

# PARNASSUS

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# METAMORPHOSIS



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## Contents

Editor's Note	ix
About the Authors	xi
<b>The Death of Thisbe</b>	1
Translation by Corey Scannell '18	
<b>Curses, Revenge, and Viricide</b>	3
Essay by Rebecca Finnigan '15	
<b>Geography of Loves Lost</b>	11
Poem by Alexandra Larkin '18	
<b>Dirge of Tantalus</b>	13
Poem by Marianne Muro '15	
<b>Society vs. Individual in <i>The Clouds</i> and <i>Protagoras</i></b>	15
Essay by Joseph MacNeill '16	
<b>Together Unwavering</b>	22
Poem by Valerie Kisselback '15	
<b>The Complex Relationship of <i>Ars</i> and <i>Natura</i></b>	23
Essay by Kelsey Littlefield '17	
<b>Delphi Could Not Know Me</b>	35
Poem by Alexandra Larkin '18	
<b>Hubris</b>	36
Poem by Thomas Kreuger '16	
<b>The <i>Testimonium Flavianum</i></b>	37
Translation by Meagan Freeze '16	
<b>The Struggle of the Artist</b>	45
Poem and Analysis by Margaret MacMullin '16	
<b>Photography</b>	
Margaret MacMullin '16 (12, 53), Henry Whitmore '16 (14, 34)	



## Editor's Note

My two predecessors have both used their short but precious space at the beginning of this journal in part to offer a brief apologia for the title “Parnassus.” As they have eloquently explained, Parnassus (or Helicon) is a mountain in central Greece that was once considered the dwelling place of the Muses, nine goddesses who each held dominion over a form of art and inspired the practitioners of their craft. This mountain is of special interest to students of the Classics at Holy Cross for (as anyone who has had to run from Kimball to an ill-timed meeting in Hogan knows) the denizens of the College also inhabit an impressive hill – that is, Mount St. James. As such, the reasoning behind the appellation of this journal is obvious: our contributors are none other than contemporary types of the ancient Muses, whose love for knowledge and mastery over the written word animate this hill with their passion for the classical world.

Prior to this issue, however, it seems that only a few of the nine had graced the pages of this publication. Melpomene has been with us since the start in the various discussions of Euripides, Aeschylus, and whenever the issue of tragedy was addressed. Clio has been popular in depth if not in breadth, for she has inspired song on the historian Tacitus no less than three times, though Suetonius and Plutarch have earned a note or two in her performance. This journal could never have earned the title of “classical” had Calliope failed to sing of the warring man Aeneas, though I hope that she shall one day ring out the wrath of Achilles or the many twists and turns of Odysseus. Euterpe has contributed a single, solitary (and dare I say ignominious) line of Propertian elegy to the kalophony of her sisters.

In short, not a bad run thus far. But you may have noticed, dear reader, that a certain Muse has been conspicuously absent from the choir of Parnassus. Erato sung for us but one lyric poem, in the first year of this journal's existence, and then fled to the seclusion of her chill grove to pluck her lyre in solitude, leaving a handful of her sisters behind to charm us without her. And although their efforts have certainly not been wasted (with the possible exception of Euterpe's, that is), we have felt Erato's absence keenly.

But no more talk of this sadness! For Erato has returned to the mountaintop to sing out her lyric once again. And she has provided us with no less than five poems for our edification and delight. She has cultivated a great harvest of fruits, from meditations on Orpheus and Tantalus to descriptions of Homeric heroes and a geographic walk around the Ancient World. Meanwhile, Polyhymnia chimes in with an ode to Excellence, Melpomene returns once more to sing of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, Clio to tell of the Jewish historian Josephus, and Thalia to buzz in the ear of Plato in the form of Aristophanes' *Clouds*.

Of particular interest in this issue, however, are the three works that fall under the theme of "Metamorphosis." Inspired by Prof. Nancy Andrews's Ovid seminar, we have obtained three pieces that draw from myths from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, a sprawling series of stories of change. You will immediately notice Maggie MacMullin's fine drawing of Icarus on the front cover. In it we see how the ill-fated feathers fall from their wooden apparatus onto the surface of the sea and how Icarus stares, struck with shock and fear, suspended for a moment while the last tiny drop of wax melts away in the glare of the sun. In a few pages you will read Corey Scannell's sublime translation of the death of Thisbe, whose grief consumed her when she saw the body of her lover Pyramus, who himself had taken his life when he mistakenly thought his beloved had died. Finally, Kelsey Littlefield offers us a reflection on the relation between art and nature in the story of Pygmalion, who fell in love with a statue he carved from ivory. Each in their own way mediate on the power and nature of change and show how even several millennia later these ancient myths can speak to the reality in which we all participate.

The Muses, then, sing more powerfully now than ever before. I am curious to see if Terpsichore shall ever find a way to come lightly prancing through these delicate leaves of paper, or Urania a window through which she can direct our eyes to the cold light of stars. For the moment, though, seven Muses are enough, and now I leave you to listen to the songs that they have inspired.

– Steven Merola

## About the Authors

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MARGARET MACMULLIN '16 (“Icarus” and “The Struggle of the Artist”) is a Classics major and Studio Art minor. She is a captain of Club Tennis and a co-host of a WCHC radio show, though she has spent this semester studying in Rome. She wrote her poem and analysis for Prof. Amy Adams’s Russian Literature under Stalin class. She is also the winner of the first ever **Parnassus Art Competition** and her drawing “Icarus” appears on the cover of this edition of the journal.



## The Death of Thisbe

Corey Scannell '18

To Thisbe's name, he raised his pallid eyes,  
But at her visage, buried them again.  
And when the girl had recognized her cloak,  
And glimpsed the scabbard empty of its sword, said,  
"By your very hand are you now quelled,  
And also by your love, unlucky boy!  
But now my hand is brave for this alone,  
Since there is love in me. My love will grant,  
In place of painful sorrow, greater strength:  
For I will imitate your bloody end,  
Called dismal cause and comrade of your death.  
Alas! Demise alone could snatch you from my life,  
But, even gone, you won't escape from me.  
Yet, O truly wretched parents of us both,  
Comply with my appeal for these two pleas:  
That, first, you shouldn't hold in your contempt –  
But rather let them lie in one same grave –  
Those whom certain love and final days  
Have thus united. But you, O tree,  
Whose branches shade the dreadful corpse of one,  
And soon about to darken those of two,  
Retain the signs of death and bear the fruit:  
A darkened mark of mourning, apt for grief  
The lasting memory of both our blood."  
Then, having fit the point beneath her chest,  
And saying that, she fell upon the sword...  
Just as it was, still tepid from his gore.  
And yet, her plea touched gods and parents both;  
For when it's ripe, the fruit is dark in hue,  
And now their ashes occupy one urn.

## Curses, Revenge, and Viricide

Rebecca Finnigan '15

Revenge is a powerful word, particularly in classical antiquity. According to Aristotle, revenge can be defined as “a self-enraged and retrospective action taken privately against an individual who has injured one’s honor.”<sup>1</sup> It is an idea that, once it has crept into our thoughts, is something which we are unable to shake until vengeance has been exacted. In his play the *Agamemnon*, the Ancient Greek tragedian Aeschylus explores this very topic and makes it a central theme to his drama. He investigates the idea that once someone has been wronged, that person’s soul (as well as those of his children and grandchildren) cannot be at rest until retribution has been paid. Aeschylus manifests this idea in the vengeful murder of Agamemnon, by his wife Clytemnestra (with the aid of her adulterous lover Aegisthus) upon the Greek general’s return from the Trojan War. Although Clytemnestra and Aegisthus had different motives for vengeance, they both sought the blood of Agamemnon as a way of quieting their tormented souls, she for the death of her daughter and he for the suffering inflicted upon his father. Aeschylus employs parallelism among different characters in the *Agamemnon* with past events referenced by them to illustrate the effects such wrongs have not only upon the soul of the wrongdoer, but also upon those of future generations.

Love and revenge in the name of those who are loved are two major themes that run through the *Agamemnon*. When love takes possession of someone, the human mind becomes blind to what is around it and, more often than not, reverts back to the old eye-for-an-eye justice in which even the most violent of acts (such as Clytemnestra’s viricide) are justified in the eyes of the revenger. Driven by anger, the “revenger is forced not just to scheme, but to think.”<sup>2</sup> In Clytemnestra’s case, revenge sprouts from the love she has for her daughter, Iphigenia. At the start of the Greeks’ voyage to Troy to recover Helen, they encounter winds at Aulis which are too strong to sail through. They are then told by the soothsayer Calchas that they have angered Artemis by slaying a pregnant hare. To ensure safe travel to Troy, the eldest daughter of Agamemnon,

Iphigenia, must be slain in sacrifice.<sup>3</sup> Agamemnon decides to kill his daughter for his own ends while Iphigenia's "entreaties of 'father' and the life of the maiden the warlike chieftains valued at naught" (*λιτὰς δὲ καὶ κληδόνας πατρῶους παρ' οὐδὲν αἰῶ τε παρθένειον ἔθεντο φιλόμαχοι βραβῆς*, Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 228-30). Angered at how easily her husband disposed of their daughter, Clytemnestra plots and schemes for ten years while she awaits his homecoming. She orchestrates a system of beacons all the way from Troy to alert her to Agamemnon's return home from the war so that she can seek her revenge as soon as possible, since "he sacrificed his own child" (*ἔθυσεν αὐτοῦ παῖδα*, 1417).

Clytemnestra gains even more justification for her bold vengeance when Agamemnon agrees to walk upon the tapestries, an act permitted for the gods alone. At first, Agamemnon has qualms about treading upon the tapestries and asks Clytemnestra to honor him as a man, not a god (*λέγω κατ' ἄνδρα, μὴ θεόν, σέβειν ἐμέ*, 925). However, it takes Clytemnestra only seven lines to convince him that he has the right to walk on them as a god. Not only does this act add fuel to the fire that is Clytemnestra's revenge, but paints a visual parallel for the audience of her initial reasoning – the tapestries are reddish-purple in color, just as was Iphigenia's blood. When Agamemnon walks upon them so heartlessly, he does so in the same manner in which he slaughtered his daughter, having thoughts only for himself. Agamemnon's transgressions are further brought to light by Aeschylus since his last words of the play are that he will go into the house treading on the tapestries (*εἴμι' ἐς δόμων μέλαθρα πορφύρας πατῶν*, 957).

While Clytemnestra is inside the house with Agamemnon, Casandra, the captured daughter of the Trojan king Priam, is outside with the Chorus describing what is happening inside the walls. Although she was cursed by Apollo never to be believed, Casandra always speaks the truth and replaces the Chorus in this capacity when she comes onto the stage. Most importantly, she relates that "[Agamemnon] falls in the armor holding water" (*πίτνει δ' ἐν ἐνύδρῳ τῦχει*, 1128). It seems likely that Casandra means Agamemnon has been murdered while in a bathtub. In the Ancient Greek world, giving someone a bath was the first step in welcoming a guest and is often associated with the female role of "hospitality" (*ξενία*). By killing her husband while bathing him, Clytemnestra inverts this idea of kindness to guests and comes

across as a crazed and jealous wife rather than a mother seeking revenge for the death of her daughter. Hospitality and friendship to anyone who came to the door was an important ideal in Greek culture. When Clytemnestra abandons this premise, she alienates herself from the audience and gives them a reason to feel sympathy for Agamemnon.

However, almost as if Clytemnestra is expecting the Chorus to react this way, she reminds them of the events that led to his murder. After committing viricide, Clytemnestra goes into detail about the events that had just occurred inside the house, and the audience is brought back to the picture of the sacrifice of Iphigenia. The murderess herself describes the slaughter as a ritualistic act when she calls it a votive thanks for Hades (*τοῦ κατὰ χθονὸς Διὸς νεκρῶν σωτήρος εὐκταίαν χάριν*, 1386-7) and a few lines later she proclaims that “if it were possible to pour libations on a corpse, then these things would be just, more than just for that matter” (*εἰ δ’ ἦν πρεπόντων ὄσ’ ἐπισπένδειν νεκρῶ, τῶδ’ ἂν δικαίως ἦν, ὑπερδίκως μὲν οὖν*, 1395-6). In bringing the audience back to the sacrifice of her daughter, Clytemnestra subtly reassures them that she is not just some insane husband-murderer, but in fact has justifiable reasons for her actions.

Murder invigorates Clytemnestra, and she sees herself as fertilized and reborn by the death of her husband. She describes him as he dies as

blowing out a sharp spurt of blood,  
he hits me with a dark rain of red dew,  
rejoicing no less than the sown corn  
in the labor of the bud at the gleam given by Zeus

*κάκφυσιῶν ὄξειαν αἵματος σφαγὴν  
βάλλει μ’ ἐρεμνῆ ψακάδι φοινίας δρόσου,  
χαίρουσαν οὐδὲν ἦσον ἢ διοσδότῳ  
γάνει σπορητὸς κάλυκος ἐν λοχεύμασιν.* (1389-92)

In these lines, Clytemnestra juxtaposes positive aspects of life with the death of Agamemnon. She mixes the image of a dark rain, (*ἐρεμνῆ ψακάδι*) with that of dew (*δρόσου*). Dew is usually used to describe cleanliness and purity because it comes first thing in the morning and can be seen as a sign of rebirth. Almost

oxymoronically, she gives the dew a dark origin and follows it up by comparing the dark rain to a bright, gleaming rain (*διοσδότω γάνει*) given by Zeus to water the corn seeds. The corn rejoices at the rain just as Clytemnestra rejoices at the spilling of the blood of Agamemnon. By comparing herself to the bud of the corn in labor (*κάλυκος ἐν λοχέμασιν*) Clytemnestra is able to clearly portray to the audience that the cause of her actions truly was her love for her daughter.

According to Aeschylus, Clytemnestra is the murderer of Agamemnon. But, in Homer's *Odyssey*, Aegisthus is made out to have done the deed in accordance with the curse of the House of Atreus. In Aeschylus' play, however, Aegisthus is not seen until the very end of the play. In fact, his name is not even uttered until line 1436, in enjambment with line 1435. The emphasis given to his name illustrates how important he is in the drama, even though appears so late. He is described by Clytemnestra as a "shield for us" (*ἡμῶν ἀσπίς*, 1437). Aegisthus is merely a tool for Clytemnestra so that she can justify her deeds even more, since she is "no more than half an avenger, being in her other half a treacherous woman who acted from motives of lust, greed, and self-advancement" (Burnett, 144). Clytemnestra needs Aegisthus to cover up the half of her that is not out for revenge, but is only looking to move up in the world. Aeschylus shows this is true by leaving Aegisthus behind the scenes for so long. This is a clever move by Aeschylus because it is juxtaposed by the fall of Clytemnestra's reasons for murder to the backdrop.

The playwright gets closer to the announcement of the death of Agamemnon in the story while Casandra recalls in detail the feast of Thyestes whose children were murdered and fed to him by his brother Atreus when he found out that Thyestes had slept with his wife. This brings Aegisthus' reasons for playing a part in the murder to the forefront. She hears the "unborn young who are crying at their slaughters and the roasted flesh eaten by their father" (*κλαιόμενα τάδε βρέφη σφαγὰς, ὅπτας τε σάρκας πρὸς πατρὸς βεβρωμένας*, 1097). The imagery brought to life by Casandra gives the audience reason to think that Aegisthus has better reasons for murdering Agamemnon than Clytemnestra does. To make things worse for herself, Clytemnestra's murder of Casandra makes the audience wonder if she has gone too far because Casandra has nothing to do with the original intent of her killing spree. She kills

Cassandra simply because she is there and perhaps because she is jealous. It is not the purpose of revenge, however, “to get rid of someone who is in the way...for it is not a mode of advancement or even of self-defense.”<sup>4</sup> It is difficult for Clytemnestra to make any claim to “justice” here because her murder of Cassandra had no justifiable motive. Her death becomes molded into a picture that takes the audience back to the trapped female of before, Iphigenia at Aulis. Her sacrifice has already been talked about in such great detail that it has come to the point where every time the audience is presented with blood or anything red for that matter, they also see Iphigenia.

The watchman, at the onset of the play, recalls the curse of the House of Atreus and sets the stage for what is to come. He understands that if walls could talk, then the house could tell some interesting tales, that “this house, if it takes a voice, would speak most plainly” (*οἶκος δ’ αὐτός, εἰ φθογγὴν λάβοι, σαφέστατ’ ἂν λέξειεν*, 37-8). The walls know in great detail the actions of Tantalus and then of Atreus two generations later, of the “many self-slaughtering evils involving the cutting of flesh” (*πολλὰ συνίστορα αὐτόφονα καὶ καρατόμα*, 1090-1). They know that both Agamemnon and Aegisthus fall victim to the curse placed upon the house. Tantalus, the son of Zeus, was so beloved by the gods that he was allowed to eat at their table beside them as if he too were a god, just as Agamemnon walked upon the tapestries as if he was a god. When the gods decide to dine with Tantalus on earth, he kills his only son, Pelops, and has him boiled up and fed to the gods because he hates them and wants to terrorize them by making them into cannibals.<sup>5</sup> Tantalus sacrifices his child for his own ends just as Agamemnon does with Iphigenia.

The grandchildren of Tantalus, Atreus and Thyestes, are thus doomed to have an ill fate. Upon discovering that his brother has fallen in love with his wife, Aerope, Atreus has the two sons of Thyestes cut limb from limb and served to his brother for dinner. Thyestes, realizing what atrocious act he had committed, is unable to directly punish Atreus because Atreus is king and Thyestes has no power over him. He instead curses Atreus and all those who would call Atreus their ancestor in future generations. Thus, the wrongs done to Thyestes by his brother would be amended by his children, namely Aegisthus, and the children and grandchildren of Atreus would be punished for his actions.<sup>6</sup> The children of Atreus

are cursed because responsibility for vengeance passes through generations. Likewise, Aegisthus is, in a way, cursed to avenge Agamemnon for the actions of Atreus against Thyestes. As the two are almost fated to reach the end that they do with one conspiring to murder the other, Aegisthus has more reason for revenge, but acts as a “cowardly lion roaming in bed” (*τινὰ λέοντι ἄναλκην ἐν λέχει στροφώμενον*, 1223-4), remaining in the background of the play while Clytemnestra does all of the dirty work.

Cursing someone who did another a wrong is a common trope in Classical literature. Such curses fall upon both the cursed and their children. When Thyestes curses Atreus, he also curses Agamemnon. Thus, when Aegisthus helps Clytemnestra kill Agamemnon, he is fulfilling the curse and properly avenging Atreus. His revenge is about hereditary guilt while the vengeance of Clytemnestra is more direct. She kills her husband for personal reasons rather than reasons past down to her. In both cases, revenge is sought for children who have died at the hands of their fathers. Clytemnestra is reborn from the cleansing rain of Agamemnon’s blood just as Aegisthus is reborn at the death of the son of the man who tortured his own father. With retribution finally paid, Aegisthus’ soul can finally be at peace because the curse placed upon his family has seemingly been lifted. In their hearts and with their souls at rest, the two truly believe that they can now rule in peace.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Burnett (1998), 2.

<sup>2</sup> Burnett (1998), 3.

<sup>3</sup> Hamilton (1942), 189.

<sup>4</sup> Burnett (1998), 2.

<sup>5</sup> Hamilton (1942), 248-9.

<sup>6</sup> Hamilton (1942), 250-1.

## Geography of Loves Lost

Alexandra Larkin '18

I. You loved a girl named Rome who licked blood off her fingers  
and she looked like divine absolution she looked like an empire

II. You loved a girl named Sparta and they told you to be careful  
this is your life but she is playing a game and she will win

III. You loved a girl named Knossos whose eyes were the  
labyrinth and all the paths led to the minotaur the prodigal son

IV. You loved a girl named Alexandria who held all life's  
mysteries on papyrus who was not as simple as they wanted but  
burned anyway

V. You loved a girl named Athens who pulled clay from the  
cracks in her skull and built carrera temples with poetry

VI. You loved a girl named Delphi who could see all and all stars  
and saw you and hated what you had made



“Roma”

Margaret MacMullin '16

## Dirge of Tantalus

Marianne Muro '15

Here, the slow, endless lapping,  
A reminder of my desperate longing;  
My purple mouth parched,  
My want for water never ending,  
The water rising just beneath  
My lips – I taste the mist  
But never the water. A blue  
As bright as heaven hides  
A cruel, hidden hell. Still,  
I reach for the fruit the gods  
Suspend just beyond my grasp.  
In distant pools the swans gather  
Free to rise and drink the sky  
That I, too, taste, but nothing more.



Study Abroad Students at the Parthenon

Henry Whitmore '16

## Society vs. Individual: The Nature of Education towards Virtue in *The Clouds* and *Protagoras*

Joseph MacNeill '16

In both Plato's *Protagoras* and Aristophanes' *Clouds*, the issue of human nature and political virtue is raised in two corresponding debates. In the former work, the debate is between the philosophers Protagoras and Socrates; Protagoras makes an extensive argument that human nature and political virtue are not naturally paired and that political virtue is a façade constructed over humanity's naturally individualistic nature. Protagoras' interlocutor, Socrates, as well as Unjust Speech and Just Speech in *The Clouds*, does not challenge this reality. Yet Socrates does raise a significant concern: if virtue must be imposed on humanity, then *how* should it be imposed? Protagoras and Just Speech support an organized societal form of education rooted in piety and tradition. Conversely Socrates and Unjust Speech come together in their skepticism of this system, questioning its efficacy. Although divergent in their motivations and conclusions, the two raise a similar question about the rights of the individual in relation to the societal common good.

The first of the debates to be examined is that of Protagoras and Socrates, in which Protagoras sets up a basic framework for the relationship between the individual and societal with his creation myth (320d-323c). In this dialogue, the debate centers on the nature and teachability of virtue and begins with the "great speech" of Protagoras, which itself begins with a detailed myth recounting the origins of humanity. The myth depicts society as an unnatural imposition upon man's inherent individualism by illustrating humanity's origin in three instances of divine intervention. The first comes with the gods' creation of all living beings. They subsequently give Epimetheus and Prometheus the task "to order and distribute powers to all severally, as appropriate" (320d). Epimetheus in turn distributes in such a way that humans are distinguished from beasts, yet holds no superior place over them: humanity is "naked and unshod, without bedding and weapons" (321c). This "weakness by nature" is the fault of humanity's own creator, Epimetheus, who negligently "used up the

capacities on the nonrational beings” (321c). As a result humanity is naturally weak, helpless, and unable to provide his own sustenance. This human deficiency is only solved through the second intervention: Prometheus enters in to distribute to all the fire of Hephaestus, which bestows upon humanity the gift of “technical wisdom,” allowing it to provide for its own survival. Humans can now sufficiently feed, clothe, and defend themselves (321d). Divine intervention, however, is now no longer a gift but a theft, one that brings with it harsh retribution against Prometheus. This wisdom gives humanity the capacity for individual survival, bestowing on it a stolen “share of the divine allotment.” Humanity has a privileged relationship with the gods, yet only insofar as its wisdom is not naturally its own, but that of the gods (322a). In this way its technical wisdom does not affect any change in its nature, but is more akin to a facade constructed over its own deficiency. This is made clear by how humanity is still “weaker” than the animals and still commits injustices – its share of the “divine allotment” is not its own by nature (322b). The third divine intervention elaborates on this facade, giving humanity the ability of “political virtue” (322e). Whereas the second intervention enables individual survival, the third raises the issue of societal survival and of the common good. Specifically it introduces shame and justice “to all,” and thus allows humanity to finally form “principles of order in cities” and “unifying bonds of friendship” (322c-d). Thus the origin of humanity is told through the lens of three separate instances of divine intervention which impose an unnatural societal framework over its natural individualism.

Since societal life is only possible through the introduction of virtue, it is only natural that Protagoras would task society with perpetuating those virtues among its people. Since it exists as a façade imposed upon humanity’s unruly nature, it can be maintained only by a systematic societal maintenance of conformity. For this reason later in his speech Protagoras recognizes the importance of “diligence and practice and teaching” in inculcating virtue (323d). This education is aimed at uprooting injustice and especially “impiety,” because the acquisition of virtue must be rooted in the pious recognition of it as the fruit of a series of divinely-imposed interventions (323e). To now bring in the corresponding debate from *The Clouds*, here Just Speech emerges as a natural corollary. In *The Clouds*, a comedic play criticizing

Socrates and his proposed form of education in wisdom, the debate between Just and Unjust Speech emerges with a theme similar to that of *Protagoras*, namely the cultivation of virtue. In this regard Just Speech advocates for “good order” in society by means of “upright habits” formed by “many blows” so as to instill virtue in a population (964, 959, 972). Tradition is of particular importance – adherence to what one’s “fathers handed down” and what one received “from his elders” – for it offers experience in upholding the façade of societal virtue (968, 982). Just Speech refers to right piety as well. He explains to Unjust Speech that the virtue of justice exists “with the gods” (904). In this way both Protagoras and the Just Speech treat virtue as unnatural to man, and thus as the sought-after product of discipline, education, and pious action. They encourage man to forfeit his individualistic inclinations for the sake of the society.

In opposition to Just Speech, Unjust Speech accepts the unnatural divine imposition of society, but encourages humanity to work around it rather than to allow it to smother his individualistic desires. This is evident when he comes to the thrust of his counterargument against Just Speech: “pleasures” are natural to humans, indeed they are “necessities of nature” which will often incur shame and punishment from one’s peers (1073-5). Thus he agrees that humanity is by nature driven by desires that are unvirtuous and unjust, and is thwarted in realizing those desires by the strictures of society. Although he does not here explicitly suggest it, he implies that he understands society to be unnatural. This view would correlate well with Protagoras’ creation myth, in which humanity’s technical wisdom led it to survive only at its own cost and according to its own whim. Political wisdom came as a benevolent though unnecessary imposition from Zeus himself which, although it introduced the idea of the common good, necessarily subverted each individual will as well. While Protagoras argues for the benefits of this imposed façade, Unjust Speech points out its deficiencies: not only does it subvert pleasures, it tramples “novel notions” for the sake of tradition, and encourages an impotent “moderation” (896, 1060). Why simply endure this façade when one can work around it? Unjust Speech encourages such resistance, calling on man to “believe that nothing is shameful!” (1078). Shamelessness is distinctly individualistic, as Protagoras has shown: it was humanity engrossed in its own

individual technical wisdom that caused feats of injustice and jeopardized the survival of the race as a whole, and thus required Zeus' imposition of "shame and justice." In this way Unjust Speech recognizes shame as the essential cornerstone of societal life, yet encourages humans to not let it define them. He stands as an advocate for individualism against Just Speech's championing of societal conformism.

As Just Speech opposes Unjust Speech in *The Clouds*, so also Protagoras opposes Socrates in *Protagoras*; thus, to maintain the structure of correlative debates, Socrates must be brought into the camp that prizes the individual above the societal. In this regard Socrates challenges the claim that virtue is "something teachable" (319b), prompting Protagoras' defense of his role as teacher of sophistry (319b-320b). Here Socrates does not make any definitive statements but simply raising two important questions about the cultivation of virtue. First, society appears to function on the contingency that every person has a stake in political wisdom (319b-d). Second, there are many who are raised by those excelling in political wisdom but who do not themselves attain such wisdom (319e-320b). The first concern is addressed by Protagoras' myth of creation, as we have seen, for a sort of "political virtue" is indiscriminately imposed by Zeus onto all humanity simply by virtue of their being human. Socrates' second concern is met with Protagoras' "argument" (324d-328c) that all are teachers and therefore all have an equal chance at developing virtue. However these questions raise a still larger issue: virtue may indeed be teachable, but how *should* it be taught? Is it something which can simply be externally imposed on a population, whether by humans or by gods, or are some people naturally more disposed to it than others? In other words, does not the internal reaction to the external application of virtue have any significance on the education's efficacy? This is undoubtedly an important question for Unjust Speech, who points out that among "the spectators," there are "many more, by the gods, who are bugged" – who commit injustice in spite of their societal education (1096, 8). Immediately following this observation, Just Speech suddenly gives in to Unjust Speech, exclaiming "We've been worsted!" (1102). By his surrender, Just Speech (who has championed habituated education) highlights the fault of such an education, which appears to have failed on a widespread scale. Thus both Unjust Speech and

Socrates are united in their doubts about the perpetuation of imposed virtue through habituated education.

Admittedly, Socrates and Unjust Speech do not hold to one cohesive belief. Socrates' thought is significantly more nuanced. Unjust Speech is destructive rather than constructive, existing only inasmuch as he opposes Just Speech. Socrates is critically destructive but also markedly constructive. In *The Clouds*, apart from Aristophanes' sarcastic anti-Socratic bias, Socrates works to correct the wrongs of the city's education rather than simply denigrate them. He operates the 'thinkery' – a mysterious school where he trains his students – which stands as an obvious counter to the city, being located as it is physically outside of the city and behind a veil of "Mysteries" (143). Yet it does not simply advocate for the overthrow of the city, but the education of individuals in the correct manner: for example although Socrates denounces traditional piety and belief in the gods, he does present an alternative devotion to the Clouds, who are conceived of as pseudo-divinities in and of themselves. Of course Aristophanes' pseudo-religious inclusion of the Clouds is meant to detract from Socrates' authority rather than add to it, representing his inability to detach himself from even a bastardized form of spirituality. Yet, remaining abreast of the bias, one can detect the greater idea at work: the provision of an alternative rather than simple wanton rebellion. In this way Socrates is shown to take the side of the individual over the societal. This is the case also in *Protagoras*, in which Plato presents a much more sympathetic portrait of Socrates. While Protagoras is a publically renowned orator who attracts large crowds from among the youth, Socrates is a private intellectual. The former sees virtue as being a set of independent parts which are imposed through the rote of society, the latter a unified whole which humanity accesses through a personal attempt to gain wisdom. Thus while Socrates is critical of the societal form of education, just as Unjust Speech is, he is not simply destructive but expressly constructive.

What is more, Socrates at times seems to be an ardent traditionalist. At the very beginning of *Protagoras*, Socrates attempts to dissuade his young friend Hippocrates in his infatuation with Protagoras the fabled sophist, reprimanding him for not first consulting his "friends and relatives" or his "father nor brother nor any of us who are your comrades" (313a). He paints Protagoras as

a “newly arrived foreigner,” suggesting that he is unknown and perhaps even threatening to the city (313b). The Socrates presented here seems to be one completely different from the Socrates described above. Rather than criticizing the educational system of the city, he seems to strongly support themes of traditional patriotism that harken back to the arguments of Just Speech. This makes Socrates’ juxtaposition with Protagoras, champion of societally imposed virtue, especially interesting. Rather than invalidate the claims made above, it instead serves to nuance them still more. The rift between Socrates and Protagoras exists not on the level of the “what” – the origin of political virtue, its teachability, the importance of societal strictures – but on the “how” of its implementation – is habituated education effective in promoting good citizenship? The fact that Socrates himself accompanies Hippocrates to see Protagoras under the pretenses of helping him learn more about the “foreigner” suggests the opposite: human nature’s innate individualism will inherently be lead beyond the strictures which society places on it.

Thus the problem with the habituated form of education in virtue is that it takes human nature too much for granted. Education in virtue cannot be a zero-sum game, superimposed over man’s inherent individualism; the reality is that some individuals seem more naturally disposed to it than others. This is the case in *The Clouds* in which Socrates is selective in choosing prospective students for his thinkery, with those extremely tough cases even necessitating “blows” (493). Of course the wisdom offered by Aristophanes’ thinkery cannot be fairly compared to Protagoras’ political virtue, nor can one forget that “blows” are the very thing which the city uses in its habituated education. Nonetheless these are manifestations of the author’s bias which should not be confused with the underlying truth: one’s nature is assumed to play a part in his acquiring of virtue. Protagoras seems to overlook this possibility in his treatment of punitive correction. In his argument in defense of the teachability of virtue, he rightly distinguishes between “bad things” which humanity possesses by nature, and those which come through “diligence,” arguing that we punish the former and thus teach virtue (323c-d). Yet his identification of those things which are naturally “bad” is perhaps too cursory. He confines such a category to physical qualities like being “ugly or small or weak,” not recognizing that nature can in

fact speak to things like impiety and injustice (323d). In short both Socrates and Unjust Speech seem to point out that virtue cannot simply be imposed across-the-board on a naturally unjust population, but must be nuanced depending upon the natural disposition of the individual.

In conclusion I submit that the four voices in the two correlated debates each occupy a distinct place on a spectrum between the societal and the individual. Just Speech has a positive view of societal education which, if adhered to like one's familial tradition, will lead to positive results. Protagoras largely agrees but is more realistic in his assessment. Society is taken as an unnatural imposition, and it is thus perhaps difficult to convince others to endure it so as to reap the fruit of social cohesion which it is meant to produce. Socrates sits on the other side of the spectrum, though not far from the middle. For him, even though virtue may have been proven to be teachable on a societal level, this does not necessarily imply that it is the exclusive right of the societal construct to teach it. There is something important about tradition and habituated virtue, yet they must never overpower the individual's quest for wisdom and virtue. Finally, Unjust Speech occupies the most individualistic position, accepting the need for society, yet advocating that man seek to work around its strictures which unduly constrict the free exercise of the human will. The final two voices pose an interesting challenge to Protagoras: perhaps society's habituated education needs to be reworked so as to take into account the reality of human nature.

# Together Unwavering

Valerie Kisselback '15

In imitation of the lyrical style of Sappho, this poem celebrates the goodness of an Aristotelian friendship and invokes Arete, the goddess of excellence and virtue, to bless and sustain it.

My friend:

Innocence springs from his soul,  
Wisdom, strength, and song  
Rise up from within him.  
A radiant light amid the darkness of misguided principles,  
His integrity is wondrous to behold.  
His smiling disposition becomes him;  
So modest and unwavering,  
The embodiment of goodness.

O, Arete:

Send forth a cascade of blessings!  
Illuminate our moral qualities,  
That he may cultivate mine and I his!  
In every encounter  
Strengthen our virtuous habits,  
That our souls may reflect your shining excellence!  
Remain with us,  
Unwavering,  
That goodness may endure.

Together:

Joy and mirth ring forth,  
consolation and encouragement sustain.  
Our hearts are devoted to Arete,  
Our souls united in the same striving  
To exemplify beautiful truth.  
Both unwavering in dedication,  
With courage and strength  
Magnifying the goodness of the other.

## The Complex Relationship of *Ars* and *Natura*: How Ovid's "Pygmalion" Employs the Power of the Artist

Kelsey Littlefield '17

Publius Ovidius Naso, commonly known as Ovid, was a Roman poet and author who lived during the reign of Augustus Caesar. He is renowned as poet of great variety and skill, and no work so wonderfully displays his talent as his *Metamorphoses*, a massive volume of mythological stories of transformation. Throughout the *Metamorphoses*, art and nature serve as unifying themes and are present in some capacity in each myth Ovid recounts. In particular, art and nature are prevalent in the myth of Pygmalion, a sculptor who falls in love with his ivory creation. An important contrast develops between art and nature in this story, and that contrast speaks to how the senses are woven into both.

Roman literature is fond of treating the subjects of art and nature, and their contrasting figures appear again and again in the best works of the Ancient World. These two didactic terms are often used in elegiac poetry as a means of deciphering the interwoven relationships among the poet, lover, and girl (*poeta, amator, and puella*).<sup>1</sup> The poet and the lover are one in the same, as the poet attempts to express the love and the experience of the beloved (i.e., the *puella*) to his reader. There is also, however, a sense of lament, as in all elegiac poetry, as the beloved has an unattainable quality that eventually leaves the poet/lover in despair. The girl, more specifically Pygmalion's own beloved,<sup>2</sup> exemplifies the erotic nature displayed in Ovid's version of elegiac poetry and the grappling of the role that the artist plays in shaping his own art.

Book 10 of the *Metamorphoses* begins with the laments of Orpheus after losing his wife, Eurydice, to the underworld. Defeated and mourning his loss, Orpheus abstains from love and chooses to use his lyre and musical talents to sing of the various myths that follow similar lamentation. Ovid uses sorrowful Orpheus as an internal narrator to express the relationship between the poet and girl, as exemplified by lines 10.81-82: "Nevertheless, a

desire was holding the many women to join themselves to the poet, the many women pained at rejection” (*Multas tamen ardor habebat / iungere se vati, multae doluere repulsae*). The women were driven by a natural desire (ardor) to join themselves to the poet, illustrating to the idea of the poet/lover. Orpheus, however, rejected such “advances,” a common motif associated with the *puella*. One such myth of transformation written by Ovid is that of the Cyprian sculptor, Pygmalion, who falls in love with his own ivory statue, and desires that it be his wife. Through Pygmalion, retold in a different historical context,<sup>3</sup> Ovid explains how the statue is simultaneously a symbol for art and nature. Joseph Solodow describes the relationship well when he writes: “this is the story about the relation between art, which is made by human skill, and nature, that which is born.”<sup>4</sup> The reader sees how the artistic ability of Pygmalion and the “natural” qualities possessed by the statue create an air of immortality that resounds throughout the entirety of the poem. In making this observation, I seek to portray the importance of acknowledging both the power of art and nature in understanding how the elemental pair functions as a means to appeal to the senses of sight and especially touch.

Ovid uses a stone motif <sup>5</sup> in order to juxtapose the converse roles of Venus in the preceding Propoetides myth and Pygmalion, while simultaneously conveying the eroto-artistic relationship associated with elegiac poetry. Women are perceived as “art objects” and are associated with the elegiac “girl” (*puella*) in both art and flesh.<sup>6</sup> The Propoetides, daughters of the man Propoetus from the island of Cyprus, offend Venus because of their “whore-like” prowess and refusal to respect her divine power, an act that results in their transformation into stone as punishment. This offense can also be explained “as a half-way between death”<sup>7</sup> because the stone renders the women lifeless, turning them from animate beings into inanimate ones. Their injustice is perpetually preserved in Ovid’s account of their metamorphosis, which immortalizes their crime and serves as a warning to outsiders not to defy the gods: “And what might that be if not the punishment of being transformed?” (*Idque quid esse potest, nisi versae poena figurae?*, 231).

By contrast, the Pygmalion myth begins with his lack of affinity towards women. Pygmalion rejects the idea of love due to the disdainful, shameful behavior of the Propoetides (*Quas quia Pygmalion aevum per crimen agentis viderat, offensus vitius*, 243- 244). Ovid

uses the terms “crime” (*crimen*) and “faults” (*vitiis*) as idioms for infidelity in elegiac love poetry.<sup>8</sup> By using this terminology, the *poeta* has rejected the concept of a *puella* as a lover because of the Propoetides’ prostitution, resulting in his lament (an act associated with elegiac poetry). Pygmalion, rather than disregarding the power of Venus, “timidly asks for her guidance and assistance in bringing his ivory statue to life” (*timide, “si di, dare cuncta potestis, / sit coniunx, opto,” non ausus “eburnea virgo” / dicere Pygmalion “similis mea” dixit “eburnae,”* 274-276).

This juxtaposition exemplifies Pygmalion’s reversal of flesh as not only an external physical quality, but also an erotic quality. The Propoetides use their fleshy bodies as a means of disgrace towards the women of society, and especially as an insult to Venus. Pygmalion’s “girl” (*puella*), however, is at first made of ivory, lifeless and immobile. Through sensation, perception, and gratitude towards the power of the gods, his prayers are answered as his own girl is transformed into the corporal form that he so desperately desires. Ovid uses such diction as “tries” (*temptat*, 282) to describe Pygmalion’s act of touch. The sculptor already believes his ivory girl is real and prays for one similar to it, thus highlighting the contrast between art and nature. In using this stone motif, Ovid captures the immortality of art and nature in describing the juxtaposition associated with the opposing concepts, giving and taking life.

The ivory medium used by Pygmalion to sculpt such a breathtaking image of a woman breathes life into how the senses of sight and touch correlate with art and nature. Ivory is the most difficult medium to sculpt, and his use of it not only demonstrates the excellence of Pygmalion’s craftsmanship but also exemplifies the true form revealed by the statue. “Pygmalion marvels [at her] and draws up fires deep within his chest for that feigned body. Often he moves his hands trying the work, but whether it is a body or ivory, he does not acknowledge the statue to be of ivory” (*Miratur et haurit / Pectore Pygmalion simulati corporis ignes / Saepe manus opera temptantes admovet, an sit / corpus, an illud ebur, nec adhuc ebur esse fatetur*, 252-255). Pygmalion marvels at his statue from afar, using his eyes (and ultimately his imagination) to fabricate what he believes the figure of the perfect girl is. As a result, there is an inanimate quality to his ivory girl. He does not experience the full breadth of his creation in terms of natural life.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, as

Ovid shifts the reader's focus to a sense of touch through verbs related to touching, he also shifts Pygmalion's perception of the statue. As Pygmalion is "trying the work," he experiences how his art is a representation of the natural female body, the embodied soul.<sup>10</sup> While using his hands to caress her like a lover, he removes the shroud of doubt associated with two-dimensional art and replaces it with the "tangible truth"<sup>11</sup> imposed by the independent existence of the statue. The art itself deceives the artist.<sup>12</sup> Essentially, the statue, as a figure, has the capacity to stand alone because Pygmalion's touch has breathed life into his art, even before Venus has animated her through divine intervention. Furthermore, Ovid demonstrates this theory of immortality through touch by using present tense verbs, like "he moves" (*admovet*, 254). He also uses an indirect statement (*esse fatetur*, 10.253-255) to acknowledge the thin boundary that exists between art and nature as Pygmalion attempts to decipher the difference between imagination and reality.<sup>13</sup> Thus, Ovid is indulging the reader in the erotic nature of the poetry by using the antithetical sensations of sight and touch.

Ovid carefully chooses a simile in relation to Hymettian wax as another source and example of "trying." The wax's pliability and durability relates to the theme of immortality in that it demonstrates a manipulation of the art medium. Just as Pygmalion manipulated the ivory into the form of a woman, the wax is softened (*mollescit*, 283) under the contact of the thumb (*pollice*, 285).<sup>14</sup> The formability and origin of the wax is also reminiscent of the immortality theme as honey, in antiquity, was associated with immortality. The hardening of the honey into wax closely resembles the process of sculpting as the ivory is molded and manipulated to suit the needs and desires of the artist. The artist, Pygmalion, molds an imitation of the form of the natural woman through his art, and ultimately as a companion.<sup>15</sup> This "companionship" is conceived through the semblance art has with nature. The textual evidence indicates that "trying" has a close association with manipulation and immortality in relation to the process of creating a sculpture of such beauty.

George Hersey's literature on enamoration with statues describes this appeal to the senses as a form of tactile beauty.<sup>16</sup> Tactile beauty is the personal, physiological responses that Pygmalion experiences from "trying" his work. This realm of

beautification links art and nature as it describes the actual transformation of stone to flesh in terms of splendor and in natural, lifelike contexts. While Pygmalion wills his statue to life, he is physically affectionate with his *puella*. For example, “he believes his fingers sit on her touched arms and fears lest a bruise appear on her pressed limbs” (*et credit tactis digitos insidere membris et metuit, pressos veniat ne livor in artus*, 256-258), signifying his desire for the statue to become a true woman. The sculptor’s ideal of beauty is influenced by his experience with women. His eyes have seen the disgrace of the Propertides, and as a result, he wishes to mold a woman that does not embody such characteristics. When the statue is roused, there is a softness and moldable quality present that did not exist in the immobile statue. “She appears to be warm; he moves his mouth to her mouth again, and also touches her chest with his hands, and the ivory softens having been touched...” (*Visa tepere est; / admovet os iterum, manibus quoque pectora temptat: temptatum mollescit ebur...*, 10.281-283). The visceral and palpable reaction<sup>17</sup> undergone by Pygmalion in response to his ivory girl’s transformation suggests that Ovid believes this change to be a representation of the art in a natural context. Ovid could have suggested Pygmalion’s response to this transformation as one of speaking, moving, or weeping; however, he critically chooses to express such a transformation through sensation because it accurately represents the statue as a substitute for a true body. Her form is a representation of a body and must be felt in order to prove conception.

This “palpability of living”<sup>18</sup> further showcases the power of the artist and his art<sup>19</sup> as Pygmalion is moved by not only the physical beauty of his work but also the grace in which she gradually transforms. This build-up allows the reader to sense the power of the beauty in the transformation that Pygmalion is experiencing firsthand through sensation and perception. “These physical sensations fill the work of art itself, and its creator and its observer.”<sup>20</sup> There is a certain level of artistic immortality present as the living version of Pygmalion’s statue retains the features that surpass the natural woman; his *puella* is perpetually his own love and creation.

The purpose of art is to surpass the model nature has created in order to realize an ideal beauty that can only exist in an artistic form, as expressed by Anne Sharrock.<sup>21</sup> As a result, art is a flawless concept and one that strives for a perfection that cannot be sullied

because of the artist's idealism and immortality associated with such an element. Such an ideal beauty should surpass reality as Pygmalion attempts to manufacture the "ideal woman."<sup>22</sup> As a creator of art, he is simultaneously a creator of beauty. "He sculpted and gave her beauty, with which no other woman is able to be born, and he took in the love of his own work." (*Sculpsit ebur formamque dedit, qua femina nasci/ nulla potest, operisque sui concepit amorem*, 248-249). The verb *concipio* often means "to take in;" however, it can also mean "to produce/form" and "to understand."<sup>23</sup> Taken in this context, Pygmalion "understands" the love of his own work, indicating that he is consciously aware of the beauty he has sculpted by his own hand.

Art, however, is still a representation of nature. Through the use of the feminine noun *imago*, defined by the Oxford Latin Dictionary in some instances as "appearance,"<sup>24</sup> Ovid understands art's deceptive appearance as a representation of nature. Art is not equivalent to nature in that nature has a sense of liminality that cannot be altered.<sup>25</sup> Art, however, has the power to take a variety of appearances to suit the needs of the artist.<sup>26</sup> It can be molded and manipulated to fit a certain ideal that nature does not have the ability to do. Art can be defined as an abstract personification, while Pygmalion is rendered the spectator and creator of the art object.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, Pygmalion has constructed a degree of immortality in his statue. There is no natural-born woman that can surpass the beauty he has chiseled. He marvels at his creation and drinks in his burning passion for her. He does not reject this version of the *puella* because his conception of art and beauty has surpassed the ideals of nature; the ivory statue is more beautiful than any natural woman.

Critics of Ovid's rendition of Pygmalion associate the dominance of nature with an imitation of art. "Art is simply an imitation of nature and is a secondary order of reality, ever striving to match nature but unable to completely do so."<sup>28</sup> Solodow indicates that nature is true beauty, echoing how Propertius views natural beauty as the principle beauty.<sup>29</sup> "He gives kisses to be returned and he thinks, he speaks, he holds (it) and he believes his fingers sit on her touched arms and fears lest a bruise appear on her pressed limbs" (*Oscula dat reddique putat loquiturque tenetque/ et credit tactis digitos insidere membris/ Et metuit, pressos veniat ne livor in artus*, 256-258). Pygmalion is treating his *puella* as if she is already

animated and lifelike. This “fear of bruising” is related to bare skin eroticism,<sup>30</sup> much in the same that the simile of Hymettian wax relates to the medium’s moldable quality. Pygmalion fears that he will cause harm to his beloved, but this episode is also indicative of the manipulation that created the beautiful statue in that it demonstrates how the body itself is a realm of flexibility and change, the antithesis of a statue’s supposed rigidity. Pygmalion is treating his ivory statue how he would treat a natural woman; however, his statue has exceeded his expectations.

There is also a realistic aspect to the statue: “the form of the virgin is true, you might almost believe to have lived, and if not held back in reverence, she would have wished to be moved” (*virginis est verae facies, quam vivere credas, et, si non obstet reverentia, velle moveri*, 250-251). The use of the subjunctive denotes that to Pygmalion the ivory statue already seems alive and through such uncertainty, as suggested by the tense and mood of *credo*, that the *ebur* is so realistic that the reader might even believe her to be real. Furthermore, by using the second person singular, Ovid intends to bring his reader into the dynamic of his myth. As the author, he wants his listeners to become critical thinkers and to investigate what they, themselves would do if in the same situation as Pygmalion.

Ovid continues to emphasize the natural quality of the ivory as he mentions the terms for ivory (*ebur* and *eburnea*) in various lines throughout the Pygmalion myth, emphasizing the importance of the medium used to sculpt the perfect woman.<sup>31</sup> The ivory often describes a certain part of the body, as displayed in other myths in Book 10, including the back and shoulders of Atalanta, all sensual parts of human anatomy that often coincide with the notions of “trying” (*temptantes*).<sup>32</sup> As a result, Pygmalion’s ideal woman carved in the most difficult medium to sculpt indicates the “immortality of the artist.”<sup>33</sup> The ivory is a segue into a godly interpretation of Pygmalion; he is creating natural life with his hands and a chisel, something only a god/goddess has the power to command.

Pygmalion looks to divine intervention as means to animate his ivory statue. Naturally, in antiquity, Venus is associated with not only love but childbirth. As a creational matriarchal figure in the mythological world, it can be inferred that Pygmalion is hoping his soon-to-be fleshy bride will mirror the characteristics of the divine Venus. As Pygmalion shyly (*timide*) asks Venus to hear and act on

his prayers, she responds with “a favorable omen” (*amici numinis omen*, 278). Venus’s favor toward him highlights his humility. Pygmalion does not want to dishonor Venus, a direct contrast to the Propertides’ disrespect of Venus’s will (*numen*) earlier in Book 10. He cannot be the direct creator of life because he does not hold the rightful power to do so; only gods have the power to create and destroy life, metaphorically symbolized through Ovid’s description of the transformation that occurs in the ivory statue.

Pygmalion even treats his ivory statue as a fleshy being by bedecking her with ornate gifts, a common motif in elegiac love poetry, as the lover presents these gifts to his beloved as a symbol of the elegiac roles of the poor poet and rich lover.<sup>34</sup> “Recently, he brings her beloved presents: smooth conch shells and pebbles and small birds and a thousand colors of flowers and lilies...also he adorns her limbs with clothing” (*modo grata puellis / munera fert illi conchas terestresque lapillos/ et parvas vulcres et flores mille colorum/ liliaque...ornat quoque vestibus artus*, 259-263). Ovid expresses and foreshadows the transformation and climax of the story by having Pygmalion “adorn” (*ornat*) his love with natural world items, such as clothing. The giving of clothes concretely denotes the idea of eventual animation because often sculptors would leave their art nude as a way for “nothing to be left to the imagination.”<sup>35</sup> The natural quality of the statue expressed the embodied shape of beauty that art seeks to portray and represent. Thus, a natural woman would need clothes as a sign of modesty. Eventually “he calls it a marriage bed and rests her neck on the soft feathers as if she could feel it” (*Appellatque tori sociam adclinatque colla/ mollibus in plumis tamquam sensura reponit*, 268-269). The use of the future participle foreshadows that eventually the ivory will feel such soft feathers around her head and neck region as a “natural” lover would be able to experience.

I have argued the validity in suspecting that art or nature holds superiority in various textual instances within the Pygmalion myth. The interwoven relationship between the two elements that are presented in the work are most accurately described by: “Art conceals itself by its own art” (*Ars adeo latet arte sua*, 252) Pygmalion’s “ivory woman” is so lifelike that the reader would think it to be real as Pygmalion continues to caress and fondle his love. The beauty of his *puella* prompts him to seek the help of Venus in order to make his dream a reality. His *puella* also allows

Pygmalion to absolve the metaphorical sins of the Proterides as he has found a woman whom he wished to share in the marriage bed, and he is further rewarded for his humility. Just as “adorns” (*ornat*) signifies a decorated, theatrical element, hubris is indicative of excessive pride that lends itself to the juxtaposition of modesty and chastity seen in the former half of the myth. The idea of creation is also prominent here as Ovid attempts to differentiate between what is made by hand and what is by procreation. The language used in the reflexive quality of “-self” (*suo*) indicates the beauty that the statue itself is exuding which could be mistaken for a natural woman.

The dynamic pairing of art and nature in the Pygmalion myth demonstrate the struggle between which element is superior. I have argued that both elements are necessary if one is to analyze the full breadth and accomplishments of Ovid’s rendition of Pygmalion as told in the *Metamorphoses*. The philological importance of *ars* and *natura* is most accurately depicted through Pygmalion as the theme of immortality, as seen through the senses, preserves the idea that art struggles as a representation of nature. The notion of *tempta* links the interface of art and nature, as the concept strives to solidify where the line of imagination ends and truth begins. Through touch, Pygmalion is able to bridge the gap between the beauty associated with art and nature. The level of organicism expressed by Ovid through Pygmalion further demonstrates how the two elements function as a pair in describing the organic quality of nature with the manufactured quality of art. In essence, Ovid evokes the senses of Pygmalion and the reader in understanding how the sense of touch manifests in describing art as a representation of nature.

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Holzberg (2002) 11.
- <sup>2</sup> Sharrock (1991) 36.
- <sup>3</sup> Bauer (1962) 1.
- <sup>4</sup> Solodow (1988) 216.
- <sup>5</sup> Bauer (1962) 2.
- <sup>6</sup> Sharrock (1991) 36.
- <sup>7</sup> Solodow (1988) 215.
- <sup>8</sup> Sharrock (1991) 38.
- <sup>9</sup> Herder (2002) 54-57.
- <sup>10</sup> Herder (2002) 56.
- <sup>11</sup> Herder (2002) 40.
- <sup>12</sup> Solodow (1988) 217.
- <sup>13</sup> Sharrock (1991) 38.
- <sup>14</sup> Alison (2014) 127.
- <sup>15</sup> Herder (2002) 45.
- <sup>16</sup> Hersey (2009) 95.
- <sup>17</sup> Hersey (2009) 96.
- <sup>18</sup> Hersey (2009) 96.
- <sup>19</sup> Solodow (1988) 219.
- <sup>20</sup> Alison (2014) 96.
- <sup>21</sup> Sharrock (1991) 38.
- <sup>22</sup> Bauer (1962) 8.
- <sup>23</sup> *OLD* s.v. “*concipio*” 1; 4; 6.
- <sup>24</sup> *OLD* s.v. “*imago*” 12.
- <sup>25</sup> Herder (2002) 43.
- <sup>26</sup> Herder (2002) 59.
- <sup>27</sup> Sharrock (1991) 40.
- <sup>28</sup> Solodow (1988) 218.
- <sup>29</sup> Sharrock (1991) 39.
- <sup>30</sup> Sharrock (1991) 43.
- <sup>31</sup> Bauer (1962) 16.
- <sup>32</sup> Bauer (1962) 7 and Barolsky (2003) 183.
- <sup>33</sup> Bauer (1962) 18.
- <sup>34</sup> Sharrock (1991) 43.
- <sup>35</sup> Herder (2002) 47.



Study Abroad Students at Mystras

Henry Whitmore '16

## Delphi Does Not Know Me

Alexandra Larkin '18

once i told you i would rather live happy than be remembered  
i lied  
i want to be forever  
i want to be the achilles girl of the age i want to wield a sword  
made of years i want all there is to be  
and if fate made me choose between a long life with you and a  
short one made of gold a short one when i  
would always be remembered as the greatest hero  
i would choose the latter  
maybe that means im not cut out for all i was meant to be but  
maybe i am toeing the line between  
humanity and experimental divinity because it is the divine that  
makes us human and human that makes us  
divine and if it becomes some sort of autoimmune disease maybe  
that makes me  
i said perseus was my favorite hero and i lied  
achilles is me and how can i not love that it's just impossible like  
waves in reverse like gods bleeding blood  
like humans bleeding ichor  
love is what destroyed achilles and love is what will destroy me  
i hope that the fallout is remembered as grandly as the fall of troy

## Hubris

Thomas Krueger '16

Reaching out like a god,  
For all things suiting his desires  
Wide open eyes burning with cleverness  
The sacker of cities thirsts for power.

He oversteps his mortal bounds,  
Hoarding riches not earned.  
Like a gust of wind, it is released  
A fist in the gut, divinely provoked.

Now, he is new to words.  
He stares into the monster's eye  
Feeling fear take hold, warm and wet.  
A drowning sensation, no mother's womb.

He slithers on the ground,  
Below even the ewes  
As he makes his escape  
Through deception and cunning alone.

Rocks hurled blindly,  
Leagues away at nobody  
As he sits and laughs.  
The ego returns, he shouts:

I am Odysseus!

Cursed! Cast down, castaway.  
Conqueror of cities changed in an instant,  
All the world made to taste like ash.  
Branded with solemn acceptance.

# The *Testimonium Flavianum*: A Translation for the Modern Christian Tradition

Meagan Freeze '16

## Introduction

Among the most controversial works of the (ever-controversial) Jewish historian Flavius Josephus is his *Testimonium Flavianum*. Written at the end of the first century AD, the *Testimonium Flavianum* is a report about the life of Jesus Christ. It appears in the eighteenth book of Josephus's *Jewish Antiquities*, a lengthy treatise on the history of the Jews from the creation up to the time of the Jewish War. The *Testimonium* is one of the few ancient historical accounts of the life of Jesus, and aspects of its authenticity have been widely debated for centuries. The purpose of this project, however, is not to contest the motives of Josephus or his later translators, but to make a clear translation of the *Testimonium* for Christians interested in the historical aspect of Jesus' life and impact. In my translation I assume my readers have no knowledge of Latin or Ancient Greek; my goal is simply to provide an intelligible text of the *Testimonium* for those who would otherwise be unable to access it.

The advanced seminar from which this translation arose focused on the translation of Josephus' works from Ancient Greek to Latin. The Latin editions of Josephus sparked much controversy over various authors' word choice, exclusions, and interpretations. Most denizens of the Roman Empire, if they could read at all, read Latin, and the extreme popularity of Josephus' works led to the creation of many Latin translations. Even those unable to read and write were able to experience the popularity of Josephus' works through oral repetition. Considering that the English language is now about as widespread as Latin once was, it seems appropriate to develop an accessible English translation of the *Testimonium Flavianum*. For the purposes of my translation, I identify the *Testimonium* as an historical report on the life of Jesus. In short, this account describes Jesus as a man who performed miracles, who appealed to Jews and Gentiles alike, was sentenced to death on the cross, was resurrected in fulfillment of a divine prophecy, but

whose name was bestowed unto a line of people that existed not only until the time of Josephus, but until today.

### **Translation**

I have chosen the Latin translation of the *Antiquities* (*LAJ*) as my textual reference. The *LAJ* was first produced in the sixth-century in the Vivarium monastery under the direction of the Roman writer Cassiodorus.<sup>1</sup> The manuscript tradition of the *LAJ* is extensive and complicated, and the text I use here is the critical edition compiled by Levenson and Martin.<sup>2</sup> Any translation from Latin into English necessarily encounters many barriers: the meaning attached to an individual word of Latin often cannot be expressed by a single corresponding English word, and Latin inflections afford the language a sentence structure that is much freer than that of English. I have translated as literally as possible to not only avoid confusion in syntax but also to provide useful and informative Latin grammar instruction. At the same time, my translation will provide colloquial interpretations for antiquated expressions. Many particles in Latin and Greek have no semantic implication, but exist solely to separate thoughts and phrases within a very complicated sentence structure or to provide an untranslatable emphasis. I have done my best not to include these colorless conjunctions, and to separate clauses in order to avoid losing the essence of the translation within Latin's complex sentence structure. An appendix with select phrases and explanations follows.

*Jewish Antiquities 18:63-64:*  
*The Testimonium Flavianum*

**63.** Fuit autem eisdem temporibus Ihesus sapiens uir, si tamen uirum eum nominare fas est. Erat enim mirabilium operum effector et doctor hominum eorum qui libenter quae uera sunt audiunt. Et multos quidem Iudaeorum multos etiam ex gentibus sibi adiunxit. Christus hic erat.

**64.** Hunc accusatione primorum nostrae gentis uirorum cum Pilatus in crucem agendum esse decreuisset, non deseruerunt hi qui ab initio eum dilexerant. Apparuit enim eis tertio die, iterum uiuus, secundum quod diuinitus inspirati prophetae, uel haec uel alia de eo innumera miracula futura esse praedixerant. Sed et in hodiernum Christianorum, qui ab ipso nuncupati sunt, et nomen perseuerat et genus.

English Translation

**63.** There was, in those times, Jesus, a wise man, if really it is right to call him a man. He was the doer of miraculous works and the teacher of men who gladly hear things that are true. He joined to him many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was the Christ.

**64.** When Pilate, upon an accusation of the most important men of our race, decreed him to be lead to the cross, those who had loved him from the beginning did not desert him. He appeared to them on the third day, alive again, according to what the divinely inspired prophets had predicted—that both these and innumerable other wonders about him would occur. But even until today, both the name and descendants of the Christians, who were called from him, have persevered.

## Appendix

**Fuit eisdem temporibus Ihesus sapiens vir:** Here a plural “ablative of time when” is used to convey the span of time in which Jesus lived. Josephus was born after the death of Jesus, so his contextual frame is continuous, as were the many years Jesus lived. The “to be” verb (*fuit*) and its predicate (*Ihesus sapiens vir*) are translated according to the Latin word order. This decision might help the reader understand the construction of the sentence, by being able to visually compare the verb, subject, and predicate according to a pattern in Latin construction. I will proceed with my translation in this fashion.

**Si tamen... fas est:** *nominare* (“to call”) is a complimentary infinitive with the verb *fas est* (“it is right”); *tamen* translated as “really” rather than “nevertheless” to communicate the author’s hesitation to call Jesus a man.

**erat enim mirabilium operum effector et doctor hominum:** This sentence is an excellent example to help the reader understand Latin sentence structure. The verb beginning the sentence makes it easier to translate literally, and the reversal of predicate nominatives and descriptive genitives is a common literary device. *enim* was omitted in translation to avoid confusion of the English word “for” (a looser word for “because”).

**eorum qui libenter quae vera sunt audiunt:** This is an orderly Latin sentence, in which the main verb appears at the end of the sentence. The relative clause is translated afterward to avoid confusion with the main verb *audiunt*. It should also be noted that there is an understood *ea* (“those things”) that is the object of the verb *audiunt* and the antecedent to the relative pronoun *quae*.

**Et multos quidem Iudaeorum multos etiam ex gentibus sibi adiunxit:** The main verb and reflexive pronoun are placed at the beginning of the sentence to emphasize the action of the verb. I chose to translate *gentibus* as Gentiles, which is parallel to *Iudaeorum* even though the latter is a genitive of the whole and the former is the object of the preposition *ex*.

**Christus hic erat:** This sentence is perhaps the most controversial one in the *Testimonium Flavianum*. There is a good deal of debate as to whether Josephus wrote “This man was the Christ” or something like “This man was called the Christ” (as some manuscript traditions attest). We know that Josephus remained a faithful Jew even after the fall of Jerusalem, as seen for example in his defense of Judaism in his apologetic work *Contra Apionem*. We also know, however, that Josephus thought God had destroyed Jerusalem because of the impiety of his people. In light of these facts, we can see why this line has caused so much controversy and why it is still debated whether Josephus actually claimed that Jesus was the Messiah.

**Hunc accusatione primorum nostrae gentis uirorum:** “Upon” with an accusation is standard idiomatic English; *primorum* has many translations, but here communicates the designation “most important” men (likely the High Priests, as in the Gospel account). *gentis* is translated as race to differentiate from Gentiles.

**non deseruerunt hi qui ab initio eum dilexerant:** The relative clause with subject *hi* (plural demonstrative) and verb at the end of sentence *dilexerant* is translated first to present the subject of the sentence, followed by the main verb *non deseruerunt*.

**uel haec uel alia de eo innumera miracula futura esse:** Neuter plural demonstrative (*haec*) and the noun *miracula* are subjects of indirect statement with *futura esse* as the infinitive functioning as main verb; *de eo* is the prepositional phrase referring the entire clause back to Jesus. The demonstrative and noun *miracula* are both objects of the verb *praedixerant*.

**Sed et in hodiernum Christianorum...et nomen perseuerat et genus:** *nomen* and *genus* are both subjects qualified by the genitive *Christianorum*. They are translated together at the beginning of the sentence to communicate their connection to Christ, and linked to the relative pronoun *qui*.

## Comments

Although historians and linguists have studied the *Testimonium* for centuries, very little attention is paid to its application in the Christian Church today. The modern age, informed by post-Enlightenment rationalism, is reluctant to accept the reality of anything not scientifically quantifiable. Although no historical work can make the same claim to empirical evidence as the hard sciences can, and although Christians are ultimately less concerned with the “historical Jesus” than they are with Christ the Savior and Son of God, Josephus’ account does provide some testimony to the former. One could spend an entire lifetime debating the trajectory of a work from which we lack a great deal of evidence, and fail to realize the potential impact it may have on our world today. The *Testimonium* condenses the several important major aspects of Christian belief, and therefore is a key contribution to the Christian curriculum. This work deserves the kind of celebrity today that it has received in centuries past, and accessibility is the first step. I would hope that one day a translation, such as the one I have produced, will be circulated among all Christians and held as an accessible, authoritative piece of evidence when considering the life and miraculous works of Jesus Christ.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Levenson and Martin (2014) 4.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 18-19.

## The Struggle of the Artist

Margaret MacMullin '16

His sight is trained  
On the road ahead<sup>1</sup>  
But his eyes yearn  
For his wife instead.

She follows behind,  
Neither dead nor alive.  
Wealth and Spring<sup>2</sup>  
May yet let her live.

The grade is steep  
And growing steeper  
While this hero's heart  
Sinks ever deeper

Into fear and doubt—  
Does Eurydice follow?  
He hears her strides  
Echo empty, hollow.

Step after step,  
Note after note,  
Orpheus continues  
The song<sup>3</sup> that he wrote

For his beautiful wife,  
A nymph of the trees:  
Indeed for her, he would  
Cross seven seas.

But something is wrong,  
Orpheus<sup>4</sup> knows.  
Surely by now she's  
Consumed by shadows.

Do not think in this way,  
O Son of Apollo.  
If you turn back  
You will only wallow

In sorrow and grief  
For the rest of your years  
Knowing that you  
Are the cause of your tears.

For as you passed  
From that world to this,  
The sight of your love  
You could not resist.<sup>5</sup>

But now she is gone,  
Into shadows<sup>6</sup> of course,  
And you had not thought  
Your life could get worse

## Analysis

Professor Amy Adams's "Russian Literature under Stalin" class spent the fall semester of 2013 studying various writers who lived during the Stalinist era. We discussed the importance of these writers to our understanding of life during that time, and the courage they possessed in order to compose the works that they did. In a time when the Stalinist government severely punished an act even slightly opposed to uniformity, it is amazing that such works as we examined exist. These included Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We* (the precursor to George Orwell's *1984*), Mikhail Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita*, Eugene Yelchin's *Breaking Stalin's Nose*, as well as a variety of other novels and poems. One of our assignments invited us to write our own poems, putting ourselves in the place of those such as Anna Akhmatova or Osip Mandelstam, who risked their lives for their work. Like many of the great Russian poets of this era, I chose to encode truths in metaphor.

My poem, and the hidden messages it constructs, are based on the ancient story of Orpheus and Eurydice. In this tale, the poet Orpheus enters the underworld while playing his lyre to rescue the spirit of his deceased bride Eurydice. Hades, ruler of the underworld, is so moved by Orpheus's music that he agrees to let Eurydice go. His only condition is that, as Orpheus walks out of the underworld, he cannot turn around to see if Eurydice is following him. Orpheus agrees, and he begins to walk away while avoiding looking around. At the last minute, however, his nerve fails him and he turns around to see if Eurydice is following him. As he turns, he catches a glimpse of her before her spirit fades away and is lost forever.

Part of the assignment included an explanation of our own poems, and here follows a revised version of that original essay.

Poets of the Stalinist era faced a great moral decision: record the atrocities they witnessed and sacrifice their careers, or succeed in society by functioning as government-approved "engineers of human souls", a term for writers coined by the Stalinist regime. While many chose the safe route of feeding propaganda to their audiences, some could not bear to be silent about their own hardships and the sufferings of those around them. The renowned poets Osip Mandelstam and Anna

Akhmatova fall into this category. They employed their literary talents to paint a picture for posterity, a picture so unusual that straightforward prose could hardly suffice. Coded poetry, along with other art forms, served as a perfect vehicle for the thoughts of the tormented Soviet citizens.

“The Struggle of the Artist” opens with the juxtaposition of looking forward versus looking back. This pairing is reminiscent of the Soviet concept of perceiving things not as they are or were, but as they will be. The poem’s protagonist, Orpheus, must not look behind him, keeping his vision focused forward, to the future. Soviet citizens were also required to keep their sight trained forward. The poet Mandelstam was not capable of acquiescing to this fallacy; his wife described him as “a man who knew that you cannot build the present out of the bricks of the future.”<sup>1</sup> In *The Whisperers*, Orlando Figes describes a recollection from Wolfgang Leonhard, a German Communist who visited Moscow as a child in 1935. At the time of his family’s visit, Moscow did not sell present day maps of the city: “We used to take both town plans with us on our walks. One showing what Moscow had looked like ten years before, the other showing what it would like ten years hence.”<sup>2</sup> Like Leonhard, Orpheus is forced to look either to the past, his memories of his wife, or to the future, when she will hopefully be alive once again.

Once curiosity overcomes Orpheus, however, and he glances behind to see Eurydice is truly following him, she disappears before he can fully see her. A woman’s glance toward her former home proved just as fruitless in Anna Akhmatova’s poem “Lot’s Wife.” God forbade Lot and his family to turn around while they departed from their homeland, just as Hades forbade Orpheus from glancing at his beloved. Akhmatova writes: “She glanced—and bound by mortal pain/ Her eyes could no longer see (10-11).” In the same way, Soviet citizens tended to be unable to see the whole truth of what was going on around them, for such perspective was not only discouraged by the government but also painful to recognize. Even if they could understand, it was impossible to rationalize. Anyone perceived as an enemy of the party was purged, and many were sent to forced labor camps.

Hades presents Orpheus with a challenge, the same challenge that Stalin presented to his Comrades: do not look. Do not observe that people are disappearing for the most trivial

offences, that even this society is dysfunctional. The only difference is that if Stalin had caught Orpheus glimpsing at Eurydice, then Orpheus, rather than his beloved, would have perished. This mythological allusion represents the struggle faced by many Soviet citizens: recognize the truth and face it, or know that it is there and ignore it. Choosing the former almost always ended badly, and the latter, though it could not ensure safety from the Secret Police, was certainly the safer option.

“The Struggle of the Artist” uses a code to portray the mental struggle many artists encountered. The tie to mythology helps to make it a timeless piece, so a person from any time period can find a way to understand the experiences of Stalinist-era poets. The focus on the future contrasted against the past, the internal dilemma of whether or not to see, and the imposing authority figures all relate to themes of other artists of this time. Stalin sought to silence them, but the magnitude of what they witnessed could not be left unsung. They found they could communicate their messages through elliptical language, using symbols and metaphors that can be traced throughout their works. In *Hope Against Hope*, Nadezhda Mandelstam describes how her husband Osip wrote his poems: “The process of composing verse also involves the recollection of something that has never before been said, and the search for lost words is an attempt to remember what is still to be brought into being”.<sup>3</sup> It almost seems as though the poets living under Stalin were listening to the same unheard soundtrack. United as one creative entity, they strove to preserve their thoughts for the next generation, so no future nation would travel down the path on which the Soviets found themselves.

## Notes to the Poem

1. “The road ahead” represents Stalin’s emphasis on thinking of things as they will be, not as they are now.
2. Just as in Anna Akhmatova’s “Poem about Petersburg”, the authority figures represent Stalin.
3. “The song” is a metaphor for a poem.
4. Orpheus is analogous to a poet: he forms art from music notes, a poet from words.
5. Like Orpheus straining not to look at his wife, poets such as Mandelstam and Akhmatova tried not to see the ugly truth of the world in which they lived. Recognizing it proved unavoidable.
6. Constant fear transformed those who lived under Stalin into semblances of their former selves, like Eurydice.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Mandelstam (1970) 115

<sup>2</sup> Figs (2007)

<sup>3</sup> Mandelstam (1970) 187



Margaret MacMullin '16

## Submissions for Next Year

*Parnassus* welcomes submissions from Holy Cross students of any major. For next year's journal, students from the classes of 2015-2019 are eligible to submit. Pieces should relate to the study of the ancient world and should be understandable to a wide audience. Essays, poems, translations, creative pieces, and artwork are all eligible for publication.

Submissions can be e-mailed to [HCclassicsjournal@gmail.com](mailto:HCclassicsjournal@gmail.com), beginning in October 2015. Pieces will be reviewed during the winter break, and authors will be notified of acceptance at the beginning of February 2016. Authors of accepted articles will continue to work on their piece with an editor in the following month.

Any questions about *Parnassus* and the submissions process prior to October 2015 can be directed to Steven Merola at [samero16@g.holycross.edu](mailto:samero16@g.holycross.edu).