Drawing on recent scholarship in art, film, literary theory, and gender studies, \textit{A Web of Fantasies} examines the complexities, symbolism, and interactions between gaze and image in Ovid's \textit{Metamorphoses} and forms a gender-sensitive perspective. It is a feminist study of Ovid's epic, which includes many stories about change, in which discussions of viewers, viewing, and imagery serve to illuminate Ovid's constructions of male and female. Patricia Salzman-Mitchell discusses the text from the perspective of three types of gazes: of characters looking, of the poet who narrates visually charged stories, and of the reader who "sees" the woven images in the text. Arguing against certain theorists who deny the possibility of any feminine vision in a male-authored poem, the author maintains that the female point of view can be released through the traditional feminine occupation of weaving, featuring the woven images of Arachne (involved in a weaving contest in which she tried to best the goddess Athena, who turned her into a spider) and Philomela (who had her tongue cut out, so had to weave a tapestry depicting her rape and mutilation).

The book observes that while feminist models of the gaze can create productive readings of the poem, these models are too limited and reductive for such a protean and complex text as \textit{Metamorphoses}. This work brings forth the pervasive importance of the act of looking in the poem which will affect future readings of Ovid's epic.

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