Ovidio, Metamorfosi 1, 416-451: nova monstra e foedera naturae

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Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1.416–51: *noua monstra and the foedera naturae*

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'The *Metamorphoses* has a subject-matter of inherent paradox...'? The very idea on which the whole extravagant project is based questions at every turn the dividing line between the possible and the impossible, belief and disbelief. In the final book of the poem, Pythagoras offers a remarkable list of *mirabilia*, which, whatever the nature of the relationship between his speech and the poem as a whole, suggests the importance of this theme for the rest of the work. Ovid is working here in the tradition of Hellenistic paradoxography, which itself must be studied in relation to developments in the fields of historiography and geography within the context of a particular socio-cultural environment involving the Library of Alexandria. For Ovid, of course, the Alexandrian poetic tradition also will have had a strong influence. Stylistically, and so generically, Pythagoras' method of exposition looks very much like Lucretian didactic, but it is also tempting to allot a central role to Callimachus, whose *Collection of Marvels* may be seen as foundational for the genre and which clearly has an interesting relationship with his more famous and better-preserved *Aetia*, certainly a key model for the *Metamorphoses*. In any case, it seems reasonable, at least initially, to credit Ovid with a wide-ranging interest in the paradoxographical tradition as a whole, in order to avoid excluding some obscure or unexpected areas from consideration. His reliance on paradoxographers was summed up over a century ago by G. Lafaye, in the end proposing Varro as a key figure in the transmission of a complex tradition. More recently, P. Hardie has looked again at the speech of Pythagoras and argued for Empedocles as a central influence, going so far as to see in *Metamorphoses* 15 a recasting of the Latin epic tradition as 'Empedoclean epos'. This paper will attempt to relate Lafaye's study of paradoxography and Hardie's promotion of Empedocles. It will concentrate on a short episode in the first book of the poem which has strong connections both to the speech of Pythagoras and to the cosmogony which opens the poem, one which occupies a prominent position in the overall structure of the work by the way in which it reworks the initial creation narrative and permits the transition from the cataclysmic flood to the stories involving Python, Apollo, and Daphne. As is well recognized, Ovid's account of the origins of animal life after the flood must be situated within the context of the creation myths which open the poem. It is necessary, therefore, to go back to the beginning (Met. 1.1–4, tr. D. Hill; adapted, to read *illa*):

In noua fert animus mutatas dicere formas corpora; di, coeptis (nam uos mutastis et illa) adspirate meis primaque ab origine mundi ad mea perpetuum deducte tempora carmen.

1 For advice and encouragement of various kinds I would like to thank G. Campbell, M. Garani, J. Farrell, P. Hardie, and S. Myers. It would be quite wrong to assume that the argument I have attempted to formulate in this paper.
2 Hardie 2002b: 44.
3 See Segal 2001 for a recent contribution to the much-discussed question of the relationship between the speech of Pythagoras and the rest of the poem.
4 Pfeiffer 1968: 134–5; Fraser 1972: 762–74; Myers 1994: 133–59. For a survey of the paradoxographical tradition, with bibliography, see Schepens and Delcroix 1996, and see also more generally Hönke and Baumbach 2006.
6 1994: 202–23; for sceptical discussion see Bömer 1986. 268–73, 335 with ample bibliography.
7 Hardie 1995. See also on Pythagoras, from different perspectives, Galinsky 1998; Segal 2001; Volk 2002: 64–7.
My spirit moves me to tell of shapes changed into strange bodies: oh gods (for it was you that changed them too) inspire my undertakings and from the first beginning of the world lead my continuous song down to my own times.

'Novelty is proclaimed in the poem's second word, and paradox follows straight after,...' The opening sentence at once surprises the reader, as the initial and natural interpretation of the words In nova fert animus as a complete sense unit is immediately challenged and modified by the enjambed corpora, picking up nova, creating a striking hyperbaton and forcing the reader to reconstruct the meaning of the whole sentence. This is the first metamorphosis in the poem, and engagement with change (mutatis... mutatibus) is central to the reading of this text on every level. There follows the generic, or at least stylistic, paradox created by the request addressed to the gods, who are asked to 'draw down a long song' (perpetuum dedicatum... carmen), conjuring up a tension between a carmen dedicatum (a short or episodic, Callimachean, elegiac work) and a carmen perpetuum (a long chronological narration of events embracing universal history). When the narrative begins, the poem's first full-scale physical metamorphosis involves the separation of primordial Chaos into the separate elements. Chaos, presented in essentially negative terms (lines 8–12 begin with nec, non, nullus, nec, nec) is described thus (7–9, tr. D. Hill):

rans indigestaque moles
nec quicquam nisi pondus iners congestaque eodem
non bene junctarum discordia semina rerum:

a rough unordered mass,
nothing except inactive weight and heaped together
the discordant seeds of unassembled things.

Within this discordant mass, opposites confront each other in some kind of continual metamorphic battle (17–20, tr. Hill):

quae postquam evolutae caecoque evertit aceruo,
dissociata locis concordi pace liguit:

And after unfolding these and drawing them from their dark heap, he bound them in their separate places with harmonious peace.

Discordia has given way to concordia, and the process of creation can begin. Commentators usually note the presence of Empedoclean Strife and Love behind these terms, but generally make little of the parallel, the consensus being that Ovid's cosmogony is highly eclectic. However, the direct influence of Empedocles may be greater than is generally allowed, given the fact that Ovid, later in book I, when faced with the necessity of repopulating the earth after the flood which wipes out mankind, rewrites the opening account of creation and in doing so interacts closely with an Empedoclean model. And significantly, in this later passage (lines 416–51), Ovid carefully faces the challenge offered by a philosophical tradition which stood fully in the way of anyone setting out to devote a whole multi-book epic to the theme of metamorphosis, one which in fact denied the very possibility of metamorphic change and the existence of monstrous forms. It is the aim of this paper to trace some aspects of Ovid's manoeuvring for position, in terms of creating both the fictional space which allows the telling of metamorphic tales and the generic space for a fifteen-book epic of a highly original kind. In an important sense, it is Ovid's scene-setting in the lines in question...

12 Feldherr 2002: 164.
13 For discussion of the complexities involved and the terms in which the opposiions may be formulated see Barchiesi 2005b: 133–45.
14 Barchiesi 2005b: 132–57 contains the best survey of the enormously complex tradition, with due respect for the importance of Empedocles.
which provides a context within which the *Metamorphoses* as a whole can reveal in the marvellous and the unexpected, and in doing so consistently test and transgress the generic boundaries of epic decorum. But before concentrating on the passage which is the central focus of this paper, it may be useful to sketch very briefly the generic limits within which Ovid is working and which his text consistently challenges. The story will begin with Homer and Apollonius Rhodius, before turning to look at Lucretius, Virgil, and Ovid. Overall, it should become clear that for anyone interested in tracing the presence of paradoxical elements in the epic tradition, it is necessary to take seriously the possibility that one of the key figures in the unfolding tale is Empedocles.

**HOMER, EMPEDOCLES, AND APOLLONIUS RHODIUS**

Homeric restraint in the presentation of the marvellous is well documented. In his study of Homer and the Epic Cycle, for example, J. Griffin states the following: 'The fantastic, the miraculous, and the romantic, all exceeded in the *Iliad* confines them.' Even in the less austere *Odyssey*, Homer takes care to put many strange things into the mouths of characters rather than allowing his narrator to vouch for their truth, and in *Odysseus* account of his wanderings only Polyphemus is explicitly described as a *thaumia* (*Od. 9.190*). In his *Argonautica*, however, Apollonius is closer in many ways to the atmosphere of the Cyclic epics in this regard, and on this level his poem may be thought closer also to the spirit and technique of the *Metamorphoses*. An air of mystery and wonder surrounds many episodes in the *Argonautica*, of which perhaps the most striking is that involving Talos. This remarkable episode has been the subject of detailed study in recent years.

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16 Griffin 1977: 40. See also Labate in this volume, ch. 7.

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R. Buxton has explored the mythic and thematic structures which underpin Apollonius' story, while both M. Dickie and N. Powers underline the scientific aspects of this strange incident and elucidate the ways in which the poet here refers to both ancient magical practice and specifically to Democritus and Presocratic atomist theory concerning the explanation of magical action at a distance. In addition, they attempt to explain why Apollonius deploys such material in his poem. Dickie proposes four reasons: to display erudition, to provide both an example of magic and a rational explanation of it, to heighten the frightening aspects of Medea's actions, and to provide stylistic variety. Powers goes on to relate the passage to the interface between Hellenistic paradoxography and contemporary scientific enquiry, concluding (p. 99): 'Apollonius marks Medea's magic as something that lies on the cusp of scientific explanation, a terrible and unusual event which is nevertheless a recognised phenomenon and a legitimate subject of investigation.' He suggests also an interplay with issues of poetic authority and narratorial control which run throughout the fourth book of the poem in particular. Unsurprisingly, therefore, there is another striking episode in *Argonautica* 4 which also describes *thaumia* (*Arg. 4.682*; cf. the *thaumia* in the mind of the narrator at 4.1673), raises many of the same issues as the Talos episode, and seems to prefigure some central Ovidian concerns.

At *Argonautica* 4.661, on their homeward journey, the Argonauts arrive on the island of Circe. In *Odyssey* 10, which is clearly the main model here, Circe's beasts are lions, wolves, and pigs, but Apollonius describes Circe's animals as follows (*Arg. 4. 672–82*, tr. R. Hunter):

*Her beasts—*which were not entirely like flesh-devouring beasts, nor like men, but rather a jumble of different limbs—all came with her, like a large flock of sheep which follow the shepherd out of the stalls. Similar to these were the creatures which in earlier times the earth itself had created out of the mud, pieced together from a jumble of limbs, before it had been properly solidified by the thirsty air or the rays of the parching sun had eliminated sufficient moisture. Time then sorted out these by grouping them into proper categories.  

Similarly unidentifiable were the forms which followed after Kirke and caused the heroes amazed astonishment.

It is well recognized in scholarship on the Argonautica that these creatures resemble bizarre life forms described by Empedocles, strange forms from an early stage in the processes of creation, when strange hybrids came to life only to disappear, being unable to survive.21 Now many questions and doubts surround any attempt to reconstruct the exact nature of Empedocles' zoogony (or zoogonies)22 from the fragmentary evidence available to us. But we are fortunate in being in a position to compare directly Apollonius' description with some of the surviving fragments in which Empedocles described an early stage in the process of creation, before the coming into being of humankind and animalkind as we know them, in which separate limbs wandered the earth or when individual limbs came together in bizarre combinations to produce strange forms.23 The relevant passages, a summary by Aetius and fragments quoted by Aristotle, Simplicius, Plutarch, and Aelian, are conveniently collected by Kirk, Raven, and Schofield and translated by them as follows:24

375 KRS (Aetius) = A 72 DK = A 72 Inwood

Empedocles held that the first generations of animals and plants were not complete but consisted of separate limbs not joined together; the second, arising from the joining of these limbs, were like creatures in dreams; the third was the generation of whole-natured forms; and the fourth arose no longer from the homogeneous substances such as earth and water, but by intermingling....

376 KRS (Aristotle, Simplicius) = B 57 DK, 50 Wright, 64 Inwood

Here sprang up many faces without necks, arms wandered without shoulders, unattached, and eyes strayed alone, in need of foreheads.

22 For recent discussions of the single/double creation issue see Wilcox 2001; Trépanier 2003; and more generally see the essays in Pieris 2005. On the Empedoclean 'cycle' note also Dillon 2005.
tradition as 'Empedoclean epic'.

Hardie, after a survey of the Greek background, including Apollonius, begins from the opening of Ennius' Annales and takes the story down, via Lucretius and Virgil, to the end of the Metamorphoses, arguing (p. 204) that 'the figure who provides a foundation for Ovid's construction of his own poetic genealogy turns out to be the Greek philosophical poet Empedocles.' His arguments rely in part on an article by D. Sedley arguing for extensive Empedoclean influence on Lucretius.

Since the publication of Hardie's paper, Sedley's original article has appeared in new and extended form. Subsequently, a further contribution by Sedley has attempted to study possible connections between Lucretius and the new fragments of Empedocles published in 1999 by A. Martin and O. Primavesi. Sedley's extensive and ongoing arguments in favour of a very Empedoclean reading of Lucretius are equally important for Hardie's thesis and for the subject of this paper, since the fragments of Empedocles adapted by Apollonius for his Circean creatures also influenced descriptions of zoogony by both Lucretius and Ovid.

**LUCRETIUS**

At DRN 5.772, in his account of zoogony, Lucretius turns his attention to the mundi novitas (780), the world's infancy. He begins by celebrating the role of the earth as mother of all creation --- et terra quoniam sunt cuncta creata (796). He goes on to say that many creatures still grow from the earth under the force of water and sun (797 f.), and then, after returning to the theme of the earth as mother (821 f.) and to her ultimate exhaustion (826 f.), he continues at

837 ff. with the multa...portenta produced by the earth a long time ago. This whole zoogony is profoundly Empedoclean in spirit, detail, and style. Even those very scant remains of Empedocles discussed above reveal what look like close reworkings. The description of the strange limbless forms at DRN 5.837—44 (tr. M. F. Smith) has been seen as a translation of the limbs described by Empedocles at fr. 376 KRS:

Multaque tum tellus etiam portenta creare
conatant mira facie membrisque coorta, 840
androgynem, interutrasque nec utrum, utrinque remotum, 
orbe pedum partim, manuum uiduata uicissim, 
muta sine ore etiam, sine uolto caeca reperta, 
tunctaque memboram per totum corpus adhaesu, 
nec facere ut possent utiquequam nec cedere quoquam 
nec utiare malum nec sumere quod volet usus.

Many were the portents also that the earth then tried to make, springing up with wondrous appearance and frame: the hermaphrodite, between man and woman yet neither, different from both; some without feet, others again bereft of hands; some found dumb also without a mouth, some blind without eyes, some bound fast with all their limbs adhering to their bodies, so that they could do nothing and go nowhere, could neither avoid mischief nor take what they might need.

Lucretius' hermaphrodite at 5.839, androgynem, interutrasque nec utrum, utrinque remotum, recalls fr. 379.3 f. KRS ('creatures compounded partly of male, partly of the nature of female'). At 5.842 creatures with inarticulated limbs, tunctaque memboram per totum corpus adhaesu, recall fr. 378 KRS, which does not in fact refer to 'countless' limbs, but rather means something like 'undifferentiated limbs', i.e. not separated from the body, and so rendering the being in question unable to procreate and survive. At 5.848, nec iungi per Veneris res, Campbell sees an ironic reference to the way in which
Empedocles described Love joining limbs together at fr. 71.3 DK = 60 Wright, 74 Inwood. On the combination of 5.864–6 leu ± isom 11 and laugeraeque Sedley argues that such pairing of compound adjectives is an Empedoclean trait, and so this may well be from a lost section of the zoogony.36 Also, the wombs of 5.808, uteri terram mdicibus apti, belong to a tradition of thought which also includes Empedocles A 70 DK.37 It is difficult not to agree with Campbell when he writes that 'there are enough Empedoclean echoes, especially in the section 83 7 ff. on the origin of species, to suggest strongly that Lucretius consciously chooses to present an “Empedoclean” version of zoogony'.38 But at 5.878, having explained how certain forms of life came to being but subsequently disappeared, being unable to survive, Lucretius defiantly states that certain other types of life-forms never existed at all (tr. M. F. Smith):

Sed neque Centauri fuerunt, nec tempore inullo esse quent dupliqui natura et corpore bino ex alienigenis membribis compacta...

But Centaurs never existed, nor at any time can there be creatures of double nature and twofold body combined together of incompatible limbs...

At the end of a passage in which he has reworked Empedocles’ zoogony closely, Lucretius corrects his model on a point which is vital for his whole philosophical system. When he states that double-natured creatures like Centaurs never existed, he is of course referring to Empedocles’ ‘man-faced ox-progeny’.39 We know from Plutarch (Adv. Col. 1123b) that Epicurus made fun of these Empedoclean monsters, and Empedocles seems to have been a particular target for Epicurean polemic in general. It may even be the case that ‘this passage reflects Epicurus’ own criticism of Empedoclean

theory.40 In any case, Lucretius’ denial of the possibility of the existence of hybrid forms such as the Centaurs looks directly back to 4.739 ff., where, in a discussion of the impact of images on the mind, we read (tr. M. F. Smith):41

nam certe ex uivo Centauri non fit imago, nulla fuit quoniam talis natura animalis.

For certainly no image of a Centaur comes from one living, since there never was a living thing of this nature.

More generally, the grounds on which this impossibility is based take us right back to the beginning of the work and the discoveries of Epicurus (1.74–7, tr. M. F. Smith):

atque omne immensum peragrauit mente animoque, unde refert nobis victor quid possit oriri, quid nequeat, finita potestas denique cuique qua nam sit razione atque alte terminus haerens. as he traversed the immeasurable universe in thought and imagination; whence victorious he returns bringing his prize, the knowledge of what can come into being, what can not, in a word, how each thing has its power limited and its deep-set boundary mark.

The point is made again, in order to prove the existence of immutable elements, at 1.584–98, where we encounter the foedera naturae (586) and lines 1.75b–7 repeated verbatim in order to emphasize the fact that fixed laws govern and control the power of each created thing, preventing hybrid forms.42 Lucretius returns to the idea at 5.916–24, bringing the section on zoogony to a close, concluding thus (923 f. tr. M. F. Smith):43

40 Campbell 2003: 139. In the context of Epicurean criticisms of Empedocles, Sedley 2003 continues his treatment of the tension between Lucretius’ negotiation of his profound debt to the On Nature as a poetic model and his distancing of his work from certain philosophical positions adopted by Empedocles.

41 For Centaurs cf. also DRN 700–2 and 4.140, with the discussion of Schrijvers 1999: 24–8.

42 Lines 1.76–7 = 595–6 are repeated at 5.89–90 and 6.65–6. For the foedera naturae see also 2.302 and 5.310, and see Asmis 2008, who translates ‘treaties of nature’.

sed res quaeque suo ritu procedit, et omnes
foedere naturae certo discrimina servant.
but each thing proceeds after its own fashion, and all by
fixed law of nature preserve their distinctions.

Both Apollonius and Lucretius have been shown reworking what
must have been a particularly striking section of Empedocles’ already
very remarkable poem. It seems impossible to prove, however, that
Lucretius alludes to Apollonius’ imitation of Empedocles in his Circe
episode. Nevertheless, the mini-tradition we are trying to follow
does not end here. Another Latin poet certainly does use Apollonius’
Circe episode, even if only to transform it entirely.

VIRGIL

At the opening of Aeneid 7 the Trojans sail past Circe’s home, located,
as in Argonautica 4, in Italy, as they finally make their way to the Tiber
mouth. The goddess (Aen. 7.15–20) has lions, pigs, bears, and wolves,
giving a rather Homeric picture. But in line 21 her animals are
described as monstra. It is very likely that this word represents a
learned allusion to Apollonius’ version of the story and its bizarre
Circean beasts. Zoogony appears in the song of Iopas (Aen. 1.740–6)
and in the speech of Anchises (Aen. 6.724–9), using Lucretian lan-
guage, but also drawing directly on Empedocles, and the Aeneid is
of course a poem in which the themes of creation and the origins
of civilization are vitally important. These aspects of Virgil’s epic
become central for Ovid’s Metamorphoses, a poem which begins

44 Apparent similarities between Lucretius and Apollonius are worth investigating as possible imitations of the same Empedoclean source; cf. Nelis 2000. I intend to investigate elsewhere the possibility of Empedocles as a key model for the handling of love and erotic themes in the Argonautica, the De Rerum Natura, Virgil’s Georgics, and Ovid’s Metamorphoses. For a fuller picture of the background to Lucretius on the earth as mother see Schiesaro 1990: 302–22.
47 On metamorphosis in the Aeneid see Hardie 1992; Feldherr 2002: 167–8. Note also Hardie in this volume, ch. 5, an essay which makes Virgil look more Ovidian than traditionally thought.

with Chaos and creation in order to construct a narrative in which the
history of the world is a central organizing principle, and in which
early on in book 1 occurs the passage which is the central concern of
the remainder of this paper.

OVID

Following the destructive flood with which Jupiter punishes the wick-
edness of the earliest generations of humankind (Met. 1.253–312),
Deucalion and Pyrrha recreate human life from mother earth by
casting stones (Met. 1.313–415) to produce a new and hard race.
Subsequently, under the action of the warming sun, new animal
forms appear from the muddy earth, still wet from the only recently
receding flood waters (Met. 1.416–37, tr. D. Hill):

Cetera diuersis tellus animalia formis
sponte sua peperit, postquam uetus umor ab igne
percauit solis, caenumque udaeque paludes
intumueru a a eust, fecundaque semina rerum
uiuaci nutrita solo c e u matri s in aluo
creuerunt faciemque aliqua cepere morando.
sic ubi deseruit madidos septemfluis agros
Nilus et antiquo sua fluima reddidit aluoe
aetherioque recens e x rit sidere li mus,
plurima cultores uersis animalia glabris
inueniunt et in quae mand modo perfecta per ipsum
nascedi s r i u a e s pecies, eodem in corpore saepe
altera pars uiait, rudis est pars altera tellus.
quipe ubi tem periem sumpsere umorique calorque,
concipiunt, et ab his oriuntur cuncta duobus,
cumque sit ignis aquae pugnax, uapor uimidum omnem
res creat, et discors concordia fetibus apta est.
dergo ubi diluuiuo tellus lutulentae recenti
solibus aesthe ris alsque recanduit aestu,
eddit innumerus species; partimque figuris
retulit antiquas, partim nova monstra creavit.

48 See Wheeler 2002.
forms. But at least some lines of influence are clearly visible. As we have seen, Metamorphoses 1.416–21 describe the spontaneous generation of animal life forms from the slime after the flood. The combination of moisture and heat lends the earth (tellus) to put forth animalia of different forms, diuersis formis (416–20). These lines pick up the preceding description of the recreation of men and women from the stones cast by Deucalion and Pyrrha. Eventually, with the passage of time (morando), these forms takes on the facies of distinct species (421). Ovid here describes briefly a process of creation and evolution. The whole passage is remarkably similar to Arg. 4.676–81, where Apollonius also describes the creation of life forms from primeval slime. That said, Ovid's language is very Lucretian, and there can be little doubt that his main model is DRN 5.795–825 and 916–23. Finally, after intense Lucretian language and detail, at Met. 1.433 Ovid reveals the nature of his double intertextual debt with a clear signal of his double allusion to both Lucretius and Lucretius's model Empedocles, when he refers to the discors concordia between water and fire as creative agents (tr. D. Hill):

Compare the following: tellus sponte sua peperti, Met. 1.416, with ébustiō chthoni autē, Arg. 4.676–7 (creation from the earth); caemato, Met. 1.418, inutu, Met. 1.424, lutulentia, Met. 1.434 with duas, Arg. 4.676 (the mud or slime); solibus, aeris, Met. 1.433 with asidulcitā bolis élio, Arg. 4.679 (sun and heat); uxor, Met. 1.417, 430 with iknādōs Arg. 4.680 (moisture); morando, Met. 1.421 with utōn, Arg. 4.680 (the passing of time); species, figurae antiques, Met. 1.436 f. with stichas, 4.680 (the creation of different species).

Compare the following tellus (Met. 1.416, 434) and tellus (DRN 5.790), terra (DRN 5.796, 823); diuersis ... formis (Met. 1.416) and sarcum formis (DRN 5.825); animalia ... postquam uetus uxor ab igne percaluit solis (Met. 1.417) and mulchauque nunc etiam existunt animalia terris, inimicībus et calido solis concreta vapore (DRN 5.797–80) and tibi tibi terra dedit primūm mortalis nācēs../../nuībīs eīstis ... uxor, Met. 1.420 with utōn (DRN 5.800); factum (Met. 1.421) and factiō (DRN 5.836); coepta suaque ... tranca uident numeris (Met. 1.427–8) and uinctaque membrorum per totum corpus adhaecum (DRN 5.842); unoque colorque (Met. 1.430) and uxor atque uxor (DRN 5.806); uxor colorque ... ab his orientem cuncta duobus, (cumque sit ignis aequa pugiosis, uxor uxoribus omnes) res creat (Met. 1.430–3) in uincta creat, (inimicībus et calido solis concreta vapore (DRN 5.796–8); factībus (Met. 1.433) and factībus (DRN 5.784); mostra creātus (Met. 1.437) and mostra creātībus (DRN 5.845); creātībus (Met. 1.437) and creātībus (DRN 5.791). For discussion see Bömer 1969 ad loc; Schiesaro 1990: 152; Myers 1994: 44; Wheeler 2000: 36; Barchiesi 2005b: 201. On Ovid's Metamorphoses and Lucretius see e.g. Due 1974: 29–33; Myers 1994: 202 s.v. Lucretius; Galinsky 1998; Flores 1999; Segal 2001; Hardie 2007b: 116–17.

This whole passage provides a good example of 'Empedoclean epos' and cannot be understood without reference to the tradition of intertexts which this paper has been attempting to trace. Hardie posits a pattern of double allusion on Ovid's part, in which he uses both Lucretius and Lucretius' model Empedocles in constructing the speech of Pythagoras, and he also finds traces of the same intertextual nexus in the first book of the poem. Our passage has also been studied by Stephen Wheeler in his Narrative Dynamics in Ovid's Metamorphoses, in which he studies the repetition of the cycle of creation and destruction in Met. 1 and 2. Ovid's zoogony must indeed be seen as part of a larger cyclic pattern of Ovidian creation and destruction. As always, Ovid's reworking of his sources permits of only partial reconstitution, such is the complexity and variety at the heart of his highly eclectic approach to traditional material and

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Ovidian scholars tend to limit the force of this 'discordant concord', but it is surely a clear marker of the importance of Empedoclean influence here, even if transmitted via Lucretius: life as we know it exists within a balance of love (concordia) and strife (discordia, the Latin epic term for specifically Empedoclean neikos since Ennius).53

Given the extent of the similarities between Metamorphoses 1 and the DRN 5 at this point, it may be tempting to read Ovid in solely Lucretian terms. However, there are two important details which invite a more inclusive interpretation of Ovid’s debt to the literary tradition which underpins Lucretius. First of all, I would insist on the claim that when Ovid refers to the interaction between fire and water as discors concordia, no reader can fail to think of Empedocles.54 And second, the lines which immediately follow the Ovidian zoogony are the following (Met. 1.438–40, tr. D. Hill):

illa (sc. tellus) quidem nollet, sed te quoque, maxime Python
tum genitum populisque nous incognita serpens
terror erat; tantum spatii de monte tenebros.

It was then that she, unwillingly indeed, bore you too,
most great Python, and you were a terror, oh unheard of serpent,
to the new races; for you took up so great a space upon the mountain.

Ovid here seems to have invented a connection between the flood and Python’s birth, the aim of the invention being to enable the transition to Apollo, Daphne, and the first love story of the poem,

53 See Nelis 2000: 90–1. Again, I do not wish to argue that Ovid is exclusively Empedoclean, especially since he concentrates on fire and water in a way which recalls Anaximander, for example, and does not integrate all four Empedoclean elements. He is here building on a long and complex tradition of accounts of creation, but one in which the poet Empedocles played a very important role. See Börner 1969 ad loc. and Burchies 2005b: 200 ff. for the numerous parallels. Given the striking similarities with Diodorus Siculus 1.7–10, it is important that Empedocles is taken by some scholars to be Diodorus’ main model; see Schiesaro 1990: 106.

inter se pecudes compactaque membra animantium, propertea quia quae de terris nunc quaque abundant—herbarum genera ac fruges arbustaque laeta—nomen inter se possent complexa creati, sed res quaque suo ritu procedit et omnes foedere naturae certo discriminis seruant.

For although there were many seeds of things in the soil at the time when first the earth poured forth the animals, that is nevertheless no proof that creatures of mixed growth could be made, and limbs of various creatures joined into one; because the various kinds of plants and the corn and the luxuriant trees, which even now spring in abundance from the earth, nevertheless cannot be produced interwoven together, but each thing proceeds after its own fashion, and all by fixed law of nature preserve their distinctions.

Lucretius in effect denies here the not only the possibility of the formation of hybrid forms, but also the very possibility of metamorphosis, and so it should not come as a surprise that as he began the first metamorphic love story of his great epic, Ovid took good care to declare his debt to Empedocles' epic about Love, Strife, and cosmic change and to invert Lucretius' certainties concerning the *foedera certa naturae* and the fixed *discrimina* they enforce.59 P. Schrijvers, in a detailed study of *DRN* 5.878–924, has argued for the influence of Palaephatus on Lucretius, concluding that 'l'auteur du recueil *Peri A piston* se concentre sur deux catégories de mythes, ceux qui impliquent des êtres hétérogènes (ou monstrueux en général) et des metamorphoses, c'est à dire sur les récits qui transgressent la fixité des espèces. L'attention de Lucrece a été également dirigée sur les mythes de ce genre.'60 Ovid's attention was surely attracted by such issues, and in a passage steeped in Lucretian language, describing the birth of Python rather than of a hybrid monster such as a Centaur, and followed closely by the *primus amor* of Apollo for Daphne, we have a knowing nod to a complex tradition of philosophical discussion involving myth, metamorphosis, and the laws of nature, and one which takes the reader back from Lucretius to Empedocles. At the same time, of course, Ovid works on other levels: the first love story of the *Metamorphoses* emphasizes generic change and interaction, from elegy to epic, as is now well known. Similarly, for Ovid, as for Lucretius, *nouitas* must always have connotations of literary originality. Equally, recent work on the poem has shed welcome light on the ways in which Ovidian explorations of novelty and change may also relate to contemporary political discourse. In this area too, *discordia* and *cordis* were highly topical, the former being a regularly used term referring to Roman civil war and the latter an important element in the Augustan discourse emphasizing restoration and the return of peace and security.61 One way of reading Ovid's opening book, which clearly suggests to its readers the presence of a contemporary subtext in the reference to the Palatine at line 176, is to see the movement from chaotic discord to creative concord as a direct reflection of this historical transition. But Ovid also presents the creative potential inherent in the paradoxical *discors concordia*, and it seems obvious that for anyone wishing to write an epic poem about creation and change, whether physical, historical, or literary, Empedocles' *On Nature* will have been an inspiring read. It seems equally obvious, given the first opening lines of the *Metamorphoses*, that Lucretius' discussions of *nouitas* and change will have attracted his closest attention.

61 For *discordia* and civil war see e.g. Osgood 2006: 152–201; more generally Iul 1965. On Augustan *concordia* see also Iul 1961; Richard 1983; Beranger 1989; Kellum 1993. For the background see D'Arco 1998. For the political approach more generally see Schmitzer 1990; Feeney 1991: 188–49. For literary treatments of Virgil's use of *concordia* and *discordia*, important for contextualizing Ovid, see Cairns 1989: ch. 4; A. Hardie 2002. Finally, note the title of Roddaz 2003, in an article which has nothing to do with Ovid: 'La métamorphose: d’Octavien à Auguste'.

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