Yet, he was not always understood. For, not even a learned contemporary Horace perceived that Propertius had changed his poetic purpose. In *Epistle* 2.2, the famous letter to Florus, Horace reserves a few sharp barbs for the mutual flattery found in poetic circles of his day. He imagines a lyric poet (himself) and an elegist fighting it out for attention like gladiators who have left the arena of battle at the end of a long contest (91-101). Horace's rebuke alludes to the respective poetic models of the two Roman poets :

> *discedo Alcaeus puncto illius ; ille meo quis ?*
> *quis nisi Callimachus ? si plus adposcere uisus,*
> *fit Mimnermus ... (99-101).*

Almost all commentators have seen in these lines a direct reference to Propertius and his boast to be the Roman Callimachus (4.1.64). In view of the mention of Mimnermus (101) and line 91 (*carmina compono, hic elegos*) that initiates the mock contest, this interpretative position is strengthened ([47]). However, we need not rely only on these allusions to conclude that Propertius was Horace's intended foil. The comments on the society of poets are introduced by the contrasting specialities of two lawyers. In a line to mark the transition to current poets Horace asks :

> *qui minus argutos uexat furor iste poetas ?* (90).

The word *furor* prepares the reader for allusions to the elegist, i.e. Propertius. Horace is recalling the Propertius of Book I in which work the elegiac poet characterized his love experience as a mental derangement. Horace intimates that the elegist is a *poeta furiosus*, a figure that he ridicules in the *Ars Poetica* (453-476) as a danger to society ([48]). It seems, then, that the language and imagery of love as a madness permeating the *Monobiblos* had an influential impact upon Augustan contemporaries of Propertius. Long after Propertius had ceased to use the term *furor* to mark his special situation, Horace chose to revive the memory of a lover/poet affected with a mental disorder — a stance which Propertius himself had altered in order to conform to his understanding of the dictates of his Alexandrian model and perhaps to stifle deftly any official criticism voiced by Maecenas.

The University of Texas,   Paul T. ALESSI.
San Antonio, Texas (USA).

(47) C. O. Brink, *Horace on Poetry : Prolegomena to the Literary Epistles* (Cambridge, 1963) 186. Cf. Propertius 1.9.11 for the poet's observation of Mimnermus' literary importance.
(48) Cf. *uesanus poeta* (455) and *furit ac uelut ursus* (472).

Humor and the Unity of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* : A Narratological Assessment

for KJR (tuis hic omnia plena / muneribus ...)

Analyzing humor is rather like raising pandas in captivity : they are both notoriously difficult to keep alive under close surveillance. The bleakness of this prospect is almost enough to deter one from looking too carefully at the operation of humor in so delightful a work as Ovid's *Metamorphoses* ([1]) ; almost, but not quite, for the poem itself, like the Palace of the Sun in Book 2, is such a marvelous example of *opus superans materiam* that its very achievement compels closer scrutiny.

Ovid's fine sense of humor is one of the forces that unify the work, despite its massive length and complexity. This is not always acknowledged ([2]), and when it was acknowledged in antiquity it was not always appreciated. Quintilian, for example, observes that *lasciuus quidem in herois quoque Ouidius et nimium amator ingenii sui, laudandus tamen partibus* (*Inst. or.* 10.1.88). Here the *quoque* seems to indicate that Ovid has imported into his heroic verse the *lasciuia* that would more appropriately have remained in his elegy ([3]). The second criticism — the much more often-quoted of the two — might be roughly paraphrased thus : Ovid is too clever for his own good ([4]). After such statements as these, the *tamen* clause indeed damns him with faint praise.

So, at the very outset, Quintilian has raised for us some crucial questions : are playfulness and clever invention out of place in heroic verse ? Is their presence in the *Met.* a sign of Ovid's tastelessness ? In framing these

(1) Hereafter *"Met."*
(2) Cf. e.g. J. Wight Duff, *Literary History of Rome to the Close of the Golden Age* (London ³1953) 439 ; R. J. Cholmeley, *The Idylls of Theocritus* (London 1901) 265.
(3) The concept of *lasciuia* seems traditionally associated with elegy (cf. Tac. *Dial.* 10.4, Ovid *Ars am.* 2.497, Quintil. *Inst. or.* 4.1.77, 10.1.93, Mart. *Epigr.* 3.20.6) as opposed to epic, so that we are to understand Quintilian as remarking an anomaly here.
(4) So too Seneca (*Nat. Quaest.* 3.27.13 : *poetarum ingeniosissimus ... ni tantum impetum ingenii et materiae ad pueriles ineptias reduxisset.*

questions I have used the words "heroic verse" rather than "epic," because in antiquity the genre seemed based principally on formal distinctions ([5]). Besides the long narrative poems such as the *Iliad, Odyssey, Argonautica*, and *Aeneid*, dactylic hexameter was used for several other kinds of poetry : didactic verse such as that of Hesiod and Lucretius, oracular utterances such as those attributed to the Delphic oracle, pastoral verse like the *Idylls* of Theocritus and *Eclogues* of Vergil, and that curiously Roman form of verse known as *satura*. And yet one can discern a general consensus as to what might appropriately be couched in such verse. The word *herois* itself is one indication ; Quintilian uses it again (*Inst. or.* 1.8.5) when recommending that a student read Homer and Vergil, and he singles out the sublimity and greatness of events in these epics as especially effective. Tacitus, in imputing *eloquentia* to melic poetry, elegy, iambus and epigram, also mentions epic and tragedy as the most obvious loci for such a virtue (*Dial.* 10.4). Subject-matter for epic has been summed-up in two words — "kings and battles" — by Vergil in a famous passage (*Ecl.* 6.3-5) modelled on the beginning of Callimachus' *Aitia*. Horace also touches on the question of subject-matter for epic (*Ars poet.* 73-74). When these people speak of *heroi* they apparently have epic narrative in mind ([6]), and it is clear that they felt the tone should be serious (*seuerus, sublimis, sonorus*), the subject-matter heroic (*reges, proelia, res gestae, bella*) ([7]). Thus, though in antiquity the *differentiae* of epic were formal — i.e. related to meter — a certain general disposition did develop toward what constituted proper subject-matter and tone. On these bases Quintilian included the *Met.* among examples of epic poetry (*heroi*), but found its tone inappropriate.

The best-known ancient discussion of criteria for epic form and content is in Aristotle's *Poetics*, chapter 23 (1459a 17 ff.). As in tragedy, true organic unity for the epic is said to consist in the μίμησις of one πρᾶξις (1459a 19 ; cf. 1451a 23-29). This is to be contrasted with the writing of history, whose unity (if any) is one not of πρᾶξις but of time-period ; here the events have

a merely chance relationship and form no organic whole (1459a 20-24). From this viewpoint Aristotle finds the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* vastly superior to other epics such as the *Cypria* or *Little Iliad* (1459a 37-b 2). Thus, he says, the good epic is very like the good tragedy, differing in terms of length (μῆκος) and the meter used (1459b 18-37). This unity of πρᾶξις seems to be what Callimachus was rejecting in favor of λεπτοσύνη, when he refused to write ἓν ἄεισμα διηνεκὲς (*Aitia* 1 fr. 1.3 [Pfeiffer]). Conversely, when Ovid proposes to write a *perpetuum carmen* (*Met.* 1.4) he seems to be turning away from the Callimachean ideal ([8]), and the reasonable conclusion that scholars like von Albrecht and Otis have drawn is that he is returning to the epic genre. Certainly his abandonment of elegiacs for hexameters, and the sheer length of the work, could be taken to imply as much. The *Met.*, however, is certainly not ἐποποιΐα in the Aristotelian sense ; his very address to the gods (*primaque ab origine mundi / ad mea perpetuum deducite tempora carmen*, 1.3-4) indicates that he intends to sketch his broadest lines in "historical" terms — i.e. from the world's beginning to his own day. (No matter that the great bulk of material is mythic !) What he in fact does is to string together hundreds of stories in quasi-epylliac style ([9]), many of them concerned with aetiologies worthy of Callimachus himself. Of course there is a thematic, and not merely a historical unity ; Pythagoras says it neatly for us in 15.165 (proving for once, incidentally, that he is capable of succinctness) : *omnia mutantur*. By Book 15, of course, we have divined this for ourselves. But unity of πρᾶξις there is not. In one four-line proem Ovid both embraces and rejects the epic tradition as Aristotle detailed it ; and throughout the poem, though we thought he had turned his back on Callimachus, his approach is often distinctly Callimachean.

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(5) For more on the nature of the epic genre, see the discussion in David M. Halperin, *Before Pastoral : Theocritus and the Ancient Tradition of Bucolic Poetry* (New Haven 1983), Part IV.

(6) Though Quintilian seems to include Hesiod and Aratus by the word *epicos* (*Inst. or.* 10.1.51), *heroi* may have been the more restricted term, as Quintilian's remark about the narrative melic poems of Stesichorus refers to him *maxima bella et clarissimos canentem duces et epici carminis onera lyra sustinentem* (10.1.62).

(7) Thus it follows that dactylic hexameter is the most appropriate meter for such poetry, being the most stately and dignified (στασιμώτατον καὶ ὀγκωδέστατον) of meters (Arist. *Poet.* 1459b 34-35).

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(8) So M. von Albrecht (*RhM* 104 1961 269-278) and B. Otis, *Ovid as an Epic Poet* (Cambridge [2]1970 : hereafter *OEP*) 46. H. Herter (*AJPh* 69 1948 141, n. 34) defines *carmen perpetuum* as "eine den Stoff in zusammenhängender Erzählung bietende Darstellung." On the proem cf. also E. J. Kenney (*PCPhS* 22 1976 46-53) and W. S. M. Nicholl (*CQ* n.s. 30 1980 174-182). (N.b. : my abbreviations for periodicals follow the conventions of *L'Année Philologique*).

(9) By this I mean merely that many of the stories have traits distinctive of epyllia — a mythical hero or heroine and often a love-motif. M. M. Crump, far from seeing organic unity in the *Met.*, felt that the stories "might indeed have been published as a collection of unconnected epyllia without any loss of interest" (*The Epyllion from Theocritus to Ovid* [Oxford 1931] 203). Herter (*AJPh* 69 1948 134-135) finds the resemblance to epyllia deceptive. See too W. Allen Jr. (*TAPhA* 71 1940 1-26), who sees epic narrative as embodied in two divergent traditions — the Homeric and the Hesiodic — and the epyllion as stemming from the latter.

The question of genre, as we have seen from ancient sources and shall see again from modern, is inextricably bound up not only with the subject-matter entailed but also with that approach of the author to his material that we have called "tone." Thus scholarly opinion is tremendously diverse on what genre the *Met.* occupies. E. J. Kenney ([10]) has neatly sketched out for us the critical lie of the land : among other candidates for genre he mentions "anti-epic protest," "epic of love," "epic of rape" (!), and his own suggestion, "epic of *pathos.*" Earlier in our century, Edgar Martini proposed that Ovid, in writing the *Met.*, was harking back to an Alexandrian genre entailing a series of short pieces collected into a single longer poem. He called this *Kollektivge-dicht* ([11]). Otis accepted this idea provisionally, but stipulated that "there is a more essential unity of tone and feeling" ([12]), and that the historical framework lends more unity to the *Met.* than other such poems evinced. In this respect, according to Otis, Ovid stands rather in the Hesiodic tradition ([13]).

All this brings us, nonetheless, far afield from the epic narratives of Homer and Vergil. And since the *Met.* is narrative in form, it must inevitably be measured against the great classical epic narratives. In an important work of 1919, Richard Heinze ([14]) compared Ovid's treatment of identical material in both epic and elegiac form, for example the story of Pluto and Proserpina, *Fasti* 4.417-620 + *Met.* 5.341-661. He found the elegy lighter, less formal, and concentrating on more tender emotions — what he called τὸ ἐλεεινόν — and the epic more serious and formal, concentrating on the strong active emotions (τὸ δεινόν). The gods, says Heinze, are more human in Ovid's elegy, more exalted and reverend in the *Met.* The result of all this is that, for Heinze, Ovid's *epische Erzählung* is very much like Vergil's — *heroi* in the grand style.

This is finally unsatisfactory as an analysis of the overall *Geist* of the *Met.* Otis refers to Heinze's "evident failure to see many nuances — above all his

(10) "The Style of the *Metamorphoses*," chapter 4 of J. W. Binns ed. *Ovid* (London 1973) 117.

(11) "Ovid und seine Bedeutung für die römische Poesie," in *Epitumbion Heinrich Swoboda dargebracht* (Prague 1927) 165-170. An example of such *Kollektivgedicht* would be Nicander's *Heteroioumena*, which itself was grouped around the concept of metamorphosis. Apparently the idea was to have one's cake and eat it too : to claim that one's Muse was λεπταλέη and still to write poetic works of larger proportions.

(12) *TAPhA* 69 1938 220.

(13) Cf. also *OEP* 49 and H. Herter (*AJPh* 69 1948 145 n.).

(14) "Ovids elegische Erzählung," *Berichte über die Verhandlungen der sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig* (philologisch-historische Klasse) 71 no. 7 1919 1-130, reprinted in Heinze's *Vom Geist des Römertums* (Stuttgart 1960).

tendency to equate 'epic' with 'seriousness' and thus to minimize the differences between the 'epic' Ovid and Vergil" (*OEP* 23). But even the ancients acknowledged that humor had a place in epic ([15]). It was probably Ovid's pervasive tone of *lasciuia*, rather than any isolated humorous remarks or episodes, that troubled Quintilian.

This brings us back to the questions raised for us by Quintilian's criticism. If the first be granted — if Ovid's *lasciuia* and *ingenium* are inappropriate to *heroi* — and if the *Met.* be classified as epic poetry — then the second must be granted as well : Ovid is tasteless. I wish to grant neither ; but I am aware that such a defense of Ovid's work involves a modified understanding, not so much of what constituted heroic narrative, as of what other kinds of narrative might properly be offered in hexameter verse. In other words, Ovid was not, in writing the *Met.*, redefining epic so much as working in a medium of his own devising, and using the meter (and often the matter) previously found in traditional heroic narratives. He is indeed *lasciuus in herois*, but this demonstrates not his tastelessness but his skill in achieving a deliberate goal — one to which he was peculiarly suited.

Vergil gained in the Middle Ages the reputation of a sorcerer, perhaps because of the association of his name with the *uirga* (magic wand) ; but it is Ovid that most truly conjures with the very forms of literature themselves, turning them inside-out and back-to-front, so that just when we thought we understood what he was aiming at, the work seems to become something else. The *Met.* represents nothing less than the metamorphosis of literature. One of the ways in which he actually effects this wondrous transformation is by infusing the whole work with the very *lasciuia* and *ingenium* that Quintilian found so irritating. Hence it is our task to stalk the panda, as it were, and try to see exactly what form Ovid's humor takes in the *Met.* The subject has already been addressed by Galinsky and others ([16]), using various categories of analysis. What I want to do is to show how Ovid's humor, which may assume a variety of different forms, functions at various levels the text.

(15) Cf. e.g. Demetrius Περὶ ἑρμηνείας 3.128 ff. Several scholars in recent decades have attempted to show humorous elements in the *Aeneid* : cf. O. L. Wilner, *CW* 36 1942-1943 93-94 ; M. Richard, *Virgile, auteur gai* (Paris 1951) ; B. Fox, *CO* 40 1962 37-39 ; P. Miniconi, *Latomus* 21 1962 563-571 ; E. de Saint Denis, *Latomus* 23 1964 446-463 ; M. D. MacLeod, *PVS* 4 1964-1965 53-67 ; R. B. Lloyd, *CJ* 72 1976-1977 250-257.

(16) *Ovid's Metamorphoses* (Berkeley 1975 : hereafter *OM*) chapter 4, + bibliography, p. 204 ; cf. e.g. J.-M. Frécaut, *L'esprit et l'humour chez Ovide* (Grenoble 1972 : hereafter *EHO*) and M. von Albrecht (*AU* 6 1963 47-72), reprinted in von Albrecht and Zinn, edd., *Ovid* (Darmstadt 1968) 405-437.

Gérard Genette, in his *Narrative Discourse : An Essay in Method* ([17]), outlines the following system of terms : "I propose ... to use the word *story* for the signified or narrative content ... the word *narrative* for the signifier, statement, discourse or narrative text itself, and ... the word *narrating* for the producing narrative action and, by extension, the whole of the real or fictional situation in which that action takes place" ([18]). I, in turn, propose to use this system of terms as a method of understanding ways in which various manifestations of humor fit into the text itself. In order to avoid confusion, and to mark them out as technical terms, I shall retain Genette's original French words for these concepts : *histoire* (story), *récit* (narrative), and *narration* (narrating). I have chosen three episodes which incorporate a variety of humorous elements at all three levels.

I. THE TALE OF PHAETHON (1.747-2.400)

The Phaethon story is, as Galinsky notes (*OM* 49), important both because of its length and its position early in the *Met.* Ovid seems to know Euripides' tragedy by this name ([19]), but to have suppressed certain elements of the received version, developing others to suit his particular purposes. The important fact for our consideration of Ovid's treatment is that what could have been an extremely moving tragic story becomes one of humor and sometimes of actual comedy ([20]). This humor, as I have said, is active at all three of Genette's narrative levels.

A. Humor in the 'histoire'

Applying Genette's definition in our context, I would define humor on the *histoire* level as a humorous event — i.e. speech or action — in the actual story-line. It may be intentional, or not, on the part of the character involved ; in the *Met.* some humorous remarks are intentionally made, as for example Juppiter is said to have joked with Juno, *cum Iunone iocos et 'maior uestra profecto est / quam, quae contingit maribus' dixisse 'uoluptas'* (3.320-321). But most of the humorous actions are not deliberate. In the Phaethon story particularly the characters do not seem to have the sense that they are acting

(17) Ithaca NY 1980 (transl. by Jane E. Lewin).
(18) *Ibid.* 27.
(19) So J. Diggle, *Euripides : Phaethon* (Cambridge 1970) 180-200.
(20) It is discussed from another viewpoint in Frécaut *EHO* 91-92.

laughably, and this is one of the reasons that some have read the story as a serious one.

It begins without a hint of humor ; rather the opening is both dramatic and swiftly developed. Phaethon is taunted by Epaphus, and we know right at the beginning (1.750-751) that these taunts are not true. Phaethon confronts his mother Clymene, and determines to visit the Sun god himself.

The second book of the *Met.* begins with one of the descriptive passages for which Ovid is justly famous : Otis rightly calls this an "epic setting' (*OEP* 110), and in fact this sort of description is a *topos* of epic description (that of fabulous workmanship, especially Vulcan's) ([21]). However, when we look more closely at the doors to this palace, we find that the details Ovid has chosen to report are depictions of the sea-divinities — not only such sights as *ballenarumque prementem / Aegaeona suis inmania terga lacertis* (2.9-10), where the impressive tableau is reinforced by the grand diction and strong enjambement, but also *Doridaque et natas, quarum pars nare uidetur, / pars in mole sedens uirides siccare capillos* (11-12). As soon as we are given the cue by such characters as Aegaeon that we are to understand these doors Phaethon has approached as a serious work of art, we notice the sea-nymphs in the cozy process of drying their hair (green hair of course). Our seeing these nymphs on the doors constitutes humor on the *histoire* level, because it occurs as an event — for all practical purposes we approach the doors with Phaethon and see them through his eyes — but the humor also function on the *récit* level because Ovid toys with our expectations.

The interview between Phaethon and Phoebus continues, to an extent, the dramatic tone for which we had been prepared at the beginning. Phoebus tries desperately to dissuade Phaethon from his course, and here again the tone at first leads us to expect a serious situation. Phoebus' speech (50-102) is an impassioned and urgent piece, but "his epical but paternally excited oratory is grotesquely ill-adapted to its object, the irresponsible and inexperienced Phaethon ..." ([22]). It is not the confrontation itself that is out of the way, nor even the longish speech on the part of Phoebus — we are used to such $\dot{\alpha}\gamma\tilde{\omega}\nu\varepsilon\varsigma$ from Greek tragedy — but rather the highly-wrought rhetoric of the speech. Phoebus basically employs an argument from expediency (especially in 98-99), though there is a hint of the argument from justice in 56, and an ingenious (and moving) combination of $\ddot{\eta}\theta o\varsigma$ and $\pi\acute{\alpha}\theta o\varsigma$ in 90-92.

(21) *Iliad* 18.478 ff. ; *Odyssev* 11.609-614 ; *Aeneid* 8.625 ff. Propertius has already adapted the epic mannerism of *ekphrasis* to a non-epic form (cf. *Eleg.* 4.4.3 ff.).
(22) Otis *OEP* 111.

But the formality of this speech violates the concept of τὸ πρέπον, so important to the classical rhetorical theorists ([23]) : a more intimate tone would have been most fitting, most calculated to persuade Phaethon that Phoebus was his father, but as it stands, the speech is so formal and elaborate as to approach the ridiculous. Phoebus employs almost Gorgianic diction at 101 : *ne dubita, dabitur*. The effect is commensurately grotesque, to use Otis' term.

Phoebus' second speech (2.126-149) is not as elaborate, though he does indulge in a fine piece of alliterative zeugma that is hardly suited to the tone of a desperate father : *consiliis, non curribus utere nostris* (146). The purpose of this speech is more to incorporate the motif of father instructing son before a dangerous journey, which we shall see again in the Daedalus story (8.203-208). There the *media uia* is again urged, and the directions are given by the constellations.

Each of Phoebus' speeches is followed by a small passage of stunning beauty, one describing the coming of the dawn (111-118) and one the fabled horses of the Sun (153-160). This is a deliberate literary device on Ovid's part, for the sheer magnificence of these verses makes the ensuing humor all the funnier, just as complementary colors make one another seem brighter ([24]). We shall see it yet again, for example, in the description of the lake Pergus (5.385-391) ; in the haunting and evocative setting for Medea's incantation (7.179-188) ; and in Pythagoras' speech on change (15.186-191). Such passages are not more than a few lines long, nor need they be ; with a few skilful strokes of the brush Ovid paints a scene complete enough to contrast by its very beauty with the humor of the surrounding situation.

After this Phaethon prepares for the journey. Here Ovid takes Homeric commonplaces and makes them ridiculous, as for example in 2.171-172 where the stars of the Triones *uetito frustra temptarunt aequore tingi*, not because all other constellations seem to circle round and to be washed in Oceanus (cf. *Iliad* 5.5-6), but because these stars became uncomfortably hot as Phaethon rode by ! Immediately Ovid resorts to the highly formal device of apostrophe (176) ([25]) to keep the situation complex. But Phaethon manifests that most unheroic of emotions, cowardice (180).

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(23) Arist. *Rhet.* 1408a, Cic. *De or.* 3.55. Theophrastus seems to have discussed this in his Περὶ λέξεως.

(24) The converse is also, of course, true ; these passages are the more breathtaking in the larger humorous context, and reveal Ovid as the consummate artist who can, if required, astound us with his powers. Aristophanes achieves similar effect in the glorious *parodos* to the *Clouds*.

(25) On the use of apostrophe in *epic* narrative cf. E. Block (*TAPhA* 112 1982 7-22).

Nor is unheroic behavior confined to mortals alone. The august rulers of the underworld are no longer *aidoîoi* when Phaethon goes roaring by (260-261) ([26]) ; and Tellus is a spectacle of comic misery as she makes her wretched complaint to Juppiter (272-300) : her throat is parched (278), she has cinders in her eyes (284) and smoke in her mouth (282-283), and, worst of all, her hair has been singed : *tostos en adspice crines* (283) ([27]). Needless to say, Tellus does not intend to be comic in this passage. This is all part of the humor at the *histoire* level.

B. *Humor in the 'récit'*

The *histoire* gives the illusion of being objective, i.e. not open to the author's manipulation, although of course this is not true. We have seen otherwise, for example, in the instance of the doors to the Palace of the Sun. In the *récit*, however, the author's craftsmanship is more immediately obvious. Ovid achieves humor on this level by a number of technical effects, especially linguistic or aural effects. It is important to remember that in Ovid's day literature was regularly composed for *recitatio*. If we do not hear this poetry read we miss a whole dimension of the narrative phenomenon, and, consequently in Ovid, an important element of the humor in the *récit*. For example, throughout the Phaethon narrative he makes extensive use of word-play ([28]) : at the very beginning *natas* (2.11) picks up the verb *nare* by

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(26) Cf. 5.356, *rex pauet ipse silentum*.

(27) Assuming (with Anderson and most MSS) that *tostos* and not *ustos* is the *lectio potior*. It certainly contributes to the comic tone.

(28) It may be useful to break down the concept of "word-play" on formal grounds. I have distinguished two major kinds of word-play in Ovid, one depending on semantic differences, the other on more sheerly sonic effects. Of semantic puns the commonest type is the *double-entendre*, where the word may be taken two ways in its own phrase. These may often be ribald, as for example 2.427 *lugis*, 2.465 *coeu*, 3.325 *uiolauerat*, 3.386-387 *coeamus*. Ovid is also fond of bilingual puns, as for example in 6.297 where the word *leto* suggests the Greek name for Latona, *Lētō*. Related to this is 4.542, *Leucotheaque deum*. For sonic word-play it is generally necessary to have two or more words involved. This is a very common type of pun in Ovid, and is the closest thing to paronomasia *proprement dite*, considering that word's derivation from Gk. παρονομάζειν "alter slightly in naming." Good examples of this are 2.497, 505 *Arcas/arcuit*; 5.125-126 *cohaesit/hausit*; 5.418 *exorata/exterrita*; 6.119-120 *colubris/uolucris*; 7.245, 248 *perfundit/fundit*; 7.733 *decor/dolor*; 15.7 *curae/Curibusque*. Occasionally this runs wild, as in 15.333-334 : *ambiguis suspectus aquis, quas* nocte *timeto* : / nocte nocent *potae, sine* noxa *luce bibuntur*. Another kind of sonic word-play depends on the conscious manipulation of word-forms. This may occur in several ways. It may involve the rhyming of adjacent words, as in 6.37 *confecta senecta*, 7.80 *scintilla fauilla*; or it may exploit different inflections of the same words, as in 14.81 *deceptaque decipit*, or similar inflections of different words, as in 3.297-298 *neque enim non haec optasse, neque ille / non iurasse*

suggesting the frequentative form *natare*. This humor on the *récit* level reinforces that in the *histoire* which we have already discussed. A little later the word *sollo* (25) suggests a pun on *Sol* (2.1, 32) and is in fact immediately followed by the name *Phoebus*. More explicit paronomasia occurs in 92 between *patrio* and *pater*, in 162 (*solis/solitaque*), and in 312-313 (*aure/ aurigam*).

Ovid also uses alliteration as a method of underlining on the *récit* level the humor of the *histoire* ([29]). Thus for example, in 2.191-192 Phaethon has quite lost control of the horses ; he cannot even call to them, as he does not know their names ! Ovid makes this embarrassing fact even more funny by couching it elegantly in an ascending tricolon : *quidque agat, ignarus stupet et nec frena remittit / nec retinere ualet nec nomina nouit equorum* ([30]). Here in the *récit*, as earlier in the *histoire*, Ovid himself purposely violates the rhetorical precept of τὸ πρέπον in order to heighten the humor.

C. *Humor in the 'narration'*

It is continually obvious that Ovid is not at all interested in preserving the anonymity appropriate to an epic poet. In fact he repeatedly draws attention to the process of storytelling itself — what Genette calls "the producing narrative action" or *narration* ([31]). Thus, what might otherwise have been an unobtrusive fact in the *récit* is underlined, as it were, by a clever comparison, so that we might become aware that Ovid is commenting on the situation : *ambiguum Clymene precibus Phaethontis an ira / mota magis dicti sibi criminis utraque caelo / bracchia porrexit ...* (1.765-767). This is common in his parenthetical remarks. When, for example, poor Tellus is trying to plead with Juppiter, she makes a statement and Ovid immediately explains it himself (2.282-283) : '*uix equidem fauces haec ipsa in uerba resoluo' /*

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potest. Sometimes this trick is used to frame an entire conceit, as in 7.340 *ne sit scelerata, facit scelus*. It may occupy exactly one verse, as in 8.323 *uirgineam in puero, puerilem in uirgine possis*, or 5.345 *carmine digna dea ! certe dea carmine digna est*. The most famous example of this kind is not in the *Met*. at all, but rather in the *Ars am*. (2.24) : *semibouemque uirum, semiuirumque bouem*. On word-play in classical poetry cf. F. Ahl, *Metaformations* (Ithaca NY 1985).

(29) He is a master of this technique, as we see in the proliferation of liquid consonants in 6.312, which represents the tears of Niobe : *liquitur, et lacrimas etiam nunc marmora manant*.

(30) An equally embarrassing situation has just been described (2.169-170) in *descending* tricolon : *ipse pauet, nec qua commissas flectat habenas, / nec scit qua sit iter, nec, si sciat, imperet illis*.

(31) Cf. Galinsky *OM* 19-20.

(*presserat ora uapor*) ... As Galinsky says, Ovid "may call attention to himself by providing a piece of information at a crucial point of a character's speech and thus keeps the reader from being all caught up in the narrative" ([32]). Or (lest we fail to notice) Ovid lifts a piece of information from the *récit* and re-emphasizes it in conspicuous *narration*, as when Phoebus is angry at the death of Phaethon (2.399-400) : *Phoebus equos stimuloque dolens et uerbere saeuit / (saeuit enim) ...* ([33]).

Another common place for humor in the *narration* is in the aetiologies. The unobtrusive aetiology may actually blend into the *récit*, which is where it properly belongs, but many of these are so outlandish or comic that they inevitably draw attention to the narrating process in a humorous way. We are told that the Aethiopians first became black when Phaethon's chariot came too close to earth (2.235-236), and that the Nile, seeking to avoid the dire fate of the other rivers just catalogued, flees in terror and hides its head (2.254-256). In these examples the editorial comments *credunt* and *adhuc latet* have a Herodotean leisure about them, and a confidential quality that prevents us from feeling any tragedy in the situation. Another comment at the end of Phaethon's story come to us by way of aetiology (and metamorphosis) and is equally whimsical, at what might have been an especially moving juncture : Phaethon's sisters are turned into trees and their tears, dropping into the river, turn into amber, which the river brings downstream for the young ladies of Rome to wear (2.364-366). Such contemporary references often impinge on the *récit* and draw attention to the *narration*, as at 1.176 where Ovid jokingly refers to the *Palatia caeli* ([34]), or in the theater simile of 3.111-114.

II. The Tale of Tereus, Philomela, and Procne (6.412-674)

The legend of the daughters of Pandion, as fascinating as it is gruesome, offered Ovid a prime opportunity to exercise his tremendous narrative powers. But is only his salubrious sense of humor, functioning at various levels of the text, that prevents the story from becoming unbearably horrific.

The tale begins with a funeral and a wedding, and here the humor binds the *histoire* and *récit* together. The funeral is that of Amphion and his

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(32) *Idem*.

(33) Such humorous parentheses are often introduced by /*neque*/ *enim*, as too at the end of Tellus' speech (2.301-302). On the subject cf. M. von Albrecht, *Die Parenthese in Ovids Metamorphosen* (Hildesheim 1964).

(34) On which cf. Frécaut *EHO* 242.

children, and the kings of all the neighboring regions, except for Athens, attend. These are listed in a catalogue reminiscent of those found in Homer ([35]), except that the flavor is not quite right. The list begins grandly enough with three names, one with a suitably Homeric epithet (6.414) : *Argosque et Sparte Pelopeiadesque Mycenae*, but such epithets may go askew, and so we find that, though Pylos is *Nelea*, Troezen is *neque adhuc Pittheia* (418). Similarly, Calydon is *nondum ... inuisa Dianae* (415). Add to this the paronomasia of *Orchomenosque ferax* (416) and *Messeneque ferox* (417) and we have a catalogue that is impossible to take seriously, though it be a catalogue of kings. Ovid puts the final touch, at the *narration* level, by adding the incredulous parenthesis, complete with apostrophe (421) : *credere quis posset ? solae cessastis Athenae.* Athens, alas, is otherwise occupied at the time, beleaguered by *barbara agmina.* But Tereus, king of Thrace, comes to the aid of Athens and routs the enemy. By means of this deft transition we find ourselves at the wedding of Tereus and Procne. Once again Ovid exploits the specious objectivity of the *histoire* to present an entirely deadpan spoof of the most celebrated wedding of antiquity : that of Peleus and Thetis. Homer tells us that Hera herself gave Thetis to Peleus ; Pindar, that the gods attended the wedding and brought them gifts ; Catullus addresses Peleus as *eximie taedis felicibus aucte* and describes the splendid marriage-bed ([36]). But, when we return to Tereus and Procne as Ovid presents them, we find, instead of a procession of the Muses and Horae — a very important part of the iconography of this story ([37]) — a wonderful twist : the Eumenides are carrying the torches, which they have stolen from a funeral for the purpose (430), hardly *taedae felices.* They further oblige the newlyweds by spreading their marriage-bed (431), the details of which Ovid leaves us to imagine for ourselves.

We find that *Pronuba Iuno* is conspicuously absent from the wedding, as are Hymenaeus and Gratia (428-429). This trick of telling us who was *not* at the wedding instead of who did attend reminds us of the negative epithets in 415 and 418 ; but, more importantly, it is another link with Catullus 64, where Apollo and Diana decline to attend the wedding of Peleus and

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(35) Cf. also the catalogue of Actaeon's hounds (3.206 ff.) and the trees in the grove of Orpheus (10.90 ff.).

(36) *Iliad* 24.59-60 (and cf. schol. on *Iliad* 17.140) ; Pind. *Pyth.* 3.87 ff. (where the wedding is intended to symbolize the epitome of bliss, despite the other misfortunes that befell them) ; Catull. 64.25, 47-49.

(37) Cf. e.g. the François Vase (fig. 1), and also the Sophilos *dinoi* pictured in J. Boardman, *Athenian Black Figure Vases* (NY 1974) plates 24-25.

Thetis ([38]). In fact, I would submit, it is the Peleus/Thetis story as Catullus records it that Ovid is pillaging. He takes the story as we have it there and subverts it with cheerfully grisly effect. At the same time his *récit* closely parallels that of Catullus, by imitating the anaphora that is so characteristic of Catullus 64 : *Eumenides* (430-431), *hac aue* (433-434), *quaque* (436-437) ([39]). He also highlights this passage by aural effects such as paronomasia (*conubio/pronuba,* 428) and tricolon (428-429).

One way in which humor can affect the *histoire* is in dramatic irony. This plays an important part in the Tereus story, as both Pandion and Tereus himself are at crucial points unaware of a fact concerning their children. Of *dextras utriusque poposcit* (6.506) William Anderson writes : "... the gesture has ambiguity, for it parallels the exchange of *dextrae* blessed by parents, that takes place at weddings. The number of ironic references to Tereus and Philomela as potential husband and wife suggests that Ovid knew the versions recounted by Apollodorus and Hyginus (namely, that Tereus actually received Philomela as wife to replace the supposedly dead Procne) but preferred his own more poignant account" ([40]). Ovid is toying with the *histoire* by changing the traditional story-line and thus changing the nature of the irony in the situation. Thus Pandion's words in 496-503 take on new significance ; he calls Tereus *care gener* (496) : "Pandion refers, of course, to the assumed fidelity of Tereus as husband of Procne. Tereus intends to become a second 'son-in-law' by raping Philomela. The confusion of relationships is made explicit in 538, *geminus coniunx*" ([41]). Pandion requests that Tereus look after Philomela with a father's love (499). This is, as Anderson remarks, a "nice reminiscence of 481-482" ([42]), where Tereus, seeing Philomela embrace her father, wishes *he* were (so to speak) *in loco parentis : ... quotiens amplectitur illa parentem, / esse parens uellet : neque enim minus inpius esset.* The conceit is neatly expressed in the *récit* by Ovid's old tricks of polyptoton (*parentem/parens*) and alliteration (*illa/uellet*), and the humor emerges in *narration* when Ovid remarks, with eyebrows raised and tongue in cheek, *neque enim minus inpius esset.* He is not willing to trade adultery for incest.

Another ingenious piece of irony in the *histoire* is verbal as well as dramatic. We are prepared for it by the *double entendre* of the word *uiscera*

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(38) Catull 64.299-302.

(39) Cf. Catull. 64.19-21, 28-29, 39-41, 63-65, 257-259, 334-335.

(40) *Ovid's Metamorphoses : Books 6-10* (Norman OK 1972 : hereafter *Comm.*) 217-218.

(41) *Ibid.* 216.

(42) *Ibid.* 217.

in 6.651, which may be understood metaphorically in the sense of "flesh and blood" (= kin) as well as literally. When Tereus asks Procne where his son Itys is, she says, *intus habes, quem poscis* (655). Here the gruesome pun on *intus* ("inside" = "in the house" and "inside you") ([43]) is reinforced by the assonance of *intus* and *Itys*.

One may well ask how a story can be humorous and yet include passages as grotesque as that describing Tereus cutting out Philomela's tongue and raping her (6.555-562), or Philomela and Procne killing and cooking Itys (636-646). The answer lies in Ovid's treatment of such events. His options were to include them or gloss over them ; but they are part and parcel of the *traditio*. In a tragic drama, such as the *Oedipus Tyrannus*, the kind of recognition and peripety that Oedipus experiences are extraordinarily powerful and draining for the audience, and the Greeks wisely put no more than three tragedies with a satyr-play. But by its nature the *Met.* is strung on and on, so that if we are continually asked to participate in real tragedy we will give up and abandon the poem in sheer exhaustion. Ovid knows better than to ask us to do such a thing. Galinsky (*OM* 132) has well remarked Ovid's "untragic presentation of tragic material." Rather than leave us empty-handed save for repulsion, Ovid tempers his magnificent sense of drama with humor, and once again impresses us with his power as a storyteller. Drama in the *histoire* is reinforced by dramatic *récit* ; for example, the word *linguam* in 556 is suspended until the end of the verse, so that the act of Tereus comes upon us all at once : *abstulit ense fero* (557). Ovid repeats this technique immediately, so that we think *ipsa* (558) refers to Philomela until the snake-simile in 559 makes it clear that *ipsa = lingua*. The effect of this graphic simile is to make the scene so outlandish that we cannot take it too seriously ([44]), and the parenthesis in 561 keeps us from fixating on the dramatic situation by drawing our attention to the narrator ([45]). Finally, the aetiology in 669-670 gives us enough distance from the whole episode to be able to go on.

III. THE TALE OF CEYX AND ALCYONE (11.266-748)

This story belongs to a genre already seen occasionally in the *Met.*, for which there are three basic criteria : [1] it is a love-story involving a man and

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(43) Frécaut *EHO* 170 n. 131.
(44) So too the simile describing Phaethon's death at 2.319-322 removes the tragic element (Galinsky *OM* 63).
(45) *Ibid.* 21. But cf. Frécaut *EHO* 259 n. 119.

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a woman conspicuous for their devotion to one another, and part of the plot in fact entails their deep desire to be together ; [2] they are finally united in death and/or metamorphosis ; [3] the story has some degree of aetiological significance. Two other examples of this genre are worth examining briefly.

[a] Pyramus and Thisbe (4.55-166) meet a tragic end in the style of Romeo and Juliet, and were perhaps the model for that story. But the episode as Ovid tells it seems to be humorous, particularly in terms of the kinds of features we have been analyzing. For example, the lovers each kiss their own side of the wall, as they are unable to make contact with each other (4.78-80). Now in Shakespeare's play we do find the lovely conceit of the glove : *See how she leans her cheek upon her hand. / O that I were a glove upon that hand, / That I might touch that cheek. (Romeo and Juliet,* II.2.23-25). But Ovid has manipulated the *histoire* so that their behavior is almost comic. We have not the conceit but the thing itself. There is irony too, both in the *histoire* and in the *récit*. What Pyramus says in 4.108 ff. is true : he is in fact responsible for Thisbe's death — but not until he kills himself. Then in 128 Thisbe arrives, *ne fallet amantem*. Ovid uses a very light hand here, yet no more than these three words, which parody *Aeneid* 4.296, is needed after the extended speech of Pyramus preceding. Finally there is the simile of the water-pipe (4.121-124) : this may strike one as absurdly inappropriate, until one sees that it functions just as the simile describing Philomela's tongue does : it gives the reader the emotional distance necessary to be able to go on after this story. The same phenomenon is at work in the sea-simile applied to Thisbe (135-136).

[b] Philemon and Baucis (8.618-724) remind one to a certain extent of another couple, Deucalion and Pyrrha (1.313-415), who were distinguished for their *pietas* in an age when this was rare. But Baucis and Philemon are more conspicuously *amantes*, and furthermore have been so for many long years. If Pyramus and Thisbe embody the frenetic spark of adolescent passion, the love of Philemon and Baucis is rather the warm quiet glow of a long-burning ember. They are also perfect and touching examples of rustic whimsy ; Ovid points up simultaneously their poverty and the simple warmth of their friendliness ([46]). When the wealthy entertain the wealthy, the resulting effect, though pleasant, is very different, as when Menelaus and Helen receive Telemachus in *Odyssey* 4.

The tale of Ceyx and Alcyone, then, is clearly part of this genre. By contrast, however, it rises to a tone different from that of these two episodes

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(46) Anderson *Comm.* 389 ff.

and in fact hitherto almost unencountered in the *Met.* It seems to mark a shift in focus and attention ([47]). Pyramus and Thisbe move us to laughter (albeit uncomfortable or bewildered); Ovid's treatment of their story smacks of farce, which may have influenced Shakespeare's presentation of it in *A Midsummer Night's Dream.* Baucis and Philemon move us to fond whimsy (warm and touching though it may be); their story has the flavor of folk-tale, especially in its portrayal of the inviting homeliness of their cottage and the motif of the wish granted. But Ceyx and Alcyone move us to a higher sphere: that of Wonder. Here we are in the more elevated realm of Romance. Several indicants of this are: [1] there are (genuinely) heroic figures involved. [2] Their love-interest is treated sincerely or "straight," not parodically or satyrically. [3] The inclusion of fabulous characters such as Somnus produces a tone fantastical enough to keep the story above the level of everyday comedy, but light enough to prevent its being as serious as epic. Humor and drama go hand-in-hand to achieve this extraordinary balance. [4] Irony is used more gently in this tale than it has been in the past (e.g. in the story of Callisto, 2.428-429) ([48]).

The position of this story seems the more significant when we consider it against the backdrop of the previous two books, in which Ovid has chosen to detail a very complex collection of love-stories. Prominent among these are the stories of Byblis and Caunus; Iphis and Ianthe; Pygmalion and his statue; and Myrrha and Cinyras. It is true that these stories are humanly treated; but one searches in vain for a couple that could embody the Archetypal Lovers. The Iphis story ends happily, it is true, but not until then does the couple enter the sphere of conjugal affection, because only then does Iphis become a man. Ovid paints the tale in terms of disaster narrowly averted. The Pygmalion story, as Otis points out ([49]), is much less indecent than other treatments of the story in antiquity, but Ovid's Pygmalion retains nonetheless an undeniably pathological attachment to his statue (10.254-269). The story is still too strongly suggestive of abnormal psychology to be a love-story the reader can wholeheartedly embrace.

The Orpheus sequence (10.1-85, 11.1-66) is the most complex in Books 10-11 and it is difficult to see what Ovid wants to accomplish with it. He had a perfect opportunity to make Orpheus and Eurydice his Archetypal Lovers,

in a straightforward piece of narrative along the lines of Vergil's treatment of the myth in *Georgics* 4. Instead his own treatment is highly idiosyncratic ([50]). What is clear however is that Ovid sees Orpheus' shift of sexuality as itself a metamorphosis — even his diction indicates this, e.g. *transferre* (10.84). Orpheus himself sings the bulk of Book 10, and his stories of pederasty may be classed with the Eurydice narrative for Love Thwarted: Ovid insists on bringing in *inuita Iuno* to intrude on Juppiter and Ganymede (10.161), and of course Apollo loses Hyacinthus (10.162-219).

When we emerge from this nexus of stories, then, and light upon the figures of Ceyx and Alcyone, the very simplicity of their relationship is a breath of fresh air — no coincidence in Ovid's carefully constructed narrative — and their nobility enables them to play a role that Philemon and Baucis, for example, cannot. That the tale is not treated on the level of comedy, as that of Pyramus and Thisbe is, but is elevated to the level of Romance, gives us to understand its importance as a concept or symbol. And yet the road to Wonder is paved, as often, with laughter. Most of the *histoire*, taken by itself, might not seem at all humorous; this is not, as we have said, comedy. But the humor is so deeply ingrained at the other levels that the tone of the story prevents it from being epic ([51]). Otis perceived this in his discussion of the episode, but was already committed to calling it an epic because of its "vocabulary, set speeches and descriptions or *ekphraseis*, as well as its very amplitude and symmetry"; nevertheless he admits it is a "quite new creation" (*OEP* 233). So, although there is nothing inherently funny about a storm — in fact Otis found it quite serious — ([52]) Ovid's storm is "a bravura piece of literary wit and allusiveness. By Ovid's time, storms, like so many other themes in ancient epic and elegy, had become literary conventions or even set pieces, and Ovid's public was aware of the long tradition of the motif from Homer to Vergil. Thus Ovid used his storm to write *about* this tradition by unleashing the Compleat Storm ... The reader's attention is meant to be absorbed in Ovid's virtuoso play on the literary conventions and precedents,

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(47) For more on this episode, and on how Ovid has reshaped it for his own purposes, cf. E. Fantham (*Phoenix* 33 1979 330-345).

(48) On which episode cf. Frécaut *EHO* 251-252.

(49) *OEP*, Appendix, 418-419.

(50) Whether it is humorous (so Anderson *Comm. ad loc.*, and Otis *OEP* 184) or serious (so C. Segal, *TAPhA* 103 1972 473-494) is debatable. If Ovid is being serious he must be striving for a far less heroic ideology than Vergil's. For example, we have in Ovid's account the text of Orpheus' song before Pluto and Proserpina, and if we are intended to imagine that these are Orpheus' *ipsissima uerba* then Ovid must intend to touch us by a still, small, humble pathos rather than by a great *tour-de-force* of poetic afflatus. Cf. e.g. 10.31-34. Ovid's treatment is compared with Vergil's in Frécaut *EHO* 245-246.

(51) Cf. Frécaut *EHO* 125 n. 112.

(52) *OEP* 250: "In the storm, Ovid's humour is in abeyance: malevolence, fear, violence, tragedy, pathos are there at work."

and not in Ceyx' actual plight" ([53]). This is humor in the *récit* that approaches, but avoids the tone peculiar to, parody ([54]). By this means Ovid is able to import a tone that avoids being excessively tragic, but still preserves the high drama : the ideal balance for Romance.

Another passage in this story where the *récit* sustains humor is the episode where Juno sends Iris to the house of Sleep ([55]). This scene reminds us of the highly entertaining description of Minerva's visit to the house of Inuidia (2.760 ff.) and of the Oread sent by Ceres to Fames (8.784 ff.) ([56]). Iris' visit is occasioned by the (characteristic) impatience of Juno, who can no longer abide being importuned by Alcyone. She addresses Iris beginning with a line of *i*-assonance (11.585), which unpleasant sound is meant perhaps to show her irritation, and immediately we are given a vivid picture of Iris' glorious raiment, replete with *l*-alliteration (*uelamina mille colorum*, 589). The first mention of the house of Somnus is couched in sonorous chiasmus : *ignaui domus et penetralia Somni* (593). The description of the magical river Lethe, murmuring over the pebbles, is heavy with spondees (603-604).

All these highly mannered stylistic effects lead up to open humor as we approach the *domus* proper : Ovid remarks that there is no door in the whole house that might creak on its hinges and so awaken Somnus. On entering with Iris we come upon *ipse deus* slumbering on his splendid ebony bed, surrounded by a proliferation of dreams — palpable things whose mass is suggested by a quick piling-up of similes (614-615). Now comes the most brilliant image of all, in which Ovid once again indulges his sense of humor : Iris strides into the room in her glittering robe and sweeps aside the dreams like so many bats brooding in a cave. Poor Somnus, aware that something is happening, attempts to rouse himself, but (true to his name) keeps nodding off again (619). Ovid is engaging in a very sophisticated form of play in the *récit* where narrative borders on conceptual speculation. This becomes

(53) Galinsky *OM* 145. Galinsky draws attention to D. L. Arnaud's detailed analysis of the humorous elements in this storm (*Aspects of Wit and Humor in Ovid's Metamorphoses* [diss. Stanford 1968] 104-141).

(54) For outright parody cf. e.g. *Met.* 13.789 ff. with Verg. *Ecl.* 7.37-45 and Theocr. *Idylls* 11.19 ff. This is to be distinguished from serious imitation of an author. Though the larger context is humorous, much of *Met.* 15.509-528 is translated fairly literally from Euripides' *Hippolytus* 1182-1246 and seems not to be parodic in itself. Rather Ovid is simply leaning on Euripides for his material there.

(55) Even Otis writes : "... in the sleep *ekphrasis*, a light and muted, but still indubitable, humour, plays over the whole scene" (*OEP* 250). Cf. also Frécaut *EHO* 257-258.

(56) On which two episodes cf. Frécaut *EHO* 92-93 and 165-166 respectively.

FIG. 1. – The François Vase (detail), showing the procession at the wedding of Peleus and Thetis. The Horae are pictured in the center. (Photograph courtesy of the Soprintendenza Archeologica per la Toscana, Firenze.)

crystallized in the word-play of 621 : *excussit tandem sibi se* ([57]). At last, with a supreme effort, he wakes up and (what a realistic touch) props himself up on his elbow to listen to Iris. No one can take this scene too seriously ; yet again the drama is preserved right through the laughter.

In the story of Ceyx and Alcyone, then, humor takes on a new character and a new role. It is not merely comedy, introduced for its own sake ; nor is it merely functioning as an antidote to erstwhile tragedy. It has become infused with the element of wonder in the story in such a way as to produce Romance, and to contribute to the distinctive flavor of the *Met.* in a way that only Ovid could have contrived ([58]).

Purdue University,   John T. KIRBY.
West Lafayette, Indiana (U.S.A).

(57) Cf. Marsyas (6.385) : *"quid me mihi detrahis ?,"* and Juppiter (2.430) : *sibi praeferri se gaudet.* Frécaut *EHO* 36 n. 30 compares 2.302-303, where Tellus *suumque / rettulit os in se.*

(58) I am immensely grateful to Professors David Konstan and Sara Mack for their help.

Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History

V

Edited by

Carl Deroux