APOLLO AND TEREUS: PARALLEL MOTIFS IN OVID'S *METAMORPHOSES*

One approach for understanding Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is to study the articulation of the epic's structure, while keeping in mind that it is unlikely that Ovid wanted the framework "to stand out crystal clear."[1] Yet the necessity for unity and coherence in an epic poem of the scope and variety of the *Metamorphoses* is imperative if the audience is not to be overwhelmed by the myriad of characters and stories. The very complexity of the epic invites a search for common elements throughout the poem's many myths in order to establish a sense of definition.[2] In this study I intend to consider one thematic thread in the tapestry of the *Metamorphoses*: the parallel motifs of the Apollo-Daphne (1.452–567) and Tereus-Procne-Philomela (6.424–674) myths, which ultimately reflect a particular difference between the divine and human condition.

It has been observed that many elements in Ovid's erotic poetry are also found in the *Metamorphoses*: the range of passions; the sympathetic portrayal of women; the presentation and analysis of complex personalities and relationships.[3] Such characteristics are present in Ovid's treatment of Apollo's passion for Daphne and Tereus' adultery with Philomela. Lust is juxtaposed with familial affection, desire and enchantment with disgust and enmity; the women are portrayed as innocent victims of male machinations; the minds of Apollo and Tereus are revealed to the audience, who enter into the imagination of both characters by means of Ovid's description of their very thoughts and visions. It is passion, compelling emotion, and its effects which shape the substance of each story; in essence, both myths are love stories illustrating the common theme of passion's power to cause either god or man to cast aside self-restraint in the pursuit of sexual fulfillment.[4]

The thematic correspondence of the two stories becomes most apparent upon consideration of specific parallel motifs and imagery. These similarities are rooted in Ovid's focus on Apollo and Tereus, as he provides motivation for each character's actions and then examines the outcome of their behavior. But as Apollo and Tereus are different characters in different stories, exact similitude should not be expected. The story of Tereus-Procne-Philomela recalls the myth of Apollo-Daphne; it does not retell the earlier myth.

[1]A. Crabbe, "Structure and Content in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*," *ANRW* II, 31.4 (1981) 2327.

[2]B. Otis, *Ovid as an Epic Poet* (Cambridge 1970, rev. 2nd ed.), hereafter referred to as Otis, devotes his third chapter to this proposition.

[3]A. Griffin, "Ovid's *Metamorphoses*," *G&R* 24 (1977) 57–70, provides an excellent general analysis of the epic.

[4]Otis describes the Apollo-Daphne tale as the first tale of "divine amores" and the Tereus-Procne-Philomela myth as the first story of "amatory pathos."

Ovid foreshadows conflict at the very beginning of both stories. Cupid's anger at Apollo, *saeva Cupidinis ira* (1.453), is balanced by the presence of the Eumenides at the wedding of Tereus and Procne (6.430–31). Each myth has an inauspicious beginning which indicates the nature of the forthcoming tale: Apollo's love for Daphne will be unrequited, a fact ensured by Cupid's wrath (1.468–73); the marriage of Tereus and Procne appears doomed to tragedy, a natural assumption based on the presence of the Eumenides and the absence of benevolent deities of marriage at the wedding ceremony (6.428–29).

It is physical beauty which impels Apollo to chase Daphne and leads Tereus astray from his marriage. Cupid's arrow pricks Apollo's interest, but Ovid makes a point of emphasizing Daphne's beauty, too. There were many suitors before Apollo, *multi illam petiere* (1.478); Ovid notes that Daphne's prayers to remain chaste are contradicted by her attractiveness:

> sed te decor iste, quod optas,
> esse vetat, votoque tuo tua forma repugnat.
>
> (1.488–89)

Philomela, the sister of Tereus' bride, also is described by Ovid as a stunning beauty:

> ecce venit magno dives Philomela paratu
> divitior forma; quales audire solemus
> Naiadas et Dryadas mediis incedere silvis,
> si modo des illis cultus similesque paratus.
>
> (6.451–54)

Ovid's picture of Philomela recalls Daphne's natural loveliness as a nymph; the poet's comments on the possibilities of even greater beauty for properly adorned nymphs is reminiscent of Apollo's own initial reaction to Daphne's lack of coiffure, *quid si comantur* (1.498). Both Philomela and Daphne appear to have an abundant measure of natural beauty, which almost makes inevitable the captivation of any male.

Further demonstrating the charms of Daphne and Philomela, Ovid includes in both stories poignant scenes between the maidens and their fathers.[5] When Peneus repeatedly asks his daughter, Daphne, to get married and give him grandchildren, she attempts to persuade him otherwise:

> illa velut crimen taedas exosa iugales
> pulchra verecundo subfuderat ora rubore
> inque patris blandis haerens cervice lacertis
> 'Da mihi perpetua, genitor carissime,' dixit
> 'virginitate frui! dedit hoc pater ante Dianae.'
>
> (1.483–87)

A similar approach is used by Philomela to convince her father, Pandion, to

[5]F. Bömer, *P. Ovidius Naso, Metamorphosen: Kommentar* vol. 3: *Buch VI–VII* (Heidelberg 1976) 135, notes the similarity of the father-daughter scenes in the two stories, as well as "Terminologie der erotischen Poesie."

allow her to visit Procne; Philomela adds her own blandishments to the request being made by Tereus:

> quid quod idem Philomela cupit patriosque lacertis
> blanda tenens umeros, ut eat visura sororem,
> perque suam contraque suam petit ipsa salutem!
>
> (6.475–77)

Both scenes underscore the childlike innocence of the young women; the embraces between father and daughter, the effective use of feminine charm, evoke sentiments of familial affection but at the same time show off the daughter's alluring nature. In both cases, however, the success of the maiden's entreaty is tinged with irony: Peneus grants Daphne's request (1.488), which eventually results in her transformation into the laurel tree (1.548–52), a loss for Peneus as well as Apollo; Pandion gives permission for Philomela's departure with Tereus (6.483), which begins the tragedy of Philomela's rape and Procne's revenge and finally afflicts Pandion with fatal grief (6.675–76).

As a contrast to the display of paternal affection and filial devotion, Ovid sets the impassioned lover. It is love at first sight when Apollo sees Daphne and Tereus meets Philomela, and in both stories Ovid employs a simile of fire burning a field to characterize their emotions.[6] For Apollo, Ovid creates an image using verbs connoting either the burning of a sacrifice (*adolentur*) or the flames of passion (*ardent*):

> utque leves stipulae demptis adolentur aristis,
> ut facibus saepes ardent, quas forte viator
> vel nimis admovit vel iam sub luce reliquit,
> sic deus in flammas abiit.
>
> (1.492–95)

This georgic imagery lacks any dire sense.[7] The fire is started by the traveler from carelessness, not malice. But for Tereus, Ovid alters the simile:

> non secus exarsit conspecta virgine Tereus,
> quam si quis canis ignem subponat aristis
> aut frondem positasque cremet faenilibus herbas.
>
> (6.455–57)

Here the fire has negative connotations. The flames are set deliberately and the verb *cremet* suggests utter destruction, a conflagration leaving only ashes. This razing of ripe grain might be associated with disaster; perhaps it even has the military connotation of burning an enemy's crops, an appropriate image for Tereus, the general (6.424–25). Although Ovid has linked the passions of Apollo and Tereus with similes of an essentially like character, the imagery associated with Tereus is much more the harbinger of violence and destruc-

[6]W. S. Anderson, *Ovid's Metamorphoses, Books 6–10* (Norman, Oklahoma, 1972) 212, remarks upon the similarity of effect Philomela has on Tereus to that which Daphne has upon Apollo, especially in the simile; Anderson, however, also argues that Ovid has avoided any negative associations with Tereus' passion.

[7]Cf. F. Bömer, *P. Ovidius Naso, Metamorphosen: Kommentar* vol. 1: *Buch I–III* (Heidelberg 1969) 155.

tion. Each simile appears to be constructed to complement the individual character: the fire of Apollo's passion is less threatening than the burning emotion of Tereus.[8]

While parallel similes describe in metaphorical fashion the reaction of Apollo to Daphne, and Tereus to Philomela, Ovid also recounts the actual thoughts of the enamoured characters.[9] Daphne educes a vision of beauty for Apollo:

> spectat inornatos collo pendere capillos,
> et 'Quid si comantur?' ait. videt igne micantes
> sideribus similes oculos; videt oscula, quae non
> est vidisse satis; laudat digitosque manusque
> bracchiaque et nudos media plus parte lacertos:
> siqua latent, meliora putat.
>
> (1.497–502)

Ovid has accentuated the visual sense (*spectat . . . videt . . . videt . . . vidisse*); the audience sees what Apollo sees. But even more importantly Ovid discloses how Apollo's imagination recasts his perceptions. In his mind Apollo arranges Daphne's flowing tresses, he discovers stars in her eyes, he would kiss her lips. Ovid's depiction of Apollo's waking vision impresses the audience with the same enticement experienced by Apollo; the audience is tantalized by glimpses of Daphne, each time stopping with Apollo's gaze, and in anticipation of better and more sexually explicit details (*siqua latent, meliora putat*) the audience, like Apollo, wants to see more. Ovid handles the imagination of Tereus in much the same manner; *spectat* begins this depiction, too:

> spectat eam Tereus praecontrectatque videndo
> osculaque et collo circumdata bracchia cernens
> omnia pro stimulis facibusque ciboque furoris
> accipit, et quotiens amplectitur illa parentem,
> esse parens vellet: neque enim minus inpius esset.
>
> (6.478–82)

The visual sense is again emphasized (*spectat . . . videndo*) and similar physical attributes are observed (*osculaque et collo . . . bracchia*), but where Apollo discovered beauty worthy of praise (*laudat,* 1.500), Tereus finds madness (*furoris*). Philomela's tender scene with her father is perverted into a vision of incest by Tereus. Any sympathy the audience possessed for Apollo's love-sick behavior is impossible to maintain for the lechery of Tereus' "diseased imagination."[10] Moreover, as is appropriate for the more lengthy tale of tragedy, Ovid includes a second instance of Tereus' mind at work, reinforcing the initial impression of Tereus' less restrained imagination:

[8]T. Brunner, "The Simile in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*," *CJ* 61 (1966) 354–63, demonstrates the connection between simile and characterization and uses Tereus as one example (p. 359).

[9]Otis discusses Ovid's style of 'mind-reading' at great length, especially pp. 70f.

[10]Anderson, (n. 6 above) 214.

at rex Odrysius, quamvis secessit, in illa
aestuat et repetens faciem motusque manusque,
qualia vult—fingit, quae nondum vidit—et ignes
ipse suos nutrit cura removente soporem.

(6.490–93)

Unable to sleep in anticipation of his imminent departure with Philomela, Tereus recalls the young woman's charms; like Apollo, Tereus thinks about what he has not seen (*qualia vult—fingit, quae nondum vidit*).[11] Tereus is as eager as Apollo to consummate his lust; Ovid implies, however, that Tereus' passion is potentially more dangerous because it lacks any restriction (*qualia vult*), as demonstrated by Tereus' previous thoughts of incest. While Apollo responds to Daphne like a lover from the erotic elegiac world, Tereus reacts to Philomela with feelings more befitting a tragedy.[12]

As Ovid used a simile to link the reactions of Apollo to Daphne and Tereus to Philomela, another simile serves to indicate the corresponding plights and emotions of Daphne and Philomela, when confronted by their respective suitors. Ovid employs a simile of predator and prey to underscore the victimization of each maiden, as she attempts to escape her unwanted lover. Apollo's pursuit of Daphne begins with his pleas for her to stop running away:

'Nympha, precor, Penei, mane! non insequor hostis:
nympha, mane! sic agna lupum, sic cerva leonem,
sic aquilam penna fugiunt trepidante columbae,
hostes quaeque suos: amor est mihi causa sequendi!

(1.504–7)

Apollo's argument that he is not Daphne's natural enemy, but only the eager lover, is completely undercut by his final point: *amor est mihi causa sequendi*. Far from allaying Daphne's fears, Apollo's words only affirm the nymph's unhappy predicament, for the love which gives rise to such pursuit justifies, rather than denies, the comparison to the hungry predator's "love" for its prey. Philomela comes to be in the same situation, but for her what is implicit in Apollo's words is made explicit:

illa tremit, velut agna pavens, quae saucia cani
ore excussa lupi nondum sibi tuta videtur:
utque columba suo madefactis sanguine plumis
horret adhuc avidosque timet, quibus haeserat, ungues.

(6.527–30)

Philomela is raped by Tereus, and she experiences the violence and bloodshed which usually result when predator captures prey. Ovid compares both

[11]Anderson (n. 6 above) 216 and Bömer, vol. 1 (n. 7 above) 157.

[12]O. Due, *Changing Forms: Studies in the Metamorphoses of Ovid* (Copenhagen 1974) 113, comments on the elegiac atmosphere of Apollo's love; G. K. Galinsky, *Ovid's Metamorphoses: An Introduction to the Basic Aspects* (Berkeley 1975) 129f., admits the story of Tereus is based upon tragedies by Sophocles and Accius, but finds Ovid's presentation "untragic" by reason of the poet's penchant for the "loving depiction even of the smallest sadistic detail."

maidens to lambs and doves; Daphne's terrified flight, however, ends in escape (*penna fugiunt trepidante columbae,* 1.506), while Philomela is caught and suffers accordingly (*columba suo madefactis sanguine plumis*).[13]

A final echo of the Apollo-Daphne myth occurs as Philomela, while being raped by Tereus, calls out in vain to her father, *frustra clamato saepe parente* (6.525). Daphne, too, had cried out for her father's help, *'fer, pater,' inquit 'opem, si flumina numen habetis* (1.545), when Apollo was about to catch her. For Daphne help is forthcoming: her father, as a river-god, possesses the power to metamorphose Daphne into a tree; but Philomela's father is a mere mortal and unable to hear the cries of his daughter or do anything to aid her. Indeed Philomela's calls to her father only provoke further violence:

> ille indignantem et nomen patris usque vocantem
> luctantemque loqui comprensam forcipe linguam
> abstulit ense fero.
>
> (6.555–57)

Tereus silences Philomela by cutting out her tongue, an act of violence fulfilling the sinister promise of *qualia vult* (6.492).

The differences in these final parallels between the myth of Apollo-Daphne and Tereus-Procne-Philomela illustrate the primary divergence of the two stories: the actual rape and attendant savagery realized by Tereus' passion for Philomela. The metamorphosis of Daphne frees her from the lust of Apollo, who is left to fondle and kiss a tree (1.548f.); the myth ends when Daphne is transformed and the audience may breathe a sigh of relief at Daphne's escape and smile at Apollo's futile gestures. The imagery of predator and prey describing Daphne, as it focuses on her fear rather than on violence, complements Daphne's experience. Philomela's situation, however, is the reverse; therefore, Ovid rearranges the order of simile and Philomela's cries for help. Philomela's failure to escape Tereus precedes the occurrence of the simile, which is altered by Ovid to reflect the cruelty of Philomela's experience. Moreover the rape of Philomela and her subsequent mutilation only mark a turning point in the story, as Tereus must return to Procne and eventually face the consequences of his unbridled lust and violence (6.563f.).

A diagram of the parallel motifs in the two myths will help to clarify and summarize the similarities and contrasts:

APOLLO-DAPHNE	TEREUS-PROCNE-PHILOMELA
portent: *saeva Cupidnis ira* (1.452–73)	portent: *Eumenides* (6.424–38)
the beauty of Daphne, a nymph (1.478 . . . 488–89)	the nymphlike beauty of Philomela (6.451–54)
father-daughter scene: Peneus grants Daphne's request (1.481–87)	father-daughter scene: Pandion grants Philomela's request (6.475–77)

[13]The dove is an especially appropriate analogy in light of the association with Venus (15.386).

Apollo—love at first sight: simile of burning field (1.492–94)	Tereus—love at first sight: simile of burning field (6.455–57)
Apollo's vision of Daphne: *spectat* (1.497–502)	Tereus' vision of Philomela: *spectat* (6.478–82)
Apollo's imagination: *siqua latent, meliora putat* (1.502)	Tereus' imagination: *qualia vult—fingit quae nondum vidit* (6.492)
Daphne's plight: simile of predator and prey (1.505–7)	Philomela's plea to her father: unfulfilled (6.525)
Daphne's plea to her father: fulfilled (1.545)	Philomela's plight: simile of predator and prey (6.527–30)

The major characters of each tale, with the exception of Procne, who plays a major role only after the rape of Philomela (6.563f.), are presented in similar manner and possess certain traits in common. Apollo and Tereus are both fresh from heroic and victorious endeavors, which provide the impetus for their respective stories. Apollo's hubristic taunting of Cupid (1.456–62), after defeating the Python (*victa serpente superbus,* 1.454), engenders the love-god's revenge, which in turn means falling in love with a renitent Daphne (1.474); Tereus' *clarum vincendo nomen* (6.425) gains the attention of Pandion, who thinks he has found the perfect son-in-law, combining wealth and good lineage with military power (6.426–28). Daphne and Philomela are both the young and beautiful daughters of powerful fathers. Peneus, the river-god, is as kind-hearted and indulgent of his daughter, Daphne, as Pandion, the king of Athens, is caring and concerned for Philomela's wishes. Each sweet and coy daughter is pictured wheedling a favor from her father, who succumbs to the same charms so irresistible to Apollo and Tereus. Ovid details the burning intensity of passion experienced by Apollo and Tereus but remains sympathetic to the plight of the two virgins, Daphne and Philomela.[14]

Finally, the myths of Apollo-Daphne and Tereus-Procne-Philomela frequently are noted as pivotal points in the *Metamorphoses*; critical consensus argues for some structural significance for these two myths, each story inaugurating a major thematic division.[15] The usual distinction between the two tales is that the Apollo-Daphne myth begins a cycle of stories centered on the gods, while the Tereus-Procne-Philomela myth introduces stories of human passion or heroism.[16] Ovid's employment of parallel motifs in the two stories draws attention to this balance and contrast of the divine and human

[14]L. Curran, "Rape and Rape Victims in the *Metamorphoses*," *Arethusa* 11 (1978) 213–41, maintains that Ovid treated rape victims with uncommon understanding.

[15]A. G. Elliott, "Ovid's *Metamorphoses*: A Bibliography, 1968–1978," CW 73.7 (April–May 1980), elucidates the recent trends concerning structure (p. 390) as well as noting "the necessity for constant re-evaluation" (p. 387) of the epic.

[16]Cf. M. Crump, *The Epyllion from Theocritus to Ovid* (Oxford 1931); L. Wilkinson, *Ovid Recalled* (Cambridge 1955); K. Büchner, *Römische Literaturgeschichte* (Stuttgart 1957); as well as Otis, Anderson, and Galinsky.

condition. The comic behavior of Apollo in his pursuit of Daphne sets the tone for the romantic escapades of the other gods, as love-struck deities behave like men and divine dignity consistently is undercut.[17] Treachery, violence, betrayal, sorrow and pain dominate the story of Tereus and become characteristic of the subsequent myths of "human beings as victims of their own passions."[18] Humor becomes horror; indignity is replaced by suffering. By recalling the Apollo-Daphne myth in his account of Tereus-Procne-Philomela, Ovid demonstrates the essential difference between gods and men: the experience of tragic circumstances. Passions may motivate both gods and men, but only human beings suffer.

GARRETT A. JACOBSEN

Denison University

[17]Cf. M. von Albrecht, "Ovids Humor und die Einheit der *Metamorphosen*," *Ovid, Wege der Forschung*, 92 (1968) 405–37. Also M. Boillat, *Les Métamorphoses d'Ovide: Thèmes majeurs et problèmes de composition* (Bern 1976) has remarked that: "L'humour d'Ovide tend à humaniser, dans un sens péjoratif, la plupart des dieux. Ils ont tous les travers de la condition humaine sans en avoir les excuses" (p. 21).

[18]Anderson (n. 6 above) 14.