metamorphosis, n.

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Pronunciation:
Brit. /məˈtæmərfaʊsɪs/ /məˈtiːmərfaʊsɪs/  US. /məˈtiːmərfaʊsɪs/

Inflections: Plural metamorphoses  Brit. /məˈtiːmərfaʊsɪz/ /məˈtiːmərfaʊzɪz/  US. /məˈtiːmərfaʊzɪz/.

Forms: BBE metamorphoses, 15 metamorphoses, 15– metamorphosis.

Etymology: < classical Latin metamorphosis (1694).

1.

a. The action or process of changing in form, shape, or substance; esp. transformation by supernatural means.

1447 G. Boconnoc Lives of Saints 5034 My norwe by-yselfe we coude provyde More goodly arie, how she deede enclis Vyky-rynge on heb de metamorphoses.

1533 T. More, Debellatione Debus & Biscoe 1.1, Sebun & Biscoe sometime two great towres, were with a metamorphose metamorphoses, enchanted and turned into two englythe men.

1598 J. Marston (title) The metamorphosis of Pigmaliom images.

1649 E.M. Barrow tr. Florio Rom. Hist. 425 As by a kind of metamorphosis, the gods had changed trees to vessels.

1676 Govt. Tongue ed. 204 One would think we were fallen into an Age of Metamorphoses, and that the Brushes did (not only poetical and in fiction) but really speak. For the talk of many is so bestial, that (etc.).

1712 Specator 18 June 1702 What more strange, than the Creation of the World, the several Metamorphoses of the fallen Angels.

1794 R. J. Swarov View of Nature IV. 179 From the metamorphoses, however, arose the doctrine of the

1836 J. Boody Met. Satanist IV. 2. 4 Godth all his forme into deformed and monstrous...
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When the two-volume Historical Thesaurus of the OED was published in October 2009 we were immediately asked whether it could be incorporated into the OED Online. At the time, we were testing the feasibility of this, but now we can confirm that the relaunched OED site will contain an integrated online edition of the Historical Thesaurus along with new functionality.

Yours sincerely

John Simpson Chief Editor
Oxford English Dictionary

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