

The Void Beyond the Veil: Chaos and the Pretense of Order in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*

This paper discusses the contradictory philosophical content in Ovid and its consequence on the text's interpretation. While the philosophical model underpinning Ovid's epic is ambiguous, allusions to systems like Platonism and Stoicism are clear from the text. These metaphysically hierarchical outlooks consequently support a pro-Augustan interpretation of the poem, with the poem's changes and fluctuations receiving rationalization in the form of an organizing divinity that corresponds with imperial authority. However, the poem presents a physical world far removed from its ostensible ideals, with the transformations revealing punished humans to be unjust victims and divinities to be monstrous. In this way, Ovid uses the philosophical vocabulary of order to reveal the natural order's dysfunction and its indistinguishability from chaos.