the reality it represents, since words can both narrate physical movement over time, and provide scripts for the expression of internal, psychological, movement, of emotion.

[1] Rosati (1983) 129–52 'Lo spettacolo delle metamorfosi'; 152 'poetica della "spettacolarità"'.
[2] Rosati (1983) 140.

Ecphrastic procedures are woven still more tightly into the texture of the *Metamorphoses* through the far-reaching parallelism between metamorphosis and art well analysed by Joseph Solodow, who sees in the clarification of an essence that is typically engineered by a narrative of metamorphosis something akin to the creation of a work of art. Solodow further points to the extensive overlap in the poem between the vocabularies of art and of metamorphosis.[3] Through a *mise en abyme*, ecphrasis in a narrative poem typically suggests an analogy between the visual work of art described in the text, and the verbal work of art constituted by the text itself and within which the ecphrasis is framed. Ovid elides the formal division between narrative and description that characterises ecphrasis, through an incorporation of the ecphrastic address to the reader, of the type 'you could see . . . ', within the narrative itself.[4] A further consequence is the elision of the distinction between two levels of reality, the reality of scenes and actions in the primary narrative and the mediated reality of scenes and actions represented in the works of art described within the narrative. An ecphrasis of the usual kind demands of the reader a twofold suspension of disbelief with regard to the work of art described, requiring of us firstly that through words we really can 'see' a visual object, and secondly that through this verbally evoked visual object itself we have access to the reality of which it is an artistic representation. In an Ovidian narrative of metamorphosis both these suspensions are directed to the narrative itself: we are both stimulated to 'see' the events, and asked to believe in the reality of what we see. Seeing is believing; pictorial illusionism and verbal fictionality are forced into an unusually close symbiosis.

Ovid's quasi-ecphrastic narratives both require of the reader what might be called an 'ecphrastic assent' to the reality of the incredible process of metamorphosis unfolding before our mental vision, and also result in permanent products, the new bodies which fill the landscape with a gallery of 'real' images, natural works of art that typically embody some essential quality of their previous incarnation and at the same time memorialise the history that led to their present state. Every picture tells a story; in this respect also metamorphosis is faithful to an essential feature of the rhetorical tradition of ecphrasis, which makes of an image the occasion for a narrative.[5] For an example of the two moments of metamorphosis, as ecphrastic process and as ecphrastic

[3] Solodow (1988) ch. 6; cf. also Wheeler (1999) 154–7 'Metamorphic images'.
[4] On issues connected with narrating and describing see Fowler (2000) ch. 3.
[5] See Elsner (1995) 25–6.



product, take the story of Tereus and Procne. First the reader is asked to visualise the process of the metamorphosis of Procne and Philomela (6.667–8):

> corpora Cecropidum pennis pendere putares:[6]
> pendebant pennis.
>
> You would think that the bodies of the Athenian women were suspended on wings; they were suspended on wings.

The repetition of the infinitive *pendere* in the indicative imperfect *pendebant* marks the point at which imagination ('you would think that . . . ') crosses the boundary into reality, a transition that in ecphrasis proper is a purely mental event in the experience of the reader/viewer, but which in the strange world of the *Metamorphoses* takes place in external reality.[7] The product of the metamorphoses of the characters in this story is a group of three birds, perpetual reminders of the story of their human originals. The hoopoe, into which Tereus changes, retains the angry aggressiveness of the human tyrant, and the nightingale and swallow, formerly Procne and Philomela, still have breasts marked with blood, the signs (*notae*) of their crime. These marks are not real blood, but blood transformed into signs of blood, which is to say natural signs that converge with the artificial signs of representational art. This convergence is reinforced by the parallel between the marks on the birds' breasts and the marks on the tapestry on which the human Philomela had represented her own tragedy: with 6.577 (the tapestry) *purpureasque notas filis intexuit albis* 'she wove purple signs into the white threads', compare 669–70 (the birds) *neque adhuc de pectore caedis | excessere notae, signataque sanguine pluma est* 'the signs of bloodshed have still not vanished from their breasts, and their feathers are marked with blood'.

Philomela's tapestry is not described in a detailed ecphrasis whether for the simple reason that it gives visual expression to events already narrated in the words of the poet, or because, if *notae* is taken to mean specifically 'letters' rather than iconic 'markings', this textile is not merely the visual equivalent of a text, it is a text.[8] The narrator thereby also

[6] This 'imaginary second person' address is used in the *Metamorphoses* mostly to induce the reader to respond to visual phenomena in the story world: the illusionist effect of a metamorphosis or a work of art is compounded by the invitation to the reader to entertain the illusion of being present within the fiction: see Wheeler (1999) 151–61.
[7] This externalisation of a mental event or relationship is closely akin to the production of narratives of metamorphosis through the literalisation of metaphor (see pp. 228–30).
[8] On Philomela's web see also pp. 87, 268.

spares the reader an ecphrastic overload, since book 6 had opened with a major ecphrasis, the description of the tapestries woven in the contest between Minerva and Arachne (6.53–128). Both these tapestries, in their different ways, reflect the themes and structures of the *Metamorphoses* as a whole.[9] A detail from the description of the loves of gods woven into Arachne's tapestry provides a compact example of the fusion of the devices of metamorphosis and ecphrasis, through the shared feature of illusionism, 6.125 *Liber ut Erigonen falsa deceperit uua* 'how Bacchus deceived Erigone with false grapes'.[10] This is one in a catalogue of the metamorphic disguises put on by gods to seduce their victims, and by analogy this otherwise unattested story will tell of Bacchus' transformation of himself into a bunch of grapes to attract Erigone. The particular choice of metamorphic disguise evokes one of the most famous anecdotes about ancient illusionist art, the competition between the artists Parrhasius and Zeuxis in which 'Zeuxis exhibited grapes painted so successfully that birds flew up to the wall of the stage' (Pliny *Nat. hist.* 35.65). The story of Bacchus and Erigone hammers home the importance of desire in working the trick of illusionist absent presence. The birds fly down to the painting because of their desire to eat the grapes; Bacchus achieves his erotic appetite for Erigone by tricking her into the belief that she can satisfy an appetite to eat the grapes; the viewer/reader is lured by the 'naturalist desire' to believe that the artwork or text actually could be a window on to reality.[11] Desire works illusions similar to those suffered by Narcissus, whose self-reflection is compared to a bunch of ripening grapes at the crisis of his infatuation (*Met.* 3.484–5: see pp. 157–8). The coincidence of metamorphosis, erotic deception, and artistic or textual illusion has already been signalled by the first in Arachne's catalogue of divine seductions (6.103–4): *Maeonis elusam designat imagine tauri | Europam: uerum taurum, freta uera putares* 'the Lydian girl outlines Europa tricked by the likeness of a bull; you would think that this was a real bull, that these were real waves'. These lines are also the clearest signal to read the ecphrasis as an image of the text in which it is framed, since it illustrates a story already narrated by the poet at the end of book 2.

[9] Much has been written on the self-reflexivity of Ovid's ecphrases. In general see Leach (1974); on Minerva and Arachne see Harries (1990); Rosati (1999a).

[10] Anderson ad loc.: 'Liber somehow deceived Erigone by means of fake grapes. These tantalizing details are unknown in any other source . . . ' Is the reader also duped into believing in a non-existent story about grapes?

[11] On 'naturalist desire' see pp. 146–7.



## ECPHRASTIC UNIVERSES

The *Aeneid* contains six ecphrases of works of art; the *Metamorphoses*, a longer poem, only three: the doors of the Palace of the Sun (2.1–18); the tapestries of Minerva and Arachne (6.70–128); and the reliefs on the *crater* given by the Delian king Anius to Aeneas (13.685–701). This relative paucity is balanced by the density of the many other episodes in the poem that reflect in the ways discussed above on the connections between word and image.[12] Of the three ecphrases proper in the poem, two make programmatic statements about the convergence of the verbal and the visual in Ovid's poetics. The weaving contest between Minerva and Arachne at the beginning of book 6 is a pendant to the song contest between the Pierides and Muses in the second half of book 5. The earlier episode uses the inset poetic productions of the divinities of poetry themselves in order to explore the poetics of the *Metamorphoses*, while the latter continues this exploration through visual ecphrasis; structural juxtaposition makes the point about the importance for Ovid of the visual within the *Metamorphoses*. The first ecphrasis in the poem describes the cosmic scenes on the doors of the Palace of the Sun at the beginning of book 2. Here in static visual form the divine artist Vulcan has represented the universe that the reader saw in the process of being created by the demiurge at the beginning of time and at the beginning of the poet's own verbal narrative (1.5–88). The resulting coincidence of poetic and plastic makings had already been signalled by Ovid's use, as model for the narrative of creation itself, of the first and greatest of ecphrases in the Greco-Roman tradition, the Shield of Achilles in *Iliad* 18, which in antiquity was commonly read as an image of the universe.[13] Ovid's universal narrative allusively launches itself under the guise of ecphrasis, the description of a work of art coextensive with reality itself. A consequence is that all later acts of viewing in the poem, whether by characters in the text or by the reader, are viewings of events that take place within the demiurge's/Ovid's masterwork. If this universe is a work of art, of that magical, Hephaestean and Daedalean, kind endowed with the power of movement, then all particular narratives and descriptions within the universe are examples of ecphrasis.

[12] See Solodow (1988) 228.

[13] Wheeler (1995), noting (106, 113) the structural and verbal parallelism between the creation narrative and the web of Arachne in book 6. On the parallels between the work of the Ovidian demiurge and Vulcan see Brown (1987). Wheeler's observations reinforce the claim of Solodow (1988) 214–15 that the Ovidian demiurge is presented as an artist. On ancient responses to the Shield of Achilles see Hardie (1985).

'Coextensive with reality', but a reality that is at best a partial copy of the reality of the world in which we live, an alternative world. The ultimate test of Ovid's ecphrastic powers in the *Metamorphoses* is to secure our assent to the visible presence of a world that is not there to be seen because it does not really exist, because it is the product of a narrative of what Ovid will later define as 'bodies transformed in unbelievable ways' (*Trist.* 2.64 *in non credendos corpora uersa modos*). Ovid's persuasive strategy is cunning. The kinds of change involved in a semi-philosophical account of cosmogony are among the few examples of transformation in the poem to which the educated reader might give his or her full assent; by presenting them at the start of his narrative in the mode of ecphrasis, Ovid draws these natural-philosophical processes into the web of his own poetic makings, so effacing the boundary between the 'scientific' and the 'mythological', between that which is really there, and that which is not. The demiurge's power to call the real world into existence, and the poet's ability to conjure up his own world of illusion, are parts of a seamless whole.

## PERSEUS' STATUE GALLERY

The distance between metamorphosis and artistic representation is reduced almost to vanishing point in the episodes of Perseus and Andromeda and Perseus' contest with Phineus (*Met.* 4.663–5.235).[14] Using the unusual weapon of the Gorgon's head the epic hero Perseus leaves a lasting monument to his victory in the shape of a statue gallery of his petrified opponents, in which the prize exhibit will be Phineus himself, as Perseus promises his defeated enemy (5.227–9):

> quin etiam mansura dabo monimenta per aeuum,
> inque domo soceri semper spectabere nostri,
> ut mea se sponsi soletur imagine coniunx.

Yes, and I shall make a monument to last through the ages, and you shall always be on show in my father-in-law's house, so that my wife may console herself with the likeness of her fiancé.

Line 227 speaks the language of the permanence of artistic monuments,[15] while the sarcastic comment in line 229 reminds us of the consolatory uses to which Laudamia and Admetus put images of their beloved (see pp. 135–7). In this case the memorialising and consolatory functions of artistic surrogates are surpassed by something that is closer to the real presence of the person in the monument, since the stone form *was* once Phineus.

Ovid's enduring monument also outbids Virgilian modes of monumentalisation. Perseus' contest with Phineus, the previous fiancé of Andromeda, and his supporters is one of several Ovidian rewritings of the duel at the end of the *Aeneid* between Aeneas and Turnus for the hand of Lavinia. Phineus, like Turnus ends his life with a supplication (214 *supplex*; *Aen.* 12.930). Phineus' inability to turn his eyes (*conanti sua uertere lumina* 'trying to turn his eyes') as he undergoes petrifaction at 232–3 mirrors the failure of physical powers in the simile of the dreamer applied to Turnus at *Aen.* 12.908–12 (910 *in mediis conatibus aegri* 'failing in mid-effort'). Turnus' body is penetrated by the iron of Aeneas' sword, after Aeneas has drunk deep of the sight of Pallas' swordbelt, the *saeui monimenta doloris* 'reminder of cruel grief' (*Aen.* 12.945). By contrast Perseus promises Phineus that he will not be violated by iron (226), but will himself become 'a memorial to last through the ages' (at 227 *monimenta* is in the same *sedes* as at *Aen.* 12.945). The swordbelt of Pallas is a 'memorial, or reminder, of cruel grief' both because of its association for Aeneas with the death of his friend, and because of the scene that it bears of the slaughter of the sons of Aegyptus by the Danaids, described in the ecphrasis of the swordbelt at its first appearance, *Aeneid* 10.497–9. The subject of the ecphrasis, the deaths of unmarried youths, is a visual parallel to the verbal narratives of the deaths of both Pallas and Turnus, so that at the end of the *Aeneid* visual and verbal representations converge. For the reader it is the text of the *Aeneid* that memorialises the hero's final outburst of anger; the poem itself is the *saeui monimenta doloris*.[16] Swordbelt, a work of art described within the poem, and the work of art that is the narrative poem, tend to merge with each other; Ovid elides fully the gap between ecphrastic image and narrative reality by producing a 'work of art' that *is* the event that it depicts.

In line 228 *spectabere* exemplifies the emphasis on viewing that runs through the Perseus episode. Phineus will go on permanent display, available to the gaze of others, but as a result of an act of gazing on his own part. In Perseus' statue gallery are frozen not just the presences of the

[14] See Solodow (1988) 204–5 (head of Medusa as a 'prolific creator of statuary'); Rosati (1983) 146–8.

[15] The *topos* is perhaps more familiar in literature in the negative formulation that material monuments do not in fact last for ever, while verbal monuments will: see Skutsch (1985) 568–9. Ovid's readers would no longer know where to find Perseus' monuments; at the end of the poem Ovid will claim a more adequate sempiternity for his own verbal monument.

[16] Putnam (1998) 205 suggests that the swordbelt of Pallas 'is in certain key senses a synecdoche for the poem as a whole'. On other aspects of the monumentality of the last scene of the *Aeneid* see Fowler (2000) 211–17.

subjects of artworks, but the presences of those who view artworks. The head of Medusa is itself a frequent subject of ancient art (as it was also to be in the hyperrealist polychromed sculpture of the nineteenth century: see p. 212), but in the course of Perseus' fight with the suitors there is time for those still living to gaze on forms already turned to stone before they encounter the source of petrifaction itself. One of Perseus' own men is petrified when he accidentally looks at the Gorgon's head (203–6):

> quem ratus Astyages etiamnum uiuere, longo
> ense ferit: sonuit tinnitibus ensis acutis.
> dum stupet Astyages, naturam traxit eandem
> marmoreoque manet uultus mirantis in ore.

Thinking that he was still living, Astyages struck him with his long sword: the sword gave a sharp ringing sound. As Astyages stood amazed he took on the same nature, and the look of marvel remains on his marble face.

The wonder of illusionist art is that it seems to cross the boundary between appearance and reality: what you know to be a block of marble seems living flesh. Ovid draws the reader into this illusion with the ecphrastic apostrophe, as for example in the description of Pygmalion's statue which was so like a real girl 'that you would believe it lived' (10.250 *uirginis est uerae facies, quam uiuere credas*).[17] Ovid uses this apostrophe to the reader in the case of another of the characters silenced by the Gorgon's stare, *Met.* 5.193–4 *adapertaque uelle | ora loqui credas* 'you would believe that his gaping mouth meant to speak'. Ours is a knowing credulity, as we watch ourselves being duped by the art. Astyages starts out as an innocent viewer; he really does believe that the stone in front of him lives, and acts on that belief, an action that leads to a quick lesson in the deceptiveness of appearances as he realises that what he knew, a moment before, to be living flesh is in fact marble.[18] This is the inverse of the normal experience of a viewer of a work of art, who is amazed that what he knows to be marble seems to be flesh. Astyages' emotional reaction is, however, orthodox, the *stupor* (in Greek *ekplexis*) expected of the viewer of a marvellously lifelike work of art, like Aeneas stunned in

[17] Cf. *Aen.* 6.847–8 *excudent alii spirantia mollius aera | (credo equidem), uiuos ducent de marmore uultus* 'others will more delicately hammer out bronze statues that breathe (yes, I am sure), and mould living portraits from marble'; see Austin ad loc. for references to epigrams on Myron's cow (*Anth. Pal.* 9.713–42, 793–8), etc. At *Aen.* 6.848 *credo* perhaps hints at the 'credulity' aroused by the illusionist work of art.

[18] With Astyages' futile attempt to wound a 'statue' compare Aeneas' attempt to use his sword on the phantasmic monsters at the entrance to the Underworld at *Aen.* 6.290–4; he needs a lesson from the Sibyl in the difference between bodies and ghosts.



front of the reliefs in the Temple of Juno (see below). Aeneas will soon recover his mobility, but through the magic of the Gorgon's head, the viewer Astyages himself now turns into a 'work of art' (as of course he already is, within the Ovidian verbal artefact): a permanent 'Statue of Surprize'.[19]

Astyages is an example of the narcissistic viewer (see pp. 145–6). In Aconteus he sees another fighter like himself; proleptically he sees in the petrified Aconteus what he is about to become. He ends up as a statue staring at a statue, a narrative realisation of the simile that compares Narcissus' self-absorption with his own image to the fixity of a statue (3.418–19: see p. 146). Astyages turned to stone is a dreadful warning of the consequences of too intense an identification with a work of art or literature: once inside, you may never escape, a fantasy with a long history in later literature and cinema.

The work of art into which Astyages is transformed is of a peculiarly effective illusionism, since the immobility of the 'statue' exactly represents the motionlessness of the astounded (or 'astonied')[20] viewer. This smoothing away of the 'representational friction'[21] inherent in ecphrasis by virtue of its status as a verbal representation of a visual representation goes back to the beginning of the history of ecphrasis: James Heffernan points to scenes of stasis on the Shield of Achilles, such as the king 'standing silent' in the middle of the reaping scene (*Iliad* 18.556–7), where the stilling of the narrative coincides with a sculptural or pictorial immobility.[22] Such effects become more self-conscious in later periods. One of the epigrams on Myron's cow excuses the motionlessness of the beast on the grounds that it has just come from ploughing, and so is reluctant to lift a foot.[23] The fate of the Ovidian Astyages may have an eye on the similar trick played by Catullus in the ecphrasis in poem 64, where Ariadne, paralysed by shock and grief, is represented (61) *saxea ut effigies bacchantis* 'like the stone statue of a maenad'. Here, at the beginning of the description of the coverlet, the reader's assent to the lifelikeness of the visual work of

[19] Henry Fielding *Joseph Andrews* I. viii; IV. xiv 'Joseph stood, as the Tragedians call it, like the Statue of Surprize', referring to contemporary acting convention which advised actors to study statues and prints for the poses appropriate to the various passions; in the case of surprise the actor was to imitate the immobility of a statue. See Brooks-Davies (1970) 368, referring *inter alia* to H. Siddons *Practical Illustrations of Rhetorical Gesture and Action* (edn. 2, 1822) Letter xi. '. . . the man struck with sudden astonishment ought to remain fixed like a statue to his posture for the time'.

[20] See *OED* s.v.

[21] The term is that of Heffernan (1993), 3; Index s.v. 'Friction, representional'.

[22] Heffernan (1993) 21. [23] *Anth. Pal.* 9.721a (anon.).

art is courted through a description of the static work of art's marvellous ability to capture – to the life – the image of a person transformed by emotion into the likeness of an unmoving work of art. The 'stone effigy' is presented to the reader in a simile, the standard *verbal* vehicle for a visual image; the insertion of this markedly textual form of visualisation at the beginning of the ecphrasis is itself a comment on the nature of ecphrasis.[24]

Shakespeare uses a similar device in the statue scene in *The Winter's Tale*, to be discussed in more detail in the next section. Leontes gazes on what he takes to be his wife's statue (v. iii. 24–7): 'Chide me, dear stone, that I may say indeed | Thou art Hermione; or rather, thou art she | In thy not chiding; for she was as tender | As infancy and grace.' The 'statue's' lack of response is a mark of its lifelikeness. In this scene Shakespeare also uses the conceit of the spectator who is as immobile as the work of art (v. iii. 34–42):

> (LEONTES) O, thus she stood,
> Even with such life of majesty, warm life,
> As now it coldly stands, when first I woo'd her!
> I am asham'd: does not the stone rebuke me
> For being more stone than it? O royal piece!
> There's magic in thy majesty, which has
> My evils conjur'd to remembrance, and
> From thy admiring daughter took the spirits,
> Standing like stone with thee.

With typical profusion Shakespeare in fact produces two conceits: Leontes is stony like a statue, because of a defect in his emotional state, whereas Perdita is like stone because of an excess of emotion, in her astonishment at the work of art. The similarity of viewer to artwork contains an added irony in context, since it will turn out that there is no difference in existential status between the two, but not in a way that could be expected.

This 'statuesque reciprocity' between viewer and viewed is made the object of a conceit by an author steeped in the conventions of the stage, Henry Fielding, when Joseph Andrews first obtains a view of his Fanny's accidentally bared bosom (*Joseph Andrews* IV. vii.), a passage discussed above in the context of Narcissus' viewing (pp. 148–9). When at last Fanny realises what it is that Joseph is staring at, the 'inconceivable Whiteness' of her Bosom is 'exchanged to Vermillion', as if a marble

[24] For further reflections on the links between simile and ecphrasis see Putnam (1998) 11, 209.



statue were coming to life. Pygmalion and his statue were put on stage by Rousseau in his famous dramatic tableau *Pygmalion*. In a 1778 illustration of Rousseau's text by Jean-Michel Moreau (Illustr. 1) the statue, Galathée, has just stepped down from her pedestal, and touches another of Pygmalion's sculptures, whose tensed posture and raised hands, in context, turn him into a figure of the astounded and frozen viewer of the statue newly brought to life, himself a 'Statue of Surprize'.[25] In Rousseau's text Galathée reacts to her touching of the statue with the words 'Ce n'est plus moi.' The illustration makes the additional point that touch *is* necessary to test the reality of the hyperrealism of a statue whose very immobility is the sign of its lifelikeness. Touch is also the way of distinguishing between Art and Nature in a late epigram on Myron's cow, in which a would-be cattle rustler is disillusioned on touching the statue.[26]

Ovid's narrative of Persus and Andromeda begins as it will end, with a human statue and an 'astonied' viewer, and here too a Virgilian model is determinative. A wandering hero suddenly catches sight of an amazing specimen of African royal femininity (*Met.* 4.672–7):

> quam simul ad duras religatam bracchia cautes
> uidit Abantiades (nisi quod leuis aura capillos
> mouerat et tepido manabant lumina fletu,
> marmoreum ratus esset opus),[27] trahit inscius ignes
> et stupet et uisae correptus imagine formae
> paene suas quatere est oblitus in aëre pennas.

As soon as Perseus saw her arms chained to the hard rocks (were it not that a light breeze had moved her hair and her eyes flowed with warm tears, he would have thought her a marble work of art), he was set on fire without knowing it; he was amazed and overwhelmed by the image of the beauty that he saw he almost forgot to flap his wings in the air.

[25] See n. 19 above. The eighteenth-century illustrator is in the line of a baroque tradition: C. Dempsey ((1995) 33) comments on Annibale Carracci's frescoes of Perseus and Andromeda and Perseus and Phineus. 'Petrifaction, that most sought after and highly praised of all seventeenth-century aesthetic responses (an effect produced by what Marino called the art of "the Marvelous"), turns upon the power of art, Medusa-like, to convert the garrulous spectator in the end to the silence of art itself, frozen in admiration for its inexhaustible marvels.'

[26] *Anth. Pal.* 9.796 (Julian, Prefect of Egypt); in 9.738 (also by Julian) touching the statue is the way to distinguish between Nature and Art. On touch as the sense that discriminates between phantoms and real persons see p. 144 with n. 2.

[27] 673–5 also allude to Cat. 64.60–7 where the immobility of Ariadne, *saxea ut effigies bacchantis*, is contrasted with the motion of the clothes that have fallen from her body as the waves play with them at her feet.

Illustration 1. Noël le Mire, engraving of Pygmalion and Galatée, in J.-J. Rousseau, *Collection complète des œuvres* (London 1774–83) vii. 45.



Perseus experiences the same *stupor* (4.676, 5.205) and immobilisation as will the unfortunate Astyages and Phineus at the end of the story.[28] This had also been the reaction of Aeneas as he gazed on the reliefs of the Trojan War in the Carthaginian Temple of Juno (*Aen.* 1.494–5):

> haec dum Dardanio Aeneae miranda uidentur,
> dum stupet obtutuque haeret defixus in uno . . .

While Trojan Aeneas looks on these marvels, while he stands amazed, rooted to the spot and fixed in a single gaze . . .

With the first word of the next line, *regina* 'the queen', Dido enters, as if she steps out of the reliefs, a flesh-and-blood materialisation of the Amazon queen Penthesilea, whose description occupies the last place in the ecphrasis. But Dido is immediately transformed back into a work of art, of a verbal kind, when in place of an unmediated description of her person we are offered the simile of Diana (*Aen.* 1.498–502), a conjunction of ecphrasis and simile that we have already seen at the beginning of the ecphrasis in Catullus 64 (above pp. 181–2). The Virgilian text leaves it as an unspoken inference that the *stupor* Aeneas experiences at the artworks will immediately be transferred to the sudden vision of the living queen, *forma pulcherrima* 'most beautiful of form'. The line between the two kinds of amazement, at a work of art and at a supremely beautiful human being, is one that it is difficult to draw within the reactions of both Aeneas and Perseus to the objects that hold their gaze. But the attempt to discriminate is misguided, given the routine interference in ancient writing on art between aesthetic and erotic responses.[29] This interference may be traced from one end to the other of the story of Dido and Aeneas. At the moment when Aeneas is, in turn, first exposed to Dido's gaze, the praeternatural beauty that his mother, the goddess of desire, has shed upon him is compared in a simile to the allure of a statue made of various precious metals (*Aen.* 1.592–3). Aeneas' final vision of the shade of Dido is of a figurative work of art, in the simile at *Aeneid* 6.471 comparing her unresponsive form to a block of Parian marble, the statuary marble *par excellence*. The line (6.469) describing Dido's fixed gaze at the ground almost replicates 1.482, of the averted gaze of Pallas in the scene in the Temple of Juno representing the Trojan women's supplication of the

[28] The inversion itself may be a Virgilian reflex: at the beginning of the *Aeneid* Aeneas' limbs are paralysed (1.92), at the end Turnus' limbs are paralysed in death (12.951).

[29] One example from many, that finds a particular echo in Ovid's story of Pygmalion: Callistr. *Descr.* 8.1–3, a Praxitelean bronze Dionysus that 'would yield to the very finger-tip if you touched it . . . It had the bloom of youth, it was full of daintiness, it melted with desire'.

goddess. Dido has turned into a figure from her own public Carthaginian art. For Aeneas, whose love for her is only now unambiguously revealed (6.455), Dido has become the ultimately unattainable object of desire.

The comparison of the chained Andromeda to a statue goes back at least to Euripides' lost play on the subject,[30] and is repeated in the ecphrasis of a painting of Andromeda in Achilles Tatius 3.7.2. The stupefied immobilisation of Perseus may be Ovid's own contribution. For a moment the free-ranging male hero and the chained virgin come together in an impotent immobility, as Perseus is frozen in mid-flight – as indeed he was in the numerous Roman wall-paintings of the scene that showed the hero in flight.[31]

## PYGMALION

Perseus acts out his story in a world where the boundary between bodily presence and imitative representation is a fragile one, where statues come as close as they possibly can to embodying the physical presence of those they commemorate, short of actually breathing. This boundary is finally crossed in the story of Pygmalion, a narrativisation of the ecphrastic topics of illusionist realism in which no holds are barred. Richard Gordon, speaking of the ambiguous status of the art object in antiquity, hovering between animate and inanimate, claims that 'The whole inventory [of denotations of life in statues and paintings] is never present, and the attempt to pass into the realm of the impermissible always fails.'[32] Pygmalion succeeds in passing into the impermissible, but in so doing stores up trouble for a future generation, in his great-granddaughter Myrrha's incestuous desire to cross another kind of impermissible boundary.[33] Myrrha's final release from her intolerable condition is metamorphosis into a tree, a state halfway between life and death, answering her prayer at 10.487 *mutataeque mihi uitamque necemque negate* 'change me and deny me both life and death'. Myrrha is frozen at a point of transition, neither truly animated nor truly dead, both a memorial of and a denial of the completed passage from the inanimate to the animate that occurred when her great

[30] Eur. fr. 125 Nauck. [31] *LIMC* I.1, 778–9. [32] Gordon (1979) 10.

[33] Nuttall (2000) 141 'the earlier sequence of oblique desire . . . leaves its mark upon the sequel', pointing to the echo of *Met.* 10.275–6 (Pygmalion) *non ausus . . . dicere* at 10.429–30 (Myrrha) *non ausa 'parente'| dicere* 'not daring to say "father"'; Hillis Miller (1990) 10 'Pygmalion, too, Myrrha's story implies, is guilty not only of Narcissism and of a strange kind of onanism, but also of incest. Pygmalion is Galatea's fathering maker as well as her husband.'



grandmother passed from being a lifeless statue that seemed to breathe to a living statue that really did breathe.[34]

But if this threshold state attempts to contain the dangerous transgressiveness of artistic masterpieces, it is an unstable condition. This will not be the end of the story of living artworks, for the parturient myrrh-tree brings forth the baby Adonis, whose beauty not even the most hostile art critic might fault (10.515–18):

> laudaret faciem Liuor quoque: qualia namque
> corpora nudorum tabula pinguntur Amorum,
> talis erat, sed, ne faciat discrimina cultus,
> aut huic adde leues aut illis deme pharetras.

Even Envy would praise his appearance; for such as are the bodies of nude Cupids painted on panels, such was he, except that you would either have to give him a light quiver, or take it away from them, if their dress was not to distinguish between them.

The mention of *Liuor*, Envy, pulls this judgement into the sphere of the artistic or literary,[35] even before the explicit comparison of the baby to painted images of Cupids, in a simile with models in Hellenistic epigram.[36] By using one of his 'approximative similes' (see p. 260) Ovid ensures that the boundary (*discrimina*) between art and reality is preserved: the young Adonis can (but only just) be told apart from a picture of Cupid. In the ensuing narrative this slender distinction between the living Adonis and a painted Cupid barely conceals a whiff of incest in the scene where Venus is unwittingly smitten with love for this Cupid look-alike (525–6):

> namque pharetratus dum dat puer oscula matri,
> inscius exstanti destrinxit harundine pectus.

For while the boy with his quiver kissed his mother, he unwittingly scratched her breast with a projecting arrow.

Cupid's arrow usually afflicts its victim with love for another party, but what happens when Cupid himself is kissing the target? Line 526 could

[34] Gross (1992) 20–1 on statues as in a threshold state between life and death. If Myrrha's metamorphosis is also typical of all metamorphoses (p. 82), this corroborates Solodow's claim that the product of metamorphosis is like a work of art (see p. 174 above).

[35] Cf. the immunity of Arachne's tapestry to *Liuor* (6.129–30); McKeown on *Am.* 1.15.1–2.

[36] Asclep. *Anth. Pal.* 12.75 (XXI Gow–Page) 'if you had wings and a bow and arrows in your hand, it would not be a depiction of Aphrodite's Eros, but of you, boy', imitated by Asclepiades (or Posidippus) *Anth. Pal.* 12.77 (Asclep. XXXVIII Gow–Page); Meleager *Anth. Pal.* 12.76 (LXXXIX Gow–Page): see Knox (1986) 58. As Knox says (64 n. 49) Gow–Page are surely wrong in taking ἐγράφη at *Anth. Pal.* 12.75.2 to mean 'recorded as', rather than 'depicted'.

be read as a figurative statement that 'Cupid unwittingly (*inscius*) inflicted Venus with desire (for himself).' Adonis 'avenges his mother's erotic flames' (524). Cupid had denied that it was his weapon that had caused the damage to Myrrha (311), but should we believe him?[37] At the very least, the present episode shows that he is no more securely in control of his own fire power than is the shepherd (Aeneas) in the simile at *Aeneid* 4.69–73, who unwittingly (*nescius*) wounds the deer (Dido) with his arrow. An incestuous love would be the most fitting revenge for Myrrha's tragic fate. We may suspect that the true source of Venus' desire for Adonis is an erotic attraction to her own son, whose double she had seen in Adonis when he was a boy, and who is now a man capable of giving her sexual satisfaction.[38] This erotic doubling is also revenge for the trick that Venus played on Dido when she inflamed and poisoned her with the embraces and kisses of Cupid disguised as Aeneas' small son Ascanius (*Aen.* 1.687–8: cf. *Met.* 10.525–8). Virgil's Venus likes to play tricks in disguise herself. One of the models for the meeting in *Aeneid* 1 between Aeneas and Venus dressed as a Carthaginian virgin is the appearance in the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* of Aphrodite to Anchises, an encounter that results in the conception of Aeneas. Ovid comments on an undertow of incest both in the Virgilian scene between Aeneas and Venus, and in the consummated relationship between Aeneas and Dido, whose Diana-like first appearance must remind Aeneas of that other seeming virgin he met in the Carthaginian woods.

Pygmalion and his progeny occupy the major part of the Song of Orpheus. In obvious ways the story of the sculptor Pygmalion reflects on the erotic experience and artistic power of the poet Orpheus, who was able once, although not for a second time, to restore to living presence an object of desire absent through death, but who is still able through his song to animate trees and rocks, thus creating an audience who have no need to suspend disbelief in tales of metamorphosis into plant form or of hard matter given life, since their own consciousness is proof of the reality of such events. The framing of Pygmalion within the song of Orpheus is another example of the convergence of verbal and visual representations, to set beside the juxtaposition of the song contest of the

[37] Cupid shifts blame on to one of the Furies; note the difficulty of distinguishing between the operations of Cupid and Allecto in the *Aeneid*.

[38] The hint of incest is noted by Thomas (1998) 102–3.



Pierides and Muses with the weaving contest of Minerva and Arachne, and the reprise of the narrative of cosmogony in the ecphrasis of the doors of the Palace of the Sun.

Equally obviously the story of Pygmalion forms a pendant to the story of Narcissus. Of the many ways in which the parallels could be explored, I wish to highlight only the part played in the two stories by erotic desire and grief in calling images to life and presence, further exemplifying the argument of chapter 3 (pp. 62–5). The story of Pygmalion is produced by the pressure of Orpheus' grief for his dead wife, a textual substitute for her person. The story itself tells of the power of love to confer living presence on an image, a substitute for the human females whom Pygmalion has rejected in his disgust at the shameless behaviour of the Propoetides. Overall, then, there is a progression from death to life via the image. The trajectory of the story of Narcissus runs in the opposite direction. The beautiful boy has rejected erotic contact with all other humans, only to fall in love with an image which his intense desire invests with real presence. At the moment when Narcissus realises that it is just an image, merely a substitute for a real object of desire, comes an inevitable passage from life to death, as love turns to grief at the inaccessibility of desire. From the beginning the reflection has been both like a marvellous work of art (3.419) and a proleptic shadow of the ghost that Narcissus will become after he dies:[39] the reflection on which he gazes in the Underworld (504–5) is indistinguishable from the reflection in the pool in the world above, since mirrors have no way of distinguishing between solid flesh and blood and phantoms. The first reflection is both the cause of Narcissus' death and a kind of anticipatory funerary image.

Much has been written on the ways in which the story of Pygmalion engages with the topics of ancient illusionist aesthetics. The mythical artist's statue literalises the lifelike illusions created by a Myron or a Zeuxis. Pygmalion is a figure for the visual artist, and also for the poet – and also for the viewer or reader, as Jaś Elsner has cogently argued. By concentrating on Pygmalion's own reactions to the statue he has made, rather than on the making itself, Ovid creates a figure for the viewer rather than the artist, producing a narrative about the 'beholder's share' in creating the impression of real presence in a work of art.[40]

[39] On the close equivalence of portrait and shade or shadow see pp. 135–6; Bettini (1999) 11–12, 42–8.

[40] See esp. Rosati (1983) ch. 2; Sołodow (1988) 215–19; Elsner (1991).

I will point to just one twist in the text's dealings with living statues.[41] The ivory statue takes life immediately under the caressing touch of Pygmalion, but the remoter cause of its animation is Venus' favourable response to his prayer for a wife 'like the ivory girl' (10.277–9):

> sensit, ut ipsa suis aderat Venus aurea festis,
> uota quid illa uelint, et, amici numinis omen,
> flamma ter accensa est apicemque per aëra duxit.

As golden Venus herself was present at her festival, she realised what his prayer meant, and as an omen of the goddess's friendship three times the flame blazed up and shot its point through the air.

How are we to imagine the 'presence' of 'golden Venus herself' at her festival? In myth and poetry the real Olympian gods are quite able to appear on earth, and 'golden' is a standard epithet of Venus. But the presence of another adjective of material in the previous line, *eburnae* 'ivory', used in a concrete sense of the material of the statue, suggests that *aurea* in line 277 might also be taken literally of a material: Venus is then present in the form of her golden cult-statue, a statue animated through religious ritual. What she/it then bestows on the ivory statue is her/its own ability to pass from the inanimate to the animate. The verb *sensit*, describing Venus' perception of Pygmalion's prayer, is repeated at the moment of the statue's first coming to life, at line 293. The parallel miracles of Venus' golden statue and the ivory statue may hint at an earlier version of the story in which Pygmalion, king of Cyprus, falls in love with a statue of Aphrodite, with which he attempts to have sex.[42] Ovid's final comment on Venus' role at Pygmalion's wedding could be taken in more than one way by a suspicious mind (295), *coniugio, quod fecit, adest dea* 'the goddess was present at the wedding that she had fashioned': how exactly was Venus present in this union?

The story of Pygmalion can be read as an *aition* of illusionist art. But Ovid's world has been populated by animated statues from a far earlier point in its history. When the ivory statue first looks up at the sky it

[41] The point is touched on by Liveley (1999) 205.

[42] Philostephanus, reported in Clem. Alex. *Protrept.* 57; Arnobius *Adv. nationes* 6.22. Clement introduces his report of the story thus: 'If one sees a woman represented naked, he understands it is "*golden Aphrodite*". So the well-known Pygmalion of Cyprus fell in love with an ivory statue; it was of Aphrodite and it was naked.' Coincidence? Sharrock (1991b) 171–2 properly corrects the assertion by Elsner (1991) 158 that in his reworking of the Pygmalion story Ovid 'scraps the problematic of goddesses and women, of the transgressive desire to possess the divine in sexual terms'.



replicates the coming to life of the first generation of mankind, 'sculpted' by Prometheus (with 10.294 compare 1.82–6). In the second creation of mankind the stones cast by Deucalion and Pyrrha miraculously soften and take on human shape, passing through a stage compared in a simile to half-finished marble statues (1.405–6). When does the age of miracles stop? In the early third century B.C. the statue of Aesculapius moves and speaks, but in dreams (15.653–7). The last statue in the poem is that of Julius Caesar, always watching over the Capitol and Forum as a *praesens deus* (15.841–2) from his pedestal in his temple. Statues no longer walk the earth, but neither have they become lifeless lumps of matter.

Jean-Pierre Vernant constructs a historical narrative that traces the development in Greece of figural representation, or *mimēsis*, out of an archaic 'presentification', that seeks 'to make the invisible visible, to assign a place in our world to entities from the other world', 'to inscribe absence in presence'.[43] Yet this historical progression 'from apparition to appearance'[44] is too cut and dried an account of the rise of a philosophical and rational relationship to the world of appearances out of a prephilosophical belief in the magical presence of the invisible in the phenomenal world. Richard Gordon has protested against art historians' tendency to privilege ancient philosophical theories of the imagination over the 'legacy of Daedalus', a way of thinking of statues and paintings as if they were alive.[45] The line between illusionist representation and 'presentification' remains a fine one, and self-consciously so, for example as shown by the Hellenistic epigrams on Myron's cow.[46] Gordon sees in this self-consciousness a 'cultural negotiation of boundaries', a 'gambl[ing] with the impermissible', and argues that such ways of speaking 'at once assert and deny that statues or painted figures are alive'.

Gordon notes that a similar self-consciousness marks 'the game of "let's pretend they are gods" which the Greeks (and the Romans) played with their statues and other representations of divinity'; 'people believed simultaneously that statues were gods and that they were not'.[47] The boundary between the suspension of disbelief operative in viewing works of art or reading texts and the worshipper's faith in the presence of his god is a fluid one. Gordon is insistent that the sphere of the artistic and

[43] Vernant (1991) 153. See also pp. 90–1. [44] Vernant (1991) 167.

[45] Gordon (1979) 7–10. For another attempt to redress too exclusively an aesthetic response to ancient art in favour of one more ritual-centred see Elsner (1996b); see also Barasch (1992) ch. 2 'Antiquity I: the animated image'.

[46] See note 17 above. [47] Gordon (1979) 16–17.

poetic should not be separated off from the broader cultural context, noting that the usurpation by human beings of 'the creative prerogatives of the gods [is] a game played also by poets, law-givers, hellenistic kings and Roman Emperors'. Ovid's fascination with the permeability of the boundary between image and reality reflects not just a sense of his own powers as an artist, but also registers a reaction to contemporary political and cultural circumstances. What might be characterised as a regressive and mystifying poetics, expressing itself in tales of animated statues and the like, compensates for the hyper-sophistication of a late Alexandrian artistic culture with a nostalgic attempt to reconnect with a primitive, archaic, shamanist and Orphic model of the poet as magician, whose *carmina* ('songs'/'spells': see pp. 126, 241–2) can directly control the external world. Such attempts to tap the power of a remote past of poetic origins are already a feature of the Hellenistic milieu from which Ovid emerges. Within a specifically Roman context, Ovid makes his own distinctive contribution to the triumviral and Augustan *vates*-concept, in which the poet reinvigorates his poetic authority by appeal to numinous models of poetic production from the past, and by which the poet mimics the *princeps*' attempt to revive political authority through a transfusion into the present of the charisma of great Romans of the past, and also through a claim to privileged access to the divine. Ovid's reenchantment of his poetic world should also be seen in the context of the visual representation of imperial power, where one could speak of a mystificatory and regressive evocation of older notions of the presence of gods in their images (see pp. 318–22).[48]

At the same time Ovid ironises these mystifications, by bringing these archaic fables of artistic magic into the contemporary world, through his familiar trick of anachronistic allusion: Narcissus fantastically obsessed with the absent presence of his reflection in a pool in a fairy-tale forest is also the elegiac *exclusus amator*; Laudamia with her devotional image of Protesilaus, visited by the real spirit of her dead husband, is at the same time one of Ovid's very modern heroines; the mythical Pygmalion is a figure for Orpheus, in turn a figure for the thoroughly modern poet Ovid; Pygmalion the archetypal sculptor is yet another instantiation of the infatuated elegiac lover.[49]

[48] On 'presence' in Roman imperial images see Elsner (1998) on the 'elision of persons and images' (37), esp. in imperial images. For another cultural tradition of representing the 'real presence' of the ruler, where modernity self-consciously draws on an older ideology, see Ades, Benton, Elliott, Whyte (1995) 251 on the survival of the acheiropoetic tradition of icons in the photographic iconicity of Brodsky's 'photo-paintings' of Lenin.

[49] Sharrock (1991a).



Ovid's Pygmalion becomes a central symbol not only in the western myth of the artist, but also in fantasies of the fulfilment of desire. The two are not easily to be separated: a central reason for the enduring popularity of the story is its thematisation of the close connections between erotic desire and the response to works of art, both verbal and visual. In the rest of this chapter I explore these connections with reference to two moments in the reception of Ovid's narrative, one in a text written for visual embodiment on the stage, the setting for many reenactments of the Ovidian exercise in making words come to life, and one in the work of a visual artist active at the very end of the western tradition of illusionist realism.[50]

## *THE WINTER'S TALE*

Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* is closely based on Robert Greene's prose romance *Pandosto* of 1588. *Pandosto* alludes to a number of episodes from the *Metamorphoses*, but Shakespeare's play goes much further in its densely woven reworking of a number of Ovidian tales.[51] The various strands of the play are drawn together in the final statue scene, a dramatisation with a twist of the animation of Pygmalion's statue. The statue scene is an unexpected addition to Greene's plot-line, the remaining issues of which have been summarily resolved in the preceding scene (the identity of Perdita, her forbidden romance with Florizel, and the enmity between Leontes and Polixenes).[52] It may however be noted that Greene had already worked the topics of realist illusion into an exchange between Fawnia (Greene's Perdita character) and Dorastus (the Florizel character), on the subject of pastoral disguise and reality:[53]

[Dorastus] 'Thou wert content to love Dorastus, when he ceased to be a prince and to become a shepherd, and see I have made the change, and, therefore, not to miss of my choice.' 'Truth', quoth Fawnia, 'but all that wear cowls are not monks: painted eagles are pictures, not eagles. Zeuxis' grapes were like grapes, yet shadows: rich clothing make not princes, nor homely attire beggars: shepherds are not called shepherds because they wear hooks and bags, but [that]

[50] In general on the reception of Pygmalion: Dörrie (1974); Miller (1988); Blühm (1988).

[51] On the Ovidian material see esp. Bate (1993) 220–40; Barkan (1981); Nuttall (2000).

[52] On the place of the statue scene within the dramatic structure of the play see Barkan (1981) 640.

[53] In Pafford (1963) 211. Dorastus' following version of the *carpe diem topos* also resonates interestingly with the Shakespearean engagement with themes of art and time: 'Take heed, Fawnia: be not proud of beauty's painting, for it is a flower that fadeth in the blossom . . . Beauty's shadows are tricked up with time's colours, which, being set to dry in the sun, are stained with the sun . . .'

they are born poor and live to keep sheep; so this attire hath not made Dorastus a shepherd, but to seem like a shepherd.'

The illusionism of the Shakespearean statue scene is intricately related to the masquerades of the pastoral sheep-shearing feast in IV. iv, particularly in the parallelism between the 'idolisation' of mother and daughter: at the beginning of IV. iv Florizel admiringly describes Perdita, in an image taken directly from *Pandosto*, as 'no shepherdess, but Flora | Peering in April's front' (2–3), to which Perdita responds by deprecatingly referring to herself as a 'poor lowly maid, | Most goddess-like prank'd up' (9–10).[54]

Pygmalion fashions his statue after turning in disgust from women as found in nature, because of the shameless prostitution of the Propoetides (*Met.* 10.243–6). Leontes rejects his flesh-and-blood wife in disgust at her imagined adultery, to replace her, after her supposed death, with a mental idol of Hermione, whose 'sainted spirit' (V. i. 57) Leontes worships. Memory elevates her to the status of a 'perfect woman' (V. i. 15), described by Paulina with allusion to an anecdote about the visual arts, the story of Zeuxis' pictorial making of such a woman through selection of the best parts of a multiplicity of real women. Like Pygmalion, Leontes violently rejects the thought of taking any other woman in marriage (V. i. 23–84).

The story of Pygmalion plays alongside other Ovidian stories. Allusion to Orpheus and Eurydice reaches a height of intensity when Paulina calls for music to awake the statue, and warns Leontes (V. iii. 105–7) 'Do not shun her | Until you see her die again; for then | You kill her double.' The story of Proserpina informs the figurative restoration of spring in this winter's tale with the return of Perdita.[55] Tony Nuttall speaks of Shakespeare's weaving together of the stories of Pygmalion, Orpheus and Proserpina in 'a complex sequence of unrivalled power'.[56] It would be more exact to speak of Shakespeare's power as a reader of Ovid, for a complex interweaving of these stories is already to be traced in the Ovidian text. Orpheus' arch appeal to the truth of the story about the rape of Proserpina in his address to the gods of the Underworld at *Met.* 10.28 is more than a rhetorical ploy, drawing attention, among other things,

[54] Perdita becomes something like a saint in the Servant's hyperbolical praise at V. i. 106–9 'This is a creature, | Would she begin a sect, might quench the zeal | Of all professors else; make proselytes | Of who she but bid follow.'

[55] This by no means exhausts the number of Ovidian stories laid under contribution in the play: see above all Bate (1993) 220–39.

[56] Nuttall (2000) 141.



to the structural parallelism between the Song of Calliope in book 5, on the rape of Proserpina, and the Song of Orpheus in book 10. The prominence given to flower transformations at the beginning (Hyacinthus) and end (Adonis) of the Song of Orpheus, and to the annual vegetable cycle as a way of commemorating the dead also betrays the pressure of the Proserpina model on the Song of Orpheus; the anemone that swells up from the blood of Adonis is of the same colour as the flower of the pomegranate (*Met.* 10.735–6; see p. 68). Orpheus is ultimately released from this model of a cyclical consolation by a total escape, through death, from temporality, into a reunion with his wife in the Underworld, a married couple now even closer to the paradigm of Dis and Proserpina to which Orpheus had appealed at the outset. In *The Winter's Tale* the cyclical model figured in the play's seasonal imagery and the correlative myth of Proserpina is transcended by the profoundly realistic acceptance, celebration even, of time's linear passage in the final scene.[57] The connection between the Ovidian Pygmalion and Orpheus is tighter still, as Pygmalion is both subject of Orpheus' song and allegory of his own experience. Shakespeare's 'combinatorial imitation' of the several Ovidian stories comments acutely on the workings of the Ovidian text itself.

Equally Ovidian is the convergence in the play of visual and verbal feignings. Paulina's art in the final scene is generally understood as self-reflexive comment on Shakespeare's own art.[58] In stage-managing the transformation of the statue, Paulina takes on the roles of Pygmalion and Orpheus, both figures within the *Metamorphoses* for the poet himself. The Ovidian text narrativises the anecdotal and ecphrastic topics of the deceptive lifelikeness of illusionist art, literalising the figurative. Similarly, Paulina's dramatic magic makes a moving tableau out of the clichés of the art criticism of the classical tradition. 'Julio Romano, who, had he himself eternity and could put breath into his work, would beguile Nature of her custom, so perfectly he is her ape: he so near to Hermione hath done Hermione, that they say one would speak to her and stand in hope of answer' (V. ii. 96–101): here the Third Gentleman virtually provides a script for the final scene. Ovid's Pygmalion is a figure both for the viewer of an illusionist artwork, and for the reader of an illusionist text, such as the tale

[57] With a hint of Odysseus and Penelope? The aging Penelope in the end is preferred to the eternal return of vernal femininity in the shapes of Circe, Calypso, and Nausicaa.

[58] See esp. Barkan (1981) 662–4 on the statue scene as staging Shakespeare's triumph in a *paragone* of the arts, in which drama, combining the verbal *and* the visual, wins as an 'art of four-dimensional sculpture'. Bate (1993) 237: 'Paulina's art, which stands in for Giulio Romano's, which stands in for Shakespeare's'.

of Pygmalion; as we read Pygmalion, we become Pygmalion, animating the textual character through our own engrossed response to and identification with him. In the Shakespearean statue scene a complete equivalence of the audiences inside and outside the play is engineered by the fact that, no more than the internal spectators, do we know that Hermione never died. Even if, in the theatre, we recognise that the motionless figure is a living person and not a stage prop, we (as a first-time audience) are most likely to assume that this is an actor playing the role of a statue.

Like Ovid, Shakespeare explores the relationship between the conjuring of visual presences and the suspension of disbelief in stories and texts, between the ontology and epistemology of fictions. Paulina proclaims the superiority of things seen to things heard at v. iii. 115–18:

> That she is living,
> Were it but *told* you, should be hooted at
> Like an old *tale*: but it *appears* she lives,
> Though yet she *speak* not.

The penultimate scene (v. ii), in which the Gentlemen report verbally on the recognition of Perdita that has taken place offstage, has the structural effect of displacing emphasis from the recognition itself to the statue scene, the latter staged in full view of audiences both internal and external. But the scene is rather more than a demonstration, as Barkan would have it, of the triumphant superiority of dramatic form over the inadequate vehicles of report and description, 'speech-without-drama'.[59] The Gentlemen repeatedly call attention to the incredible nature both of what they have just witnessed and of the story that has led to these events, 'like an old tale'. Such expressions of incredibility are not simply admissions of the inferiority of the word, but are part of the word's rhetorical strategy of arousing in the listener a sense of wonder adequate to the experience of the actors themselves. Most eloquent of the reporters is the Third Gentleman, who, surely not accidentally, is the steward of that supreme impresario, Paulina (26). It is he who delivers the setpiece on the illusionist magic of Giulio Romano, and it is he who, in his previous utterance has given a masterly specimen of the power of words to conjure up a vivid picture (of an audience's reaction to a verbal relation), 81–91:

> One of the prettiest touches of all, and that which angled for mine eyes (caught the water though not the fish) was, when at the relation of the queen's death (with the manner how she came to 't bravely confessed and lamented by the king) how

[59] Barkan (1981) 662.



> attentiveness wounded his daughter; till, from one sign of dolour to another, she did, with an 'Alas,' I would fain say, bleed tears, for there I am sure my heart wept blood. Who was most marble, there changed colour; some swooned, all sorrowed: if all the world could have seen 't, the woe had been universal.

Even the most skilful actor would find it difficult to create the visual illusion of a transformation from a 'marble' complexion; stage tears stand ready at command, but tears of blood? 'Who was most marble, there changed colour' is an ironic anticipation of what is to happen in the final scene (how knowing is Paulina's steward?); the Third Gentleman's verbal mastery of what he has seen is also a reminder that in the final analysis the visual miracle of the final scene depends largely on verbal conventions, the kinds of thing that get *said* about works of art. The animation of Pygmalion's statue and of Hermione would have a very different effect on a readership or audience who did not understand that verbal clichés were here being turned into narrative or dramatic reality. The dramatic, visual, art of the final scene of *The Winter's Tale* is dependent on a prior art of verbal description or ecphrasis.

Within the economy of the play Paulina's theatricals are the white magic that undoes the effects of the black magic of Leontes' jealousy at the beginning of the play.[60] The final resolution, in comic mode, of the problems that attend the boundary between art and reality is also a resolution of the threat of transgressions, of a tragic kind, within the sphere of human relationships. Pygmalion's statue is a response to an overstepping of the socially acceptable limits of female sexuality through indiscriminate promiscuity, but the cure is itself the cause of a new and worse disease: if union with the statue provides an instant 'comic' conclusion to the story of a desire thwarted by an apparently insuperable obstacle, this happy ending unleashes a chain of tragic, incestuous and quasi-incestuous, transgressions in the stories of Myrrha and of Venus and Adonis.

Leontes' 'affection' has created a monster which does not exist, the image of an adulterous wife that, he convinces himself, is confirmed by the

[60] Felperin (1990) is eloquent on the connections between beginning and end of the play, but approaches them from the perspective of the word, rather than things seen: (54) 'the superstition of the word that Mopsa and Dorcas exemplify in the sheep-shearing scene, and that lingers on in Paulina's account of Hermione's "resurrection", is only the other side of the suspicion of the word exemplified in the first act by Leontes, much as Leontes' jealousy had been not the absence but the dark side of his faith . . . The very opacity that had been such a problem in the language of the opening act becomes, in the closing act, the means of resolving that problem.' Other readings that focus on the link between the feignings of Leontes and Paulina include Grene (1967) 68–86; Bishop (1996) ch. 5.

senses of sight and hearing, and by mental understanding, a conviction triply proof (I. ii. 267–73):

> Ha' you not seen, Camillo?
> (But that's past doubt: you have, or your eye-glass
> Is thicker than a cuckold's horn) or heard?
> (For to a vision so apparent rumour
> Cannot be mute) or thought? (for cogitation
> Resides not in that man that does not think)
> My wife is slippery?

His error could be subjected to a Lucretian analysis of delusion (see pp. 150–6): he really has seen signs of friendship between Hermione and Polixenes, and heard words pass between them, but imposed quite false mental judgements on these true perceptions: thinking is in fact the sole source of his mistaken belief. To the outside world Leontes' firm facts are the invention of a dreamer. In the trial scene Hermione's charge to this effect is immediately taken up by Leontes in a way that he intends as bitterly sarcastic, but which to an impartial ear sounds like a confession of his insanity (III. ii. 79–84):

> HER. Sir,
> You speak a language that I understand not:
> My life stands in the level of your dreams,
> Which I'll lay down.
> LEON. Your actions are my dreams.
> You had a bastard by Polixenes,
> And I but dream'd it!

Howard Felperin sees in Leontes' inventive jealousy a parody of 'a characteristic drift of European literary criticism: a superstition of the word that endows it with the power to conjure its referent into being', referring to Sidney's famous account, in his *Apology for Poetry*, of the power of the poet, who, 'lifted up with the vigour of his own invention, doth grow in effect another nature . . . freely ranging only within the zodiac of his own wit'.[61] But a longer temporal perspective opens up. Jealousy is a close relative of envy, and from early in antiquity envy is not only the enemy of, but also the malicious rival of the poet (see also pp. 236–8). This can be seen clearly from Ovid's summary of the traditions of envy in his personification of *Invidia* at *Metamorphoses* 2.760–82. *Invidia* has the power of *enargeia*, of creating vivid visions of things absent, the power which Ovid

[61] Felperin (1990) 48.



himself exercises in conjuring up a horrific vision of the abstraction of envy (*Met.* 2.803–5):

> germanam ante oculos fortunatumque sororis
> coniugium pulchraque deum sub imagine ponit
> cunctaque magna facit.

[Envy] places before her eyes her sister and her sister's happy wedding and the picture of the handsome god, and magnifies everything.

Furthermore, Envy's magnification is one of the features that she shares with the Virgilian *Fama*, both demonic parody of the power of the poet, and, within the immediate context of *Aeneid* 4, an unbridled outburst of verbal feigning provoked by the erotic encounter in the cave between Dido and Aeneas, and given renewed impetus by Iarbas' acute sexual jealousy. As Bellaria, the Hermione figure in *Pandosto*, says, 'envy oftentimes soundeth Fame's trumpet'.[62]

Perversion of desire creates the monstrous double of his wife in Leontes' mind, and leads to her supposed death; the consequent sixteen-year long desire that he will feel for the presence of a wife whom he worships as a sainted spirit will eventually prompt him to kiss what he takes for her statue, until warned off by Paulina. Shakespeare thus avoids the taint of an unnatural action that many readers feel in the Ovidian narrative of sexual advances made to a statue; Paulina's admonition about the physical staining that will result if Leontes puts his lips to the still wet paint of the statue's lips (V. iii. 80–4) carries the hint of a moral pollution. Faith, rather than desire, is to animate this statue (94–5): *Paul.* 'It is requir'd | You do awake your faith.' Faith can be taken in a number of ways: the audience must have faith in Paulina's magic for it to work, as the children in the theatre must believe in fairies for Tinkerbell to come back to life, a faith that interacts somewhat uneasily with the Christian imagery that has pervaded much of the play, hinting at a Popish idolatry of painted images;[63] the audience must suspend their disbelief that lifelike statues are not really alive; Leontes must be true to his faith in the goodness and fidelity of his wife.[64] This is the converse of the faith in, or conviction

[62] In Pafford (1963) 192. Felperin raises the possibility that Leontes' suspicions of his wife's infidelity may be true, and points out that there is no way that the audience can be absolutely sure. It is true that Leontes at least sees behaviour on the part of Hermione and Polixenes that is open to misinterpretation: the Virgilian *Fama* sings of *facta atque infecta*.

[63] See Sokol (1994) 77–84.

[64] Paulina stands for a Pauline principle of faith, and belief in the sanctity of marriage; see Bishop (1996) 162. Raphael Lyne points to the irony of the hastily arranged match between Paulina and Camillo at the end of the play.

of, his wife's infidelity that had created the dreamlike delusions under which Leontes labours at the beginning of the play; Camillo refers to (I. ii. 429–30) 'The fabric of his folly, whose foundation | Is pil'd upon his faith'.[65]

An equivocation between moral and intellectual or aesthetic senses of *fides*, 'faith, trust, credibility', is programmatic in the Ovidian construction of a world of love and love-poetry at the beginning of the *Amores* (see p. 38). Ovid's amatory elegy effects a major shift from a concern for *fides* as the personal fidelity of poet or *puella*, to *fides* as the assent required from the reader as to the reality, or at least plausibility, of the incidents and emotions of the elegiac affair. The fiction of *The Winter's Tale* tends in the opposite direction, cutting through the illusions of art with an assertion of the lasting power of marital faithfulness. For Leontes the suspension of disbelief was never necessary, since the 'statue' of Hermione is not an artistic illusion. Paulina places great emphasis on the lawfulness of her magic: 'lawful' or 'unlawful' occurs three times in the space of sixteen lines in the statue scene, culminating in Leontes' striking exclamation 'If this be magic, let it be an art | Lawful as eating' (V. iii. 110–11).[66] What can be more lawful than a magical transformation that in reality is reunion with a lawfully wedded wife, lost but now found?

Paulina also uses the Christian language of redemption (V. iii. 102–3): 'Bequeath to death your numbness; for from him | Dear life redeems you.' This is the culmination of the imagery of fall and redemption which structures the whole plot. The play stages a fall, or at least the fantasy of a fall, from a paradisal state of unmediated presence with an object of (presexual) love into temporality, language and sexuality, resulting in forced absences and unreal, or illicit, presences. Redemption is achieved not through the transcendence of linear time, whether into a non-human, natural, cyclical time or into a higher state of atemporality

[65] On the several kinds of faith see Barkan (1981) 659–60; Frey (1980) 161 'trust in Paulina, belief in providence, fidelity to vows of love, sincerity, uncritical confidence'.

[66] Paulina begins her 'ritual' with an inversion of the call to the profane to absent themselves, 95–7 'Then all stand still: | Or – those that think it is unlawful business | I am about, let them depart.' Two Ovidian parallels present themselves: (i) the inversion of the ritual instruction to the profane to absent themselves (*procul este profani*) in the command at *Ars am.* 1.31–2, to married women to absent themselves, followed by the assurance that the poet will sing of *concessa furta*, which might be translated 'lawful erotic thefts'; (ii) the uninverted use of the ritual instruction by Orpheus to open his Myrrha narrative, immediately following the Pygmalion episode, at *Met.* 10.300, followed by an alternative (introduced by *aut* as Paulina's 'all stand still' is followed by 'Or –') which is the opposite of Paulina's 'awake your faith': *desit in hac mihi parte fides* 'do not believe in this part of my story'. There may be a further connection between *Ars* 1.31–2 and the Song of Orpheus, which begins with a table of contents including (*Met.* 10.153–4) *inconcessisque puellas | ignibus attonitas* 'girls smitten with illicit fires'.



or eternity, but through a mature acceptance of the passage of time in a (lawful) matrimonial relationship.

The primitive Edenic state is preserved – or constructed – in Polixenes' memory of his childhood days with Leontes, as he tells Hermione (I. ii. 62–80):

POL. We were, fair queen,
Two lads that thought there was no more behind,
But such a day to-morrow as to-day,
And to be boy eternal.
HER. Was not my lord
The verier wag o' the two?
POL. We were as twinn'd lambs that did frisk i' the sun,
And bleat the one at th' other: what we chang'd
Was innocence for innocence: we knew not
The doctrine of ill-doing, nor dream'd
That any did. Had we pursu'd that life,
And our weak spirits ne'er been higher rear'd
With stronger blood, we should have answer'd heaven
Boldly 'not guilty', the imposition clear'd
Hereditary ours.
HER. By this we gather
You have tripp'd since.
POL. O my most sacred lady,
Temptations have since then been born to 's: for
In those unfledg'd days was my wife a girl;
Your precious self had then not cross'd the eyes
Of my young play-fellow.

In this infantilist pastoral paradise time is frozen in eternity, communication is achieved through prelinguistic bleating, and the relationship of the two boys is expressed through the exchange of same for same, 'innocence for innocence', a kind of pastoral amobaeic responsion bordering on narcissism. At the very beginning of the play Camillo describes the differentiated and surrogate exchanges through which the adult kings seek to perpetuate their childish union, through epistolary and diplomatic absent presences (I. i. 21–32):

Sicilia cannot show himself over-kind to Bohemia. They were trained together in their childhoods, and there rooted betwixt them then such an affection which cannot choose but branch now. Since their more mature dignities and royal necessities made separation of their society, their encounters, though not personal, have been royally attorneyed with interchange of letters, loving embassies, that they have seemed to be together, though absent; shook hands, as over a vast; and

embraced, as it were, from the ends of opposed winds. The heavens continue their loves.

This carefully structured relationship, a continuation by other means of the boys' innocent inseparability, breaks down when Polixenes gets too close, or is imagined by Leontes to get too close, to the sexual union of man and wife that resulted from a 'temptation' (see I. ii. 76–80) that entered the garden of childhood friendship.[67]

Leontes suffers from an imaginative lability that not only discerns transgression of sexual boundaries through adultery where none exists, but also slips between time zones and generations, and ultimately raises the spectre of incest. These two kinds of slippage are superimposed on one another in the scene where Leontes begins to suspect his wife.[68] After the first sudden access of jealousy as he watches the familiarity between his wife and Polixenes, he turns, through an easy connection, to his son Mamillius to ask (I. ii. 120) 'Art thou my boy?' The thought of the (conventional and reassuring) likeness that all see between father and son leads to a projection of a sexual prurience, stimulated in Leontes by his jealous interpretation of the signs of friendship bestowed on Polixenes by Hermione, into an identification with the latent sexuality of his son, his younger self (125–35):

> Still virginalling
> Upon his palm! – How now, you wanton calf!
> Art thou my calf?
> MAM. Yes, if you will, my lord.
> LEON. Thou want'st a rough pash and the shoots that I have
> To be full like me: yet they say we are
> Almost as like as eggs; women say so,
> (That will say any thing): but were they false
> As o'er-dy'd blacks, as wind, as waters; false
> As dice are to be wish'd by one that fixes
> No bourn 'twixt his and mine, yet were it true
> To say this boy were like me.

[67] Friendship will be restored at the end of the play at the same time as the sexual relationship between husband and wife is brought back within its proper channels: see Polixenes' expression to Leontes of his wish 'To take off so much grief from you as he | Will piece up in himself' (V. iii. 55–6). For the language of the merged identity of close friends Pafford (1963) ad loc. compares *The Two Noble Kinsmen* II. ii. 187–8 'am not I | Part of your blood, part of your soul?', language with classical precedent: Cic. *Lael.* 21 *alterum inquirit cuius animum ita cum suo misceat ut efficiat paene unum e duobus* 'he searches out another whose soul he might so mingle with his own as to make almost one out of two'.

[68] For a psychoanalytical approach to the 'catalytic presence' of Mamillius in the scene of Leontes' suspicions see Bishop (1996) 132–41.



The horns ('shoots') spell cuckoldry, but as the future attributes of a 'wanton calf' they also hint at the budding sexuality of the young boy (like the 'forehead swelling with horns' of the kid in Horace *Odes* 3.13). At 137 Leontes turns back to thoughts of his wife's sexual misdemeanours in a passage of tormented self-examination. Hermione asks 'Are you mov'd, my lord?'; Leontes answers with an evasion that nevertheless reveals further the association in his mind between thoughts of his wife's and his son's sexualities (150–60):

> No, in good earnest.
> How sometimes nature will betray its folly,
> Its tenderness, and make itself a pastime
> To harder bosoms! Looking on the lines
> Of my boy's face, methoughts I did recoil
> Twenty-three years, and saw myself unbreech'd,
> In my green velvet coat; my dagger muzzl'd
> Lest it should bite its master, and so prove,
> As ornaments oft do, too dangerous:
> How like, methought, I then was to this kernel,
> This squash, this gentleman.

This is a very different picture of childhood to that evoked by Polixenes; the father imaginatively identifies himself with the 'copy' of himself, but in this memory of a past self the snake is already in the garden, in the phallic image of the muzzled, but already dangerous, dagger.[69] Leontes' fervid imagining of a sexual affair between Polixenes and Hermione seems both to spill over into, and to be fuelled by, an identification with a young and vigorous copy of himself, whose sexuality is on the point of erupting.[70]

In the case of his female child, Leontes' rejection of another likeness of himself will be later over-compensated with the threat of an excessive closeness. Paulina presents him with his newborn infant and tries to win

[69] The phallic interpretation is reinforced by the apparent lack of evidence for a specific practice of sheathing daggers so that they could only be worn as ornaments, according to Pafford's long note on these lines ('unknown to those living authorities I have consulted'). The phallic image is clear enough e.g. to Bishop (1996) 137.

[70] The connection in this passage between a wrongful relationship with another man's wife and an excessive closeness to one's own child may be compared with an internal monologue from near the end of Greene's romance, in which Pandosto struggles with his desire for Fawnia, whom he does not yet know to be his daughter, beginning (Pafford (1963) 219): 'How art thou pestered, Pandosto, with fresh affections, and unfit fancies, wishing to possess with an unwilling mind and a hot desire, troubled with a cold disdain! Shall thy mind yield in age to that thou hast resisted in youth? Peace, Pandosto: blab not out that which thou mayest be ashamed to reveal to thyself. Ah, Fawnia is beautiful, and it is [not] for thine honour, fond fool, to name her that is thy captive, and another man's concubine.'

him over by pointing out in its features 'the whole matter | And copy of the father' (II. iii. 98–9). Leontes angrily disowns the baby. When the lost child returns as the maiden Perdita, Leontes is sexually tempted by her likeness to her other parent. The 'temptation' scene is set up in Leontes' protestation that he will never marry another at the beginning (V. i. 69–75):

PAUL. Will you swear
Never to marry, but by my free leave?
LEON. Never, Paulina; so be blest my spirit!
PAUL. Then, good my lords, bear witness to his oath.
CLEO. You tempt him over-much.
PAUL. Unless another,
As like Hermione as is her picture,
Affront his eye.

Paulina of course has her own plans, and she knows that the *adynaton* in 73–5 will come true; her words echo the formulation of Pygmalion's prayer at *Metamorphoses* 10.274–6 for 'a wife like the ivory statue', that will be fulfilled with the gift of a wife who *is* the statue. Paulina is however not quite as much in control as she imagines, and with hindsight Cleomenes' 'You tempt him over-much' functions as a proleptic gloss on her next words. A servant now enters to announce the arrival of Florizel and his princess, according to the servant (94–5) 'the most peerless piece of earth . . . | That e'er the sun shone bright on'. Paulina rebukes this man, who it appears is a versifier and had in the past praised Hermione thus (100–1): 'She had not been, | Nor was to be equall'd.' But there is a legitimate equivalence of peerlessness between mother and daughter, which is however inaccessible to the Servant, who has a weak memory (104 'I have almost forgot [Hermione]'), and is unable to match daughter to mother, unlike the Third Gentleman who will comment on (V. ii. 36–7) 'the majesty of the creature in resemblance of her mother'.[71] As a member of Paulina's household, the Third Gentleman has access to an instant standard of comparison. Leontes by contrast, as we have seen, is naturally blessed (or cursed) with a vivid visual memory of the past, which he displays in another moment of regression at the first sight of Florizel (V. i. 123–9):

Your mother was most true to wedlock, prince;
For she did print your royal father off,

[71] 'Peerless' is applied by Paulina to Hermione at V. iii. 14. Cf. Colie (1974) 282 'Perdita, that mother's child, recapitulates the mother's beauty, in her own living regenerates her mother's lost image.'



Conceiving you. Were I but twenty-one,
Your father's image is so hit in you,
His very air, that I should call you brother,
As I did him, and speak of something wildly
By us perform'd before.

After the announcement of Polixenes' request that his son be arrested for running off with the shepherd's daughter, Florizel appeals to Leontes' evident attachment to the past (V. i. 217–27):

Beseech you, sir,
Remember since you ow'd no more to time
Than I do now: with thought of such affections,
Step forth mine advocate: at your request,
My father will grant precious things as trifles.
LEON. Would he do so, I'd beg your precious mistress,
Which he counts but a trifle.
PAUL. Sir, my liege,
Your eye hath too much youth in 't; not a month
'Fore your queen died, she was more worth such gazes
Than what you look on now.
LEON. I thought of her,
Even as these looks I made.

Leontes' first remark here is offered as a complimentary defence of Perdita's worth against Polixenes' contempt for a low-born girl, but Paulina realises that there is more here than courtliness, with no doubt a momentary rush of anxiety with regard to her own scheme. Leontes' second remark is offered in self-defence ('I hadn't really forgotten Hermione'), but Leontes also thinks of Hermione because her 'copy' stands before him.[72] The temptation is felt as a very real one; but to make love to *this* likeness of Hermione would be to commit incest. This moment is an allusive memory of the far stronger incestuous approaches in Greene's *Pandosto* of Pandosto, the Leontes figure, who 'contrary to the law of nature . . . had lusted after his own daughter', Fawnia.[73] In terms of allusive manipulation, one could compare the trace in Ovid's Pygmalion of the older version in which Pygmalion falls in love with a statue of *Venus* (see p. 190).

Shakespeare's play swerves from the threat of incestuous union with the likeness of a wife restored to the springtime of her youth, and instead, through Paulina's guiding intervention, Leontes' affections

[72] Bishop (1996) 144 notes Leontes' 'uncanny tendency . . . to speak directly about his situation and yet not hear himself'.
[73] In Pafford (1963) 225. See Bate (1993) 230 n. 14; Nuttall (2000) 140.

are restored to their lawful object. The narrative coupling within the Ovidian Song of Orpheus of a transgressive union with a statue (Pygmalion) with incest (Myrrha) is broken by the lawful magic of a statue scene where the statue is no statue, but the living wife, present as herself.

## JEAN-LÉON GÉRÔME: A PYGMALION COMPLEX

The lifelikeness of the 'statue' of Hermione in *The Winter's Tale* is perfected by the colours of the paint that Paulina warns Perdita and Leontes is not yet dry on it (v. iii. 46–8, 80–3). It may be a surprise that a piece of sculpture by a Renaissance master such as Giulio Romano should be polychromed, but an early seventeenth-century English audience would have been very familiar with contemporary brightly painted tomb effigies, such as those of Elizabeth I and Mary Queen of Scots, commissioned in 1605 by James I for Westminster Abbey.[74] Shakespeare may also have had in mind medieval painted statues of saints, and the play certainly activates memories of preReformation idolatry. The unease felt by a modern audience at the idea of a polychromed sculptural masterpiece of the High Renaissance may be compared with the discomfort aroused in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by the accumulating evidence that the masterpieces of ancient Greek sculpture had been coloured, at a time when the neoclassical aesthetic endorsed by Winckelmann had made a fetish of the purity of white marble sculpture. But the archaeological evidence also prompted a wide range of new experiments in sculptural polychromy, together with attempts to reconstruct ancient practice. For example John Gibson's *Tinted Venus*, which caused a sensation at the International Exhibition of 1862 in London, is a highly classicising figure uncannily, and for some contemporary viewers shockingly, brought to life by its subtle colouring. Alma-Tadema's 1868 painting of *Phidias and the frieze of the Parthenon*, shows the Athenian public allowed up on the scaffolding to view the freshly painted frieze.[75]

The nineteenth-century obsession with sculptural polychromy received a new impetus with the discovery in 1873 of thousands of small painted terracotta figurines in graves at the Boeotian village of

[74] Orgel (1996) 56.

[75] See A. Blühm 'In living colour. A short history of colour and sculpture in the 19th century', in Blühm (1996) 11–60.



Tanagra.[76] These images of contemporary types brought the ancient world back to life in a particularly vivid way. The Tanagra figurines had an especial impact on Jean-Léon Gérôme, one of the last representatives of the nineteenth-century academic tradition, notorious for his opposition to the Impressionists. Gérôme was a painter who later in his life also turned to sculpture, and played an important part in the history of polychrome sculpture in France.[77] For Gérôme this interest extended far beyond an exercise in archaeological reconstruction, to form part of an obsessive and narcissistic concern with the nature and power of his own art. Central to this concern is the myth of Pygmalion. Unsurprisingly, Pygmalion had been repeatedly invoked in the earlier nineteenth-century history of polychrome sculpture, for example in Anne-Louis Girodet's painting *Pygmalion and the statue* (1819), intended as homage to Canova, a sculptor who had himself been inspired by the pioneering investigations into ancient polychromy of the French archaeologist Quatremère de Quincy.[78]

With Gérôme Pygmalion meets the age of photography. Gérôme was fascinated by photography: he had photographs taken of himself at work with his models in his studio, and used some of these photographs as the basis for self-portraits of the artist in his studio. Multiple reproductions of his paintings circulated in photogravures published by the Goupil firm.[79] But he will also have registered the ease with which a mechanical device reproduced the work of the artist. The coming of photography marks a decisive crisis for what Norman Bryson describes as the 'Zeuxian ambition' of western representational art, the desire to capture original presence in the painterly sign. Bryson diagnoses the condition of this art as one that has always been marked by the impossibility of the presence for which it strives, since 'the logic of recognition entails that no vernal or primal vision can be represented, yet the pursuit of presence

[76] See Higgins (1987). Shortly after the discovery Reinhard Kekulé (1878) published a lavish volume, including colour illustrations.

[77] See Blühm (1996) 45–7. On Gérôme see Ackerman (1986) (references are to Ackerman's catalogue numbers).

[78] Blühm (1996) 19–22.

[79] Ackerman (1986) 134, referring to six large photographs of Gérôme in the Bibliothèque Nationale in his sculpture studio at Clichy together with the life-size plaster for his sculpture *Omphale*, and the live model for the plaster; ibid. 62 on Gérôme's collaboration with Goupil. 'E. Shinn' edited a 10-volume collection *Gérôme. A Collection of the Works of J. L. Gérôme in One Hundred Photogravures* (New York 1881–3). Gérôme himself compiled a collection in 28 volumes of Goupil's photogravures of his works, bequeathed by his widow to the Bibliothèque Nationale.

involves endless struggle against repetition'.[80] The photograph miraculously achieves the artist's desire to counterfeit reality, but at the same time intensifies the viewer's awareness that the image is an absent presence: the uncanny awareness that what has been captured is a past instant of time, is itself a sharp reminder that the presence of which the photograph is a certificate is no longer there. Roland Barthes describes the essence of photography as a 'That-has-been': 'in the Photograph, what I posit is not only the absence of the object; it is also, by one and the same movement, on equal terms, the fact that this object has indeed existed and that it has been there where I see it'.[81] The development of techniques of multiple photographic reproduction creates another kind of distance between the photograph and the unique presence of its object. In Gérôme we seem to see one of the final paroxysms of Zeuxian painting, characterised by a neurotic repetition of attempts to conjure presence, by the multiplication of lifelike images (including photographs) of lifelike images, but in fact achieving no more than an indefinite chain of displacements and substitutions.

Gérôme's response to the anxiety of modernity is to project the exactness to life of the new technology of photographic reproduction back to the origins of realist art in ancient Greece, and beyond that back to antiquity's own founding myth of illusionist art, Pygmalion and his statue. One may compare the way in which Ovid elaborates myths of the archteypal artist, Orpheus and Pygmalion, in order to empower his own belated poetry. The intensity of Gérôme's yearning to locate the origins and perfection of his art in the remote historical and mythical past is brought into relief by a comparison with his towering predecessor, Ingres, who goes no further back than the High Renaissance to find his originary source in the person of Raphael, in a series of five paintings on the subject of *Raphael and La Fornarina* that explore the relationships between art, life and desire, firstly in the work of Raphael himself, and, secondly and by extension, those same relationships, plus the relationship between nineteenth-century artist and his Renaissance hero, in the work of Ingres.[82] Norman Bryson has seen in the *Fornarina* series a grappling with 'the impossibility of closure or self-completion for the image in tradition', and at the same time a statement about the impossibility for desire to reach beyond a series

[80] Bryson (1984) 26–8. [81] Barthes (1982) 115.

[82] According to Ackerman (1986) 26, Gérôme felt a youthful aversion to Ingres: the result of an anxiety about being dominated by Ingres?



of displacements to the satisfaction of a real presence.[83] These paintings provide a close precedent for Gérôme's own combination of mythical and autobiographical representations of his own aspirations and anxieties as an artist, and may well have provided direct stimuli to the later artist.

In these pictures of the artist in his studio, a popular subject in the nineteenth century, Raphael embraces his 'muse', enjoying her physical presence, but his gaze looks away to the canvas on which is taking shape the image, in varying stages of completion, of the living woman. In the version in the Fogg Art Museum (Illustr. 2) the Madonna della Sedia hangs on the wall in the background of Raphael's studio. Ingres exploits the fact that the Virgin's headscarf in this image is not unlike that in the original 'La Fornarina' (believed to be by Raphael by Ingres, but generally attributed by modern scholarship to Giulio Romano). This raises further questions about the relationship between life and art. Has La Fornarina then already sat as a model for the Madonna, or has she now dressed herself in imitation of Raphael's painted Madonna? The right half of the tondo is cut off by the edge of the canvas in progress, thus occluding the figure of the Christ child in the embrace of the Virgin; while the Virgin is replicated in the brightly lit figure of La Fornarina in the foreground, the Christ child is, as it were, cut out by the figure of Raphael that completes the central group. Almost blasphemously, the human painter has replaced the Word Incarnate as a source and guarantee of presence and meaning. In another version in Columbus, Ohio (Illustr. 3) the figure of Raphael has taken on distinctly Christ-like features, with the down on his lower jaw now pronounced, and the pose of La Fornarina, head bent over and resting on top of the painter's head, is even closer to the composition of the *Madonna della sedia*. The curve of La Fornarina's head and bare back, continued down into her sleeve, makes half a tondo, of which a further quarter is completed by the figure of the man putting his arm round the boy on the finished canvas in the background. The living persons of La Fornarina and Raphael are thereby drawn into the composition of this painting; this time the background work is Raphael's 'Transfiguration', and here it is the top part of the picture which is cut off, by the frame of the painting itself, rather than by the panel of a painting within the painting, and what is

[83] Bryson (1984) 144–7. The five painted versions are catalogued in Ternois (1980) 176, nos. 84–8; see also Vigne (1995) 122–4. For Ingres Raphael was almost literally a saint: when Raphael's remains were moved into the Pantheon, Ingres successfully requested from the Pope a piece of his rib, which is preserved in a reliquary in the Musée Ingres.

Illustration 2. Ingres, *Raphael and La Fornarina*, 1811–12.

cut off is again a figure of Christ, floating above the disciples. Once more Christ is so to speak incarnated in the foreground figure of Raphael, replacing the image of the unique revelation of the divine in the human that occurred at the Transfiguration.

While Raphael's gaze is contained within these paintings, La Fornarina looks out of the frame to meet the eye of the viewer, and of her painter Ingres. But the image that we and he behold is already the



Illustration 3. Ingres, *Raphael and La Fornarina*, 1840.

image of La Fornarina as constructed by Raphael; we can get no closer than this to the real form of the woman. And perhaps not even that close, for, as Norman Bryson points out, the images of La Fornarina contain echoes of earlier paintings by Ingres, the *Grande Odalisque*, whose jewelled

headband La Fornarina wears (but whose headscarf and hairline already resemble those of the original *La Fornarina* and of the *Madonna della sedia*); and of the *Valpinçon baigneuse*, whom Ingres' La Fornarina must resemble if viewed from behind.[84] The possibility for artist and viewer of ever embracing the original of the erotically charged female object of desire is thus perpetually deferred by the proliferating chain of signifiers, as Bryson points out, and also by the strange disruption of the linearity of time that makes it impossible even to single out a temporally originary image in this chain.

A closely analogous logic (or antilogic) structures the several paintings and series of paintings by Gérôme on the subject of the artist in his studio. What makes the circular network of relationships still more complicated is the fact that in all these paintings Gérôme depicts a sculptor, or polychromer of sculpture, at work on a piece of sculpture that Gérôme either had already himself created, or was to create, but which in each case purports to be a recreation of an ancient statue. Best known of these paintings is that of Pygmalion and his statue in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Illustr. 4), one of four versions of the subject, the other three of which are lost.[85] In the 1890 New York version the sculptor passionately embraces his own creation, the last chips from which lie fresh on the floor together with the sculptor's mallet. Colour creeps down from the already flexible upper body of the female form towards her still stiff and marble lower limbs. Around the studio are placed other specimens of the artist's work, both sculpted and painted, which comment in various ways on the central subject of the painting and on the painting as a whole. These include a seated, uncoloured, figure of a woman looking in a mirror; a painting of a figure kneeling at the base of steps leading up to what might be a curtained shrine; and a bronze shield embossed with a virtuoso image of the head of the Gorgon, a lifelike image of the monster that turns flesh and blood to stone, and a common subject of nineteenth-century experiments in polychrome sculpture.[86] To the right rest two theatre masks with grotesquely gaping mouths, frozen apertures waiting for the human actor to turn them into channels for breath and speech; one mask is a deathly gray, but the other, turned in the direction of the statue, has flesh tints, as if the amazement that seems to be registered on its face at the miracle of

[84] Bryson (1984) 145.

[85] P 385–88 Ackerman. Ackerman reproduces figures of two of those lost, in both of which the statue is displayed frontally to the viewer.

[86] See the various examples listed in Blühm (1996), Index s.v. 'Medusa'.



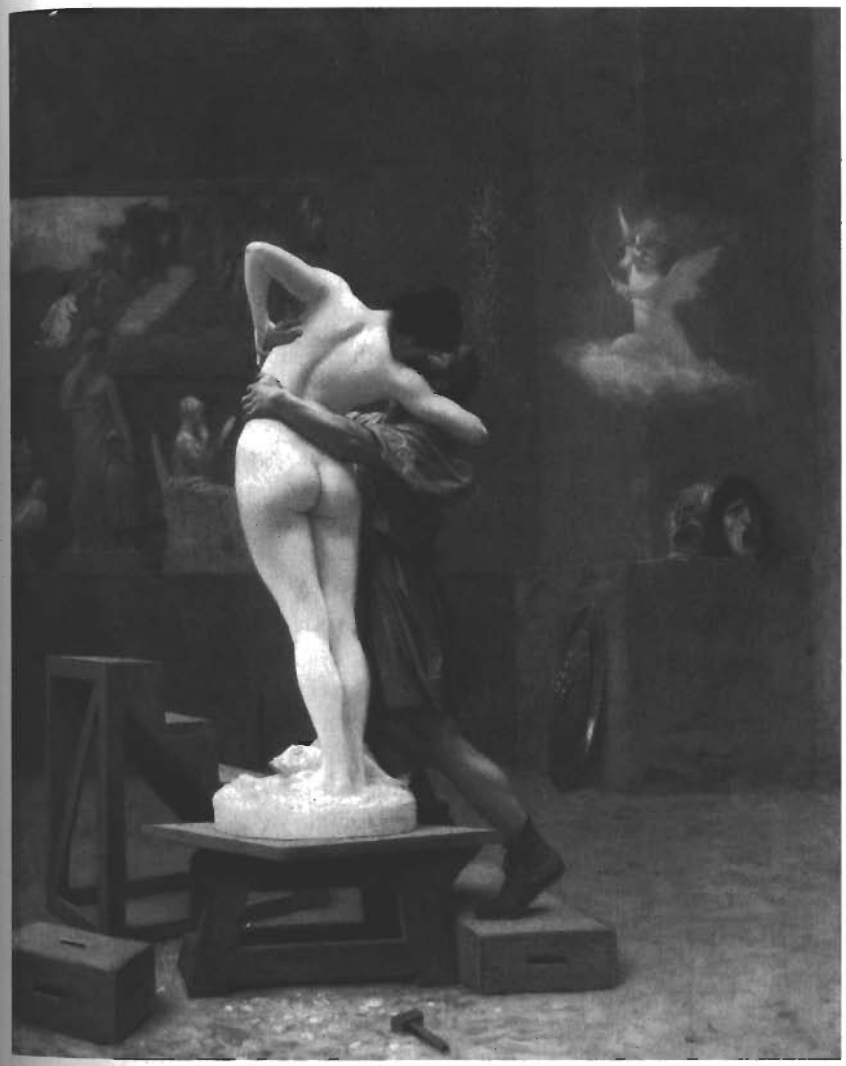

Illustration 4. Jean-Léon Gérôme, *Pygmalion and Galatea*, 1890.

the animated statue has jolted it into life. These props reflect an era of scientific archaeology. The winged figure of Cupid floating on a cloud and shooting his bow has wafted in from the mythological machinery that descends in clouds in eighteenth-century paintings of Pygmalion. The painter's power to conjure up the visible presence of the divine

inhabitants of the invisible world or of abstract personifications is another analogy for the power of the legendary sculptor to bring stone to life.

The marble base of the statue is signed with the name of the painter 'J. L. Gérôme', and, according to Blühm, 'Pygmalion himself is a somewhat flattering portrait of the artist as a young man.'[87] But for Gérôme the painting of Pygmalion is not merely a figure for his own pretensions as an artist (as Pygmalion is for the Ovidian Orpheus), but a reproduction of his own sculptural art. The statue carved by the Pygmalion in the painting is not unique, as had been the Ovidian Pygmalion's statue, but a copy of (probably) the plaster for the tinted, though now faded, marble group of Pygmalion and Galatea exhibited in 1892 (Illustr. 5).[88] The painting is doubly narcissistic, both as a painted image of another work by Gérôme in a different medium, and in that the existence of the sculpted group indicates that the painted Pygmalion is an image of Gérôme himself as sculptor. But Gérôme, like Narcissus, is trapped by his own reflection; the painting affords a glimpse into the studio of a romantic past and of an artist of miraculous powers, but the statue that we see is irredeemably a product of the late nineteenth century.

In a series of works inspired by the discovery of the Tanagra figurines Gérôme uses archaeology, rather than myth, as the magic door through which to enter into the presence of originary works of art. The *Tanagra* of 1890 is a type of the Tyche of an ancient city, the personification of Tanagra (Illustr. 6).[89] The seated nude female figure deploys what one might call an archaeology of desire, as the sculptor's skill in coaxing into the miraculous appearance of life a highly erotic female figure out of the shapeless stone block is made to coincide with the archaeologist's restoration of ancient works of art from the grave of time. Her smooth and finely modelled surfaces have emerged from the rough marble on which she sits, but at the same time this seemingly half-worked block is an illusionist representation of the shapeless soil from which the excavators of Tanagra had recently unearthed their treasures. A pick rests on the mound of earth by her side, the archaeological equivalent of the sculptor's chisel. Peeping out of the mound are a number of still half-buried figurines. Tanagra herself holds in her left hand a polychromed Tanagra figurine, the *Hoop dancer*. This archaeological exactitude is, however, illusory, for no such statue of Tanagra had been excavated,

[87] Blühm (1996) 47. [88] S 24 Ackerman. [89] S 17 Ackerman; now in the Musée d'Orsay.



Illustration 5. Jean-Léon Gérôme, *Pygmalion and Galatea*, 1892.


Illustration 6. Jean-Léon Gérôme, *Tanagra*, 1890.

and the *Hoop dancer* is Gérôme's own variation within the repertory of Tanagrene figures.[90] The body, and more especially the face, of Tanagra

[90] The Tanagra figurines ('Tanagras') enjoyed great popularity in the late nineteenth century, and a flourishing forgery industry developed to meet demand: Higgins (1987) ch. 9.



herself are, as Blühm puts it, 'more those of a modern *Parisienne* than a classical Greek beauty'.[91]

Like his sculpted Pygmalion, *Tanagra* becomes the subject of Gérôme the painter. In *The artist's model* of 1895 (Illustr. 7) Gérôme represents himself at work on the plaster for *Tanagra*.[92] Life, the model seated immediately next to the statue, at a slightly lower level, is being converted into art, as a stage on the way to the conversion of inert matter, marble, back into (the appearance of) life. Here the artist is no idealised youth as in Ingres' paintings of Raphael and La Fornarina, but a realistic self-portrait of the aging Gérôme, firmly planted in the late nineteenth century. His touch rests on the cold plaster replica, a chaste sublimation into art of the gaze that he directs at the thigh of the living model seated beside her insensible sister. The instrument of possession is the modelling tool, not the penis. The artist's studio is littered with props and with other specimens of the artist's work. On the right of the picture space stands a polychromed statue of the Tanagra *Hoop dancer*, another painted image of what we are to assume is a large-scale copy by Gérôme of an ancient figurine, and in turn a model for the small *Hoop dancer* that will eventually be placed on the oustretched palm of the marble Tanagra. To the left, behind the stooped figure of the sculptor hangs an example of his painterly skill, the Pygmalion and his statue, whose miraculous animation is now firmly framed out of the real world of the aging artist. The symmetry that balances a coloured statue against a statue in a painting is reinforced by the formal echo between the curve of Galatea, seen from behind as she bends towards the embracing Pygmalion, and the forward bow of the Tanagra *Hoop dancer*. There is also a responsion between the

[91] Blühm (1996) 128. Yet this might be recuperated as an attempt at archaeological reconstruction: in 1899 Théodore Reinach wrote 'Always elegant but never affected, always in motion but never in a hurry, the Tanagra lady is truly the Parisienne of antiquity' (quoted by Higgins (1987) 176–7). Varying traditions report that the model for *Tanagra* was Gérôme's own daughter or his mistress, the wife of a foundry owner. The passage of time has sharply separated the features of Hellenistic and nineteenth-century femininity for the present-day viewer, and also intervened in more physical ways: Ackerman (1986) 136 comments on the present state of the statue: 'She is lightly tinted: her lips, her nipples are red, her hair lightly blonde; her skin "once a delicate tint, sweet to the eye", has faded to a pure, smooth white.' Tanagra has not been immune to time, any more than Shakespeare's Hermione. She has turned back into a statue.

[92] P 419 Ackerman. Elizabeth Prettejohn suggests, *per litteras*, that the doubling motif in *The artist's model* might be borrowed from Alma-Tadema's *The sculptor's model* of 1877, which shows the sculptor of the then newly excavated 'Venus Esquilina' standing behind his model, who holds a large palm frond that largely obscures the statue itself in the background. If so, Gérôme produces a sharp contrast between the imaginary image of a sculptor creating a real antique, and the real image of a sculptor creating an imaginary antique. The two artists had met in 1863, and were very conscious of each other's work thereafter. The model in Alma-Tadema's 1908 *The golden hour* holds a copy of Gérôme's *Hoop dancer* (and a copy was sold in Alma-Tadema's estate).

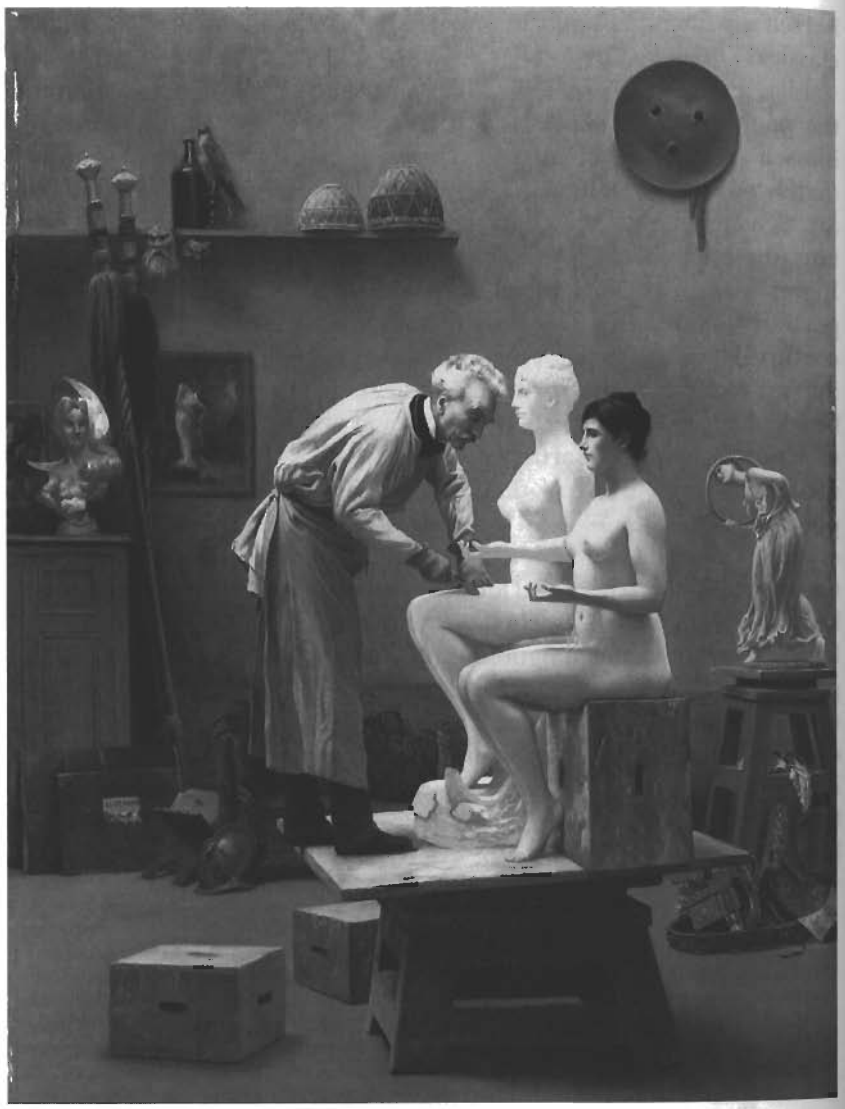

Illustration 7. Jean-Léon Gérôme, *The artist's model*, 1895.

bowing Dancer and the stooping sculptor, suggesting that the Dancer is in a coquettish dialogue with her maker, quite in contrast to the stiff and formal pose of Tanagra and the model, incongruous in their nudity.

In this painting the artist's attempt to call into existence a unique artistic embodiment of living and desirable flesh is flooded in a wash



of displacements and repetitions. This is yet another staging of the Pygmalion story, whose multiply mediated image (a painting of a painting of a sculpture of a mythical statue and its artist) hangs on the wall. The large-scale Hoop Dancer is a copy of a (fictitious) Tanagrene original, and will in turn be the model for the smaller figurine to be placed in the left hand of the *Tanagra*. Gérôme's own 'Galatea' herself has split into two, the plaster figure appearing almost as some kind of ectoplasmic *simulacrum* emerging from her flesh-and-blood original, instead of a single figure in the process of metamorphosing from marble to flesh.

The artist desirous of the immediate presence of a living work of art is now banished from the miraculous world of the legendary Pygmalion, and can reconnect with a golden past of Greek art only through archaeological excavation and the copy. Centuries beyond recall separate the modern artist from the ancient Tanagra; the artist's own aging separates him from the youth of the model for *his* Tanagra. Golden antiquity and golden youth alike can be appropriated by the artist only through his own copies of them.

But this fallen repetition is always the condition of art: this is the message of *The antique pottery painter* (or *Sculpturae uitam insufflat pictura*, 'Painting breathes life into sculpture') of 1893 (Illustr. 8), which whisks us back to ancient Tanagra and into the workshop of the painter of the original figurines.[93] But 'original' has little meaning when what is painted is a whole series of identical figures taken from the same mould. The incipient sequence of two in the juxtaposition of *Tanagra* and the life model in *The artist's model* is now extended in the row of six figurines lined up side by side on the table in front of the painter, while others seem to have broken away from their companions in the 'dance'. The one furthest to the left on the table is shown at the same angle as the larger copy in *The artist's model*, and here too the curve of her body points towards the artist, as she awaits her turn to receive the breath of life from the artist's brush. With a small tilt the angle of this unpainted figurine is replicated in the freshly painted exemplar held up in the left hand of the artist.

This painter is no aging male, but a young woman or girl, who might herself have been the model for the (presumably male) sculptor of the original Hoop Dancer. Her posture, cross-legged on the bench, recalls that of a Tanagra figurine in the Louvre. Her rapt gaze seems to be held by a narcissistic fascination with the figurine which she is calling into a painted life. Again the artist at her work is surrounded by other products of her art, variously modelled on ancient works (including

[93] P 411 Ackerman, a pair with P 412, the *Atelier of Tanagra*. Gérôme may have been inspired to this subject by Alma-Tadema's 'Greek potters' of 1871.

Illustration 8. Jean-Léon Gérôme, *The antique pottery painter (Sculpturae vitam insufflat picturae)*, 1893.



existing Tanagra figurines) and on Gérôme's own works, a shuffling of chronology that tries to outmanoeuvre a sense of belatedness. On the floor lies open a box of theatrical masks that she has painted, and behind it a shield given magical life with a Cyclopean painted eye. On the shelves are a range of other polychromed statues, including a full-relief Gorgon's head whose eyes have been startlingly 'opened' by the painter's brush. At the retail outlet on the right a figurine is being handled by a customer with a pointed sun-hat, a living sister in the world outside of one of the Tanagra figurines on the shelf, art brought back to life by the magic of Gérôme's own brush. Seated beside this window on to the sunlit world of ancient Tanagra is a version of Gérôme's own sculpted *Tanagra*, which is thereby given a pedigree as a copy of a lost ancient work. The *Tanagra*'s self-consciously symmetrical and formal pose echoes the relaxed and unselfconscious pose of the young artist herself; both hold a copy of the *Hoop dancer* in their left hand. But whereas the artist is engaged in its silent, narcissistic, dialogue with the figurine, the *Tanagra* holds up her figurine to the gaze of the outside world, and, placed where she is, offers it to the marketplace to enter the circulation of commercial exchange.

From this point of view *The antique pottery painter* is a lightly disguised image of the reality of Gérôme's own commercial activity, for the edition of small bronzes of the *Hoop dancer* was probably his most popular sculptural production. The painting is a still more accurate image of its artist's own activity, for he liked to paint cheaper plaster casts from the moulds for the *Hoop dancer*, and give them away to his friends. And, not for the last time, Gérôme's own artistic activity was made the subject of another artist's work: his friend the Danish sculptor Leopold Berstam cast a bronze portrait bust in which Gérôme holds the figure of the *Hoop dancer* in one hand and paints it with the other.[94] In all of this there is a high degree of self-consciousness and, one is compelled to say, wit. What I call Gérôme's 'Pygmalion complex' is at one and the same time at the core of his ambitions as an artist, but also the object of detached and ironic contemplation. A work like *The antique pottery painter* both constructs an innocent springtime of art and acknowledges that even in that time the modern conditions of mass production applied. One can compare Ovid's construction of a figure of original and unsurpassable poetic power in Orpheus, who is yet himself condemned to repetitions, of a different kind (pp. 65–70). Orphic repetition is an index of the impossibility of art's satisfying the desires which call it into being and which

[94] Ackerman (1986) 139–40.

it in turn creates, but as a figure for Ovidian art Orphic repetition also comments on the allusive and imitative tradition which both imprisons and empowers the late Augustan poet. One might respond to *The antique pottery painter* as an ironic comment on an emerging late nineteenth-century view of academic art as 'unoriginal, repetitive, mechanical, uninspired'.[95]

The reproducibility of the Tanagra figurine in the Golden Age of ancient Greece is paralleled by the possibility of multiple copies in the new nineteenth-century technology of photography, a medium that was also supplemented by hand-tinting. As we have seen, Gérôme entered a symbiosis with photography's mechanical threat to the status of the artist's illusionist skill; perhaps the truth is that the evacuation of real presence in photography's haunted images spoke closely to his own sense of the impossibility of creating images that fulfil desire. The late *My portrait* of 1902 (Illustr. 9)[96] was, according to Ackerman, painted from a photograph; this lost canvas now exists only in one of the volumes of photogravures of Gérôme's work bequeathed by his widow to the Bibliothèque Nationale. It shows Gérôme in his studio, once more surrounded by other examples of his own art and artist's props, at work on a plaster figure of a nude woman, scaled down from the living model to its side. A Baudelairian black cat, with eyes as piercing as the Gorgon's, rubs sensuously against the wooden platform on which the life model sits – the same black cat that sits on a chair in one of the lost painted versions of Pygmalion.[97] The model and her plaster copy are placed in such a way that the model's gaze seems to be intensely directed at her *altera ego*; yet this narcissistic gaze is unintentional, being determined purely by the will of the artist in placing the model in this pose. Since this is not a mirror reflection, the plaster does not return the gaze, but repeats it in the same direction, away from her original, initiating an indefinite series of gazes on to the other, and on to further replications of her self, beginning with the marble offspring of the plaster.

In a pair of his last paintings Gérôme represents himself in the act of using paint to bring to life a statue that has already been finished, in the two versions of the self-portrait painting the masks of the sculpture of *The ball player* (Illustr. 11).[98] Of the two versions of the sculpture, that in Caen has kept its polychromy well preserved (Illustr. 10).[99] This is another invented subject from antiquity, a game in which the ball player has to throw the balls into the gaping mouths of the masks beneath her without moving her feet. In the paintings the artist is now, like Pygmalion, alone

[95] I owe this suggestion to Elizabeth Prettejohn. [96] P 472 Ackerman.
[97] P 388 Ackerman. [98] P 473, 474 Ackerman. [99] S 57 Ackerman.



Illustration 9. Jean-Léon Gérôme, *My portrait* (photograph of lost painting, 1902).

with his miraculously lifelike creation, the twist of whose body is not unlike that of Pygmalion's statue; but the wing-collared old gentleman does not dare to embrace his creation, directing his eyes instead towards the base, abasing himself to the level of the masks at her feet. The masks are also polychromed into the appearance of life, so that their gaping mouths appear to register astonishment, *stupor*, at the vision of

Illustration 10. Jean-Léon Gérôme, *The ball player*, 1902.

female flesh that hovers above them; compare the flesh tints of the mask staring open-mouthed at the animated statue in the *Pygmalion and Galatea* (Illustr. 4).

The double self-transformation into art that is engineered in this picture registers an old man's hope for an extension of life through art beyond the grave. Fittingly, a posthumous monument to Gérôme was created through the sculptural creation by Gérôme's son-in-law, the sculptor Aimé-Morot, of a version of the photographic or painted subject of the artist in his studio. Aimé-Morot added a bronze statue of Gérôme in sculptor's apron, to the earliest of Gérôme's own virtuoso sculptural



Illustration 11. Jean-Léon Gérôme, *Gérome polychroming the masks of The ball player, ca.* 1902.

performances, the 1878 group of the *Gladiators* (Illustr. 12).[100] The artist has now once and for all entered his own world of art. The bronze statue of Gérôme speaks the same 'That-has-been' that Barthes experiences in the presence of a photograph, for we know that the flesh-and-blood hand of the artist once wrought into flesh the bronze that is polished up by the bronze hand of the statue. The *Gladiators*, representing the victory of a *murmillo* over a *retiarius*, is based on the central figures in one of Gérôme's best-known paintings, *Pollice verso* (1872). In its new context the gladiator's victory becomes the triumph of the artist over recalcitrant matter and over time; the defeated gladiator under the victor's foot bears at least a passing resemblance to a traditional type of Envy trampled underfoot by Fame. But as always, the trick only works with a viewer (or reader) who knows the rules of the game. Gérôme's reputation has languished

[100] S 9 B1 Ackerman.

Illustration 12. Jean-Léon Gérôme, and Aimé-Morot, *Gérôme at work on The gladiators*, 1878 and 1909.

since his death. For many years the bronze group (now in the Musée d'Orsay) stood overlooked in a public garden, the identity of the *Gladiators* as Gérôme's own casting forgotten; only examination of the foundry marks has restored to the viewer the frisson of knowing just how this group plays on the boundary between illusion and reality.

CHAPTER 7

# *Absent presences of language*

The final transformation in the *Metamorphoses* converts Ovid's physical body into the verbal *corpus* of his own poetry (pp. 91–7).[1] The linguistic nature of this change embraces *all* the metamorphoses narrated in the poem, not just in the trivial sense that all of these narratives are contained within the verbal edifice that is the *Metamorphoses*, but because at a more profound level Ovidian metamorphosis is as much a linguistic event as it is something that happens out there in a material world of bodies and landscapes. The quality of suspension that often attaches to the product of a narrative of transformation reflects the nature of language itself, suspended between its status as an autonomous structure of signifying relationships and its power of referentiality, opening out to non-linguistic objects and events in the external world. Recent work on the *Metamorphoses* has focused increasingly on the ways in which it may be read as a poem about language and about the power of language to create illusions of presence; particular attention has been paid to the figures of metaphor, syllepsis and personification, and to these may be added an interest, pervasive throughout Ovid's works, in the relationship between names and the persons or objects to which they are attached, and from which they may become detached as free-floating signifiers.

Ovid's fascination with linguistic figuration as a way of both creating and commenting on illusions of presence finds its widest field of play in the *Metamorphoses*. But one factor in the choice of this subject-matter for the long hexameter poem may have been that from the beginning of his career Ovid had foregrounded these linguistic effects in creating his poetic worlds; the *Amores* opens with a set of exercises in lending bodily substance to personifications and names (pp. 32–40). Previous chapters have repeatedly drawn attention to the illusionist work done by the linguistic surface of the texts; this chapter offers a consolidation

[1] On the equivocation between *corpus* as physical body and *corpus* as literary *œuvre* see Farrell (1999); Theodorakopoulos (1999).

# OVID'S POETICS OF ILLUSION

PHILIP HARDIE

*Reader in Latin Literature,*

*University of Cambridge, and Fellow of New Hall*

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS