

Ovid's Artistic Transfiguration, Procris and Cephalus

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This chapter takes as its point of departure a miracle: that which occurs when an electric impulse of the brain is made manifest in the form of words that in turn yield that incredibly durable form of art that we call literature. An essential prerogative for literature, if it is to perform such a miracle, is to outlive the death and decay of everything that surrounds it at the time of its creation. The term “transfiguration,” which is primarily a theological one,¹ and associated with the overcoming of death in the Resurrection of the Christ, is consequently a fitting one to apply in describing this process. And yet, the transfiguration involved in literature, however miraculous it may ultimately be, is sharply distinct from that of theology as regards one important point. Theologically, transfiguration is a part of the doctrine; it cannot fail. By contrast, nothing is certain in the field of literature: what happens if there is only death and no transfiguration? Or if perhaps, even worse, only a distorted version of the original work of art continues to live on? While a great poet may believe in eternal fame, it requires a poet who is greater still to acknowledge that artistic transfiguration may be both a miracle and a mirage. This chapter argues that Ovid is precisely such a poet.

The argument takes as its starting point Ovid's triumphant claim in the epilogue of the *Metamorphoses* that he will survive his own death, pursues a connection between this epilogue and the two versions of Ovid's Procris and Cephalus, through the idea of catching up a dying person's spirit in a living person's mouth, as a kind of metempsychosis,² and argues that the story of this couple is a hitherto neglected case in point for how the idea of artistic transfiguration vacillates between success and failure in the Ovidian corpus. Throughout, a number of passages from this corpus will be called upon to support the argument. The question of whether these passages are to be understood as

1 “Transfiguration” is of course also a part of the scholastic curriculum at Hogwarts in J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* books.

2 This may be regarded as Ovid's Romanization—and indeed Ovidianization—of an originally Greek concept, as presented e.g. in Plato's *Laws* (782c). I am grateful to Brill's anonymous referee for this observation.

author-generated internal allusions³ or specimens of reader-generated intratextuality⁴ is here considered to be of less importance than the fact that these passages serve to demonstrate the central dynamics of the potentially transfigurative powers of literature,⁵ on which both author and reader ultimately depend.⁶

The aim of this chapter is thus to show how the perspective offered by an understanding of artistic transfiguration as potentially both a miracle and a mirage has important consequences for how we may view Ovid's Procris and Cephalus episodes, and consequently Ovidian poetics, afresh.

1 Vivam?

The starting point of the present argument is the monumental epilogue of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (15.871–879):

Iamque opus exegi, quod nec Iovis ira nec ignis
nec poterit ferrum nec edax abolere vetustas.
cum volet, illa dies, quae nil nisi corporis huius
ius habet, incerti spatium mihi finiat aevi;
parte tamen meliore mei super alta perennis
astra ferar, nomenque erit indelebile nostrum;
quaque patet domitis Romana potentia terris
ore legar populi, perque omnia saecula fama
(si quid habent veri vatum praesagia) vivam.⁷

And now my work is done, which neither the wrath of Jove, nor fire, nor sword, nor the gnawing tooth of time shall ever be able to undo. Let that day come when it will, which has no power save over this mortal frame, and end the span of my uncertain years. Still in my better part I shall be borne immortal far beyond the lofty stars and I shall have an undying name. Wherever Rome's power extends over the conquered world, I shall

3 Seminal here are Conte 1986, 2017 and Martindale 1993.

4 See e.g. Hinds 1998.

5 See Fulkerson and Stover 2016 for a recent contribution to the particular dynamics of repetition and variation in the Ovidian corpus.

6 Even when it is assumed that the reader generates meaning in a text, the reader often includes an idea of the author's intention as a part of that meaning.

7 The text is that of Tarrant 2004.

be picked up/read by the mouth of the people, and, if the prophecies of bards have any truth, through all the ages shall I live in fame.⁸

Within this celebration of the immortality of poets and poetry there are nonetheless certain reservations revealing the tension between the miracle and the mirage of artistic transfiguration, a transfiguration which is arguably expanded upon—with references to precisely this epilogue—in Ovid's exile poetry.⁹

One such reservation is found in the words *ore legar populi* (878). The phrase is rich in significance, which spreads across at least three levels. The most straightforward involves taking *legar* as a reference to the works of Ovid, the "I" of the epilogue, being read by the people in the future.¹⁰ At the same time, the phrase refers to the picking up of Ovid by the mouth of the people in the sense that the poet himself will be known and talked about. Additionally, the phrase may refer to the traditional Roman practice of catching up a dying person's soul in the mouth of someone who is still alive.¹¹ In scholarship, this imagery has been linked to the idea of metempsychosis,¹² that is, the migration of souls from one body to another, regardless of whether this new body is that of an animal or a human being. This idea resounds against a particularly rich sound-board within the Ovidian corpus, as metempsychosis is the centerpiece of the discourse of the philosopher Pythagoras at the outset of Book 15 (75–478).¹³ The phrase *ore legar populi* at the very end of the same book thus points back to Pythagoras' speech in a ring-compositional gesture, which arguably lends

8 All translations are taken, sometimes in modified form, from Goold's revised version of Miller 1916, unless otherwise stated.

9 The most obvious reservation is found in the parenthesis, introduced by the "if" of the last line: *si quid habent veri vatum praesagia* (879). This reservation takes the grammatical form of a conditional clause, which is fitting as a means of expressing hesitation. At the same time, the line clearly dramatizes Ovid's inexhaustible fascination with the poetics of illusion (Hardie 2015, 627), and may thus be regarded as yet another way for the poet to sign his epilogue affirmatively, as a *nomen indelebile* of sorts. The "recycling" of this line towards the end of Ovid's autobiography underscores the close association between the poetry and the poet, and stresses its significance as a signature: *si quid habent igitur praesagia veri, / protinus ut morior non ero, terra, tuus* (*Tr.* 4.10.129). Cf. also Hardie 2002, 91–97 and Río Torres-Murciano 2016.

10 "This is a textual survival, animated by a surrogate vitality through the transient breath of successive generations of readers" (Hardie 2002, 94).

11 See Farrell 1999, 132.

12 See Hardie 2015, 620.

13 For Pythagorean influences on Plato on the theme of metempsychosis (cf. n. 2 above), see Long 1948; for Pythagoras in Ovid on metempsychosis, and, occasionally, metapoetics, see Segal 1969 and 2001; Miller 1994; Hardie 1995 and 2002, 10 and 95; and—in an Augustan context—Beagon 2009.

the reference to metempsychosis in the epilogue of the *Metamorphoses* a particular weight compared to the other meanings listed above.

Notably, from the point of view of Ovid's Pythagoras, metempsychosis translates into an imperative towards vegetarianism, because one actually slaughters one's "fellow human being" when one slaughters an animal (15.139–142):

quod, oro,
ne facite et monitis animos advertite nostris,
cumque boum dabit is caesorum membra palato,
mandere vos vestros scite et sentite colonos.

I pray you, do not do it [kill animals], but turn your minds to these my words of warning, and when you take the flesh of slaughtered cattle in your mouths, know and realize that you are devouring your own fellow-labourers.

Within the optic of metempsychosis there are two aspects that appear particularly relevant to the present argument. One is cannibalism as the perversion of metempsychosis, exemplified by the Cyclops in Pythagoras' discourse (15.91–95):

scilicet in tantis opibus, quas, optima matrum,
terra parit, nil te nisi tristia mandere saevo
vulnera dente iuvat ritusque referre Cyclopum,
nec, nisi perdidit alium, placare voracis
et male morati poteris ieiunia ventris!

And so in the midst of the wealth of food which Earth, the best of mothers, has produced, it is your pleasure to chew the piteous flesh of slaughtered animals with your savage teeth, and thus to repeat the Cyclops' horrid manners! And you cannot, without destroying other life, appease the cravings of your greedy and insatiable maw!¹⁴

14 Pythagoras' mention of the Cyclops echoes the story of one of the men, Achaemenides, who escaped the jaws of the Cyclops, as he tells his story in Book 14 of the *Metamorphoses*: "It is due to him that my life came not into the Cyclops' jaws, and though even now I should leave the light of life, I should be buried in a tomb, but surely not in that monster's maw" (*ille dedit, quod non anima haec Cyclopolis in ora / venit et, ut iam nunc lumen vitale relinquam, / aut tumulo aut certe non illa condar in alvo*, 14.174–176). Relevant here is also the negative exemplum of how Itys is killed by his own mother and aunt, Procne and

The other aspect is metapoetic, and turns metempsychosis into another way of dramatizing the idea of artistic transfiguration through the concrete reception of an artist via the consumption of his or her work by others.¹⁵ Furthermore, metempsychosis as metapoetics may result in success (cf. 15.879, *vivam*), but also in failure, as suggested by Ovid's exile poetry (*Tr.* 3.3.59–64):

atque utinam pereant animae cum corpore nostrae,
 effugiatque avidos pars mihi nulla rogos!
 nam si morte carens vacua volat altus in aura
 spiritus, et Samii sunt rata dicta senis,
 inter Sarmaticas Romana vagabitur umbras,
 perque feros manes hospita semper erit.¹⁶

O that our souls might perish with the body and that so no part of me might escape the greedy pyre! For if the spirit flits aloft deathless in the empty air, and the words of the Samian sage are true, a Roman will wander among Sarmatian shades, a stranger forever among barbarians.

In this poem,¹⁷ the self-confident prophecy of the poet's survival after his own death through the immortality of his work in the epilogue of the *Metamorphoses* is reversed into a horror vision for the ghost poet Ovid, for whom the idea of artistic transfiguration remains a mirage.

In another such passage,¹⁸ the failure of artistic transfiguration is linked to two concrete works in the Ovidian corpus (*Tr.* 3.14.18–25):

tres mihi sunt nati contagia nostra secuti:
 cetera fac curae sit tibi turba palam.
 sunt quoque mutatae, ter quinque volumina, formae,
 carmina de domini funere rapta sui.
 illud opus potuit, si non prius ipse perissem,
 certius a summa nomen habere manu:

Philomela, who cook and serve him to his own father, Tereus, who eats him unwittingly (*Met.* 6.636–660).

15 Another example of metempsychosis as metapoetics is that of Ennius' reception of Homer; cf. Aicher 1989. For another connection between Ennius and the metempsychosis of the epilogue of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, see Hardie 2002, 94; Hardie 1995; Segal 2001.

16 The text and translation are those of Luck 1967.

17 For the poem as a whole, see Ingleheart 2015.

18 This poem is probably addressed to a book-seller; see White 2002, 18.

nunc incorrectum populi pervenit in ora,
 in populi quicquam si tamen ore meum est.

Three of my children have caught pollution from me: make the rest of the flock openly your care. There are also thrice five books on changing forms, verses snatched from the funeral of their master. That work, had I not perished beforehand, might have gained a more secure name from my finishing hand: but now, unrevised, it has come in the mouth of the people—if anything of mine is in their mouth.

The works in question are the *Ars amatoria* and the *Metamorphoses*, of which the latter's presence is further underscored by the fact that much of the content of its epilogue is repeated *verbatim* in the *Tristia* passage.

I shall argue in the following that there is a connection, parallel to the passage quoted above from *Tristia* 3.14.18–25, between the *Ars amatoria*, the *Metamorphoses* and the metapoetics of metempsychosis in Ovid's two versions of the story of Procris and Cephalus (*Ars* 3.685–746, *Met.* 7.670–865). Firstly, their story occurs both in the *Ars amatoria* and the *Metamorphoses*, and thus acts as a further connection between the two works.¹⁹ More importantly, the story of Procris and Cephalus is the only mythological narrative in the entire output of Ovid that includes a scene which puts on display the catching up of the breath of a dying person by one who is alive, and which—as a result—has been associated with metempsychosis, as is also the case for the phrase *ore legar populi* in the epilogue of the *Metamorphoses*.²⁰

The scene occurs in both versions: towards the end of the story, when Cephalus has pierced his wife with a hunting javelin, having allegedly mistaken her for an animal, his catching up of her dying breath is described thus in the *Ars amatoria* (*Ars* 3.743–746):

ille sinu dominae morientia corpora maesto
 sustinet, et lacrimis vulnera saeva lavat;
 exit et incauto paulatim pectore lapsus
 excipitur miseri spiritus ore viri.²¹

19 Much like the two stories of Daedalus and Icarus (*Ars* 2.21–96 and *Met.* 8.183–235).

20 Hardie 2002, 95; cf. 76. “*Legar*, però, potrebbe anche essere tradotto “sarò raccolto” ... idea espressa anche da Cefalo in *Met.* 7.860–861” (Hardie 2015, 626 ad *Met.* 15.878–879; cf. Kenney 2011, 305).

21 The text is that of Kenney 1995.

He raises to his grieving bosom his mistress' dying body, and washes the cruel wound in tears: her spirit passes, and ebbing little by little from her rash breast is caught by her unfortunate husband's mouth.

And thus, in the words of Cephalus, as he tells of Procris' death in the *Metamorphoses* (*Met.* 7.859–861):

labitur, et parvae fugiunt cum sanguine vires.
dumque aliquid spectare potest, me spectat et in me
infelicem animam nostroque exhalat in ore

She fell back in my arms and her last faint strength fled with her blood. So long as she could look at anything she looked at me and breathed out her unhappy soul on my lips.

The image of the catching up of a dying person's breath, which is evocative of metempsychosis, thus occurs both towards the end of the *Ars amatoria* and towards the end of Book 7 of the *Metamorphoses*, the approximate mid-point of the epic work. When we associate these with the metempsychosis imagery in the epilogue of that epic, we find a set of key moments in the macrostructure of the Ovidian corpus.²² In the following, I shall suggest that their placement at such key moments adds to the metapoetic significance of these instances of Ovidian metempsychosis, which pick up on the speech of Pythagoras, especially in relation to the themes of cannibalism and the metapoetics of failure, and thus dramatize the miracle and mirage of artistic transfiguration.

2 Nec cito credideris (*Ars* 3.685)—vocibus ambiguis (*Met.* 7.821)

As noted above, like several other stories in the Ovidian oeuvre, that of Procris and Cephalus occurs twice, in two different works.²³ As in the case of these other stories, the question of whether one version is simply a replica of the other or whether the two belong to a sequence in which repetitions and vari-

22 See Papaioannou 2017, who draws parallels to the macrostructure of Vergil's *Aeneid*. Cf. also Anderson 1990 for a different approach to the structural and thematic parallels between the *Ars amatoria* and the *Metamorphoses* episodes.

23 Seminal here are Hinds 1986 on the episodes of Persephone in *Fasti* and the *Metamorphoses*, and Sharrock 1992 on *inter alia* the Daedalus and Icarus episodes in the *Ars amatoria* and the *Metamorphoses*.

ations are significant, is a highly relevant one. I shall return to the potential significance of the variations and repetitions between the *Ars amatoria* and *Metamorphoses* versions below, but first, I shall outline some of the main features of the story in question.

There are several elements in the Ovidian corpus, both within and outside of the Procris and Cephalus narratives, that back up the events of the story as it is told in other sources.²⁴ These elements include:

1. Cephalus' adulterous affair with the goddess Aurora, which is noted in the *Ars* (3.84) and confirmed by Cephalus himself in the *Metamorphoses* (7.700–705);²⁵
2. Procris' liaison with King Minos of Crete,²⁶ where she had fled when Cephalus discovered that she was willing to have an extramarital affair, either (in one version) with another man for the price of a golden crown,²⁷ or (in Cephalus' version in the *Metamorphoses*) with Cephalus himself in

24 The main sources of the Procris and Cephalus myth outside Ovid are: Pherecydes ("the genealogist") in *FGH* 3.F.34 (Fr. 34 Fowler) = ap. Schol. *CMV* Hom. *Od.* 11.321, cf. Eustath. p. 1688 ad Hom. *Od.* 11.321; Hyg. *Fab.* 189, Pseudo-Apollodorus 3.XV.1–2 and Antoninus Liberalis 41; because Nicander is an important source for Antoninus Liberalis, some equate the latter with the former, e.g. Otis 1971. The different passages are referred to below by the names of their authors. It is difficult to establish which versions refer back to which; with the exception of Pherecydes, the dates of these sources are either hard to pin down, as in the case of Hyginus (cf. *OCD s.v.* 3), or later than Ovid. *Procris* was the title of a play by Sophocles (Pollux 9.140 = *TGF* 4 fr. 533 Radt) as well as one by Eubulus (fr. 90–92, Hunter), but very little can be inferred from the remains of these plays. The *Suda* includes interesting information about Procris and Cephalus, although this is of a later rather than earlier date (cf. *OLD s.v.*). At Π 2484 in the *Suda*, we learn of Πρόκριδος ἄκοντα ("Procris' javelin/dart"), which is proverbially defined as ἐπὶ τῶν πάντων τυγχάνοντων: τοιοῦτον γὰρ ἔχουσα ἡ Πρόκρις πάντα ἐθήρα ("In reference to those hitting everything; for with such a spear Procris used to hit everything," trans. Robert Dyer), and at T429 we learn that the story of Cephalus and the Teumessian fox are known from the *Epic Cycle* (cf. *Epigoni* F 4, incert. loc. 1 Davies).

25 The didactic setting in which this line occurs, of a parallel drawn between heroes pursued by goddesses and lustful men, casts doubt on the unwillingness of the male characters in the examples cited, thus: "nor is Cephalus a prize that shames the roseate goddess ... Study, ye mortal folk, the examples of the goddesses, nor deny your joys to hungry lovers" (*nec Cephalus roseae praeda pudenda deae. / ... ite per exemplum, genus o mortale, dearum, gaudia nec cupidis vestra negate viris, Ars* 3.84, 87–88; cf. also *Am.* 1.13.39 and *Her.* 15.87). The affair between Aurora and Cephalus features also in Hyginus, Pseudo-Apollodorus and Antoninus Liberalis; cf. Davidson 1997, and, more generally, Celoria 1992.

26 So Hyginus (ad loc.), Pseudo-Apollodorus (ad loc.) and Antoninus Liberalis (ad loc.). Otis' summary (1971, 411) is euphemistic regarding the sexual relationship of Procris and King Minos.

27 So Pseudo-Apollodorus (ad loc.).

- disguise (and cf. "in Procris Minos lost his passion for Pasiphae," *Pasiphaes Minos in Procride perdidit ignes, Rem.* 453);
3. Cephalus' embarrassment at having been willing to prostitute himself in order to obtain the trappings of the hunt, a dog and a javelin, from a boy—who was in fact his wife.²⁸ When this event takes place, Procris has returned from Crete to her husband in disguise. The third-person narrative in the *Metamorphoses* reveals Cephalus' embarrassed recollection of this event when he is being asked about his hunting spear ("what he [Phocus] asks for, he [Cephalus] tells, but out of shame and touched by pain he is silent about the rest, that is at which price he carried it [the javelin] off," *quae petit ille refert; ceterum narrare pudori, / qua tulerit mercede, silet et tactus dolore, Met.* 7.687b–688 Kenney²⁹);
 4. Procris giving her husband the dog and the javelin as tokens of their reconciliation—an element of the Ovidian episode in the *Metamorphoses* as well as of all other sources;
 5. Procris' death, following this act of appeasement. We encounter Procris in *medias res* in the *Ars amatoria*: she hears Cephalus speaking of an *A/aura* and, thinking that he is unfaithful (again?), spies on him as he hunts in the woods, and is killed by his javelin when he allegedly mistakes her for an animal (*Ars* 3.732–742). This event is later recalled by Cephalus in the *Metamorphoses* episode (7.840–859).³⁰

Taken together, the Ovidian elements not only offer snippets of a continuous narrative, (supported, though also slightly varied, by other sources), but also provide the most essential information about the couple, which is that Procris and Cephalus are each other's equals in terms of deception, both through adultery and by tricking one another while in disguise. The elements that provide the fuller narrative context for the two main Procris and Cephalus episodes are aptly placed in the close vicinity of those episodes in the Ovidian corpus, as Cephalus' liaison with the goddess is mentioned at the beginning of the same book in which Procris dies in the *Ars amatoria*, Procris' affair with Minos is included in the sequel, *Remedia amoris*, and Cephalus' embarrassed silence precedes his narration of the death of his wife.

What does not emerge from this outline of the basic elements in their story,

28 So Hyginus (ad loc.) and Antoninus Liberalis (ad loc.).

29 The variants, which are all based on sound manuscript traditions, are included in the text of Kenney 2011, 40. As may be seen below, I argue that the contradiction between this information and what Cephalus later claims about how he received the javelin from Procris is productive, rather than problematic. For a different view, see Tarrant 1995.

30 Antoninus Liberalis is the only source not to report Procris' death.

however, is the arguably most important overall feature that both versions share in the Ovidian corpus: namely, their fundamental ambiguity. For, while the bare facts tell a rather unromantic tale, the way in which this tale is told in the Ovidian corpus is apt to make the most hard-hearted reader weep. In fact, both the *Ars amatoria* and the *Metamorphoses* versions include a stark contrast between the content of the story, as it emerges from other sources and in the Ovidian passages quoted above, and their strongly moving treatment.³¹ What meets the eye in the Ovidian episodes is romantic tragedy: so much so, that most scholars who have argued for the suppression and omission of the elements outlined above have done so because they run counter to a wholly heartbreaking tale.³² The most fundamental question, therefore, remains this: what were they, Procris and Cephalus? Were they equally bad, or were they unfortunate, but equally loving?

I would argue that the two potential answers to this question are both important, inasmuch as, operating together, they have a great metapoetic potential and, consequently, considerable relevance for the Ovidian question of the failure or success of artistic transfiguration. Key to this understanding are smaller

31 So Anderson 1972, 31: "Ovid tells the story with exquisite taste, despite the fact that the myth came to him in a number of gross versions."

32 So Fontenrose 1980, 289: "It is irrelevant that Ovid alludes to Minos' passion in another poem (*RA* 453); that is a different composition." Such claims are, however, hard to sustain in the wake of studies such as Conte and Most 1989; Gibson, Green and Sharrock 2006; Martelli 2013; and Thorsen 2014, which all argue for the significance of Ovid's internal references in one of his works to another, for example, by means of stories that occur in more than one of his works. Tarrant 1995 argues for the text to be changed so that there are no hints about Cephalus' offering of sexual services to his "boy" wife in exchange for the trappings of the hunt—an operation which removes the contradiction between the third person account of how Cephalus obtained the dog and the javelin and the one that he provides himself in his own version of events. This contradiction may, however, also be regarded as productive, as argued below. The most important argument, according to Tarrant, for assuming that the hints at Cephalus' embarrassment are later interpolations is the lack of any information in the episode that might underpin the hints at the embarrassing explanation. However, Tarrant does not consider the shadow of King Minos, who leaves Aegina, as Cephalus is arriving at the island where he tells the story of him and Procris at *Met.* 7.490–493 (see below), which may be regarded as underpinning precisely this darker side of the story both in the *Metamorphoses* and in the *Ars amatoria*. The question of how to interpret Ovid's Procris and Cephalus story divides scholarship. Those who maintain a tragic-romantic outlook include Pöschl 1959; Otis 1971, 174–183; Labate 1976; Segal 1978; Fontenrose 1980; Davis 1983; Sabot 1985; Fabre-Serris 1988; and Saylor 2008. Those who maintain a non-romantic outlook include Green 1979; Peek 2004; and Lateiner 2013. A middle approach may be seen in Hardie 2002, 75–77; Laigneau-Fontaine 2009; Hutchinson 2011, 252–256; and Hejduk 2011.

elements of each of the two versions. The first is the didactic precept that precedes the story in the *Ars amatoria* (3.685–686):

nec cito credideris: quantum cito credere laedat,
exemplum vobis non leve Procris erit.

Nor be quick to believe: of what harm quick belief can do, Procris will be to you not a slight warning.

This warning arguably has several functions. The most obvious is that it is related to Ovid's erotodidaxis on how to love wisely (cf. *Ars* 2.501; *Rem.* 745). By this precept, if one gets some upsetting information about one's lover, one should not necessarily believe this information straight away, for such information may be false or misleading. And when we meet Procris in the *Ars amatoria*, she has indeed just been informed that Cephalus has been uttering the word *A/aura* when he is hunting in the woods; she fears that he is having an affair, acts on that suspicion and gets killed for it. Thus, at first glance, it all seems to be the tragic result of a terrible misunderstanding. The only problem is that Cephalus actually *has* been unfaithful to Procris in the past, as we have learned earlier in the same book of the *Ars amatoria* (3.84; see above), and as Cephalus himself will later confirm in the *Metamorphoses* (*Met.* 7.700–705, see below). Given that the readers of the *Ars amatoria* already know that Procris has good reason to suspect that Cephalus is (again) unfaithful, how well does she *really* exemplify the dangers of believing something too rashly and on false grounds?

In fact, the precept about not believing something too rashly works at least as well, if not better, as a metapoetic warning about not taking whatever you are presented with at face value. Notably, Cephalus himself corroborates this lesson in the *Metamorphoses* by admitting that his own exclamations to the breeze were ambiguous, in a passage that has been recognized as highly metapoetic (*Met.* 7.821–823):³³

vocibus ambiguus deceptam praebuit aurem
nescio quis nomenque aurae tam saepe vocatum
esse putat nymphae, nympham me credit amare.³⁴

33 See Miller 1993.

34 The text *me ... amare* is a manuscript version (Marcianus Florentinus 255), which has the advantage of implying both "a nymph loved me" and "I loved a nymph." Cf. Tarrant 2004 ad loc. with critical apparatus.

Someone overhearing these words was deceived by their double meaning; and, thinking that the word “Aura” was a name that was so often called, was convinced that I loved a nymph.

Thus, Ovid’s two versions of the Procris and Cephalus tale are excellent illustrations of the pitfalls of approaching a narrative superficially, and of too rashly presuming that one has grasped the fuller meaning of a story. The precept *nec cito credideris ... ambiguis vocibus* may thus also sum up the lesson that the two versions—metapoetically—have in common: “do not believe ambiguous words too rashly.”

3 Pythagorean Lessons in the *Ars amatoria*

There are many differences between the versions of the story of Cephalus and Procris presented in the *Ars amatoria* and the *Metamorphoses*. Some of these differences are due to the works’ dissimilar genres (broadly speaking, elegy and epic), different narrators, and different addressees. Nevertheless, the difference that has greatest relevance to the present argument is that the versions belong to different points in time within a narrative framework. In the *Ars amatoria*, the narrator *Naso magister* describes an event taking place at a time which has become the distant past by the time the aged Cephalus recalls it many years later in the *Metamorphoses*. The two versions thus occupy different positions in a narrative continuum.

In the *Ars amatoria*, most of the focus is on the distress of Procris when she suspects that *A/aura* is the name of her husband’s new love. When Procris finally follows Cephalus into the woods and there realizes that he is in fact calling for the breeze, the story reaches its climax (*Ars* 3.729–742):

ut patuit miserae iucundus nominis error,
 et mens et rediit verus in ora color;
 surgit, et oppositas agitato corpore frondes
 movit, in amplexus uxor itura viri.
 ille feram movisse ratus, iuvenaliter artus
 corripit; in dextra tela fuere manu—
 quid facis, infelix?³⁵ non est fera: supprime tela—
 me miserum! iaculo fixa puella tuo est.

35 See Gibson 2003 ad loc. for the dramatic apostrophe on the part of the poet.

"ei mihi," conclamat "fixisti pectus amicum:
 hic locus a Cephalo vulnera semper habet.
 ante diem morior, sed nulla paelice laesa:
 hoc faciet positae te mihi, terra, levem.
 nomine suspectas iam spiritus exit in auras:
 Labor, io! cara lumina conde manu!"

When the name's pleasing error was manifest to the hapless woman, her reason returned, and the true colour to her face. She rises, and speeding to her lover's embrace stirred with her hurrying frame the leaves that were in her way: he, thinking he saw a quarry, leapt up with youthful ardour, and his weapon was in his hand. What are you doing, unfortunate one? It is no beast: drop your missile. Ah me! Your javelin has pierced the girl. "Woe to me!" she cries, "you have pierced a friendly breast: this spot will always have a wound from Cephalus. Untimely I die, yet injured by no human rival: this will make you, earth, lie lightly on my bones. Now goes my spirit out upon the air whose name I once suspected: I faint, o woe! Close your eyes with a dear hand."

Thus, in the *Ars amatoria* Procris dies while revealing that she thinks that she has understood the real meaning of *A/aura*.³⁶

Importantly, in the passage quoted above, Cephalus thinks that he is killing an animal, when it is in fact a human being. This is exactly what Pythagoras speaks against in his discourse on metempsychosis and the ethical imperative towards vegetarianism in the *Metamorphoses*. Given that Cephalus thus epitomizes all that is wrong from the point of view of Ovid's Pythagoras, and that he readily kills animals and Procris alike, how safe is she with Cephalus as he catches up her final breath, in an action which may be associated with metempsychosis? Against the background of metempsychosis, the cannibalism represented by the Cyclops and the metapoetic aspect of Pythagoras' speech also seem relevant to this question: for, given that Cephalus has actu-

36 On the basis of her claim that she is *nulla paelice laesa* she seems to believe that she has never been betrayed by Cephalus. However, the fact that the term *paelex* is used, which is nowhere in Ovid applied to goddesses such as Aurora, with whom Cephalus has indeed had an affair (cf. *Ars* 3.84), indicates that her realization that Cephalus is just calling for the breeze means only that she thinks that she did not have a rival in this particular case (though other cases may be different). Also, this term picks up on and thus helps to connect the general advice given in the *Ars amatoria* preceding this exemplum with the exemplum itself ("nor be put out when you hear of a rival," *nec sis audita paelice mentis inops*, *Ars* 3.684).

ally killed Procris, will his subsequent catching up of her spirit amount to a sort of cannibalism, à la Pythagoras' Cyclops? And—when considered from the point of view of metempsychosis as metapoetics—how much of her story will remain as he retells it from his perspective? Will she too end up as a distortion of herself? Will she be an *opus incorrectum*? If indeed anything of her will remain (cf. *si meum est*, *Tr.* 3.14.24–25, above)?

It is precisely against the background of questions such as these that the recollection of Procris, told by Cephalus himself many years after her death, becomes particularly relevant, since this later account can actually show to what extent the spirit of Procris may still be alive in the mouth of Cephalus after her death.

4 Cephalus' Metamorphoses

Another feature that the two Ovidian versions have in common is the shadow of King Minos of Crete, which lingers over Procris and Cephalus as a couple. In the *Ars amatoria*, theirs is one of three episodes that extend over more than thirty lines in Books 1, 2 and 3 respectively, which have as their common denominator the theme of Minoan adultery.³⁷ Furthermore, the mention of Procris in the *Remedia amoris*, the sequel to the *Ars amatoria*, confirms her adulterous connection with that king (cf. *Rem.* 453). Finally, when we hear the story of Procris' death told again, this time by Cephalus himself, he is literally framed by King Minos, inasmuch as his story is embedded in a longer narrative framework in which Minos is the main character.³⁸ Thus, Cephalus emerges from under the shadow of King Minos, as it were, when he reappears in the *Metamorphoses*.

In the *Metamorphoses* setting, many years have passed since the death of Procris, and King Minos threatens war against Athens, to avenge the death of his son Androgeos, which he blames on the Athenians. King Minos has just failed to persuade King Aeacus of Aegina to join him in his war and sailed off from the island, when Cephalus approaches it on his diplomatic mission to secure allies for Athens against his former erotic rival (7.490–493):

37 See *Ars* 1.289–326, where King Minos's wife Pasiphae courts and mates with the bull, *Ars* 2.21–96, where Daedalus tries to flee Crete, after having constructed the maze in which King Minos hides the result of Pasiphae's adulterous union, the Mintaur, and *Ars* 3.683–746, where the death of King Minos's adulterous ex-lover, Procris, is dramatized.

38 See Pechillo 1991, Otis 1971, 175 and Brenk 1999.

classis ab Oenopiis etiamnum Lyctia muris
 spectari poterat, cum plena concita velo
 Attica puppis adest in portusve intrat amicos,
 quae Cephalum patriaeque simul mandata ferebat.

Still the Cretan fleet could be seen from the Oenopian walls, when, driven on under full sail, an Attic ship arrived and entered the friendly port, bringing Cephalus and his country's greetings.

Cephalus' mission should be fairly easily accomplished. Aeacus is already well disposed towards Athens; he has just referred to his allegiance with that city in rejecting the advances of King Minos (7.471–498). Furthermore, Aeacus is an old friend of Cephalus, who has visited his island in the past.

In fact, there appear to be only two potential obstacles between Cephalus and his diplomatic goal: he must not draw attention to his previous defeat by his former erotic and present political rival King Minos, and he must not be incriminated by the death of Procris, who was, after all, the daughter of Erechtheus and a princess of Athens. Cephalus' fear of being accused of her murder is explicitly stated in his account of her death: "I pray that she might not leave me stained with her death" (*neu me morte sua sceleratum deserat, oro*, 7.850). This expression may simply denote the husband's wish that his wife should not die, and yet, the wish remains sufficiently ambiguous to suggest at the same time that Cephalus is afraid that he will be accused of Procris' murder. Notably, in Pseudo-Apollodorus, Cephalus was "tried before the Areopagos for the murder of Procris and condemned to exile" (καὶ κριθεὶς ἐν Ἀρείῳ πάργῳ φυγῆν ἀίδιον καταδικάζεται).

The javelin is linked to both these obstacles. Therefore, when Phocus asks about it, he places Cephalus in a tricky situation. First, one of the sons of Pallas³⁹ comes to Cephalus' aid and provides an answer (7.681–684):

"usum
 maiorem specie mirabere" dixit "in isto.
 consequitur, quodcumque petit, fortunaque missum
 non regit, et revolat nullo referente cruentum.

39 "Ovid seems to have invented for Cephalus two Athenian companions, [Clytos and Butes,] sons of Pallas, who was Aegeus' brother." Anderson 1976, 297 and Bömer 1967, 327, both on *Met.* 7.500.

“You will admire the weapon’s use more than its beauty;” he said, “it goes straight to any mark, and chance does not guide its flight; and it flies back, all bloody, with no hand to bring it.

However, this piece of information only inflames Phocus’ curiosity: “Then indeed young Phocus was eager to know why it was so, and whence it came, who was the giver of so wonderful a gift” (*tum vero iuvenis Nereius omnia quaerit, / cur sit et unde datum, quis tanti muneris auctor*, 685–686). And so, Cephalus has to deal with the question of the *muneris auctor*, which is arguably as difficult as it can get, because answering it honestly may lead Cephalus to reveal embarrassing aspects of his and Procris’ relationship, notably Cephalus’ willingness to prostitute himself for the javelin, Procris’ extramarital liaison with King Minos—who may in fact have given the javelin to her in the first place—and incriminating facets of the circumstances of Procris’ death, the awkwardness of which increases in pace with the relevance of King Minos, since Cephalus’ killing of Procris suddenly seems to have her adultery as its motive. The revelation of even one of these pieces of information would render Cephalus’ diplomatic mission difficult.

Tellingly, Cephalus’ immediate reaction to the question is silence (*silet*, 688); he then starts his discourse (690–758), which is broken off in the middle by a digression about the Teumessian fox (759), and then he goes silent again (*tacuit*, 794) until Phocus encourages him to resume his narrative about the javelin; and Cephalus continues, going on to tell of Procris’ death. Cephalus’ silence thus marks the beginning of each of the two halves of his tale, each of which is around 65 lines in length, and which embrace the digression, which is around 35 lines long. The striking symmetry of Cephalus’ monologue,⁴⁰ chopped up by two moments of silence and one digression, suggests that Cephalus pauses for a reason. The romantic reason would be that it pains Cephalus to recall the death of his wife, while the less romantic would be Cephalus’ need to manipulate parts of the story, since a truthful answer to Phocus’ question may frustrate Cephalus’ diplomatic mission. Strikingly, three strategies related to ambiguity—cf. *vocibus ambiguus* (721)—in Cephalus’ discourse further corroborate this notion of manipulation, by being more or less successful as such.

The most pervasive strategy employed throughout Cephalus’ narrative is arguably his avoidance of providing an answer to Phocus’ question. This question is a genuinely good one within the broader context of the Ovidian corpus.

40 Cf. Otis 1971, 181.

For, who *did* make the javelin? And who gave it away? Certainly, in one sense, the *muneris auctor* is Procris, because she gave the javelin to Cephalus as a token of their reconciliation. But if Procris is a candidate for the title of “giver” at this stage, then from whom did Procris get the javelin in the first place? Clearly, she acquired it after Cephalus had tested her fidelity and she fled (7.743–746). Cephalus claims that she then went off *studiis operata Dianae* (7.756, “devoted to the pursuits of Diana”) without specifying the exact whereabouts of these pursuits. All other sources, however, Ovid in his *Remedia amoris* included, are explicit about Procris going to Crete (see above). Notably, Ovid’s Cephalus does not deny that Procris fled to Crete. However, he draws attention away from the possible existence of any lover for Procris, such as King Minos, by claiming that Procris hated all mankind—that is, all *men*—much like the virgin goddess Diana herself (cf. 7.743–746), who is said to have given Procris the hunting dog Laelaps (7.753–756):

dat mihi praeterea, tamquam se parva dedisset
dona, canem munus; quem cum sua traderet illi
Cynthia, “currendo superabit” dixerat “omnes.”
dat simul et iaculum, manibus quod, cernis, habemus.

She gave me besides, as though she had given but small gifts in herself, a wonderful hound which her own Cynthia had given, and said as she gave: “He will surpass all other hounds in speed.” She gave me a javelin also, this one which, as you see, I hold in my hands.

So, Cephalus claims that he received the dog and javelin from Procris. And since he simultaneously points out that the dog originally came from Diana, the listener or reader may easily assume that the goddess was also the original source of the javelin, but this is in fact never stated in the Ovidian text. “King Minos” therefore remains a possible answer to Phocus’ question about the identity of the producer of such a gift, since King Minos is, in other sources, the one who gives Procris the javelin, in gratitude for her sexual favors, as is partly confirmed by Ovid in the *Remedia amoris*.

Furthermore, such an answer to Phocus’ question may lie embedded in the description of the dog Laelaps (7.776–778):

non ocior illo
hasta nec exussae contorto verbere glandes
nec Gortyniaco calamus levis exit ab arcu.

No spear is swifter than he, nor leaden bullets thrown by a whirled sling,
or the light reed shot from a Gortynian bow.

Cephalus' comparison between these various kinds of missiles and the dog—the *munus* that he wishes to focus on, as he avoids talking about the provenance of the *munus* that Phocus is actually asking about, which in fact *is* a missile—arguably draws attention back to precisely the gift of the javelin. Furthermore, when we consider the fact that one of the missiles in the comparison is defined according to its affiliation with Cretan geography (*Gortyniaco ... arcu*),⁴¹ we are faced with a cluster of associations between a gift, missiles and Crete, which is highly evocative of the broader elements of the story: that Procris went to this island, had sex with King Minos, and—according to some sources—received gifts from him that included the javelin Phocus is asking about. While Cephalus evades Phocus' question throughout, the comparison between Laelaps and the missiles, one of which is Cretan, thus appears to be a slip of the tongue on the part of Cephalus, hinting at the one answer to this question of the identity of the *muneris auctor* that is also backed up elsewhere in Ovid and other sources: namely, “King Minos.” Cephalus may thus be regarded as not entirely successful in his evasive strategy, which against the background of knowledge about the myth in other sources may raise the suspicion that his narrative may be both manipulated and manipulative.

Cephalus' potential manipulation not only of the story itself, but also of his audience, is perhaps at its most conspicuous when he inserts a digression into his account, which may be regarded as a special case of avoidance. At the same time, this digression is of the utmost importance within the metapoetic framework of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, since it includes the most obvious transformation within the whole episode. The digression is introduced with words recalling the opening of the *Metamorphoses* (*in nova*, 1.1), including an engaging imperative in the singular—which is as fitting for addressing the listener Phocus as for addressing the actual reader of the text—and a focus on the miraculous: “Hear the wonderful story: you will be moved by the novelty of the deed” (*accipe mirandum: novitate movebere facti*, 7.758). And, in fact, among all the metamorphoses in the *Metamorphoses*, that of Cephalus' digression is considerably novel. In a way, it is the most realistic metamorphosis in the whole of Ovid's epic—phenomena of the natural world feature regularly as models for artworks, and this fact is recalled in Cephalus' digression, in the sense that two

41 “Das Adjektiv, im Griechischen anscheinend unbekannt ..., bedeutet einfach ‘kretisch’” (Bömer 1976, 389).

animals are turned into marble statues when he is about to throw his spear at one of them (7.787–791):

ad iaculi vertebar opem; quod dextera librat
 dum mea, dum digitos amentis addere tempto,
 lumina deflexi. revocataque rursus eodem
 rettuleram: medio (mirum) duo marmora campo
 adspicio; fugere hoc, illud captare putares.

I turned to my javelin's aid. As my right hand was balancing it, while I was fitting my fingers into the loop, I turned my eyes aside for a single moment; and when I turned them back again to the same spot—oh, miraculous! I saw two marble images in the plain; the one you would think was fleeing, the other catching at the prey.

Other Ovidian metamorphoses that involve petrification include stones or other hard material turned into humans or vice versa, often as a reward or a punishment from the gods.⁴² And while Cephalus speculates on the divine intervention that must have caused the transformation (cf. *deus voluit, si quis deus adfuit illis*, 7.793), his focus is wholly on the *wonder* that the turning of the two animals into marble effigies entails: *mirum* (7.790). For the metamorphosis that Cephalus witnesses may indeed be regarded as a miracle of artistic transfiguration: i.e., the changing of a perishable being into the enduring form of art. It seems especially pointed that Cephalus' digression appears not only as disconnected from his main tale, and absolute, as it were, but at the same time it captures the essence of artistic transfiguration, thus embodying the deeper significance of the *Metamorphoses*, which is also dramatized in its epilogue: namely, that the art form of literature has transfigurative powers. Cephalus' strategy of including a digression, which distracts his audience from the initial question about the javelin, thus has a strongly metapoetic aspect.

Another strategy involves puns and repetitions centered on the similarities between *A/aura* and Aurora as names both of female figures and of natural phenomena: more precisely, of the breeze and the dawn. Compared to the tale

42 Compare e.g. the stones turned into humans by Deucalion and Pyrrha (1.313–415), Battus (2.688) and Aglaurus (2.820) changed by Mercury into stone, Perseus' enemies turned into statues by the petrifying looks of *Medusa* (5.1–219) and the Propoetides, hardened to stone by the prostitution inflicted upon them by a vengeful Venus (10.221; 238), the ivory girl of Pygmalion (10.247–249), and the snake which is petrified by Apollo, when it is about to bite the head of Orpheus (11.56–60).

as it is told in the *Ars amatoria*, in which Aurora is kept out of the Procris and Cephalus episode (though not completely out of the *Ars amatoria*: cf. 3.84), and in which the crucial misunderstanding of the tale concerns the referent of the word/name *A/aura* (a new girlfriend or the breeze), Aurora is by contrast an imposing figure in Cephalus' tale. And, here, the ambiguity arguably lies in the close resemblance between the Latin name of the goddess and that of the breeze, which in Cephalus' account amounts to a punning repetition of *aura* in "Aurora." Furthermore, the echo of the word *aura* in the name of Aurora has a parallel in a series of textual repetitions within Cephalus' tale that also involve variations serving to underscore the ambiguity of what is said.

Aurora occurs at the very outset of Cephalus' account, when, he tells us, the goddess sees him as he is hunting on Hymettus, rapes him and tries to keep him for herself (see point 1. in the summary above). However, when Cephalus will not stop talking about Procris, Aurora lets him go. But, jealous and in search of revenge at having thus been rejected, Aurora also persuades Cephalus to test his wife's fidelity. He does so by trying to seduce Procris in disguise. Procris hesitates, Cephalus reveals his true identity and Procris, upset, flees from him. When Cephalus subsequently regrets it all, and asks Procris for forgiveness, she accepts his excuse and gives him the trappings of the hunt, the javelin included, as tokens of their reconciliation.

When Aurora reappears later in Cephalus' account, it is in a setting that confuses the name of the goddess with that of the natural phenomenon of dawn, thus providing a parallel to the ambiguity between name and nature seen in *A/aura* both in the episode in the *Ars amatoria* and also earlier on in the same *Metamorphoses* episode (7.832–844):

saepe tamen dubitat speratque miserrima falli
 indicique fidem negat et, nisi viderit ipsa,
 damnatura sui non est delicta mariti.
 postera depulerant Aurorae lumina noctem.
 egredior silvamque peto victorque per herbas
 "aura, veni" dixi "nostroque medere labori!"
 et subito gemitus inter mea verba videbar
 nescio quos audisse; "veni" tamen "optima!" dixi.
 fronde levem rursus strepitum faciente caduca
 sum ratus esse feram telumque volatile misi;
 Procris erat medioque tenens in pectore vulnus
 "ei mihi" conclamat! vox est ubi cognita fidae
 coniugis, ad vocem praeceps amensque cucurri.

And yet she would often doubt and hope in her depth of misery that she was mistaken; she rejected as untrue the story she had heard, and, unless she saw it with her own eyes, would not think her husband guilty of such sin. The next morning, when the lights/eyes of Aurora/dawn had driven night away, I left the house and sought the woods; there, successful, as I lay on the grass, I cried: "Come, Aura/breeze, come and soothe my toil"—I said. And suddenly I thought I heard a groan. Yet "Come, dearest," I cried again, and as the fallen leaves made a slight rustling sound, I thought it was some beast and hurled my javelin at the place. It was Procris, and, clutching at the wound in her breast, she cried, "Woe to me!" When I recognized the voice of my faithful wife, I rushed headlong towards the sound, beside myself with horror.

First, the phrase mentioning Aurora plays on the potential confusion between the name of a goddess and that of the natural phenomenon of dawn,⁴³ repeating or even anticipating, the same potential confusion between "Aura" and *aura*, which is crucial in the *Ars amatoria* and then again—repeatedly—in the *Metamorphoses* (7.810–823). Furthermore, the passage quoted above repeats Procris' fearful jealousy from the *Ars amatoria*, the repeated presence of A/aurora from the outset of Cephalus' *Metamorphoses* account (which gives Procris a reason to fear that Cephalus is unfaithful to her), and Cephalus' endearments, which is the third occurrence, as it were, since these repeat both those in the *Ars amatoria* and those appearing previously in the *Metamorphoses*. An effect of this triple repetition is that Cephalus' endearments seem far too exaggerated to be addressed to a breeze, and are thus suspicious. The punning repetitions centering on the name of A/aurora thus have an effect similar to that of Cephalus' evasion of Phocus' question, namely that both strategies simultaneously conceal and reveal ambiguous aspects of his story.

A third strategy employed by Cephalus, which is also the most revealing and least successful of his manipulations, involves contradiction. As we have seen, before Cephalus commences his tale, the third person narrative tells us that Cephalus "was silent" (*silet*, 7.307) because of the shame evoked by "that price" (*qua mercede*, 688), which must refer to Cephalus having offered sex in return for the trappings of the hunt that Procris, disguised as a boy, possessed. This is later denied in Cephalus' own account, which makes perfect sense, inasmuch as the internal contradiction between Cephalus' attempt to acquire the

43 Cf. Montuschi 1998 on this *double entendre* against the background of Ovid's use of previous authors.

javelin by means of prostitution, as related by the third person narrator, and the romantic, alternative story Cephalus tells in his first-person narrative, is symptomatic of Cephalus' apparent self-serving modification of his story in the *Metamorphoses*.

Furthermore, Cephalus contradicts the *Ars amatoria* version when it comes to Procris' last words. In the *Ars amatoria*, she has realized that Cephalus is not seeing another woman, whereas in the *Metamorphoses*, Cephalus tells of Procris begging him not to marry "Aura," which suggests that she does still think that there is another woman. One effect of this contradiction is that the Procris of the *Metamorphoses* corroborates the idea of mutual exclusivity between the two, and of Procris as a model wife (cf. *fidae*, 7.843); at the same time this variation may also be related to the next instance of this strategy of contradiction, as shown below.

This contradiction involves a ring-compositional structure in two steps, relating to the javelin. First, there is Cephalus' claim, "I wish I had lacked this gift [the javelin] always and for ever" (*hoc utinam caruissem munere semper*, 7.693), which is blatantly contradicted by the fact that Cephalus, many years on, still carries the javelin with him.⁴⁴ Furthermore, the description of the javelin by one of Pallas' sons as a missile that "flies all bloody with no hand to bring it" (*revolat nullo referente cruentum*, 7.684), before Cephalus commences his tale, is directly contradicted in Cephalus' description of Procris' death (7.845–849):

semianimem et sparsas foedantem sanguine vestes
et sua (me miserum!) de vulnere dona trahentem
invenio corpusque meo mihi carius ulnis
mollibus attollo scissaque a pectore veste
vulnera saeva ligo conorque inhibere cruorem.

There I found her dying, her disordered garments stained with blood, and oh, the pity! trying to draw the very weapon she had given me from her wounded breast. With loving arms I raised her body, dearer to me than my own, tore open the garment from her breast and bound up the cruel wound, and tried to staunch the blood.

44 This contradiction has been duly pointed out in scholarship and given various explanations, such as this one, by the commentator Bömer 1976, 367: "Nach allen Gesetzen von Psychologie und Logik trägt ein Mann die Waffe mit der er die geliebte Frau getötet hat und deren Anblick ihn zu einem Weinen ohne Unterlaß veranlaßt, nicht dauernd bei sich, zumal diesem Fall, da er sicher weiß, daß er ihrer überhaupt nicht bedarf."

This scene contains subtle evocations of the contradictory description of the javelin at the outset of the episode as a missile that flies back to its thrower. Firstly, the javelin is called *dona*, a synonym of *munus*, thus recalling Phocus' initial question about the *muneris auctor*. Then there is the fact that not only is this "gift" stuck in the breast of Procris, it is indeed so firmly stuck that she has to try to remove it herself. The tension between Cephalus' account and the boomerang quality of the javelin is as its most intense in the evocation of Pallas' son's word, *cruentum*, in Cephalus' *cruorem* (see above, cf. 7.681–684), which, so to speak, seals the allusive contradiction in Procris' blood.⁴⁵

In this blood, as will become clear below, one may even see a connection with Pythagoras' speech in the *Metamorphoses*. Yet another potential contradiction helps to prepare the ground for this link. When Procris is dead, Cephalus describes her thus: "but she seemed to die without worries and with a happy look on her face" (*sed vultu meliore mori secunda videtur*, 7.862). This claim seems to contradict the anxiousness Procris expressed in her wish that Cephalus should not remarry. For how can Procris beg of Cephalus not to marry "Ara," fail to get any response from her husband, and then die with a contented look on her face?

Cephalus' words about the look on the face of his wife not only contradict her last words, but also stress the idea of appearances, especially through the words *vultu meliore* and *videtur*. This may be regarded as symptomatic of how Cephalus corroborates the superficial, first-glance impression of things by evading, confusing and contradicting certain details of his story. One effect of these strategies is that he avoids touching upon the role of King Minos in his past, the fact that he offered his own sexual services in exchange for the trappings of the hunt, and his potential motive for killing Procris in revenge for her adultery. Another, corollary effect of these strategies is that he turns the pity of which Procris is the primary object in the *Ars amatoria* episode towards himself. This is done in a sustained manner throughout Cephalus' account, which is initiated "with tears" (*lacrimis*, 7.689) and sealed with tears, his own as well as those of his audience: "The hero, all tears, recalled these things to those who were [also] crying" (*flentibus haec lacrimans heros memorabat*, 7.863). After this final shedding of tears, Aeacus, now awake, arrives: "Look, Aeacus comes with his two sons and his new levied band of soldiers, which Cephalus received with their valiant arms" (*ecce / Aeacus ingreditur duplici cum prole novoque / milite; quem Cephalus cum fortibus accipit armis*, 7.863–865). Cephalus has thus been saved by the moment; there are no more questions about the *muneris*

45 Cf. Anderson 1972, 313: "An ominous foreshadowing of *sanguine* 845 and *cruorem* 849?"

auctor, and Cephalus has accomplished his mission. The closing lines of the episode celebrate Cephalus' diplomatic success.

Prior to this diplomatic success, Cephalus arguably also perverts Procris' associated metempsychosis by suggestively turning the couple's unique experience into something that he can share with others. This effect is achieved by playing on several levels of significance that the spirit-and-mouth imagery evokes, which are also active in the words *ore legar populi* in the epilogue of the *Metamorphoses*, as shown above. In this work, Cephalus thus recalls his metaphorical catching up of Procris' spirit while a captive of Aurora: "it was Procris I loved; Procris was in my heart, Procris was ever in my mouth" (*ego Procrin amabam; / pectore Procris erat, Procris mihi semper in ore, 7.707–708*).⁴⁶ The metempsychosis association is subsequently vulgarized when Cephalus later explains that "'Aura' ... perhaps I would add ... 'this spirit of yours is always caught by my mouth'" (*"aura" ... forsitan addiderim ... "meoque/ spiritus iste tuus semper captatur ab ore," 7.813–822*). Cephalus thus replaces Procris with another female figure, evoking the same associations with metempsychosis. The fact that these associations are evoked in reference to a potential rival of Procris, at least from her point of view, arguably imbues Cephalus' subsequent description of the moment when Procris gives up her spirit with an adulterous aspect: "she breathed out her unhappy spirit into my mouth" (*"in me / infelicem animam nostroque exhalat in ore," 7.860–861*). This internal evocation of the metempsychosis imagery in relation to Procris, then *A/aura*, and then Procris again, arguably contradicts the image of exclusivity between Procris and Cephalus and instils their relationship with adulterous implications, even in death.

Thus, this extramarital aspect of the metempsychosis imagery, together with the manipulative strategies and ambiguous words of Cephalus throughout his discourse, suggests some answers to the questions posed earlier in this chapter. According to this argument, Procris is clearly not safe with Cephalus as the vehicle of her process of metempsychosis. To the reader who does not jump to conclusions, but digs deeper, Cephalus appears to commit a double murder, which disquietingly resembles the kind that Ovid's Pythagoras warns against in his speech (see above, p. 64). And the blood (*cruentum*) that stains the javelin

46 For the ways in which this echoes the severed head of Orpheus calling for Eurydice in Vergil's *G.* 4.525–527, see Hardie 2002, 76–77. The echo may seem romantic, but there are testimonies to a less romantic perception of the Orpheus and Eurydice story, too; cf. e.g. Boethius' claim that Orpheus *occidit* ("killed") Eurydice (*De consolatione* 3.m.12.51). I am grateful to Peter Astrup Sundt for this comment. Cf. also Lateiner 2013. It also seems relevant to the present argument that Eurydice does indeed turn into a ghost.

which, according to one of the sons of Pallas, always flies back to its thrower—a claim which is contradicted in the javelin that remains lodged in Procris' breast, as the blood (*cruentem*) gushes forth from the wound—may be said to be splattered across the very last warning of Pythagoras in the *Metamorphoses*: “may mouths be free of blood” (*ora cruore vacant*, 15.478). For—from a certain perspective—Cephalus kills Procris as if she were an animal, he swallows up her spirit, and, by retelling their story in a self-serving manner, Cephalus fills his mouth with words of her blood.

5 Conclusion: *Omnia mutantur nihil interit* (Met. 15.165)

The interpretation of Ovid's Procris and Cephalus episodes offered in this chapter follows one strand in a truly ambiguous tale. Indeed, the story does have highly romantic qualities, and the catching up of Procris' breath in the mouth of Cephalus may of course resemble one last kiss more readily than an act of cannibalism. At the same time, though, the purely romantic approach raises a number of questions, which remain very hard to answer; for, what would it mean for a tragic and romantic tale to hold such key positions in the macrostructure of Ovid's corpus? Why is there a unique reverberation of the catching up of Procris' spirit in the mouth of Cephalus in the phrase *ore legar populi* in the epilogue of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*? What do the discrepancies between the episodes as they are told in the *Ars amatoria* and the *Metamorphoses* mean? What is the significance of the apparent contradictions even within Cephalus' own tale in the latter work? What does Cephalus' digression about the Teumessian fox have to do with his account of the death of Procris? And why does this account violate the most fundamental rule of the *Metamorphoses* by seemingly ending with no metamorphosis?⁴⁷

By contrast, the less romantic aspects of the Cephalus and Procris episodes have a considerable explanatory force. Their metapoetic potential, which opens up an understanding of the episodes as a story about the superficial and deeper meanings in a narrative, as well as the dangers of its reception, fits together well with the structurally important positions that these episodes

47 The seeming lack of metamorphosis towards the end of Cephalus' narrative has puzzled readers and scholars, e.g. Hutchinson 2011, 252: “Procris' death ends the book with a striking violation of the poem's rules: there is no metamorphosis but only the slightest alterations of expression Readers are left to wonder about the relation between the constructed poet's emotional engagement and his fidelity to the secondary narrator's perspective.”

occupy in the Ovidian macrostructure, which generally tend to draw attention to such essentially literary dynamics.⁴⁸ Moreover, the association between the idea of metempsychosis as metapoetics and the catching up of a dying person's spirit in someone else's mouth sheds meaningful light on the many discrepancies between the versions of the story as told in the *Ars amatoria* and the *Metamorphoses*, as well as on a number of contradictions within Cephalus' own narrative, which may thus be regarded as signs of the tension between the superficial and the deeper meaning of this story, and consequently of the inherent potential of all narratives to change completely in accordance with a change of perspective. Finally, the less romantic aspects of the Procris and Cephalus story even allow us to see a closing transformation in Book 7 of the *Metamorphoses*.

From this perspective, the deeper metamorphosis of this episode, as it is told in Ovid's epic, is that of Procris,⁴⁹ who, as she is killed by Cephalus, changes from the living equal of her husband into an *opus incorrectum* (cf. *Tr.* 3.14.24–25, above), whose death by his hand is staged as a loving sacrifice “of high pathos and tragic misunderstandings”⁵⁰ that serves his version of events. Strikingly, this metamorphosis, which is implicit, acquires a still deeper significance when paired with that narrated in Cephalus' digression, which constitutes the explicit metamorphosis in the episode. This deeper significance emerges from the fact that, when taken together, these metamorphoses show themselves to be perfectly calibrated between death and artistic transfiguration: the metamorphosis of the Teumessian fox and the dog Laelaps into marble effigies in Cephalus' digression represents the miracle—*mirum!*—while the metamorphosis of Procris—which begs the question if anything of her indeed remains (cf. *si meum est*, *Tr.* 3.14.24–25, above)—represents the mirage embedded within.

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48 Cf. e.g. Martelli 2013, generally but esp. 1–103, with references.

49 Thus Hardie 2002, 76: “Henceforth Procris will be reduced to nothing more substantial than breath, as Cephalus wishfully thinks in the form of her life-breath captured at the point of death on his lips, but more truthfully perhaps in the breath of Cephalus as he retells her story.”

50 Segal 1978, 175.

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