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### PROJECT

## Metamorphosis: A Natural Wonder, an Evolutionary Mystery, and a Father's 40-Week Journey to Understand the Deep Meaning of Transformation and Change

Metamorphosis is often perceived as curious and exceptional, but is in fact a common biological process. According to some estimates, up to 70% of species undergo one form or another of metamorphosis, which is defined as the process of transformation of an organism from an immature form to an adult form in two or more stages, or, alternatively, as radical postembryonic development. Prevalent in marine invertebrates, insects, and amphibians, the process has attracted the attention of natural philosophers and scientists over the ages and has served as the focal point for important discoveries in endocrinology, genetics, developmental biology, evolutionary theory, and regenerative medicine. It has also attracted the attention of philosophers, writers, and artists who have sought to find in the process of metamorphosis meaning relevant to human psychology and culture. The current research project proposes to find a creative writing framework for considering both the history of attempts to understand the biological phenomenon of metamorphosis and the cultural, philosophical, and psychological preoccupations with the theme of lifecycle and transformation.

### Recommended Reading

Harman, Oren. *The Man Who Invented the Chromosome*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004.

–. *The Price of Altruism*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2010.

–. *Evolutions: Fifteen Myths That Explain Our World*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2018.

## Writing for the Ages

Writing for different audiences makes us better writers and thinkers. It helps us experiment with certain trade-offs and get into other people's minds in order to experience different truths. In the spirit of showing rather than telling, I will present three projects that I've been writing at Wiko: a who-done-it about the disappearance of Darwin's notebooks from the Cambridge University Library, written for 8- to 12-year-olds; a creative book of science and history about metamorphosis, written for mature readers; and a picture-book series about metamorphosis, for the very young. For me, morphing between registers and genres is a way of being, a way of thinking. As the great illustrator Quentin Blake expressed: "I don't feel as if I belong to an age group."

P.S. Come prepared with pencils and notebooks. There'll be an exercise in class!

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PUBLICATIONS FROM THE FELLOW LIBRARY

Harman, Oren (London [u.a.],2023)

Is there really 'nothing unnatural in nature'?

<https://kxp.k1oplus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1834109930>

Harman, Oren (Oxford,2020)

Before Watson and Crick in 1953 came Friedrich Miescher in 1869

<https://kxp.k1oplus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1848986424>

Harman, Oren (London,2020)

When science mirrors life : on the origins of the Price equation

<https://kxp.k1oplus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1848964870>

Harman, Oren (London,2020)

When science mirrors life : on the origins of the Price equation

<https://kxp.k1oplus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1812842392>

Harman, Oren (New Brunswick, NJ,2018)

The life and times of a scientific mistress

<https://kxp.k1oplus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1848993811>

Harman, Oren (Cham,2018)

Scientific biography

<https://kxp.k1oplus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1848978081>

Harman, Oren (New York,2018)

Evolutions : fifteen myths that explain our world

<https://kxp.k1oplus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1017985537>

Harman, Oren (Leiden,2014)

A history of the altruism-morality debate in biology

<https://kxp.k1oplus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1848990103>

Harman, Oren (Amsterdam [u.a.],2013)

Shakespeare among the ants

<https://kxp.k1oplus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1848988044>

Harman, Oren ([Dordrecht],2013)

On modeling emergence

<https://kxp.k1oplus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1848985320>