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Ovidian Retro-Metamorphosis on the Elizabethan Stage

Although Ovid dedicated his Metamorphoses *to the subject of change, the vast majority of the corporeal alterations catalogued in this ancient Roman poem are singular, permanent transformations. In contrast, dramatists writing for the Elizabethan stage tended to represent fantastical, neo-Ovidian metamorphoses as temporary and reversible. With particular reference to the plays of John Lyly — and especially* Love's Metamorphosis — *this article exposes conceptual and generic deviations between the static post-metamorphic norm found in Ovid's Latin poetry and Elizabethan England's theatrical depictions of bodily retro-metamorphoses.*

At the outset of the *Metamorphoses,* Ovid's poetic persona famously announces his compulsion to speak of '*mutatas … formas*', or what Arthur Golding in his Tudor translation calls 'shapes transformde to bodies straunge'.[1] Its author's avowed interest in change inculcates this encyclopaedic text with a sense of thematic continuity. Variously figuring as escape, retribution, aetiology, or apotheosis, acts of bodily transformation recurrently punctuate the *Metamorphoses*'s hundreds of mythological episodes. As Donald Lateiner once quipped, all of the poem's constituent 'plots are [thereby] reduced to a single climax'.[2] In tale after interlinking tale, seemingly rigorous boundaries of ontology and identity — between human and animal, vegetable, or mineral; between male and female; between animate and inanimate — become violable and permeable. For all that the *Metamorphoses* is nominally about change, this text is equally concerned with stasis, however. Leonard Barkan remarks that Ovidian transformation generally results in 'reduction and fixity', and Garth Tissol offers the complementary reflection that the Roman poet habitually employed the vocabulary of '*manere* ("to remain"), *durare* ("to endure"), and the like' when 'describing the … consequences of metamorphosis'.[3] Whether facilitated by deities or represented as natural processes, the *Metamorphoses*'s tales of physiological mutation usually conclude with a sense

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of finality. This article probes the implications of a simple, related observation: although one of the defining features of metamorphosis in the *Metamorphoses* may be its typifying permanence, superficially similar transformations found in Elizabethan stage plays instead tend to be unstable and temporary.[4] Concentrating my analysis on the dramatic works of John Lyly, and particularly his play *Love's Metamorphosis* (ca 1590), I posit that early modernity's apparent fascination with theatricalized acts of retro-metamorphosis (ie, transformations that result in a subject's return to a prior physical state) speaks to a broader set of tensions that emerged when Ovid's poetic narratives of externalized change were translated into a new, performance-based medium.

Lyly was arguably the most fashionable, admired, and widely imitated English writer of his generation. Possessing an impeccable humanist pedigree and credentials (his paternal grandfather achieved fame as the author of *Lilly's Grammar,* and Lyly himself was an Oxford MA), he auspiciously launched his literary career with the publication of *Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit* in 1578. Following the popular successes of this work of prose fiction and its 1580 companion piece *Euphues and His England,* Lyly turned his attention to writing for the stage; he specialized in devising comedies for the recently commercialized companies of boy players that were also destined to be in vogue at court until the end of the decade. 'His plays', Andy Kesson summarizes, 'seem to have been the most famous theatrical events of the 1580s, just as [Thomas] Nashe, [Thomas] Kyd, [Christopher] Marlowe and [William] Shakespeare began their writing careers'.[5] Germane to my broader argument is the fact that Lyly's extant dramatic corpus is also remarkable for what critics have often recognized as its 'clear and sizeable debt to the myths of the *Metamorphoses*'.[6]

The *Metamorphoses*'s tales of transformation proved endlessly fascinating not only to Lyly but to early modern English authors and audiences more generally. That said, although allusions to the *Metamorphoses* were ubiquitous in the drama of this period, stage plays of the late sixteenth century seldom presented their *dramatis personae* undergoing the sorts of bodily alterations into flora, fauna, and the like that feature so memorably in Ovid's ancient Roman text. Prior studies of the *Metamorphoses*'s influence on early modern theatre have therefore tended to investigate Ovidian change as a figurative phenomenon. M.C. Bradbrook long ago suggested that, whereas metamorphosis as 'the changing of shape [was] not *unknown*' in late Elizabethan drama, Shakespeare and his contemporaries 'evolved a new and subtler form of metamorphosis — an interior one'.[7] Such assertions have appeared in more recent scholarship as well. William C. Carroll's *Metamorphoses of Shakespearean Comedy,* for instance, distinguishes 'between

metamorphosis proper' and 'more mundane though related forms of change, such as natural mutability or normal human maturation'.[8] Carroll identifies the latter as far more common in the drama of the period. Along similar lines, Jonathan Bate argues in *Shakespeare and Ovid* that early modern playwrights, who 'inherited a tradition … in which Ovid's literal transformations were interpreted as metaphors for … internal changes', overwhelmingly represented metamorphosis as the (nonphysical) alteration of a dramatic character's psychology or identity.[9] One problem with such figuratively expansive, conceptually inclusive treatments of Ovidian transformation, however, is that, as John W. Velz recognizes, they 'risk … discuss[ing] changes that are not really matters of morphosis', thus 'making metamorphosis mean too much and (*ergo*) too little'.[10] Attuned to Velz's cautions, this study draws attention to the fact that, while they may occur less frequently than the more nebulous social or psychosomatic metamorphoses described by Bradbrook, Carroll, or Bate, externalized, corporeal mutations — that is, transformations that feel far more in keeping with the *Metamorphoses*'s literal 'shapes transformed to bodies straunge' — can occasionally be found in Elizabethan stage plays.

My purpose in this article is twofold. I seek first to highlight the high concentration of what Carroll would term 'metamorphosis proper' in Lyly's dramatic oeuvre. As Kent Cartwright has put it, 'Fantastical … Ovidian transformations' ('all changes', he observes, 'that must be realized onstage through properties and costumes') are a primary force 'driv[ing] Lyly's plays' and speak directly to the Elizabethan author's 'concrete interest in the body'.[11] I contend, second, that such Lylian stage metamorphoses differ rather noticeably from the Ovidian standard in that they are regularly represented as impermanent. Underpinning my broader analysis is the thesis that this early modern author's demonstrable attraction to instances of restorative, rejuvenative, and serial metamorphosis — classes of transformation that are, as I subsequently establish, statistically uncommon in the *Metamorphoses* as a whole — stems from an underlying incompatibility between the transformative stasis so frequently represented in Ovid's work and Lyly's own dramatic techniques.

Let me lay some additional conceptual groundwork for this argument with further reference to the *Metamorphoses.* The narratives that comprise this fifteen-book poem are diverse — ants become people and people become birds; statues become women and women become rocks; nymphs become trees and boys become blossoms — yet they are also decidedly formulaic. The gods may wilfully alter themselves into provisional forms (often in the service of fulfilling sexual desires), but Ovidian metamorphosis is characteristically a terminal affair or, as

one recent commentator has put it, a 'one-time occurrence' for mortals.[12] Once transformed, Ovid's Adonis will be a flower, his Niobe a rock, and his Daphne a tree *in perpetuum*. Amongst hundreds of irremediable, permanent metamorphoses catalogued in Ovid's work, there are remarkably few instances in which a non-deity's bodily change is reversed: a retelling of the well-known Homeric story of Circe (with Ulysses's men turned to pigs and back to men) in book 14; a brief account of Tiresias's sex changes (from male to female and back to male) in book 3; and the tale of Io's transformations (from girl to heifer and back to girl) in book 1. To such examples of retro-metamorphosis we might also add the related act of rejuvenation that Medea performs in *Metamorphoses* 7 when she uses witchcraft to restore her father-in-law Aeson to his youthful form of forty years earlier.[13] Furthermore, amongst the classical poem's modest cast of shape-shifters (Proteus, Vertumnus, Thetis, Acheloüs, Periclymenus, and Mestra), who are capable of serially self-metamorphosing into a variety of forms, only one — the 'exceptional' Mestra — begins, as Andrew Feldherr notes, as a fully mortal or 'human figure'.[14] All in all, only around 2% of the approximately 250 tales of transformation depicted in this Ovidian text involve non-deities changing, either singularly or plurally, and then subsequently resuming their prior humanoid aspects. What is more, along with shape-shifters and acts of restorative or rejuvenative retro-metamorphosis, it is likewise unusual to find in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* tales of serial alteration, in which a character undergoes a second, non-restorative mutation following an initial metamorphosis into a non-humanoid form. The tale of Callisto in book 2 (where the heroine goes from woman to bear to constellation) provides the best-known example of this type of double metamorphosis, though other instances include Scylla's serial transformations from nymph to sea-monster to rock in book 14, Julius Caesar's from man to star to god in book 15, or Hercules's from man to god to constellation in book 9.

Returning focus to the Elizabethan stage, a prominent example of neo-Ovidian 'metamorphosis proper' (that is, one of those 'overt nymph-to-tree or man-to-stag metamorphoses' that the author ordinarily eschewed) occurs in act 3, scene 1 of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (ca 1595).[15] Physically 'changed', 'translated', and, quite literally, 'ma[d]e an ass of' in the midst of rehearsing *The Most Lamentable Comedy and Most Cruel Death of Pyramus and Thisbe,* Nick Bottom experiences a transformation that is reminiscent both of Midas's metamorphosis in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 11 and of Lucius's in Apuleius's *Golden Ass*.[16] This corporeal change proves to be relatively short lived, though, and Shakespeare's amateur thespian par excellence duly returns to his former shape in the following act.[17] Another instance of retro-metamorphosis appears in Ben Jonson's *Cynthia's*

Revels (ca 1600), a stage play first performed by the Children of the Chapel Royal.[18] Here, the legendary Echo, a nymph who pines away to mere disembodied voice in book 3 of Ovid's *Metamorphoses,* returns from invisible, airy nothingness to her original humanoid form through divine intervention. In *The Maid's Metamorphosis,* an anonymously written play that the Children of Paul's probably first performed in the same year that *Cynthia's Revels* débuted, Apollo causes Eurymine to undergo a series of seemingly Tiresian-inspired gender-swaps that eventually culminate in the restoration of her female body.[19] As these examples indicate, early modern dramatists seem to have been disproportionately drawn to the two per cent or so of the transformations in the *Metamorphoses* that follow atypical patterns by retro-metamorphosing their subjects to states of pre-transformative origin. My aforementioned examples have something else in common as well. Not only are *A Midsummer Night's Dream, Cynthia's Revels,* and *The Maid's Metamorphosis* habitually identified as Ovidian comedies, but they are also frequently hailed as being Lylian in aesthetic.[20]

Some of the physical metamorphoses in Lyly's own stage plays do admittedly contain the sorts of stable, lasting transformations that appear in ninety-eight per cent of the *Metamorphoses*'s tales. Consider, for instance, *The Woman in the Moon* (ca 1588), a work that begins with Nature's Pygmalion-esque creation of Pandora from 'purest water, earth, and air, and fire' and her subsequent animation of this 'lifeless image' with 'inward seeds of sense and mind'.[21] The final act of this comedy features Nature ordering Pandora's servant Gunophilus to 'Vanish into a hawthorn' (5.1.278). This transformation is unambiguously terminal: condemned to 'follow … the moon' as Pandora's 'slave', Stesias declares that he will ever 'bear this bush', using the botanically mutated Gunophilus to 'scratch her face' should his wife happen to 'look but back' at him (318, 324–5). The beautification of Phao by Venus at the outset of Lyly's *Sappho and Phao* (ca 1584) likewise seems meant to be understood as a lasting change.[22] Along similar lines, in the final act of *Galatea* (ca 1584), the resolution of which is heavily indebted to Ovid's Iphis and Ianthe tale from *Metamorphoses* 9, Venus assures Phillida and Galatea that she will 'turn one of them to be a man'.[23] While not actually shown on stage, the play's gender swap promises to be permanent; *Galatea* has, accordingly, been dubbed 'the ultimate conversion narrative'.[24]

My above counter-examples notwithstanding, physiological instability more frequently characterizes Lylian stage metamorphoses. In act 4, scene 1 of *Midas* (ca 1589), a piece that draws its plot elements principally from *Metamorphoses* 11, Apollo angrily transforms the titular king so that he finds the 'ears of an ass' on his head (5.3.11). Anticipating Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, however,

Lyly's Midas diverges from his Ovidian model when he undergoes a second meta-morphosis in the play's final scene. Striking a conciliatory pose, Midas travels to Apollo's oracle at Delphi where he begs to 'be free from [the] shame' of his trans-formed state (11). Divinely 'resolved' and 'restored' to his former shape, this early modern Midas 'shake[s] off [his] ass's ears' onstage at the comedy's close (121, 131, 126). In *Endymion* (ca 1588) as well, metamorphoses occur only to be reversed. Tellus engages the 'notable witch' Dipsas to make her erstwhile lover Endymion fall into 'such a dead sleep that nothing can wake or move him'.[25] Endymion's forty-year slumber is also a metamorphic event, for he awakens with 'Winkled cheeks', 'decayed limbs', 'Hollow eyes', a 'Withered body', and a 'grey beard' (4.3.79–80, 5.1.53–4). Again, though, this alteration is not terminal. In the play's final act, the intervention of Cynthia causes Endymion's 'mouldy hairs to moult' in a rejuvenative retro-metamorphosis strikingly reminiscent of Aeson's in *Meta-morphoses* 7 (5.4.190). Corsites, too, is 'deformed' partway through *Endymion* when he acquires mysterious 'leopard'-like spots all over his body, and a third instance of corporeal metamorphosis transpires when Dipsas changes 'her maid Bagoa to an aspen tree for bewraying her secrets' (4.3.92, 89, 5.2.85–6). And, like Endymion's, both Corsites's and Bagoa's metamorphoses ultimately reverse. Whereas the former uses a lunary to 'recover [his] former state', the 'hard for-tunes' of the latter resolve when Cynthia returns the aspen to her original human form (4.3.133, 5.4.295).

   Lyly's *Love's Metamorphosis,* however, stands out as the preeminent exemplar of an early modern English stage play that treats mythological 'matters of morph-osis' as physical phenomena. In the remainder of this article, I therefore focus my attention on this Lylian work, which Paul's Boys first performed circa 1590 and the Children of the Chapel Royal later revived (roughly contemporaneously with the release of *Cynthia's Revels* and *The Maid's Metamorphosis*) in 1600 or 1601. As its intertextually resonant title would suggest, *Love's Metamorphosis* is self-con-sciously Ovidian, and its plot hinges on the (mostly reversible) bodily transforma-tions of various female characters into trees, flowers, rocks, birds, and even men. Leah Scragg submits that the 'Ovidian universe' of *Love's Metamorphosis* is there-fore 'at one with the shifting realities of the Lylian corpus as a whole, in which the boundary between the inanimate and animate worlds is highly unstable and mutation a primary concern'.[26] This relatively short play draws elements of its plot both from the tale of Erysichthon and Mestra in *Metamorphoses* 8 as well as, more elusively, from the 'seemingly unending chain of stories of pursuit and rape' that, as Philip Hardie aptly notes, forms 'many readers' most abiding memory of [Ovid's] poem'.[27]

Before turning to the particular ways in which Lyly treats the interlinked processes of metamorphosis and retro-metamorphosis within this play, we need to establish how *Love's Metamorphosis* engages with its primary Ovidian source more generally. *Love's Metamorphosis* is comprised, structurally, of two intertwined plot strands. One of these adapts, with some modification, *Metamorphoses* 8's tale of Erysichthon and Mestra. Like so many of the tales in Ovid's poem, this episode is a story-within-a-story, supposedly narrated by the river god Acheloüs. Chronologically the first narrative in Ovid's collection to invoke shape-shifters, it also contains the classical poem's most pointed and elaborate treatment of chronic mutation. Acheloüs, who eventually concludes his remarks on Mestra with the admission that he, too, is a shape-shifter, opens this tale with reference to the archetypal Proteus. The river god lists Proteus's various incarnations into human, bestial, botanical, and non-sentient forms to contextualize the similar and unusual transformative abilities of Erysichthon's daughter. In so doing, Acheloüs makes the vital observation that such serial change deviates from what readers of the Roman poem have come, by book 8, to understand as the Ovidian metamorphic norm: 'there are those / whose forms, once changed, forevermore remain / in their new state; others there are [like Proteus and Mestra] for whom / continual transformation is the rule' (8.1027–30).

In the *Metamorphoses,* the imprudent actions of Mestra's father Erysichthon, a flouter of divine authority, prompt her shape-shifting career. After Erysichthon commits a deliberate act of sacrilege by taking his axe to one of the goddess Ceres's sacred oaks (thereby also killing the hamadryad who dwelt within this tree), the harvest goddess duly punishes him.[28] Insatiable hunger plagues Erysichthon as he devours all of his former wealth and property; finally, having exhausted other resources, he resolves to sell his own daughter. Mestra narrowly escapes this fate by appealing to her former lover Neptune, who grants her the ability to shape-shift. Her greedy father briefly exploits Mestra's newfound metamorphic abilities for his own financial gain — that is, Erysichthon sells 'her off to master after master' while 'she, as a mare, or bird, or cow, or deer' repeatedly 'slip[s] away' — before ultimately perishing by consuming his own flesh (1228–30).

Although Erisichthon may escape his grisly Ovidian end via self-ingestion in Lyly's work, the first plot strand of *Love's Metamorphosis* replicates the basic outlines of the Erysichthon and Mestra tale in *Metamorphoses* 8. In retelling the story of Erysichthon's tree-felling, Lyly's play reproduces Ovid's earlier emphasis on this mortal's flagrant *impietas,* similarly dwelling upon his brazen disregard of divine authority. When, in act 1, Lyly's Erisichthon encounters Ceres's nymphs celebrating a harvest holiday at the foot of the goddess's sacred tree, this

'contemner of the gods' sounds not unlike an irate landlord apprehending illegal trespassers on his land.[29] Provided with a sense of purpose largely absent from Ovid's earlier rendition of the tale, Lyly vests his Erisichthon, the self-identified 'ruler of [the] forest' in which the nymphs are celebrating, with a double motivation for interrupting their festivities (1.2.71). He expresses anger that the celebrating nymphs might 'disturb [his] game', yet he is equally peeved to see them 'dare do honour to any but' himself (72–3). Erisichthon's hubristic belief that he is more deserving of worship causes him to dismiss Ceres as a 'goddess, which none but peevish girls reverence' (93–4). Lyly's character therefore cuts Ceres's sacred tree to the ground in an attempt to assert his own authority over the landscape and its inhabitants.

In the *Metamorphoses,* the figure of obedient Mestra plays a narrative role that further emphasizes her father's impiety. Erisichthon's daughter Protea (apparently renamed by Lyly to underscore her alignment with the shape-shifter Proteus and, correspondingly, the play's titular interest in metamorphosis itself) fulfils a similar function in *Love's Metamorphosis.* We first meet Protea in act 3, scene 2, when Erisichthon informs his 'dear daughter' that she will 'be sold' and must be 'contented' with this fate (3.2.1–3). Promising to 'obey both to sale and slaughter', Protea agreeably invites her father to 'Chop and change' her as he likes — particularly evocative language given his prior chopping of Ceres's tree and her own impending changes of physical form (18, 31). Protea, like Mestra before her, is figuratively aligned with the oak that her father similarly violates. Yet her resourcefulness means that Protea escapes the tree's violent fate. Rather, in the vein of Ovid's Mestra, she offers up a private prayer to 'Sacred Neptune' in a timely act of supplication: 'Let me, as often as I be bought for money, or pawned for meat, be turned into a bird, hare, or lamb, or any shape wherein I may be safe' (27, 33–5).

As in Ovid's *Metamorphoses,* which figures Ceres as a powerful deity (capable of presenting appropriate displays of ire, granting her assent to prayers, and doling out punishments), *Love's Metamorphosis* stresses the goddess's divine status. In its thematizations of *pietas* and *impietas,* however, Lyly's play departs from Ovid's tale by adding Cupid to the mix. Whereas the Erysichthon and Mestra episode in the *Metamorphoses* centres on the predictably ill-fated power struggle between an egotistical mortal man and a single powerful godhead, Lyly's play shows Cupid equally involved in this quest for reverence. These ongoing struggles for dominance and recognition bear directly upon the second of the play's plot strands, wherein 'those that yield, and honour Cupid' receive 'sweet thoughts' and the fulfilment of 'pleasing wishes' but 'the other' (who do not so 'honour

Cupid') are 'tormented with vain imaginations and impossible hopes' (5.1.29–32). In this second strand, the 'amorous foresters' Ramis, Montanus, and Silvestris tenaciously pursue three female devotees of Ceres, each of whom either 'mocks love', 'hates love', or 'thinks herself above love' (1.2.21, 1.1.27–9). Unlike Ceres, who understands the value of periodically demonstrating deference to Cupid, her followers are decidedly impolitic about performing requisite acts of *pietas.* The almighty god, resultantly, twice transforms these nymphs. At the behest of the spurned foresters, Cupid first turns Nisa, Celia, and Niobe into a bird, a rock, and a rosebush and then later restores them to their original female forms.

Though less obviously Ovidian than the plot strand regarding Ersichthon and Protea, this narrative of 'Cruel Nisa', 'Coy Celia', and 'Wavering, yet witty, Niobe' and their divine disobedience is also deeply indebted to the tales of the *Metamorphoses* (3.1.152–4). Lyly appears to have developed these characters from suggestions found in Ovid's following lines:

> There stood a giant oak of many years,
> a veritable grove all by itself,
> girdled with garlands, ribbons and votive tablets —
> all witnesses to effacious prayer.
>   Often beneath its branches, dryads danced,
> And, linking hands, encircled the great oak   (8.1049–54)

Lyly's play significantly fleshes out the unnamed dryads of *Metamorphoses* 8, minor characters Ovid mentions only in passing. So too does Lyly expand and develop Ovid's mention of Ceres's ritual votive tablets, or *memores,* which serve as material proof of prayers fulfilled, in *Love's Metamorphosis.* In Lyly's ancient source, the ironic presence of these *memores* contributes to our sense of the tree as sacred, consecrated to Ceres, and a material testament to her authority; Lyly's revision of this image in act 1 of *Love's Metamorphosis* seems calculated instead to accentuate Cupid's governance over gods and mortals alike. To wit, rather than *memores* attesting Ceres's power, Lyly's characters install amatory messages on the tree. The first scene of *Love's Metamorphosis* begins with Montanus, Silvestris, and Ramis hanging ornamental 'scutcheon[s] on th[e] tree' of Ceres for Nisa, Celia, and Niobe's benefit, and the nymphs later reply by decorating the sacred oak with inscribed retorts of their own (1.1.33). This symbolic replacement of the Ovidian Ceres's religious *memores* with notes of romantic ambition and rejection provides an early hint at the new centrality of Cupid in Lyly's unfurling of Erisichthon's tale.

While the development of Nisa, Celia, and Niobe as central characters in *Love's Metamorphosis* may seem like an original Lylian embellishment of the Erysichthon and Mestra material in *Metamorphoses* 8, the Elizabethan dramatist's portrayal of these characters owes much to portraits of Diana's nymphs found throughout in the *Metamorphoses,* along with the plethora of chase-and-rape scenes that pervade Ovid's poem. That Ceres's nymphs are analogues to the man-spurning nymphs of Diana (including Daphne, Syrinx, Callisto, and Atalanta in the *Metamorphoses,* as well as cognate characters portrayed in Lyly's own earlier *Galatea*) is a point *Love's Metamorphosis* repeatedly emphasizes. Ceres, for instance, highlights this affinity when she presciently cautions her followers that 'Diana's nymphs were as chaste as Ceres' virgins', yet 'they all yielded to love' (2.1.87–90). The familiar tale of Daphne, moreover, provides Lyly with a particular prototype for the foresters' pursuit of Nisa, Celia, and Niobe. Chronologically the first of the *Metamorphoses*'s many narratives of rape and attempted rape, Daphne's story sets the pattern not only for the sequence of sexually violent stories that memorably occupy the final third of *Metamorphoses* 1 but also for the many similar tales that follow throughout the remainder of the fifteen-book collection. In this episode, Diana's nymph finds herself unwillingly pursued by Apollo. Just as the deity seems about to seize her, however, Daphne's prayers are answered, and a timely metamorphosis into a laurel protects her from imminent assault. Act 3 of *Love's Metamorphosis* features a successive chain of related chase scenes, with Ramis following Nisa, Montanus following Celia, and Silvestris following Niobe. That we are meant to recognize these as restaging Apollo's pursuit of Daphne is intertextually clarified by Ramis's appropriation of the Ovidian god's dialogue in the act's opening lines: his command 'Stay, cruel Nisa! Thou knowest not from whom thou fliest, and therefore fliest' (3.1.1–2) clearly reprises Phoebus's 'you've no idea, rash girl, you've no idea / whom you are fleeing, and that is why you flee' (1.710–11). Like *Love's Metamorphosis,* furthermore, Lyly's Ovidian source tale is explicitly concerned with Cupid's desire to showcase his supremacy. After all, in the *Metamorphoses,* the rapacious desire exhibited by Apollo is the direct consequence of an insult he delivered to Cupid, with Daphne's victimization stemming from a slighted god's desire to demonstrate the full scope of his influence over a fellow male deity.

In various ways, Lyly's Erisichthon, Ceres, and Cupid are all preoccupied with defining, negotiating, and exerting their own power. A concern with authority permeates both plot strands in *Love's Metamorphosis,* evoking those same themes of *pietas* and *impietas* that run through *Metamorphoses* 8. In the play's final act, Ceres, disturbed by the corporeal transformations of her nymphs, appeals to Cupid to reverse what she deems to be their 'shapes unreasonable' (5.1.2). The

two godheads strike a deal whereby Ceres will restore Erisichthon, alleviating his insatiable hunger. In turn, Cupid will restore Nisa, Celia, and Niobe to their female forms. There are a number of additional conditions on both sides, however, designed to ensure that both divinities receive proper reverence in the future.

Beyond its neo-Ovidian concern with *pietas* and *impietas,* Lyly's play also evinces a fascination with the trope of metamorphosis that further unites its bifold plot strands. Given the aforementioned rarity of retro-metamorphoses, shape-shifters, and serial mutation in Ovid's classical text, Lyly's tangible preoccupation with all of these phenomena in *Love's Metamorphosis* is noteworthy. Of the five female characters who undergo (or are described as having previously undergone) bodily metamorphoses in Lyly's play, four — Nisa, Celia, and Niobe, as well as the shape-shifting Protea — experience decidedly unstable metamorphoses, returning to their female bodies by the play's conclusion. The fifth — the nymph-cum-scared-tree Fidelia — initially looks as though she might prove to be an exemplar of a typically Ovidian terminal metamorphosis, yet she too experiences a second transformation (in the non-restorative pattern of Ovid's Callisto) before the play's end. After being brutally 'hacked in pieces' in her arboreal form, Fidelia's physical remains undergo a further — seemingly post-mortem — metamorphosis when Diana 'change[s] her blood to fresh flowers, which are to be seen on the ground' (2.1.5–6, 5.1.41–2).[30] The many neo-Ovidian metamorphoses in *Love's Metamorphosis,* then, are overwhelmingly reversible and/or plural.

When Ovid's bleeding hamadryad begins to speak in book 8 of the *Metamorphoses,* she identifies herself only as a follower of Ceres and offers a brief prophetic curse, directed at her *impius* attacker:

> Beneath the surface of this tree I dwell,
> A nymph of Ceres; dying, I foresee
> Your punishment at hand, and pleased, foretell
> The consolation that your death will be.   (1083–6)

Fidelia, Lyly's equivalent tree of Ceres, is considerably more loquacious. This oak has a name and a developed identity, including a backstory wholly absent from Ovid's text. Rather than prophesying Erisichthon's future punishment, Lyly's tree instead bewails her own past. Fidelia relates an autobiography that sounds like it would be at home amongst the formulaic string of sexual assaults in what has been called Ovid's 'epic of rape': 'chased with a satyr, by prayer to the gods [she] became turned to a tree' (1.2.139–40).[31] Although her 'mind nothing can alter', Fidelia's 'body now is grown over with a rough bark, and [her] golden locks … covered with green leaves' (141–3). This story that Fidelia relays of her pursuit

and transformation primes us to note key parallels with the subsequent meta-morphoses of Nisa, Celia, and Niobe. The spurned foresters, ironically reflecting that 'Cupid is a kind god' and determined to 'entreate his favour', initiate the first metamorphoses of these nymphs (3.1.185–7). Silvestris, Ramis, and Montanus appeal to the godhead not for aid in their amatory suits but rather in the hope that he might humiliate or persecute Nisa, Celia, and Niobe for rejecting their advances. The foresters want reprisal, and Cupid is happy to comply. Cupid's acquiescence to the men's joint appeal, however, seems motivated not so much by the weight of the arguments made by these supplicants as by the god's own abid-ing concern with *pietas*. Metamorphosis serves as a vehicle for 'Cupid [to] prove himself a great god' and those nymphs who so casually 'blaspheme [his] godhead' merely 'peevish girls' (4.1.119–20, 63).

Despite the three foresters' belief — a belief significantly shared by Cupid, and perhaps by Ceres, as well — that the transformations of Nisa, Celia, and Niobe into non-human plants, animals, or minerals are punitive, contemporary scholarship has noted that Ceres's chaste devotees do not share this conviction.[32] Following Cupid's allegedly benevolent reversal of their bodily metamorphoses in act 5, the freshly restored nymphs do not behave as expected when instructed that they 'must now take [the foresters] for [their] husbands' (5.4.52–3). Ceres point-edly prods the retro-metamorphosed trio, asking 'Why speak you not, nymphs?' and 'Why stare you, my nymphs, as amazed?' (58–9, 47). Cupid and the foresters seem similarly befuddled by Nisa, Celia, and Niobe's collective lack of enthusi-asm in the wake of their corporeal restorations. Rather than rejoicing, each of the nymphs asks to be transformed 'again' (81, 98, 108). In sharp contrast to the aforementioned 'metaphorical instead of physical and literal' changes that Bate and others argue inform early modern theatrical engagements with Ovid's *Meta-morphoses* more generally, Lyly's representations of Nisa, Celia, and Niobe's trans-formations are thus essentially anti-psychological in nature. The three have (and understandably so) experienced no interior change that would reverse their earlier reluctance to be wooed by or marry the foresters. To this effect, the nymphs' purportedly 'perverse' requests to perennially retain their non-humanoid shapes cause an exasperated Cupid to threaten that he 'will turn them again: not to flowers, or stones, or birds, but to monsters' (114–15). What the deities and forest-ers — and even Ceres — fail to grasp is that corporeal change for Nisa, Celia, and Niobe, as for Fidelia, offers a potentially attractive form of autonomy.

Fidelia's verbal outpourings in act 1 of Lyly's play can help to illuminate the position on transformation taken by Ceres's retro-metamorphosed nymphs. Fol-lowing her physical assault by Erisichthon, the wounded hamadryad invokes two

Ovidian precedents by name, comparing both Daphne's and Myrrha's ultimate fates to her own. That Fidelia, 'the express pattern of chastity, and example of misfortune' (1.2.157–8), should self-identify with Daphne is predictable, for their tales of rapacious pursuit and timely transformation into trees are broadly similar in narrative outline. That this plainant should simultaneously invoke the story of Myrrha, however, seems puzzling at first glance. Although she similarly transforms into arboreal form following a long chase, the incestuous Myrrha, who seduces her own unwitting father in *Metamorphoses* 10, is hardly an emblem of chastity. Yet careful consideration of Fidelia's words reveals a commonality between these two mythological precedents: post mutation, they were left to their own devices. Daphne was 'pursued' only 'till she was turned to a bay tree', at which point 'Divine Phoebus … ceased … to trouble her', and Myrrha's father 'followed his daughter' only 'till she was changed to a myrrh tree', afterwards ceasing 'to prosecute her' (1.2.118–22).[33] As Ovid evocatively puts it in *Metamorphoses* 10, transformation allows Myrrha to opt out from both life and death 'lest [she] … outrage / the living by … survival, or the dead by … dying' (581–2). Cora Fox aptly summarizes this dynamic as it translates into Lyly's play: 'Metamorphosis functions, according to Fidelia's complaint, as a bitter but effective evasion', offering 'a feminized escape from a masculinized social world'.[34]

The serial metamorphoses of Lyly's Protea share elements with but also stand in contrast to those of Ceres's nymphs. Like her antecedent in *Metamorphoses* 8, Protea begins her career as a shape-shifter when Neptune aids her timely, gender-bending metamorphosis into a fisherman so that she might evade sale to a new master. Subsequently, Protea changes herself a second time to become the ghost of Ulysses, in which form she rescues her husband-to-be Petulius (seemingly a renamed version of Autolycus from *Metamorphoses* 8) from a wily Siren. Protea differs from Ceres's nymphs in that, while she may similarly use serial transformation as a means of evasion, she does not appear to crave a further extension of the metamorphic stasis idealized by Fidelia, Nisa, Celia, or Niobe. Whereas Ceres's followers perceive metamorphosis as a means of extricating themselves from the sexual economy — an economy which their retro-metamorphoses will require Nisa, Celia, and Niobe to unhappily rejoin, and which only Fidelia wholly escapes (albeit via the rather dubious means of arborification and presumable death) — Protea has no parallel need or desire to exempt herself from socio-sexual interchange. The key difference, of course, lies in the fact that Protea is the only woman in Lyly's play romantically matched with a man whom she apparently desires.

In considering Protea's presumable contentment upon resuming her initial female shape and how it differs from the reactions of Nisa, Celia, and Niobe, I want to highlight a set of relevant observations that Feldherr has made about the inherent conventionality of Ovid's Mestra. Her 'preservation of her own identity', he argues, 'is molded to be perfectly compatible with the maintenance of every kind of order'.[35] Indeed, Mestra's 'multiple capacities for disruption' ('by violating contracts, by assuming the prerogatives of the gods, and by offering … a renewable resource with the potential to thwart Ceres' punishment of Erysichthon') are conspicuously 'all held in check' in Ovid's tale.[36] Mestra's final resumption of her original human form in *Metamorphoses* 8 saliently leads to her marriage. Although I have been referring to this character as 'Mestra', she in fact remains unnamed in Ovid's text — my use of her name derives from alternate versions of this tale found elsewhere, including the classical poetry of Hesiod and Erasmus's sixteenth-century *Adages*. When Acheloüs introduces Ovid's Mestra, he notably refers to her patronymically and periphrastically as the 'daughter of Erysichthon, who wed / Autolycus' (8.1042–3). Acheloüs's initial identification of Mestra via her future husband highlights, from the start of the tale, the pertinent fact that this shape-shifting mortal ultimately 'settle[s] down to respectable matrimony and a single shape', as one Ovidian commentator has put it.[37]

At this juncture, then, I want to pose a set of interrelated questions: what light might the final retro-metamorphosis of Mestra in *Metamorphoses* 8 (a transformation that facilitates her resumption of a normative, gender-defined place in the socio-sexual economy and expedites her identity-defining marriage to Autolycus) shed on Lyly's use of Protea as a foil to Ceres's devotees, and how might this relate to the succession of gendered retro-metamorphoses that occur onstage at the end of *Love's Metamorphosis*? Having first represented physical mutation as an unsustainable — if also, from a female perspective, potentially desirable — form of escape from unwanted male desire, *Love's Metamorphosis* ends with the discomfiting suggestion that that Nisa, Celia, and Niobe's externally imposed restorations of form seal their collective fate as the three foresters' future wives. In the interests of neutralizing, at least momentarily, what Feldherr might call the nymphs' 'multiple capacities for disruption', Cupid retro-metamorphoses their bodies and thus condemns Ceres's followers to the revered state of matrimony, or as James M. Bromley pronounces it, 'enforced marriage'.[38]

The conceptual deviations I have identified between the characteristically labile Lylian versus characteristically terminal Ovidian representations of mutability evoke the broader tensions involved in translating the *Metamorphoses*'s tales of externalized and permanent bodily transformation for the Elizabethan stage.

We should not overlook the shift in medium that accompanied Lyly's adaptation of Ovid in *Love's Metamorphosis,* nor the fact that material culture undoubtedly shaped his aesthetic choices. To what extent, for example, was the dramatist's reconception of Ovidian transformation coloured by the fact that, 'at some point in his career', Lyly acquired a stage tree that 'he became rather devoted to'?[39] After all, this artificial tree seems to have featured in a number of his 'Ovidian' plays (ie, *The Woman in the Moon, Galatea, Endymion,* as well as *Love's Metamorphosis*), and, as Shannon Kelley speculates, its 'wooden trunk' might well 'have been recognizable to an early modern audience as a chest' and 'functioned as a space from which an audience would have *expected* a hidden actor to emerge'.[40] Theatre is a medium that brings human bodies as well as properties onto the stage, and it thus requires audiences to engage with the physicality of metamorphosis in a different way than narrative poetry. The attraction of Lyly and his fellow Elizabethan-era dramatists to retro-metamorphosis may well speak to the various aesthetic and affective incentives involved in returning actors' bodies (and the major characters they represent) to the stage before the end of a play. If we accept the premise that an 'actor's body never stops asserting itself in its material, physiological facticity', then there is, for example, a clear metatheatrical payoff involved in staging the retro-metamorphoses of dramatic personae: they cue spectators to register the presence of the actors' own transformative bodies and correlatively underscore the metamorphic nature of mimetic representation.[41]

Beyond such considerations of Lyly's theatrical medium, I also want to posit that the high proportion of retro-metamorphoses in his dramatic works may speak to the author's more particularized techniques of theatrical resolution. Put otherwise, the logic of closure in Lyly's plays often seems to hinge upon those same sorts of restorative, rejuvenative, or serial metamorphoses that so infrequently appear in Ovid's *Metamorphoses.* Lylian resolution — which is occasionally, but by no means predominantly, epithalamic — is reliably presented, *dei ex machina*-style, as a series of divine compromises and shrewd negotiations: traditional hierarchies are ostensibly (re)ordered, roles (re)assigned, and identities — (re)established. To this effect, *Love's Metamorphosis,* concludes with a recognizable, if considerably strained, version of that paradigmatic 'last scene' so often seen in comedy — a scene in which, as described by Northrop Frye, 'the dramatist … tries to get all his characters on the stage at once' such that 'the audience witnesses the birth of a renewed sense of social integration'.[42] Taken at face value, such conceptions of closure-as-(re)establishment-of-accepted-social-order are largely incompatible with the changed-and-then-unchanging metamorphic standard of Ovid's narrative poetry. If we interpret theatrical closure in *Love's Metamorphosis* as being (at

least superficially) achieved through the forcible reconciliation of the play's other characters with the all-powerful Cupid and 'social integration' as the compulsory re-entry of Ceres's nymphs into the marriage market, then it becomes clear why, logically speaking, the disengagement from the socio-sexual economy associated with Ovidian metamorphosis-as-eternal-suspension must be reversed through acts of retro-metamorphoses. That said, a distinct sense of fragility — a fragility that arguably haunts the resolutions of Lyly's plays more generally — further complicates the ending of *Love's Metamorphosis.* An uneasy mixture of coercion, insincerity, and divine mandate fuels the supposed reconciliations of the play's characters with the god of love, and this bitter tincture hardly heralds future stability. Indeed, the triumphant Cupid's risible concluding declaration that, 'hav[ing] disposed the affections of men' to his satisfaction, he will now 'soar up into heaven, to settle the loves of the gods' with equal efficiency ironically highlights the deep flaws in his wider programme of 'social integration' (5.4.184–5).

Charles Segal proposes that Ovid often used metamorphosis in the *Metamorphoses* to crystallize 'moments when stable forms and familiar norms dissolve in order to tap creative, if necessarily disorderly, energies that are usually kept beneath the surface, under the control of political, social and symbolic systems that insist on coherence and order'.[43] For all that Lylian stage transformation may vary from the Ovidian standard, the early modern author ultimately employed bodily acts of both metamorphosis and retro-metamorphosis to much the same end. Restorative, rejuvenative, or serial alteration in Lyly's plays might appear to operate on one level as a mechanism for externally (re)imposing 'stable forms and familiar norms', however ideologically disquieting, and for (re)asserting 'the control of political, social and symbolic systems'. Yet the efficacy of corporeal change as a mechanism for maintaining social 'coherence and order' is consistently undermined by what we might identify as those 'disorderly' and subversive 'energies' that trouble not only the dénouement of *Love's Metamorphosis,* but also the many depictions of metamorphosis and retro-metamorphosis found throughout Lyly's broader dramatic canon.

Notes

1   Ovid, *Metamorphoses, Books I–VIII*, trans. Frank Justus Miller, rev G.P. Goold, 3rd
     edn (1977; rpt Cambridge, MA, 2004), 1.1, https://doi.org/10.4159/dlcl.ovid-meta-
     morphoses.1916; *Ovid's Metamorphoses*, trans. Arthur Golding, ed. John Frederick
     Nims (Philadelphia, 2000), 1.1. All subsequent references to the *Metamorphoses*
     throughout this article are parenthetical and refer to the following English transla-
     tion: Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. Charles Martin (London, 2010).

2   Donald Lateiner, 'Mythic and Non-Mythic Artists in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*', *Ramus*
     13.1 (1984), 2, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0048671X00005099.

3   Leonard Barkan, *The Gods Made Flesh: Metamorphosis and the Pursuit of Pagan-
     ism* (New Haven, 1986), 64; Garth Tissol, *The Face of Nature: Wit, Narrative,
     and Cosmic Origins in Ovid's Metamorphoses* (Princeton, 1997), 195, https://doi.
     org/10.1515/9781400864614.

4   The mechanics and defining characteristics of Ovidian metamorphosis remain sur-
     prisingly under-theorized to date. Notable (post-classically oriented) exceptions in-
     clude a handful of studies that have investigated the trope of Ovidian transformation
     in relation to identity politics, selfhood, and human-animal distinctions: Caroline
     Walker Bynum, *Metamorphosis and Identity* (New York, 2001); Marina Warner, *Fan-
     tastic Metamorphoses, Other Worlds: Ways of Telling the Self* (Oxford, 2002); and Su-
     san Wiseman, *Writing Metamorphosis in the English Renaissance, 1550–1700* (Cam-
     bridge, 2014), https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9781107300460.

5   Andy Kesson, *John Lyly and Early Modern Authorship* (Manchester, 2013), 4.

6   Jeff Shulman, 'Ovidian Myth in Lyly's Courtship Comedies', *Studies in English Lit-
     erature, 1500–1900* 25.2 (1985), 253, http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/450722.

7   M.C. Bradbrook, *The Growth and Structure of Elizabethan Comedy* (1955; rpt Lon-
     don, 1979), 79. Emphasis my own.

8   William C. Carroll, *The Metamorphoses of Shakespearean Comedy* (Princeton, 1985),
     3, https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400854813.

9   Jonathan Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid* (Oxford, 1993), 181, https://doi.org/10.1093/ac
     prof:oso/9780198183242.001.0001.

10   John W. Velz, 'Shakespeare's Ovid in the Twentieth Century: A Critical Survey', ed.
     A.B. Taylor, *Shakespeare's Ovid: The Metamorphoses in the Plays and Poems* (Cam-
     bridge, 2000), 190.

11   Kent Cartwright, 'The Confusions of *Gallathea*: John Lyly as Popular Dramatist',
     Comparative Drama 32.2 (1998), 211, https://doi.org/10.1353/cdr.1998.0000.

12   Michael Simpson (trans.), *The Metamorphoses of Ovid* (Amherst, 2001), 4.

13 In *Metamorphoses* 8, Medea replicates this magical feat of rejuvenation on non-human agents as well: a Nysean ram is restored to lambhood and a staff to an olive tree.

14 Andrew Feldherr, *Playing Gods: Ovid's Metamorphoses and the Politics of Fiction* (Princeton, 2010), 109, https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400836543. On Ovidian shape-shifters, see Elaine Fantham, '*Sunt quibus in plures ius est transire figuras:* Ovid's Self-Transformers in the *Metamorphoses*', *The Classical World* 87.2 (1993), 21–36, http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/4351453.

15 Carroll, *Metamorphoses of Shakespearean Comedy,* 64.

16 William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* Stephen Greenblatt, et al (eds), *The Norton Shakespeare,* 2nd edn (New York, 2008), 3.1.102–6. All dates given for plays throughout this essay adhere to probable years of composition identified in Martin Wiggins and Catherine Richardson, *British Drama, 1533–1642: A Catalogue,* vols 2–4 (Oxford, 2012–2014).

17 The limited number of physical metamorphoses in the tragicomedies that Shakespeare produced later in his career likewise tend to be impermanent in nature. Depending upon how literally one is prepared to take Hermione's reanimation at the close of *A Winter's Tale,* she appears to undergo a series of bodily shifts from woman to statue to woman again, thereby modifying the Pygmalion narrative of *Metamorphoses* 10 to accord with the same change-and-restoration pattern seen in *A Midsummer Night Dream. The Tempest*'s Ariel seems, like Mestra of *Metamorphoses* 8, to be something of a serial shape-shifter: one moment a fair water nymph, the next a foul harpy, and then back again.

18 See Ben Jonson, *Cynthia's Revels, or The Fountain of Self-Love,* David Bevington, Martin Butler, and Ian Donaldson (eds), *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson,* vol. 1 (Cambridge, 2012), 429–548.

19 See *The Maid's Metamorphosis,* ed. R. Warwick Bond, *The Complete Works of John Lyly,* vol. 3 (Oxford, 1902), 341–87.

20 Though beyond the immediate scope of this article, it might also be noted that both *Cynthia's Revels* and *The Maid's Metamorphosis* were, like Lyly's Ovidian comedies, specifically written for performance by children's companies.

21 John Lyly, *The Woman in the Moon,* ed. Leah Scragg (Manchester, 2006), 1.1.57, 62, 69. Subsequent references are parenthetical.

22 See John Lyly, *Sappho and Phao,* G.K. Hunter and David Bevington (eds), *Campapse; Sappho and Phao* (Manchester, 1991), 197–300.

23 John Lyly, *Galatea,* G.K. Hunter and David Bevington (eds), *Galatea; Midas* (Manchester, 2000), 5.3.151–2. Subsequent parenthetical references to *Midas* refer also to this edition.

24 Jeremy Lopez, *Theatrical Convention and Audience Response in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge, 2003), 191, https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139344128.

25 John Lyly, *Endymion,* ed. David Bevington (Manchester, 1996), 5.2.85, 3.4.162–3. Subsequent references are parenthetical.

26 Leah Scragg, 'Re-editing Lyly for the Modern Reader, or the Case of Mother Bombie's Stool', *The Review of English Studies* 63.258 (2012), 28, https://doi.org/10.1093/res/hgr007

27 Philip Hardie, *Ovid's Poetics of Illusion* (Cambridge, 2002), 67. Although scholars' opinions have varied on the chronology of these texts (as *Love's Metamorphosis* is a difficult text to date), it should also be noted that Lyly's play bears a striking similarities to Robert Greene's *Alcida* of 1588. Greene's prose romance tells of three metamorphosed maidens whose fates are analogous to those of Nisa, Celia, and Niobe. Greene's Fiordespine, Erphilia, and Marpesia are — terminally, in accordance with the Ovidian norm — transformed into a statue, a chameleon (described as a type of fowl), and a rosebush. For various theories on the relationship between these texts, see: C.F. McClumpha, 'The Metamorphosis of Greene and of Lyly', *PMLA* 12 (1897), lv–lix, http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/456244; G.K. Hunter, *John Lyly: The Humanist as Courtier* (Cambridge, MA, 1962), 81; and Michael Pincombe, *The Plays of John Lyly: Eros and Eliza* (Manchester, 1996), 147–9.

28 On Ovid's thematization of *pietas* in the Erysichthon and Mestra episode, see: William S. Anderson (ed.), *Ovid's Metamorphoses: Books 6–10* (Norman, OK, 1972), 400–1; G. Karl Galinsky, *Ovid's Metamorphoses: An Introduction to the Basic Aspects* (Berkeley, 1975), 5–14, 220–8; and Meredith Prince, 'The Ties That (Un)Bind: Fathers, Daughters, and *Pietas* in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*', *Syllecta Classica* 22 (2011), 39–68, http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/syl.2011.0007.

29 John Lyly, *Love's Metamorphosis,* ed. Leah Scragg (Manchester, 2009), 1.2.167. Subsequent references are parenthetical.

30 It is worth noting that Fidelia's second (floral) transformation is reminiscent of Adonis's post-mortem botanical metamorphosis in *Metamorphoses* 10.

31 Charles Segal*, Landscape in Ovid's Metamorphoses: A Study in the Transformation of a Literary Symbol* (Wiesbaden, 1969), 93. The *Metamorphoses* contains 'more than fifty tales of rape in its fifteen books (nineteen told at some length)', making roughly 20% of Ovid's tales one of sexual violation: Amy Richlin, 'Reading Ovid's Rapes', ed. Amy Richlin, *Pornography and Representation in Greece and Rome* (Oxford, 1992), 158.

32 Cora Fox, for instance, suggests that Nisa, Celia, and Niobe 'would, essentially, prefer to be Ovidian nymphs, for whom metamorphosis offers escape, than English nymphs, who must yield to marriage': *Ovid and the Politics of Emotion in Elizabethan*

England (Houndmills, 2009), 53, https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230101654. Along similar lines, James M. Bromley observes that Ceres's followers 'actively inhabit their new mode of corporeality by employing their metamorphic states to further resist compelled marriage': '"The onely way to be mad, is to bee constant": Defending Heterosexual Nonmonogamy in John Lyly's *Love's Metamorphosis*', *Studies in Philology* 106.4 (2009), 429, http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/sip.0.0035.

33 Intriguingly, this same pairing of Myrrha and Daphne appears in Edmund Spenser's poetry, as well: *The Faerie Queene,* ed. A.C. Hamilton (1977; rpt New York, 1984), 3.7.26, 4.7.22.

34 Fox, *Ovid and the Politics,* 50.

35 Feldherr, *Playing Gods,* 109.

36 Ibid.

37 A.S. Hollis (ed.), *Metamorphoses: Book VIII* (Oxford, 1970), 133.

38 Bromley, '"The onely way to be mad"'.

39 Hunter, *John Lyly,* 110.

40 Shannon Kelley, 'Desire, a Crooked Yearning, and the Plants of *Endymion*', *Renaissance Drama* 44.1 (2016), 22, https://doi.org/10.1086/685941. Emphasis my own.

41 Stanton B. Garner, *Bodied Spaces: Phenomenology and Performance in Contemporary Drama* (Ithaca, 1994), 44.

42 Northrop Frye, 'The Argument of Comedy', Troni Y. Grandde and Garry Sherbert (eds), *Northrop Frye's Writings on Shakespeare and the Renaissance* (1948; rpt Toronto, 2010), 5, https://doi.org/10.3138/9781442689886.

43 Charles Segal, 'Ovid's Metamorphic Bodies: Art, Gender and Violence in the *Metamorphoses*', *Arion* 5.3 (1998), 12, http://www.jstor.org/stable/20163686.