

Anneliese Pollock
Comparative Literature 30A
Metamorphoses Section
October 15, 2013

Learning Objectives:

- explore the role of language, music, and silence in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (within and across stories)
- explore the role of imagery in Ovid's text through a comparative analysis with *actual* images and film
- develop close reading skills
- develop comparative skills first through a comparison students can relate to, then through comparing the narratives within the *Metamorphoses* themselves

Lesson Plan

- I. Discussion of Dido and Aeneas cave scene in *Aeneid* from three perspectives:
 - 1) Virgil's text
 - 2) Marilyn Desmond's critical approach
 - 3) Interpretation and adaptation in American film (10 min.)
- II. Group work: students broken into groups, each group assigned a specific narrative in the *Metamorphoses* (20 min.)
- III. Groups present their findings (10 min.) (each member of the group presents one thing they found important or interesting-should usually include a quote from the text) (including: you present Philomela)
- IV. Sum-up and Discussion of language, love, and agency in the *Metamorphoses* (10 min.)

Group Work Handouts

Pygmalion

I. Read the story of Pygmalion (reader, pp. 30-31), and answer the following questions:

- 1) What does Pygmalion want?
- 2) What does he get?
- 3) Describe the woman before her metamorphosis
- 4) Describe her after—what has changed?
- 5) Can she talk?
- 6) What can she do? What's so great about her?
- 7) Any problems?

II. Now watch the following clip from My Fair Lady:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vbdVvIbB1KU> (to 2:17)

- 1) What are the differences between Eliza Doolittle and Henry Higgins?
- 2) In other words, what does Henry have that Eliza doesn't?
- 3) What does Henry Higgins want?
- 4) What does Eliza want? What changes does Eliza undergo? (if you haven't seen the film, you can watch this clip also:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hYMSvyqHHwA> 4:10-6:10)
- 5) In the end, though, what are the problems with Henry and Eliza's relationship/what they want/what they get?

III. Compare Ovid's version of Pygmalion to My Fair Lady

- 1) What has My Fair Lady added?
- 2) What has My Fair Lady left out?
- 3) What is the significance of these changes?
- 4) What can it tell us about Ovid's conception of gender roles?
- 5) What can it tell us about Roman culture versus early 20th century England?
- 6) What can the story in Ovid tell us about language? And feminine beauty?

Pyramus and Thisbe

- I. Read the story of Pyramus and Thisbe, and underline all the images and metaphors you can find.
 - 1) What makes this story sad, other than the fact that everyone dies?
 - 2) What is the role of language in this story? (see in particular lines 69-68 and 139-151 and 157-160)
- II. What metaphors and images do you find in Shakespeare's version of the story?
 - 1) Is this story also sad? (hint: it's funny)
 - 2) Why is this story funny? Give specific examples
- III. Compare the two versions of the story. Why is one tragic, and one comic? Be specific, and in particular use images and metaphors from both texts.

[Excerpt from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act I, scene I]

Lion

You, ladies, you, whose gentle hearts do fear
The smallest monstrous mouse that creeps on
floor,
May now perchance both quake and tremble
here,
When lion rough in wildest rage doth roar.
Then know that I, one Snug the joiner, am
A lion-fell, nor else no lion's dam;
For, if I should as lion come in strife
Into this place, 'twere pity on my life.

Enter Thisbe

Thisbe

This is old Ninny's tomb. Where is my love?

Lion

[Roaring] Oh--
Thisbe runs off

DEMETRIUS

Well roared, Lion.

THESEUS

Well run, Thisbe.

HIPPOLYTA

Well shone, Moon. Truly, the moon shines

with a
good grace.
The Lion shakes Thisbe's mantle, and exit

THESEUS

Well moused, Lion.

LYSANDER

And so the lion vanished.

DEMETRIUS

And then came Pyramus.

Enter Pyramus

Pyramus

Sweet Moon, I thank thee for thy sunny
beams;

I thank thee, Moon, for shining now so bright;
For, by thy gracious, golden, glittering gleams,
I trust to take of truest Thisby sight.

But stay, O spite!

But mark, poor knight,
What dreadful dole is here!

Eyes, do you see?

How can it be?

O dainty duck! O dear!

Thy mantle good,

What, stain'd with blood!

Approach, ye Furies fell!

O Fates, come, come,

Cut thread and thrum;

Quail, crush, conclude, and quell!

THESEUS

This passion, and the death of a dear friend,
would
go near to make a man look sad.

HIPPOLYTA

Beshrew my heart, but I pity the man.

Pyramus

O wherefore, Nature, didst thou lions frame?
Since lion vile hath here deflower'd my dear:
Which is--no, no--which was the fairest dame
That lived, that loved, that liked, that look'd
with cheer.

Come, tears, confound;

Out, sword, and wound

The pap of Pyramus;

Ay, that left pap,

Where heart doth hop:

Stabs himself

Thus die I, thus, thus, thus.

Now am I dead,

Now am I fled;

My soul is in the sky:

Tongue, lose thy light;

Moon take thy flight:

Exit Moonshine

Now die, die, die, die, die.

Dies

Re-enter Thisbe

Thisbe

Asleep, my love?

What, dead, my dove?

O Pyramus, arise!

Speak, speak. Quite dumb?

Dead, dead? A tomb

Must cover thy sweet eyes.

These My lips,

This cherry nose,

These yellow cowslip cheeks,

Are gone, are gone:

Lovers, make moan:

His eyes were green as leeks.

O Sisters Three,

Come, come to me,

With hands as pale as milk;

Lay them in gore,

Since you have shore

With shears his thread of silk.

Tongue, not a word:

Come, trusty sword;

Come, blade, my breast imbrue:

Stabs herself

And, farewell, friends;

Thus Thisbe ends:

Adieu, adieu, adieu.

Dies

Echo and Narcissus

I. Read the story of Echo and Narcissus

- 1) What is the conception of love portrayed in this story?
- 2) What is the role of language?
- 3) Focus in on p. 19, ll. 480-510. What metaphors can you find? Images?

II. Look at the painting on the back of this handout.

- 1) What does the picture portray? Any of the metaphors and images you just found?
- 2) Are any of these metaphors and images *not* included in the painting? Why not?
- 3) What is added?



Caravaggio, 1597-1599