

BTP2BR_T_43
 METAMORPHOSIS
 Thu 10.00-11.40
 Room 111

Bényei Tamás

Requirements: the success of the seminars will greatly depend on your contributions; it is essential, therefore, that participants read the assigned material (the quantity of which will be kept at a reasonable level) and contribute to the discussion. Since there is no end-term test, seminar participation will be an important factor in the grades. Presentations are encouraged.

Home essay (for those not in their final year). Deadline: 12.00, Thu 12 May.

Length: 2,500-3,000 words. Only typewritten essays will be accepted. Essays must be written in the form of a research paper: use of secondary material and scholarly documentation, conforming to the MLA Style Sheet, are essential. Failure to meet any of these requirements will result in the reduction of the grade. Plagiarism and academic dishonesty will, without any further comment, result in a failure as described in the Academic Handbook of the Institute.

Texts: there is a Course Packet for this course which includes the shorter texts discussed in the seminar. One of the novels (Poor Miss Finch) will be available in a digital copy. The other novels are available in the institute library.

The course is intended as an introduction to the changing contexts, uses and meanings of the trope of metamorphosis through the centuries, drawing upon literary renditions of bodily transformation, while also looking at some emblematic pictorial representations. Rather than offering a complete historical overview, the course will focus on two historical moments and on a few crucial issues and contexts in order to make the material manageable. The two moments are those of Ovid and the twentieth (and 21st) century. The interlocking issues that are intended to provide a coherent focus are those of gender (female embodiment) and biopolitics – especially as these issues are inextricably intertwined already in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. The theoretical context of the discussions – besides the literature on Ovid and literary metamorphosis – will be provided by the writings of Deleuze and Guattari, Giorgio Agamben, Georges Bataille, Rosi Braidotti and Elizabeth Grosz.

The course will be loosely divided into two parts. We shall start with Daphne – partly because her story is one of the purest prototypes of Ovidian metamorphoses, and partly because her transformation has been appropriated in a number of intriguing ways. This will be followed by a 19th-century rewriting of the story of Eros and Psyche

The second major segment of the course will explore some other Ovidian narratives (Io, Callisto, Scylla, Actaeon, Philomela, the Myrmidonians) and twentieth-century – not necessarily Ovidian – narratives of metamorphosis.

The English Ovid to be used throughout the course is A.D. Melville’s 2009 translation in the Oxford World’s Classics series.

Schedule

1	11 Febr.	Introduction: metamorphosis, narrative, subjectivity; the rhetoric of metamorphosis Ovid: <i>Metamorphoses</i> : Lycaon, Picus, Memnon
2	17 Febr.	Daphne and her afterlives/1 Ovid: “Apollo and Daphne” Visual representations: Piero del Pollaiuolo: <i>Daphne</i> ; Bernini: <i>Apollo and Daphne</i> ; Anton Räderscheidt: <i>Daphne</i> ; Paul Klee: <i>Metamorphosis</i> ; Kate McDowell: <i>Daphne</i> ; Ana Mendieta’s works
3	24 Febr.	Daphne and her afterlives/2 <i>Poetry</i> Anne Sexton: “Where I Live in This Honorable House of the Laurel Tree” Fiona Benson: “[transformation: daphne]”

		Nina Kossman: “Daphne Herself” David Constantine: “Daphne” Ann Deagon: “Daphne on Woodbrook Drive” Eavan Boland: “Daphne with Her Thighs in Bark” Margaret Kaufman: “Waking”
4	3 March	Daphne and her afterlives/2 <i>Short stories</i> E.M. Forster: “Other Kingdom” (<i>Collected Short Stories</i> , 59–85) Sara Maitland: “Daphne” (<i>Women Fly When Men Aren’t Watching</i> , 107–114) A.S. Byatt: “Baglady” (<i>Elementals</i> , 185–194) Michèle Roberts: “Daphne” (from <i>The Book of Mrs Noah</i> , 51–53)
5	10 March	Eros and Cupid revisited Wilkie Collins: <i>Poor Miss Finch</i>
6	17 March	Eros and Cupid revisited/2 Wilkie Collins: <i>Poor Miss Finch</i>
7	24 March	Becoming-animal/1 from Gilles Deleuze – Felix Guattari: <i>Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature</i> Roger Caillois: “Legendary Psychæsthenia” Julio Cortázar: “Axolotl” Jackie Kay: “Shell” (from <i>Why Don’t You Stop Talking</i> , 137–155) Daisy Johnson: “Starver” (from <i>Fen</i> , 3–14) Eavan Boland: “The Woman Turns Herself into a Fish”
8	31 March	CONSULTATION WEEK
9	7 April	Metamorphosis, alteration and the unformed Marie Darrieussecq: <i>Pig Tales (Truismes)</i> , 1996)
10	14 April	Metamorphosis: rape, trauma, biopolitics Ovid: “Io”; “Callisto”, “Actæon”; “Philomela”; “Scylla” Fiona Benson: “[transformation: Callisto]”; “[transformation: Io]”
11	21 April	Metamorphosis and biopolitics Christoph Ransmayr: <i>The Last World (Die Letzte Welt)</i> , 1988)
12	28 April	Metamorphosis, pandemic and the body politic Ovid: “The Myrmidonians” Ali Smith: “The Beholder” (from <i>Public Library and Other Stories</i> , 43–56) Eugène Ionesco: <i>Rhinoceros</i> (1959)
13	5 May	Metamorphosis, nature, ecology Ovid: “Philemon and Baucis”; “Erysichthon” James Lasdun: “Erysichthon” (<i>After Ovid: New Metamorphoses</i> , ed. Michael Hofmann and James Lasdun, 198–212)
14	12 May	ESSAY DEADLINE